

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting  
held at Utterby Village Hall Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

There were 24 people who attended the meeting including residents, Councillors, speakers and the Parish Council Clerk.

No apologies were received.

**1. Chairman's introduction**

Cllr Alan Woodward, Chair of Utterby Parish Council welcomed everyone in person to the Annual Parish Meeting.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

The draft minutes of the 2022 meeting were proposed and seconded as a true and accurate record and the Chairman signed them as the minutes.

**3. Annual Report, Utterby Parish Council**

Chair of Utterby Parish Council, Cllr Alan Woodward presented the Parish Council's Annual Report 2022-23

**Parish Council**

I am delighted to welcome you to our Annual Parish Meeting. I am pleased to report that we have had a full complement of Councillors over the last twelve months and I would like to thank them all for their support and during that time. The Parish Council has been ably supported by our local representative from ELDC, Councillor Edward Mossop and Councillor Alex Hall from Lincolnshire County Council, who have attended the majority of our meetings.

**Parish Clerk**

On behalf of everyone residing in Utterby, I would wish to thank our Parish Clerk, Maria Vincent for her work. She brings enthusiasm to the Council and her contribution is vital to the smooth running of our affairs.

**Meetings**

Utterby Parish Council met on ten occasions this year and continue to meet on the first Wednesday of each month with a 15 minute slot at the beginning of the meeting for residents to ask relevant questions. Our next meeting in May is two weeks later than it would usually be (the May Annual Parish Council meeting), due to the elections. It could have been that we had a contested election, and that being the case we would not have had a new council in place by the first Wednesday of the month.

**Governance**

The Parish Council is a member of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils, their support and legal advice access has been very helpful in the past. The Council continues to ensure that its framework of policies is regularly reviewed and updated. Key documents include the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Management/ Strategy. A complete list of the policies and documents are available on the Council's website.

Delivery of Parish Council Amenities

**Assets**

The Council continues to maintain the Village Green and the amenity grass verges on the A16. The verges amenity grass cutting is part of a Parish Agreement with Lincolnshire County Council and we signed up to this again in 2022/23; this enables the Parish Council to contract a grass cutting company direct to cut verges along the A16 through Utterby, and this is undertaken up to 13 times during the year (weather dependent).

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The moles have again been troublesome this year, but the pest control company endeavours to keep them under control.

The bus shelters are cleaned every month and the structures are maintained. This year we also started paying the contractor who cleans the bus shelter to clean the phone box monthly following an infestation of dead wasps. This year three of the bus shelters were recoated with preservative, two also had new Perspex fitted as the windows in them had become opaque and one had new woodwork to replace those that had rotted. The Kissing Gates and Millennium bench are checked regularly. Sadly the original wooden parish notice board was in such poor condition that, following the offer of a free metal noticeboard from Blackrow Group (a local resident business owner), we decided to replace it – it will be sited within the next few weeks. Part of the new noticeboard will be available for the users of the Village Hall to add their own posters.

We maintain all the trees and the hedge on the village green, and also organise three cuts per year for the footpath from Church Lane to the A16 to keep this clear for walkers as LCC no longer maintain it.

The Parish Council is committed to improving the fabric of our village. In 2022/23 the five planters in the village were refreshed with new seasonal plants on a regular basis. The new benches of the Village Green continue to be popular with residents and dog walkers.

At Christmas we had the LED lights onto the tree by the decorative Utterby sign on the corner of Church Lane and the Main Road. Unfortunately these are not hardy enough to be kept out all year through and so due to the unstable connection over Christmas 2022, we have had to remove them and will consider a new idea for Christmas 2023.

The Welcome Packs continue to be delivered to new residents. The Council continues to maintain and update its website, Facebook page and publishes and distributes the Utterby Voice twice a year in January and July.

