

BARKSTON AND SYSTON PARISH COUNCIL

AT A MEETING of the BARKSTON AND SYSTON PARISH COUNCIL held in the Village Hall, Barkston, on Monday 11 March 2024 at 7.45 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Miss M.E. Nussey in the Chair

Councillors A.C. Card, P.C .Connor, S. Elnor, A. Hine, S.A. Micklewright, R. Parke, C.I. Pell and A. Rowell.

Also present – District Councillor Ian Stokes.

PUBLIC FORUM

One local resident said that he was concerned at the state of the grass verge in front of the Bedehouses on Honington Road, Barkston. The verge was muddy and rutted and a danger to pedestrians. In particular, wheelchair access was poor as a result of mud spreading onto the pavement. The Chair explained that discussions with the Highway Authority had taken place over the last 11 years but that further contact would be made in an attempt to come to an agreement about a programme of work to make the verge safer.

Another resident asked for an update on the situation regarding the edges of Hough Road, which had been reported as overgrown and in need of action to assist with draining water away. The Clerk pointed out that this had been referred to at the last meeting, and that the Highway Authority had agreed to look at the area, and arrange for drainage grips to be cut.

The Chair thanked the residents for attending, and for their comments. The points made in regard to the Bedehouses issue would be considered later in the meeting. The Public Forum was closed at 7.55 pm.

Before commencing the business of the meeting the Chair referred to the fact that this was the Clerk's last meeting, following nearly 54 years of service, and introduced the newly appointed Clerk, Mrs Samantha Soutar.

2749. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Paul Martin. (This apology was received by the Clerk at 7.09pm, after he had left for the meeting).

2750. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to all members, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

2751. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

2752. ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

Members considered the update circulated by the Clerk on 4 March, with reference to issues raised at and since the last meeting in relation to the following:

(a). Blocked drains, Minnetts Hill/Church Street – work completed.

(b) Footpath opposite Village Hall, Barkston – work completed. Also, the Highway Authority had cleared the dyke, and cut a larger grip to allow water to drain.

(c) Speed limit reduction, Hough Road, Barkston – the Clerk's report outlined a response from the Highway Authority in regard to the request made at the last meeting for details of the specific parts of the policy which applied to the area, and how to appeal if the decision was considered unsatisfactory. It was apparent that Hough Road did not meet the requirements of the policy, although it was pointed out that the road was the only road in the village not subject to a 30 mph limit. After a discussion, it was agreed to request that a survey be undertaken to establish whether or not the speed limit was regularly exceeded, before taking any further action.

(d) Footpath to Picnic Area from village, along Station Road – the Area Surveyor had been reminded that the Council's suggestion was to construct a path in the County Council owned land to the north of the road, not on the road itself. The Clerk advised that no reply had been received.

(e) Station Road speed limit – similar query as in item (c) above, survey to be requested.

(f) A607 crossings – a reminder had been sent after the last meeting, but no reply had been received.

(g) Footpath – The Drift towards the bus shelter, Main Road, Syston – request made for the path to be sided back, but no reply received.

(h) The Drift, overhaul of the uneven surface – referred to Area Surveyor, but no reply received.

(i) Gates at side of road at entrance to Syston – standard 'slow down' village entrance gates, referred to Area Surveyor, but no reply received.

(j) Extension of footpath along A607, coming from Belton to Syston – this path to be extended from its present stopping point opposite the turn to Syston, towards the turn to Syston Park. Referred to Area Surveyor, but no reply received.

(k) Improved signage to alert drivers to the turns into Syston village and Syston Park, as well as a street light to improve visibility. Referred to Area Surveyor, but no reply received.

(l) Syston 'Village Only' sign – sign demolished and referred to Highways under the Fixmy Street scheme. Being investigated.

(m) Area in front of Bedehouses, Honington Road, Barkston – discussion took place on the item mentioned during the public forum, and it was agreed that the Clerk would again write to the Highway Authority emphasising the now urgent nature of works, particularly in view of the worsening damage to the verge. County Councillor to also be advised and requested to take action. It was also suggested that the Almshouses Committee could write supporting the urgent request for action. Councillor Micklewright offered to prepare a letter for all Almshouse residents to sign, to support the Council.

