

Branston & Mere Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Pavilion, Moor Lane, Branston on
Monday 3rd February 2020 at 7pm.

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

In Attendance: Clerks - Mrs Stead and Mrs Naylor.

Members of the Public: Three.

Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.

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

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 2 Public Forum.

The Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee expressed concern about their admin after the retirement of the clerk, who was also retiring as their secretary & treasurer. He asked the Parish Council to consider continuing to support the facility. He said that they were unable to attract new committee members willing to take on officer roles and was concerned about the future of the Village Hall.

The Chairman thanked him for bringing the matter to the Council's attention and said that it would be considered when the job description was drawn up. He praised the achievements of the committee in providing an excellent Village Hall. He agreed to make the VHMC aware of the Council's decision asap.

Cllr Lundgren pointed out that the Village Hall was not linked to the Parish Council.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

The online Police Newsletter continued to report:

- ASB reports in the Moor Lane car park. Officers were carrying out targeted patrols to deal with possible offences.
- Winter crime prevention advice.

Cllr Lundgren spoke about an incident involving adults and children riding motorcycles on the highway. After waiting 22 minutes for a 101 call to be answered; 999 had been used, as the incident had escalated. An officer attended 26 hours later. Cllr Lundgren said that such waiting times were not acceptable and asked whether others knew of similar issues, with the intention of highlighting the problem through NKDC.

b) County Council.

Cllr Oxby's report had been circulated.

- Final approval of the budget would take place at the February meeting of the full council. A 1.5% increase and 2% on Adult Social Care had been proposed. Efficiency savings of £14m had been identified to balance the budget, including a reduction in staff levels and premises. Lincolnshire continued to have one of the lowest rates in the country.
- £4m would be spent on additional highway maintenance and £2m on drainage repairs and flood response equipment.
- Work had started on a 70-apartment, extra care housing scheme at De Wint Court.
- The opening of the Eastern Bypass had been delayed until the autumn, but the scheme was under budget by £1.3m.

Cllr Ross questioned why Lincolnshire remained amongst the lowest rates in the country; suggesting that rates needed to increase to maintain and improve services but that would be 'electorally unacceptable'.

Cllr Oxby said that increases were capped at 2% without approval through a public referendum. He said that Lincolnshire workers were amongst the lowest paid in the country (Average £20k pa). The authority had lost £20m of funding in 11 years as the government grant had been reduced to zero.

c) District Council.

- Cllr Lundgren reported that District Councillors for Branston, Washingborough, Heighington and Bracebridge Heath had successfully lobbied Highways for measures to mitigate the impact of the 5-month closure of the B1190. He said that the official diversion route remained via Station Road and the B1188, but Highways had agreed to trial temporary traffic lights on Canwick Hill, to allow the newly reopened C113 to provide an alternative option.
The request to place a moratorium on additional road works in the area during the closure had not been agreed.
- The Scrutiny committee had considered the SUE development on Canwick Heath and plans for the provision of infrastructure relating to the new houses. He thanked the Chairman for attending the meeting and said that representatives from two parish councils had helped put pressure on officers to deliver the necessary infrastructure as the development progressed.
- A motion limiting the noise made by fireworks and firework displays had not been adopted. The motion had been prompted by residents concerned that noise from fireworks (some exceed 120 decibels) caused problems for people and animals.
- Cllr Cucksey reported that the Executive Board had agreed to increase the cost of the discretionary brown bin collection (garden waste) to £35pa. to cover the cost of the service, in line with best practice guidance.
- New Council Tax arrangements for empty homes would come into effect from 1st April 2020: Homes empty for two years or more would be charged double; homes empty for five years or more would be charged a 200% premium on top of their regular Council Tax and homes empty for ten years or more would be charged a 300% premium.
- The Council had approved a 2.7% rent increase for all social and affordable housing for 2020/2021.

d) Community Library.

- The Volunteer Coordinator had reported a £50 donation from Heighington Christmas Market and £737.74 from the Lincolnshire Co-op Community Champions scheme.
- A BCA English teacher had been assigned as Library & School Reading Coordinator. A meeting to define the role had been requested.
- Craft activities had been planned for the half-term holiday.

e) Environment Warden Report.