### **Finance**

In 2022/23 the precept was £8843.84 and at the end of this financial year our spend was £8,824.64 leaving a balance of budget and reserves of £17044.75. We also received income from the Parish Share (grass cutting contribution from LCC) and from claiming back VAT on our expenditure. During the year the Council resolved to make no increase on the Precept for 2023/24 keeping it to £8843.84 yet again.

We ensure that all contracts and purchases give the residents of Utterby best value. The annual Internal Audit took place in February 2023 with a good report back and the AGAR (annual governance and accountability return for 22/23) will be completed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting and submitted to PKF Littlejohn LLP Auditors.

### **LCC Highways and Other Issues**

The Parish Council reports on issues regarding the highways / street lighting and the traffic refuge in the village often using 'Fix My Street' and we continue to make Lincolnshire County Council aware of the speed and volume of traffic on the A16; we will keep doing this as it is one of the major issues in the village.

### **Planning Matters**

Two planning applications were considered during the year along with one planning appeal: Planning Permission - Erection of a hay store. Ref. No: N/192/02230/22 THE ORCHARDS, MAIN ROAD and Planning Permission - Erection of a detached garage. Ref. No: N/192/01250/22 ESTEVAN, CHAPEL LANE

The Council considers all planning applications objectively and with regards to the village as a whole - it has been supportive of residents inconvenienced by building traffic and will continue to report to Planning Enforcement when conditions stipulated by planning applications are ignored or planning permission is not applied for to begin with.

#### 4. Reports from Village Organisations

##### a. Utterby Primary Academy – Headteacher’s Report – Tom Hawkins

Utterby Primary Academy is federated with North Thoresby Primary Academy, with whom we share a number of resources and staff. We are part of Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) one of the largest multi-academy trusts in England.

At Utterby we operate 3 classrooms and the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) remains at 10 children per year, a total of 70 pupils overall, which is the current maximum capacity of the school. Since September, for the first time in many, many years, the school is effectively full. We currently have a waiting list of 12 children awaiting places in a number of different year groups. To manage the capacity we currently have 3 full time teachers, supported part time by a further teacher and full time by an additional unqualified teacher.

As in recent previous years, the catchment area for pupils remains remarkably wide and for about 60% of our pupils Utterby is not their nearest school. We continue to have a strong uptake of pupils attending from Louth and other surrounding villages, which is essential for the long term success of the school, as both the feeder villages of Utterby and Fotherby do not traditionally have either the size or demographics to maintain even a small school by themselves.

We know in the coming years the proposed housing development of 198 new homes in the neighbouring village of North Thoresby will have some effect on the school there. North Thoresby also has a reasonably wide catchment area, however in the short term of 3 to 4 years this catchment area will probably contract and North Thoresby Primary Academy will likely mainly serve residents of the village itself. This in turn will have the probable effect of reducing Utterby’s catchment area also, due to the relative increase in population size within the immediate vicinity. Following our successful Ofsted Inspection in November 2021 we recently had an Educational Quality Review as part of Trust’s cycle of school standards monitoring and quality assurance. We were very pleased that the team that came to visit agreed with our own high rating of the school and gave overwhelmingly positive feedback. As always this is a testament to the hard work of staff who together make Utterby Primary Academy an excellent place to learn for our children. This “health check” recognises that the school has continued to make improvements since its last inspection.

It is wonderful to be part of a forward thinking and supportive trust such as Academies Enterprise Trust. Whilst we are geographically remote from our fellow trust school (as are other schools in general given our slightly unique location), we still feel very much part of the academy trust family, and this is none more so reflected in the support we receive from our colleagues up and down the country on a day to day basis.

In the school grounds themselves the long awaited upgrade the ‘mobile’ classroom to the side of the main building is currently underway (over the Easter holidays) and we continue with plans for an additional permanent structure to expand our learning environments. This may also have the effect of increasing the potential number of pupils on roll in future years. Obviously building costs are very high at present and school budgets very tight, but we continue to work with our trust to ensure the best facilities possible for our children. On a side note, we have been unaffected by recent industrial action in the education sector.

