

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report 2023-24



Our council - All parish/town councils in

Lincolnshire held elections in May. In Heighington these were uncontested, with fewer nominations than available seats on the council. We subsequently co-opted the remaining vacancies and currently have our full complement of councillors.

Cllr Alison Buckley-Jones and our **RFO Nikki Briscoe** were nominated in the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) 2023 Shining Stars Awards.

We received a great report from our external auditors for financial year 2022-23 and also from our intermediate internal audit for 2023-24.

Community events - We ran a number of free community events for children, which are all well supported, including a HoolaHoop Megastructure workshop; free tennis coaching sessions; Halloween workshop making spooky lanterns and decorations; circus workshop.

We took part in the village scarecrow festival, in conjunction with Washingborough and Branston parish councils. The entries were once again very varied and wonderful to see.

Remembrance

Sunday was again commemorated with the knitted poppies.

Our annual Festival

Tea generated a fantastic response from residents. Branston &

District u3a ukulele band got everyone singing. Representatives from Branston Academy student council attended and joined in. Our thanks go once again to **AF Blakemore & Son Ltd/Spar** for their generous donations and for the support of all the volunteers.

Council was happy to support - A Good Yarn and their amazing, knitted Christmas Tree.

Litter - At our Community Litter pick in October, 20 volunteers collected 10 bags of rubbish from around the village. The next one is planned for **28th April**.

We're also lucky to have our regular volunteer community litter picker. In 2023 alone he collected 33 bags of rubbish from around the village and generously donated 42 hours of his time to do this.

Parish council book swap - Goes from strength to strength, attracting a number of regular visitors.

We also extended this to the phone box on the high Street (*creating a book kiosk*). Unfortunately, we had some vandalism to both the books and the kiosk and removed the books over the winter but hope to put some back in the better weather. Cllr Jacki Rushby is our council 'librarian', looking after the books.

Environmental - The Lincolnshire County Council Zero Carbon Parishes grant helped us fund: energy efficient LED lighting for the Jubilee Hall, cycle racks for Station Road and Potterhanworth Road, water butts for Station Road and Jubilee Hall; daffodil and narcissus bulbs for Station Road; thermal blinds for Station Road pavilion.

A community event in the Autumn helped plant free trees (*from the Woodland trust*) at Station Road, along with the bulb planting. Further free hedgerow trees have been planted at Potterhanworth Road. We had lots of people interested in the idea of a Repair Hub, but unfortunately not enough stepped forward to form a committee to organise and run this so the idea is currently paused.

Speeding and traffic - A new solar powered speed sign will shortly be installed on Washingborough Road. The battery powered one will be deployed between the Fen Road and Potterhanworth Road locations.

We need more volunteers interested in starting up a Community Speedwatch group to get this off the ground.

It was a shame to see the attitude and behaviour of some motorists during the High Street closure in August. Whilst this was very disruptive, it was necessary to ensure the safe completion of the works. Unfortunately,

some reckless motorists ignored the road closure, putting pedestrians and other motorists at risk.

Flooding and community spirit - Despite the heartbreak and disruption caused by the floods in October and January, it has been impressive to see the community spirit amongst residents helping others out. The parish council continues to work with LCC (*the lead flood authority*) and other agencies to see how the flooding situation can be improved. We were able to provide some filled sandbags for residents and have set up a sand bin at Jubilee Hall so that residents can fill their own sandbags. Work is ongoing with our Emergency Plan.

Other news/achievements

- The Jubilee Hall wooden floor was stripped back and re-waxed. Many years of polish and grime was removed, and it now looks great again.
- The tennis courts were professionally cleaned and re-marked out. A local tennis coach is now hoping to run coaching sessions for children. Free play tennis will continue.
- The extended period of wet and warm weather caused lots of tree and hedge growth around the village, resulting in complaints about obstructed footpaths. We ask residents to please cut foliage to keep footpaths clear.
- The parish office has been extended, hopefully providing a more welcome visit for parishioners.
- The clothing bank situated in the rear Jubilee Hall car park generated **£168** in the last year, allocated to community projects.
- As part of our ongoing play area maintenance, we replaced the universal joint on the cantilever swing at Almond Avenue, at a cost of £1,821.
 - A new bench and a fully accessible picnic table for wheelchairs bought for Station Road.
 - 2 replacement litter bins tops bought as someone removed them and they were never found. This costs the parish £200 each time.
 - We're currently liaising with a local fabricator to find a way of displaying the old flagpole top at the Jubilee Hall.
 - Ongoing battles with chafer grubs at both Station Road and Potterhanworth Road and the subsequent damage caused by the crows digging up the ground. We also have moles at Potterhanworth Road.

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