The warden had reported that a witness statement, in connection to a littering offence, had been sent to NKDC.

The Clerk had sought clarification on Public Space Protection Orders: NKDC could apply for a PSPO but behaviour would need to pass a threshold test in relation to the detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; the persistence and being unreasonable and would require a record of evidence. It would not be pursued at this time.

Item 4 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 6th January are approved as the Minutes.

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

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

16299 Ref 16285 - LCC had added areas previously cut by NKDC to their grass cutting schedule; to be cut 3 times in 2020. The opportunity to enter into a Parish Agreement in 2021 had been extended.

16300 Ref 16278(d) - NKDC had requested an ecological survey in relation to the removal of 125m of hedgerow off Mere Road for consideration when the decision was made.

16301 Ref 16289 - The new Junior Gym had proved popular with children attending the Mini Kicks football training.

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

16302 LALC Training Schedule.

b) Letters for information.

16303 HM Land Registry – A possessory title had been granted for the Sheepwash car park. It could be converted to an absolute title in 2032.

16304 NHS CCG – Seeking views on the Gamete & Embryo Cryopreservation Policy. The information had been circulated for individual response.

16305 Resident – Advice about the use of signage was sought by the owner of 29 rare breed chickens killed by a dog. It was a civil matter and only limited advice could be offered.

16306 Resident – A request to consider stoning the section of footpath leading to the field at the end of PROW 4. Highways had suggested that many PROWs were currently in poor condition due to the wet winter. There was concern that it could set a precedent if the Parish Council took on the task.

c) LCC – Diversion route during Washingborough Road closure.

16307 Cllr Davies had advised that Washingborough Road would be closed for approximately 5 months from 17th February to allow the road to be lowered by 1.5m prior to drainage work, kerbing and lighting required for the new roundabout.

16308 Galliford Try had confirmed the traffic light trial and added that they would initially be manned at peak times to ensure a consistent flow of traffic in the area. A remote camera had been installed at the crossroads in Branston.

Cllr Cucksey pointed out that the lights were only on a trial basis and if they impacted on traffic in the city, they would be removed.

Cllr Lundgren said that common sense had prevailed to avoid an additional 9,000 vehicles a day on Station Road, but pedestrian and cycle access was still unclear.

d) NKDC – Electoral boundary review.

16309 There were no comments on the boundary review consultation.

Item 6**16310 Planning Applications & Tree Applications:****a) Planning decisions received.**

Planning permission had been refused on the following application:

19/1677 Prior Approval application - Steel framed grain store Westfield Farm

Refused due to the height and proximity to an aerodrome. A full application had been submitted.

b) Planning Applications viewed during the month.

19/1763 Grain storage building Westfield Farm, Hall Lane.

No objections.

20/0057 Outline application for 1156 dwellings Sleaford Road, Bracebridge Heath.

Branston & Mere Parish Council, although not a consultee, wishes to comment on this proposal.

In particular:

- *A development of this scale will overload current infrastructure – roads, drains, schools, doctors – in Bracebridge Heath and surrounding villages. To avoid impacting and damaging those services and the quality of life for existing residents, the infrastructure needs to be in place early in the development.*
- *Provision of adequate health care is of prime importance as the area is already struggling to cope with the rapid increase, alongside a reduction in GPs through retirement and general shortage. The surgery at Branston was oversubscribed prior to new developments in the village but still accepts new patients. If this provision is not addressed soon, it will cost lives. The theory versus the actual reality is very different.*
- *The single lane bypass due for completion by the end of 2020 will help alleviate existing congestion but the addition of 1156 dwellings on this site plus others already approved in Bracebridge Heath and surrounding villages will negate any benefit; apart from the fact that it will only provide the third quarter of a ring road.*
- *What is the phasing for this development? The scale of development in and around Greater Lincoln has been rapid and availability remains. Is there evidence of need that this number is required?*
- *The Parish Council is concerned about the comments from Anglian Water and asks that they are taken very seriously and all issues raised by them are fully investigated and completely resolved at outline.*

20/0101 Demolition of garage for single storey extension 10 Shardloes.

No objections.

20/0102 Conversion of garage to granny annexe 24 Wisteria Avenue.

