

Foston Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

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MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLETED PROJECTS

Chairman's Summary

We have had another good year for the Parish Council and sadly we have had to say goodbye to our Clerk of 8 years Wendy McCallin who resigned this year. Wendy has been an excellent clerk to the Council one of the best. She was an invaluable asset for the village especially with all her help with our Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Council will be moving on to improve the facilities on the playing field now, as the Neighbourhood plan is complete. The Parish Council's website, playing field and the state of the roads continue to be the main focus for the Council.

Following the elections earlier in May this year we have a new County Councillor Alexander Maughan. Our District Councillor Paul Wood has been very supportive during our meetings which he regularly attends throughout the year. He helps and advises us where and when ever he can. We do have another District Councillor but she has yet to accept an invitation to attend our Parish Council Meetings.

Website: The parish website continues to grow and contains a lot of information that we hope will be useful to residents. There are links to Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council along with many local services. Information includes all required Parish Council documents as well as details about geology, water quality, flora and fauna, archaeology, plus a brief Parish History and a wealth of useful information.

We also have a business section on the website for Foston based businesses which we would like to expand. We offer free listing to Foston based businesses with a link to their website.

The Emergency Plan: The Emergency Plan for the Parish is almost complete. We have been working in conjunction with Steve Harris at Lincolnshire County Council's Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service.

We held an Emergency Accident simulation to test for our plan this year. This was a successful exercise and we have had a training session following the training exercise.

New Clerk: Due to the resignation of Wendy McCallin we appointed a new Clerk who stayed with us for a few weeks and then resigned. Subsequently we appointed James Stanley who has a wealth of experience to bring to Foston and he used to be Clerk for Bracebridge Heath Parish Council.

30 mph Wheelie Bin Stickers: The Parish Council has a few more speed limit reminder stickers for wheelie bins. They are designed to be a reminder of the speed limit on bin collection days only.

Finance: Precept and Income: The year's precept was £9500. Grants received included £750 for village cleaning.

Key Council Expenditure: The Playing Field mowing and maintenance plus ongoing removal of Japanese knotweed are continuing expenses and staff costs were £2805, insurance came to £327. Again this year we have had the River Witham water analysed for water quality. The Parish Council continue to provide wi-fi at the Village Hall for users to access, provided grants totalling £1050 to community organisations to assist with running costs and made a donation of £330 to the Church to assist with the cost of repairs to the clock. This year the Council has also made a donation of £500 to Long Bennington Parish Council to help fund a pedestrian crossing close to Long Bennington Primary School which will benefit Foston residents.

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 two extraordinary meetings to deal with urgent matters. We continue to have a joint informal meeting with the Scouting Groups and the Village Hall Committee.

Health: We were lucky to have Diane Hansen, head of Engagement and Inclusion at South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group. She gave an excellent presentation about the way forward for the NHS in Lincolnshire's Sustainability and Transformation Plan and also answered many questions from Parish Councillors and the residents present.

Planning: There have not been any major building developments this year. Where there have been applications they have been minor alterations and extensions to village dwellings, plus some agricultural buildings.

Playing Field: The large tree stump on the playing field is to be removed when the weather is suitable for this major undertaking. The Parish Council is still 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 is focused on providing improved facilities for the playing field. Nothing came of Foston Parish Council, Foston Scouting Groups and the Village Hall's joint meeting to look at the varying options for the best way forward for the village.

Foston's new signs: are up at last which includes the Church of St Peter representing stability of the community over the years. The perching Barn Owl (villager's choice) representing future conservation and the river symbolises continuity of life. We remember the past with Foston's windmill that was demolished in the 1960's.

Defibrillator: The defibrillator has been installed in the old telephone box on Main Street and it will be registered with the Ambulance Service. Anybody wanting to use it in an emergency will need to telephone 999 to ask for the code via the Ambulance Service to open the box.

NEWARK COMMUNITY FIRST AID (NCFA): Following on from the success of last year's free first aid course the Parish Council arranged for another 2½ hour course to learn basic first aid in the Village Hall. Again this was very successful course and attendees learnt how to examine a casualty, control severe bleeding and manage a casualty in shock. They also had training on how to manage a casualty who is unconscious and breathing. There was also instruction on how to use the defibrillator on a casualty who has ceased normal breathing.

Neighbourhood Watch: We would encourage everybody to join the Neighbourhood Watch scheme online. There have been a few burglaries, including Farm and outbuilding burglaries in the local area. It is possible for Insurance companies to reduced premiums to members of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme so maybe well worth joining.

Dog excrement and litter: We are sorry to report that the dog fouling problem is getting worse again so we continually send out polite reminders to dog owners. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 states that Authorised officers of the district council are able to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to anyone found letting a dog under their control foul in a public place and not clean up after it. The same applies to litter dropped. This includes all public footpaths, pavements, verges, roads and woodland.

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 excellent role as community cleaner. They will hopefully continue with this role for another year as funding has been awarded.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are still looking to the Playing Field for the next major project, to replace the changing facilities that were demolished in 2012 due to their not fit for purpose state.

We are looking at these possibilities with the scouts to produce a useful community building for the Village, Scouting Group and visiting teams. The Emergency Plan is to be completed next year and we are working in conjunction with Lincolnshire County Council's Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service. The format is continually being up-dated so it keeps us on our toes.

A Closed Circuit television (CCTV) for the village is another project we are looking into. The Parish Council resolved to contact the St Peters' Parochial Church Council (PCC) regarding potential use of the church tower as CCTV receptor for Foston.

We are proposing to enter the Best Kept Village Competition in 2018. The first round of judging will be in May. We encourage you to get involved to keep verges and front gardens neat well-trimmed and tidy. We will need to keep public spaces tidy and clear of litter and we have just under a year to do it. The project will be led by our newest Councillor David Guy.

CONCLUSION: The Chairman wishes to thank 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, including outgoing Clerk Wendy McCallin, and new Clerk James Stanley and internal Auditor Mr Patrick Traynor for their continued support and help throughout the year.

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. To retain resident's privacy this information is emailed out as blind carbon copies. We would like to thank everybody for keeping the Parish Council up to date with their email addresses and if we have not got yours we would be most grateful if you would email the chairman with yours, many thanks.