

District Cllr's Sept Report

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 2023

Serving the parishes of Blyborough, Corringham, Glentworth, Grayingham, Harpswell, Heapham, Hemswell, Hemswell Cliff, Springthorpe & Willoughton.

Complaint against District Cllr

A complaint against the District Cllr by Corringham Parish Council in April, a month before the elections, has been quashed by WLDC Standards finding that there is *no case to answer*.

The complaint alleged that Cllr Howitt-Cowan had transgressed the Nolan Principles, which are expected of anyone in public office. He was further accused of lead a campaign against Corringham Parish Council in his newsletters, leading to an undercurrent of ill feeling coming from people he had influence over, spreading malicious rumour around the Parish. He was further accused of withholding information about community grants and of the Councillor Initiative Fund from the Parish Council [this is a council with substantial reserves]

"We also call into question his integrity in this matter. We feel his comments border on bullying and harassment and show no respect for Corringham Parish Council, it's officers or it's Councillors. Corringham Parish Council would like Councillor Howitt-Cowan to issue a public apology,"

Standards concluded rightly that there was no evidence to support the allegations which impugned the 'very integrity' of the District Councillor who was prepared to defend himself and confident of being exonerated.

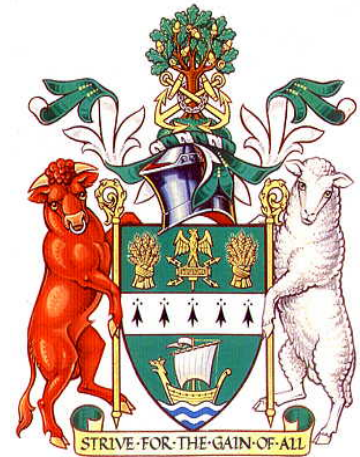
As District Councillor I shall be looking for a unreserved apology from Corringham Parish Council.

Moreover, I am hoping that the Chair should resign with immediate effect and its two remaining Parish Councillors 'consider their positions'.

The manner and style of its Chair is highly questionable & should resign forthwith in the light of how she has mis handled the complaint against the District Councillor.

In all my 13 years I have only had on two occasions experienced problems with a Parish Council in the Hemswell Ward and that has been at Corringham where I have strong associations with currently serving as Churchwarden and as Hon Sec of the Village Hall.

Such serious allegations about my integrity if upheld would have forced me to resign from both positions in that village, which I continue to serve to the best of my ability since I was elected in 2010.



September's Cllr's Diary

4 Full Council 7pm

Hemswell Cliff 7:30pm

5 Overview & Scrutiny 6:30pm

Corringham PC 7:15pm

8 Leader's Panel [all day]

18 Hemswell PC 7pm

24 Civic Service Kirton in Lindsey 2:20pm

28 Willoughton PC 6:30pm

27 WL Churches Festival AGM

Oct 3 Overview & Scrutiny



Gainsborough Heritage Skills

Festival

The Market Place

Saturday 16 Sept 9am to 3pm

FREE

Scampton

This is an on going matter which only increases the distress to Scampton and outlying communities and the frustration of the £300 million development at stake which will provide economic growth

The Planning Committee in July refused the application to exhume the doggy belonging to Guy Gibson. I supported this recommendation in a written submission. I only learned later that the ashes of former RAF personnel had been scattered in the area of the doggy's grave which only added to the sacredness of that location, I did ask if the grave could be monitored if the asylum seekers did eventually arrive.

Part of Catterick Army Camp is ear marked for asylum seekers which is controversial as part of the land was to be developed in similar way to Scampton.

Several asylum seekers arriving at Wetherfield in Es-

sex have been diagnosed with TB which only adds to the anxiety & challenge.

I do know that local surgeries have been approached to set up a contract to provide medical cover however our surgeries are fully stretched and have so far declined the Home Office.

There is a move to identify how much

land will be occupied and if there is sufficient for part of the £300 million developers to go ahead

Regardless of the potential loss to development Scampton it is not the appropriate site for asylum seekers.

