

Foston Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

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MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLETED PROJECTS

Chairman's Summary 2007 - 2025

This year I am doing things differently because this was my last year as Chairman. We have done our best with our limited funds and I am pleased with the Parish Council's accomplishments.

I was elected as a councillor by Election a very long time ago. And I have been Chairman ever since. So I thought I would look back and see some of the things the Parish Council has achieved during all those years!

I think we have accomplished quite a lot! Some initiatives take many years for example the footpath around the double bend. We had been campaigning for that for years. In the end we had to offer to pay a proportion of the cost to secure the project. And that was definitely well worth taking out a loan to pay for it.

Going back to January 2008 we had a lot of issues on our "to do" list! Most of them have now been completed but there are still some that are outstanding. For example the renovation of the Scout and footballers huts on the playing field. The footballers changing hut was demolished in 2012 because it was no longer fit for purpose.

The Parish Plan was the first Parish Council initiative that I became involved in. To find out more, check out the Parish Plan on our Parish Council website or **here**. You will notice some very familiar names although one or two of our original participants have now left the village. We also developed a Neighbourhood Development Plan that was published in 2016 and can be found **here**.

In 2006 Foston did not have very much at all in the way of amenities. By then we had lost the School, Pub, Village Shop and the Post Office. At that time we did have an outreach Doctors surgery and a regular visits from the Mobile Library, unfortunately we have since

lost both facilities. But now we do have a thriving community with many new organisations taking up new initiatives.

The purpose of a Foston's Parish Plan was two-fold. After initial consultation with the village residents, of all ages, a detailed Action Plan was developed that was taken forward by the Parish Council and local community groups. Many of the initiatives have been completed or are ongoing. Now is the time to update the Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Development plan as one document to take Foston forward in the latter half of the 21st century.

Following the Parish Plan publication several groups were set up including the Conservation Group, Toddler Group, Foston Footers and Foston Parish Council's very first website and the Neighbourhood Watch group was reinstated.

Neighbourhood Watch: has changed over the years and it is now managed by the Parish Council. All notifications are sent out by email. This is an area we need to improve and we are looking at ways to improve safety including a local cctv set up.

The Playing field: committee was a sub-committee of the Parish Council with the Parish Clerk John Lucey taking the initiative. The group was responsible for the children's play equipment and the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). I remember getting up every day in freezing fog conditions to record the MUGA taking shape and it was mighty cold.

The Parish Council continues to invest in the Playing Field and the Parish Council has been focused on providing improved facilities for the playing field. This has been in conjunction with the Scouts and Long Bennington Football club and possibly the Village Hall committee in the future. This idea has been on-going for many years.

The walks leaflet: was put together by the Conservation group and published in 2010 and can be found on the Parish Council website. Now, Lincolnshire County Council have up-dated the information and they have even more comprehensive information on their website **here**, so definitely worth a look.

The Toddler Group: thrived for many years but unfortunately it closed when there was nobody able to take it on. It was briefly reinstated but it has since closed. If anybody is interested the Parish Council has the balance left over from the time when the play group closed and would be willing to help again with another start-up group.

The Book Club: Continues to thrive with most of the original members. They are an informal bunch that meets monthly to discuss books over an optional glass of wine and nibbles!

30 mph Wheelie Bin Stickers: The Parish Council's safety initiative continues to secure more 30 mph speed limit reminder stickers for resident's wheelie bins. We usually go for two stickers for each bin so now we provide them in sets of six or eight.

Neighbourhood Development Plan: Fast forward to 2014 and we were working on another major project for Foston, the Neighbourhood Development Plan that was published in 2016/7. This was another major achievement for the village and one of the first in South Kesteven. The value of the Neighbourhood Plan has been tested with some of the Planning Inspectors quoting the Plan in their judgements.

Foston's Neighbourhood Development plan now needs to be up-dated so we will be looking for volunteers to help again.

Another new website 2016: We spent some time looking for a suitable host for our new website as the old one was no longer fit for purpose. I spent three months choosing topics, writing up along with taking photographs for the website which went live in May 2016. Since then most village organisations have had a webpage.

The Parish Council 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 therefore offer free listing to Foston based businesses.

