

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 at 19:00hrs at Braceborough & Wilsthorpe Village Hall.

Present- Dave Kentish, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew (Clerk), James Shorrocks, Susan Burgoin, Paul Morriss, Steve Collins, Cllr Barry Dobson (SKDC), Malcolm Ravlous, Elizabeth Kentish, Sue Holloway, Geoff Burgoin, Keith Wright. Di Holden, Johathan Manning, C.Cllr Ashley Baxter.

#### **Meeting Commenced hrs**

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS- Dave Kentish welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –None.
3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING-It was proposed by Paul Morriss & seconded by Susan Burgoin that the minutes of the last meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 be received. All agreed.
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

#### **Mallard Pass Solar Farm**

Having been approved over a year ago and subsequently sold on to Quinbrook who are now the new owners, the work will eventually start at some point this summer. It was due to commence this quarter, but ongoing issues with Network Rail have delayed things. Some stakeholder meetings with regards to Quinbrook planning and discharge applications have already been held with Quinbrook representatives and Parish Councils along with Mallard Pass Action Group attending to gain information from Quinbrook and to question some of their decisions. So far there are not many full answers coming back.

Ultimately it will be the responsibility of the County Councils, SKDC and Rutland planning offices to hold Quinbrook accountable for the agreements put in place in the original planning approval. Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council will support the councils with this where we are able to.

#### **Flooding**

Again, flooding has caused severe property damage to homes in villages within this area, which is devastating for the families affected. And in reality, this will happen again and again unless there is considerable will and money from government and councils to develop a long-term plan for mitigating the risk of flooding. Alicia Kearns, our MP chairs a regular flooding panel of Parish Councils bringing in local flood experts from Lincolnshire and local councils to update on the efforts they are making and to advise on mitigation of flooding in our areas.

#### **Greatford Mineral Extraction**

This proposal has far exceeded the planning time limitations to begin extraction as Ashton Estates did not carry out the highways works mandated by planning that would allow the extraction to commence. Ashton's Estates would now need to submit a new planning application should they wish to proceed. We shall see.

**BT Braceborough public phone box service removal** reported last year that BT wanted to remove the telephone equipment from the telephone box in Braceborough. This was done about six months ago. The box is now locked, and we are not sure what to do with it. The Parish Council are looking for suggestions.

#### **Potholes - Kerbside breakup – Verges**

Potholes, kerbside break up and damage to verges are problems that I'm afraid, are not going to go away, the best that can be managed is to have repairs made as soon

as they are reported. What will help, if you see a problem and report it onto the Highways website <https://fixmystreet.lincolnshire.gov.uk/> with the location and the problem and continue to keep doing so, Highways will come and install a repair. The more people that report any of these issues the quicker a repair will get done. The Parish Council do a yearly Parish walkabout with Highways outlining problems and getting as much buy in from them for as many repairs as they can feasibly manage.

**Planning applications**

The Parish Council have sight of all planning applications in the Parish and examine each one. There is a structure laid down by the local Planning Authority that we have to take account of when giving our observations and comments, and these are considered by the planning officers when making their decisions.

**The big clean**

I report on this each year as a reminder that this programme has proved to be a success. The teams visit our Parish two or three times a year, clearing out weeds, cutting back overgrown hedges and clearing pathways. This is a great initiative from SKDC and one that I hope continues into the future.

**Parish Council vacancy**

We have a vacancy on the Parish Council. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone who would be willing to step up, assist the Council and the community by adding their thoughts, viewpoints and a perspective to the issues that are presented to the Parish Council. There is no barrier to putting your name forward for this, other than that you must be at least eighteen years of age, be on the electoral role and have lived in the parish for at least a year.

If you would like to consider yourself for this role but feel that you do not have any experience of what this would entail, please do not let that put you off. Almost all people who become Parish Councillors do not have any experience of this when they join, and I myself had no Council experience when I became a Councillor the same as all my fellow councillors. I will be very happy to have a chat with anyone who would like to know more about this and would hope to talk to you soon.

**Please get involved**

The Parish Council welcomes and invites all members of the Parish to attend the Parish Council meetings. If you feel that there is something important that I have not covered here, or when something crops up in the future, then please raise your concerns at our Parish Council Meetings and find out how we as your Parish Council are able to help or advise you.

