

Branston & Mere Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Pavilion, Moor Lane, Branston on
Monday 1st October 2018 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Messrs Blair, Clarke, Lundgren, Marchant, Newman, Ross (Acting Chair) & Tebb and Cllr Mrs Catton.

In Attendance: Clerk - Mrs Stead.

Members of the Public: Three.

Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.

The Council noted and approved the reasons for the apologies of Cllrs Naulls, Price, Spittlehouse and Willcox.

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

- Cllr Tebb declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application for Arnhem House.
- Cllr Mrs Catton declared a non-pecuniary interest in JR Architects.
- Cllr Lundgren declared a non-pecuniary interest in Place Architects.

Item 2 Public Forum.

There were no issues raised.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

During the period 03/09/18 – 01/10/18 two crimes had been reported: 2 counts of Criminal Damage to a fence panel and a garden umbrella.

b) County Council.

Cllr Oxby had provided a report:

- The Council had recommended extending Serco's contract to 2022, with some parts being taken back in-house.
- Roadworks on Wragby Road had been completed.
- Dixon Street roadworks were on schedule for completion mid-October.
- The summer resurfacing program had been completed.
- North Hykeham relief road proposals would be discussed by the executive. The dual carriageway option had been backed by 75% of those who had taken part in the survey. The estimated cost was in the region of £148.5m compared to £110m - £117m if built as a single carriageway.

c) District Council.

Cllr Cucksey had provided a report:

- The Council continued to perform strongly across all NK Plan priority areas, with the Annual Report, due to be published during the month, providing an overview of its achievements during 2017/18; focusing on the achievements in relation to 'our economy'; 'our homes'; 'our communities' and 'our council'.
- The Asset Management Plan reflected the current state of the Council's estate and assets, highlighting areas demonstrating value for money and prudent management.
- The Gas and Heating Safety Policy had been reviewed and updated in line with new regulations.
- In-year collection of Council Tax had achieved 99.4% for 2017/18.
- In-year collection of Business Rates in 2017/8 had been 99.89% against a target of 99.09%. North Kesteven's collection rate had been ranked 7th out of 326 billing authorities.
- The government had announced plans for Business Rates Retention Pilots in 2019/20. The level for 2019/20 would be 75%; reduced from 100% in 2018/19.
- Cllr Lundgren had reported on options to get empty properties occupied however, he advised that there was no time limit on refurbishments and if a property was furnished and council tax paid, the property was not considered to be empty.

- He advised on a push to license commercial activities like dog breeding and kennelling but said that such initiatives would not affect individuals dog sitting on an occasional basis.
- He said that he was part of task and finish groups looking at youth unemployment and s106 developer contributions for the provision of health facilities that would assist NKDC to address issues identified.

d) Community Library.

- The volunteer-run library had just celebrated its third birthday. The facility had been made available to pupils during the lunch break and the new Year 7 pupils were particularly keen to use it. The Co-ordinator hoped that sixth form cover would be provided to support the volunteers.
- Half term activities had been planned.
- A Book Sale and Craft Fair was scheduled for 10th November.

The clerk had written to Keith Ireland, the CEO at LCC about future support for the Library as the revenue grant had only been guaranteed for four years.

Cllr Newman pointed out that, aside from the grant that covered the rent and utilities, the computers were linked to the main system. Cllr Tebb questioned future investment in IT and books.

Cllr Oxby said that he would speak to Cllr Worth.

e) Dog Warden Report.

The warden had reported a reduction in fouling at Branston Booths. He had concentrated on areas where problems had been reported and had put anti-fouling signs.

Item 4 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 3rd September are approved as the Minutes.

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

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

15756 The resident complaint about the width of the footpath on Sleaford Road had been reported. The response received stated that it would be monitored and prioritised as part of future works within the available annual budget. (Ref pg. 2449)

15757 There had been no response from Highways about HGV signage for Rectory Lane. (Ref 15720)

15758 The police team had looked at the parking issue at Branston Booths, attached advice leaflets to the windscreens and recorded vehicle registration numbers. They would monitor the situation. (Ref 15749).

15759 Cllr Lundgren said a rumour that the solar park would not be built was untrue and that it would be built during summer 2019.

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

15760 Clerks & Councils Direct - September.

15761 LALC News.

15762 NKDC's Chairman's Charity Event.

b) Letters for information.

15763 NKDC – Acknowledgement and thanks for the Community Champion Awards nominations.

Neither nomination had been shortlisted but the Junior Academy had reached the final in the category for Contribution to a Better Environment; for growing and selling produce. The final was on 11th October.