A Councillor expressed concern at the lack of replies to a number of the Parish Council's requests, and enquired if the Clerk was aware of any key performance indicators. The Clerk indicated that he was not aware of any such indicators.

2753. PLANNING MATTERS

Comments/decisions:

i Decisions received:

Construction of a bespoke timber and double glazed garden room to rear elevation of the property as a replacement of an existing conservatory on the same footprint, Sunny Cottage, Minnett's Hill, Barkston – not consulted in the usual way as an application for a certificate of lawful use – approved

Variation of condition 15 (opening times) of S22/2320 (Section 73 application to vary Conditions 2 and 5 of planning permission S22/0471), Land north of The Leas, Hough Road, Barkston – approved

(Parish Council's comments to be checked against the conditions imposed on the Permission, and members advised accordingly).

ii Decision made following consultation with the Chair:

The application for residential development comprising the erection of four detached Dwellings and renovation/enlargement of an existing dwelling, The Gables, Honington Road, Barkston, was subject to an appeal to be dealt with on the basis of written representations

The Clerk said that he had consulted the Chair and on the basis that the Parish Council did not raise any objection to the proposal at the application stage, no further comment has been made. The Parish Council's 'no objection' comments will be passed to the Planning inspector

2754. BURIAL GROUND

The Clerk reported that he had had further contact with the Funeral Director in regard to the unsatisfactory finishing of a grave plot. The plot had now been levelled and turfed, and was considered satisfactory.

2755. PLAYING FIELD

Councillor Card reported problems with flooding following heavy rain, which had resulted in some matches being cancelled.

2756. PICNIC AREA

A replacement litter bin requested from SKDC had been provided. It was a significantly bigger bin, and was able to take dog waste. To prevent unauthorised removal the bin was chained to a nearby tree.

A quotation had been received for the levelling works to the surface, to dig out and relay, provide more chippings and compact, in the sum of £600. This was agreed.

It was noted that the field adjacent to the picnic area had been sold, apparently with a right of access through the picnic area. The Clerk said that he was unaware of any right, although it was acknowledged that there was a gate on the far side of the area providing access into this field. It was agreed that the Clerk would check with the County Council's Legal Services section to ascertain if there were any rights from their former ownership which had not been carried forward.

2757. CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) SKDC – Flood Prevention - The Clerk reported that the stock of 100 sandbags had been received and were stored in the Bier Shelter at the Burial Ground. It was agreed that it

would be necessary to publicise the availability of the bags/sand in the event of flooding, and members enquired if there was a published plan for this eventuality. Noting that there was no such plan, Councillor Micklewright undertook to look at the SKDC plans and report back.

- (b) Grantham College – The Council considered a request from Grantham College, which had been circulated, to find out whether the Council were aware of any skills development needs in the area which the College could help with. After consideration, it was agreed that no further action be taken, as course availability in the area was well known.
- (c) LCC – Electric Vehicle charging locations – an email from the County Council asking for the Parish Council's help in identifying electric vehicle charging locations in the area had been circulated to members. Some suggestions had been received, and these were discussed along with suggestions made at the meeting. It was considered that there were no suitable locations within either village, and it was therefore agreed to take no further action.

The email also asked for thoughts about sustainable travel within the area, and after consideration it was agreed to suggest that a better cycle/footpath linking Grantham and Sleaford, passing through the villages would be a useful addition to sustainable transport in the area. Clerk to advise the County Council accordingly.

2758. SKDC LIFE SAVING TRAINING

The Clerk reported that he had contacted SKDC asking for a Friday date, as agreed at the last meeting, but unfortunately these were restricted owing to bookings already made, and staff difficulties. The Tuesday dates had been canvassed instead, but the Village Hall was unavailable. The Clerk said that more dates would be available in September, as last year, and in the circumstances he had declined the March dates, and suggested that the September dates be considered when availability was known. The Council agreed with the Clerk's suggestion.

