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9.	Clerks Report								
	a. End of Year Finance 2023-24								
	Report having been circulated prior to the meeting the clerk summarised the content as below. It was clarified that these figures are what are used for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return but simplified in format for review. The Clerk stated that there are certain finances that have not been addressed historically that must be discussed and budgeted for going forward like Insurance, Website set up and maintenance costs (initial set up package of 10hrs set up and extra time for the clerk to look at Policies and Standing Orders which then need publishing once signed off and agreed), potential laptop purchase for the PC, membership of LALC (this costs is calculated on number of parishioners). We will require an increase in precept for next year to accommodate these extra expenses along with the cost of the clerk. <table> <tr> <td>2023/24 Ends on</td><td>£ 432.22</td></tr> <tr> <td>Precept remit came in April for 24/25</td><td>£4,750.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Less – to May clerk outgoing</td><td><u>£1,508.00</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>£3,674.22</td></tr> </table> Less today's payments – June to Aug clerk outgoing £1,803.00 leaving closing balance of £1,871.22 to cover to end of financial year. It is likely PC will run out of funds due to a double contribution to both churches for grounds/grass cutting made before locum clerk in post. Next year no contribution required so will correct itself. Clerk agreed to carry over part of her wage payment to next financial year as there will be a shortfall in Feb/March 2025. Precept history 2020-21 To churches £500 (£0 precept) 2021-22 To churches £1500 (£600 precept) 2022-23 To churches £0 (£600 precept) 2023-24 To churches £2000 (£1750 precept)	2023/24 Ends on	£ 432.22	Precept remit came in April for 24/25	£4,750.00	Less – to May clerk outgoing	<u>£1,508.00</u>		£3,674.22
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	b. Website								
	Clerk confirmed she had started communication with LALC (The Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils). There is a fee for administration of the website, unfortunately the parish council are not be able to afford it this financial year. Plan would be to get it ready to set up with a view to do April/May to then allow all AGAR etc to be published along with other required documentation. Set up of website delayed due to Governance Review and costs not budgeted for. We will require 10 hours to set this up and get all appropriate documents published. Then an ongoing minimum fee for publishing.								
	c. Insurance								
	Clerk confirmed she will need to get quotes, what are we responsible for? What assets if any do we own as a PC? Public Liability Insurance will be required but no public bins, no bus shelters (as to be demolished), but notice boards would need to be covered.								
	d. Meeting Dates								
	Provisional dates agreed as follows. Wed 30 th Oct '24 Wed 29 th Jan '25 Wed 19 th March '25								
10.	Finance & Year End Audit - Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-24 - Clerk								
	As you will be aware my first role as clerk was to document and put together the last four years of historic finance records and submit AGAR for each one by agreement with PKF Littlejohn the external auditors. 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. The final step to get the PC up to date from a financial perspective was to complete the AGAR for 2023-24 which will be signed off at this meeting.								
	a. Certificate of Exemption								
	AGAR Page 3 of 6 – has been signed and submitted to confirm we are smaller authority where the gross annual income or gross annual expenditure does not exceed £25,000								
	b. AGAR 2023-24								
	Pg 4 – Internal Control Audit – Clerk was not able to verify historic accounts as being reviewed mid year as no internal auditor was in place at this time, so no signature required. Pg5 – Annual Governance Statement, SECTION 1 – issues identified will be rectified at end of this financial year – Chair and Clerk signed as agreed. Pg6 – Annual Governance Statement, SECTION 2 – these figures are correct from completing the historic 4 years which were previously not done and I have verified accounts from bank statements – Chair signed as agreed.								
11.	Council Vacancies - Clerk								
	The news that David Horton has confirmed he has resigned and is not standing this year, this then confirms three vacancies becoming imminently available. The clerk explained that initially the parish council have to follow a process where vacancies are advertised and a fourteen day period must lapse to allow a minimum of 10 electors to potentially request a by-election. Once this period is complete and if no by-election is required as confirmed by The Returning Officer at SKDC; then the parish council may co-opt interested parties. This process will be conducted by way of applications being considered by existing parish council members and successful applicants being co-opted. The recruitment meeting should take place 25/09/24 if no by-election is called, with the vacancy being advertised 03/09/24.								

