

Branston & Mere Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Pavilion, Moor Lane, Branston on
Monday 4th February 2019 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Messrs Adams, Blair, Clarke, Lundgren, Marchant, Naulls, Newman & Tebb and Cllrs Mesdames Price & Willcox.

In Attendance: Clerks - Mrs Stead and Mrs Naylor.

Members of the Public: Two.

Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.

The Council noted and approved the reasons for the apologies of Cllrs Catton, Ross and Spittlehouse.

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 2 Public Forum.

- A resident from Sleaford Road questioned why the new footpath from the Spires ended short of the Recreation Ground. The clerk advised that it finished in line with the site boundary and that the issue had been raised with Lovells and LCC. LCC had agreed to extend the path when footpath work was next carried out in the area.
- A resident from Station Road complained about the use of railings on Station Road to advertise a slimming group. He asked about the Fly posting policy and was directed to 'Legals' at the foot on the main page on the website.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

During the period 07/01/19 – 04/02/19 two crimes had been reported:

1 Theft - Plant Vehicle from Mere Road.

1 Criminal Damage – Nails in car tyres on a Lincoln Road driveway.

There had also been a further incident with the Huskies at Top Farm. Members felt that this had become a big issue for local people. Cllr Lundgren said that landowners had a duty to ensure that PROW were open and available to the public. Concern was expressed about the safety of children and horse riders and the Clerk was instructed to write to the Beat Manager.

b) County Council.

- Cllr Oxyby reported that the executive would reconsider the provisional budget after some additional funding had been announced by the government. The proposals would be ratified by the full Council on 22nd February but use of reserves would be lower. Uncertainty over future funding allocations remained.
- The flagship Fire, Police and Ambulance operational hub was on track to open in the autumn.
- Plans to protect Lincolnshire's heritage for future generations were being considered, including, the creation of two 'super sites' at Lincoln Castle and the Collection Museum; alternative uses for the Usher Gallery and returning Gainsborough Old Hall to English Heritage when the current lease ends in 2020.
- Following the resignation of the Chief Executive, reshuffling of senior directors and expected retirements; two new officers would be appointed in Resources and Commercial in April.
- The Street light policy had been adopted allowing Parish Councils to make a one-off payment to have lights switched back on. The cost was £300 per light, unless it coincided with routine maintenance when it was reduced to £170 per light.

The clerk had already advised the Council that approx. 200 lights were affected by the part-night schedule. The matter would be included on the March agenda.

c) District Council.

- Cllr Cucksey said that the Council Tax Support Scheme had been approved by the Full Council, agreeing that:

- the empty homes premium would be increased from 50% to 100% resulting in a total Council Tax charge of 200%.
- a care leavers exemption for those aged 18 to 25 years.
- the 25% follow-on reduction for unoccupied and unfurnished properties would be removed.
- an Exceptional Hardship Fund of £20,000 would continue for 2019/20.
- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22 had set out the framework for a general 5% increase in discretionary fees and charges.
- The Garden Waste service remained at £30. Annual reviews would be undertaken to ensure that the fee was appropriate.
- The collection of bulky household items had increased in April 2017 to £29.15 for up to 3 items, to reflect the cost of recovery.
- Cllr Lundgren had arranged a meeting for residents affected by the planned closure of Bardney Bridge. From the meeting, he hoped to gain a better idea of the issues and the help needed.
- He advised that the Class Q application to convert a concrete barn into dwelling had been refused on land off Sycamore Close.

d) Community Library.

- A third quote for new shelving was proving difficult to obtain.
- An application had been submitted to the Coop Community Champion Scheme.
- Circus themed craft activities were planned for half-term.

e) Dog Warden Report & the law on Dog Fouling.

Following training at NKDC, the Warden had reported that the Dogs 'Fouling of Land' Act had been repealed. His role had changed to Environmental Warden and would enable him to issue FPNs for littering while also collecting evidence of dog fouling to submit to NKDC.

The Council welcomed the extended powers and recognised the deterrent provided by the Warden.

Item 4 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 7th January are approved as the Minutes.

Acceptance of the notes was proposed by Cllr Newman and seconded by Cllr Mrs Willcox.

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

15913 Ref Public Forum - Cllr Lundgren had advised that business owners had a responsibility for litter associated with their business, i.e. litter picking and providing bins.

15914 Ref 15884 – The first two weekend closures of Lincoln Road had seen a number of drivers failing to understand that the road was impassable and returning at speed. Highways had been made aware of the problem and the need for a sign at the Lincoln end of Beech Road. The signage had been increased on the third closure and there had been little traffic.

15915 Ref 15902 - Screen shots of the bank balance had been sent weekly to the Chair & Vice and a document of evidence created.

