

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT SOUTH WIGSTON METHODIST CHURCH, BLABY ROAD, SOUTH WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2296

COUNCILLORS

R H Adams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Flynn Leicestershire County Council
N Hughes South Wigston Health Centre
PCSO E Sanders Leicestershire Police

24. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 8 November 2022, were declared true and accurate.

25. POLICE UPDATE

Non-crime incidents – 49, 69 less than previous three months. Burglaries down by 9, vehicle crime down 14, shoplifting down 20 incidents. Criminal Damage, 21 less, spiked in January but now low. Public order 23 less than previous.

Two break-ins on Gloucester Crescent that the Police are aware of already were raised by a resident, but public perception is that there were an additional 2 or 3 break-ins that have taken place in the same period. Break-ins are mainly occurring as the night starts to turn darker; recommendation is to leave lights on where possible, or put lights on a timer if one is available. The Police can always be contacted on 101 for suspicious activity, such as unfamiliar individuals in the area.

A resident raised the two break ins / smashed windows at the Chemists on Canal Street; requested that CCTV coverage is put in place here if possible. M Smith discussed the camera at Blaby Road Park and how it can be rotated to provide coverage in this area.

Traffic issues were also raised as an issue in South Wigston, and the increase in traffic to / from the new prison. It was noted that the car park at the prison is currently being built, and the displaced cars will return to the prison site. There are no plans in place to change the entrance location for the prison, which will remain on Tigers Road.

Blaby Road Park – Problem management plan is in place, with regular patrols heading through the park. South Wigston train station was also recommend by a resident to be a

police focus area. An individual riding a motorbike through Blaby Road Park was also brought to the attention of the police, with a request for further details to be reported through to the police when seen.

eScooters – Concerns raised around scooters carrying more than one person at a time, on the road which is illegal. It's not just teenagers riding these now, with adults also using them. It was noted by the Police that they are unable to pursue these scooters as it presents an unsafe situation. It was raised by the Chair that Police resources would not be best placed to address these, with the Police taking an 'education first' approach to eScooter usage before enacting seizure powers for anti-social usage. Concerns were raised by residents about them being used by parents with young children, particularly on the school run.

26. SOUTH WIGSTON HEALTH CENTRE UPDATE

N Hughes from South Wigston Health Centre introduced himself to residents, and provided an update on the centre. Several doctors left the health centre in June 2022 leaving virtually no regular doctors in place; a doctor from Two Steeples was drafted in to support as a partner, and now 6 permanent doctors are employed at the practice. A new practice manager joined the health centre in January 2023.

A visit from the CQC highlighted that significant improvements were required at the health centre, but this is now historical as a number of plans are in place to address the issues that the CQC are aware of.

There is now a full team of receptionists employed at the health centre, with 5 available to answer all calls that come through in the morning.

Pre-appointments can now also be booked for the following week, and some Saturdays which benefit individuals who work Mon – Fri. These weekend appointments take place at Two Steeples Health Centre.

The intention is that South Wigston Health Centre fully integrates into the local community, with patient focus groups having also been setup to assist this. New furniture has also been purchased for the health centre, in addition to improved lighting, to make the building more welcoming.

A raised that one of the receptionists was unaware of a health condition he stated to them when wishing to speak with a GP. It was confirmed that none of the receptionists are clinically trained as it is not a requirement of the role. The GP then contacted the patient over the phone for this appointment rather than a face to face meeting. It was confirmed that this is standard procedure for the GPs, with the GP using the telephone appointment to establish if there is a need for the patient to be called in for a face to face appointment.

Oadby Urgent Care Centre is now only accessible following a call to 111 who will pre-book patients into appointments there. A resident wondered if the old process of just being able to turn up at the centre would return, and potentially be implemented at South Wigston too. This will not be happening at South Wigston.

