

# **Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

## **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 7.30pm Methodist Church Hall, Back Lane**

### **1. Introduction and welcome**

Welcome and thank you all for coming to the Annual Parish Meeting which is open to the public and an opportunity for the Chair and Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to report on the work of the Parish Council and for residents to raise any issues they have for the Parish Council to consider. The Parish Council is here to serve the community and can always be contacted either via the clerk or your councillors. Please allow me to also welcome our other speakers, David Heath French from the Colsterworth Festival of Remembrance, Mo Taylor from the Nature Trail, Warden Peter Wheatly from St John the Baptist Church, Lucy Bateson from The Youth Club Committee and Vanessa Tombs from BLOCK Action Group. Thank you to all for your time.

### **2. To Approve the Minutes of meeting held Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

The minutes of the Parish Meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 were agreed and duly signed.

### **3. Chair's Annual Report**

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to Sue Grant who has retired after 8 years as clerk and welcome to Eleanor Parfitt who has been appointed as the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Thank you to both for favourable internal and external audit reports. The Parish Council aims to act as proper custodians of the public's money.

I would like to thank Kevin and Mark our Community Cleaners who continue to provide a first-class service.

Thanks to all councillors for providing their time and efforts looking after individual projects and coming together for meetings and for looking after our community.

Thanks to District Councillors David Bellamy and Ben Green, and County Councillor Charlotte Vernon who come to our meetings so we can escalate things to the appropriate authorities when necessary.

Thanks to all the Nature Trail volunteers – it takes a combined effort to maintain it and they do so brilliantly.

Thanks to the volunteer litter pickers – the Parish Council is grateful for their efforts.

Finally, thank you to the “In Touch” volunteers delivering to every household in the Parish and to the editor Stuart Whitcombe for their efforts – they do a sterling job every month.

In terms of the projects the Parish Council has worked on within the past year, the War Memorial information board was finalised last year and is now wrapped up although there is on-going maintenance. Associated VE day and then VJ beacon lighting Assisted by the Scouts and Dawn Prentice saw a nice turn out for the community to celebrate and remember important events in our community. The creation of Nature Trail maps, with support from a £250 Co-op Community donation was completed and maps are now placed in key areas around the village. Painting of the Colster Way play equipment plus bench maintenance helped to keep everything up to a good standard. Anything that needs maintenance, please draw it to the attention of the Parish Council. The Old Post Lane Cemetery extension is underway – planning has now been granted with conditions. The current cemetery is nearing capacity so now that planning is granted with conditions, we will continue to work on bringing the project to realisation so that members of the community can remain in the area after

their passing. And finally, with the Emergency Plan review, assets have been bought for the community, ie. sandbags, so we have a bit more mitigation in place going forward.

In terms of planning, we are statutory consultees and provide feedback on local planning. Some of our current consultations are:

- Anaerobic digester appeal
- Small development of 3 houses on Bourne road
- Plant hire site East of A1 and self storage adjacent to A1
- Quarry operating hours
- Housing allocation south of Bourne Road

The PC will continue to feedback to try and mitigate, where possible, things affecting the community.

Looking forward, the Parish Council will continue to work on:

- Old Post Lane Cemetery extension.
- Nature trail tree maintenance with ongoing monitoring for safety and for the health of other trees.
- Review of the Neighbourhood Plan which will be in the context of the new housing allocation awaiting further developments from the county and district councils to ensure any further development is in the spirit of our community.
- Review of traffic issues, particularly on the High Street and the Community Car Park. Aiming to help when the A1 is closed by talking to highways about what can be done.

#### **4. Clerk's Financial Report**

The SCRIBE Accounting Parish Council software package continues to provide the Parish Council with a robust transparent accounting system with reports extracted from SCRIBE.

- Bank accounts are reconciled and approved monthly.
- The Finance and Administration Committee meet twice a year.
- October includes Budget Setting which was agreed and recommended to full Council.
- April for End of Year accounts and external audit.
- Internal Audit is undertaken twice yearly by an independent auditor.
- Councillor O'Neill has a view only access to the Parish Council bank accounts.

#### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/2025**

- The Annual Governance and Accountability Report dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025 for 2024/2025 had no findings.
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/2026 is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026.
- The Internal Auditor is scheduled to complete the Internal Auditors Report on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Statements of accounts are uploaded to the Parish Council website on a monthly basis.

