

Branston & Mere Parish Council

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

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

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

Cllr Lundgren declared a non-pecuniary interest in the selection of a tree surgeon and took no part in the vote.

Item 2 Public Forum.

- A resident from Fairleas asked whether there had been any objections to the refused planning application for a fence at 40 Station Road. He was referred to the online planning portal. The Parish Council had submitted a 'no comment'.
- A resident from the Spires said that he was being seriously affected by his home being in darkness for much of the day and asked that the removal of the hedge be treated as 'high priority'.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

During the period 07/10/19 – 04/11/19 five crimes had been reported:

1 Theft – mobile phone.

1 Attempted Burglary – Abel Smith Gardens.

3 Criminal Damage – to vehicles on Gibson Close & graffiti on garage walls at Abel Smith Gardens.

Due to diminishing resources, it was unlikely that officers would attend future meetings and the format of reports would change. Officers from the Bracebridge Heath station would move to South Park.

Reports of 50 new officers for Lincolnshire would not return numbers to previous levels and Cllr Lundgren said that, while still very low, North Kesteven had seen a 35% increase in crime and was no longer rated as the safest place in England.

Councillors were very concerned about the attempted burglary; thwarted by the resident activating her lifeline device. Keeping doors locked and using a coded key box were discussed. Help was available from Age UK and Adult Social Care.

b) County Council.

- Cllr Oxbey reported that the £400k invested into a falls service, in partnership with EMAS, in 2018 had saved over 700 hospital admissions. A further £350k would be invested in 2019 to boost the service.
- Co-responding between Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, LIVES and EMAS had been introduced at two stations in 1999. Twenty years on, 26 stations in Lincolnshire co-respond.
- £1.3m of Council Tax fraud had been identified and 3,441 single person discounts had been taken away. Steps to reclaim the money has begun.
- Lincolnshire Trading Standards had visited and advised tyre dealers on the sale of part worn tyres.
- Six steel bridge beams had been lifted into place to allow the bridge deck, parapets, waterproofing and kerb laying to take place on the Eastern By-pass. The Greetwell Road roundabout was due for completion by the end of November. The roundabout on Washingborough Road would start in early 2020.
- The C113 from Heighington to Canwick was expected to reopen on 20 December following the construction of the flyover.

- Three Highways contracts would end in March 2020. The Executive Committee had approved new contracts for Highway works to Balfour Beatty Group Ltd; Traffic Signals to Colas Ltd. and Professional Services to WSP UK Ltd from 1st April.

c) District Council.

Cllr Lundgren reported that the Communities and Economy scrutiny panel had met with Chief Inspector Vickers to discuss policing in North Kesteven.

- PCSO numbers would be further reduced but funding was in place to recruit, train and replace any joining the force under the initiative to increase police constables.
- The main focus of community policing was on domestic violence as the biggest killer and prevalent in rural areas.
- ASB, drug gangs and maintaining a physical police presence.
 - Cllr Cucksey reported that the Executive Board had approved several public consultations and scrutiny in 2020/21.
 - The Council Tax Support Scheme would provide help for people on low incomes.
 - The £20k Exceptional Hardship fund for 2020/21 had been agreed, to top up Council Tax Support in appropriate cases.
 - The Council Tax Empty Homes Premium had been approved for consultation. Designed to bring homes back into use; there was concern that the Premium did not take account of particular circumstances and allowing a period of grace would be considered. The number of long-term empty properties had been reduced: In September there had been 1,232 empty properties in the district: Short term: (547); Long term - 6 months to 2 years: (336); Long term - over 2 years: (110); Second homes or furnished empties: (239).
 - The Council continued to review the medium-term financial challenges.

d) Community Library.

The report advised of the planned IT upgrade that would, in effect, reduce the number of library and public access computers.

Cllr Lundgren said that he had written to the Library & Heritage Client Lead Officer to ask for the planned reduction to be reviewed against actual usage and need.

Cllr Oxby said that GLL planned to increase IT in smaller communities with site visits planned. After discussion, it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Portfolio Holder, Nick Worth.

e) Environment Warden Report.

Patrols continued between 7am and 7pm. The warden had received several calls about dog attacks.

Item 4 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 7th October 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.

16207 Ref 16175 - The new model Financial Regulations were still to be reviewed.

16208 Ref 16183 - A letter, with photos of existing signage and lorries using Rectory Lane, had been sent to the Highways Manager. He had responded that the team would use the evidence when investigating the problem and noted Cllr Oxby's support; although no timescale for investigation could be given.

