

Branston & Mere Parish Council

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

Present: Cllrs. Messrs Adams, Blair, Lundgren, Marchant, Naulls, Newman, Ross, Spittlehouse & Tebb and Cllrs Mesdames Catton & 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 Clarke and Price. Cllr Cucksey had also sent apologies.

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

Cllr Clarke had declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant application from the Tennis Club as an ex-member.

Cllr Spittlehouse declared a pecuniary interest in the Library agreement due to a professional conflict and took no part in the discussion.

Item 2 Public Forum.

- A resident attended to reiterate concerns in their letter about speeding vehicles on Silver Street.
- A resident from Station Road spoke of his disappointment that the Chip Shop owner would not consider swapping plastic forks for wooden for the benefit of the environment. Cllr Lundgren said that NKDC was looking to restrict single use plastic and promote sensible behaviour. The resident was advised to liaise with NKDC.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

During the period 04/12/18 – 07/01/19 one crime had been reported:

1 Theft – meat from the Co-op. The meat had been recovered but the thief had not been identified.

- The team had checked a vehicle that had been parked on Melville Close for several months. It was road legal and registered to a property on the High Street.
- The owner of the Husky dogs had relocated them within the walled compounds and been advised to put up signage recommending that dog walkers put their own dogs on a lead as they approach the property.
- A blanket ban had been placed on leave for the whole of March and April in anticipation of issues with BREXIT. Officers could be seconded to assist other forces in the event of disruption and protests.

b) County Council.

Cllr Oxby had sent reports for November and December.

- Lincolnshire roads had received £13.474m towards additional road repairs.
- £400,000 had been allocated to run a pilot 'falls service'. In collaboration with EMAS and LIVES, anyone calling 999 after a fall would receive a faster response.
- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue had received a 'good' report from Her Majesties Inspectorate.
- Community Groups were being encouraged to sign up for free text alerts warning of possible emergencies in their area. The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum was trialling the service in a bid to communicate more efficiently with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.
- Adult Social Care had received an extra £3.7m pa for two years to help train and recruit an extra 240 homecare workers; progress e-consultation; clinical support and assessments; support for nursing homes; the wellbeing service; the falls response pilot; additional beds and more social care staff.

c) District Council.

Cllr Cucksey had provided a report:

- The Local Government Finance Settlement had confirmed funding for 2019/20 and that the bid for 75% Business Rates Retention Pilot had been unsuccessful. The Revenue Support Grant had been expected to continue in 2019/20 but would cease, along with the £71,000 Rural Services Delivery Grant and a reimbursement of £47,000 to finance Levy payments; both had been factored into the Council's Target Budget for the General Fund.
 - The medium-term Financial Strategy 2019–2022 highlighted significant uncertainty, compounded by the Government Spending Review and the expected changes to Business Rate Retention, while projecting likely funding resources and spending needs for the General Fund.
 - The Valuation Office Agency decision to have separate business rate bills for external ATM's had been successfully challenged in November 2018. The potential financial impact in NK could be in the region of £293,000 in lost rates.
 - There would be no change to Polling Districts and Polling Stations in Branston & Mere following the recent review.
 - Cllr Lundgren added that NKDC would be part of a polling trial at the 2019 election that would require electors to show photo ID or two forms of paper ID at polling stations. The postal voting system would not be affected.
- d) Community Library.**
- The Book-Start Bear had made a successful visit to the library.
 - A new self-service kiosk would be installed, replacing the old machine that was reaching the end of its life.
 - The Summer Reading Challenge would be Space Chase, for the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. The purchase of materials was approved.

e) Dog Warden Report.

The report had been circulated.

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

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

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

15879 Decisions on Dog Wardens issuing FPNs would in future be made by NKDC's Environment Team, in line with new legislation. The Dog Warden would be required to log details of the dog, owner and visibility.

15880 RoSPA certification had a 3-year lifespan. LALC had a certified course scheduled for June 2019 with the Play Inspection Company. Places would be booked for the handyman and assistant clerk. (Ref 15842)

15881 Shared Access had advised that the mast was expected to go live on 7th February. (Ref 15873)

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

15882 LALC Newsletter.

15883 Clerks & Councils Direct January.

b) Letters for information.

