

East and West Barkwith Parish Council

Report on the E-meeting held with the notional date of 1st June, 2020

Contributing: Mr. A. Platt, Mr. J. Stamp, Mr. C. Wilson, Mr. D. Ward, Mr. N. Battell, Mrs. T. Brady, Ms. K. Breckons, Mr. C. Fincham and Mr. N. Gibson.

It had been agreed at the March meeting that, due to the current Coronavirus situation, the council's business was to be conducted by e-mails, with a notional date for the confirmation of the details.

1041. **Election of Chairman.** Also due to the Coronavirus issue, the government has ruled that where the Annual Parish Council Meeting does not take place, there can be no election for a new chairman. The current chairman, together with any other elected or appointed officers, including the clerk as RFO, and representatives would remain in their posts until next year's Annual Meeting. This was accepted by all councillors and the list was approved for publication on the web-site.

1042. **New Member.** Following the resignation of Mr. S. Goodacre, East Lindsey confirmed that there had been no requests for an election and the vacancy could be filled by co-option. No other candidates had been suggested, so it was agreed that Mr. N. Gibson should be invited to take the seat and he has accepted. The necessary declarations have been completed and signed, witnessed by the clerk, and notification has been sent to East Lindsey. His involvement has begun immediately.

1043. **Minutes.** Minutes of the meeting of 19th March, 2020 have been circulated but it was agreed that formal approval will be deferred until the next physical meeting. There have been no comments requiring attention at this stage.

1044. **Correspondence.**

District and County Newsletters and other e-mail items of general information have been forwarded as they arrived.

Other items of note are as follows:-

East Lindsey have sent an up-date to the Electoral Register showing 3 additions.

They have also sent an e-mail outlining their plans for further co-operation with Boston Borough Council, involving shared expertise and some working practices. This is expected to save some £15.45 million over the next ten years through efficiencies in delivery of services and economies of scale in other areas.

Signed by the Chairman

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Lincolnshire County Council has sent a timetable for a temporary Call Connect Shuttle Bus service, to replace the regular Stagecoach 50 service between Wragby and Louth, while this is suspended due to the Coronavirus. This has been posted in the bus shelters.

The Library service wishes to remind residents of the on-line facilities available through the web-site at:- <https://lincolnshire.spydus.co.uk>.

LALC sent information on using Zoom as a means of video-conferencing for council meetings. However, it appears that there would have to be a regular subscription from the council to access the system, and the possible need for up-grades or additions to the clerk's and councillors' equipment in order to participate. Councillors were consulted and, on balance, the opinion seemed to favour working by the familiar system of e-mails and this was confirmed.

Quantum Air Fibre, 'Fibre to the Premises'. As agreed at the last meeting, the clerk forwarded the e-mail to councillors for consideration, but it suggested attendance at a meeting with the public so it was agreed to hold off on any action until such meetings are again possible, although it may be possible to send preliminary information to residents using flyers and the web-site. This option can be explored further.

1045. **Planning.**

a) Applications:-

Ref. - S/044/00813/20 - The Walled Garden, Benniworth Road, Panton, LN8 5LQ

For - Change of use, conversion and alterations of existing outbuildings to form a holiday let and siting of a shepherd's hut.

Councillors were given the information to enable them to view the application either on the District Council's website, or on paper by arrangement with the clerk. It was agreed by all that the application should be supported.

b) Decisions - There were no items to report on this occasion.

1046. **Reports**

a) Village Hall. Cllr. Wilson reported that the hall had been closed following the government instructions given on Friday, 20th March and will remain so until the restrictions are lifted. The water supply has been turned off but routine maintenance continues as does contact with the committee members, by telephone and e-mail. As part of this the up-dated development plan, with a list of priorities and costs, was circulated and approved. Copies can be made available to councillors on request.

Both the electrical and the fire inspections have been carried out with no remedial action being required.

The surveyor has attended to confirm the measurements for the new front doors and installation is expected in mid-June, with the costs being met from the balance of the grant.

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A new quote is awaited for the heating to be up-graded and grant aid will be sought to help with the cost of re-covering the car park surface.

A small window has been broken by a stone thrown up by a car 'doing donuts' in the parking area. The repair has been requested and will be completed as soon as the company re-opens. In the meantime, the building has been made secure.

