

Chairman's Report May 2023

I would like to welcome everybody to the Annual Parish Meeting and highlight some of the events of the last year.

The current members of the Parish Council have come to the end of their duties. Those that want to continue have been requested to put themselves forward for re-election along with any other parishioners who would wish to do so. The clerk has been informed by the Returning Officer that the number required to fill the vacant seats has not been oversubscribed. Consequently, there will not be an election for this council at the forthcoming local elections.

During the last year we have not received any multiple applications for planning permissions in this area. Work is well underway on the development off Stow Park Road and the necessary road improvements needed are currently being undertaken. One dwelling has been built but not completed on the High Street and no work has been started onsite at the Littleborough Lane development.

The Parish Council has spent a considerable amount of time discussing the proposed solar parks that are in the process of applying for planning permission in this area. The central government in Westminster consider projects such as these to be of Strategic National Importance so the usual local authorities are overruled. We have had visits by representatives of the Cottam, West Burton and Gate Burton sites to give us their proposals. We have also been informed of another proposed site, Tillbridge Solar Farm, is also looking to erect solar panels in this area.

Councillor John Patrick visited the Lackford Farm Estate Solar Park in June 2022 on behalf of the Parish Council. He reported his findings back to us at the next meeting which raised concerns amongst the members.

The Council has listened to what has been put forward by all concerned. The general consensus is that the land in this area is good productive soil, granted not the best, and has been for hundreds of years. There are alternative sites such as rooftops that would be more appropriate for these schemes. Effect on the wildlife would be devastating as each area of solar panels would be

surrounded by security fencing thus denying them access. Due to the geology of this area, the cheapest route for the cables to connect to the Cottam substation would be through the parishes of Marton and Gate Burton. This would again disrupt the remaining land crossing both parishes.

At the moment we have made our views clear to the developers through their questionnaires. They are now presenting their findings to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. The Parish Council have registered an interest in these proposals and will have an opportunity to put our objections forward at a pre-determined date later this year.

We are not alone in our views and have joined the area protest organisation, the 7000 acres group. By joining with numerous other parish councils who are also alarmed at the concentration of solar farms being put forward we hope we can put pressure on the Inspectorate to reject these proposals.

We are seeking to register the cemetery in Trentport Road on the Land Registry and have engaged Messrs Burton and Dyson, solicitors, to undertake this. The clerk has recently approached them for a progress report. They have replied that due to the build-up of applications due to the Covid pandemic this could take another year.

One long term issue of the Parish Council has been the flooding in Trentport Road during periods of heavy rain. Work has now been done regarding a collapsed drain in front of the affected properties. The pipe has been cleared and now appears to be taking away the excess rain water. The footpath here has been raised and re-laid with new tarmac. A large majority of the footpaths in the village have been re-surfaced and are now in good condition. My thanks to Councillors Ellis and Butroid for their help in getting this work done.

The land behind the Sanctuary houses in Littleborough Lane has now been cleared of excess vegetation and some of the trees. The contractor we engaged received the permissions from the Forestry Commission he was waiting for in January. The work has now been done and a pathway was created through the remaining trees. This was made up of large branches of the fallen trees with a surface of wood chippings from the small ones. This work has cost the parish a considerable portion of our financial resources. More work is needed to complete this project. We will be discussing and

undertaking the required maintenance during the coming year. For example more woodchip on the pathway and more suitable tree planting. This small wild woodland area will then be opened for the use and enjoyment of the parishioners.

As previously mentioned, this month is the end of the current councillors term of office. The new Parish Council will inaugurate on 15th May 2023. I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and assistance during the last year and hope they have put themselves forward to be of service for the next period. Thanks also to Mrs Gill Martin, our clerk, without whose valuable service we would not be able to continue.

Finally, as is customary, I would like to record that the Enclosures Act documents, parish deeds and Land Registry details are deposited in the Lincolnshire Archives, St Rumbold Street, Lincoln.