Finally, a big thank you to my fellow colleagues on the Parish Council, our clerk and the representatives from the outside bodies who keep us up to date with the wider matters that affect our Parish and who we work closely with.

I look forward to the coming year and hope for your continued support.

Dave Kentish

5. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2026

Clerk reported that bank interest rate had reduced from 1.60% to 1.40%. Lloyds bank introduced monthly charges which cost the council an extra £35.00 per year. The Council continues to receive grants from Lincolnshire County Council £904.00 for cutting grass verges within villages, South Kesteven District Council £927 towards keeping the parish clean and tidy. The Council continues to support both Churches towards keeping their church yards tidy.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

1. D.Cllr Barry Dobson

As predicted last year, the rainfall was quite low during 2025 that the statistics showed we would get an increased amount at the end of the year and early in 2026. So far, we don't appear to have had the devastating floods in our region as experienced during previous years although there is still more rainfall to come. We have some 100+ sandbags stored (thanks to SKDC) just in case. It was the first time in a few years wading through flooded areas of my ward. Let's hope it stays that way. Work has started on the junction High Street/A15 to reduce the size if not completely eradicate the lake that forms there. I believe this will be finished by the end of the week.

Last year we had a total of 501mm (19.7inches) of rainfall which was below average as I mentioned in a previous report that it was considerably lower than most previous years. January has already seen a marked increase with 62.5mm (2.46 inches) of rainfall which is likely to continue throughout the coming month(s). The rivers are full of torrent flows of water. It is powerful so please take care along the banks.

Devolution continues to occupy most of the senior staff at SKDC alongside the members. Personally, I wish services could be transferred to the district councils or a combination of no more than two of them to manage things locally. The county is one of the country's largest in area and a massive task for just one authority to deal with.

As vice-chairman for culture and leisure overview and scrutiny committee, I am currently engaging in raising the awareness of importance of wellbeing in our communities. This includes tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity which enhances the wellbeing of our communities. There are so many important advantages of taking part in the variety of sports and leisure that is available to us in our area, helping to promote the extensive health benefits for people of all ages. If anyone has any questions on what is available or needed, please let me know. Bourne and the Deepings have the highest percentage of people with diabetes in SKDC; 1 in 4 suffer with mental health issues.

The rivers are full of almost torrent flows of water. It is powerful so please take care along the banks. I've witnessed several near misses where people and dogs have been close to falling into the water.

2. C.Cllr Ashley Baxter reported on the County Councils preferred for local government re-organisation, introduction of food waste from April, pot holes and council tax set at 2.99% with 2% going to social care.

7. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER BODIES:-

a) Braceborough Village Hall Committee-

Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Village Hall has had a successful year, maintaining its role at the heart of the community, while generating sufficient income to cover its operating expenses.

Both new and perennially popular activities and events have entertained local people, providing an opportunity for residents to meet, chat and have fun. Highlights include coffee

mornings, art classes and community lunches, as well as Christmas Eve's mulled wine and mince pies, the Race Night, Gentlemen Chefs' Pot Luck Supper, and the fabulous summer barbecue, complete with live music, which drew a crowd of almost 100 people.

The past year also saw the inaugural Bike Braceborough event, which attracted eager participation, including from a number of younger children. New events for this spring include a quiz night and an afternoon tea with village history talk.

We aim to keep hire and ticket prices as low as possible, while maintaining a margin to cover escalating utility prices. Our last set of accounts show that the hall delivered a profit of just over £1,000, based on receipts of £7,956 and costs of £6,876.

In terms of maintaining the real estate and facilities, over the last year we have replaced the back door, installing a low threshold door that is wheelchair and pram accessible. We used a National Lottery grant to replace the storage container, and have plans to camouflage this further as soon as the weather improves. The same grant also funded a new, more portable speaker system, which has already been well used at parties, the Gin Night and Burns' Night.

At the front of the Hall, we have refurbished the beacon and planted flowers at its base, while at the back the fruit trees have recently been pruned.

This year's plan is to redesign the bar area, creating a room that is both more ergonomic and lockable (so we can store alcohol in it). We also have some redecoration to do in the toilets and along the skirting boards. However, our desire to install broadband has been thwarted on cost grounds, with suppliers insistent that we pay business rather than domestic prices.

