

Branston & Mere Parish Council
 Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held by Teams on
Monday 7th September 2020 at 7pm.

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

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

Members of the Public: One.

Item 1 a) Apologies for absence and reasons given.

The Council noted and approved the reasons for the apologies of Cllr Ross.

b) Declarations of Pecuniary & Non-Pecuniary Interests.

- Cllrs Adams, Clarke, Cucksey, Lundgren, Marchant, Penistan and Tebb had declared pecuniary interests in the Home Guard Club's planning application (Ref 20/0661) as members of the club and had no input in the response.
- Cllr Tebb declared a pecuniary interest in the planning application at Longhills (Ref 20/0932) and made no comment.
- Cllr Willcox declared a personal interest in the application for tree work at The Bothy (Ref 20/1060) and made no comment.
- Cllr Adams declared a personal interest in a planning application (Ref 20/0523) neighbouring his father's property and abstained from comment.

Item 2 Public Forum.

There were no issues raised.

Item 3 Reports from representatives on outside bodies:

a) Police.

The online Police Newsletter reported on anti-social behaviour around community venues in the area and included advice to householders on autumn security measures.

b) County Council.

- Cllr Oxby started by thanking Cllr Marchant for producing informative, daily blogs on the response to the Covid-19 situation.
- The B1190 Washingborough Road roundabout had been completed and the road had reopened after the seven-month closure.
- Advice and guidance had been made available to people concerned about the emotional wellbeing or mental health of a child or young adult on the Lincolnshire Here4You Line - 01522 309120
- The Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner had set up the county's first ever youth commission for those aged 25 or under to have their say on police matters.
- A Fix your Bike voucher scheme had opened to anyone with a bike in need of repair to encourage more people to embrace cycling as an alternative to driving or public transport.

c) District Council.

- Regular updates from NKDC had been circulated during the summer.
- Cllr Lundgren suggested that the Boundary Commission review would not have a material effect on Branston.
- The design consultation for the Lincoln SUE showed an additional 3,500 houses in the area that would impact on Branston. Cllr Lundgren expressed concern that there could potentially be even less developer contributions for health, education and community infrastructure.
- Proposals had been approved for the Flourishing Communities initiative that replaced Partnership NK. The initiative would see increased focus on delivering community services.

- The government were expected to initiate proposals for a unitary authority in Lincolnshire. Cllr Lundgren was sceptical about the claimed financial and service benefits of a new county wide authority and questioned whether communities like Branston could be properly represented on that scale.
- Cllr Cucksey reported that the Council's finances were linked to the success of the national economy. Any reduction in economic activity would have a direct effect on the level of resources and it was anticipated that recovery would take until the end of 2021.
- Unemployment was predicted to be at 5-7% and expected to impact on rent, Business and Council Tax collection. Additional monies for Council Tax Hardship Relief had been awarded to assist Council Taxpayers, through Council Tax Support.
- The in-year collection of Business Rates was up by 2.18% (compared to August 2019)
- New Housing Benefit Claims were being processed in an average of 16.45 days. Changes of Circumstances were being processed in an average of 3.08 days.
- A Deficit of £2.2million in the General Fund had been forecast for 2020/21. Some revenue expenditure savings would be seen, due to being unable to complete work during the financial year.
- A shift to borrowing instead of using Reserves while borrowing rates were at an historic low was being considered and would protect Reserves.
- The Council's Financial Resilience Strategy would respond to challenges to ensure sound financial control and management.

d) Community Library.

The Library partially reopened on 5th September; allowing customers to return books and collect reservations from the door as phase 1. Over 1000 books were out when the lockdown began.

The BCA had agreed to allow volunteers to carry out essential work on Mondays and Fridays. All but three volunteers, with non-Covid related reasons, were ready to resume their work and had coped well with the training on the new computer system.

Phase 2 hoped to allow one customer at a time to browse but screens at the main desk would be required. The purchase was approved.

Cllr Newman advised that there had been an issue for volunteers accessing the Library that morning when the school had locked the gates at 9am with no instruction to volunteers on how to gain access. The Coordinator would liaise with the school manager.

e) Environment Warden Report.

Attention had been given to the Moor Lane Recreation Ground during the month to present a visible presence as a deterrent. There had been a lot of litter in the car park where young people gathered. He would continue to monitor it during the month.

Patrols would be carried out in all areas of the village, with some late patrols as the evenings got darker and the clocks go back.

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

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

b) Matters arising from the Minutes for clarification.

16493 Ref 16464 – There had been further correspondence with the resident leading on the project during recess. He had expressed frustration that the project had stalled but had been advised that the bench and memorial were conditions attached to the planning approval and had to be delivered. Any change to the design would require Taylor Wimpey to apply to NKDC for a variation of the condition.