15916 Ref 15904 - The Village Hall roof had been inspected and found to be sound. The report had been sent to Came & Co.

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

15917 Glasdon Brochure.

b) Letters for information.

15918 Came & Co had advised that Stackhouse Poland had been acquired by Arthur J Gallagher & Co.

15919 JJH Vegetation had been unable to complete the work to clear the dyke at Branston Booths play area and replace the fencing due to the drainage issue. Cllrs Blair and Naulls would look at the issue and suggest a solution.

15920 A resident had expressed concern about the condition of a Lime tree on the Lincoln Road recreation ground. The tree had been assessed as 'Good' when inspected in March 2018. The resident had sent photographs indicating rot.

The Inspector had revisited the tree and provided further assurances that the tree was in good condition with a low likelihood of failure.

The Council was satisfied with the expert's findings and the Clerk was asked to advise the resident accordingly.

c) LCC – Better communication on Planning Issues.

15921 No comments.

d) EBP – Requesting support for the summer NCS programme.

15922 Members were keen to support the NCS scheme but had no project to put forward other than in the Jungle, which had been classed as routine maintenance and unsuitable in 2017. The use of the Pavilion as a base would be offered.

e) Branston Infant School – Response to parking issues.

15923 The Infant School had responded to the suggestions made to alleviate the parking issues. They could not enforce parking at the Village Hall but would remind parents of the option. A gate from Linden Avenue would not be viable as it would require additional paths and supervision to ensure children's safety.

Item 6

15924

Planning Applications & Tree Applications:

a) Planning decisions received.

Planning permission had been refused on the following application:

18/1670 Prior approval for the proposed change of use from barn to dwelling Sycamore Close

b) Planning Applications received.

19/0036 To vary condition 2 to extend Solar Park operation to 40 years. Sleaford Road

No comments.

19/0062 Outbuilding Beck View, Paddock Lane

No comments.

c) Tree applications received.

18/1728 Crown reduction & reshaping of 4 trees Sycamore House, Hall Lane

No comment.

19/0035 Reduce height & reshape 2 Silver Birch 2 Springfield Close.

The tree in the front garden is mature and established, forming an important part of the street scene – ref NKDC's Conservation Area Appraisal and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's Character Appraisal.

While happy to accept sensitive management of the trees, members agreed to request that this tree should be protected by a TPO.

19/0156 Work to group of Ash trees Land at end Woodside & Deansway.

The group of trees provide excellent habitat for wildlife but are in need of careful and sympathetic management after years of neglect that has caused concern to neighbouring residents.

19/0158 Fell Leyland Cyprus & crown lift conifer hedge The Old School, High Street.

The plan of work is poor and does not give a clear picture of the work planned.

The conifers around the School House detract from the property which is a village asset building.

The single Leyland Cypress is well established and sensitive management of it and the Birch would be preferable to felling.

The hedge is overgrown and in poor condition, overhanging and overshadowing the neighbouring Memorial Garden by more than a metre, as well as the garden in which it belongs.

Any work to the hedge needs to be carried out on both sides to maintain a balance.

Item 7

Other Reports:

a) Update on New Pavilion project.

15925 A site meeting with architects from LK2 had taken place. The first drawings were expected for discussion at the March meeting and the possibility of a link to the existing building. LK2 were researching possible funding streams to determine how much of the wish-list was affordable.

b) Update on speed reduction measures.

15926 The Chairman said that he expected a further quote for illuminated speed signs and would circulate the information for signs and gateways for comment.

He was trying to arrange a meeting with Highways to discuss arrangements for both measures.

c) Update on the Neighbourhood Plan & consultations.

15927 Cllr Lundgren reported on a meeting to redraft policies 2 and 4 prior to returning the Plan to NKDC. The consultant had advised that there needed to be a 6-week consultation on the draft plan followed by NKDC's 6-week consultation, appointment of an examiner and a 28-day notification period for the

referendum, so there would not be sufficient time for the referendum to coincide with the local elections in May. The process would not be delayed by Purdah as it was not a political document and he hoped that the referendum could take place during the summer.

d) Lincoln Transport Strategy workshops & questionnaire.

15928 Cllr Ross had attended the workshop and had circulated a report. He encouraged all members to complete the online questionnaire.

e) To consider a cycle hire rack in Branston

15929 The contract for the Hire Bike scheme and Access funding were due to end in March 2020 and there were currently no plans to extend the network. If the contract gets extended, there would be a strong case for a bike rack at Branston and further contact would be made in June.

f) Additional plans from the Lincs Rivers Trust.

15930 Lincs Rivers Trust had additional funds available and hoped to introduce some gravels to the beck at Waterwheel Lane to create pools and riffles, dependant on permission from the IDB.

A family event would be held at the Pavilion during the February half term to 'build and decorate a bird or bat box' with the intention of creating a Branston Bird Box Trail. Councillors welcomed the idea and suggested possible locations.