A query was also raised around the number of doctors at the health centre and how this translates to available appointments. It was confirmed that only 3 doctors work per day, with between 150-200 people seeking appointments each day. Doctors will see roughly 18

patients per session. 7493 patients are currently registered at the health centre.

A query was raised around if home visits will also be offered to patients. The community nurses continue to visit patients for some care needs, but the GPs will not undertake home visits. Home visits from a GP can be arranged via 111 where on call GPs could attend.

Prescriptions used to take a total of 11 days, this has now been reduced to 2 days, with only acute prescriptions that require a GP intervention taking slightly longer at 3 days. Blood test result sessions have also been booked in per week for groups of patients who can be seen individually.

The health centre is taking a backlog following Covid that it is addressing.

27. CHAIR'S UPDATES

Traffic marking painting has taken place on Dorset Avenue, but there is no budget for traffic calming measures currently on Cornwall Road.

A resident raised concerns with the traffic junction for Gloucester Crescent and Saffron Road as a dangerous junction. This was looked at but no works were deemed required. Traffic using this junction has been displaced to Dorset Avenue as it is felt to be a safer route for some motorists.

Warm Hubs – Details of all of the Warm Hubs in South Wigston are available on the Council's website. Various Hubs are open and available all days in the area, at differing times, to ensure ease of access for residents.

Household Support Fund – Run by LCC, with individuals to be referred from suitable bodies such as the Local Area Coordinators, Helping Hands etc.

Discretionary Housing Payment – OWBC £110k available to support those in need.

Severn Trent – The Chair has approach them regarding river and water quality, burst pipes etc. in the Borough. 14% of all rivers are "good ecological status". £12billion has been sent on sewer upgrades, and £100m is being invested in the water service per year. Sewer and storage capacity is being increased. These works are noted to be 16 years ahead of scheduled. Query raised around capacity of existing water treatment plants in Oadby and Countesthorpe following the building of additional properties in the Borough – concerns of discharge into the rivers during storm surges etc. as the Borough has a combined sewer and storm system since Victorian times. Newer estates are built with a separated system for sewerage and storm waters. Severn Trent are looking at the possibility of diverting storm water to storage reservoirs to prevent flooding and additional discharge into rivers. 80% reduction in the discharge of harmful chemicals into rivers from farms.

28. COUNCIL TAX

Oadby & Wigston Council Tax will be going up by a total of £7.61 per year, an increase of 2.99% for a Band D property. LFRS will be raising their Council Tax precept by £5 per year, and the Police by £15 per year. Leicestershire County Council will be raising their precept by 4.99%, an increase of £72.50 for Band D property per year, with a meeting to be held to set this next Wednesday (22 Feb). This increase also covers Social Services in Leicestershire.

Oadby & Wigston's Council Tax rate is still the lowest in the County due to not having any Parish Councils within its boundary.

Previously Central Government provided 70% toward the costs of service provision for local government, but this no longer exists with local Council's required to foot 100% of the costs. For Oadby & Wigston this was a reduction of £2million.

Road sweeping and grass verge cutting was raised as a potential cost saving by a resident. It was noted that the road sweepers now have a larger number of streets to visit, and that the footpath sweeper is currently awaiting repair with a part on order.

29. VOTER ID

A Voter ID booklet was provided to all residents present at the meeting, detailing what forms of ID will be accepted at Polling Stations during the elections in May 2023. All ID must be photo ID.

Details were also given on how residents can apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate', if they do not have any photo ID, with a deadline of 5pm on 25 April 2023 for applications to be received.

Postal votes are thought to be the easiest way to vote if no photo ID is available. Details of the requirement for photo ID for vote should be included with the Council Tax letters going out in the Borough in addition to the national advertising campaign.

30. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Dorset Ave – Speed Control – The post has been installed but the top has not been situated. It is thought that the camera was in situ for one evening only, and removed the next day. Cllr. Boulter will chase up on this with LCC Highways.

