

Foston Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

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MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLETED PROJECTS

Chairman's Summary

Foston Parish Council has welcomed another new Councillor this year and remains positive and thinks confidently while spending funds wisely. The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been our main focus for the last three years and the Council will be moving onto the playing field project and the Best Kept Village Competition now that the plan is complete. The Parish Council's website, the playing field and the state of the roads continue to be the main focus for the Council.

Our County Councillor and District Councillor Paul Wood has been with us every step of the way and he regularly attends our Parish Council Meetings and he helps and advises us wherever he can. We do have another District Councillor but she has yet to accept an invitation to attend our Council Meetings.

The Village Neighbourhood Plan Referendum was held on 4th May 2017, on the same day as the County Council elections. The Parish Council along with the help of willing volunteers Lucy Bliss, Tracie Hesford and John Lucy and Cllrs Tracey Gardner, Ian Hesford, Christina Lees and the Parish Clerk Wendy McCallin have worked tirelessly to put the plan together. The Parish Council would like to thank everybody for taking part in all the information gathering exercises.

South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) will now give considerable weight to our Neighbourhood Development Plan when they are determining planning applications. Our plan will also now be part of SKDC's Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

The main ongoing project for the Parish Council has been the Neighbourhood Plan and the council is pleased that it is now completed. The Plan passed its examination by the independent Examiner Dr. ANGUS KENNEDY OBE, MA, MRTPI, MCIH and was recommended that it should go to the village for the referendum. The referendum result was a positive 180 YES votes to 27 NO votes.

Website: The parish website is still growing and contains a lot of information that we hope will be useful to residents. The website has links to Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council along with local services. We hope this amenity will be used by residents as the first port of call for local problems. The Parish Council is still building up a list of Foston based businesses and we offer

free listing to these businesses with a link to their individual website. The Parish Council has also started a register of residents with specialist expertise that could be useful to the Parish Council if and when needed.

The Emergency Plan: The Emergency Plan for the Parish has been completed and we will be holding an Emergency Accident simulation to test our plan, we will need willing volunteers for this exercise.

New Parish Councillor: The Parish Council welcomed Cllr David Guy who joined us at the beginning of the year; we are delighted to have him on board.

30 mph Wheelie Bin Stickers: The Parish Council has a new supply of 30mph speed limit reminder stickers for wheelie bins. They are designed to be a reminder of the speed limit on bin collection days only. We have also purchased some 30mph notices for lamp posts, which can be seen on Long Street, Newark Hill and Main Street.

Finance - Precept and Income: The year's precept was £9500. Grants received included £750 for village cleaning, plus £1345 for the government **transparency code** issued to meet the government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability. Finally £1600 was received for Foston defibrillator.

Key Council Expenditure: Three new Foston entrance signs have been purchased at a cost of £2500, the signs are due to be erected in April. The defibrillator costing £1775 is also due to be installed imminently. The Playing Field mowing and maintenance plus ongoing removal of Japanese knotweed are continuing expenses and staff costs £2190, insurance came to £314. Again this year we have had the River Witham water analysed for water quality.

Section 137 Grants: Grants were awarded to the Scouts, Guiding Association, Conservation Group and the Village Hall. 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 looking neat and tidy.

Meetings: Foston Parish Council has had six Parish Council Meetings during the financial year, plus a joint informal meeting with the Scouting Groups and the Village Hall Committee. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has met on the second Monday of every month.

Planning: There have not been any major developments this year they have mostly been minor alterations to dwellings.

Conservation Group: The Group have been less active this year although they have been very busy on the Playing Field adding a raised flower bed and they have been working in conjunction with the Scouting Groups.

Playing Field: The large tree on the playing field was up-rooted in the winter storms over Christmas and has now been cut up by willing residents with chain saws. All that is left is a large stump. The Parish Council is looking to plant another tree, but not necessarily in the same place.

The Parish Council continues 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 for the village. Foston Parish Council, Foston Scouting Groups and the Village Hall had a joint meeting to look at the best way forward for the village at the end of March.

Newark Community First Aid (NCFA): Following on from the success of the free First Aid Course, the Parish Council will arrange further Courses in the coming months.

Neighbourhood Watch: This has now changed, you join a scheme via the Neighbourhood Watch website by registering directly with the Neighbourhood Watch here http://www.lincolnshireneighbourhoodwatch.co.uk/pages/1051/1/Register_here.html Insurance companies sometimes offer 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. We hope Highways will soon be working on some remedial work to tidy up the area in the not too distant 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 again.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Playing Field is the next major project, 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 which would benefit residents, Scouts and Footballers now the Neighbourhood Plan is completed. We have already got a basic feasibility study completed. The Parish Council is also looking to enter the Best Kept Village competition and we are actively looking for somebody to head up the project along with 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.

Cllr. Mrs Christina M Lees,
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

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The Parish Council continues to collect email addresses so that important information and reminders can be circulated quickly within the village.