

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Present;** Cllr. R. Gore (Chair), Cllr. C Hunt, Cllr. S Farrow, Cllr. D. Forrest, Cllr. D. Edwardson

Kexby residents; M. Prior, G. Payne, K. Payne, P. Dooley, L. Hunt, C. Wells + 5 Upton residents for item 1

**In attendance;** Cllr. J. Milne (WLDC) for the whole meeting. Hayley Silvester (Quickline) Stephen Brookes (LCC), Carl Knight (WLDC Broadband Officer) for the first agenda item only.

**Apologies** were received from; Cllr. C. Cuckson, Cllr. L. Hoggarth, Bernie Shaw,

**APM21/01 Broadband provision and improvements** – a presentation and question and answer session was given by the representatives from Quickline, Lincolnshire County Council and West Lindsey District Council. Many residents of both Kexby and Upton were finding broadband both slow and unreliable. Quickline had been awarded a contract by WLDC to improve broadband in rural areas, their remit being to assess demand in rural communities and to devise bespoke solutions to suit local conditions. This would often be a hybrid system of wireless and fibre, using some of the existing infrastructure (such as ducting and poles) to suit local topography. Provision would rely on the use of government voucher schemes to meet the cost and, as such, it would require a minimum of 60% uptake to make a scheme viable.

During the Covid pandemic there had been supply issues which had delayed improvements to Quickline's infrastructure causing them to fall behind schedule but these appeared to have now been resolved. It would make sense for Kexby and Upton to be regarded as a joint scheme given their proximity, if a scheme was agreed it would be fully implemented within twelve months.

There was currently dissatisfaction with provision from both Quickline and BT/Open Reach from many customers with complaints about after sales service from Quickline and inadequate infrastructure from BT (both villages suffering from being at the end of the copper wire network). Hayley acknowledged that there had been issues with Quickline and agreed to contact existing customers to apologise for previous shortcomings and promise improvements.

Following discussion Quickline agreed to the following five point plan;

1. To email all existing customers to acknowledge the challenges and what they were doing to improve their service.
2. To submit a proposal through BDUK to secure funding for the Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme.
3. To look at increasing capacity at the repeater site to stabilise speeds in the interim.
4. To produce a flier for Facebook to encourage residents to register interest for fibre to the premises (FTTP) electronically in the first instance.
5. Following successful approval from BDUK encourage further engagement through door knocking and/or completing further community engagement events in order to fulfil the minimum number of vouchers to make sure the programme was commercially viable

It was pointed out that not only was the internet unreliable with the current, copper wire based, system but many people were experiencing severe problems with their telephone landlines. Like the broadband, this was an intermittent problem, with the interference on the line so bad some days that it was impossible to hold a conversation. Many people were still reliant on landlines as mobile phone reception was also very poor. Asked if the hybrid system could provide a solution to this problem it was explained that it could for much of the time but it relied on the internal power supply to the property so there could be problems in the event of a power cut. Where a continuous provision was essential, for example where people were reliant on Lifeline services, the problem could possibly be overcome using a battery back-up system.

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**APM21/02 Minutes of meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019** – legislation requiring a meeting to be held annually had been suspended in 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic so the 2019 meeting was the last meeting to have been held. The minutes had been posted on the village notice board for seven days prior to the meeting, they were approved as a true record and signed off by the Chairman.

### **APM21/03 Matters arising**

- a) Neighbourhood Plan** – no progress had been made on this because of the pandemic, at the Parish Council meeting prior to this meeting it had been decided that the process should be held in abeyance until the level of commitment from the community as a whole could be assessed.
- b) Telephone box** – this had been sited on the village green and many positive comments had been received about how it had greatly enhanced the appearance of the village centre. It was serving a useful function as a book exchange which was appreciated by many residents. The Chairman once again expressed the thanks of the Parish Council to those involved in its restoration.
- c) Glentworth Road drains** – these had been sorted out, further work was still required to prevent a repetition of root blockages but the Parish Clerk would continue to monitor this. Cllr. Milne pointed out that it had eventually required intervention of the local MP, Sir Edward Leigh, to spur the local authority into action for which the Parish Council were very grateful. They had written to Sir Edward to inform him that the work had been done and to thank him for his assistance.