#### **Bank Balances at 31/03/26.**

- Community Account £9,661.15
- Community Savings Account £52,899.79
- **Total £ 62,560.94**

#### **Total Receipts for 2025/2026 = £62,003.03 (Excl VAT)**

- Budgeted receipts of £61,860.80

- **Actual receipts of £62,003.03**

**Total Payments for 2025/2026 = £62,127.34 (Excl VAT)**

- Budgeted payments £61,861.00
- **Actual payments £62,127.34**

### **Policies for Updating**

Policies are regularly reviewed and recommended to full Council for adoption. All Policies can be found on the Council website on the following link  
<https://colsterworth.pariah.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-business>.

## **5. Nature Trail update by Mo Taylor**

Recruitment to what the volunteers call 'the green gym' continues to be quite strong with around 15 to 20 members currently. To help keep the team occupied, volunteers are regularly sent out elsewhere in the community with recent tasks including painting the church railings, painting the railings outside the Methodist Hall, tidying up the pub garden rockery, and tidying up Spring Lane which saw a fantastic positive response from the village which has been much appreciated by the volunteers.

In terms of professional development, upcoming trips include the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust with whom the Nature Trail is loosely attached with a view to rekindling the relationship and providing wider work for the volunteers. The team also plan to complete a tidy up at the Church cemetery and visit Boothby Pagnell rewilding to view the beavers.

The volunteers perform litter picking a few times a year especially on the flyover and are grateful to the truck stop for the refreshments.

KWR Logs have been a huge help with ash die back and plant machinery for tree removal.

The Nature Trail maps have been produced and placed around the village (noticeboards, National Trust Woolsthorpe Manor, the surgery) with a suggestion from Woolsthorpe Manor that a brochure be produced which the Nature Trail hopes to explore with the Parish Council.

Fly tipping on the trail continues to be an issue, mostly minor litter but some major sites as well.

For the future, the volunteers are looking to provide some landscaping to the old village bypass mound to stop it looking so unloved.

## **6. Colsterworth Festival of Remembrance update by David Heath-French.**

Pleased to say that turn out for last year's event was very strong and continues to improve year after year. A few changes to report: I (David Heath-French) will remain as Chair but will be taking a slight step back with Mark Cornell taking over the organisation of the actual day – a thorough handover has been conducted. Lorna McShane has taken over as Secretary from Caroline Hainsworth and they have been going over the finances together. Flight Lieutenant Tamsin has stepped into the steer group to bring her experience.

In terms of finance, three signatories are on the account to mitigate any fraud issues. The bank account has moved from Yorkshire Bank to Virgin after it was purchased but it has proven to be much easier to deal with. In terms of spending, the big War Memorial project has been finished off beautifully with a final goal to try and get a flag pole fitted at the site. Preliminary discussions and quotes have been gathered with 80% of funding secured and no ongoing maintenance costs associated with the project. CforR intends to apply for a Parish Council Community Grant to secure

the remaining funding. In terms of funding elsewhere, Lorna will be taking this on and building on the success of recent years (with the annual hamper and raffle prizes) which bring in around £1500 each year.

In terms of planning for the 2026 event, Mark is liaising with the homeowner nearest the memorial on use of utilities and the passing on of this request to any new homeowners so that the relationship can be maintained. All details of the day have been covered in the handover with Mike Childs taking over managing the road closures and organising training. A lot of work is going on in the background for this year's event.

## **7. Update on the St John the Baptist Church by Peter Wheatley (Church Warden).**

Thanks for the invitation as it's a great opportunity for the church to speak about what they'd like to do and achieve going forward. Firstly, worship – we have been without a vicar for 3 years but have had services as normal through that period led by laypeople. Pleased to say that the congregation has remained consistent despite the lack of vicar. We try to do things of interest to other people – the Christmas carol concert brings the church up to 80% capacity (around 80 people) and it's a delight to see non-regular members of the church. Midnight mass is also always popular. Other highlights include the end of term school services – normally starts around quarter to two, parents start turning up at one o'clock as the school has expanded and it's standing room only and it's great that so many people turn out.