16209 Ref 16204 - The flooding and deteriorating road surface on Hall Lane had been reported to Highways but it had been assessed and no action would be taken.

16210 Ref 16205 - LCC's Footpaths Officer had investigated the archery signage at the Wheelhouse and offered advice to the resident.

16211 Ref 16206 - The daily congestion through Branston had been reported to Highways.

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

16212 Local Council Review - Autumn.

16213 Came & Co Newsletter.

b) Letters for information.

16214 The Croquet group had thanked the Parish Council for the use of a roller and support given to the group.

c) LCC – Response to school safety concerns.

16215 A concerned resident had raised the issue of road safety following an incident outside the Community Academy, the day after a schoolgirl had died at North Hykeham. The Clerk had passed the report to Highways, the Police team and the Academy. The Senior Traffic Engineer at LCC had added Station Road to the list of Traffic Regulation Order assessments. TROs near schools were being prioritised and should be assessed within the next two months. The Principal had contacted Highways and the LRSP and a meeting had been arranged.

d) James Richards Circus – Request to visit.

16216 James Richards Circus had enquired about a half-week visit to Branston in 2020. Sleaford Town Council had confirmed that their visit to Sleaford had been well managed and problem free. Previous requests from similar organisations had been refused to avoid complaints from neighbouring residents and damage to the sports field but members felt that, with careful management, it would be a good event for residents. A site visit would be arranged to consider noise, parking and other needs.

e) Resident – Request to maintain a commemorative sign.

16217 The Forman family had asked NKDC for permission to place a sign at the entrance to Villa Close to commemorate Forman's Haulage. NKDC Assets were prepared to support the request but the Parish Council would need to agree to maintain it.

Little maintenance was expected to be required. Details of the size and type would be requested before agreement was given.

Item 6

16218 Planning Applications & Tree Applications:

a) Planning decisions received.

Planning permission had been granted on the following applications:

19/1000 Outline for a dwelling	18 Moor Lane, Branston Booths.
19/1044 Rear, single storey sunroom	The Rise, Plough Hill, Potterhanworth Booths.
19/1103 Replacement livestock building	Brambles Farm, Mere Road.
19/1088 Timber shed	Branston Café.

b) Planning Applications received.

19/0961 Amended plans for 2 dwellings 64 & 66 Sleaford Road.

Branston & Mere Parish Council objects to this proposal.

- *The Parish Council objected to this application at Outline and councillors continue to object to what they consider to be overdevelopment of the plot and excessive density in the immediate vicinity; adversely impacting on the visual and residential amenity of 64 & 66 Sleaford Road, the proposed new dwellings and the properties on Kirk Road; for current and future occupants.*
- *The Planning Officer's report at outline stated that the layout and size of the indicative dwellings would not be acceptable as the layout indicated a cramped plot with small gardens and poor outlooks. To achieve a two-dwelling scheme, it would need to be reduced in size and the layout altered.*
- *The plan was instead enlarged from 3 bedroom to 4-bedroomed properties with dormer windows and double garages. The Parish Council's comments made in August suggested that the proposal needed to be scaled back.*
- *Although the dimensions have been changed slightly to step back from the Kirk Road properties and the rear dormers have been replaced with roof lights, that has not happened and the proposal continues to indicate a cramped site.*
- *The Design & Access Statement, submitted at outline, said that the new dwellings would be designed to ensure no issue with overlooking.*

Even with rooflights towards the Kirk Road properties, the proximity of the dwellings would create an unacceptable level of overlooking that would be intrusive and detrimental to residents of all the properties.

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.

- *The gardens of the new dwellings provide a deficient amenity space. The subdivision of gardens also leaves the host dwellings with a poor standard of 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. Recent development and existing outline permission will provide 380 new properties in Branston; exceeding local demand.

- *The width of the shared driveway has been slightly widened to meet the minimum of 4.1m for emergency vehicle access to the rear properties according to s184 of the Highways Act but, as it was already less than the required 2m from the blank wall of a residential room of the front property, it fails to meet regulations.*

Shared access would cause noise disturbance, particularly over gravel, and a lack of privacy to the current and any future occupants of No. 66; affecting the quality of an existing living environment.

This application – the loss of the buffer zone, loss of a retained hedge, proximity of soakaways and lack of consultation – has become particularly contentious and requires careful scrutiny and consideration to achieve a sustainable quality of life for all residents concerned.

