

Beckingham Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 31st May 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr L Tatton (LT) – Chair, Cllr P Wells (PW), Cllr A Brewer,

Terry Brown/Parish Clerk (TB).
District Cllr Sue Howe (SH)
PCSO Sarah Lingard
10 members of the public

Minute	Action
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17/49 Apologies for absence.

Ian Hickingbotham (Beckingham Highway Trust), Nick Ashworth (Poor Gardens)

17/50 Approval of the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held 1st June 2016.

The minutes were approved and signed.

17/51 Matters arising

None.

17/52 Chairman's report.

"Good Evening and welcome to this year's Annual Parish Meeting. Why are we here? I am here because the 1972 Local Government Act says I must be here to Chair the meeting, I hope you are here if not to be entertained at least to be informed about the work of your Parish Council over the last 12 months.

At this meeting anyone, or any local company or charity, or organisation is able to make a presentation should they so wish and hopefully take questions from the floor.

Last year we used a series of pictures to better describe some of our activities and as at least one person commented favourably we shall do so again, I hope it meets with your approval.

The report will not be in any sort of chronological order but may be considered as ordered random. So to start with:

We have managed to secure the supply of and install a defibrillator and subsequently a training session was given by EMAS. So far it has not seen any use and let's hope it continues to reside on the wall outside there, just in case.

The Village Hall being a somewhat elderly building has suffered from the ravages of time and has benefitted from a bit of a refurbishment especially to the porch and the toilets. During the course of this work a puddle appeared in the hall and further "emergency" repairs had to be made to the roof and the consequent stain can still be seen, this to be addressed in due course.

We asked the Post office if the Post Box could have a fresh coat of paint applied as it wasn't the smartest box in town, this resulted in a completely new box being fitted, with the advantage to business users that this box is able to take bulky A4 packages easily whereas the old one was not as convenient.

Sutton Road is the site of an old unused bus shelter that was still being used, but not for bus passengers. It was reported to us that there were smells emanating from the area and on investigation the cause was soon found. That and the fact that the asbestos roof was damaged was sufficient for us to decide that the best course of action was for the shelter to be demolished. It turned out to have been built like the proverbial brick outhouse it took quite a bit of removing.

Road gutters are the province of NKDC and although they are swept on a regular basis by one of the yellow left hand drive road sweepers in parts of the village the build-up of soil and vegetation was defeating the best efforts of the mechanical brushes. Therefore, in order to try to preserve the integrity of the tarmac and the appearance of the Parish we have undertaken to have the gutters cleaned by hand to remove the somewhat substantial earth, soil and debris build up along with the flourishing weed growth. We have also approached NKDC for them to extend the current route to include all the kerbed area along Sutton Road.

Weed prevention is in the province of LCC Highways and Highways have previously stated that this type of maintenance work is being severely curtailed. It seems pointless to clear the gutters only to have the weeds flourish again then we have in accordance with LCCs recommendations undertaken to take on this work ourselves in order to try to keep the appearance of the gutters as it should be.

After having another unannounced free caravan rally on the Playing Field and having the joy of paying bailiffs again to clear the field we have taken steps to ensure that these rallies are not repeated. As the previously installed bollards were destroyed something more substantial was needed to deter unwanted guests, the moat and bund ought to deter even the most hardened caravan towing visitor. Again, our thanks go to a local farmer and another local for their work in clearing the rubbish and human detritus that was left in the unwelcome visitors wake.

The downside of the security measures put in place are that they have prevented the use of the field as a site for a car boot that was proposed by a local business man. This would have generated income from the field and given the area a use.

Those of you that were here last year will remember the saga of the caravan on Woodgate Lane, it was finally removed after a protracted wrestle with NKDC. I must ask that no connection be drawn between the dumping of a caravan full of asbestos and the previous mention of caravaners.

Again, from last year was the saga of the delayed completion of work to the new house on Sleaford Road and the consequent eyesore from skips and building materials, this again took a little time to unravel responsibilities as both LCC and NKDC were involved, we are grateful for the assistance of Cllr Sue Howe for her work in this and the previous matter.

We as a Council are sent all planning applications that are made in the Parish for our consideration and this past year there were 6, September last year, erection of a conservatory on Sutton Road, January Broadband masts on the Parish Church, this application was subsequently withdrawn, also in January, an application for a two story dwelling on the corner of Chapel Street, July of last year again, the conversion of the closed pub into two separate dwellings, October 2016 the removal of the telephone kiosk, (along with a proposed removal of 61 others in NK), and finally in March of this year, the building of an extension to Goose Cottage in Rectory Street. As a council, we could find no planning reasons to object to any of the applications and we therefore have made no comments.

Sutton Road and part of Sleaford Road has had trees pruned for the first time it is believed since they were planted. Several reasons for this action. We have a duty of care to provide a safe place of work for our grass cutting contractor who has mentioned the fact that he has encountered branches whilst grass cutting, the tree branches prevented a local farmer from accessing their hedge rows that they are obliged to maintain in good order, the branches were also reaching out to the roadside and were a hazard to some 4-legged road users. Again, this work is in the hands of Highways, and as there are time limits upon which farmers can maintain hedgerows we took action to undertake the work ourselves to meet the objectives just set out. As a spin off from this work the adjacent ditch is now readily available for ongoing maintenance work which ought to reduce the rodent population along that stretch of road. We were assisted by the local farmer for whose help and assistance we are grateful.

