

**Branston & Mere Parish Council**  
 Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held by Teams on  
**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020** at 7pm.

**Present:** Cllrs. Adams, Blair, Clarke, Cucksey, Lundgren, Marchant, Naulls, Newman, Penistan, Ross, Tebb and Willcox.

**In Attendance:** Clerks - Mrs Stead and Mrs Naylor and Cllr Oxby.

**Members of the Public:** None.

**Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.**

The Council noted and approved the reason for the apologies of Cllr Catton.

**b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.**

Cllr Adams declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application at 5, Veronica Close.

Cllr Cucksey declared a non-pecuniary interest in the loan from NKDC because he sits on the Executive Committee.

**Item 2 Public Forum.**

No issues had been raised.

**Item 3 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May are approved as the Minutes.**

Acceptance of the notes was proposed by Cllr Clarke and seconded by Cllr Cucksey.

**b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.**

16423 Ref 16402 - The offer of a 3-month free trial, to run a new keep fit group at Moor Lane Recreation Ground post-lockdown, had been positively received.

16424 Ref 16414 - There had been no further reports of fouling and the village appeared to be relatively clean again.

16425 Ref 16420 - The 'Gateways' had been installed on Lincoln Road, Sleaford Road and Branston Booths.

16426 Ref 16422 - The Chairman had negotiated additional sites for the original speed device, including one on Station Road, following concerns about vehicles speeding past the Junior Academy.

**Item 4 Reports from outside bodies – an opportunity to raise issues on circulated reports.**

16427 The Police Newsletter reported on measures during Covid-19 lockdown and warned of associated scams.

16428 County Council Report:

- Cllr Oxby had reported that over 200 schools had reopened for children in years 1, 2 and 6 to return if parents wanted them to. Many had remained open throughout for key worker's children.
- Extra funding of £10m had been awarded for Care Home businesses, to help with PPE and essentials.
- A portion of £300m had allocated to help with Track & Trace.
- The Click & Tip system at the recycling centre was working well.
- Road improvement projects, halted by Covid-19 restrictions, had started or resumed.
- The Council had used Microsoft Teams for virtual meetings. He said that ward councillors were unable to join parish meetings using Zoom.
- Lincolnshire had been recorded as having the second lowest rate of Covid-19 cases.

Cllr Oxby left the meeting.

16429 District Council Report:

- Cllr Cucksey reported that staff had been mobilised to work from home but the financial impact of COVID-19 on the council's budget had been significant; including lost income from the suspension of car parking charges, closure of leisure centres & other commercial services and lower income from business rates & council tax than forecast in the council's budget.
- Staff and resources had been redeployed to maintain essential services.
- The first virtual meeting of the Executive Board had been held, making decisions on the Lincoln Transport Strategy, Homefinder Lettings Policy and Asbestos Policy.

- Discretionary Business Grants for businesses outside the previous range were available from £2,500 - £10,000 for micro businesses and £7,500 - £25,000 for small businesses.
- Cllr Lundgren had circulated relevant advice and information as received during the month.

#### 16430 Library Report:

- Core libraries were not expected to reopen until July following a deep clean.
- Books would need to be quarantined for 72 hours on return.
- The Academy did not want library users on site until after the end of term on 16<sup>th</sup> July.
- It was likely that the Library would initially open on Saturdays only, starting on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Volunteers would carry out preparatory work on the Friday before.
- The 2020 Summer Reading Challenge would be virtual.
- Frequent Posts had been added to the Facebook page and regular contact made with the volunteers.

#### 16431 Environment Warden Report – noted.

### Item 5 Correspondence:

#### a) Letters for information.

16432 Clerks & Councils Direct

May 2020.

16433 The U3A Croquet Group had thanked the Parish Council for their support. Play had resumed in small groups while observing social distancing rules and without access to the Pavilion.

16434 London Hearts Charity had offered a £200 grant towards defibrillators. The cost started at £795 with external cabinets from £525. It was agreed that 4 within the village was sufficient.

#### b) CAB – Request for financial support.

16435 Deferred until Item 8c.

#### c) Marie Curie – Request for financial support.

16436 Deferred until Item 8c.

#### d) Resident – Complaints about speeding vehicles.

16437 Ref 16421 – There had been further communication with the resident who had complained about vehicles speeding through the village. He had suggested reconsidering a community group to monitor speed. Deferred until Item 7d.