The existing insurance company decided to review the details of the policy and required a report from a structural engineer before offering any level of cover, particularly with regard to the store room which has suffered from some subsidence in the past. The cost of this report would probably be more than the annual premium. Another company has quoted a premium for full cover of the hall but without subsidence cover for the store room. The committee agreed that this was acceptable as the store room, although no longer moving, will be replaced when funds become available.

The hall usually pays business rates, at a reduced level for charitable organisations, but the request for this has been rescinded for this year as part of the government support in the current situation. Community Lincs sent information on two other government grants intended to help with the loss of income. An application was made for one of these and it is understood that the payment is currently being processed.

b) Neighbourhood Watch. Online and telephone scams are now prevalent and residents should be very careful when banking online or over the telephone. There have been reports of door-to-door salesmen offering protective equipment and supplies, such as masks and sanitisers at inflated prices, when these are now more easily available locally.

c) Play Area. Following further government instructions the Play Area has been closed and locked until restrictions are lifted, access being given only for grass-cutting and maintenance tasks.

The play equipment has been cleaned down and repainted and the benches have been re-stained. The flat swing seats will need to be replaced before the Annual Inspection, usually in early August, and costs are being sought.

Replacement and additional equipment is being considered, subject to grant support.

d) Countryside Committee. The Parish Field has been very well used by locals and has been looking well with a range of flowers. Some additional donated trees have been planted. Thanks are due to Eric Brady and David Cotgrave for their work in maintaining the site.

Cllr. Wilson wished to thank all those volunteers who have been making the Owl Boxes. So far, two have been installed at Manor Farm, one each at The Grange and Ings Farm, East Barkwith, and four more will shortly be going to sites in Panton. More will be made as soon as more materials can be purchased with the remaining funds, a little over £300.

Thanks are due to Eric for his assistance in cutting back the excessive growth at the rear of the Village Green to allow the grass to regrow. Some of the lower tree branches will be cut back to admit more sunlight to support it. One of the oak trees has an infection in the canopy and may have to come down. It carries a Tree Preservation Order so contact will be made with East Lindsey's officer for his advice.

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The trees in the Churchyard have been inspected and any dead, damaged or dangerous branches have been removed.

e) Dog Watch Co-ordinator. There was no report on this occasion as the village is being kept very clean.

f) History Group. Contact between members has been maintained by telephone, letters and e-mail, while members to work on their own projects at home. Some small items have been added to the web-site and there has been an approach from Susan Busse, the daughter of Dr. Roe, with some family information connected with her father and the Home Guard in the village.

Thanks are due to those members who helped set up the display by the War Memorial to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

g) VE 75. The original plan for a street party had to be cancelled but the excellent weather allowed a limited display to be set up around the War Memorial. Other bunting which would have been used was lent to residents nearby. They were able to decorate their houses and front gardens and, with due regard to social distancing, spend some time outdoors with their neighbours. Most of the village visited the display at some time or another during the day, and many passers-by stopped for a few moments to mark the day in their own way, demonstrating the need to show respect for all the fallen in spite of the current difficulties.

1047. Amenities.

a) War Memorial. The winter pansies have now been replaced. The posts have been repainted and the bench has been stained. The surrounding display on VE Day brought many favourable comments from those out for their daily walk and also from passing motorists, judging by the smiles, waves and sounding of horns.

b) Web-site. The site has been up-dated with the information related to the Coronavirus situation and Cllr. Gibson's details have replaced those of Stuart Goodacre on the contacts list. Other council information will be checked and up-dated where appropriate after approval.

c) Shop. Cllr. Ward, as proprietor of the shop, pointed out that, should he, or any of his family succumb to the virus, the shop and post office would have to close immediately for the prescribed term of isolation, and be properly prepared for re-opening afterwards. He was concerned for the residents, both the regulars and those who are choosing to shop closer to home, especially those who are relying on his delivery arrangements. There is also the question of the newspapers which are brought to the shop each morning at around 5am, and left outside the premises for him to bring in and sort for the regular orders and for general sale. He asked whether a councillor might be willing to liaise with him and with any potential volunteer(s) to organise at least partial cover during such a period.

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A number of comments were made, some to the effect that it was not a matter for the council to get involved in a private enterprise, others ranging from supporting the idea of some volunteer help with the newspapers up to invoking part of the Parish Emergency Plan and opening the Village Hall for use as a temporary shop, thus supporting the vulnerable residents.

Since then, Cllr. Ward has been in touch with other colleagues who run similar businesses and the discussions have revealed a number of difficulties. Because of these, his request for help has, reluctantly, been withdrawn at this stage. Further discussion may take place at a later point should the need arise.

