

Toft Newton Parish Council

Website: <https://toft-newton.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk>

Parish Meeting Minutes

27th June 2024

Held at Toft Newton Village Hall, Washington Drive, Newtoft, Lincolnshire LN8 3NN

This Parish meeting was a follow-up to the Annual Parish Meeting that took place on the 7th of May 2024 and had no members of the public in attendance, this Parish Meeting was also scheduled to take place on the 28th of May 2024, but was cancelled due to the serious illness of the Clerk.

Attendance:

Councillor Rob Nelson

Councillor Russ Gibbs

Councillor Jackie Roson

Michael Lewis, Parish Council Clerk

Natalie Mellors, Playground Warden

There were five members of the public present.

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Bridgett Carpenter

Councillor Carlos Roson

The meeting started at 18:03.

Summary of discussions:

This parish meeting was held because the Gainsborough-based owner of the Woodland off Alexandria Road, Newtoft, known locally as "The Big Wood", has put the woodland up for sale through a local auction house.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council or the community could apply to West Lindsey District Council register the woodland as an Asset of Community Value, this would protect the woodland from being sold 'for development' for a period of five years.

There was some confusion as to whether the woodland could be sold during those five years due to conflicting information being presented on the West Lindsey District Council website. The Clerk committed to finding out the correct answer.

The Clerk believed at the time of the meeting that the owner could sell the woodland while it was an Asset of Community Value, but that they would have to offer it to the Parish Council or Community first – clarification is needed on whether this is correct.

There was a discussion about the benefits of this woodland, remaining a woodland, overwhelmingly, these were presented as physical and mental health benefits, as well as the benefits of having a diversly rich natural environment on the resident's doorstep.

It was agreed that the Clerk would co-ordinate the application to register the woodland as an Asset of Community Value, while Councillor's Roson and Gibbs would get residents to sign pledges of support. The Clerk had already created a GDPR compliant pledge form and brought copies with him.

There was then a discussion about the Community Energy project that the Clerk had been exploring, it seems that money is available to develop sustainable Community Energy projects but that the parish of Toft Newton might be too small to access such funding. The Clerk will continue to explore the options and whether we could in any way support our residents to become more energy efficient.

Finally, the Clerk brought up the subject of a Neighbourhood Plan – until later in the year, the government are offering grants of £10,000 to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. However, the deadline to apply for this grant is imminent, and it is unlikely the Toft Newton Parish Council would be able to get the information needed to apply for the grant before the deadline.

But that wouldn't stop the Parish Council applying in a future round.

A Neighbourhood Plan would allow the parish to set it's priorities in terms of development, it would allow the parish to identify sites that need to be protected and identify sites that can be developed on.

A Neighbourhood Plan that is developed after the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (most recent version was adopted in 2023) and the National Planning Policy Framework would have primacy over these in the planning system.

Ultimately, a Neighbourhood Plan, although a lot of work to create one, would allow the residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups and the Parish Council to decide how the parish develops over the ensuing fifteen or so years.

The discussion returned to the subject of The Big Wood.

The meeting concluded at 18:48.

The five members of the public all left the meeting.