

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OADBY RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT CIVIC SUITE,
BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY, LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON
WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2023 COMMENCING AT 6.30 PM**

PRESENT

D A Gamble Chair



Meeting ID: 2518

COUNCILLORS

N Alam
M L Darr
S Z Haq
P Joshi
R V Joshi
J Kaufman

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

L Monk Leicestershire County Council

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 20 March 2023 were declared true and accurate.

2. POLICE UPDATE

Burglary Dwellings – There has been a considerable reduction from the start of the year where there were 38 reports between January and March, and recently there have been 2 reports in April, 2 in May, and 1 in June. Additional Officers were deployed to patrol Oadby and also 4 persons were arrested, which contributed to the reduction in burglaries.

Burglary Other Than Dwelling – There were 9 reports (April – 0, May – 4, June – 5) where 7 of these reports were businesses broken into along The Parade, London Rd, and Stoughton Rd. A person has been arrested and investigations currently ongoing. Currently there have been no further reports since the arrest of the suspect.

Theft of Motor Vehicle – 5 reports (April – 1, May – 3, June – 1) where 4 reports have been 'keyless' vehicles thefts where device used to obtain signal and take the vehicles. Investigations ongoing and arrest of a suspect linked to similar offences across Leicestershire.

Anti Social Behaviour –

17 reports in April, where the main locations were :-

The Parade – 6 reports of youths climbing on roofs of businesses and causing nuisance > Youths identified from CCTV by Schools and details obtained. Youths visited and parents informed.

Brocks Hill country Park – 4 reports of persons riding motorbikes at the location > Officers conducted patrols, unfortunately unable to locate / identify perpetrators.

Kenilworth Dr – 3 reports of Persons using / dealing drugs > Ongoing patrols at location to identify youths and working with the Council.

16 reports in May, where the main location were :-

Beaumont St – 5 reports of males gathering in vehicles using/dealing drugs > Officers attended and identified males involved, discussed reported incidents and Vehicle removed; No further reports.

Brocks Hill country Park – 3 reports of persons riding motorbikes at the location > Officers conducted patrols, unfortunately unable to locate / identify perpetrators.

Kenilworth Dr – 3 reports of Persons using / dealing drugs > Ongoing patrols at location to identify youths and working with the Council.

6 reports in June, main locations was Kenilworth Dr – 3 reports of Persons using / dealing drugs > Ongoing patrols at location to identify youths and working with the Council.

Theft from Stores – 15 reports (April – 4, May – 6, June – 5) > Suspects were identified for 3 of the 15 reports.

Drugs – 10 reports where officers have proactively patrolled identified problem locations, stopped and searched persons and/or vehicles and found drugs.

Incident of Note – 2 reports in Oadby (additional reports in other areas) of elderly victims of courier fraud. Victims would get a cold call where person stating they are a Police Officer and identify a Police Force. Person would state they are investigating bank related incidents and either ask for bank details or ask victim to collect money (£5000 average) from bank and someone will attend their home to discuss and collect monies. All reports are currently under investigation.

eScooters – Widely used, and was raised some time ago regarding the use of eScooters illegally in the public. M Smith provided a short update from the Community Safety Partnership and their planned events with the Police.

Parking and Motor Vehicle Concerns in Oadby, especially around the Parade, and on the corner of roads with large expanses of space where vehicles can block line of sight. County Council matter as it is a Highways concern; has been raised on many occasions with them by OWBC, including parking outside of schools. LCC operate an ANPR vehicle which has seen operation outside schools locally. Bollards were suggested by residents as a measure to stop the problem parking. Cllr. Haq has noted an increase in problem parking around the new Bru café on the Parade. Conversations are taking place to see if OWBC can be granted powers to enforce parking on the highway. Greggs also have delivery lorries pull on the pavement.

Sports Bar, London Road – “constant invasion of vehicles parked on double yellows, corners too”. Also noted problems around speeding vehicles. County Council approached regarding having wardens patrol the area during the problem times in the evening, but the County Council refused to pay the overtime for officers at this time. Emergency vehicles are also potentially being blocked by problem parking on some of the smaller side streets. Cllr. Gamble will email Leicestershire County Council to follow this up, and provide the response to the Forum.

“What is the County Council’s obligation around dangerous / illegal parking?” – It is their statutory obligation, but their response, or lack of, is justified by accident and injury data in locations reported to them.