The Judicial Review result expected 31Oct/1st of Nov

“The scourge of modern society is the abhorrent practice of depositing of waste on private and public land to be removed at the tax payers expense”

Fly Tipping & Graffiti fines increased

Did you know that nationally that there were one million incidents filed of fly tipping and 92, 00 fines made

The Government has increased fixed penalty notices to try to combat this scourge in our communities

Fly tipping attracted a fine of £500 but it is now £1k

Graffiti was a £150 fine and is now £500

The challenge is catching the miscreants in order to issue the fines .

Bus pass scheme

Councils spent £452 million last year to support the national concessionary bus fare scheme. The scheme was designed

to encourage the OAP's to be able to get out and out addressing isolation and loneliness in society. The figures for those taking advantage are not revealed. The Government does not fully fund the scheme and councils are left plugging the gap which has made the scheme unsustainable.



Solar Farms:

Around 1, 300 renewable energy projects with planning consent are held up because of delays connecting them to the Grid infrastructure.

The solar schemes awaiting construction would alone generate around 15, 000

megawatts a day to power 1.9 million homes.

WLDC is submitting its comments. I have argued that the landscape will be dramatically transformed the last being at the Enclosure Movement and we may never

see it returned for 60 years or more. Furthermore the technology is reliant on battery power which cannot at the moment store sufficient energy during the winter months to power our homes.

Community Grants

The following in the Hemswell Ward have been successful in grant applications for which I congratulate the recipients

Grayingham Church has received £30k towards toilet / server facilities in its proposed community space to be built onto the south aspect of the church.

Corringham Village Hall is trying to tackle

the poor sound quality in the big hall.

Willoughton is exploring a grant package for its village hall

I would encourage all villages in the Hemswell Ward to come up with projects and apply for community grants however large or small [£1k and above] A grant can make all the difference to any village

hall or group that may be struggling

And the paperwork is not that onerous

For more information go to WLDC website Grants & Funding.

The maximum grant can be £50k !!!

You require a copy of your working document, estimates, and a worthwhile project

Good Luck!



Ingham Surgery Scores highly

Ingham Surgery which many people in the Hemswell Ward use, especially for minor operation obtained the highest rating in Lincolnshire—97% which captures customer service, and medical treatment and it is a rural surgery! Congratulations Ingham.

An appeal for villages with defibrillators to either take out the £100 per annum service charge with WLDC or ensure that they are serviced regularly—it may save a life!

Hybrid Council Meetings

The Local Government Association LGA for short sates that in a survey 95% of councils want to re introduce virtual and hybrid technology for statutory meeting. No Council wanted to operate fully virtual to meet the needs of cllrs with care needs, disabilities or child

care commitments and travelling time.

But it opens a can of worms for officers the majority of whom wish to work at home leaving the Guildhall resembling a ‘ghost town’.

Some cllrs may prefer working group meetings to be on TEAMS whereas I

think it should offer choice however nothing can compete or replace face to face meetings in my opinion. It is what serves local democracy best and this may have to be on an individual case. And hybrid is the compromised position to be explored.

“We have to remember that not all our residents have broadband and those that do, do not always receive adequate reception and in the interests of democracy Councils should be accessible to all and not just those on broadband”

To illustrate, Plato imagined an ideal state in which private goods and nuclear families would be *relinquished* for the sake of the greater good of a harmonious society. Or contextualize it, Glentworth, Harpswell, Springthorpe has to relinquish its farm productive land for the next 60 years for the sake of the greater good so that Tillbridge can build a solar farm to power homes etc. and this has application to the proposed Gate Burton and Cottam Solar Farms.

I believe, in the light of Putin weaponise energy along with the war in Ukraine has brought to ahead, what many of us have said, that the UK has encouraged an energy dependency and now we have to reverse that. The UK is seeing a proliferation of planning applications for renewable particularly in Lincolnshire in which private companies are exploiting as the Government is in a 'knee jerk' reaction to the energy crisis much to its own doing.

