

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 2HR ON WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2625

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
M H Charlesworth
K J Loydall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

L Chevallereau Planning Officer
T Maccabe Community and Wellbeing Manager
E Morgan Principal Planning Policy Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

PC G Morgan Leicestershire Police

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

All minutes of the previous meeting were recorded accurately, aside from one minor mistake on page 2. The figure written was £64 where in fact it should be £64,000.

61. POLICE UPDATE

PC Gareth Morgan from the Wigston Policing Beat Team attended the Forum.

He advised that general issues in the Wigston area have reduced. This included burglaries since key arrests were made during the Christmas and New Year period.

He offered crime prevention advice, which included ensuring windows and doors are locked and closed and keys aren't left in locks. One resident raised with PC Morgan that she was advised to leave her key in her window by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) in case of a fire. PC Morgan discussed the different agendas between Police and LFRS, but ultimately both organisations want resident to be safe. PC Morgan suggested putting keys somewhere hidden, but in a location that is easily found and accessible in case of emergencies.

PC Morgan noted that Police were are of homeless people around The Arcade in Wigston, but when patrolling, had not seen them recently. He is engaging with the Council's Housing Options Team to see what support can be offered should they return.

There are some anti-social behaviour (ASB) concerns in Wigston and the likelihood is that this will increase during the summer months. PC Morgan is aware of some of the ASB perpetrators. One in particular that has been identified will be litter picking to ensure that they are paying back to the community.

Some of the ASB is occurring around the schools, with students travelling from Wigston to South Wigston and vice versa as well as Blaby Road Park.

Cllr Bentley raised speeding vehicles is still a concern in the Little Hill estate and if more can be done to prevent this. Cllr Bentley referred to an unfortunate traffic incident that occurred recently. PC Morgan advised Police Volunteers support with mobile speed cameras and advised he will look into liaising with schools to discuss and educate students on traffic safety.

Cllr Bentley also raised that obstructive parking is a current issue with vehicles parking and full blocking footpaths. This included near the bottom of Horsewell Lane. A resident also raised that a vehicle parked on Homestead Avenue is causing an obstruction and that this will be raised in the last Forum. PC Morgan noted that he was aware of this but due to other policing matters, has been unable to investigate further. PC Morgan will however look into this.

PC Morgan advised residents that Police have specific powers with obstructive parking, and key bits of legislation have to be ticked in order for Police to exercise their powers. PC Morgan offered to residents the opportunity to contact him to report concerns where he will review these.

62. OADBY & WIGSTON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Ed Morgan and Lisa Chevallereau from the Council's Planning Policy Team to discuss the Local Plan. Ed advised that the Local Plan is put in place for a period of 21 years. The Government sets the legislation in which Councils are legally obliged to follow

A first consultation was completed in 2021 with the community and stakeholders for the first draft of the Plan with roughly 20 sites located for potential development. A second consultation was completed in 2022 with landowners to locate further sites. In recent weeks, the latest consultation has taken place which ran for 6 weeks. The consultation did provisionally end last Wednesday (15 May) but has now been extended until the first week in June.

Following this, a second draft of the Local Plan is to be released, with a third draft in 2025. This will highlight the preferred options for development. Plans will be evidenced based using the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, which provides what Oadby and Wigston's housing need is. The formula also takes into consideration local need.

It has been identified that Oadby and Wigston will require 188 houses per year as a starting figure. In addition to this, the Council has a duty to cooperate with its neighbouring Councils. After the Planning Inspectorate examined Leicester City Council's Local Plan, there was a declared unmet housing and employment need. As a result, this will be distributed to other Councils. Oadby and Wigston have agreed to take a further 52 houses per year, making the total figure 240.

The Planning Policy Team will first be looking at urban areas and the Council has a policy to state that there should be no net loss on its car parks. The Council do have site options but these will be based on evidence with no decision having been made yet. A Transport Assessment will be completed Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland wide taking into consideration extra congestion with a further local assessment being completed with neighbouring Councils.

Infrastructure will be reviewed, including GP surgery's, schools, libraries etc with the Council working towards an Infrastructure and Delivery Plan. Meeting with partners will take place to discuss this such as Highways at Leicestershire County Council and the Integrated Care Board of the NHS. This will support decision making when allocating new sites as to what is needed from developers, included Section 106 money.

Ed also noted that the Council will try and protect green wedges, which separate town from town but is under pressure. They will also work with developers for better design quality and infrastructure.