Rubbish bin outside Milners on Blaby Road – New bin has been installed, but the old bin next to it remains full and has not been emptied for some time. The bins at the train station also require emptying, and have been full for roughly two weeks. Town centre bins should be emptied every day, there are 900 bins in the Borough and one operative currently to service these. A list of frequency for bin emptying has been drafted for high traffic areas.

Countesthorpe Road, Alpha House – Query raised around the plans for the building as it is in a "terrible state". Planning applications are received for this building on a fairly regular basis, all of which have been passed, but it is now up to the owners to carry out the works.

Electrification of the Railway – Query raised around how the height of the railway bridge will be addressed as part of the electrification works. The railway line cannot be lowered, and raising the height of the bridge will cause significant disruption. Works are underway, and will take 3 years, but there is no information around the bridge height available at present. The works are thought to be behind plans at present.

Nautical William, Wigston – A resident queried the planning application in place for a place

of worship and community centre at this location. Planning has already been passed for houses to be built at the site but Section 106 monies are still awaited. The planning application for the community centre has not been verified as yet, and comments in support of the application from outside the Borough will not be considered as part of the process.

William Gunning Park – Concerns were raised around flooding on and around the park following heavy rain that can overwhelm the drainage system in place.
Street Cleansing – During winter several people slipped outside of the Co-Op due to fallen leaves. The awaited repairs for the pavement sweeper were noted again. This is noted to also be an issue outside of South Wigston High School.
Tackle Shop – A large puddle forms outside the shop during rain due to the condition of the pavement and the tree that is growing there. The Chair will raise this with County Highways.

Crow Mills – A bench is to be installed that overlooks the water meadows, placed on the grass verge there.

Communication with Residents – Concerns were raised that the majority of communications from the Council were going digital, which excludes older residents. What is the Council doing to address this? A newsletter goes out twice a year to all properties in the Borough, and a venue is being sought for South Wigston where face to face meetings can be held with Council staff once the move to Brocks Hill is complete. The Local Area Coordinators are also a great point of contact for residents. A new electronic board will be erected near the college in the new financial year. The Council's Town Centre Manager notes that these digital signs are "quite effective", with the new boards being a technological improvement on the existing boards. OWBC Comms Team are responsible for the information displayed on these boards, and partners can utilise them to advertise other services in the Borough.

Rat Problem – Irlam Street and Garden Street have noted increased rat activity due to building works. Environmental Health should be contacted in regards of this.

Garden Waste – Collection service restarts 27 February. The Council's website states collection dates are split into Week A and Week B, but does not make a distinction for residents. However if they enter their postcode or address exact collection dates for the upcoming three weeks are available.

South Wigston Conservative Club – Unsure if the building is still in use. Some residents believe it is open as usual.

King's Coronation Plans – A planning meeting for this took place last Friday (17 February). A fair is expected on Blaby Road Park for two or three days as part of this, with no events on the Saturday of the coronation in order to allow people to watch the event. Some areas are doing breakfasts on the Sunday or Monday of the coronation. The Council is awaiting details of planned events from community groups to collate into a Borough schedule of celebrations. The timing of the coronation in relation to local elections has presented difficulties for the Council in terms of staffing events. Road closures for bigger events can be applied for with the County Council which are likely to be approved free of charge.

Attendance at the resident forums is low compared to previous meetings, with email addresses etc. being collected on sign-in sheets at the start of the forums to rebuild the mailing lists for them. Residents noted that many people have a view of "the Council won't

deal with it”, and won’t then raise or report an issue, which unfortunately is often because the Council is unaware of the matter that needs addressing. Issues should always be reported so that they can be rectified where possible.

31. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Residents in attendance at the meeting were informed that the next Forum would be taking place on Tuesday, 23 May 2023, 7pm at Fairfield Primary School, South Wigston.

Due to the May elections this meeting was cancelled, with the next scheduled meeting of the Forum now to take place on Tuesday, 25 July 2023, 7pm at South Wigston Methodist Church.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.16 pm