The public enquiries are now under way and there is a great move to obtain much public support at these meetings. The idea behind this is possibly to demonstrate to the inspector the overwhelming opposition to these proposed solar farms. I personally do not think that sways the judgment of an inspector. He or she will be well aware of the public opposition. His judgment will not be influenced by the 'number game' but by the cogent arguments with supporting evidence put to him regardless whether are hundreds attending the meeting or just a few people. We know that if there to be a referendum on the proposed solar farms the public would win hands down. But the Public Enquiry is not interested in emotion or the argument about the loss of food production unless that is supported by an evidence base

The new Local Plan for Central Lincolnshire, passed in April 2023 requires new developments to demonstrate how they are meeting our target of net zero emissions, which is having a dramatically positive effect on the energy saving standards of new buildings. We also have many thousands of acres of south-facing commercial roofs which could have solar panels added.

Instead, we now also have an unlimited influx of very large solar panel developments covering miles of farmland, close to the power connection eg West Burton

Lincolnshire currently has proposals for around 35,000 acres of solar panels, over 50 square miles. Wheat yields vary with Lincolnshire having the highest yield in the world again this year, at more than 7 tons/acre, grown by Tim Lamyman. Even at say, 5 tons/acre, that is 175,000 tons of wheat we would need to get from somewhere and multiply that x 60 years! The UK has a growing need to be independent as possible for its food as its population is over 60 million and rising.

The last time the landscape we know it today was created was by the Enclosure Movement which was 200 years ago. What is now proposed is on that scale and I shall not see it restored in my life time when the 60 year contract expires. Children born in 2023 will be lucky to see it restored in the state it was in before the proposed solar farms were built and by then the technology will no doubt have been transformed in that period. The landscape is our legacy, Lincolnshire is reputed for food production and for its green lungs, which are very important towards our quality of life,

Renewable energy from on shore wind and solar will not provide us with the energy throughout the year. I am informed that we cannot store energy from wind turbines in batteries and batteries for solar are in their infancy. Moreover the national grid is in need of a radical overall. What will give us reliable and consistent energy independent of external sourcing is 'nuclear' / nuclear fusion which the Government is supportive of however there are problems with this, a) a nuclear power stations takes over 10 years to build, b) the cost, but then again energy is never going to be 'cheap' c) the waste from nuclear remains concerning.

The proliferation of proposed solar farms are being led by the private sector, [much of foreign interest] it can be said that they are 'cashing in' on the UK's demand for energy independence. and therefore, despite what renewable companies may say, future as with present energy will not be 'cheaper'. Moreover, these companies are proposing community funding but are deliberately not engaging in reducing energy bills to communities by say 30% which would possibly make the concept more palatable. It is interesting that some Community solar farms do offer this.

A mixed energy economy is the only way forward but what the UK needs is an energy policy and reliance on renewable is not the way forward in my opinion

There is a human story to all this, During the election I visited Grange Farm Cottage Corringham. It is surrounded by fields growing crops. Its idyllic, if you want to live in an isolated spot surrounded by fields. As this couple do and enjoy the peace it brings. However, their quality of life is possibly going to be transformed, as the fields on every side of their dwelling are going to have these huge solar panels. The psychological effect of being surrounded by these every day would surely impact on mental health. Their quality of life is going to be radically reduced and the value of the property reduced in tandem. But is that the sacrifice for the greater good of producing renewable energy to the masses. That is an example of the human factor as people caught up in HR2 have experienced to their cost and misery



Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 27th of September 2023

@ 10am

Nettleton Village Hall

All Most Welcome

Europe's largest antiques centre joins council's commercial waste service

Hemswell Antique Centre is the latest company to join West Lindsey District Council's Commercial Waste Service.

The centre, based at Hemswell Cliff, was once part of RAF Hemswell, which was the home of the Lancaster Bomber during the Second World War. It now offers a wonderful mix of antiques and collectables from bygone times.

They will now benefit from a value for money, reliable and environmentally friendly service by switching to the council's commercial waste and recycling collection service.

Switching to the council's service will support Hemswell Antique Centre in improving its sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint. Increased recycling and diversion of waste from landfill is aligned with the council's ambitious goal to reach carbon neutrality before 2050. Partnerships like this represent important steps on the path to curbing climate change and protecting the planet for future generations to come.

Paul Dagg, Operations Director for Hemswell Antique Centre, said: "Antiques themselves are incredibly environmentally friendly – for example, industry studies have shown that an antique chest of drawers will have just one twelfth of the carbon footprint of its modern-day counterpart.