Post-COVID we are out and about into the wider community and have been enjoying a number of local trips and activities over the past few months. Having our own pair of minibuses allows us to enjoy the amenities of the local area with relative ease, such as recently when our youngest children visited the library in Louth just before the holidays. After Easter they will be used extensively again as some of our older children have swimming lessons at the Meridian Leisure Centre in Louth. The buses also allow us to join up with our partners and friends at North Thoresby,

such as for a recent architecture and sustainability workshops which all children took part in, kindly led by local organisation Equans.

Over the summer term all the classes are going on at least one other school trip. Children in Year 5 and 6 have the incredible opportunity for a 4 night residential in Cornwall in July. It is a bit further afield than we would normally go, but a great chance to visit a different part of the country and take part in a range of fantastic experiences, including a trip to the Eden Project.

Although COVID is largely no longer an issue in school, absence due to general illness, including well documented spikes of scarlet fever and Strep-A, has led to lower than expected attendance in schools in England so far this academic year. Whilst we remain on the right side of expected attendance compared to the current national average, we have seen some quite intense periods of illness, particularly just before Christmas. Unfortunately this did mean we were unable to hold our usual Christmas performance at St Andrews as we normally would and instead held a much reduced carol concert in school. Since then however attendance has thankfully returned to normal.

In school we have been inviting our families in to join our pupils in their "learning share" assemblies. Children present to parents what they have been learning over the current and previous terms followed by leading their parents through a workshop of related activities. Not only is this a fantastic opportunity for pupils to recall their recent learning (and help commit it to their long term memory), but also is a fantastic oracy opportunity to speak in front of a crowd of people. The school continues to offer a range of before and after school provision for children. We have a daily breakfast club on site and this term children have a choice of 7 after school clubs run on Tuesdays to Fridays, spread across both North Thoresby and Utterby school sites. By sharing clubs across both sites we are able to offer a wider range of clubs and continue the link for pupils to collaborate over both school sites.

Our fabulously supportive Friends of Utterby Primary Academy continue to run a number of fundraising events including a family movie night and a recent Easter Bingo event, both held at Utterby Village Hall. Both events were brilliantly attended and raised over £800, which will go towards supporting a range of school activities over the coming year and beyond.

We also have just launched a new academy council as part of our governance structure which is designed to celebrate success and explore new opportunities for the school within the local area. The council is a mixed of parents, staff and local community members.

**b. St Andrew's District Church Council –Chairman – Mr David Frost**

**Congregation:** We are pleased to say that regular congregation numbers are around 20 and that new village residents have been welcomed where people have moved away.

**Services:** Sunday services are held on the 4th Sunday of every month with local licenced readers or retired clergy, all volunteers, leading the worship. A Harvest celebration was incorporated into the October Sunday. Utterby schoolchildren and their parents held their Harvest service in church. A Carol Service was held on Christmas Eve and was attended by church members and village residents.

**Life services:** A funeral service was held for Miss Silver Green, aged 93 and a committed member of the congregation.

We were pleased to celebrate the wedding of Kenneth and Hayley Coxon and the christening of Martha Wrisdale.

**Churchyard:** The churchyard is maintained for the enjoyment of the whole community and thanks are due to David Buckley for his professional and skilful work in caring for the hedges and the grass. Volunteers regularly tidy the graves and gravestones, removing weeds and ivy.

**Social/fund raising events:** Overall we have enjoyed a year of successful fund raising and social events and are very grateful to all the volunteers who arrange and run our events. We are also

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grateful for all the donations of cakes, plants etc which greatly help the profits. Post pandemic attendance has increased and we see village residents and local visitors regularly supporting events. Saturday coffee morning have been held in church and we have been pleased to support Simon Small with his Village hall coffee mornings.

Recently we held our usual Snowdrop Day and were almost overwhelmed by the number of visitors.