The Hall is well supported in its upkeep by volunteers from the committee and wider communities, and we are very grateful for all assistance.

Finally, the past year has seen the stepping aside of Sue Cook as chair, after years of committed service, to be succeeded by Jonathan Manning. Sue deserves enormous credit and thanks for leaving the community spirit of the hall, as well as its real estate and finances, in excellent health.

b) St Margaret's Parochial Church Council.

Our PCC has again met its agreed covenant payment, which was paid in full, for 2025.

The fenestration repairs have almost been completed. Just one casement now needs to be replaced.

The churchyard and both sides of Church Lane have benefitted from regular grass cutting, maintenance and tidying. Our thanks are extended to our contractor, Chris, and all those volunteers who have generously given their time throughout the year. The grant awarded by the Parish Council for 2025 was a major contribution towards the costs incurred, helping

us to maintain an acceptable appearance throughout the year. All the grant monies were expended on grass cutting and associated material costs.

Attendances at St.Margaret's services have been steady despite the illness and recent loss of some regulars. Monthly Holy Communion services at Braceborough Hall continue and the relationship with the Hall continues to thrive both via events at the village hall and at church – wheelchair parking in the aisle was at a premium at the last Carol Service when a record attendance of more than 100 enjoyed the service!

Father Aran's support and visibility continues to benefit the ministry within our parish and local community. He regularly engages with a wide audience of parishioners and visits many who are ill as well as leading all our services at St.Margaret's. Outdoors for Remembrance Day was again well supported. Father Aran is a valued and popular parish priest and we have a continuing responsibility to help meet the costs of his ministry so as to ensure he is not lost to us.

Thanks go to the officers & committee of the Village Hall, with whom St.Margaret's works on a number of community-related issues and events. The terrific support we receive when hosting Messy Church is gratefully received.

On behalf of our PCC, I extend sincere thanks to our Chairman and members of the Parish Council for their continued support and generosity towards the upkeep of the churchyard at St.Margaret's Church. Malcolm Ravilious. Keith Wright

c) St Faith's Parochial Church Council

Our Parish Share for 2025, which is now called a Covenant Pledge and is increased by an agreed percentage each year, was paid in full.

St Faith's is well supported in the village for both services and fund raising activities, for which we are very grateful, as this is our only means of income. The church remains open 24/7 and many visitors come to the church both for services and as tourists.

The main fabric of the church appears in good condition. Following on from the Quinquennial inspection we hope to have some interior plastering and decorating carried out this year.

With regards to fund raising, we made the decision to hold the Open Gardens event every 2 years, this will therefore happen on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Although not a main fund raiser, the quiz evening held in October continued to be a great success and has become an annual event. Other fund-raising events are being organised and details of these will be in the Towers & Spires.

St Faith's PCC would like to thank the Parish Council for their generous grants given in previous years and their continuing support. The grant is used solely towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard and from the comments and compliments received, is much appreciated by the village and visitors alike. Susan Burgoin, Treasurer

- d) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NWS) Wilsthorpe – Susan Burgoin.  
As reported previously, NHW has completely changed and is not a local Police run organisation. (This could probably be because there are no local Police, PCSO's or Police Stations!!) It is now sometimes called Lincolnshire Police via Neighbourhood Alert or Lincs Alert and totally on-line

Emails received are either survey to complete, newsletters, updates on crimes from a far wider area than Wilsthorpe (or Stamford). There is also a lot of advice regarding online spam, online abuse, domestic violence etc., etc.

There are no longer updates on local issues and crime, but all necessary emails continue to be sent onto villagers in Wilsthorpe.

Dave Kentish, Braceborough, agreed with Susan Burgoin.

- e) Mallard Pass Action Group- Sue Holloway reported that she did not always receive planning applications, it was agreed that the clerk would include the MPAG on all correspondence.
- 8. TO RECEIVE CONCERNS & CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF ELECTORS CONCERNS**
1. Update on Sleaford reservoir – nothing to report.
  2. Highways – potholes, unfortunately LCC does not have enough money to repair at this present time. It was felt that HGVs had increased along the Carlby Road, concern about old properties rumbling due to excessive speed. It was suggested that residents go onto Lincolnshire County Council '**LORRY WATCH**' and report.
- 9. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CLOSED 19:55 hrs.**