Moving onto the building, it's Grade 1 listed in recognition of it dating back 1200 years and being of some importance, but that can be a nuisance as we'd need to get permission even to change the front door and it can hamper maintenance of the Church. We try to work with it and live with it. The clock-donation from the PC was kindly given but it is still in the bank account. The clock has a problem with the striking mechanism and has now been disabled. A cog is being re-cut which requires approval because of the listed status – the cog had to go to a workshop in Nottingham. Clock repairers anticipate putting the cog back in and carrying out other necessary work in late May. It's a few hundred years old and requires craftspeople that are becoming rarer which is why it's taken so much time. The Ingle Trust has also provided support which has been gratefully received. The roof has also undergone repairs by a firm from Yorkshire who did a great job.

Moving on to the community, in 2024 we did a Christmas concert with carolling which led to a full house and a great response from the community. Last year, four concerts were held including the Cranwell Military Wives Choir who have asked to come back this year. A lot of local people who are very gifted have been kind enough to provide their time as well. The coffee morning has raised funds but is also for meeting the community. The Church also sends a card twice a year to every household just to say 'we're here!' and keep contact with the schools in Great Ponton and Colsterworth with the children really enjoying the opportunity of doing the pictures to be chosen for the card. Acknowledging the huge amount of time people give to the church – making tea and coffee, grass cutting, flowers, etc., which is hugely appreciated especially as there are so many people in the village who do so despite not being churchgoers themselves. A huge thank you from the church. A good number of visitors come during the summer as well usually in conjunction with Woolsthorpe Manor visits – it brings in a steady stream of people.

With regards to a new vicar, it's good news and 'slowly, slowly' news – we're in the process of organising recruitment packs. The new vicar will not be a replacement for the one that went – the new one will be in charge of multiple parishes – an 'oversight minister' for 16 parishes. It's not what the Church would have preferred and it's not what possibly a number of local people would have hoped for either but the days of a vicar overseeing just two or three churches and knocking on doors is long gone. As such, volunteers will remain a huge part of the Church and if people are accepting of the change and the new way of doing things, it can be a success.

## **8. Update from The Youth Club Committee by Lucy Bateson.**

The Colsterworth and District Youth Centre is a small committee of six or so members and provides a small service in the community as well as supported in the upkeep of the Little Legs Nursery with a small income coming from their rent. We provide support to local youth groups and offer donations - recent donations include the Colsterworth Colts Football Club and the Colsterworth Music Festival. Slightly outside of our normal remit but we also used our insurance to repair the damaged fence on Colster Way after an accident. We would like to continue to support other groups in the village like the Cubs and the Scouts plus the Football Club who need new loft insulation. We're also prepared to put money towards resurfacing the Community Car Park. We ask that local people make requests to us for support for young people in the village.

## **9. Update from BLOCK Action Group by Vanessa Tombs.**

For context, BLOCK was formed by a group of local residents to oppose the industrial biogas AD plant application on a site between Gunby and Sewstern which would impact Stainby and Colsterworth as well with HGVs using the local roads between the plant and the support hub every day.

In conjunction with other local parishes and local people, SKDC was persuaded to reject the application but it has now been appealed by the applicant. The appeal has dragged on as so much documentation has been provided by the applicant's team of solicitors, technical experts and planners. The Planning Inspectorate will now hold a full 4-day inquiry in July with SKDC unfortunately deciding not to contest the appeal.

BLOCK is officially a Rule 6 party with a team of people helping to defend against the appeal – through fundraising and generous donations from local residents, a professional advocate and technical experts have been brought on board to help locals defend against the impacts of the proposed industrial development in open countryside and within a 7.5t weight-restricted highway zone.

The point of coming today was to give the main update about the enquiry – the first two days (14-15<sup>th</sup> July 2026) will be in the Jubilee Life Church, 5 London Road, Grantham and second two days (16-17<sup>th</sup> July 2026) will be in the council offices on St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. Any member of the community is welcome to attend to have their say. We are particularly encouraging anyone from Colsterworth who lives on Bourne Road and from Stainby living on Buckminster Road to attend and speak as these will be the most impacted by HGVs. Anyone not wishing to speak is still encouraged to attend as this will be a valuable show of strength. The Planning Inspectorate must weigh up the benefit versus harm so the strength of feeling in the community can make a difference. Once built, it is BLOCK's opinion that the amenity of the two closest villages will be altered.

## **10. Any Motions by Electors (must be proposed 10 days before the Annual Parish Meeting).**

## **11. Any other business.**

**The meeting closed at 20:30pm.**

**Signed:**

**Chair**

**Date:**