



branston & mere  
parish plan



# Branston & Mere Parish Plan

Householder Copy - March 2011





## Introduction

The Branston & Mere Parish Plan is the result of three years work by the steering group, formed from volunteers and local councillors, whose main aim is to ensure that Branston & Mere remains a **vibrant and sustainable community**; by protecting what is important to the residents and making improvements to enhance the existing way of life.

The idea of a Parish Plan originated as part of the government's White Paper in 2000 and is a statement of how the local community sees itself developing over the next few years. Communities constantly grow and change and most people have strong views on whether this change is for the better or not, but unfortunately, for the vast majority of individuals this is as far as their involvement goes. Parish plans give everyone in the community **the opportunity to influence and contribute** towards the development of their parish by determining the issues which affect the community. Parish plans are intended to be evolving documents;

outlining how a community would like to develop over the next ten years and ultimately to influence the actions and decisions of local government in order to protect, maintain and develop. The action plan details how these developments can be achieved and which agencies and organisations are responsible for their delivery.

The Parish Council was required to take the lead in the process and be prepared to adopt the plan at the end. It is however only a document, and requires the people to implement the goals identified and a willingness in local government to listen to **the needs and aspirations of those who live in the village** and integrate them into the wider plans of service providers. It is not about the Parish Council or anyone else imposing their ideas; it is about giving everyone the opportunity to have a say and share their ideas, if they choose to do so.







The Parish Council hosted an open meeting in November 2006 to introduce the idea of a Parish Plan to the residents. The meeting was attended by approximately 40 members of the public, who voted in favour of producing a plan for Branston & Mere. Shortly afterwards, a steering group was formed to take on the task of consulting the people and assessing the most important issues. An extensive survey was devised and hand delivered to **every household** in November 2007. It was considered to be the most inclusive way to find out what people wanted. The response rate of 35% was pleasing and the steering group are grateful to the 640 households for their time and effort. In addition to the Householder Questionnaire, local businesses were consulted and a group of sixth formers adapted it to form a Youth Questionnaire. Those findings have also been incorporated in to the plan.

Already, some of the views expressed in the Questionnaire have been used as evidence of need to secure funding for work on Paddock Lane, the Jungle, the

Village Hall, the play areas and a new village noticeboard. Plans are also in hand to provide an Astro court.

Thanks go to all who gave their time to attend meetings of the steering group; to those who helped deliver and collect the questionnaires; to the Community College students for helping to consult the youth and also the technical assistance putting the figures into charts; to the speakers who attended the public meetings; to Community Lincs for their support and to all the residents who completed the Questionnaire.

We trust that you will feel that the Parish Plan reflects your **aspirations for our parish** and that it may inspire you to become more involved in **your community**.

Hilary Hawkyard  
Chairman of the Steering Group





## Business and Employment - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Establish a support network for local businesses	Businesses feel isolated and unsure where to find help	<p>A local group linked by an e-group to share ideas and solutions to common problems</p> <p>Find mentors who have experience to share</p> <p>Local qualified people available to give useful business advice or other professional help</p>	<p>A support network would bring in further resources such as people to advise on marketing and grants</p> <p>Encourage retired business people to be part of the network in an advisory capacity</p>	Business Link LCC NKDC Local business people
Promote local enterprise – keep it local	<p>Residents are not aware of all the services available on their doorstep</p> <p>Potential customers prefer to take their trade to larger businesses in the city to gain a bigger choice and keener prices</p>	<p>Raise the profile of local businesses</p> <p>Develop a marketing image like "Tastes of Lincolnshire" for Branston businesses</p>	<p>Invite Branston Community College's Business Enterprise unit to help put a website together and carry out market research and devise marketing strategies as part of their work</p> <p>Involve other village organisations such as the WI, Ladies Group, Art Group, Friendship Group etc to help with ideas as to how to improve the</p>	Business Link LCC NKDC Local business people





