

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 21st March 2023 at 19:00hrs at Braceborough & Wilsthorpe Village Hall.

Present- Dave Kentish, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Barry Odell, James Shorrock, Susan Burgoin, Paul Morriss, Keith Wright, Nigel Eveleigh, C.Cllr A Baxter, D.Cllr Barry Dobson, Sue Cook, Di Holden, Malcolm Ravilious.

Meeting Commenced 19:00hrs

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS- Dave Kentish welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Sue Holloway.
3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING-It was proposed by Dave Kentish & seconded by Paul Morriss that the minutes of the last meeting held March 2022 be received. It was **resolved** that the minutes of the last meeting be confirmed as a true record & signed by Dave Kentish. All agreed.
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT- report at attached
5. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023 – Report attached.
6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR- Report attached.
7. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER BODIES:-,
 - a) Braceborough Village Hall Committee – See report attached
 - b) St Margaret's Parochial Church Council – See report attached
 - c) St Faith's Parochial Church Council – See report attached.
 - d) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NWS) Wilsthorpe & Braceborough: – Susan Burgoin reports:-

NHW has completely changed from when I first joined as co-ordinator. We had meetings in Bourne with an AGM etc. Now through varying name changes it is called Lincs Alert and totally online. I do not know our local Police person or even a PSCO if there is one. Most of the emails received are either surveys to complete, newsletters or advice on 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.
 - e) Mallard Pass Action Group – It was reported that the Chairman of the Parish Council had registered on behalf of the council. Information attached.
8. TO RECEIVE CONCERNS & CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF ELECTORS CONCERNS- as follows:-
 - The Council ask a member of the Police to attend a meeting,
 - The kerb, Church Street be moved as agreed by Lincolnshire County Council highways department in 2022.
9. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CLOSED 20.00Hrs.

Item 4 Chairman's report:-

This past year has been dominated by the Mallard Pass Solar Farm planning application.

You will be aware that the Government Planning Inspectorate have approved the submission for examination. On the 2nd of March, registration to be an Interested Party and submit a Relevant Representation with your views on the solar farm to the Planning Inspectorate closed.

This was the only opportunity to get your views in front of the Planning Inspectorate and these will be the only views that will be taken into consideration, all other previous submitted objections or support up to this point went to Mallard Pass and will not be considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

For those who have registered it allows you to take part in the examination process if you wish to do so. In the spring, you will be invited to submit a written representation and you can expand on the issues that you feel strongly about.

The Parish Council are indebted to the Mallard Pass Action Group who have kept up a steady stream of information and lobbying pressure on MP's and councils with regards to this planning application.

Ultimately the decision on this will be made by the Government as this is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and around this time next year, we will know what that decision is.

Other business

Whilst the Mallard Pass Solar Farm has taken up much of the Parish Council's time, there have been many other less headline grabbing day to day issues which are just as important that need to be attended to:

Planning applications (local oversight)

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 decision.

Speeding

This has always been an issue with cars and heavier vehicles driving too fast through the villages. The Parish Council over the past few years have looked at many different ways of drawing drivers' attention to speed limits, all so far have been too costly or not practical. We have however now purchased sets of verge side gates that will have a strong visual impact to calm traffic coming into the villages and these will be installed at the entrances to the villages when the weather is more forgiving.

The big clean

I have reported on this previously and it 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.

Flooding - Potholes - Kerbside breakup – Verges

I have deliberately put all these together as they are perennial issues that affect us all.

Flooding has not been as bad as it has been in the past as work by Highways has mitigated some of the problems as well as households having work done themselves to reduce the likelihood of damage to their properties.

Ongoing, the Parish Council actively pursues all options with Highways, District Council, and the drainage board, to continue to find ways to further mitigate the impact of flooding and the damage caused.

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. To this end, what will help, is 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.

With regards to verges, do also report damage where you see it, Highways do not see this as a priority and may get to repair some of the worst damage at some point.