2759. SOUTH KESTEVEN PROSPERITY FUND

Councillor Micklewright introduced his update report, which was circulated to members. He reminded members that his report to the January meeting had provided a list of possible projects. It had been agreed that projects covered by other budgets should be passed on, specifically road improvements, and this had been done by the Clerk. The Council further agreed to provide feedback on the priorities and preferences against the list of possible projects.

Comments had been received from a number of Councillors, resulting in a broad consensus that the Council should prioritise: improvements to the playground and associated facilities; an annual village show/arts festival; improvements to the drainage at the Playing field; cricket pavilion renovation and improved parking at the Playing Field.

Subject to approval, quotations would be needed for the works before bids were submitted, and it was suggested that wherever possible quotations be sourced from locally based contractors/businesses. It would also be necessary to contact Councils that had made successful bids to obtain contact details for specialist suppliers, e.g. playground equipment.

After discussion it was agreed that five discrete bids be submitted to the SKDC Prosperity Fund as follows:

1. Improvements to the Playground;
2. Funding an Annual Show;
3. Improve drainage at the Playing Field;

4. Cricket Pavilion renovation; and
5. Works to improve parking at the Playing Field.

Councillor Micklewright authorised to submit bids as they become ready, with copies to Councillors.

2760. VILLAGE HALL

- (a) Councillor Connor's note/minutes deferred from the last meeting – the Council gave further consideration to Councillor Connor's note of his meeting with the Village Hall Committee, and to the minutes of that meeting. A general discussion ensued, during which the point was made that the ownership of the hall needed formalising, as the Charity Commission website stated that no property was owned by the Hall Committee. It was queried whether or not there was a constitution. Councillor Connor said that there was a meeting of the Hall Committee next month, and he suggested that he report back to the Parish Council meeting in May. This was agreed.
- (b) King's portrait – members were advised that free portraits of King Charles were available for siting in Community Buildings, upon application. It had been suggested that the application, which had to be made by the Parish Council, could be made for a portrait in the Village Hall, subject to the Village Hall Committee agreeing. Councillor Connor said that he would raise the suggestion at the VH meeting in April. It was necessary to register an interest in the first instance.

It was proposed and seconded that the Parish Council apply for a portrait of the King for the Village Hall. On being put to the vote there was an equality of voting. The Chair exercised her casting vote against the proposal which was therefore lost and no further action was taken.

2761. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Financial update

The Council received and noted the financial updates at the present date, and the Clerk explained these for the information of members. In response to a query in regard to mowing payments the Clerk explained why some showed different figures.

Clerk to continue looking into the possibility of a deposit account with Virgin Money and report in due course.

(b) Accounts paid and for payment

RESOLVED:-

(i) That payment of the following accounts be approved and confirmed (all online):

Rachel Metcalfe (Christmas decorations)	£166.12
Anglian Water Business (Supply to Burial Ground 26.9.23-12.11.23)	£19.29
Lincs Association of Local Councils (Advert for Clerk)	£72.00
Anglian Water Business (Supply to Burial Ground (12.11.23 – 12.2.24)	£19.29

(ii) Account for payment;

That the following account now submitted be approved for payment:

M L Hall (Half year salary)	£1239.46
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2762. ITEMS FOIR DISCUSSION BUT NOT DECISION

Councillor Stokes mentioned that the SKDC Local Plan update would be out for consultation next week. The Clerk advised that he was aware of this, and undertook to circulate the reminder from the District Council.

Councillor Parke asked if anyone locally, including the Parish Council, was arranging anything to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June. After discussion, it was noted that nothing was planned locally.

Councillor Parke also asked if there was such a thing as a list of volunteers in either of the parishes, i.e. people who were available to undertake small jobs in the area that required a small amount of time. It was apparent that there was no such list and therefore Councillor Parke undertook to organise one, and to publicise it via local social media.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Dated..... Signed.....
Chair