The Pic Nic Party for the Queens Platinum Jubilee was badly affected by weather, causing everyone to move into church- it was a bit of a crush: Similar bad luck affected our Christmas events. The school concerts had to be cancelled because of illness amongst the pupils and a power failure caused 'The Churchwarden's Jolly' to need to relocate, but a good time was had by all. Thanks to Tim and Pam for their hospitality.

Looking forward we shall celebrate the Kings coronation and have plans for more coffee mornings, a Harvest Festival, a Heritage day and a Christmas event.

The door to the church is always open and visitors are welcome to take time to look around, study the local heritage or just to sit in peace.

### c. **Village Hall Committee – Ann Van-Spall – Treasurer, Utterby Village Hall**

Since our last report, we have seen a steady stream of bookings for the hall.

Danielle's Baby Club on a Thursday is attracting a number of children's parties so this is generating much needed income. We also have regular bookings for: the Parish Council, Parkinsons, Philip Brougham, Dog Club, Simon and Andrew's coffee morning.

This year there is the local elections in May and the hall is hired out for the day as the village polling station.

Since last year as all of us know the electricity bills have sky-rocketed so we are making sure the heating is switched off after every hiring.

We have reviewed our hiring costs and it has been agreed that from 1st September 2023 the price will be £15 per hour.

We are pleased that Simon and Andrew from the Barn have joined us as members of the Village Hall Committee.

Finally, I personally want to record a big "thank you" to Glenda and Pat who work tirelessly week after week keeping this village hall going well done to you both.

## 5. **Open Forum**

- A report from the Utterby Coffee Morning organisers, Simon and Andy Lashbrooke-Small was read out:

We started Utterby community coffee morning in Sept 2022 with the annual Macmillan coffee morning to kick it off. Coffee mornings have now also been held in December 2022 and February & March 2023, with a turn out of over 30 people each time. The main focus is to give local people an opportunity to get together, meet new people and catch up. Aside from that, charity donations have also been made from any profits (after hall costs and some occasional consumables).

Charities benefitting have been: Macmillan £275, The Ark Animal Sanctuary £225 and DEC Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal £200.

Thanks to everyone who has attended and/or donated. We will continue with our community coffee mornings over the coming months. Save these dates for your diaries - May 19, July 21 & September 29, all at the village hall from 10am-12pm. Everyone is welcome! To sign up for email updates, please send an email with your name(s) to [utterbycoffeemorning@gmail.com](mailto:utterbycoffeemorning@gmail.com) - Thanks and see you there soon!

- There was a general discussion regarding the speed on the A16 and it was acknowledged that this was the biggest issue of complaint in the village and that the Parish Council did bring this to the attention of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) regularly but that it seemed not to be able to make any progress regarding speed restrictions due to the criteria set for 30mph speed limits. The general opinion was expressed that the only thing to stop the speeding along the A16 would be speed cameras. The opinion was voiced that the police could also help enforce the speed limit but it was commented that even though there had been RTC accidents within the Utterby boundary, they had not been reported to the police and therefore the police had no evidence that speeding was a dangerous issue in the village.
- A resident of the village complained about the issue with road noise outside her home, and that LCC had inspected and undertaken some maintenance, but that she was convinced that there was still an issue with the structure of the road.
- A resident complained about the state of the pathway from the corner of Church Lane around to the bus shelter on the south side of the village, that it was covered in bark and branches and that you could not easily walk the path. As part of the public highway this was LCC's responsibility, but that it might be something that the parish council could look at if there was no improvement in the debris build-up. Cllr Woodward commented that if everyone in the village kept their own verge in front of their home tidy, that the village would be much tidier. He also thought that the verges would be in a much better state if people refrained from driving and parking on them.
- There were concerns regarding fly-tipping in Church Lane, recently a fridge had been left on the verge, which Cllr Woodward had reported to have removed.

Cllr Woodward brought the meeting to a close, thanking everyone for coming to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.04p.m.

Minutes taken by: Maria Vincent, Utterby Parish Clerk