A further volunteer day to plant up the berms was planned and the possibility of a volunteer day in the Jungle was being considered.

g) Update on Skate Park maintenance issues

15931 A site meeting had taken place with Lovells and a meeting with Galliford Try was planned to give three quotes for comparison.

h) To review the lack of Post Office facility.

15932 There had been no further response from the Post Office.

Cllr Tebb suggested that options were limited and the delay finding a solution would weaken the demand from residents as they found alternative arrangements.

i) Four Parish Cluster notes and agenda items.

15933 Suggestions for agenda items for the meeting on 25th March were invited.

j) To consider the appointment of a seasonal worker.

15934 A seasonal worker had been employed to work with the handyman for 12 hours a week from April to October since 2017. The vacancy would be advertised in the Sheepwash Times with a closing date of 10th March.

k) Emergency Plan update.

15935 Cllr Marchant advised that the Plan had been approved by LCC. An open evening and First Aid course had been planned for 24th April.

l) Update on arrangements for the Beer Fest.

15936 Cllr Clarke gave an overview of the progress to date, including a presentation by Lincoln Brewery. Extra power would be needed and the electrician would be asked for advice about using the Astro supply.

m) To confirm the purchase and position of a new Dog Waste bin.

15937 The Chairman had looked at possible sites for a dog bin near Branston Hall (Ref 15890). He had identified the footpath signpost pointing down PROW FP4. The cost of a bin was approx. £85. The purchase was agreed subject to permission from NKDC to add a bin.

Item 8 Governance Review –

a) Risk Assessment.

15938 Cllr Clarke confirmed that the external wiring to the air conditioning units at the Village Hall had been correctly installed. There would only be an issue with high voltage cables through misuse. The Village Hall Committee would display warning signs as a precaution.

b) To review the Grant Aid Application policy & process.

15939 Cllrs Adams, Catton and Lundgren had reviewed the applications and submitted their recommendations to the Council. It was agreed to award the following grants:

U3A Croquet - £300, LIVES - £1000 and Branston Bowls Club - £300.

15940 The councillors also suggested that the application procedure be reviewed; recommending that grants only be given for capital projects, new ventures or unexpected events and not to fund maintenance or running costs. Cllr Tebb said that a balance was required to avoid losing clubs through insufficient funds.

The policy would be revised and reviewed at the March meeting.

c) To consider the enforcement of the Fly-posting policy.

15941 Cllr Lundgren had consulted NKDC Enforcement and confirmed that the Parish Council had the power to remove fly posting from lamp posts etc without notification, although their advice would be to write to the offender in the first instance, requesting them to desist and remove signs within 7 days.

The Clerk requested support on enforcing decisions. An action plan would be drawn up for agreement in March.

Item 9 Finance:

a) To approve payments to be made.

15942 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Newman and seconded by Cllr Clarke.

T Mobile	Asst Clerk Mobile	11.00
Staff payments	Wages & expenses	3618.27
HMRC	Tax & NI	656.94
NEST	Pension	300.76
Michael Cummins	Dog Warden	210.00
Came & Co	Additional premium	842.00
Simon Humphreys	Inspection & unblock	40.00
E-On	Dress Christmas Tree	420.00
LAB Planning Services	Neighbourhood Plan	1000.00
LK2	Interim 2	3000.00
JJH Services	Clear ditch at B Booths	175.00
	Total Payments.	10273.97

b) Confirmation of the Precept demand.

15943 The demand for £124,970 had been submitted as agreed at the January meeting.

In 2018/19 the Precept had been £115,373.90 + 676.10 (redistribution grant) = £116,050.00

The redistribution grant has been reduced over several years and would not be available in 2019/20.

The full amount showed an increase of £9596.10, an increase of £5.73 on a Band D property (an extra 48p a month) or +6.89% according to the figures available.

Item 10 Items for information.

15944 The Assistant Clerk reported that the Branston & Mere Facebook page would be regularly updated with appropriate and up to date material and asked for information, photos and details of events. She said that there had been 300 hits on the bird box post in one day, demonstrating how quickly information spread.

The Parish Council did not have a Social Media policy or disclaimer. Cllrs Catton & Willcox would help to draft a policy. The Clerk would seek help to link the posts to the website news feed.

15945 The Chairman made the Council aware that a resident had received a £100 fine while shopping at the Coop for parking outside a designated bay. They had parked on the yellow lines at the side of the store, without causing an obstruction, as the car park had been full.

After discussion, it was suggested that the Council should offer to meet with the Coop to discuss the issues and possible solutions.

15946 The Clerk advised that Heighington Parish Council continued to support the Youth Club but had sent a cheque to the club rather than sharing the cost of the Sports Hall hire. The full cost had been included in the budget for 2019/20.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.