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
			customer experience  Providing a local, high quality, personalised and friendly service	
Encourage employment and training opportunities for young people	Too few opportunities	Encourage smaller businesses to offer work experience positions	Canvass prospective employers by making them aware of the implications and benefits	Community College Youth Forum

### Key

LCC: Lincolnshire County Council

NKDC: North Kesteven District Council

NB. The green text has been taken from the Youth Questionnaire and is representative of the young people in Branston





## Community - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Develop a sense of community	Village divided between existing residents and new residents  Apathy towards village events	Encourage all sections of the community to work together on village events	Continue to publicise events  Create a feeling of pride in the parish  Encourage groups to work together to increase organised social events  Work with the schools to promote events	Everyone Local clubs & groups Parish Council Community College
Extend the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to all parts of the parish	Only 10 streets are currently part of the scheme	Encourage volunteers to come forward from every part of the parish	Campaign to find volunteers with articles in the Newsletter and Sheepwash Times, and posters	Residents Police Parish Council
Establish a volunteer / good neighbour scheme to solve transport, shopping and gardening problems	Many vulnerable residents are isolated and lonely and feel unable to ask for help	Encourage volunteers to come forward from every part of the parish  Residents extend the hand of friendship to neighbours in need	Campaign to find volunteers with articles in the Newsletter and Sheepwash Times, and posters	Residents Age UK NKDC LCC Parish Council
Establish a Youth Council to ensure that	Youth do not feel part of the community	A Youth Council	Support the youth to create a well run forum to	Parish Council NKDC





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
the voice of young people is heard	Lack of understanding between generations		express their opinions	
Revitalise the Play Areas	The equipment is dated and boring	New play equipment - completed August 2010	Seek funding to improve the play areas	Parish Council
Renew the viability of the Village Hall	The facility has become dated	Undertake a programme of modernisation	Improve the interior of the building to make it attractive to modern hirers  Encourage more residents to support the committee	Village Hall Management Committee
Provide a Multi-use sports facility	There are no floodlit facilities to allow training through the winter	Provide an Astro Court	Seek funding to build an Astro Court - funding secured in December 2010	Parish Council Local sports clubs
Make people aware of Branston's twin town	Not all residents aware of the relationship with La Chartre  Few know more than the name on the sign	Provide information for those who may be interested	Make information available via the Newsletter	Twinning Association Interested residents

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## Environment - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Promote the attractions of the parish  Promote the permissive footpaths	Many of the newer residents do not know the village beyond the key services	Make people aware of what is available on their doorstep	Consider ways to advertise walks and village features  Post details on the website	Parish Council NKDC History Group LCC
Reduce the amount of litter	A considerable amount of litter is dropped every week, particularly on the main school routes	Education  More bins  On the spot fines for dropping litter	Consider areas that lack bins  Work with the schools to educate the children to keep Branston tidy  Place articles in the Newsletter to highlight the problem to parents	Parish Council NKDC Schools & Parents Police & PCSOs Public
Provide more benches around the parish  Create a picnic area	Most of the benches are close to the B1188. Benches in quiet, green areas are needed	Create areas that can be enjoyed by residents of all ages	Consider improvements to the Garden of Rest, Waterwheel Lane and the Jungle field	Parish Council
Encourage further restoration and art works to promote our heritage			Work in partnership to protect heritage sites  Support the History Group and other interested	NKDC Parish Council History Group Church





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Provide allotments	There are no allotments in the Parish	Identify suitable land to provide allotments	parties to add to the village features  Look at the feasibility of purchasing a plot of land	Parish Council Landowners
Make the Jungle a safe and accessible recreation area	An area that is constantly changing and is difficult to maintain  Few people are willing to volunteer but many value it	Employ help to maintain the area	Regular inspection and work by Hill Holt Wood rangers	Parish Council
Public Rights of Way for Branston Booths	There are no footpaths on the definitive map for Branston Booths	Establish and mark out a path	Liaise with Footpath officers, local residents and landowners to identify possibilities	LCC Parish Council