With the increase of on-line deliveries, delivery vehicles have multiplied and so has the damage to verges.

The Parish Council do a yearly Parish walkabout with Highways outlining problems and getting as much buy in for as many repairs as they can feasibly manage.

It is worth noting that to add to all of these issues, should the Solar Farm get full approval it will mean that the construction period of up to two years plus will bring a major increase of heavy traffic, further exacerbating all of these problems.

Quarrying, King Street Greatford

The plan for quarrying was approved in July of last year and although we do not have a date for the work to start, the plan will convert 55 hectares of agricultural land off King Street to extract and process sand and gravel and then to progressively restore the site to a mixture of agricultural land, nature conservation area and an agricultural water reservoir.

A road widening amendment to the plans and traffic routing has been agreed by the planning office. This project will create heavier HGV traffic on King Street and surrounding roads, and we hope that the restrictions put in place will be regularly monitored and the restoration is carried out in full.

Barry Odell

Barry has served on the Parish Council for well over twenty years and has decided that the time is now right for him to step away, so he will not be standing again for election onto the Parish Council. For the past eleven of those years, I have had the good fortune to have Barry as a trusted, faithful and dedicated Parish Councillor, giving sage advice on all matters that came up before the Council. His historical local knowledge and deep understanding of this wonderful area that we live in has been of immeasurable benefit both to the Parish Council, and Parishioners. On behalf of the current and past Parish Councillors and Clerks who have worked with Barry, I would like to say a big thank you.

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, my thanks as ever go to all the people in our local neighbourhood watch who keep us informed of criminal activity in the area and what to look out for, 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, Chair Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council

Item 5 Draft Parish Council Accounts:-

The Clerk to the Parish Council reported that the Council had donated £400 towards the Mallard Pass Action Group plus £300 to each parish church for church yard maintenance. Insurance was slightly down on previous years due to the fact that the council had taken the decision to sign up to a five year contract. Hiring of venues had increased due to the extra number of meetings to discuss the proposed Mallard Pass Solar Farm. The Council has purchased white gates for the entrance of the parish to try to mitigate the speeding traffic after a conversation with LCC Highways.

Concern was expressed about the movement of large agricultural vehicles, the chairman reported that this had been taken into account.

Item 6b – District Councillor Barry Dobson Report:-

1. Despite some changes throughout the year, SKDC has continued to collect bins and tidied many areas throughout the Ward. In total, the team collect 80,000 bins each week. There have been some changes with some of the teams which were set up as limited companies have been brought back in house (SKDC) which will give employees more stability and allow proper scrutiny.
2. I was also pleased to have attended functions at the Braceborough & Wilsthorpe Village Hall and been able to meet many of you enjoying lunches and concerts. I am currently helping to secure some additional funds to improve the safety and convenience to some of the features in the Hall.
3. The Government has is encouraging local councils to increase the availability of footpaths and open spaces for leisure. A parishioner and I are currently looking at some of the footpaths in Braceborough and Wilsthorpe to see if they are still correctly maintained and open for public use. There have been reports that not all are.
4. I have also recently been appointed to serve on the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board. The first meeting I attended was in January when I realised just how this is all arranged. Basically, the flood water on fields is their responsibility for which farmers and landowners are charged a rate. Rivers are maintained by the Environment Agency and water and drainage elsewhere by Anglian Water. If I am voted back in as your councillor, I have been offered the chance to find out more in-depth knowledge.
5. I am also on the GLLEP Energy Council and recently took part in the first face-to-face meeting near Grimsby. It is Lincolnshire that is producing more and more renewable energy with offshore (the largest in the world) and excitingly new methods of producing and distributing

energy. Hydrogen remains the most expensive to produce, but work is continuing. Batteries may be fine for cars, but large goods vehicles, such as arctics, if they were to be fitted with battery power, would have very little room for freight.