Cllr Lundgren advised that the preferred company was not prepared to build the bench designed by Taylor Wimpey. An alternative company would be used. The size of the memorial stone would be slightly reduced due to availability at the local quarry.

16494 Ref 16488 – The gateway had still not been re-sited.

A letter would be sent to Lincs Groundworks to request that the work be completed.

Item 5 Correspondence:

a) Newsletters and Periodic Publications.

16495 Clerks & Councils Direct

July and August.

16496 LALC News

e-version had been circulated.

b) Letters for information.

16497 LALC had advised that the requirement to hold an Annual Parish Meeting had been disapplied and that Council meeting notices should include details of how to join virtual meetings.

16498 NKDC had shortlisted Cllr Marchant under Community Safety and the Food Voucher Scheme in the Health & Wellbeing category of the Community Champion awards. The award ceremony would feature pre-recorded videos and be streamed online on 7 October.

c) NKDC – Boundary Commission Review.

16499 The consultation would close on 19 October with recommendations published in January 2021. There would be no change to the number of NKDC councillors (43). Boundaries of 17 wards would change with 8 unchanged, to provide electoral equality. Branston would remain unchanged.

In 2019 the electorate was 4066 (3% variance). In 2025 it was expected to be 4414 (1% variance).

d) Resident – Request to withdraw planning comment. (20/0932)

16500 The resident had requested that the Parish Council withdraw their objection to the application as it would make the site un-mortgageable. They had been advised that the Parish Council was a consultee and not the decision maker. After consideration, it was agreed that the submitted comment would remain.

Item 6

16501

Planning Applications & Tree Applications:

a) Planning decisions received.

Planning permission had been granted on the following applications:

20/0088 Demolition of dwelling, new dwelling, extension to farm shop etc

Willow Farm, P. Booths.

20/0367 Change of use agricultural barns to 2 dwellings

Top Farm, Washingboro'

20/0369 Partial demolition of barn to form dwelling & detached garage

Ashdene, Lincoln Road.

20/0570 Conversion of garage

16 The Chalfonts.

20/0670 Electric gates

82a Lincoln Road.

b) Planning Applications received viewed during the month & comments submitted.

20/0523 Amended Plan

5 Veronica Close

Branston & Mere Parish Council continues to object to this application for the same reasons stated during the original consultation: .

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.

20/0661 Outline for a dwelling

Paddock Lane

Please note these observations are not the census of the full council due to 7 of the 13 members having pecuniary interests due to their membership of the Home Guard Club. Those with declared interests have taken no part in the consultation.

The Parish Council objects to this application.

- The site boundary is unclear and appears to include part of the highway verge as parking spaces. Provision for parking needs to be included within the site with sufficient space to accommodate turning and visitor parking as Paddock Lane is already narrow.*
- Paddock Lane is a single-track PROW (fp10 - mapped as a restricted byway and not maintained to the same standard as a road) between the conservation area and open countryside and is used by pedestrians and dog walkers as well as vehicular access. The Lane is already fronted by 4 properties with 3 additional rear accesses and parking associated with the 2 houses at the head of the Lane. An additional property would make ten households with multiple vehicles using the Lane.*
- The tree survey is inadequate and does not provide sufficient detail. While some of the trees may be self-set, they have not been maintained and have been allowed to become established and mature. They provide good habitat and their widespread removal will have an effect on local wildlife. The planting*

along the northern boundary is at least partly within the cemetery and therefore not the applicant's decision that it is viable only as a hedge.

- *Beck View was recently built on Paddock Lane and the construction vehicles involved damaged the edge of the tarmac, exposed tree roots and created loose materials and potholes. Further heavy vehicular use will be detrimental to the Lane.*

20/0810 Demolition of bungalow & new detached bungalow

Hillsboro, The Moors

No objections.

20/0932 To remove condition 2 to enable 3rd party use of riding surface

Longhills Farm

Branston & Mere Parish Council objects to the removal of Condition 2 to enable third party use of the riding surface and stables.

The condition was imposed in 2007 to limit its use to be incidental to the enjoyment of the house and not used in connection with any business to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area.

There has been no material change in the location in the interim and therefore Condition 2 remains valid; as do Conditions 3 and 4.

The Parish Council is aware that Longhills Farm has recently been sold and the 'equestrian holding' listed separately, with the inference that it could be suitable for business or commercial use with a car park included in the listing.

Access to the site is along a single-track drive, shared by 3 properties. There are no passing places other than the neatly mown grass verge. The entrance onto the B1188 is narrow and visibility is restricted at that point by an incline and a dip in the road.

If the land is sold separately, there should be a stipulation that it cannot be used for business purposes.

20/0940 Variation of conditions 2, 3 & 4

69 Station Road

No objections.

20/0947 Side & rear extension, loft conversion & garage

170 Lincoln Road

No objections.