### Key

NKDC: North Kesteven District Council

LCC: Lincolnshire County Council

PCSOs: Police Community Support Officers

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## Housing - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Protection for village environment, curtilage and greenbelt  Resist any large developments	Residents value the rural village identity and are concerned that Branston could become a mini town  Rapid expansion would affect village life	Encourage small scale infill and conversion of existing buildings rather than new estates	Lobby for development to be suitable and enhance the community and its needs	NKDC Parish Council Developers
Give consideration to improving infrastructure to support new development	Services are already to capacity causing difficulties for residents e.g. GP surgeries	Significant future development must be supported by s106 monies	Petition NKDC as appropriate	NKDC Parish Council
Small / affordable houses and flats for single people to buy and rent so that young people can remain in the village	Too few starter homes and affordable housing available	Provision of true affordable housing  Ensure conditions to retain affordable status	Parish Council to work with NKDC  Encourage those in need to register on NKDC's housing register	NKDC Developers
Resist new developments that do not have sufficient off road parking spaces	Too much on street parking  Parking partially on pavements affecting wheelchair and	Ensure that new developments include adequate provision	Petition as appropriate  Issue warnings to vehicles obstructing footways and	NKDC Developers Parish Council Police





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
	pushchair users		preventing wheelchair access	
Ensure that any new developments within the conservation area is in character	Character of conservation area at risk	Closely monitor all planning applications	Request review of conservation area  Encourage developers to respect the character of the village  Support those conserving and enhancing older buildings	NKDC Parish Council
Encourage greater provision of suitable accommodation for the elderly	Ageing population needing suitable accommodation to maintain independence	More purpose built accommodation or help to adapt to needs	Monitor need	NKDC Housing Associations Burland Court Parish Council Age UK

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## Services and Facilities - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Maintain and improve shopping facilities in Branston	Many services are no longer available in the village	Improve the range of services available	Make local businesses aware of residents needs	Local enterprise
Improve access to free to use cash machines - available 24/7	Nearest cash machine is at Washingborough	Install a cash machine	Make local businesses aware of residents needs	Local enterprise
Develop the range of sports facilities available to the public	Limited access to sport and existing facilities. All sports centres are the opposite side of the city or in Sleaford. Travel to them is difficult and the hire expensive	Use of facilities at the College be made available to residents outside school hours  Easier access to the tennis courts  Astro Courts that are available for hire  Better facilities at the Pavilion	Ask the College and NKDC to form a partnership  Work to extend facilities to the public when not in use by members during school holidays  Seek funding or partnership  Extension to provide changing areas for women and children	LCC NKDC Tennis Club Parish Council
Make the play areas more challenging and exciting	The equipment is dated and traditional	Provide new equipment with more challenge	Parish Council to secure funding from grants and the precept and consult local parents and children on the design - Completed August 2010	Parish Council
Establish an indoor area, outside school premises where 13-19	Lack of venues for young people to meet	Cafe or burger bar	Make local businesses aware of the need	Local or social enterprise





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
year olds can meet				
Improve the relationship with, and cover provided by, the Police	Poor cover and slow response times has disillusioned residents and made them reluctant to report incidents	Frequent foot patrols to combat anti-social behaviour	Build and maintain a close relationship with a local beat team	Lincolnshire Police Parish Council
Maintain and improve: Schools	Varying pupil numbers and government funding could affect viability	Lobby against reduction in services and closure	As need requires	LCC Parish Council
Post Office	Business less viable	Lobby against reduction in services and closure	As need requires Use local services	Residents NKDC Parish Council
Library	Fewer users will reduce hours to save money	Increase usage Lobby against reduction in services and closure	Encourage groups to use the library for social events As need requires	Parish Council
GPs	As population of the village grows, the ease of making appointments is more difficult	Improve appointment systems and extend hours to cope with increased demand	Make surgeries aware of resident's concerns	Practice Management
Improve feeling of safety near the Jungle	Poorly lit, shadowy area is intimidating	Footway lighting	Parish Council to lobby for additional lighting	NKDC

The need for a free cash machine was evident and that need has been provided for by the Post Office during their trading hours. The Co-op is considering a similar facility within their store but a cash back facility on purchases made with a debit card is already available. A machine has also been installed at the Waggon & Horses but its use does incur a charge.