"It is essential that every part of our business is consistent with the same green credentials as the items we sell, and partnering locally is an important part of that strategy. We are thrilled to be working with West Lindsey District Council, trusting their proven record in waste management to help us become more sustainable, whilst keeping our costs low."

As more businesses opt for our waste solutions, West Lindsey District Council moves closer to reaching its net zero targets sooner and increasing the chances of success in the worldwide fight against climate change

Who is affected?

The transition from copper wires to VoIP will undoubtedly impact millions of people across the UK, particularly those who heavily rely on their landline telephones for communication. Among the most vulnerable groups affected are the elderly, who have spent a lifetime using traditional landlines and may struggle to adapt to the complexities of digital technology. For many seniors, the simplicity of picking up a phone and dialing a number provides a sense of familiarity and security. However, the shift to VoIP may require them to learn new devices, applications, and processes, leading to potential feelings of confusion and isolation.

Moreover, rural communities will be disproportionately affected by the upgrade. While urban areas generally enjoy reliable high-speed internet connectivity, many rural regions still struggle with inadequate internet infrastructure. VoIP relies heavily on stable internet access to function effectively, making rural communities susceptible to dropped calls, poor call quality, and unreliable service. This disparity in connectivity further widens the digital divide between urban and rural populations, leaving those in remote areas at a significant disadvantage in terms of communication options.

What are the issues?

As the UK transitions to VoIP, several critical issues arise that warrant careful consideration. The primary concern is the reliability of VoIP services during adverse conditions. Unlike traditional copper-wire landlines, which can continue to function during power outages, VoIP relies on electricity and internet connectivity. In emergency situations such as natural disasters or widespread power failures, individuals may find themselves without a reliable means of communication, hindering their ability to call for help or stay connected with loved ones.

Another pressing issue is the digital divide, which is exacerbated by the shift to VoIP. While many individuals are already accustomed to digital technologies, others, particularly the elderly, may struggle to adapt to the complexities of VoIP systems. This lack of digital literacy can lead to frustration, alienation, and increased social isolation. Furthermore, for those living in areas with inadequate internet infrastructure, the installation of high-speed broadband may be costly and time-consuming, further delaying access to essential communication services.

Why is it time to act?

Immediate action is imperative to address the potential pitfalls of transitioning to VoIP. Rather than rushing

.Why is it time to act?

Immediate action is imperative to address the potential pitfalls of transitioning to VoIP. Rather than rushing to replace copper wires entirely, a more balanced approach is necessary. Coexistence of both copper wires and VoIP systems, at least during the initial stages of the upgrade, can provide a reliable fallback

option during emergencies and ensure continued communication for all citizens.

Moreover, it is crucial to allocate adequate funding and resources to improve internet infrastructure in rural areas. By bolstering connectivity, the UK can bridge the digital divide and provide equal communication opportunities for all citizens. This approach will

prevent marginalized communities from being left behind and disconnected from the rest of society.

Additionally, comprehensive training and educational programs must be implemented to assist the elderly and technologically challenged individuals in adapting to the new VoIP system. By providing accessible resources and support, the transition can be made smoother, and these individuals can continue to stay connected with their families, friends, and emergency services.

In conclusion, the UK telephone upgrade in 2025 must be approached with caution and care. The elderly and rural communities are at particular risk of being negatively affected by the transition to VoIP. Issues surrounding reliability, the digital divide, and emergency preparedness necessitate a thoughtful and measured approach. By acting now and considering the welfare of all citizens, the UK can embrace technological advancement without sacrificing the vital lifeline that traditional telephone systems offer. By addressing these concerns, the UK can pave the way for a seamless and inclusive communication network for everyone.

The technology that currently powers landline telephones is to be switched off in 2025 - but don't panic, you will still be able to have a handset in the hallway should you wish.

Lea Fields Crematorium donates £12,000 to emergency responder charity.

A Lincolnshire charity that provides emergency care in critical situations to residents has been given £12,000 to keep vital volunteers on the road.

Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service (LIVES) received the money from Lea Fields Crematorium, through a national metal recycling scheme.

The ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) Metal Recycling Scheme, was set up so that with the consent from families, orthopaedic implants recovered after cremation are recycled and any money raised is used to give back to bereavement related charities.