20/1007 Change of use from agricultural to caravan storage

Hanworth Country Park

- *Branston & Mere Parish Council believes that the proposed storage site is within Branston & Mere and the Council is not in favour of such development in open countryside. It is not considered to be an acceptable use of or reason for the loss of further agricultural land.*
- *It would be visible from the lane to the north and the Spires & Steeples trail.*
- *The Parish Council is concerned that if permission is granted, the storage of caravans, in varying conditions, and urban fencing would affect the visual amenity of the open countryside.*
- *The storage of caravans was prevented by conditions under 17/1818 to protect the visual amenity.*
- *Any security night-lighting installed, or subject of a further planning application, would create light pollution, additional to the overnight lights at the Hanworth Country Park, and would further affect night flying birds and wildlife.*
- *The Parish Council questions whether caravan storage is essential to the commercial development of the fishing lakes and whether there is a demand for additional storage in the area.*

20/1080 Internal access door to create en suite

1 Hall Lane.

No objections.

20/1124 First floor extension

78 Station Road.

No objections.

c) Comments on the design of the Lincoln S E Quadrant.

Branston & Mere Parish Council has viewed the proposals for the Lincoln South East Quadrant design and is concerned about the threat to the Green belt between Branston & the city. The emerging Branston Neighbourhood Plan looks to protect the green space between Branston and the bypass and maintain the impression of open countryside from the top of Canwick hill towards Branston, preserving the view from Branston towards Lincoln. This development is extremely close to the village boundary and the multiple access points onto the B1188 are a concern on an extremely busy B-road that is a major route between Lincoln and Sleaford and the A17.

The Parish Council has concerns about the health care provision and the timescale for its inclusion. The Branston Surgery is already well oversubscribed yet is continuing to take on more patients as the new

developments in the village and surrounding area are inhabited, to the point that the lack of availability is a risk to life. The Council asks that improved health provision is prioritised.

The Eastern Bypass will certainly take some of the extra volume of traffic but with a development of this scale the single carriageways and missing Southern quadrant will create congestion through the city and the B1188 route, including considerable construction traffic.

Proposals for sustainable transport, including Park & Ride, are also required now and should therefore be included in the early stages of the development to support new and existing communities.

d) Tree Application Decisions received.

No decisions had been received.

e) Tree applications received.

20/0862 Fell Laburnum

41 Silver Street

No objections.

20/1041 Crown lift 5 trees

The Old Farm House, Church Road

No objections.

20/1042 Crown lift 2 Yews

The Old Farm House, Church Road

No objections.

20/1059 Remove 245m hedgerow

Church Commissioners land adj Westfield Farm.

While sympathetic to the disruption caused by the Eastern Bypass construction, the Parish Council is not in favour of removing hedgerows that form historical boundaries. It is unclear whether this hedge contains a sufficient variety of plants to warrant its protection and the Tree Officer's comments would be welcomed.

20/1060 Fell Silver Birch

The Bothy, Waterwheel Lane

The Parish Council objects to this application.

When the applicant wanted to reduce the height and spread earlier in the year, the Council considered that the tree was well shaped, enhanced the area and that the proposed work was severe and unnecessary. Now, with its full summer foliage pictured, the applicant wants to fell it to avoid an annual maintenance bill.

It is unlikely that work would be required on an annual basis and even so, that is not considered to be a legitimate reason to fell a healthy tree, that is an integral part of the street scene and conservation area.

Item 7 Other Reports:

a) Update on office refurbishment and suitable signage.

16502 Work was progressing well and would be completed by the end of September. The new clerk had been able to have input into the layout and flooring. There had been a few unexpected issues, including the need for a new toilet, no flashing between the two roof levels and some damp at the rear of the second room caused by a guttering issue. The office is in the conservation area and therefore permission would be required to fit a new door, external signage and noticeboard.

b) Update on the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.

16503 Cllr Lundgren advised that the plan was back with the consultant for two further amendments, requested by NKDC.

c) Covid-19 Support Group update.

16504 Cllr Marchant said that it was a monumental day, with the 1000 task milestone exceeded – Week 24, Day 1. The group would continue through October.

d) The establishment of a Good Neighbour Scheme.

16505 In conjunction with YMCA Lincs, consultation leaflets had been delivered to all homes in the parish to gauge need and support for community support to continue. Cllr Marchant said that 27 volunteers had already come forward to be part of the lasting legacy. The group would have a constitution and separate bank account, but grants received would be held in the Council's account in the interim.

e) Latest update on the Pavilion project.

16506 Cllr Tebb reported that LK2 had been given a budget of £200k but the cost consultation had been returned at £400k and there was likely to be a reduction in grant funding available due to Covid-19. Cllr Adams suggested that the project could be scaled back to make some potential savings but the cost would remain £300-340k. The working party questioned whether there was sufficient demand to progress the project. A further meeting with LK2 had been scheduled and the Council would be kept informed.

f) Community Speed Initiative.