**APM21/04 Chairman's Report** – this was circulated to those present, because of the pandemic there had been limited activity during the year but the Chairman thanked those who had helped to keep the Parish Council functioning and residents informed throughout. The Parish Forum (Facebook), maintained by Cllr. Hunt, provided an excellent communication method for many and the village notice board provided access to information for those who did not have this resource. The new village website (<https://kexby.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk>) was also a source of information although the Clerk was still finding the updating a learning (and time-consuming) experience.

It was pointed out that the speeding issue was on Kexby Lane, not Willingham Road as stated in the report. LCC had promised to review the possibility of a speed limit on this road following a request from the Parish Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Following the intervention of Sir Edward Leigh once again LCC responded on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to say that surveys had been suspended during the pandemic and that they had 161 “live requests” for speed reviews prioritised on known collision locations.

**APM21/05 Treasurer's Report** – the annual accounts had been passed by the internal auditor and approved by the Parish Council, a copy of the balance sheet had been posted on the village notice board for seven days prior to the meeting. Other than routine expenditure the main item purchased had been a second defibrillator for the centre of the village, located on the corner of High Street and Glentworth Road. This was fully functioning and checked monthly along with the one at the village hall.

Kexby was fortunate in receiving rental income from the parish cottage in addition to the precept from WLDC. However, the age of the cottage did mean that the Parish Council did have to maintain reasonable reserves in case of unexpected maintenance costs. Balances at the end of the 20/21 financial year were £10,447 in the current account and £2,017 in a business reserve account.

There were no questions raised concerning the accounts but the Clerk reminded parishioners that anyone on the electoral register could examine the full set of accounts (by arrangement) during a period of 30 working days known as “Exercise of Public Rights”. This year that period would run from 7<sup>th</sup> June until 16<sup>th</sup> July, anyone wishing to take advantage of this should contact the Clerk.

### **APM21/06 Resident's Forum**

- a) Pillar box for village green** – it was suggested that a pillar box sited at the opposite end of the village green to the telephone box would enhance the area even more. The Chairman said that if anyone was aware of one they should inform the Parish Council who would give it due consideration.

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- b) Tree planting** – a request was made for a tree to be planted on the village green to the west of the road in a gap left by one which had been removed. It was pointed out that planting one in that position was likely to interfere with the drains taking excess water from the well, which was the reason for the loss of the previous tree.

An alternative site was also suggested by the wooden bus shelter on the corner of Willingham Road and Kexby Lane. Neither site is owned by the Parish Council, they both come under the jurisdiction of Lincolnshire Highways from whom permission would have to be sought. The Parish Council had discussed opportunities for tree planting at their earlier meeting at the request of WLDC who were conducting a survey of potential planting sites. There was no land owned by Kexby Parish Council upon which trees could be planted.

- c) Tree obscuring signpost** – it was reported that there was a tree on the corner of Willingham Road and Kexby Lane which obscured the signpost, particularly when in leaf, this often caused traffic to stop on the corner in order to read the sign. This was an obvious traffic hazard and the Clerk was asked to report it to LCC via the “Fix My Street” tool. **Action GP**

- d) Platinum Jubilee** – the tree planting suggestions above had been inspired by the potential platinum jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen in 2022 (having ascended to the throne on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952). No details had yet been released concerning national celebrations but it was felt that the village was likely to want to mark the occasion in some way. Items such as bunting and flags had been purchased to celebrate VE Day 75 in 2020 but the event had to be cancelled because of the pandemic so the items would still be available for use. It was suggested that an item in the parish newsletter asking for ideas might be a good idea and the Clerk undertook to include it as an agenda item at a future Parish Council meeting.

- e) Post Office** - this was operating in the village hall on Mondays and Thursdays between 10:00 and 11:30 but there was still a degree of unreliability. Because of family commitments the operator was not available in school holidays and there was no back-up if other issues arose. Such a level of uncertainty was deterring people from using the service. Another issue was that the “A frame” sign which used to be placed on the roadside got broken and had not been replaced so there was no indication of when the post office was operating. The Chairman offered to look into the issue. **Action RG**

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:15pm