West Lindsey District Council, which runs Lea Fields Crematorium has so far donated £71,000 to charities in Lincolnshire thanks to the scheme, since it opened in 2020.

Chairman of West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Stephen Bunney, said it was a 'real privilege' to meet with representatives and present the money.

He said: "LIVES do incredible work providing emergency care to people in critical circumstances and it is a real privilege to be able to provide them with this cheque.

"Without fantastic schemes like this, metals would have been buried in crematorium grounds, creating potential environmental problems. Recycling ensures that the metals do not contaminate land. A special thank you goes to the bereaved and their families whose decision to recycle is helping to raise much-needed funds for local charities."

West Lindsey District Council sought nominations for a charity to benefit from the donation, which was chosen by Priestley & Cockett Funeral Directors.

Nicola Holmes, Business Leader at Priestley and Cockett said: "We are immensely proud to have nominated LIVES charity to receive this fantastic donation. LIVES play a vital role in our community, providing urgent medical assistance, when it matters the most.

"All of the team here at Priestley and Cockett are so grateful to Lea Fields Crematorium for facilitating this donation. We also want to extend our gratitude to the bereaved families who provided their consent during what is undoubtedly a very difficult and sad time."

LIVES attend 999 medical emergencies across the county, 365 days a year. Whether they are providing rapid first response support on their doorstep, or highly specialised medical interventions to the most seriously ill patients, they all volunteer their time for free to save lives.

Kirsty Raywood, Head of Income for LIVES Lincolnshire said: "Not only do our Emergency Responders attend 999 medical emergencies; they are there for the family of patients when they need support the most. Suffering a loss is difficult in any situation but our emergency responders are there to try and help make things a little more manageable. LIVES provide the equipment and training to ensure that our Emergency Responders stay on the road.

"We are incredibly grateful for the kind donation of £12,000 from the metal recycling scheme. What an incredible legacy for those people who have donated to the scheme; knowing that the funds raised will ensure that our Emergency Responders can continue to be there for local people when they need help the most."

Book lovers from across the district are invited to head over to Gainsborough for a very special Farmers and Craft Market next month.

West Lindsey District Council is excited to be hosting its very first Literature Village in the Market Place on Saturday, September 9 from 9am to 2pm. We have teamed up with the Newark Book Festival Literature Village, which will be 'on tour' outside of Nottinghamshire for the first time – here in Lincolnshire.

Authors and poets promoting their work, book illustrators, writing groups, craft makers and many book-themed products will be available to buy at the event. There will be a super dozen Literature Village traders with something for everyone; children's and adult fiction, history, thriller, poetry and more.

Storytelling will also take place at Gainsborough Library and we have a special pop up story telling tent in the Market Place, for people to enjoy the story. The Musicians of Bremen and the Pied Piper of Hamelin will be brought alive in a new story format at 10am in the Library and 11am in the Market Place.

Cllr Jeanette McGhee, who represents the Gainsborough South West Ward at West Lindsey District Council is encouraging people to attend the event.

She said: "We are delighted to bring our literature village to Gainsborough. It is a great opportunity to celebrate and showcase the world of books in an exciting and engaging way.

"The UK Shared Prosperity Fund means we are able to put on extra activities to attract people into the town centre, to support their local and specialist market traders in Gainsborough. So whilst you are shopping for your local produce why not settle down on a beanbag in our 'pop-up' story telling tent!"

The Gainsborough Library and Gainsborough Heritage Centre will both have stalls and there will be free crafts available for children from AllyPally the Storybook Emporium.

Our usual fresh and local produce and craft traders will be in attendance. Additionally, we have Steampunk Street theatre and entertainment for children.

The fantastical Steampunk 'Crab and Crumb' will be joining us on their crazy bicycle machine. Jeremiah Crab and Thadious Crumb, Victorian fairy catchers and magical pest control will be out and about dealing with pests and trading their weird and wonderful wares.

Inspiring Stories to boost grant aid.....

Uplifting stories of how two very different and successful community projects came to fruition were re-told at a special event in West Lindsey.

A captive audience of more than 100 people listened to the compelling stories of how the groups worked against the odds to succeed, and what their journey was like.