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## Traffic - Action Plan

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Improve safety on Station Road for school children	Parents are concerned about the hazard of children crossing the road at peak times and between stationary vehicles backed up from the traffic lights	<p>Install a pedestrian crossing</p> <p>Maintain a school crossing patrol person</p> <p>Create a school safety zone</p> <p>Encourage parents on school run to park away from school gate</p>	<p>Parish Council and School Council to lobby Highways Department</p> <p>Post filled 2009</p> <p>Installed 2010</p> <p>All schools to raise the profile of this issue with parents</p>	<p>LCC – Highways</p> <p>LCC - Highways</p> <p>LCC &amp; Schools</p>
Reduction in the speed limit on B1188	The speed limits currently in place with the increasing volume of traffic is considered inappropriate. The 30mph does not come into effect until beyond the care home, play area and several junctions serving large residential areas	<p>Introduce a 30mph limit from Woodview Care Centre</p> <p>Introduce a 40mph limit from start of houses on Lincoln Road</p>	Parish Council to lobby Highways Department	LCC - Highways
Improve the standard of street lighting on B1188	Crossing the B1188 is hazardous. The footway lighting is below the required standard and inadequate for cyclists on a	<p>Install safe crossings</p> <p>Upgrade lighting from Sleaford Road to Canwick Hill</p>	<p>Parish Council to lobby Highways Department</p> <p>Parish Council to ensure adequate provision on new planning applications</p>	LCC - Highways





Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
	substandard cycle path.			
Encourage residents to park considerably	Households have more vehicles than parking spaces causing congestion around some streets and junctions. Parking partially or wholly on pavements causes inconvenience and obstruction to pedestrians and wheelchair users	Educate drivers on the difficulties faced by wheelchair users and appeal to their consciences, even if it means a short walk	Local police teams to issue notices to badly parked vehicles	NKDC
Construction of the Eastern Relief Road	Congestion through city centre causes access difficulties	A ring road would reduce the need for traffic to cross the city. The Eastern bypass would be the next phase	Planning Permission granted in October 2010	LCC – Highways
Reduce the speed of traffic entering the village	Traffic from the south fails to slow down until the Moor Lane bend	Reposition the 30mph signs to make them more visible	Parish Council to lobby Highways Department	LCC – Highways
Complete cycle path between Branston & Lincoln	The majority of the route is narrow and the surface in poor condition.  Evening use is hazardous due to absence of lighting	Renew the path to modern standards  Install adequate street lighting	The Parish Council to continue to lobby for the path to be renewed	LCC – Highways



## Traffic - Action Plan (continued)

Objective	Problem	Solutions	Actions	Responsibility
Install a bus shelter on Station Road for Lincoln bound passengers	The old bus shelter was removed several years ago to discourage youths congregating. The stop is well used, especially by older residents and is exposed to the weather	Install a new bus stop	Ask the Parish Council to investigate the possibility	Parish Council
Introduce a student rate on public transport	Teenagers find the full fare restricting. Many requested a more direct route to the city although some wanted routes to encompass more isolated areas on the outskirts of the parish.	A student rate of 50% -75% of the full fare  Advertise the direct route from Sleaford Road, High Street and Lincoln Road	Arrange a meeting with Bus Companies and LCC to discuss the feasibility	LCC Stagecoach Call Connect Brylaine

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### Other issues raised:

Disability access to some business premises was raised by a few. Smaller businesses are not expected to meet the same standards as national companies and the expense involved is often prohibitive.

Some suggested the need for more grit boxes and further requests were made during last winter. The Highways Dept is currently working on a policy for the provision of grit bins. The Parish Council has suggested fixing instructions to each bin as some residents are unsure how and where the grit should be used.

