

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT
SOUTH WIGSTON METHODIST CHURCH, BLABY ROAD, SOUTH WIGSTON,
LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 4PB ON TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2626

COUNCILLORS

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Planning Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Leicestershire Police

58. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that Appendix A from Item, Minutes of the Previous Meeting was missing.

59. POLICE UPDATE

Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) Cara Hayter and Dominic Judge attended the Forum and provided the below statistics for crime from 1st to 28th May in South Wigston.

17- Non crime incidents recorded. These include safeguarding concerns, verbal only domestics, anti-social behaviour etc.

14- Violence against a person reports. 9 with injury, 5 without injury.

12 thefts. This includes 4 theft from stores, 3 residential burglary, 3 thefts from vehicles and 2 miscellaneous. It was not clear what miscellaneous covers.

7- public order offences. Of these 7, 1 involved a knife involved, there were 3 criminal damages and 1 drug offence.

0- robberies.

A resident advised that he was aware of two males that were very active in committing theft from motor vehicles. A description and location were noted by PCSO's Hayter and Judge.

The presence of a drug dealer was also raised to Police. The location and specific details were passed to Police.

Concerns were raised with parking on double yellow lines on Leopold Street as a result of customers attending the Cue Club on Blaby Road. Both PCSO's noted this. Thomas Maccabe advised that Leicestershire Police have restricted and specific powers with

parking. Traffic enforcement officers employed by Leicestershire County Council enforce parking on double yellow lines.

Namur Road was also raised where vehicles park on double yellow lines.

PCSO Judge advised residents that from feedback from the local community, priorities raised were dog fouling and speeding vehicles.

PCSO Judge informed residents, tackling dog walkers who do not clean up their dogs mess is difficult to enforce without CCTV. A resident who supports the Litter Wombles noted she was seen used dog bags thrown in bushes and trees. Cllr Boulter advised those attending that the Council do have a dog warden.

Information around PCSO powers were given to residents in respect of reckless driving. PCSO's have some powers to enforce, however the large majority sit with PC's. PCSO's have and will continue collect information and intelligence surrounding those driving recklessly to pass to PC's.

A resident enquired whether the pedestrian crossing near Jasmine Court can be raised, ie speed bump, to reduce speeding.

Further concerns were raised with speeding and parking on Gloucester Crescent. Cllr Boulter noted that Dorset Avenue also suffers with this. The Council are soon to receive ANPR cameras that may help deter some drivers from speeding.

A resident enquired as to what Police believe peak times are for speeding. PCSO Judge noted he patrols and monitors traffic at the weekends as well as rush hour on weekdays.

A resident raised that she can hear speeding motorbikes on Saffron Road and suspects that they are racing. The noise causes an issue. Cllr Boulter advised that certain powers have be removed for Environmental Health meaning that they can no longer enforce such reports. PCSO Judge advised he will inform the local PC.

PCSO Judge advised the Section 59 Notices can be issued to vehicles that are being used in an anti-social manner. This could lead to seizure.

A resident asked Police what their opinions are on electric scooters. PCSO Judge advised that these are illegal but are awaiting Central Government issuing Police specific powers to deal.

60. OADBY & WIGSTON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Peter Heath and Lisa Chevallereau from the Council's Planning Policy provided an input with respect to the Local Plan.

Residents were advised that the Council are required to provide a Local Plan as per Central Government and this is to be reviewed every 5 years. The last review having taken place in 2019.

If the Local Plan is up to date with a 5 year supply of housing, the Council are in a position of power to determine future development sites. If however, the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing or the Plan is not up to date, planning framework will have to be relied upon which is looser and may allow development in certain sites which are not recommended.

The Local Plan is being developed with a public consultation having finished on 15th May. Peter advised he will take further comments from those attending the Forum however if done in a timely fashion.

A further version of the Plan will be completed in February/March 2025. After this, an independent Planning Inspector will review and host a hearing for the public to raise further comments. The report provided by the Planning Inspector will be binding.

The Local Plan contains sites that have been allocated from growth and various planning policies to guide the development of sites. Policies include climate change, water development and affordable housing.

A study has been completed with Oadby and Wigston's population expected to grow, gain in wealth with retailing need growing slightly. With regards to retail, utilising existing vacant premises should cover this growth need. There will also need to be more land identified for employment, however the Council do have some sites located. The number may change based on evidence.

A standard method is used to determine how many houses are needed. This is a consistent approach across the country. As a result, Oadby and Wigston will need to provide 190 houses per year. There is also a duty to cooperate with neighbouring Councils. As such, with Leicester City being unable to comply with their growth, Oadby and Wigston have taken a further 50 houses per year. Total number being 240 houses.

