

Foston Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLETED PROJECTS

Chairman's Summary

Foston Parish Council has welcomed a new Councillor this year and the Council remains confident and thinks positively despite our limited resources.

The process of producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan with the help of volunteers has been a time consuming process and has taken almost three years. The benefit of having a plan according to the Government is that it enables communities be able to guide local planning issues via their local Neighbourhood Development Plan. Foston's Plan should therefore be a useful planning guide for all future planning applications within the village. The Plan includes planning policies and design guidance.

The Parish Council has had extra funding for a new website via the Neighbourhood Plan which is now live. The Parish Council's website, the playing field and the state of the roads have been the main focus this year. Not forgetting the faster broadband we now have within the village.

New Website: The new parish website has been a long time coming and we hope it will grow. When residents of Foston have an issue the Parish Council hopes the website will be the first port of call at <http://www.fostonpc-lincs.uk/>. The new website has links to Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council's "report it" sections. We would encourage all residents to make maximum use of this new resource for solving problems and finding local information and help.

The Parish Council is also building up a list of Foston based business and offering free listing to them with a link to their individual websites.

The Emergency Plan: The Emergency Plan for the Parish has been completed and is available to the emergency services.

New Parish Councillor: Claude Preira has joined us on the Parish Council and he is now the Parish

Council representative on the Village Hall Committee and also Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

Finance The annual precept was £9300 and other income included a grant towards Neighbourhood Plan expenses of £7990, £686 towards keeping the village tidy and £400 Big Society Lottery grant from Cllr Paul Wood. We receive a grant towards part of the cost of the broadband in the Village Hall, do you find this useful, and we welcome your views? The Parish Council donated £1025 to 6 village organisations with grants from £50 to £450.

Major expenditure items include Playing Field mowing and maintenance £652, ongoing removal of Japanese knotweed £240, staff costs of £2583, insurance and audit £417, £801 for village tidying, litter picking and maintenance work. This year we have had the River Witham water tested and a traffic survey carried out at a cost of £809, this is part of Neighbourhood plan work.

Section 137 Grants: We have continued to support a range of local worthy community groups and have awarded section137 Grants to the Scouts, Conservation Group, Parent & Toddlers, Village Hall, and LIVES. The Parish Council also pays the loan for the repair of the Village Hall roof and St Peter's Church receives a grant to help with grass cutting costs to keep the Churchyard neat and tidy for us all.

Meetings: Foston Parish Council has had six Parish Council Meetings during the financial year. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has met on the second Monday of every month.

Planning: There have not been any major developments this year so more time has been spent on the Neighbourhood Plan and website set up which are both now nearly complete. Relatively minor planning applications have been commented upon mostly minor alterations to properties and tree thinning.

Conservation Group: The Group have been very busy on the Playing Field adding a raised bed and clearing the undergrowth at the entrance to the Playing Field. A Foston walks leaflet can be found here on the Lincolnshire County Councils website http://microsites.lincolnshire.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1320/Foston_Leaflet.pdf This leaflet can also be found on the Parish Council's website under Public footpaths and is also available in the noticeboard on Main Street.

Playing Field: The Parish Council continue to invest in the Playing Field and the Parish Council will soon

be focused on the provision of improved facilities for the playing field. A feasibility study has been carried out and we have had a lot of support via the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire and we are looking at the best way forward.

Neighbourhood Watch: This has now changed and via the Neighbourhood Watch website you register directly with the Neighbourhood Watch here http://www.lincolnshireneighbourhoodwatch.co.uk/pages/1051/1/Register_here.html It is possible for Insurance companies to reduced premiums to members of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Roads and Footpaths: The Council continues to receive complaints from residents regarding damage to verges which has been significantly worse this year due to the major construction work on Fallow Lane. Long Street, and Newark Hill have suffered significantly and we hope Highways will soon be working on some remedial work to tidy up the area in the not too distance future.

Community Cleaner: The Scouts have continued with their role as community cleaner and have been given a proportion of the money allocated to the village for cleaning purposes. They will continue with this role for another year as funding has been awarded.

Broadband: High speed broadband has arrived in Foston's Cabinet and can be accessed by contacting your Broadband supplier.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Playing Field is the next major project, which is to replace the changing facilities that were demolished in 2012 due to their not "fit for purpose" state. We will be looking at a business plan to get the project underway again in the not too distant future. The priority will be replacing the Footballers Hut with suitable facilities on the playing field which would benefit the residents, Scouts and Footballers when the Neighbourhood Plan is completed. We have already got a basic feasibility study. We are also looking to enter the Best Kept Village competition and we are actively looking for somebody to head up the scheme along will some willing volunteers.

CONCLUSION: The Chairman wishes to express gratitude to all the members of the Village who give their time freely for the benefit of the Village. Their hard work is greatly appreciated and the village reaps the benefits. Thanks to all the members of the

Parish Council, Clerk Wendy McCallin and internal Auditor Mr Patrick Traynor for their continued support and help throughout the year.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the Neighbourhood Plan working group who have met regularly and worked tirelessly throughout the last two and a half years to put together Foston's Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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