

Branston & Mere Parish Council

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

Present: Cllrs. Adams, Blair, Catton, Clarke, Cucksey, Lundgren, Marchant, Newman, Penistan, Ross (Chair), and Willcox.

In Attendance: Clerks - Mrs Stead and Mrs Naylor.

Members of the Public: Four.

Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.

The Council noted and approved the reasons for the apologies of Cllrs Naulls and Tebb.

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

Cllr Willcox declared a pecuniary interest in the planning application from Branston Ltd.

Item 2 Public Forum.

- A resident from Hall Lane spoke to reinforce his concern re Item 5c. An HGV, trying to turn out of Rectory Lane onto Hall Lane at 2.30am, had been a metre from his bedroom wall. There had been further incidents including one the previous Saturday morning when it had taken 45 minutes to reverse onto the B1188. He said that the problem needed to be reappraised as a matter of urgency and clearer signage put in place to deter HGVs. He said that he had first written to Highways in March 2014 and the problem was getting worse.
- A resident suggested that a lower speed limit was needed on Silver Street and a layby built on Moor Lane to deal with the increase in on-street parking near the junction.
Cllr Ross said that it was not easy to secure speed reductions even when desirable, referring to the Lincoln Road campaign. Cllr Lundgren said that as LCC Highways policy was based on mean speeds, limits could be increased when reassessed.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

During the period 02/09/19 – 07/10/19 six crimes had been reported:

2 Thefts

1 Damage to a motor vehicle

1 Burglary - Dwelling

2 Burglary – other.

b) County Council.

- Cllr Oxbey reported that work on the Eastern bypass was progressing well. A giant crane was being used to lift four bridge sections over the Witham and drain. The closure of the C113 between Heighington and Canwick had been extended until 31st January.
- ‘SHERMAN’ had been introduced to highlight the seven causes and groups most at risk from fire: Smoking; Hoarding; Elderly and those living alone; Reduced mobility, hearing, visual impairment; Mental health issues; Alcohol & drug dependence; Needing care & support.
- Members of the County Council, North Lincolnshire Council & North East Lincolnshire were joining forces to provide more efficient services.
- Treasures from the legacy of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert would be exhibited at the Collection until January.
- Feedback was sought on the new website.

Cllr Ross asked about LCC provision for adult learning ref the September report. Cllr Oxbey had nothing further to add but would follow it up.

c) District Council.

- Cllr Lundgren reported that a motion had been passed on violence against women in the workplace and home; based on the UN charter and a parliamentary Bill and initiated by Independent members.
- He congratulated Mrs Appleyard and the library volunteers on helping to save the community library. He added that other councils and agencies were looking for community facilities to 'piggy back' services and having the library would offer opportunities to expand services.
- Cllr Cucksey said that the Annual Report provided a detailed overview for each priority area including Economy; Homes; Communities and the Council.
- The Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 had been presented to the full Council. The Collection Fund showed a deficit of £215,000 for Council tax at 31st March 2019 and would be taken into account when the Council Tax base for 2020/21 was approved.
- The District Council had £33.3million in fixed and variable investments at 31st March 2019. The outstanding long-term debt was £72.8million.
- The Lincolnshire Business Rates Pilot had allowed 100% growth retention in 2018/19. The retention rate had returned to 50% in 2019/20. The Government's Fair Funding Review and Spending Review were expected to have an adverse impact on resources.
- The government had recognised the importance of town centres and the high street and the challenges of from changing consumer behaviour and would provide support through the business rates system. Business rates would be cut by one-third for retail properties with a rateable value below £51,000; benefitting retailers in North Kesteven by £274,412.

d) Community Library.

- Mrs Appleyard had reported that sixth form support had been provided to allow the Library to be open to students at lunchtimes.
- The 4th Birthday Celebration had been well attended and Danica Butler, a local crime fiction author, had officially 'opened' the new shelving. The event and the volunteer's achievements had featured on Lincoln City Radio and reported on the University's School of Journalism social media.

e) Environment Warden Report.

The warden had attended further training provided by NKDC.

The level of fouling in the parish remained low.

Item 4 a) To resolve that the notes of the meeting held on 2nd September are approved as the Minutes.

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

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

16172 Ref 16139 - As hosts, Washingborough Council had been made aware of the Lincs Rivers Trust plan to improve the beck and their offer to give a presentation. The agenda for the meeting on 28th October would be circulated on receipt.

16173 Ref 16143 - Cllrs Marchant & Ross had viewed the hedge from both sides. The resident would make Lovell Homes and the Longhurst Housing Association aware of the light issue and request help to resolve the problem.

16174 Ref 16144 - Lovells had been asked to return the old bench. It would be put into storage until a new position could be identified.