15764 Shared Access - Completion Certificate. The potential date for connection was 25th December.

15765 NKDC – The Waggon & Horses had been approved and listed as an Asset of Community Value.

15766 An invitation to the WWI Commemorative event at the Community Academy.

c) Invitation from Heighington PC to attend Planning Training.

15767 The session on 23rd October had been opened to the Cluster group and would be led by Gainsborough's Town Clerk, Matthew Gleadell, a former planning consultant. Cllrs Blair, Catton, Clarke, Naulls, Ross & Spittlehouse expressed interest.

Item 6

15768 Planning Applications & Tree Applications:

a) Planning decisions received.

Planning permission had been granted on the following applications:

18/0907 Log Cabin for use as a photographic studio

18/1067 Gate & replacement fence

12 Cherry Avenue.

Springfield House.

b) Applications viewed during the month – For Information.

18/1085 Demolition of garage & single storey side extension 5 Sycamore Close
No comments

c) Applications for comment.

18/1127 Internal remodelling, demolition of outbuilding & new showroom Hall Lane.
The Parish Council wishes to support this thriving business but also has concerns that the buildings involved are Grade II listed and on a list of sensitive buildings supported by the Local Plan; the recent Conservation Area Appraisal and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
The Parish Council is keen to see the conservation officer's response to ensure that the buildings are not compromised by the needs of the business.

18/1140 Wall mounted sign – Red Carpet Ready Hall Lane.
While wishing to support this thriving business, the Parish Council considers that the proposed sign is not in keeping with its location in the conservation area and on the edge of open countryside.
The size, solid design and bold colours would be too obtrusive; impacting on the streetscene and resident's enjoyment of the area. A design more sympathetic to the age and location of the buildings would be more in keeping.

18/1246 Conversion of agricultural building to 4 holiday lets. Branston Causeway
No comments

18/1223 Conversion & extension of garage to 2 holiday lets. Potters Lodge, Plough Hill
Branston & Mere Parish Council has no objection to this proposal but asks that a condition be placed to prevent it being used as a permanent residence rather than holiday lets.

18/1211 Extensions & Alterations Arnheim House, Longhills
No comments

18/1247 Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump Oak Tree Barn, Branston Moor.
No comments

18/0963 Pitched roof to create a chalet bungalow – amended. 8 Shardloes.
The Parish Council's previous comments remain unchanged.

d) Tree Application Decisions received.

There were no tree decision notifications.

e) Tree applications for comment.

18/0848 Confirmation of TPO on Lime tree. 26 Rectory Lane.
The Lime is mature, sound and healthy.

Mature Limes are becoming increasingly rare but are indigenous to Lincolnshire.
They are slow growing and unless stimulated by unnecessary pruning, it is considered unlikely to have any damaging effect on the property at this age. The Parish Council would like the TPO to be upheld and agrees with the Tree Officer, that felling it would be excessive.

Item 7 Other Reports:**a) To consider a public meeting to confirm the need for reduced speed limits.**

15769 The last public survey had been carried out in 2016, prior to submitting the report to LCC. Due to the time taken by LCC to provide a response, it was agreed that public support to continue to campaign for a reduction in speed limits needed to be reaffirmed; prior to a public meeting with the portfolio holder and Highways officers.

Cllr Oxby stated that Cllr Davies was willing to listen to the request and would explain why the request had been refused.

Ways and opportunities to consult residents were discussed and would be agreed with Cllr Naulls who was gathering additional information and support.

b) To consider the architect spec for a new Pavilion.

15770 The Chairman had invited input and comment on a draft brief that had been circulated following the extra-ordinary meeting. Cllr Tebb offered to condense the brief and comments received into a usable format to send to architects. The revised draft would be circulated for further comment.

Four architects had been identified and would be offered the opportunity to tender.

c) Arrangements for an SSL certificate & plug-in updates for the website.

15771 The resident who had volunteered his time to install an SSL certificate had advised that it could only be done at server level. It was agreed to instruct Monkfish to install the SSL certificate at a cost of £120pa. He had shown the clerk how to do plug-in updates and given assurances that it was failsafe.

d) Post Office Outreach Services.

15772 Other villages without a post office had secured a travelling outreach service and a request had been submitted. The initial response received was to an application to run the service. There had been no reply to the second request for an outreach service to be provided.

Cllr Tebb said that an outreach service would only be a short-term solution and suggested that the Parish Council might consider running the service or subsidise someone to run it, as it was known to be loss making. He suggested that incorporating a courier drop point would provide an additional income stream.

e) Update on the refurbishment or replacement of benches in Memorial Garden.