Branston and Mere Parish Council has no objections to the proposed annex provided that a condition be imposed to allow that it shall only be used in connection with and ancillary to the occupation of the existing dwelling and shall not at any time be rented or sold separately.

c) Tree Application & Decisions received.

There were no tree applications or decisions.

Item 7 Other Reports:

a) Neighbourhood Plan & the need for more community drop in events.

16311 Cllr Lundgren said that the consultation event had been well attended and 11 written responses had been received – 5 public and 6 from statutory consultees. The Assistant Clerk was working through the Consultation Statement which would then be sent to NKDC.

16312 A suggestion had been made at the consultation event, that more drop-in events should be held. About ten years earlier, the Clerk had trialled a monthly Saturday morning 'surgery' at the Library but had not continued as only one person had attended in 3 months.

It was suggested that a quarterly event or when projects were planned could be held but the need would be discussed further.

b) Report from Communities & Economy Overview & Scrutiny meeting.

16313 The Chairman had attended the meeting and raised concerns about the effect on existing infrastructure and the need for planned new infrastructure to be in the early phases to avoid further impacting essential services; concerns echoed by Bracebridge Heath Parish Council.

He said that Officers had been unable to comment in detail as two applications in Bracebridge Heath were live.

c) To agree and sign the revised payment plan with LK2.

16314 Cllr Ross spoke of his frustration with the project and said that LK2 and the Council needed to be more proactive if it was to progress. He said that he was unwilling to continue to lead. Cllrs Adams, Blair and Tebb agreed to work alongside him.

16315 The contracts had been circulated and it had been confirmed that payments made against the previous design would count towards the new plan.

Cllr Tebb proposed, and Cllr Clarke seconded signing the new agreements.

An updated action plan from LK2 would be requested.

d) Forestry Commission report and re-planting scheme.

16316 The Assistant Clerk reported that Cllrs Ross and Tebb had met an officer from the Forestry Commission, who were not opposed to felling the conifers but would need to be replaced by a similar number of trees within the parish. The plan would need to be approved by the Forestry Commission before a licence would be granted for the felling; taking about 10 weeks and would be further delayed by the nesting season.

Cllr Tebb suggested that the replanting scheme could be a community project or something to work on with the Community Academy in November. He proposed a small plantation of small/low growing trees in the corner of the Moor Lane Recreation Ground, close to where the conifers were and offered to lead on the project. The Woodland Trust offered packs of trees and an application would be submitted.

He suggested that the conifers along the rear boundary also needed work; topping or felling. That decision was deferred.

16317 A prospective Housing Association tenant had asked about reducing the height of trees in the hedge line behind the Pavilion. They were property side of the chain-link fence which marked the Council's boundary, as confirmed by the Deed of Sale. Lovell Homes had confirmed their intention to reduce the hedge around the boundary and Longhurst Housing Association had confirmed that their team would carry out future maintenance when required.

e) Update on installation of speed reduction measures.

16318 The Chairman confirmed that both new devices were working and appeared effective in slowing the traffic. He hoped to get LRSP to conduct an Archer survey to demonstrate a lower mean speed.

16319 The Chairman planned to meet another contractor for a quote to install the gateways. It had proved difficult to find contractors interested in the job.

f) BBF 2020 requirements for consideration.

16320 Cllr Marchant said that entertainment, food sellers and lighting had all been booked and several sponsors found. He proposed making a donation from the profits to a local charity, to be confirmed,

g) Emergency Plan including power to ISO & Ex Silver Siren.

16321 Cllr Marchant confirmed the date for the multi-agency exercise as 13th May. The local team of volunteers would be the first to be involved in Silver Siren exercises and local people were invited to get involved as wounded/displaced people.

h) Update on groundwork to Skate Park.

16322 It was agreed to defer the reopening of the skate park until further notice due to the ongoing wet weather. Lovell Homes had agreed to supply topsoil for the area damaged by the track and grass seed would be purchased and spread by the Handyman.

i) Possible new bus shelter on Station Rd.

16323 Deferred.

j) To consider issues for the Four Parish Cluster meeting.