19/1339 Outline for 1 dwelling with access 93 Lincoln Road.

The Parish Council objects to this proposal and makes the following comments:

- *The frontage of 93 Lincoln Road makes a significant contribution to the street scene of mature, substantial residences of similar sizes, fronting the main approach into Branston. The proposed use of this garden is not acceptable and, if permitted, would act as a precedent for further unsatisfactory development of a similar nature on neighbouring sites (NPPF110 and NPPF111)*
- *There is repeated reference to an ‘oversized back garden’. This is considered to be a weak argument for development. All gardens in the vicinity are more generous than recent developments, but a village needs houses of all shapes and sizes on a variety of different sized plots.*
- *Although there is room on this site for a single storey dwelling and the street scene from the B1188 would not be adversely affected, the neighbours would be affected; particularly by the indicative relocation of the garage for 93 Lincoln Road, which is close to 20 Park View Avenue and would be overbearing and impact on light to their property and dwelling room windows.*

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 ensure that the neighbouring site is not compromised and the amenity of occupiers of the new development will be satisfactory with the ongoing normal use of the neighbouring property.

19/1399 Single storey extension The Barn, Springfield Yard.

No objections.

19/1453 Single storey side extension 6 Deansway.

No objections.

19/1468 Vary conditions 2 & 12 Solar Park, Mere Road.

No objections

c) Tree Application Decisions received – All approved.

19/1183 Fell 2 Sycamores 31 Silver Street.

19/1189 Fell conifer & Cotoneaster 1 Melville Close.

19/1202 Fell conifer & cut back branch of Silver Birch 3 Springfield Close.

d) Tree applications received.

There were no further applications.

Item 7 Other Reports:

a) Neighbourhood Plan screening & next phase.

16219 The Screening Report had been successfully completed. A committee meeting had been scheduled to sign off on the final document ahead of a 6-8 week public consultation, with at least one public consultation event, prior to the public referendum and adoption.

The Assistant Clerk would check whether the process would be restricted by Purdah.

b) Update on installation of speed reduction measures.

16220 The Chairman said that installation of the speed devices should take place w/c 11 November, on receipt of the LCC permits. Road Traffic Management was not required.

16221 The outcome of the NKDC grant application towards the cost of gateways was still unknown. LCC had insisted on Road Traffic Management while the work was carried out.

c) Resilience Conference & Emergency Team award

16222 Cllr Marchant gave a brief report on the 3rd Annual Conference; attended by over 100 delegates. Two new awards had been made: The Outstanding Contribution award was given to Wainfleet where the community had contributed 5000 hours to support the community during the recent flood. The Resilient Community of the Year had been awarded to Branston & Mere.

Cllr Catton said that Lincolnshire was the furthest ahead with Neighbourhood Plans and suggested that Branston & Mere was therefore the best in the country.

Cllr Marchant was commended for his leadership; developing a working Plan and building a team of 110 local volunteers.

16223 Cllr Lundgren said that he had recently received an automated message that flooding was imminent with threat to life but Cllr Marchant, as Emergency Team Coordinator, had not been notified. Feedback on the lack of notification had been given to LCC.

d) Beer Festival 2020 requirements for consideration.

16224 Cllr Clarke advised that the working party had met and the initial plans made. He requested:

- A working budget to cover the set-up costs and deposits - £5k was proposed by Cllr Ross; seconded by Cllr Adams.
- A gate to replace a section of railing to make easier vehicle access onto the field at an estimated cost of £600-800 – Agreed in principle. Quotes to be obtained.
- The use of the Handyman before, during & after the event through the payroll with his hourly rate taken from the profit – Agreed.
- Insurance for cancellation due to adverse weather was to be considered.
- The Pavilion carpet would be cleaned after the event as part of annual maintenance – Agreed.

e) To consider removal or reduction of Moor Lane conifer hedge

16225 The likely issue with the hedge and its proximity to the corner plot had not been appreciated at the planning stage. After lengthy discussion, a vote on the removal of the conifers and was resolved with 6 votes in favour; 4 against; 1 abstention.

Three quotes to remove the hedge had been circulated. The quote from Eco Arborists was unanimously selected at £1,800.

Alternative planting, if necessary, would be considered with professional advice – 8 votes in favour; 3 abstentions.

f) Update on Pavilion plans, comments received & next step

16226 The revised plan without changing rooms had been circulated and commented on. A meeting had been scheduled with LK2 to discuss the comments and discuss funding availability.