Give Way signs have been requested at the Broadway / Fairway area to reduce accidents at this location; the County Council has refused to purchase and install these signs due to cost. Residents asked if they could pay for the signs themselves but this was refused. Cllr. Joshi has confirmed that LCC will now be installing the signs, as confirmed by Ozzy O'Shea at LCC. Repainting of road markings will also be taking place, and the feathering of growth at the bottom of the trees that line the road will also be looked at due to them impacting on line of sight.

"What can residents do to force action from Leicestershire County Council to address the problem parking in the Borough?" – A petition was suggested by Cllr. Gamble which can be presented to Ozzy O'Shea. The parking on the Moorwoods would definitely cause issues to emergency vehicle access as some cars are already affected. A petition must have a clear, and exact, request of Leicestershire County Council with a desired outcome, i.e. "please enforce the existing road markings".

A conversation is required with LFRS and town planners regarding the width of roads, and the provision for emergency vehicle access.

Parking on pavements is not illegal outside of the London metropolitan area.

3. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Defibrillator at St Peter's Church Hall: The Premises Officer at St Peter's Church has requested funding from the Forum to replace the battery on the existing Defibrillator and to purchase new pads for it as the current ones are reaching the end of their operable life. The combined cost would be approx. £310 and would ensure that the defibrillator will remain in working order.

Vote held with an overwhelming majority in favour. Requests from the Forum usually go through Committee, with a request made of the Leader to enable this to be bypassed in order to expedite funds being made available.

Request made for total budget figure available to the Forum.

Redevelopment of Oadby Mosque and Community Centre, Sandhurst Street: Matter raised by local resident. The Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association website has a prominent image on its frontpage raising funds toward the redevelopment of the existing building. Concerns were raised that the redevelopment is not public knowledge, as not everyone uses the internet, and that the proposed development being much larger than the existing building will impact on congestion, noise nuisance, parking, and access to neighbouring footpaths. The development has not had any formalised plans submitted to the Council for planning permission, and appears to be in early exploratory stages only. A request for information regarding this development will be made to the Oadby & Wigston Muslim Association, and brought back to this Forum's next meeting.

Brocks Hill / Members Enquiry: The response to Members Enquiry CQ/23/051 was shared with residents, noting that the total budget approved for the refurbishment of Brocks Hill into the new Council Offices was £3.61 million. The second part of this enquiry confirmed that, as of March 2023, the Council's total debt was £55,075,227 and that the interest on the debt is £744,991. An additional query was raised around the cost to the Council for taking back control of Brocks Hill, where it was confirmed that there was no cost to the Council for this.

A request was made for a breakdown in costs associated with the refurbishment of Brocks

Hill, highlighting where the money was allocation.

A further request was made regarding the increase in debt from a previous report, noting a significant increase from the report to the quoted figure of £55,075,227. Long term borrowing is for the HRA account and leisure centres. There is approx. £18m long term borrowing, and £16m short term borrowing. The £55m figure is from a Members Enquiry made in March 2023, the additional figures are from June 2023. A clarification will be sought and fed back to the Forum.

Bushloe House remains under offer, with contracts to be signed.

Fludes Lane Required Works: Stuart Marbrook, the Council's Corporate Assets Manager, has confirmed that a proposal was put forward to resurface, and make safe, Fludes Lane. There were a number of factors that required agreement before the Council could commit to carry out the works, and there is not currently a plan in place to proceed with works due to the following;

- The proposal was made assuming there would be voluntary labour available, as was mitigated to achieve maximum output from the available funding.
- Material costs have changed since the ball park cost for the works was originally conceived – no specification was submitted by the Councillor who originally proposed the works, other than asking what could be achieved for £20,000.
- No areas of work on Fludes Lane were identified properly in the scheme's concept as it was a financial proposal.

The Council has summarised that to resurface the full length of Fludes Lane with a millwaste, and some path repairs, plus labour could cost in excess of £100,000. Access and distance to manually move the materials is one of the biggest issues.

Conversations have been held with the Probation Service, specifically the Community Payback Scheme, around mitigating labour costs but this has been put on hold as Probation are not able to provide enough supervision at present. Early discussions are taking place with the new HMP Fosse Way for potential future partnership.

A suggestion of match funding from Leicestershire County Council was also made, and was followed up with the County Council, but the level of funding required was not available, and the nature of the project would mean the would have to adopt the path which the current surface condition made unfeasible.