15884 LCC – B1188 Closures.

There would be nine weekend closures for the installation of drainage and statutory undertaker apparatus for the Eastern bypass. Confirmation had been given that advance warning signs would divert HGVs to the A15. A request had been made for the traffic light sequence to be adjusted to deal with the increase in volume from Silver Street and Station Road.

15885 LCC – Confirmation of ongoing funding for the Library.

Further confirmation that financial and expert support would continue for the Library. The letter included praise for the success of the 'hub' and the commitment of the volunteers.

15886 NKDC – Animal Welfare Regulations 2018.

Details of the scope of the new Animal Welfare Regulation 2018 and activities that required a licence.

15887 NKDC - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

An overview of the newly approved Policy.

15888 Western Power – An invitation to a stakeholder event to develop their business plan.

Noted.

c) LCC – Lincoln Transport Strategy consultation events.

15889 Information on drop-in events for the Lincoln Transport Strategy. An online questionnaire would be available from 21 January to 1 March to gather information on public experiences, expectations and ideas. Stakeholder events would take place at the end of January. Cllr Ross agreed to attend.

d) Resident – Request for additional Dog Waste bin.

15890 A resident had requested an additional bin between Silver Street and Branston Hall that did not require her to cross the B1188. Cllrs Marchant and Naulls would consider a suitable location prior to seeking agreement from NKDC.

e) Resident – Parking issues at the Infant school.

15891 A resident had again raised the issue of parking near the infant school at drop-off and collection times; suggesting additional chevrons/yellow lines or using the Village Hall car park. The Police team had agreed to monitor the problem. The assistant clerk would liaise with the school and advise the resident.

f) Resident – Speeding traffic on Silver Street.

15892 Extra safety measures were requested to deal with excessive speed on Silver Street. Concern was expressed that the problem was particularly bad at shift change at Branston Ltd and likely to get worse with further expansion, the industrial units and new homes. Cllr Mrs Willcox said that it was particularly hazardous for cyclists as Mere Road was so dark.

The clerk was asked to request Police speed checks and the assistant clerk would check the speed recorded at peak times.

g) Resident – Signage for Oaklands.

15893 HGVs delivering to the building developments were increasingly turning into the cul-de-sac and experiencing difficulty getting out again. Cllr Lundgren would request a 'No through road' sign from NKDC.

Item 6

15894 Planning Applications & Tree Applications:

a) Planning decisions received.

Planning permission had been granted on the following application:

18/1439 Single storey rear extension

Brookside, Paddock Lane.

Planning permission had been refused on the following application:

18/1140 Wall-mounted sign

Red Carpet Ready, Hall Lane

It had been refused 'by reason of its design, internal illumination and inappropriate materials that will adversely impact the Grade II building and its rural setting in the conservation area'.

b) Planning Applications received.

18/1652 5 Light industrial (B1) Units

Kirk's Yard, Mere Road.

The Parish Council largely supports this application but requests that conditions are included to protect the neighbouring community and countryside.

Traffic flow on Silver Street and Mere Road has increased considerably with the expansion of Branston Ltd and applications should work to address the issue to minimise the effect on the village.

- *There should be signage within the site to reiterate the weight restriction on Silver Street and indicate that HGVs can only turn left as they leave.*
- *Businesses should be made responsible for providing access details from the south of the development, not through Branston via Silver Street, to customers and suppliers.*
- *All loading and unloading of HGVs should take place within the site.*

The potential for noise and light pollution should be limited so that the use of the units does not adversely affect local residents and protects the character and appearance of the countryside and protected species.

- *The previous condition to limit noise should be reapplied:*

The rating level of sound emitted from any plant and/or fixed machinery associated with the development shall not exceed background sound levels by more than 5dB(A) between the hours of 07:00 and 23:00 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and shall not exceed the background sound level between 23:00 and 07:00 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises). All measurements shall be made in accordance with the methodology of BS4142:2014 (Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound) and/ or its subsequent amendments.

- *Measures which minimise light pollution should be applied, such as effective screening to avoid glare and unnecessary light pollution in open countryside.*

General Management Conditions.

- *Clear guidance should be given to tenants of the units about times of operation to minimise disturbance to neighbouring residential areas.*
- *There should be restrictions on internal expansion, i.e. no combining of units to make into larger units, in order that the units remain for light industrial purposes.*
- *There should be strict adherence to planning use classes.*

18/1670 Change of use Agricultural building to dwelling

Sycamore Close.