Landowners have been written to find suitable land for development with certain sites being identified. The sites do not yet have Council support but this will be reviewed after relevant evidence is gathered through several methods, including a traffic and flood surveys.

Once the relevant evidence has been gathered, the Council will engage with Members to decide on recommended sites. The next version of the plan will contain these.

Feedback from the consultation thus far raises concerns that the current infrastructure cannot cope as well as green areas being identified.

A resident raised concerns that she resides on a newly developed site where residents have to pay a managing agent to maintain the land, including a balancing pond. It was asked if attempts to avoid this can be considered.

A further query was raised regarding considerations for better access for construction vehicles to sites. Peter advised that the transport study that is due to be conducted will support making decisions concerning this.

Introducing a by-pass was raised by a resident to reduce the already heavy traffic footfall on Blaby Road. Peter advised that National Highways will consider roads and any adaptations.

The traffic lights were raised opposite the swimming pool in Wigston and suggestions were made that this causes traffic issues. Cllr Boulter advised that Leicestershire County Council have checked the lights.

Cllr Boulter raised that should there be sites in the town centres for development, there will be no loss of car parking.

A resident advised that although flats have been built near his address, there has been no extra parking provided.

Mary Ray and Tony Sumpter who are volunteer tree wardens gave a short speech regarding local green spaces and the Local Plan. Below is a summary of what was said:

The current Local Plan includes 12 sites that are called Local Green Spaces:

Railway triangle, Paragon and Defra sites on Saffron Road, Territorial Army and office frontages on Tigers Road, the rear of the Territorial Army, Crete Avenue green, two frontages on Ladysmith Road, two sites at the top of Namur Road the frontage of the Salvation Army of Saffron Road.

They have some protection from being built on. It isn't full protection, but it's the best we can get. It took 20 years and masses of evidence provided to the Council, including unanimous votes by this Forum and residents letters of support.

In 2018, the Planning Inspector agreed all 12 sites and the Council adopted the current plan in 2019.

Ed Morgan of the Council Planning Policy Team said at this time, no further evidence of community support is needed. If the time were to arise, Ed will advise Mary and Tony where a further presentation will be provided to the Forum.

It is believed two items within the draft Plan should be changed.

Local Spaces with the draft Plan are in a chapter called, 'Protected Places'. Praise was given to this title. In the latest version of the Plan, the title in 'Natural Environment' which is not as well supported.

It is also believed that all the Environmental Policies should be labelled as 'Strategic'. Concerns were raised that id 5 of the 7 policies were left as 'Non-Strategic', a developer may have more scope to build on them.

Peter highlighted that the term 'Strategic', are full more general information. 'Non-Strategic' policies are still important with more specific information detailed.

61. CHAIR'S UPDATES

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61a. REFUSE COLLECTION CHANGES

A letter was sent to residents offering the update that the Council will be moving to alternate weekly bin collections. This is projected to save the Council £240,000 a year. Officers will collect refuse one week, and recycling the other.

An optimization survey is due to take place to find the most suitable route to collect waste.

Cllr Boulter noted a residents comment about Council Tax. He advised that the local authority receive a small amount with the majority going to Police and Leicestershire County Council.

Should the Council not have made this decision, a 114 Notice may have been issued. This will allow Government employees to inspect how the Council operates and the make cost making decisions. This will also be at a financial cost to the Council. The Council have also saved money by reducing staffing by 15% and are reviewing income generation.

Cllr Boulter referred that previously, the Council allowed residents a free garden bin. It was however found that residents without gardens were in fact requesting bins at a cost to the Council. A decision has therefore been made that a one of payment of £38 will allow residents to purchase a larger refuse bin.

The change is due to be implemented in September.

Questions were raised concerning larger recycling bins. Cllr Boulter advised that the Government is soon to introduce new legislation which will reduce the number of packaging companies will use. This therefore should reduce the number of items residents recycle to be able to use current recycling bins.

Food waste collections are again, something new soon to be introduced. The Council have received advice that residents can put food waste in their garden bins. That said, Leicestershire County Council will not dispose of food waste with garden waste so it is currently unclear what to do at this time.

A resident advised that his refuse is going to be overflowing with the alternate weekly bin collections and does not believe this will work. He also advised that Northamptonshire offered bins to residents for free.