Footpath at Fludes Lane is likely 24 years old at this point in time. The two main areas that should be focussed on are from the A6 to the entrance of Fludes Court, and from Brookside Drive to Nene Court, as these areas are most heavily trafficked and see some of the larger flooding. A bridge along Fludes Lane has also collapsed, and now prevents the use of the full length of the path. The bridge is not an official designated footpath, and is the subject of discussions between OWBC, LCC and the land owner regarding its repair and maintenance. It is unclear who installed the bridge originally. Vote held on the proposed sections in favour of repair, seeing approx. 100m of path restored; approved by the majority. This will be raised with Corporate Assets.

On 17 May, John Gray LCC Public Rights of Way Inspector looked into the collapsed bridge. He notes that the land appears to be owned by OWBC under deed LT410440. Stuart Marbrook has followed up on this, in a visit with a resident, who promised a simple structure could be installed but no works have taken place to date.

A request was made to look into if the footpath can now be classed as a designated footpath under common law due to the duration of its use.

A request was made for a breakdown of costs related to any contracts for work related to Fludes Lane. The procurement process keeps this information confidential in order to not prejudice the process. Three quotes will be sought under the procurement process. OWBC gets between £17-£20 from Council Tax which it must use to address statutory responsibilities and services before remaining funds are, at the request of officers, placed into a budget approved by Members.

Flooding in the Borough: A resident has raised concerns following the recent flooding in the Borough around the following areas;

- The Washbrook
- Surface Water Drains
- Overwhelmed Sewers
- Responsibilities of Different Agencies
- Ownership of the role of 'policing riparian responsibilities'
- Flood risk mitigation controls and future improvement plans
- Land development and usage impacting water run-off

The majority of these areas fall under the remit of Severn Trent and Leicestershire County Council Highways, both of whom have been approached to provide a response to the questions raised by the resident ahead of the meeting. Responses to these questions will be raised at the next meeting of this Forum.

Residents have been receiving forms from the County Council regarding the affect of flooding from households in the area. This form may have been born from a request made by Cllr. Alam of the County Council regarding drain cleaning around the Borough. The volume of water should have been handled by the existing system, but instead manhole covers were being blown due to capacity. 34 drain covers were blown in Oadby. Drain cleaning should help the system handle larger volumes of water in a quicker period.

The flooding, especially around the Moorwoods, appears to be getting worse with water coming from the brook and the sewers at a volume that has not been seen in previous years. Residents suspect this could be linked to developments around the edge of Oadby.

The sweeping of road gutters has also been noted as an issue as they do not appear to be done on a regular basis, with detritus being forced into the drains from the gutters and blocking them.

The County Council has, within 8 years, changed the process / routine for how drains are cleaned. The system is intended to identify the drains that require the most frequent cleaning, with some not requiring any cleaning. Leicestershire County Council Highways should be requested to review this process.

Rain in the UK is expected to increase by 30% in the coming years. Household flood defences were also discussed, although the flooding seen recently was flash-flooding due to the large downpour.

There is a firm belief that the works Severn Trent have been doing along the A6 has directly contributed to the additional flooding seen in the Moorwoods, with significant damage to properties and belongings. No additional drainage is being provided to handle the increased capacity of water from new developments near to the golf course.

County Highways and Severn Trent to be invited to the next Forum, with a strong letter, for these concerns to be discussed. Town planning should also be invited to attend, and the Environment Agency.

Severn Trent have leafleted properties in the area with a flyer around what should and should not be flushed down the toilet, and this is felt to be a means for Severn Trent to "cover their own backs" following the flooding.

It was noted that new developments are required to install water sinks as a means to aid in addressing flooding. A large water sink is being installed at Cottage Farm.

Campaigns that support the development of infrastructure should be supported given the current state of the Country's water industry.

"Is drainage a consideration during the development / approval of new builds?" – Yes, this is an established consideration for all new developments. These are approved by OWBC after professionals have been consulted, and their guidance provided.

Oadby & Wigston has a local plan that takes us up to 2035 for development. Consultation with all relevant infrastructure partners take place as part of the development of this. Devolved powers for Leicester / Leicestershire and being reviewed, with additional funds being made available for infrastructure, but this is being frustrated by the City Mayor not being in favour of the devolution.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None raised.

5. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 19 October 2023 – 6:30pm – Brocks Hill Council Offices, Brocks Hill, Oadby

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.38 pm