It has been there for a while now and nobody looks at it but we have a new Parish notice board made by a local charity in Lincoln, we were the recipients of a grant towards the cost from the Highways Trust for which we are also grateful.

We have made an effort to improve the appearance of a stretch Sleaford Road adjacent to the churchyard wall that was overgrown with weeds, brambles and nettles. The area has been cleared and will be finally levelled and seeded so that an easy to maintain area will be presented. We hope that this improvement will reflect the ongoing good work that is done by the PCC on the inside of the wall.

We have attended a talk by Lincolnshire's police and Crime Commissioner, Marc Jones who enthusiastically and eloquently outlined his plans for policing in the County. We are fortunate to live in a rural area with a low level of reported crime. We do however benefit from a close relationship with our PCSOs based at Hykeham who regularly visit the Parish. He also explained that there was a sudden drop in the number of PCSOs the reason being that a significant number had joined the force but that further recruitment was underway. He is also focussing on rural crime and fighting government to obtain funding for a geographically large County.

Due to a recent change in legislation we have been able to alter the use of the various litter bins in the Village. We used to have designated General Litter bins and designated Dog Litter bins. Litter bins are emptied free of charge but we have to pay to have Dog bins emptied. Now all bins have been relabelled to accept General and Dog litter. As a result, that they are not now specifically Dog Litter bins they are all emptied at no cost to us and it also means that it will be easier for dog owners.

We have spent a considerable amount of time of the phone, culminating in an exchange of formal letters to NKDC with regard to Grass Cutting on the Village Green and associated areas. Those of you who were here last year will no doubt be familiar with the story. We pay a contractor to cut "our" grass and sometimes on the same day NKDC pay their contractor to cut their grass. We have offered to take over responsibility for NK's grass, cut it more often, to a higher standard and at no cost to NK. This offer has been noted and a letter explaining their current refusal to accept our offer has been received. We hope that with the support of the District Councillors we may be able to get them to accept. We have also suggested another strategy whereby we either lease or buy the land in question. We can only wait for the appropriate wheels of bureaucracy to slowly grind to a conclusion. If the wording of their sign is anything to go by...

Last pictures, a hope, not a promise, but we have our fingers crossed that the A17 may not be like this soon and that the winter freezing puddle may disappear forever.

We did spend a considerable amount of time investigating the ramifications of a possible visit by a reported number of 400 traveller guests to a wedding planned to be held at All Saints Church. A number of bodies from LCC, NKDC, the Police were contacted as we had had concern expressed to us by several parishioners as to the possibility of rowdy behaviour and possible damage to property etc. there were also enquires as to whether there would be a procession that would be interesting to see. All the various bodies contacted take the view that a wedding is a perfectly legal action and that none of them are in a position to take any preventative measures, but all expressed their willingness to help once there had been any sort of incident. However, fortunately the wedding passed off without incident.

An almost unprecedented event a couple of weeks ago, was the arrival of a letter of praise for work that the Council has undertaken, at least to one person we are doing something right.

From what we have achieved we consider it to have been a reasonably successful year from our point of view.

A marked change has taken place in the membership of the Parish Council and we are saddened to note the retirements of Trish Thorpe and Graham Else from public life. There is no need for me to outline the history of either of them, if you are not aware of the length of service, the commitment, the dedication and work that they have both given to the parish for over 4 decades between them, then I don't have words sufficient to describe their actions and how we have all benefitted from their efforts. Their presence at meetings and their combined depth of knowledge and experience will be missed and I and the rest of the Councillors extend our thanks for what they have done and our best wishes for each to enjoy a happy retirement away from the sometime frustrations of being a councillor.

Having said that we, that's myself Andy Brewer and Philip Wells are three councillors out of five that the Parish should have. We do have an almost firm commitment to one of the vacant places, that will be resolved at the next PC meeting, so if you feel that you could follow in the footsteps of the retirees or would like to become a Parish Councillor and give a little time and effort to better our community, speak to anyone of us, come to a PC meeting and see what we do.

Finally I would like to extend the thanks of the PC to all those who have worked for us, the lady who cleans the hall, the man who cuts the grass, the electrician who wired up the defibrillator, the men who repaired the roof and improved the toilets, the local farmer that assisted with the tree job and helped clear the field after the caravan rally, the new occupant in the old pub for donating some of the pub fittings and furniture, to Mikki and Andrew for letting us have space in their Bugle and finally to our hard working clerk Terry who keeps us on the straight and narrow.

That if you are still awake, was the report from the Parish Council. If there are any questions, comments or even praise, then now is the time to speak."

17/53 Reports from Community Groups.