Cllr Boulter responded to say that the Council initially wanted to charge an extra £50 per years. Members however disagreed where the one of cost was selected. Cllr Boulter also encouraged residents to try and use their current refuse bin where possible. Black bags left next to the bin will not due taken due to previously resulting in injuries to staff. The lids will also need to be closed to avoid damage to the bin.

A resident advised that he has seen staff collecting the bins pick out black bin bags from the refuse bins to then throw them into the lorry. Cllr Boulter advised that this should not happen.

Cllr Boulter informed the Forum that any smaller refuse bins returned will be recycled. Residents were concerned due to some properties, mainly terraces, not having the space to wheel the larger bins down the side alley to their rear garden and that bins will be left on the street.

A question was asked as to whether some occupants can have two smaller refuse bins.

A resident also raised concern with hygiene with moving to alternate weekly collections with waste sitting their for 2 weeks.

Cllr Boulter advised the Forum that the Council are having to reduce costs. He gave an example that currently that Council have a statutory duty to temporary accommodate certain individuals and families. The cost equates to roughly £600,000.

A resident questioned if practicalities have been considered or whether residents are simply expected to adjust. Cllr Boulter again referred to the new legislation to reduce packaging which should support residents with the number of items they recycle.

It was raised that when Melton introduced a similar scheme, they did charge residents for new bins, however Harborough did not. Increased fly tipping was also raised as a concern.

Cllr Boulter advised those with medical conditions can apply for a free black bin. Residents noted that this was not contained within the Council letter.

61b. D-DAY 80TH CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Boulter informed the Forum that there will be an event held at Brocks Hill to commemorate D-Day. The beacon will be lit at 9:15pm. A small ceremony will also be held at Peace Memorial Park at midday.

61c. SPION KOP

Spion Kop, the bridge that leads from South Wigston into Wigston and vice versa is due to be demolished in part or full. Work is to start in May 2025 and will take a minimum of 4 months. The road will be closed during this time with diversion routes in place. Pedestrians however will still be able to use the bridge on foot.

A resident raised that when a bridge having construction work done in Blaby, a temporary bridge was erected and questioned why this has not happened here.

62. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

The Cue

A resident raised concerns with The Cue on Blaby Road with noise nuisance and parking issues. Cllr Boulter advised that noise can be enforced and will follow this up. It was questioned why the Council does not increase business rates. Cllr Boulter advised that they legally cannot do this.

Resident only parking

Questions were asked why they cannot have resident only parking on residential streets off Blaby Road. Cllr Boulter advised that this decision is made by Leicestershire County Council and was previously refused due to both residential sides of Blaby Road having to commit. Residents are concerned that they struggle to park on roads such as Leopold and Fairfield Street.

Countesthorpe Road car park

A question was asked in respect of how much revenue the car park has made. Cllr Boulter to find this information.

Parking in South Wigston

With South Wigston being more deprived than other areas of the Borough and retailers struggling, can the Council consider adapting the car parking charges. Cllr Boulter to follow this up.

Water leak, Saffron Road

Cllr Boulter advised that Severn Trent are aware, although residents were concerned it has taken Leicestershire County Council 6 weeks to view the issue.

Ladysmith Road

An address on Ladysmith Road has 5-7 minivans parked on its property, is overgrown with increased rubbish piling up. A resident believes that owners has previously taken advantage of those who have lived there. The property is now vacant and Cllr Boulter

advised that the previous occupants did not have a tenancy which gave the Council limited powers.

Cllr Boulter advised the Council can remove vehicles from private land but have to have the owners consent to do so. The Council will also consider if the cost is reasonable to remove the vehicles, where removing 5-7 vehicles would be expensive.

The property in questions is under scrutiny by the Council and has not been approved to be a residential building.

Bungalow, Marsten Avenue

A resident made Cllr Boulter aware that the occupant have unfortunately passed away and questioned what will happen to their vehicles, approximately 15 of them. There is also a car in the lounge. Cllr Boulter to follow this up.

63. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No Items Raised.

64. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 23 July 2024 – South Wigston Methodist Church – 19:00

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.46 pm

Minute Item 58

Corrections to South Wigston Residents' Forum Minutes of Meeting that took place 31st October 2023. All words in red are corrections / clarifications.

Throughout this section of the Minutes, it is clear the drafter did not truly understand the position on the Waterside Gardens Estate vis a vis the balancing pond thereon and separately, the Public Open Space. The drafter confuses the two areas.