West Lindsey District Council hosted the community funding event at Hemswell Court, to encourage community groups to find out more about the funding available and to learn from other groups.

Stepping Stones Theatre gave a very emotional and powerful performance of readings and music. They demonstrated the importance of creativity and listening to the voices and experiences of all people in our district as our communities shape their open and accessible facilities and projects.

Bill Rodgers said: "Without West Lindsey District Council's funding there would be no Stepping Stones. Things were different in the early days of social prescribing in the belief that creative outlets could have anything to do with recovery. 25 years later we are here telling our story."

They were followed by Scampton Church and RAF War Graves Heritage Centre who explained the issues they faced with their building, including constraints with funding for churches, and how they navigated their way to a revitalised and vibrant community space. They offered important insights, including about the importance of consultation, volunteers and partnerships, to those branching out into their own project.

As the saying goes, mighty oaks grow from little acorns, and this is how Joe Bartrop Project Coordinator, felt about the council's grant funding. He said: "With the £8,000 that West Lindsey helped us to get through the council's grant funding meant we were able to match fund in a further £320,000 that was needed for our project."

Community organisations play a pivotal role in supporting 'Our People' and 'Our Place' and Our Council's community grants can help kickstart groups on their journey.

Leader of West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Trevor Young said: "With the support of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund, we are pleased to present our Community Grants Schemes to support the people and places of West Lindsey to thrive and reach their full potential."

"We know that it is our communities who lead the way in maintaining and building community facilities like village halls, playparks and green spaces.

"It is our communities that are putting on events and activities that bring people together, tackling social isolation and building cohesive and engaged neighbourhoods. It is our communities that know what their neighbourhoods need and have the ideas and solutions to address the issues they face."

"With that knowledge, our Community Grant Funds have been developed to respond to the needs and ideas of our community organisations. We want to ensure that our grants have the greatest impact on our communities."



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This September the Lincolnshire Wolds & Coast Churches invite you to visit 140 stunning churches & chapels over 2 weekends: 2/3 & 9/10 Sep #LoveLincsChurches



Heritage Skills Fair – Saturday 16 September

9am until 3pm

FREE, no booking required

Join us for this bustling outdoor fair in Gainsborough’s historic Market Place, alongside the traditional Saturday market and stretching down to the grounds of Gainsborough Old Hall.

Demonstrations will include traditional skills such as blacksmithing, woodturning, leatherwork, pottery and frame-making, as well as building restoration skills such as antique wall-paper conservation, working with lime-mortar and sash window repair.

Come along to this special event where you can have a go, watch a demonstration, or buy a unique hand-made item to treasure.

Workshops – Monday 18 to Saturday 23 September

The festival continues throughout the following week with a series of **FREE** workshops and illustrated talks.

Booking are now LIVE! Take a look at what’s on offer. Please note all workshops are for **ADULTS ONLY** except the Children’s Craft workshop on Saturday 23 September.





Heritage Open Days
- 8th-17th September
2023

BROADCASTING

Engineering Museum

at Hemswell Cliff, Capper Avenue
The only museum in the Hemswell
Ward!

Come and see the TV cameras
that are exhibited and once were
used in the early days of television
one was in service for the late
Queen's Coronation in 1953.

Plenty of car parking available

Devolution

This is back on the table. The County Council is pushing for an elected Mayor fearing that if Labour get into power at the forthcoming General Election it will favour a Regional authority with the fear that Lincolnshire will miss out on funding.

There are problems associated with the current package for devolution and I fear that if it is approved, WLD will not be the recipient of the millions promised I anticipate it will go Humberside, the East Coast, and Lincoln.

Moreover, what concerns me whether we go Devolution or Regional is the 'democratic deficit'. That will inevitably be sacrificed in whichever way we go. And local tax payers should enjoy a vote on this important matter.

And devolution package being put forward ie the district councils are not to have a place 'at the table' as that is to be monopolized by County and the Unitary authorities because they represent the largest population areas of Lincolnshire. Districts *may* be consulted and this is unacceptable in the interests of democracy & fair play.

Moreover, its 'Top Down' and not 'Down Up'- the democratic dimension is found wanting!.