There were requests for additional street lights to be installed, specifically on the Wisteria link road and the pipeline footpath across the Jungle. The request has been submitted to NKDC and will be considered when funds allow.

While over 60s benefit from free travel on public transport, paying customers considered the fares to be excessive to the point that it was cheaper and more convenient to travel by car.





## Successes

One questionnaire was returned with the following comment:

**"In 1987 a plan for the future was to be introduced. Nothing has been done in 20 years. So what chance has this one?"**

**Results have been seen already, whether by coincidence or otherwise:**

- The B1188 has been included in a new initiative for enhanced verge maintenance which will cut back the hedge from the cycle path and we have asked them to clear up properly to avoid punctures
- The second phase of the cycle path has been completed
- Working with NKDC on their Healthy Lifestyle survey we have introduced a keep fit class for over-50s which has proved to be very popular
- A new, weatherproof noticeboard has been provided at the Village Hall with the help of O2
- A free cash machine has been installed at the Post Office
- Work is on going to tidy the Jungle
- The path along Paddock Lane has been resurfaced, the trees made safe and the boardwalk replaced.
- Volunteer workdays and Junior Fundays have been held
- The fence at the end of the Branston Booths play area has been replaced with a secure palisade fence to keep children away from the old, water-filled clay pit
- The shopping facilities at the Co-op have been greatly extended
- The Food for Thought Coffee shop has changed ownership and is open longer hours, which will provide a good venue for young people to meet their friends
- The Waggon & Horses offers good quality, value for money food with OAP specials on Tuesdays
- The rundown empty shop on the High Street has been given a new purpose
- After losing the evening sessions at the Library, the times were reconsidered



- and again include 3 nights until 7.00pm
- Improved communications with the Police team have led to a better service
- The double yellow lines have been extended on the High Street and Silver Street to deal with congestion at the traffic lights caused by parked cars
- The Village Hall management has undertaken a refurbishment programme to update the facility
- A 'lollypop lady' has been found for Station Road
- A Craft Fair was held in November 2008 with more than 20 stalls
- The Christmas tree has been improved with new lights and a decorative fence
- The website has regular visits and has added to its menu
- Big improvements have been made to the Play Areas
- Money has been included in the budget to continue to maintain and improve the Jungle

### **Round the Next Corner:**

- Funding has been secured for a mosaic in the centre of the village
- Match funding has been secured to provide a floodlit Astro court
- The Parish Council hopes to create a picnic area, possibly using designs by local students
- The Parish Council will continue to lobby the Highways Division to complete the cycleway improvements

### **For any Parish Plan to succeed everyone in the community must play their part:**

Some responses showed a need for services and also a willingness to get involved and help, for example Neighbourhood Watch – 182 said they would help. However only 6 people responded to the article in the Newsletter, asking for volunteers to come forward; so including it in the Plan has to be questioned if so few are really interested. Similarly, there was real enthusiasm for the Jungle to be tidied up but few people







have been willing to help on workdays and so alternative arrangements were made for 2010.

### **Not everyone's desire is achievable:**

There was little interest shown in buying land for a new Burial Ground and the Parish Council has taken this as a sign that you do not wish your taxes to be spent this way and are not pursuing the purchase.

Other requests were beyond the remit of the Plan or simply not feasible – a petrol station; more play areas all over the village; building a new pub; moving the Post Office to a place with a car park.

### **Has it been a success?**

Although it has taken twice as long as planned to produce, the Steering Group and Parish Council are pleased with the success of the project. The excellent response to the Questionnaire at the end of 2007 suggests that residents like to be consulted on issues affecting village life. You told us that you rely on the Branston Newsletter for village news and so when there is a major change or project to be consulted on, it will be delivered through the Newsletter or the Sheepwash Times; both of which are delivered to every household, free of charge. Please take the opportunity to continue to tell us what you want!

“ what is the village but the people ”  
William Shakespeare

“ Thank you  
for taking this  
time to read this  
Parish Plan and for  
your contribution  
to the future of  
our Parish ”



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