12.	Highways & Speed restriction signs		
	Highways - Cllr Vernon wished to highlight that she is involved in the A1 regarding safety issues. Ultimately the A1 is not the County Councils responsibility but National Highways and she is working together with Alicia Kearns (Conservative MP for Rutland and Stamford) and Gareth Davies (Conservative MP for Grantham and Bourne) regarding the A1 and as part of this also highlighting the impact these accidents have on villages adjacent the A1 when accidents occur. Cllr Vernon stated that the MPs are looking at options for suggestions to put forward from a local level. Possibilities being lengthening the slip roads, closing some of the central reservation gaps (but we must also be mindful of the impact this could have on agricultural traffic) and speed reduction. This is clearly a lengthy project. Speed Restriction Signs -Discussion around potential options for speed reduction measures within the parish. Speed humps request would go to Highways for approval. Speed reactive signs optional but very expensive at approx. £3K. No traffic calming measures will be available to the PC obviously as it's a 60mph limit not 30 mph <i>Action: Cllr Vernon said she would take advice from Highways on what options may be available and feed back to the next meeting.</i>		
13.	The state of the bus shelter		
	Bus Shelter was built by the estate and is on estate land, it is in poor repair and in need of demolition as it is unsafe. It was agreed by resolution of the council that Stoke Rochford are approached to demolish as soon as is possible to do so. <i>Action: Demolition of bus shelter by Stoke Rochford Estate. Cllr Allam to feedback progress.</i>		
14.	The Pond Stroxton		
	There are ongoing concerns from parishioners regarding the awful smell from the pond and the stagnant water. As requested, Cllr Allam had checked the landowner details, and the Land Registry confirms the pond is owned by Charles Welby. It was last dredged it is thought sometime during the 1970s. Repairing Rights were mentioned, and a potential discussion was suggested with Environmental Health at SKDC for advice and support in this matter. Cllr Parkin advised that Business Water Lincolnshire currently have a water restoration fund where Anglian Water have been fined three million pounds, this money is available for the restoration of waterways and ponds in their catchment area. There is also the option to look at the SKDC Prosperity Fund which is in its final year and ends 31/03/25. It was suggested an approach perhaps might be that the Parish Council and the landowner make a joint application. There appears to be two issues one being the pond and one being the culvert under the road which frequently get blocked. It was decided the subject required more discussion before a decision is made on the best way forward. The Chair asked it to be carried forward to the next meeting. However, it was agreed that the Chair with support of Cllr Allam would draft an initial communication letter for discussion at the next meeting. <i>Action: Cllr Parking and Cllr Allam to share draft letter for discussion at next meeting</i>		
15.	Missing village sign in Stroxton adjoining to Lodge Farm		
	A discussion took place, and it was noted that there has been a missing village sign for Stroxton for some time near Lodge Farm. <i>Action: Cllr Vernon offered to move this forward and make enquiries to get this replaced.</i>		
16.	Farm machinery impacting the roads		
	Concerns raised from parishioners regarding mud on the roads caused by farm machinery. Whilst there is an expectation that there will be mud on the road caused, the feeling was if effort was made to clear and keep this to a minimum it would be appreciated. It was noted sugar beet time is the worst and clean up has happened during this period. Cllr Skelton had a suggestion that as some other farms had done, could local farmers be approached to ask if they could consider creating and using farm tracks where possible so as to negate the issues of using the roads where possible. There is a legal responsibility by the farmer to clear the roads. It obviously also has serious health and safety ramifications for road users. <i>Action: Pick up again at next meeting to check if action has been taken</i>		
17.	Accounts for payment – August 2024 - Clerk		
	a.	Sal/Tax/NI/Exp June to Aug 24	£1803.00
		Total	£1803.00
18.	AOB		
	Ash dieback - Cllr Allam asked if Cllr Vernon could enquire about responsibility of dealing with ash dieback in the parish. Specifically, regarding whose responsibility this was dependant on the location of the trees with the problem <i>Action: Cllr Vernon said she would take advice and feedback at the next meeting.</i>		
	Roadside Tree pruning – Cllr Skelton asked Cllr Vernon to enquire regarding the following; at Little Ponton junction as you come from Stroxton. Request clarification on where is Highways responsibility. <i>Action: Cllr Vernon said she would try to get a copy of a map to get clarification and feedback at the next meeting.</i>		

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8-15 p.m.

Signed: REDACTED

Chairman, Little Ponton & Stroxton Parish Council

Date: 27/11/24