The Pandemic: 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. This Parish Council initiative has been developed into a help group supported by the Parish Council, Lincolnshire County Council via Lincolnshire's YMCA. This enterprise has been working in partnership with communities throughout Lincolnshire to help communities wishing to set-up Good Neighbour Schemes. Hence we have now have Foston Neighbours.

The Emergency Plan: The Emergency Plan for the Parish was completed in the year 2014/2015 but this is ongoing and needs regular updating. In 2023 we joined forces with Foston Neighbours.

Key Council Expenditure: The Playing Field mowing, hedging and maintenance plus continuing staff and insurance are the Parish Councils main expenses

For the playing field we have recently provided additional bins and a picnic table. The Parish Council continue to provide wi-fi at the Village Hall for users to access. We also provide grants to community organisations to assist with running costs with Section 137 Grants:

Section 137 Grants: Grants have been 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. These grants can be applied for on a yearly basis

Meetings: Foston Parish Council has six Parish Council Meetings during the financial year, plus extraordinary meetings when required to deal with urgent matters. We continue to have a joint informal meeting with the Scouting Groups and the Village Hall Committee.

Roads and Footpaths: Over the past 15 years Church Street, Tow Lane, Long Street, and Chapel Lane have been either resurfaced or dressed. Now Long Street and Newark Hill are in need of resurfacing and the junction of Main Street and Wilkinson Road are always in need of urgent attention.

Unfortunately campaigning for anything takes years rather than months. Potholes blight our village roads and as soon as one is filled in another one appears, it is a never

ending battle to report problems to Lincolnshire County Highways. We have been trying to get residents to report all potholes directly on to FixMyStreet. This is a simple quick method of reporting problems.

Trees Fallow Lane and Newark Hill: Trees on Fallow Lane and Newark Hill have been planted by Lincolnshire Highways in accordance with instructions. So that there is sufficient space has been left for hedging and ditching. We have also had fruit trees from Defra that have been planted in the Church Yard close to Church Street.

Community Cleaner: The Scouts have not been very active with their role as community cleaner for the Parish Council.

Queens Diamond Jubilee: 2012 was the year of the Queens Diamond Jubilee and the Parish Council planted an Oak Tree in the middle of the Long Bennington Foston roundabout. This process took much longer than we had thought because we had to get a licence to plant it and then wait for the correct season to plant it out so in the end it was not planted until March 2013 to commemorate this momentous occasion.

Celebrating: is something we as a village are quite good at despite rain on HRH Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

First Defibrillator: We took delivery of our first defibrillator in 2017 and now we have three. One in the phone box on Main Street another on the Village Hall and the third on the Gorrie Hall Scout Hut on Chapel Lane.

NEWARK COMMUNITY FIRST AID: They are a charity that has attended the Village on multiple occasions giving us free First Aid courses. This includes the skill of how to use a defibrillator. Thus giving us vital First Aid training on how to save a life.

New Foston Sign: In 2017 Foston's new sign was delivered to the village. We had three made for the village one on Main Street, another on Newark Hill and the third is on Allington Lane. The illustrations on the sign represent Foston's different eras. The Church has been a steadfast building for hundreds of years. The owl represents the natural rural world. The river runs behind the Church and the Foston post windmill, a lost

landmark that used to be prominent in the village.

Parish Council Letterbox: Just a reminder we have a Parish Council letterbox in the old telephone box on Main Street.

Dog Fouling: We put together a dog walking code in 2020 and we are sorry to report that the dog fouling continues to be a problem. Unfortunately some villagers fail to pick up after their dogs. On all public footpaths, pavements, verges, roads and woodland you have to pick up after your dog. We have also had complaints from residents about dogs urinating on alloy wheels causing staining, please watch where your dog is relieving its self.

LOOKING AHEAD: Foston Parish Council is still looking at the Playing Field, for the next major project. This is to replace the Scout Hut and the footballers changing facilities with one new building. The footballer's facilities were demolished in 2012 because they were no longer fit for purpose.

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

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.

NB All the emails that I send out are circulated as blind carbon copies to keep the village informed and to retain resident's privacy. At some stage this will change and we will be using a new system - Mailchimp that ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Cllr. Mrs Christina M Lees,
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
2025