Only Cllr Ross and the Clerk were available to meet LK2. Delegated authority to have a fact-finding discussion and report back was agreed.

g) Report on Annual Play Inspection & Branston Booths dyke & fence.

16227 The annual safety inspection had been carried out. The issues raised had all been identified as low risk and monitoring and repair would be carried out in-house.

It was noted that the buffer mechanism on the See Saw at Lincoln Road needed replacing; the chains on the Bird's Nest Swing at Moor Lane were worn and needed replacing and the Activity Trail at Branston Booths had some rot and the Climbing Frame had no impact attenuating surface.

The Assistant Clerk would produce a full job list; check the guarantee for the timber and order the necessary parts.

16228 The quote to clear the dykes and replace the fence had been circulated. Cllr Blairs comments were read out in his absence.

Cllr Ross proposed that Hills carry out the necessary work; seconded by Cllr Lundgren.

Cllr Clarke proposed that Hills carry out maintenance twice a year; seconded by Cllr Newman.

h) Arrangements for Skate Park repairs.

16229 Work by Lovell Homes would be carried out during the month. The Skate Park would be closed for the duration and appropriate signage displayed. Publicity photos would be taken by Lovell and would be promoted on social media and local newsletters.

i) Position & installation of the junior gym at Moor Lane.

16230 Cllr Ross advised that the equipment would be installed in December. Sgt Whyte had made a site visit and had no issue with the position, near the Astro gate, and the proximity of the new housing.

j) Report from Four Parish Cluster meeting.

16231 Cllr Marchant reported that the other parishes had no future aspirations to have an Emergency Plan; had no interest in the Lincs Rivers Trust project or the threat to the Youth Club.

The next meeting would be on 18th March 2020 in Branston; Cllr Marchant to chair and the Assistant Clerk to take the notes.

k) To consider support for the Lincs Rivers Trust project.

16232 The Rivers Trust had submitted a planning application to carry out major improvements to Sandhill Beck. The work would start near Sycamore Close, but the longest stretch was in Washingborough. The cost of the work was expected to be £120k; with £100k funding already secured. Washingborough Parish Council had indicated that they would not contribute. The Clerk would ask for an update on the funding.

l) Installation of bus shelter at Branston Booths & update on Station Rd.

16233 The bus shelter had been installed at Branston Booths and several residents had expressed their thanks. Unfortunately, a large puddle had formed in front of it with waiting residents getting splashed. Advice would be sought on a solution.

16234 There had been no update on the position of a shelter on Station Road.

m) Cost to install a handrail at Pavilion steps.

16235 Further quotes would be obtained prior to making a decision.

Item 8 Governance Review –

a) Risk Assessment.

16236 There was nothing to add.

Item 9 Finance:

a) To approve payments to be made.

16237 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Clarke and seconded by Cllr Newman.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	11.29
Staff payments	Wages & Expenses	4136.26
HMRC	Tax & NI	547.19
NEST	Pension	316.46
Michael Cummins	Environment Warden	210.00
Play Inspection Company	Annual inspection	267.00
Ace Shelters	Bus Shelter - B Booths	4560.00
Doddington Farms	Christmas tree	200.00
British Legion	Wreath	50.00
GLL	Summer Challenge - Library	91.49
CB Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting	644.10
Recognition Express	Badge - DP	11.94
	Total Payments.	11045.73

Item 10 Pending - Unresolved Issues not covered:

a) Cycle path provision – Lincoln Road & Mere Road.

b) Co-op car park issues.

c) GP provision in the parish.

d) Provision of a Post Office or outreach service.

e) Future of the Youth Club.

f) Memorial Garden benches.

16238 A family bench had been removed for refurbishment. A decision would be made on the other two benches after its return. It would be returned to a different position, to avoid mess from birds in the tree.

g) To finalise the Library Agreement.

There was no movement on any other items.

Item 11 Items for information.

16239 Cllr Marchant would attend the Remembrance Day service and lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

16240 The Chairman had seen work apparently taking place on the community land at Windmill Meadow and asked the Clerk to make enquiries with Planning Officers.

16241 Cllr Marchant advised that the Lancaster memorial had not yet been put in place.

16242 Cllrs Adams, Clarke, Lundgren and Marchant volunteered to help with the Christmas Tree on 23rd November.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.