### Item 6

#### 16438 Planning & Tree Applications.

No decisions had been received.

Comments submitted during the month.

20/0570 Conversion of garage to living room

16 The Chalfonts.

*No objections.*

Applications for comment:

20/0523 Two storey extension and block paved drive 5 Veronica Close.

*The general character of Beech Road and the Closes off, including Veronica Close have retained the character and uniformity of a very distinctive house design type, in particular, the elevations that front onto the road present a strong and established, architectural character with uniform roof lines and unaltered design.*

*An alteration such as the one proposed, which involves evening out the front elevation to form a traditional looking semi-detached property, would be incongruous, would represent an out of character appearance and be detrimental to the overall street scene.*

Tree Decisions

20/0178 Fell Silver Birch & Macrocarpa

1 The Old School

Approved.

20/0371 Reduce height & spread of Silver Birch

The Bothy, Waterwheel Lane.

Approved.

### Item 7 Other Reports:

#### a) To approve the loan terms & issues relating to the Parish Office.

16439 Approval to take a loan had still not been received. The MHCLG had requested further evidence.

16440 NKDC had provided a loan agreement for approval that had been circulated. Cllr Ross had sought advice without prejudice from a commercial lawyer, which had suggested that it was a standard agreement but highlighted clause 9.5, that could allow future loans to be vetoed. The risk was considered to be low and short term but would be raised with the solicitor.

Acceptance of the terms of the loan (subject to confirmation of clause 9.5) was proposed by Cllr Ross and seconded by Cllr Marchant.

16441 Cllr Ross proposed taking an EIP Loan; seconded by Cllr Tebb.

16442 Additional details from the vendor of 17a Church Road had been supplied, including an in-date EPC and copies of utility bills. The proposed date for completion was 1<sup>st</sup> July. The execution clause was accepted. Cllr Tebb proposed; and Cllr Newman seconded signing the contract and paying the deposit as soon as agreement was received from the MHCLG.

The Clerk was authorised to transfer the balance on completion; proposed by Cllr Tebb and seconded by Cllr Naulls.

16443 The Indemnity Insurance to cover the installation of the windows without the correct permissions would be checked with the solicitor.

16444 Came & Co had been made aware of the purchase and would provide Building Insurance from the completion date.

#### **b) Emergency Plan & ongoing community help.**

16445 Cllr Marchant had continued to write a daily blog. He reported that over 450 requests for assistance had been received to date with 123 residents receiving regular support. New residents were beginning to ask for help as friends and neighbours returned to work or on returning from stays with family. The number of active volunteers had dropped to 64 as they also returned to work as restrictions were eased.

The Food Bank had received 5 deliveries from FareShare, and food parcels had been provided to people in need locally and as far as Lincoln and North Hykeham. Some requests had been received via the NKDC call centre because they had been unable to contact other groups or ones capable of dealing with the requests.

The shielding restrictions were due to expire at the end of June but could be extended until 31 July or 30 September for those with COPD.

He said that some residents were getting nervous that the group would be disbanded, and help would not be available. He hoped that when the time came, it would be possible to leave a lasting legacy by developing the group to regularly support those in need. Care was available through Wellbeing but there was an 8-week lead time.

Cllr Tebb said that Cllr Marchant had done an excellent job and agreed that a permanent helpline was needed.

Cllr Marchant said that the undertaking would need resources, indemnity insurance and a leader.

Cllr Lundgren suggested that a mechanism was needed to hand responsibility back to Wellbeing and other organisations.

Cllr Cucksey said that NKDC had done well contacting people aged over 70, but approximately 3600 had not responded. Cllr Marchant said that on week 11 that was outrageous and suggested that contact should be devolved to a local level and doors knocked on. Cllr Tebb said that he had received contact by texts, phone and letters and suggested that countywide, 3600 represented a small percentage.

#### **c) Latest proposals for the Pavilion project.**

16446 Cllr Tebb gave an update on progress. LK2 had modified the plans within a reduced budget of £250-300k with grant funding being sought. The sports area within the existing building would be refurbished and an extension added to provide a new community space. The outside of the building would get a facelift, improved entrance, be more environmentally friendly and have additional car parking spaces.

Cllr Ross suggested that it provided the best option to date.

#### **d) Community Speed Initiative.**

16447 The Chairman reminded members that the initiative had been considered two years previously but not pursued because it was seen as 'policing on the cheap' and there had been concern that volunteers could be put at risk of road rage. Instead, the Council had chosen to encourage motorists to abide by the speed limits by installing additional speed devices and gateways.

