

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLETED PROJECTS

Chairman's Summary

I write during the pandemic at the beginning of April. This situation could not have been predicted but here we are still in lockdown although things are beginning to ease very slightly.

The children are back at school and half of all adults have had their first doses of one of the vaccines. What a year we have all had and our priorities are changing to the situation. We have received a lot of planning applications this year 17 in total, that is very unusual. Like everyone else the Parish Council has followed the guideline rules.

Councillors are working by e-mail, text and Zoom and now by Teams. Thankfully it has worked reasonably well although we do miss face to face meetings. The Parish Council has invested in our own laptop for the first time ever. That will mean that all documents are stored on one machine and we have the documents backed up on our website <http://www.fostonpc-lincs.uk/> and on the cloud to be on the safe side.

James Stanley our Parish Clerk has managed very well keeping us up to date in these difficult times and we have had to have more meetings than usual. The first thing we had to do when we went into the first lock down was to set up a support group to help vulnerable residents

There are some things that have been postponed until life and business gets back to some normality, but we have continued to deal with queries and news issues. We will in time resume first aid classes when it is deemed safe to start again.

To ensure transparency of the work of the Parish Council, details of its business is available to view on the Parish Council

website. Although we have all seen rises in the District Council Tax, I am pleased to report that there is no rise in the Foston's Precept as it has been maintained at the same level as last year.

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

We are expecting an Election in May for the Police Commissioner and County Councillors for Lincolnshire as the 2020 election was postponed due to the pandemic.

Website: The parish website contains a lot of information that we hope will be useful to residents. 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.

The Emergency Plan: The Emergency Plan for the Parish is complete but needs regular updating.

30 mph Wheelie Bin Stickers: The Parish Council's safety initiative has secured more speed limit reminder stickers for the resident's wheelie bins.

Finance: Precept and Income:
The year's precept was £11,013. Grants received included £814 for village cleaning.

Key Council Expenditure:
The Playing Field mowing, hedging and maintenance plus ongoing removal of Japanese knotweed are the continuing expenses. The staff costs were £2824, insurance came to £341.

This year the Parish Council purchased and installed a new picnic bench on the Playing Field and we also purchased two dog waste bins. 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 £1200 to community organisations to assist with running costs as Section 137 Grants:

Section 137 Grants: Grants were awarded to the Scouts, Guiding Association, Conservation Group and the Village Hall. St Peter's Church receives a grant to help with grass cutting costs to keep the Churchyard looking neat and tidy.

The Parish Council has at long last completely repaid the loan for the repair of the Village Hall roof.

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.

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. This is in conjunction with the Scout and Long Bennington Football club. We now have the plans for the building in progress.

Defibrillator: Foston Parish council has provided a new Defibrillator for the Village Hall which has been installed on the outside wall by the ramp. We are hoping to get NEWARK COMMUNITY FIRST AID people to give us some hands on experience when rules allow.

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 not been as active with their excellent role as

community cleaner due to the pandemic. Once it is safe they will be back in action.

Dog Fouling We are sorry to report that the dog fouling continues to be a problem. This year we leaflet dropped the entire village with a Dog Walker's Code and Villagers still continue to fail to pick up after their dogs. The same applies to litter dropped. This includes all public footpaths, pavements, verges, roads and woodland.

LOOKING AHEAD

Foston Parish Council is still looking to the Playing Field for the next major project, to replace the changing facilities and the Scout Hut that was demolished in 2012 due to the not fit for purpose state. This is a long term project with a goal for completion to be around 10 years if the Scout Hut will hang on that long.

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

CONCLUSION: The Chairman wishes to thank all residents who give their time freely for the benefit of the Village. Their hard work and commitment is greatly appreciated and the village reaps the benefits. Thanks to all the members of the Parish Council and especially to our parish clerk James Stanley and internal Auditor Mr Patrick Traynor for their continued support and help throughout the year.

The Parish Council continues to collect email addresses so that Newsletters and important information along with reminders can be circulated quickly within the village. To retain resident's privacy all information is emailed out as blind carbon copies.

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

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