6. There will be a new Best Kept Village scheme this year where villages are entitled to apply to be judged. The information is on the SKDC website. The PC should collect photographs and go to the website to complete the application as soon as possible.
7. I'd just like to end by saying that the eight years that I have had the honour of being your district councillor have seemingly flown by. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with you and I would be pleased to continue working with you through another 4 years. Who knows what will be at the end of the next term!

Best wishes, Barry

Item 7a Village Hall Report:-

Committee

The committee, chair and treasurer remain unchanged. Although we feel that this year would be the right time for a change in chair and treasurer and will be looking to announce these changes after voting at our AGM in September. Both Sue and I would like to remain on the committee but after both having been in place for 5 years, feel it is time for some fresh ideas and leadership.

Events

These have continued throughout the financial year with successful community lunches being very well attended as well as the pot luck suppers, Christmas Ball, New Year's eve and others. The Queens Jubilee was celebrated in style with many successful competitions and a village BBQ. Rain did stop play on day two of the celebrations which was a huge shame.

The hall has been used for private hire for a number of events.

Building Repairs and Maintenance

The hall floor was successfully restored although this took more time and money than first thought as a lot of the rafters beneath the floor were completely rotten and had to be replaced.

A new front door is being made as we speak and will be fitted in the very near future.

The garden fencing has all been replaced with the addition of rabbit netting which will hopefully reduce the number of rabbits currently trying to set up home in our lawn. There are plans to do major repairs on the lawn.

All the electrics within the hall have been updated where needed as part of our insurance compliance. We are also looking to move the light switches from behind the bar into the entrance way and add an outside light over the front door as well as lighting in the entrance way. We are currently waiting on a quote for this. Moving the light switches is the first step in the bar refurbishment project which we still plan to do at some time in the near future.

We have recently purchased swift nesting boxes which will be put in place very soon. These were purchased from a very kind donation from Janet Trestrell in memory of Frank.

We are still waiting for the dropped kerb to be moved and ask for an update on this.

Attendance and necessity of Parish Council member on the committee

Barry Odell is our appointed PC member on the committee but has not been able to attend the last few meetings. It seems it is difficult to get the commitment from the PC for a member to regularly attend and participate on our committee. Can I therefore ask if the PC deems it necessary for there to be an appointed representative and if so if they could appoint someone to take part and attend the meetings. If it is deemed not necessary then I would happily arrange for a copy of all meeting minutes to be circulated to the chair of the PC.

Sue Cook – Chair

Item 7 b - St.Margaret's Church Braceborough –

The Diocese has changed the payment of Parish Share to an annual covenant payment for each PCC. Our agreed sum was paid, in full, for 2022.

The churchyard areas again benefitted from regular maintenance and tidying throughout the year. Grateful thanks go to all those who generously gave their time to help. The grant awarded by the Parish Council for 2022 was again a significant contribution to the costs of having the grass in the churchyard cut regularly and to help maintain its appearance.

2022 was another year of changing times for church. Thankfully we have been able to return to meeting safely for regular in-church services at St.Margaret's. Attendances at services are very encouraging and Messy Church continues to benefit families in our 7 villages. The Holy Communion services at Braceborough Hall were regrettably largely suspended due to Covid outbreaks and the attendant restrictions and legislation. They have now re-started with increased congregations. Some areas of the building are showing deterioration in the fabric – particularly the porch ceiling, plaster on the wall of the Apse and broken stained glass. These continue to be monitored and will be addressed when funds allow.

Father Aran's positive influence on our ministry within the parish and the wider benefice continues to provide huge benefits. He engages with, listens to, and visits a wide audience of parishioners and continues to lead all of our services at St.Margaret's. The outdoor services for Remembrance Day were again well received & supported. He continues to help grow our church. We have a continuing responsibility to help meet the costs of his ministry, otherwise his position will be lost to us.