16175 Ref 16160 - The new model Financial Regulations would be reviewed as soon as time allowed.

16176 Ref 16164 - A site meeting to consider work on the dykes at Branston Booths play area had been scheduled.

16177 Ref 16133 - Saxilby Parish Council no longer employed a Youth/Sports Development worker. They had employed a Community Engagement Officer to work with the local school and sports clubs, but the position had not been renewed after the initial term.

Item 5 Correspondence:**a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.**

16178 LALC News & Annual Report.

16179 Clerks & Councils Direct September.

16180 Wicksteed & Streetscape brochures.

b) Letters for information.

16181 LCC – Adoption of Statement of Community Involvement.

16182 Galliford Try - A public meeting to provide an update on the Eastern Bypass would be held on 13th November at 6.15pm.at the Church Hall.

c) Resident – Ongoing use of Rectory Lane by HGVs.

16183 Resident – The letter had been circulated to members and Cllr Oxby. Highways had responded that Rectory Lane was on the list for investigation when resources allowed.

After discussion, it was agreed that their response was unsatisfactory; the problem was escalating and not all HGVs were heading to Branston Ltd. More meaningful signage, as previously requested, was needed. The Clerk was instructed to write to Highways again.

d) U3a – Request to install a handrail at the Pavilion entrance.

16184 The Art Appreciation group has requested a handrail at the steps into the building. The disabled access was via the front ramp and electric shutter, but a handrail would be preferred. Options and cost would be investigated.

Item 6**16185 Planning Applications & Tree Applications:****a) Planning decisions received.**

Planning permission had been granted on the following applications:

19/1002 Temporary portacabin

Branston Ltd. (Until Sept 2022)

19/1051 Single storey side extension

16 Park View Avenue.

Planning permission had been refused on the following application:

19/0700 Increase in height of pillars to boundary wall, fence and gate

40 Station Road.

The following planning application had been withdrawn:

19/0165 Conversion of barn for holiday let

Poultry Farm, Branston Moor.

b) Planning Applications received.

19/0729 Channel improvement to Sandhill Beck

Millstream to Jungle.

The Parish Council supports this plan and considers that it is a fantastic opportunity for the communities that will benefit from the work.

19/1088 Timber framed shed

Branston Café.

No objections.

19/1261 Single storey porch extension & vehicle access

17 Moor Lane.

No objections.

19/1244 Water treatment plant

Branston Ltd, Mere Road.

No objections.

c) Tree Application Decisions received.

No decisions had been received.

d) Tree applications received.

19/1335 Crown reduction of 2m to Mulberry tree

1a Beech Road.

Branston & Mere Parish Council is concerned about the severity of the proposed reduction to a rare tree with historic significance.

Whilst it does overhang the boundary wall, it is not to the extent shown in the diagram and does not affect the footpath or PROW.

The tree appears to be healthy and flourishing and should continue to be allowed to do so with some careful and minor pruning.

Item 7 Other Reports:**a) Final report on the 2019 Beer Festival & plans for 2020.**

16186 Cllr Clarke reported on the closure meeting when the organisation of the event had been assessed. He advised that the date for BBF20 had been set for Saturday 20th June - the Summer Solstice – to take advantage of longer daylight hours. A schedule of meetings had been booked and new volunteers were being encouraged to join the working group.

BBF19 had realised a profit of over £3,500.

The Council approved the purchase of a storage container to house the equipment and Emergency Team kit. Further requirements would be listed for consideration at the November meeting.

b) Update on the Pavilion project.

16187 A revised drawing and approximate cost to produce the community section of the original plan, as a standalone building, had been requested and would be circulated for comment.

c) Update on speed reduction measures.

16188 The Clerk confirmed that the speed devices had been ordered.

16189 The cost of gates at the four locations had been quoted as £9635.

Further quotes for the installation were still to be received, complicated by the need for temporary traffic lights on both the B1188 and B1190. The work would take four days and the cost of Traffic Management had estimated at £320 per day.

The total cost would exceed the amount earmarked for the project although amounts under Contingency or Community facility could be utilised by resolution.

Cllr Lundgren questioned the need for traffic management and suggested challenging Highways, as most of the fences would be installed on wide verges and be 500mm from the carriageway.

16190 A grant application for £2,500 had been submitted to NKDC towards the project. Officers had been unsure whether the project met grant criteria but the result should be known by November.

d) To finalise arrangements for Skate Park repairs.

16191 The Assistant Clerk said that the cost of tracking to protect the field would be a minimum of £4200. The work to build up the mounds would be carried out by Lovell Homes during October/November and take about a week.

The cracks on the ramps had been filled by the Handyman.

e) Additional play or junior gym equipment at Moor Lane.

16192 Cllr Ross reminded members of the plan to add additional play equipment at Moor Lane but the need would be met by a new play area that had been installed on the Spires; awaiting safety fencing before opening it to the public.