Residents pay a rent charge to FirstPort Property Services who were appointed by the developer, Barratt Homes North Midlands Ltd to cut grass and repair the wooden slatted fence at the balancing pond situate the first corner on Windlass Drive. Residents do not pay them to maintain the Public Open Space. The Public Open Space is currently not maintained and has been left to deteriorate now for 7 years due to an impasse between the relevant parties involved. The residents pay full council" tax and on top, an annual rent charge for partial maintenance at the pond. Severn Trent Water maintain the pond workings, pipe work and head walls.

Balancing Pond off of Windlass Drive / Public Open Space Opposite Windlass Drive – Residents noted an increase in rats in this area as it remains overgrown. A letter was received by residents from the property developers, **Barratts**, (not Barratt's. It was from the landowner, J.H Hallam and Son Limited) that was forward to the Council and to Dave Gill, but no response has been received to date. **The letter details how the developers and the Council appear to be at an impasse blaming each other for the handover of the land having not taken place to date. This last sentence should be re-written to say -** The letter details how J.H.Hallam & Son Limited and the Council appear to be at an impasse regarding the handover of the area from Barratt's to the Council. The letter stated that J.H. Hallam & Son Limited have been frustrated over the last 10 years or so, by the fact that the Public Open Space Area has not been dealt with in accordance with what was originally intended and agreed within the Section 106 Agreement. Barratt's were given a licence over the area and under the S106 Agreement, were obliged to maintain the area for a period of 12 months after the last house was occupied. At this point, a lease was to be entered into by OWBC to carry on with the maintenance provided that Barratt's had maintained the area to an acceptable standard. Nothing has happened now for 7 years since that first 12 months maintenance ended. A request was made for a response from the Council to be provided to residents in the Windlass Drive area.

Residents are very frustrated at the lack of progress regarding this open space and the lack of information being made available to them from both **Barratts** (not Barratts - it should say J.H.Hallam & Son Limited) and the Council. **Residents in the Windlass Drive area note that they are effectively paying two lots of Council Tax as they are also paying a property management company for the open space. (This sentence should read:- Residents on Windlass Drive, Cutting Close and Keel Close note that they are effectively paying two lots of Council Tax, as they are also paying a property management company for the maintenance at the balancing pond situated on the first corner of Windlass Drive).** The Chair explained how the Council are unable to prevent developments taking place where a property management company will be operating at the completion of the building process.

Residents expressed further frustration that they feel their houses are becoming unsellable given the situation with the property management company, with residents having to develop their own 'help sheets' for neighbours who are looking to sell their property. Residents note that they were unaware of the **property management fees** (these last three words should be replaced with the words - the true extent, implications and meaning

of a "rent charge" being applied. They were only told there would be an annual fee to cut the grass and repair the wooden fence at the balancing pond) when purchasing their homes, and that their solicitors were also unaware of Barratt's (words to be added here "and Barratt's appointed managing agent, a company called FirstPort Property Serviced Ltd's) ability to evict people from their homes for not paying those fees, or the value of the bills they were to expect. Some residents have taken additional legal advice at their own costs to vary the **contracts** (the word "contracts" should be replaced by - "TP1 - "Transfer of Part of Registered Title" which forms part of the property's land registry documents" **they have in place with Barratts.** (These last 6 words should be struck out). Other residents noted that **Barratts** (again this is the wrong party - it should say "FirstPort Property Services") have sent copies of their bills for property management to several former addresses to reach them, with bills arriving after several months to years of occupying those properties without knowing they would be liable for the associated costs.

The Chair noted that the frustrations raised by residents in regard to Windlass Drive influenced how the Council approached the development of the new estate on Newton Lane. There were no grounds for the Council to refuse planning permission for the development at Windlass Drive with the inclusion of a property management company in lieu of Section 106 monies. The Chair will raise the question as to the legal status of developers being able to operate a property management company in lieu of Section 106.

Residents pay management charges to **Barratts** (again the wrong party - it should say "FirstPort Property Services") to cut the grass at the balancing pond and to maintain the bordering fence which is also covered by (add the words "property damage, public liability and") terrorism insurance which residents are also charged for. Residents **believe** (this word should be removed and replaced with the words - "were told by Barratts") that the Council was given the opportunity to adopt the pond which the Council rejected; the Chair refutes this. Residents have noted that some of their neighbours have taken it in to their own hands to mow the grass at the edge of the open space in some effort to maintain it as a barrier between the open space and the highway.

Members note that a response needs to be made to residents from Mr Gill in light of letters submitted to the Council, and that the lack of response is not in line with the Council's Service Standards. It has been noted that residents not present at this meeting have provided a statement to residents who are in attendance supporting the points raised.