Branston & Mere Parish Council objects to this proposal.

1. *The application site is outside the settlement curtilage in open countryside. The site has been recognised in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan as designated local green space where development would only be supported in very special circumstances and with a clear link to further enhancement of the space. (Policy 11). Such development would set an unwelcome precedent for further infill into open countryside.*
2. *The Local Plan states that developments should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the environment in which it is located; stressing the importance of good design in open countryside.*

This building is still in use. It is questionable whether it is structurally strong enough to take the loading necessary to provide for residential use.

If a concrete and asbestos structure, built to store hay and feed, is deemed suitable for conversion to dwelling, it will set a precedent for virtually any other barn.

3. *Surface water flooding is a material consideration. There is poor drainage in this location with standing water regularly an issue at the head of the cul-de-sac.*
The advice from the Environment Agency acknowledged the risk of flooding but did not cover risk from ground water. The neighbouring watercourse is a small beck that flows towards Heighington where serious flooding is a constant concern. Heighington Parish Council include a monthly report on water levels in the local magazine.
4. *The access to the field is not owned by the applicant and crosses a well-used PROW.*
The Parish Council has ownership of the footpath. The surface is not adequate for an increase in traffic flow.

If this application is allowed to progress, a condition should be imposed to prevent it being used or sold other than for agricultural purposes ancillary to the land.

18/1706 Outline – 2 dwellings

Rear 64 & 66 Sleaford Road

Branston & Mere Parish Council objects to this proposal.

The Branston Parish Plan published in 2011 opposed the destructive practice of 'garden grabbing' and welcomed the government intervention to reclassify gardens as Greenfield, rather than having previously been residential land or Brownfield.

The shared driveway is insufficient and would need to be a minimum of 4.25m for emergency vehicle access to the rear properties and 2m from the blank wall of the front property. Shared access would cause noise, disturbance and a lack of privacy to the current and any future occupants of No. 66; affecting the quality of an existing living environment.

Policy LP26 of the Local Plan states that developments must make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the environment within which it is located; having regard to its local context and should not impact negatively upon the amenity experienced by neighbours. The additional dwellings would overlook the properties on either side and create an intrusive loss of privacy for the neighbours that will unduly harm their right to enjoy their own amenity space.

LP20 recognises the importance of green infrastructure; including the benefit of domestic gardens and states that proposals that cause loss or harm should not be permitted unless outweighed by need. There is currently permission to build 362 new properties in Branston which exceeds local demand.

The gardens of the new dwellings would be extremely small, even in comparison to the neighbouring new builds, providing deficient amenity space. The subdivision of gardens would leave the host dwellings with a poor standard of amenity space.

c) Tree Application Decisions received.

Permission had been granted on the following applications:

18/1368 Work to Yew, Sycamore & 3 Horse Chestnut. (with conditions) Springfield House
 18/1369 Fell Larch, Blue Spruce, Ash & 2 Lime. Springfield House.

Item 7 Other Reports:

a) Confirmation of appointment of architects

15895 Cllr Ross said that LK2 Architects had been advised of the decision and an initial meeting had been scheduled. He suggested that the levels of funding available would determine how much of the wish list could be achieved.

b) Progress update on speed limit reductions.

15896 The Chairman said that quotes for speed signs and gateways would be circulated for consideration when available. Cllr Lundgren suggested that the weekend road closures could provide a good opportunity to cut back the hedge on Lincoln Road.

c) To consider a cycle hire rack in Branston

15897 Cllr Lundgren said that the hire bike operators were looking to extend the area covered and promote sustainable transport in villages around Lincoln. He suggested that a rack near the Village Hall could be an option and in line with the Neighbourhood Plan's aim to promote a healthy lifestyle. The assistant clerk would investigate the possibility.

d) Update on Skate Park maintenance issues

15898 The assistant clerk reported on a meeting at the Skate Park, with Cllrs Naulls, Ross, Tebb and Lincs Civils, to discuss the repairs required. A variety of ways to rectify the issues with the mounds and the cracking had been suggested and quotes were expected. A site meeting with Lovells had also been scheduled.

e) Advice on an agreement with the Academy re the Library

15899 After discussion, it was agreed that LCC's confirmation of ongoing support provided the impetus to renew contact with the Academy to discuss future arrangements and finalise an agreement. Cllrs Naulls and Ross would meet with the Business Manager, supported by the assistant clerk.

f) To review the lack of Post Office facility.