Ed discussed flood risks which has been raised as part of the recent consultation and will be working with partners to discuss what the impact of this in sites may be. There were also objections to the Local Plan from the consultation, but Ed advised this legally has to be completed.

Ed advised that Oadby and Wigston is one of the smallest Borough's in England with a dense population. 37 policies are included within the Local Plan and consideration are being discussed as to include what Oadby and Wigston needs are.

Cllr Bentley advised that the Local Plan protects certain areas for development and if one if not completed, the Council will have little say as to where sites are identified. Ed discussed that there is a monitoring report for completions where this will be reviewed throughout to then include certain infrastructures.

A resident raised concerns that she has noticed lots of houses are being built, but is not seeing the infrastructure being put in place, for example schools and GP surgeries. Ed advised that there will be certain trigger points when developers are building on sites for the Council to then request these be built.

A resident raises concerns with a house on Durnford Road being developed and questioned why this received planning permission. Cllr Boulter advised that the Council's Planning Enforcement Team are investigating this. Cllr Bentley advised that as part of planning permission, they will have to reinstate the ground to as it was before.

Section 106 money was discussed with a resident asking for it to be explained and who takes responsibility for this. Cllr Charlesworth advised this money is given to organisations such as education at Leicestershire County Council who then decide how to spend it. He raised concerns that this is rarely spent on GP surgeries and with developers wanting existing GP surgeries to be used which saves the company money. Smaller development sites do not necessarily require certain infrastructures to be built.

Lisa advised that the Council will request infrastructure based on the proportion of houses being built. The larger the development, the more the Council can request. Ed advised that the money is pooled with smaller development sites to then spend.

A recent planning application was raised for a site off Washbrook Lane in Oadby. Cllr Boulter advised that this planning application was refused.

A resident asked if the Council review existing buildings as part of the Local Plan. Ed advised that they consider all sites but not many existing sites, especially in the town centre have been brought forward for the Council to consider.

63. CHAIR'S UPDATES

63a. REFUSE COLLECTION CHANGES

Cllr Boulter advised that if not already, residents will be receiving a letter to details the Council's intention of moving to an alternate weekly bin collection. Oadby and Wigston are one of this last Councils to move in this direction. The Council are working with consultants to look to optimise the best ways to collect waste and reduce its carbon footprint.

Cllr Boulter highlighted that the Government are soon to bring in legislation that will then require companies to reduce their packaging. This should reduce the quantity of recycling items placed in bins by residents. There is also soon to be weekly food waste collections per rules set by the Government.

The Council are offering residents to the opportunity to purchase large refuse bins at a one off payment of £38. Cllr Boulter encouraged residents to try to use their current bins in the first instance.

The Government are soon to introduce standard items for recycling that will be shared with residents. It has also taken roughly 18 months for the Council to order and then receive refuse vehicles which use 4 miles to the gallon. Other areas have tried electric vehicles but these have failed. Cllr Boulter confirmed that the Council have enough vehicles to collect waste, but the total number has reduced.

The projected total saving to moving the alternate waste collection is £240,000.

If the Council had not made this decision, it may have resulted in bankruptcy and being served a 114 Notice. This in essence allows the government to move its own staff in to manage the Council and make future decisions. The Council will also be burdened with paying for the service.

The proposal will be introduced in the first week of September.

A suggestion was made by a resident to collect both recycling and refuse bins on the same day, but area by area. That way, some residents will have all their bins collected one week or others the following week. Cllr Boulter is to raise this to the consultants.

A resident asked if there was an option to purchase larger recycling bins. I believe this referred to purchasing recycling bins with the capacity of 240L as some still have 140L bins. Cllr Charlesworth stated there are currently no plans to offer bigger recycling bins. Cllr Boulter noted that as above, with new legislation soon to be introduced restricting the packaging from companies, this should reduce the number of items residents should have to recycle.

A question was asked by a resident, who would replace damaged or stolen bins. Cllr Boulter referred to residents when being provided a bin, enter into a contract in which they own the bin. That said, if bins are damaged by the Council, they may be replaced free of charge.

Cllr Boulter in response to a resident advised that any excess cardboard left net to the recycling bin will be collected, but black bags next to a refuse bin will not.

Cllr Charlesworth enquired about bin lids that are left open due to the bin being full. Cllr

Boulter advised that the lids should be flat when collected.

A resident asked if refuse bins can have an identifiable number to link it back to a specific address, similar to the garden bins. Cllr Boulter will explore this.

Cllr Boulter explained that the Government have advised that food waste can be put in garden waste. Cllr Boulter however stated that this is restricted depending on where the garden waste is then disposed.