The Clerk had seen small children playing on the outdoor gym equipment before and after football training and had pointed out that the minimum age for users was 14.

Cllr Ross proposed that a junior gym would be a popular choice; safer for primary aged children and in-keeping with the sporting purpose of the field; seconded by Cllr Clarke and agreed.

The Assistant Clerk had obtained a quote from Fresh Air Fitness for 6 pieces with matting and fully installed for £9,087.50 +VAT.

The Police team would be consulted about the position in relation to neighbouring homes and potential ASB.

16193 Cllrs Clarke, Marchant and Willcox proposed using the profit from the Beer Festival towards the purchase.

f) Possibility of a Post Office Outreach service

16194 An approach had been received, from the Change Manager at Post Office Ltd, to identify a venue for an Outreach Service in Branston.

The Clerk had shown him the Village Hall, Church Hall, Home Guard Club and Pavilion. No decision had been made but a Postmaster was interested in providing an outreach service for two hours a week from 2020. Outreach services are classed as 'social' by Post Office Ltd with little money to finance it and little income for the postmaster. The usual fees at each location would need negotiation to make them viable.

Members felt that a permanent site was needed for a minimum of three days a week but considered that it would be a step in the right direction. It agreed that hire fees could be assessed when the choice of venue was known.

g) Plans to improve the Memorial Garden.

16195 The new fence has been installed and local residents had praised the improvement and the 'untrammelled view' of the School House. Members agreed that it had transformed the garden.

The Seasonal Worker would work on preparing and planting the border. It was agreed that the budget amount earmarked for the Memorial Garden could be used for substantial planting.

h) Update on requests for bus shelters at Branston Booths & Station Rd.

16196 The Assistant Clerk confirmed that the necessary consents had been obtained for Branston Booths and the shelter ordered with installation expected by mid-November.

There had been no update for Station Road.

Item 8 Governance Review –**a) Risk Assessment.**

16197 Concern was expressed about the risk on village roads with evidence to support the High Risk & a High Effect rating. It was noted that the responsibility was LCC Highways’.

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

16198 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Newman and seconded by Cllr Clarke.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	11.29
Staff payments	Wages & expenses	4914.18
HMRC	Tax & NI	839.67
NEST	Pension	364.93
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	480.00
Michael Cummins	Environment Warden	262.50
Hill Holt Wood	Jungle maintenance	168.00
CB Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting	691.40
Grundy Agricultural	Spark plug	5.63
Tyson Mowers	Mower parts	13.28
Zero Dry Time	Carpet cleaning	175.00
Firestop	Extinguisher service	95.46
TFM Country Store	Flail Mower Hire	120.00
Technical Surfaces	Astro Service	426.07
Gresswell	Library returns cart	442.80
NKDC	Election Fee	99.56
LIVES	First Aid cover - BBF	276.00
Cllr Marchant	Radios	49.99
		9435.76

b) Completion of the Annual Audit review.

16199 The audit had been completed by PKF Littlejohn.

Under 'matters not affecting their opinion' they had noted the following:

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2019-2020 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019-20 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2020-21.'

The notice displayed to announce the public inspection of the accounts had been dated 29th May for inspection between 1st June and 12th July. However, the accounts were not approved and signed off by the Parish Council until 3rd June.

There had been no requests to view the accounts and no elector had been affected by the mistake.

The error was noted.

c) Half-year report.

16200 The report had been circulated. No were concerns were raised.

16201 The Chairman's allowance paid in December had been £200 since halved in 2005. The budget had been increased in 2018 to £400 but the increased payment had not been ratified and the payment in 2018 had remained at £200.

Cllr Cucksey proposed and Cllr Clarke seconded increasing the payment to £400.

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

16202 The B1188 cyclepath had been discussed at a meeting with the Project Leader for Access Lincoln, initiated by the Parish Council's letter to LCC. No immediate improvement was planned but the need had been included in the strategic transport plan for Lincolnshire, for development when funding allowed. Connectivity between Branston and the city was important and the path along the B1188 would be looked at.

16203 The contract for the Type 1 hire bikes was due to end in March. If the contract was renewed, it was expected that the existing bikes would be upgraded to e-bikes and possibly a bike station installed in Branston.

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

There was no movement on Items 10b to e.

Item 11 Items for information.

16204 Cllr Adams reported that Hall Lane through the wooded area was in a poor condition and a 10m stretch was under 2-3 inches of water.

16205 Cllr Ross had been sent a photo of a sign, on the PROW on Waterwheel Lane, warning that archery was in progress. There was concern that leaving it in situ would deter walkers.

16206 Cllr Ross reported queueing traffic through the village between 3pm and 6.30pm, making it difficult to enter and exit driveways. Queues from the traffic lights frequently stretched back beyond the new roundabout. He questioned whether the light sequence had been altered after the B1188 closures had ended.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.