15900 Post Office Ltd had apologised for the delayed response and incorrect information received in previous emails. NKDC had provided contact details for the External Affairs Manager who was seeking an update on the situation.

Cllr Tebb stated that the longer the village was without a Post Office, the less chance there was to restore a service. He suggested the possibilities of the Council running the service; approaching local businesses to take it on and possibly subsidising the service to make it viable. He also questioned whether the village wanted or needed its own post office. The matter was deferred until February.

Item 8 Governance Review –

a) Risk Assessment – Updated document.

15901 Cllr Clarke had provided an updated Risk Register. The amendments and updates were agreed.

b) Method to mitigate online banking risk.

15902 The Chairman had suggested that limiting access to one person provided a clear paper trail for transactions. The clerk has consulted the Internal Auditor on providing the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with a weekly screen shot of the bank balance to reduce the opportunity for fraud. She had agreed that it would reduce the risk but asked for it to be noted on the risk register and provide evidence that it was being done.

c) Update on Jungle bridge.

15903 The work had been completed by Hill Holt Wood.

d) To review insurance cover post property revaluations.

15904 The property valuations had been sent to Came & Co. The increase in value had resulted in an annual increase of £1159.75; requiring an interim payment of £857.90.

The insurers had also requested that flat roofs were inspected by a competent contractor every two years. Members agreed the additional premium and inspection.

e) To confirm the date & agenda for the 2019 APM.

15905 The date of the APM was confirmed as 11th March at Branston Hall. External speakers had been confirmed as the Prevention & Protection Officer from Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue, Galliford Try and Circles of Support. The progress of the Neighbourhood Plan would also feature strongly. Cllr Lundgren suggested the possibility that the referendum could be held along side the elections in May.

Item 9 Finance:

a) To approve payments to be made.

15906 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Mrs Willcox and seconded by Cllr Newman.

T Mobile	Mobile Phone	11.00
Staff payments	Wages & expenses	3977.23
HMRC	Tax & NI	867.33
NEST	Pension	346.90
Michael Cummins	Dog Warden	262.50
Hill Holt Wood	New bridge & repairs	2208.00
Technical Surfaces	Astro Service	426.07
LALC	Lunch expenses	8.50
Community Academy	Sports Hall Hire (Escape)	96.00
Grundy's	WD40	5.99
Land Registry	Land registration	40.00

b) 3rd Quarter report.

15907 The report had been circulated and had not raised any new or unexpected issues.

c) To discuss and approve the Precept Demand, including Grant Aid requests.

15908 Cllrs Clarke, Naulls and Ross had drawn up a draft proposal; dependent on grant aid applications and the cost of skatepark repairs. The proposal had been circulated. Cllr Newman objected to the request from the U3A Croquet group for a grant. He said that he had received complaints about the subsidy from other U3A members; pointed out that people from other U3A's could play and that income should be raised from weekly subs. The clerk advised that members paid an annual and weekly sub to join the group and confirmed their fee to use the Recreation Ground and payment towards grass cutting through the season.

The working party was yet to discuss the grant aid applications and the final demand would be confirmed but was expected to be £124,970. This would be an increase of £9596; equating to a 6.89% (£5.73) increase for a band D property.

The clerk advised that the increase appeared slightly higher as the precept had in recent years been topped up by the Redistribution Grant (£676 in 2018/19). That was no longer available and so the full amount required would be from the Precept.

The demand was proposed by Cllr Tebb; seconded by Cllr Blair.

d) Public Sector Deposit Fund fact sheet.

15909 The details were noted.

Item 10 Items for information.

15910 Paul Mumford had passed away on 18th December. He had served on the Parish Council from May 1995 until April 2015 when his health had begun to fail. Condolences would be sent to his family.

15911 Cllr Lundgren spoke about the 12-week closure of Bardney bridge from 15th April for major maintenance, to sustain the safe working life of the bridge and the effect that it would have on residents at Branston Booths who worked north of the river; used the Lincoln to Horncastle bus service; the school bus to Horncastle and GPs and schools at Bardney. The diversion route via Fiskerton was a considerable detour. He had contacted Cllr Davies to instigate support for affected residents.

15912 Cllr Lundgren reported a lower standard of response time for pothole repairs; increasing from 28 days to 90 days.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.