Cllr Boulter confirmed in response to a resident query that the Council have and are liaising with fellow Council's in respect of best practice. The method in which the Council are looking to introduce is similar to the scheme in Melton.

A further question was raised in respect of how the Council will evidence that it has reduced its carbon footprint. Cllr Boulter advised that there is a formula that will calculate this.

63b. D-DAY 80TH CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Boulter advised residents that a commemoration is to be held at Brocks Hill in Oadby, starting at 8:30pm. A beacon will be lit at 9:15pm. A small service is also taking place at Peace Memorial Park at 12:00pm.

A resident enquired as to whether a tree can be placed near The Arcade for D-Day. Cllr Boulter will follow this up.

64. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Grass Cutting

Several residents at the Forum raised concerns with the lack of grass cutting in Wigston and specifically in the Meadows Estate. This is causing a risk to safety and children can now no longer play in certain areas.

Cllr Boulter advised that the Council have been cutting grass on land which is in fact not owned by them. If there were any accidents as a result of this, the Council would not be covered by insurance. The Council continue to survey land in which grass is cut to establish owners. The Council have contacted land owners and advised that they will now need to arrange plans to cut the grass or to pay the Council to do this on their behalf.

Cllr Boulter advised that Members were not made aware that the Council were to execute this plan but have since met with the Council's Chief Executive.

Cllr Boulter have been advised that Leicestershire County Council will not be cutting grass on their land in May.

A resident asked why have the Council been cutting grass in certain areas for years but have since stopped. Cllr Bentley advised a decision has been made to reduce the grass cutting due to Council finances.

A resident raised that Staindale has not seen grass cutting for a considerable amount of time. Cllr Boulter is to follow up on this.

Newton Lane bridge

A resident raised that the bridge on Newton Lane is still not yet open. This falls outside the

Borough.

Spion Cop/Bridge from South Wigston to Wigston

Cllr Boulter advised residents that the bridge will be closed in June 2025 for between 4 and 6 months. There will be pedestrian access but not for vehicles. The recommended diversion route from Leicestershire County Council is 7.5km/5miles long. Cllr Charlesworth stated that only the central section of the bridge is to be replaced.

Cllr Charlesworth advised that during this period, buses will not follow their normal route and terminate on either side of the bridge.

British Legion, The Elms

A resident raised a query as to what will be happening with The Elms. Cllr Boulter advised that the roof has been repaired and painting completed inside. A sign has been erected to state it will be a bar and restaurant. The premise will have to apply for a new license.

A resident asked if when applying for a new licence, if the frontage of the building can be considered. Cllr Boulter advised that it cannot, however there can potentially be enforcement action if it warranted it. It was asked if the blue plaque can be maintained by the developers.

Nautical William

Cllr Boulter advised that the building is to be sold to develop for potential new homes.

Brocks Hill Council Offices

When parking at Brocks Hill, there is very little signage to direct residents to where the Council reception is. Historic England are interested in the property.

Potholes neat Little Hill shops

A resident wanted her thanks to Cllr Charlesworth in the minutes for being involved in the potholes being filled.

Ross Lane

Concerns were raised that old leaves are not be swept in this area. Cllr Boulter advised that the Council does not possess a sweeper small enough to access the narrow footpath. Cllr Boulter is to follow this up.

Parlour Close

The Council owned area of Parlour Close is not being cleaned. Cllr Boulter will follow this up.

Bus Timetables, Little Hill

A resident advised that there are no timetables at bus stops. Cllr Charlesworth is investigating this in order to get timetables installed. Cllr Charlesworth is also trying to get papers copies sent to residents.

Parking machines at Brocks Hill/Parklands Leisure Centre

The keyboards on the parking machines are too small, some digits are also worn down. Cllr Boulter advised the new parking machines are to be installed.

Culworth Drive

The street lighting on Culworth Drive does not offer enough lighting and is extremely dark. Cllr Charlesworth advised that the lighting has been dimmed to 30%. Cllr Boulter will

follow up on this.

Clogged drains

Concerns were raised that drains are being clogged up due to soggy leaves. Cllr Boulter advised that a new path sweeper is being sought.

Path between Foston Gate and Newton Lane estate

A resident has enquired whether a public footpath can be built to connect the two areas with lighting etc. Cllr Boulter to follow this up.

65. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No Items Raised.

66. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 17 July 2024 – Thythorn Hill Community Centre – 18:30

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.00 pm