16507 The Chairman reported that six volunteers had shown an interest in the project and the LRSP would be consulted on taking the project forward. It was agreed in principle to fund the purchase of the equipment and PPE required.

g) Future plans for the Jungle field & possible community orchard.

16508 Cllr Lundgren proposed creating a community orchard in the Jungle field. He would put a plan together for consideration at a future meeting.

h) Tree work required near Cornus Close.

16509 A resident had highlighted a tree on the PROW that was touching the roof of his house and causing root damage to the patio. Mrs Naylor was seeking quotes for the work.

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

16510 Cllr Clarke expressed some concern about the Risk Assessment for the Library. It had been approved by LCC but he questioned whether LCC or the PC would be held responsible if there was an outbreak. Responsibility would be clarified.

b) Charity Donation Policy.

16511 The Clerk had amended the Grant Aid policy and application form to cover requests from charities. Cllr Tebb suggested that a formula was needed to calculate the amount versus the number of residents to benefit. It was unclear how that could be achieved.

c) Data Breach Policy.

16512 Cllr Catton suggested some amended wording and the policy was accepted.

Item 9 Finance:**a) To confirm payments in August.**

16513 The payments had been approved by email.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	8.00
Staff payments	Wages & Expenses	4278.72
HMRC	Tax & NI	570.48
NEST	Pension	316.46
CB Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting	644.10
Hill Holt Wood	Bridge repair - W/wheel Lane	312.00
Hills Garden Maintenance	Clear ditch - B Booths Play Area	360.00
ESPO	Diaries/Cleaning/Lime	121.20
Mark Harrod Ltd	Boot brushes	115.20
British Gas	Environmental Lighting - May/June	2.44
M Cummins	Environmental Warden	210.00
	Total Payments.	6938.60

b) To approve payments to be made.

16514 Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Mrs Willcox and seconded by Cllr Newman.

T Mobile	Mobile Tariff	8.00
Staff payments	Wages & Expenses	5267.99
HMRC	Tax & NI	1043.56
NEST	Pension	406.21
Cllr A Marchant	Covid - 19 phone top up	60.00
Chinchero Ltd	Internal Audit	300.00
Came & Co	Insurance Premium	4637.23
Michael Cummins	Environment Warden	262.50

CB Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting	540.10
Hill Holt Wood	Jungle maintenance - July & Aug	336.00
Technical Surfaces	Astro maintenance	426.07
Opus Energy	Electric - Office	37.25
British Gas	Electric - Office	9.24
British Gas	Environmental Lighting	1.27
Branston Community Academy	Premises Charge 2018-2020	10,000.00
	Total Payments.	23,335.42

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**
- e) **Future of the Youth Club.**

16515 The Youth Club leader had thanked the Parish Council for their support. He hoped that trips and targeted activities could be arranged in 2021 and would keep the Council informed.

- f) **Memorial Garden benches.**
- g) **To finalise the Library Agreement.**

16516 The Assistant Clerk was asked to liaise with the school to finalise the new agreement.

- h) **Provision of a Hire Bike station.**
- i) **Parish Council surgeries.**
- j) **New website**

16517 The Clerk's e-group had been inundated with clerks struggling with the new LCC websites. The training and need to upload the content from the old website and needing to be converted from pdf to HTML.

- k) **Business plan**

There was no update on items a,b,c,d,f,h,i & k.

Item 11 Items for information.

16518 Cllr Catton commented on the new Washingborough Road roundabout, suggesting that the angles were difficult to navigate.

16519 Cllr Lundgren had received several complaints about a van parked outside the old Green Tree at Branston Booths. The Clerk was asked to write to the resident.

16520 Cllr Marchant reported that the gate into the play area on Lincoln Road was broken.

16521 A comment had been made on social media by Cllr Carrington that suggested the Eastern bypass would divert traffic from the B1188, but Cllr Marchant disagreed. He said that without a diversion being signed, HGVs would continue to head south on the B1188. He mentioned a stone cottage on Lincoln Road that had props holding it up.

16522 Cllr Tebb said that there was a lack of communication on Facebook when issues were raised by residents. How to have a more effective presence would be added to the next agenda.

16523 The conifers at Moor Lane Recreation Ground were due to be felled on 28 September. The new trees were expected to be delivered during November and a team would be needed to plant them. Cllr Tebb proposed involving local children and the Assistant Clerk was asked to contact the school.

Advice on planting the 102 new trees on the Recreation Ground would be sought.

16524 Cllr Willcox requested that the grass near the new gateways be cut back further to increase impact.

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

Cllr Lundgren proposed and Cllr Newman seconded the resolution.

The Assistant Clerk & public member logged off.

The meeting closed at 9.04pm.