

The Council year began with the election of recently co-opted Cllr Baker being voted in as Chairman of the council, Cllr Stewart as Vice Chairman; Cllr Graham Wilson resigned from the Council and Cllrs Tim Mitchell and Victoria Pattison were co-opted onto the Council. Cllr Pearce joined the Council in June, as did Cllr Miemczyk who filled the vacancy left by Mr Wilson. Lynne Horsefield resigned in August. The sad death of Cllr William Eckhardt in November was observed with a two minute silence in December. Currently the Town Council has 3 vacancies following the recent resignation of Ann Ludbrook.

Grant funding: The Council supported the Wesley Trail information board at St Andrew's Church with a grant of £5338.00 in May. The board and associated project work can now be seen at the Church. During the same meeting the Council resolved to grant fund Epworth & District Agricultural Society £1000.00 towards the costs of the Horticultural Marquee. During the second meeting in May a grant of £4845.36 was resolved for the Epworth Christmas Lights Committee towards the updating of the lights. The Town council already pay the annual electricity bill for the lights. Following a grant application from the Mechanics Institute the council resolved a figure of £1000.00 under "section 133" – Parish & Community buildings in July. A grant of £250.00 towards expenses was awarded to the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society in August. A grant towards the cost of insulating works at Epworth Swimming Pool of £3270.00 under the Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 sec 19 was awarded in October. Funding for summer holiday activities (youth community engagement) was approved in January, a series of 5 free sessions will be available for juniors, at the Epworth leisure Centre between 1 and 3pm on every Tuesday in August costing nearly £500.00 and approved under the miscellaneous provisions Act sec 19 (3) (b). Epworth Imperial Hall submitted a grant funding request in March when a figure of £1815.60 was approved towards the costs of improvements to the small hall; £150.00 was granted to The Isle Community Choir. Epworth Music Day, now an annual event will be supported with a grant of £700.00 and a grant of £750.00 has been awarded to The Old Rectory towards hosting a production of A Midsummers Nights' Dream later in the year. Whilst not a direct grant; Epworth Town Council in partnership with North Lincolnshire Council is funding maintenance of Turbary Road, £1000.00 a year. Earlier this year councillors attended the official opening of the new facilities for Epworth Colts who had received a grant of £10,000.00 in June 2015.

Planning: The Council continued to respond to planning application as a statutory consultee, the Planning Committee members attending additional meetings held when required, generally at Cemetery Lodge; whilst development plans either affecting the conservation area, or, those of wider interest to the community have been placed before full council (*see separate planning report for 2016*). The council received further information from North Lincolnshire Council on the Lincolnshire Lakes Area Action Plan in July, which was noted.

Interests & issues: In post since February 2017, PC Jane Proud attended the August meeting of the Council to introduce herself. Issues on parking have been introduced by members of the public following which councillors have had a number of meetings with officers from North Lincolnshire Council; however, the agreed actions have still to be implemented by North Lincolnshire Council. In addition the proliferation of advertising boards both on and off buildings has caused concern and is being discussed with North Lincolnshire Council. The Field Reeves approached Epworth Town Council to take over responsibility for the Field Reeves Lanes, which was declined. The Field Reeves organisation has been referred to North Lincolnshire Council over this issue. Cllr Baker was pleased to represent the Community at the Welcome service for the new Methodist Minister and also to attend the Annual Service of Remembrance where he laid a wreath on behalf of the

residents of Epworth, present and past. The Council ran a survey of all residents asking for opinions on the future use of the Chapel of Rest, despite over 2000 survey sheets being distributed only a small number of replies were received with responses being split almost 50/50 between maintaining the current use and changing the use; the Council resolved that the use of the Chapel of Rest would remain un-changed. Andy Tate from North Lincolnshire Council addressed the Council in February concentrating his team efforts on combatting litter and fly tipping. Councillors have recently been involved in putting up new signs, hopefully, to reduce dog fouling. A trial scheme of spray marking fouling, will be trialled shortly.

Council administration: Throughout the year the council has worked on new and improved methods of communication; the clerk with a new phone; a new and improved web-site (designed and instigated by Mr Peter Davies) and, most recently a “facebook” page. The clerk has attended a playground equipment safety course and councillors have attended course on Code of Conduct, Planning, Managing Volunteers and have participated in the Heritage Partnership. Building management has been ongoing throughout the year as the Council approved expenditure on property maintenance which includes works to the building roofs, new sewer and drainage pipes and internal plastering to improve damp conditions particularly in the Chapel of Rest. Additional external lighting has now been installed to enable safe use of the car parking area when dark.

Finance & Precept: Financial preparation of precept discussions by the Finance Committee in November went to Full Council in December; the figures proposed were ratified by the Council in January as £58213.00; made up as £54889.00 precept and £3324.00 North Lincolnshire Council grant element. At this point the Council does not know when the grant element will be removed completely and what effect this may have on future precept figures.

Kings Head Croft (QEII Field): The Council continues to inspect and monitor the play areas, financing the regular grass cutting and litter collection carried out, scrupulously, by the North Lincolnshire Council Neighbourhood Services team; a replacement litter bin has been provided, an additional picnic table approved and new fencing funded. The regular inspection regime continues. **Hanging baskets** part funded by the Epworth Businesses will be displayed throughout the summer, watered by our regular team and the roadside planters will be tended by volunteers as last year. CW Fields have offered to sponsor the planting of the planters which we hope will contribute to the success of the Town in the Best Kept Village competition; fingers crossed.

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