

WILSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WILSFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 21 MAY 2024 AT 6.30PM IN THE SMALL ROOM OF THE VILLAGE HALL.

Present: S. Davey. 4 parishioners and D Gascoyne Parish Clerk

1. Welcome by the Chair: The Chair Simon Davey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. To resolve to approve the notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16 May 2023. It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: to accept the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16 May 2023 as a true record and these were signed by the Chair.

3. Presentation of reports:

- Chair - Cllr Davey read out his report and a copy are attached to these minutes.
- County/District Cllr Hagues - Cllr Hagues gave a verbal report including that disabled bays at Paddock Close had been turned down. There had been no further correspondence regarding the Flooding at Town End.

4. Financial Report: The Parish Clerk read out her report and a copy is attached to these minutes.

5. Questions from the Public:

Hedge – The hedge at the Crescent is overgrown, but nobody knows who owns the hedge. The Clerk was asked to contact NKDC in the first instance.

Public Transport – A parishioner had written to Centrebus and copied in the Parish Council regarding the declining and overcrowding of the No.27 service.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.45pm

Signed:
Chair Wilsford Parish Council

Date:

WILSFORD PARISH COUNCIL: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

Until a few months ago it would have been reasonable to describe the period since my last report as uneventful. Sadly, Storm Babet on 20 October and Storm Henk on 2 January were the precursor to some alarming weather and I shall return to the rains and flooding in greater detail below.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

The vacancy caused by the resignation of Councillor Jacky Clements was filled by the co-opting of Sarah Reseigh, known to most of us as the boss of the Plough. Otherwise, Councillors Martyne Miller, Val Blankley, Keith Corner, Mick Harrison and Roger Sirs (our Deputy Chairman) remain in place. They have all been very supportive in our meetings and other activities and my thanks go to them.

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

Denise Gascoyne remains Clerk to the Wilsford Parish Council and has continued to provide a first-rate service. She is also Clerk to the Ancaster Parish Council which is very useful when our interests overlap, for example on Emergency Planning.

PARISH COUNCIL WEB SITE

For much of the period the Wilsford Parish Council website was administered by James Bell and we are grateful to him for all the hard work he put into it. But the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) now employs a website administrator who has access to a wide range of useful information that he can put directly onto the website so we, like most Parish Councils in Lincolnshire, now subscribe to this service.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Following some boundary changes, our representative at both District and County level is now Councillor Andrew Hagues who previously represented us only at county level. Despite the calls on his time he has managed to attend almost all of our meetings and has been invaluable in his assistance at the higher administrative levels.

FLOODING

Wilsford is designated a flood-risk area but I imagine most of us assumed that the threat came from the Beck and that most of the houses bordering it had long sloping gardens that would ensure that, even after heavy rain, the waters would not rise high enough to threaten flooding of buildings. Alas, we now know that the real threat comes from water running down the steep fields to the south of Main Street. Storms in October and January came as a warning and in February sheets of water hit the row of bungalows at the top end of Main Street. Two houses had to be evacuated and several more suffered water damage. The cause was traced to a culvert that runs from a private garden, under Main Street and into the Beck and which it is believed had been fractured thus reducing its capacity to discharge flood water.

Wilsford Parish Council has been party to a detailed exchange of correspondence between the residents impacted and the local manager of LCC Highways over

responsibility. To their disappointment, Highways have argued that they are not responsible for the drainage of private land. However the authorities will still be carrying out a Section 19 investigation the purpose of which is to determine the main causes and identify recommendations as part of a possible solution. We will continue to be involved in this.

BIO-DIVERSITY (Contributed by Councillor Martyne Miller)

The year saw continued progress for our **Wilsford Naturehood Programme**, with a wide number of species seen.

Our meadow areas, left to grow naturally throughout the summer, were a huge success with more plant species introduced, building on the 104 identified at last year's Wildlife open day.

Early in the year a small working group tackled overgrown paths, encroaching ivy, and removed broken or overhanging branches at the entrance to the playing field. More work is needed, and another date will be arranged in the autumn now that we have more robust equipment. The area around the specimen Oak was cleared letting more light in and encouraging new growth.

In late April we once again encouraged villagers to take part in No Mow May, creating their own mini meadows to provide early nectar for bees and butterflies. Insects love many of the plants we think of as weeds: nettles, buttercups, dandelions, clover and ox-eye daisy, to name but a few. Leaving even a small patch can bring many new species to a garden.

