

Annual Parish Meeting 2024/25

Chair's Report

Good evening welcome to the Scothern Annual Parish meeting for the year 2024/25, where the main purpose of the meeting is to hear from residents on what is important to you.

Firstly a brief summary of the past year:

We have had an unsettled year as a Council, Neville Rayner was appointed as Chair in May 2024 but resigned as Chair and Councillor in November 2024, our thanks go to Neville for his short time on the Council and as Chair. I was appointed as Chair in December 24 and thank you to Barnaby who has taken on the role of Vice-Chair and for continuing to be a voice of reason when I need one! Mark Unwin was coopted onto the council in January 2025. I would like to welcome Mark to the Council he is definitely going to help us to make a difference in the future. Luckily, we have had stability during this year with the other Councillors Barnaby Derek Jackie Robert and Cathie who continued to provide support and give up their time for the benefit of the village. We have now had Lisa as our Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for 18 months and she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, she's also got to know the village very well in this time.

so on to the areas we continue to tackle throughout the year:

- Scothern reviewed its Neighbourhood Plan and this was accepted by the village after a referendum in June 2024, this means that West Lindsey District Council will take account of the content of the Neighbourhood Plan when reviewing planning applications in the village. (More about this later).
- The three speed cameras positioned around the village are helping to tackle speeding, however we still attract high volumes of vehicles and drivers who speed in and out of the village. The statistics are published in Scothern News every month and will be updated onto the website. We desperately need more volunteers to support the speed watch initiative run by Robert and Derek. Please let us know if you can help.
- We continue to work with Community Police Officers and review the monthly crime figures across Scothern and surrounding areas. Unfortunately, we don't currently have a CSO in place but if residents could ensure incidents are reported either via 101 or via the online reporting tool on the police website
- Last year the Parish Council took over the production and distribution of Scothern News, we have to thank Cathryn Nicoll for the production each month of the newsletter and we are currently emailing out 98 copies, 21 copies are downloaded from the website and 27 copies are printed and distributed for those with less access to technology and skills.
- Thanks also go to the Grange Park working group Melanie and Steve Tointon, Cathryn Nicoll and new active resident member Rosie Thompson for continuing to maintain and improve the Park for the benefit of the village.
- Unfortunately, the War Memorial has still not been restored and renovated but things are finally moving forward, and we are confident the project will be completed by Remembrance Day this year.
- Flooding in the village continues to be both the Councils and residents biggest concern, the adverse weather conditions have not helped but we need to be able to have the right infrastructure in place to manage it. We are in constant communication with those with the responsibility for managing the drainage, sewage and water flows

across the village but over the next year we intend to take a more proactive approach in these areas and are currently planning corrective action.

- The issue of an improved bus service is still high on the council's agenda and residents continue to remind us this is important to them. We have met with PC coaches and are now communicating with Stagecoach and the Enhanced Partnership Board, I can assure you, that whilst I am Chair, we will continue to pursue this.
- Following our annual inspection of the playpark by RoSPA - the junior/infant swing set, the small slide, the cross over chain trail and the cargo net were all found to be falling below the required safety standard for play equipment and the decision was taken - sadly - to have these items removed to ensure the safety of all users. We felt that this was an opportunity to assess the equipment we have at the park and identify what items the village felt were needed to update and improve the area for a range of users. Therefore, a survey was created, and we received over 100 responses. The overwhelming items that were identified in the survey were that the swings and slides were the most used pieces of equipment and a fully inclusive/all access roundabout would be a valuable addition to the park. As we are sure you will understand - it has not been a quick journey to find replacements - play equipment is varied and expensive. We have a duty to the village to ensure that whatever company we choose to provide us with the new equipment; that not only will that be of good quality but will be long lasting items and will go some way to giving all users the opportunity to experience and enjoy the area. We are aiming to have the project completed by the summer holidays.
- On Saturday we held a spring clean event across the village with Counsellors, their families and residents litter picking and carrying out general maintenance. We would like to do this more regularly in the future and involve more residents.

Moving on to the future, the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan outlined that Scothern would have two new housing developments, one off Nettleham Road and one at the back of St. Germaine's way off Dunholme Rd. Planning applications for both of these sites are currently in progress. Whilst we recognise there are challenges for the village in accommodating two additional housing developments and potentially 100 new houses, we wish to ensure that the council and village residents are kept informed and that dialogue is set up with the developers to ensure they meet the criteria in the neighbourhood plan. It is proposed to set up working groups including Developers, Councillors and village residents in the future.

We often hear that residents were not aware that meetings or events were happening, we currently communicate through our website, facebook page, notice boards and Scothern News but we would like to hear from you on how we can best improve this. We are planning a communication strategy for the Council that will be informed by residents.

Lisa will provide us with a finance report in a moment, but I would like to highlight that this year for the third year running the Council has reduced its Precept, therefore reducing residents contribution to Council Tax.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to West Lindsey District Councillor Baptiste Velan and Lincolnshire County Councillor Sue Rawlings for their work with the Council and attendance at meetings, we will hear from them later, but special thanks go to Sue as this will be her last meeting as she is not seeking re-election in May.