16324 The notes from the last meeting had been circulated with a request for agenda items for the March meeting, which would be hosted by Branston PC – Cllr Marchant to Chair.

k) To consider the implications of potential website issues.

16325 Octagon had identified a potential problem with the Divi-theme, which used non-standard WordPress construction methods and could be difficult or impossible to fix issues that arose.

Cllr Tebb said that the lifespan of websites was generally 3-5 years and suggested adding a replacement to the future planning list; while monitoring the success of the new LCC offering.

Item 8 Governance Review –

a) Risk Assessment.

16326 Cllr Clarke suggested that the listing could be revised for the Branston Booths Play Area following the installation of the new fencing.

b) To consider the need for a 5-year business plan.

16327 Cllr Tebb had previously suggested a 5-year plan. After discussion it was agreed to work towards a 1, 3 and 5-year plan to be used to support the Precept. Members were asked to have suggestions to put forward in March; in addition to the new Pavilion and Parish Office.

c) To consider a representative on the Village Hall Management Committee.

16328 Cllr Penistan had agreed to step in as Booking Clerk and therefore could not continue as PC rep. LALC had confirmed that it would be acceptable as the Parish Council would not be the employer. The role of PC rep would remain vacant until the Annual meeting in May.

Item 9 Finance:

a) To approve payments to be made.

16329 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Mrs Willcox and seconded by Cllr Newman.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	11.29
Staff payments	Wages & Expenses	4044.71
HMRC	Tax & NI	511.39
NEST	Pension	316.46
Michael Cummins	Environment Warden	210.00
Espo	Cleaning/stationary	87.94
E-on	Christmas tree dress/undress	420.00
Technical Surfaces	Astro maintenance	426.07
Hills Garden Maintenance	Branston Booths Play Area	4002.21
Pelican Trust	Neighbourhood Plan printing	250.00
Tyson Mowers	Chainsaw loop & oil	47.50
Tiger Hire	Deposit - BBF	208.56
	Total Payments.	10536.13

Item 10 Pending – Movement on Unresolved Issues not covered:**a) Cycle path provision – Lincoln Road & Mere Road.**

16330 Cllr Tebb said that the path along Mere Road should be progressed before there was a serious accident. He suggested finding out the cost and seeking support from businesses in the area. The Assistant Clerk would seek an update on the LCC Transport Plan.

b) Co-op car park issues.**c) GP provision in the parish.****d) Future of the Youth Club.****e) Memorial Garden benches.**

16331 The Pike family bench was due to be returned following its refurbishment. A new position away from the tree had been agreed. It would be viewed before the refurbishment of the remaining benches was considered.

f) To finalise the Library Agreement.**g) Provision of a Hire Bike station.****h) Branston Booths dyke & fence.**

16332 Work at Branston Booths' play area had been completed.

The Contractor had advised spraying weed killer several times a year to prevent regrowth around the new fence posts and had offered to quote for the extra work.

16333 Additional or replacement equipment would be considered to improve the offering.

i) Post Office service.

16334 The Post Office Outreach Service was due to start on 6 February. It would be in the Church Hall from 2.45 - 4.45pm every Thursday.

There was no movement on any other pending issues.

Item 11 Items for information.

16335 Cllr Cucksey spoke about HGVs continuing to use Rectory Lane and causing damage to the verge on Hall Lane. He suggested that some vehicles were from the solar park and, with construction likely to last 12 months, asked for LCC to be pushed to improve the signage and the solar park made aware of the problem.

16336 Cllr Adams commented on the state of the verge and mud on the pavement on Lincoln Road, opposite the Beech Road junction. He suggested that corrective action was also needed to prevent recurrence. Paving was suggested as an option.

16337 Cllr Tebb said that lighting at the solar park was affecting night flying birds and asked whether it was temporary during the construction.

16338 The bench that had previously been at the corner of Moor Lane had been returned by Lovell Homes replaced by two new seats. It was resolved to refurbish the bench in wood at a cost of £151. The clerk was asked to seek a price to shot blast the metal end supports for a more thorough refurbishment.

Item 12 To resolve on whether the Council will move into closed session.

Cllr Lundgren proposed, and Cllr Tebb seconded the resolution.

The meeting closed at 9.38pm.