15773 There had been no response from the British Legion or Home Guard Club and the item was deferred.

f) To consider repairs to the Jungle boardwalk.

15774 Hill Holt Wood had looked at the cost of plastic boards; calculating that the boards alone would be in the region of £8400. Tanalised timber boards would cost £8-10 each. The ranger had suggested replacing the 70 broken and springy boards and the broken support and consider laying heavy gauge wire which would give extra protection against vandalism. (Wire - £800)

After discussion, it was agreed to replace weak boards and broken support. It was also agreed to have repairs carried out on the two bridges.

g) To consider a repair to the cracks on the skate park.

15775 There had been no further response and the item was adjourned.

h) To review the Solar Park benefit.

15776 Cllr Lundgren advised that Potterhanworth had opted to include a solar panel installation as part of their community benefit. Branston's share of the community benefit would need to be finalised when the installation work started.

i) Arrangements for the Centenary Remembrance service.

15777 The Act of Remembrance would take place on Sunday 11th November at 10.50am at the War Memorial following a short Church service at 10am. Cllr Marchant would lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council. The Chairman would do a reading during a special event in Church at 6pm.

j) To agree the purchase of the Christmas Tree.

15778 An 18' Norway Spruce would be ordered from Doddington Hall at a cost of £200. It would be delivered on 23rd November and members would gather to put it in place on 24th at 9am.

Item 8 Governance Review –

a) Risk Assessment.

15779 The Risk Assessment had been updated and circulated. Cllr Clarke suggested that the probability for risk from potholes be reduced to Medium, as Highways had carried out the majority of repairs on main routes.

15780 The annual play inspection had been delayed but would be completed during October. In-house checks were all up to date.

b) Risk Assessment form for Handyman tasks.

15781 Having less than four employees meant that risk assessments were not mandatory. As best-practice, Cllr Clarke would put together forms for the regular tasks.

c) To consider the need for a policy on advertising boards and other notices.

15782 Cllr Lundgren provided two examples of flyposting; found within the parish but for neighbouring villages. Branston was outside NKDC's area of special advertisement control although there were restrictions on size and position under permitted development.

The clerk was asked to draw up a draft policy for consideration.

d) To consider the need to have a property revaluation carried out.

15783 Property revaluation every 7-10 years had been advised by Came & Co. The last valuation on the Village Hall and Pavilion had been done in 2006. It was agreed that both buildings should be reassessed.

Item 9 Finance:
a) To approve payments to be made.

15784

Staff payments	Wages & expenses	3356.69
HMRC	Tax & NI	527.36
NEST	Pension	251.77
Michael Cummins	Dog Warden	210.00
Hill Holt Wood	Jungle - September	144.00
C B Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting	691.40
LALC	AGM (2)	20.00
Chincherro	Internal Audit 2017/18	275.00
PKF Littlejohn	External audit	480.00
Technical Surfaces	Astro maintenance	426.07
B&B Tree Specialists	Tree work	7200.00
	Total Payments.	13582.29

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

b) External Audit report.

15785 The return had been signed off with no issues raised.

c) Internal auditor's proposal.

15786 Reviews had been completed during the month and a report would be sent to the Council for the November meeting. It was agreed that Chincherro would continue to provide audit services in 2019.

d) Half year report.

15787 The report highlighted two areas with potential overspends, where pay increases had been higher than had been budgeted for. The underspend in the absence of an assistant clerk should absorb the excess.

e) To agree a budget to purchase IT equipment for the assistant clerk.

15788 The old laptop had been condemned as unfit for use. It was about 10 years old, becoming increasingly slow and files had been lost; possibly due to the hard drive failing.

Several quotes had been obtained. Cllrs Blair and Tebb recommended an SSD for longer life and better speed. A budget was agreed and the clerk would liaise with Cllr Blair. Octagon would set the device up.

Item 10 Items for information.

15789 The Rivers Trust had secured the necessary Internal Drainage Board consents to carry out work on the beck at Waterwheel Lane. The willows would be thinned and work on the beck would take place during November.

15790 Cllrs Clarke & Ross agreed to consider a programme for staff appraisals.

15791 Cllr Clarke asked that the Council consider a working budget and date for the proposed Beer Fest.

15792 Cllr Ross proposed a (self-funded) Christmas lunch on 9th December for members and partners.

Item 11 To resolve on whether the Council will move into closed session.

Cllr Ross proposed and Cllr Lundgren seconded the resolution.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.