LT summarised the reports that had been tabled by the **Highways Trust and Poor Gardens.**

Police:

PCSO Sarah Lingard reviewed the five Police incidents that had happened in the village in the last twelve months. But in general, the Village and its surrounding area continued to be relatively crime free.

She encouraged residents to make use of the Police in marking valuables in order to prevent burglaries to outbuildings.

Parochial Church Council:

Vic Rampton outlined the progress made by the PCC in updating the facilities in the Church. £12700 has been spent on updating the electrical systems in the Church and there would be a service on July 6th to mark the finish of the work.

He commented on the recent planning application made to install antennae on the Church tower roof. This had been withdrawn because of problems over visual intrusion on a Grade 1 building. But it was likely that a new application would be made at a future date but with equipment that would be more sympathetic to the surroundings.

Cllr Sue Howe reported:**"COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS 2016/17**

Good evening. I have pleasure in presenting you with an overview of the District Council's achievements throughout the year 2016/17 aligned to its four corporate priorities, Our Economy, Our Homes, Our Communities and Our Council.

Our Economy

19 business units built and let at Blackwood Court, Teal Park within eight months of the site opening, continuing the success of another business park within the District at Churchill Park, Bracebridge Heath. Supporting occupancy targets of our workshop portfolio of almost 96% set against a target of 80%.

- Actively engaging with partners in Sleaford and North Hykeham to promote investment opportunities in these areas.*
- Supported the growth of tourism and provided a grant of £200,000 to fulfil the International Bomber Command memorial on Canwick Hill.*
- Tourism is a vital component of the District's economic viability for Lincolnshire and collated some £120m in revenue from 2.3m visitors to the area.*
- The District has also been successful in its bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to restore Mrs Smith's cottage in Navenby as a heritage site.*

Our Homes

375 homes constructed in the year against a target of 245 homes. This is in addition to 89 affordable homes having been built against a target of 45.

- We strive to bring empty homes back into use and, in doing so, brought 14 empty properties back into use against a target of 13. During 2016/17, the Council delivered its 175th council house and the county's first, super-efficient social housing, the Passivhaus, as part of a development of 22 new homes in Heckington.*
- Over the year, tenants have been able to collectively save more than £26,000 on their fuel and water bills due to availability of the Affordable Warmth Service.*
- In North Hykeham, a land-locked site known as "Holland Court" has been transformed to create twelve new bungalows for the over 60's.*

Our Communities

Delivered the OneNK refurbishment project, providing the country's first 'Interactive-Selfie-Flume. This has in itself encouraged attendance increase at indoor sports and leisure activities to almost 518,000 against a target of 490,000 participants.

- The Whisby Natural World Centre and Little Darters play area has benefited from £250,000 investment and the venue also now boasts new exhibition and conference space and Otters Reach indoor play activities for toddlers.*

- *Almost 300,000 visitors attended cultural and ArtsNK programmes during 2016/17 against a target of 290,000.*
- *The District is immensely proud of its status for the third year running to be named as the safest place to live in the country whilst being recognised as having England's highest level of life satisfaction.*
- *Alongside this accolade, the District remains responsive and vigilant to fly-tipping matters, issuing fixed penalty notices, operating CCTV in such hot-spots and successfully prosecuting offenders.*

Our Council

Maintained one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country.

- *Set up a Council-owned housing company known as "Lafford Homes", to meet the needs of affordable housing within the District.*
- *Cut its carbon footprint by 40% four years ahead of target.*
- *Piloted a national obesity programme - being 1/4 district council's chosen by Public Health England to participate.*
- *Approved a Sport and Physical Strategy to inspire all to become more active.*
- *Adopted a five-year Community Plan (2016-21) which will consider how to promote/improve economic, social, environmental health and well-being throughout the area.*

*Noting all these **achievements**, I am sure you will agree with me that we, as residents, are very fortunate to live in North Kesteven and benefit from the District Council's commitment."*

Village Hall Management Committee:

Andy Brewer reported on the recent changes in the Committee and the intention to continue to promote the use of the Village Hall not least with the recent inauguration of the Social Club. All the information from the Committee can be found on the website which also contains an up to date diary of Village Hall bookings.

Beckingham Village Hall Social Club:

Philip Wells (Chairman) summarised the events that had led to the formation of the Club such that now, with the 100 villagers signed up as members, the Committee had made a licence application with the expectation that it would be approved by July.

17/54 Open Forum.

A question was raised about the continuing problem of speeding (and noise) on the bypass.

LT agreed on the seriousness of the problem but there seemed to be little that could be done until there were fatalities. This seemed to be the main determinant which would cause the relevant authorities to take some action as had been the case further along the A17 towards Newark, but in Nottinghamshire.

LT reported that an attempt had been made to find a provider for a follow up training session on the defibrillator but that to date none such had been found at a reasonable cost.

LT reminded the meeting of the possible use Section 137 funds from the Precept to support developments in the Village deemed to be for the general good. The meeting supported the idea that the development of the Social Club might be one such possibility.

A request was made that the Annual Parish Meeting in 208 did not conflict with Half term holidays.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 26th July 2016