With reference to the resident's letter suggesting the need for a community group to monitor speed (Item 5d), a post had been added to the Facebook page encouraging likeminded people to come forward. A minimum of 6 people would be needed. There had been some positive comments.

The Chairman detailed the costs involved: £229 for a speed gun, £68 for each sign and £12 per set of PPE.

Cllr Marchant pointed out that someone (a volunteer) would need to act as the coordinator for the group.

**e) To consider recommendations for tree work at Lincoln Road.**

16448 A tree surgeon had been called to look at one of the Lime trees on the Lincoln Road Recreation Ground after a long branch fell near a resident's garden. He had not been able to identify any major issues with the trees. No further action required.

**f) Cancellation of the 2020 Beer Fest.**

16449 Cllr Clarke reported that after much deliberation, the 2020 Beer Fest had been cancelled. He said that he hoped the deposits paid could be carried forward to the 2021 event.

16450 Cllr Marchant suggested that a community event could be held to reflect and celebrate the end of Covid-19 restrictions; with residents invited to take their own food & drink.

**Item 8 Governance Review –**

**a) Risk Assessment.**

16451 There was nothing to add.

**b) To review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**

16452 New model Financial Regs had been published in September 2019. An initial review had been carried out and clause 4.5, allowing the Clerk & Chairman some additional authority during the Covid-19 crisis, had been added in April.

Cllrs Naulls & Ross had considered the Clerk's suggestions and added notes. Cllr Adams agreed to add his notes prior to draft documents being circulated for approval in July.

**c) To consider a policy to deal with requests for financial aid for charities.**

16453 The effects of the Covid-19 crises had resulted in 3 requests from charities for financial assistance to date.

A resolution had been made in favour of LIVES in April but there was no budget to support all requests.

Parish Councils had a power to support CABs. Other donations would come under s137 and need to benefit some or all of the electors.

After discussion, it was agreed that Marie Curie and CAB do fantastic work and, while the Council was sympathetic to their current situation, it was not possible to support all. It was resolved that any donations made should be to support locally based groups.

The Chairman would consider a policy and statement to respond to any further requests.

**Item 9 Finance:**

**a) To approve payments to be made.**

16454 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Tebb and seconded by Cllr Ross.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	9.59
Staff payments	Wages & Expenses	4,662.52
HMRC	Tax & NI	570.48
NEST	Pension	316.46
M Cummins	Env Warden – May	210.00
Lincolnshire Fieldpaths Ass.	Annual Subs	5.00
Octagon	BBF SSL Certificate	48.00
Tyson Mowers	Strimmer line	8.50
R D Beedham	PAT testing – Pavilion & Office	96.00
Ace Shelters	Bus Shelter – Station Rd	4,560.00
Lincs Groundworks	Groundworks – Bus shelter	1,900.00
JACS	Gateways	5,941.68
C B Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting & spraying	627.04
	Total Payments.	£18,955.27

**b) To review the Annual Governance Statement.**

16455 The statements were considered and answered affirmatively with the exception of statement 4. As reported in October 2019, the Clerk had advertised the date for the exercise of public rights two days early and therefore had not complied with Regulation 15 of the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. There had been no requests to view the accounts and no elector had been affected by the mistake.

Cllr Lundgren proposed, and Cllr Marchant seconded signing the Governance Statement.

**c) To approve and sign the audited accounts for 2019/20.**

16456 The completed return had been circulated.

Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Ross and seconded by Cllr Newman and arrangements would be made for the Chairman to sign the return.

**Item 10 Items for information.**

16457 The Assistant Clerk said that the new turf laid as part of the groundwork for the new bus shelter had not been watered and had died. It was agreed to allow time for it to recover, as most verges were brown after the recent hot spell.

16458 Cllr Tebb said that the Branston Local Information Facebook page had more followers and there were often comments about issues in the village. He suggested that an official response was needed to some of the issues raised. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk should respond as necessary.

16459 Cllr Newman reported that a tree near the traffic lights was again obscuring the lights and needed cutting back. The Clerk would write to the householder.

16460 Cllr Lundgren asked whether the payment from the solar farm had been received. There had been a delay in importing materials from Italy which had delayed the commissioning. Payment was expected when commissioned.

16461 The licence to remove the conifers at Moor Lane Recreation Ground had been received.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.