1048. Highways.

Insurance evidence has been sent and acknowledged in accordance with the Parish Grass-cutting Agreement. The arrangements for payment will be notified later in the season. Cllr. Wilson stated his wish to thank Eric Brady and Colin Poxson for their work in cutting the roadsides.

The county contractor has done as much as he can on the Willingham Road and Lincoln Road Bus Shelters but is currently unable to get supplies of perspex for the windows. He will be back to finish the work as soon as these are available. The noticeboards, which were removed during the work, were cleaned and refinished and have now been replaced.

Cllr. Wilson reported that the bus shelter at West Barkwith, the responsibility of this council, is also in need of cleaning and staining for which some £40 would be needed for materials and this expenditure was approved..

The grant of £500, towards the cost of the speedwatch camera, has arrived. The clerk will need to remind the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership of the posts which were designated for this so that they can complete a final visual inspection. Three posts were originally specified, on the main roads in and out of the village, so the costs were quoted at £2,000 for the speedsign itself and one bracket, plus £60 for each extra bracket - these to remain screwed to the posts while the sign is rotated between them. There had been agreement that the council should go ahead with the notification and the purchase at a total cost of **£2,120**, and this was confirmed.

1049. Finance.

a) Receipts - The precept has been received in the sum of £8,250
 The District Councillor's Grant towards the Speedwatch sign has also been received £500

b) Bills - The following items had been approved for payment on receipt of invoice -

Payee - For	Cheque no.	Net	VAT	Total
GoDaddy - Web-site Host Fee	CARD	£83.88	£16.78	£100.66
Mark Woodcock - grass-cutting	000857	£121.00	-	£121.00
BHIB - Insurance	000858	£489.61	-	£489.61
S. C. Warren & Co - Internal Audit	000859	£100.00	-	£100.00
Viking - Office Supplies	CARD	£89.23	£17.85	£107.08

This last payment would normally be paid by cheque but Viking is accepting only card payments for the time being. Page 981

Signed by the Chairman

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There were no other specific invoices awaiting attention but, as stated at the last meeting or approved as above, a number of payments will be due shortly:-

Village Hall Doors - possibly by CARD - quoted at £1,286 plus £257.20 VAT = **£1543.20**

Quarterly Salary payments due in June - at the rate agreed in November 2019, to take effect from April 2020, a total of **£1,092** for the quarter from 1st April to 30th June. A tax payment will need to be deducted and paid to HMRC but the exact figure is not yet certain.

Reactive Speed Sign and Brackets Total **£2,120**

Further supplies for Owl and Bat Boxes up to total of **£328** - to be paid from remaining grant.

Materials to clean and stain West Barkwith Bus Shelter approx. **£40**

On-going Grass-cutting bills for fuel etc and for Mark Woodcock

It was agreed that the payments should be made at the due date or on receipt of invoice, using the CARD if there was no alternative.

c) Asset List - The List of Land Holdings has not changed since last year. It has been circulated and was approved for publishing on the web-site.

d) Accounts and Annual Return -

i) The internal audit has been completed with no issues to report. The auditor's report has been circulated and it was agreed that it should be accepted. The accounting records and all other supporting documents for the Annual Return were also circulated for study.

ii) The Certificate of Exemption from External Audit was circulated and approved for signature by the chairman and the clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.

iii) The Annual Governance Statement was circulated and the clauses agreed by all. It was approved for signature by the chairman and the clerk.

iv) The Accounting Statements sheet was signed by the clerk as Responsible Financial Officer and circulated. It was agreed by all that the figures were in accord with the other documents already seen and that the Statement should be signed by the chairman.

It was also agreed that the notional date of this e-meeting and its notes should provide the date and minute references for the signatures on these documents.

The completed documents will be prepared for publication on the web-site and the period for public inspection of the accounts and related documents will be set from 29th June to 7th August. This is a little later than last year but will allow time for current restrictions to ease a little and for the clerk to ensure a safe procedure.

The VAT repayment claim for 2019-2020 has been submitted.

1050. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Fincham asked if there were any views on registering the Crossroads as a Community Asset and a number of councillors felt it was appropriate to investigate the options and the process.

Under normal circumstances, the next meeting would fall on Thursday, 16th July. However, as it may well have to take the same format as this e-meeting, it could be appropriate to consider that date as being the start of the process and this was agreed.

Hopefully, September will see a return to more normal arrangements.

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Signed by the Chairman