In July we reminded villagers of the benefits of being immersed in nature and told the story of four new trees, donated by villagers, that had been planted in the cemetery and on the edge of the playing field. The trees, all native and suitable for the areas selected, are doing well with new shoots showing and acting as a reminder of personal stories, including the work done by the NHS during COVID. We hope that all four trees will continue to thrive in their new homes, giving pleasure to all and benefitting our wildlife.

Planning is already underway for the coming season with hopes to reinstate the Willow Walkway - long overgrown and almost unrecognisable - lay a natural hedge at the entrance and a dead hedge at the perimeter. Path clearing and removing fallen trees will be part of the next working party.

A commemorative bench, for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Majesty King Charles III, has been ordered and will soon be in position allowing villagers to sit and take a moment in their busy lives to simply enjoy nature, watch the butterflies & bees and listen to the birds.

The Naturehood Programme is working closely with the newly formed Community Orchard Project in the hope that together we can support the creation of a wider wildlife corridor and raise awareness of the importance of protecting and enjoying nature.

PLAYING FIELDS AND PLAYGROUND (Contributed by Mick Harrison)

Despite the comments of some parishioners, we have not been neglecting our duties here. Maintenance this year has been hampered by the unusually high rainfall that has

left the grass too wet to cut in many places. Ask any farmer about the set-backs the rain has caused! But the grass has now been cut and is at a very reasonable level. The football pitch is still wet at the left hand side but now we have had a little bit of dry weather it will be improving fast. The playground was inspected and as soon as things improve we hope to repair the Wendy house.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The last community activity related to emergency planning was the National Outage Exercise on 28 to 30 March 2023 in which representatives of Wilsford and Ancaster Parish Councils took part. This exercise was set against the background of a nationwide loss of power and in my view the organisers had not fully comprehended the absolute chaos and disorganisation such a disaster would bring about. By contrast, the Joint Emergency Plan that our two villages have put together lays out action to take in the event of a purely local major incident - another fire at the recycling plant, for example. We have resubmitted our plans to the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum for any further comment of up-date but have had no response. The plan may be viewed on the Wilsford Parish Council website.

DOG FOULING

A small minority of dog-owner in the village simply have no thought or consideration for others by allowing their animals to do their duty in the street or on the playing fields (where it is a particular risk for children) without picking up and safely disposing of the poo. We have put up notices (which are themselves defaced) and more bins and plastic bags but the practice continues.

We have installed new dog bins near the bus stop and near the Post office. We also replaced a number of 'dog fouling' signs and have continued to monitor the dog bag disposal units. Over 400 dog poo bags have been used since the installations.

FIREWORKS (Contributed by Councillor Roger Sirs)

The Annual Wilsford Firework Display has become probably the most popular village social occasion in recent years. The Parish Council has sponsored and provided oversight of this event since its inception, but with its increased popularity it became necessary to put its organisation on a more formal footing and bring it in-house. This event is now therefore an official Parish Council event run by a small village working group under the management of our Deputy Chairman and we would hope to continue with it into the future.

DONATIONS TO OTHER BODIES

During the year the Parish Council gives donations to local organisations and other bodies to advance their work on behalf of the community. In the last year we have given various sums of money to St Mary's church for roof replacement and for grass cutting in the cemetery; to Wilsford and Kelby News; the Village Hall; the Christmas tree fund; the fireworks display; Wilsford allotments; the mobile library van; the Wilsford produce show; Open Garden; and other community events. We hope that these donations will help to build a closer community.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH (Contributed by Councillor Keith Corner)

Over the past year and under the supervision of Councillor Corner we carried out a number of speed awareness checks along Town End and are looking to start the programme again in May. We requested replacement 30mph signs and these have been installed free of charge.

GET TO KNOW YOUR VILLAGE OPEN EVENING

On May 14, the Parish Council hosted an Open Evening to showcase activities within the village of which not everybody might have been aware. There were around 21 manned tables. Some were from established bodies like the village hall, the church, the history society, the Plough, and badminton. But others might have been less well known like the upholstery workshop, open gardens, dog grooming and yoga classes.

It was particularly useful to have present representatives of Quickline who are the company who will be laying fibre optic cable down Main Street between 24 June and 19 July. This will inevitably cause some inconvenience and the team were able to answer relevant questions on it.

Councillor Miller gave a short presentation on the bio-diversity project and activities on the playing fields and around the village which are of great interest and importance.

Some 31 people manned the tables, and a slightly greater number of villagers came to see the event. Complimentary tea, coffee, cake, and wine were available, and the event went on until nearly 9pm.

The event was organised by Councillor Martyne Miller and our thanks go to her for a very worthwhile occasion.