Our thanks go to the officers & committee of the Village Hall, with whom St.Margaret's works closely on a number of community-related issues and events. Special thanks go to Sue for her continued leadership & support.

As for many in these times of high inflation, church finances continue to be under pressure. Regular gifting by Planned Giving would benefit us enormously. We hope and pray more will support St.Margaret's in this way.

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

Malcolm Ravilious Churchwarden. March 2023.

Item 7c - St Faith's Church, Wilsthorpe –

St Faith's was able to arrange, what has become, our annual Pimms Afternoon and Open Garden, with grateful thanks to Pete & Di Holden at Willowcroft. Teas and cakes were served at The Forge for which we thank Paul & Kelly Jackson for their hospitality. The funds received from this event were mainly for St Faith's Church but a donation was sent to Age UK Peterborough.

The fabric of the church remains good and more electrical sockets were installed to allow for extra heating.

Our Parish Share for 2022 was paid in full and we have agreed the amount for 2023, which has also been paid in full. St Faith's is very well supported in the village for both services and fund raising activities. Many visitors come to the church both for services and as tourists.

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 to maintain the churchyard and from the comments and compliments received, is much appreciated by the village and visitors alike.

Susan Burgoin Treasurer

Item 7d Parish Councils registration response to Mallard Pass Solar Farm

To be clear, Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council on behalf of the Parishioners strongly oppose the construction of Mallard Pass Solar Farm for the following reasons;

Construction issues:

- 2 years of noise, light pollution, disruption and damage across the 2,105 acre site and surrounding area.
- *Cabling to new sub-station may now run through Essendine with Mallard Pass seeking compulsory acquisition 'rights'.
- Extensive traffic measures through Ryhall, Essendine, Great Casterton and surrounding areas especially in the vicinity of 7 construction compounds.
- 80, 400 and 1000 tonne HGV loads.
- Up to 400 workers a day on-site; working hours 7am-7pm Mon to Sat.
- Public rights of way (PROW) will be closed and/or diverted when required.
- Complete uncertainty for future generations as the application has no time limit.
- Will the funding be secure for decommissioning, if not there could be a solar graveyard when it shuts down?

Note: *The draft DCO (Development Consent Order) outlines the compulsory acquisition 'rights', whether permanent or temporary. Peoples' property/boundary will be affected in some way. Existing rights may either be extinguished or suspended for the duration of the solar farm, or during construction. Causing major uncertainty and mental stress to those households.

Operational issues:

- Site 2,105 acres (c1,300 football pitches), solar area 1,052 acres (1,312 acres including field margins). The sheer unprecedented scale and topography means you cannot eradicate or screen all the adverse impacts.
- No benefits directly for the community, the energy produced will be used across the UK as required. Local electricity tariff will not be cheaper as a result.
- The local landscape will be changed to an industrial-scape with 530,000 solar panels 3.3m high; security fencing and CCTV; solar stations or shipping containers housing inverters/transformers dotted across the solar area.
- New sub-station will be visible & audible for Essendine residents on A6121.
- Solar is hugely inefficient as a source of energy, only delivering 11% of its stated capacity on average in the UK.
- Loss of productive quality agricultural land at a time we need to protect our food production; solar should be on rooftops or brownfield sites. Mallard Pass's reduced estimate* of BMV (Best and Most Versatile) land is 41%, land that should not be developed on according to planning policy. (Note: *needs validating, previously quoted 53%).
- Flood risk concerns discounted by Mallard Pass.
- Impact on mental health of residents/locals not considered. Visual amenity of public rights of way (PRoWs) will be significantly compromised, despite addition of permissive paths.
- There will be a massive detrimental impact on the bio-diversity of the area and wildlife will lose their habitat.

Of future concern:

Windel are open in their application that they will sell out should they achieve planning approval. Solar farms are notorious for schemes constantly being sold on which makes it difficult to control their future development.

I sincerely hope that you take our legitimate concerns fully into account when reaching your decision

David Kentish – Chairman Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council