

| Hemswell Cliff Parish Council | |
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| Meeting | Ordinary Parish Council Meeting |
| Date | 7 March 2022 |
| Report by | Clerk |
| Report Title | Review of number of Parish Councillors |

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Parish Council with research to assist in the decision making whether to request an increase in the number of Parish Councillors on this Parish Council. By law, parish councils must have at least 5 councillors, but, other than this minimum, there are no statutory or recommended numbers.
- 1.2 West Lindsey's District Council's Electoral Registration service has advised that any changes, if agreed would not come into effect until 2023.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Parish Council currently consists of 7 Councillors. At the 2019 election, all 7 Parish Councillors were returned to office unopposed. Since the 2019 election there has been two resignations and one co-option. The second resignation was in January 2021 and at the notice of vacancy stage.
- 2.2 The Parish Council wanted to explore whether there was a need to increase the current number of Parish Councillors and this report sets out the research undertaken.

3. Process

- 3.1 If the Parish Council does decide to increase the size there is a process to follow. To increase the current numbers of a parish council the subject must be debated at a properly convened parish council meeting and agree to a proposed resolution stating the number of current members and the proposed new number of members.
- 3.2 The process of gauging public opinion would then commence by the publication of the proposed resolution and the reason why the council feel there should be an increase in numbers. A Notice should state the day by which any observations should be made and give the contact details of the clerk of the council. Public consultation may take the form of Notices placed in prominent places within the parish, parish magazines, local newsletters etc.
- 3.3 The council should then take into account any observations received before an appropriate resolution is passed by the council. A formal letter should then be sent to the Returning Office at West Lindsey District Council giving details of the resolution the date of the council meeting at which it was passed and a background of methods used for consultation.
- 3.4 After consideration the Returning Officer may request a letter is sent to each elector to advise them of the proposal and a final opportunity to send any objections direct to him. If there is serious objections it may then have to go to a Governance Review. As

mentioned above, any change in numbers will not occur until the next round of scheduled elections in 2023.

4. **Research**

4.1 West Lindsey District Council does not set criteria on size of parish council versus electorate size and level of duties and responsibilities. As a result, the Clerk undertook some research on other parishes within West Lindsey.

4.2 In summary, there are 79 parishes within West Lindsey; three of which are Town Councils. The largest electorate is Gainsborough Town Council at 14,337 electors 18 Town Councillors and the smallest is Cold Hanworth with 25 electors and 2 Parish Councillors and combines with Hackthorn Parish Council. Hemswell Cliff ranks 34th out of 79 Town and Parishes in terms of electoral size.

4.3 The focus of the research is to review those Parishes with the number of Parish Councillors between 7 and 9 for consideration by the Parish Council. It's been difficult to ascertain the duties and responsibilities of comparable parishes. Other parishes will have more assets and a number have a burial responsibility.

4.4 Set out below are all West Lindsey Parishes that have 7 Councillors which totals 41. It is the most common number. Hemswell Cliff sites in the centre of the distribution in terms of population and the number of the electorate ranges from 979 to 112.

| Name (7 Clrs) | Electorate |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Fiskerton | 979 |
| Scampton | 896 |
| Burton | 757 |
| Scothern | 755 |
| Torksey | 711 |
| Greetwell | 698 |
| Marton | 568 |
| Nettleton | 563 |
| Brookenby | 525 |
| Willingham | 496 |
| Scotton | 493 |
| Hemswell Cliff | 480 |
| Osgodby | 478 |
| Barlings | 423 |
| Faldingworth | 404 |
| Fenton | 389 |
| Upton | 379 |
| Grasby | 378 |
| Glentham | 367 |
| Toft Newton | 358 |
| Bigby | 348 |
| Kettlethorpe | 327 |
| Laughton | 318 |

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| Normanby-By-Spital | 302 |
| Newton-on-Trent | 293 |
| Kexby | 290 |
| Stow | 285 |
| Knaith | 279 |
| Hemswell | 277 |
| Bishop Norton | 268 |
| Willoughton | 255 |
| Glentworth | 237 |
| Owersby | 233 |
| East Stockwith | 211 |
| Walesby | 193 |
| Snitterby | 192 |
| Wickenby | 178 |
| Rothwell | 168 |
| Swallow | 160 |
| Claxby | 136 |
| Northorpe | 112 |

- 4.5 Set out below are five Parish Councils in West Lindsey with 8 Parish Councillors. Two Parish Councils have fewer electorate than Hemswell Cliff but three have more with South Kelsey in the middle at a similar number of electors.

| Name (8 Cllrs) | Electorate |
|----------------|------------|
| Sudbrooke | 1,359 |
| Ingham | 768 |
| South Kelsey | 482 |
| Tealby | 465 |
| Great Limber | 202 |

- 4.6 Finally the following Parish Councils have 9 Councillors. One Parish Council has an electorate lower than Hemswell Cliff but the others have higher numbers, some over twice the number.

| Name (9 Cllrs) | Electorate |
|-----------------|------------|
| Middle Rasen | 1,669 |
| Dunholme | 1,639 |
| Sturton-By-Stow | 1,175 |
| Morton | 1,118 |
| Blyton | 988 |
| Lea | 815 |
| North Kelsey | 789 |
| Reepham | 714 |
| Waddingham | 506 |

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| Corringham | 393 |
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5. **Issues for the Parish Council to consider**

5.1 This report sets out comparisons with other West Lindsey parishes but doesn't analyse the duties and responsibilities. On this analysis it seems that there are the right number of parish councillors for the electorate population but the Parish Council should consider the following:

- If the Parish Council recommends an increase, this should be accompanied with an engagement plan to raise the profile of the Parish Council and encourage new Parish Councillors.
- Future growth in the electorate. There are 38 dwellings or more planned west of Lancaster Green which could increase the electorate of Hemswell Cliff.
- The ability to take on more responsibilities if there are more Cllrs against the risk of having vacancies if there is no demand.
- Plans to take on more responsibility in the future.

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 That the Parish Council considers whether to increase the size of the Parish Council.