

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 2HR ON WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

**PRESENT**

G A Boulter                      Chair



**Meeting ID:** 2519

**COUNCILLORS**

M H Charlesworth  
J K Ford  
C J R Martin

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

M Smith                              Community Safety & Youth Officer

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

S Jamal                                Leicestershire County Council

**35.      MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Agenda Packs / Minutes of the Previous Meeting have not reached residents. The Agenda has been included in the body of the email to Residents concerning the Forum. 6:30pm – 7pm is an open surgery for Residents, 7pm is the meeting start.

**36.      POLICE UPDATE**

PC G Morgan spoke of the issues ongoing at Wigston Cemetery. Comments are being made on the Leicestershire Police main page on Facebook but it appears many are not following the local Oadby & Wigston Police page; this is used to update the public in the Borough on Police work at a local level. Neighbourhood Link was also promoted to residents present as another means for the Police to share updates and work with the public.

Wigston Cemetery and ASB around the Bell Street / Junction Road area. Police are undertaking plain clothes and uniformed patrols through the cemetery, but are not sharing details of the dates ahead of the patrols. It has been noted that another gravestone has been pushed over in the cemetery today.

There are lots of comments around the Police “finally doing something about the issue” but on review it is apparent that the issues haven’t been reported to the Police, and without the knowledge of a concern they are unaware of something they need to act on. The cemetery matter was first noticed on Spotted Wigston, not via a report to the Police.

Burglaries and Vehicle Thefts – 6-7 arrests were made, and the number of incidents reduced massively.

eScooters / eBikes – Raised by a member of the public as they are becoming an increased

risk on the public highway. Leicestershire Police are taking an education route regarding the use of eScooters, informing riders where it is safe to stop them that the use of them in public is currently illegal. There is some confusion around the public's view of eScooters being legal as some retailers are not making their current status clear at the point of purchase. Schools have been asked to pass on a message to parents around the use of eScooters as parents have previously been seen taking children to / from school on them. Leicestershire Police has previously seized eScooters on multiple occasions. eScooters can only be used on private land with the landowners consent. There is a potential that some eBikes are legal under different legislation that is being reviewed with Leicestershire Police's traffic department. It may be too late to "put the genie back in the bottle" regarding the use of eScooters. The Police cannot stop retailers from selling eScooters as their sale is legal. Legislation may change from central government in 2024.

Pavement Parking – Raised by a member of the public as it is particularly bad along Horsewell Lane. Part of the issue is front gardens being paved over but still not being big enough to accommodate vehicles which are left hanging over the edge of the pavement. Many of these driveways have not been accompanied by a dropped kerb which would make the driveway legal, as a means of allowing a vehicle to pass over the pavement. The Police do not have a power to enforce this, but can enforce against dangerous parking. Pavement parking falls under the remit of local authority parking / traffic wardens. Recommended that a log of registration numbers, time, date and location are kept by those affected; photographs can also be taken and forwarded on to local Beat Teams. Newton Lane is another location where cars are nearly blocking pavements with their parking, and on the days wheelie bins are put out they are completely blocked. The pavement parking is also damaging infrastructure where kerbs are dropping through vehicles driving up them. Central Government was looking at legislation to make pavement parking outside of London have the same standard of legality as is in London, where pavement parking is only permitted in certain areas due to road width. The efforts that some people go to in order to avoid paying £1 in parking fees is excessive. PC Morgan stated he is happy for members of the public to share details of problem parking with him via email; [gareth.morgan@leics.police.uk](mailto:gareth.morgan@leics.police.uk). Langton Road, a van being parked entirely on the pavement at this location on a wide corner, corner of Halcroft.

McDonalds – Raised by Cllr. Martin, McDonalds are encouraging the use of their app as part of the drivethru, which still falls foul of using a mobile phone whilst driving even when on private land. The use of the app isn't illegal in and of itself, but the Police will intervene if people are witnessed by officers using their phone whilst driving.

Corner of Clarkes Road – Raised by Cllr. Boulter, a gentleman is parking his white van on the corner and causing traffic to exit Clarkes Road on the wrong side of the road, and cars entering are unable to do so due to the cars waiting to exit. This has been noted by PC Morgan who will visit the location tomorrow.

## **37. CHAIR'S UPDATES**

Cllr. Boulter provided details of the Council's Appointment Hubs; these are appointment only but allow members of the public to speak directly with officers in their local area without needing to travel to Brocks Hill. Brocks Hill can still be attended for emergencies / urgent items. Wigston's takes place at the Kings Centre on Bull Head Street. The clinics are not limited to residents from each area, who can attend any of the three appointment hubs in the week.

Electrification of the Midland Mainline – Works are currently underway, with a programme

of activities which will affect Wigston. Works will be taking place day and night including construction, vegetation works, etc. This phase of works stop just before Spion Cop. Bassetts Bridge is being removed, and Taylors Bridge is being raised.

### **38. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

***Brocks Hill Country Park - Car Parking*** – More and more cars are parking at the Brocks Hill park end of the car park, most likely Council staff. Are they paying for parking, and how many spaces are expected to be in use? Cllr. Boulter confirmed that staff are paying for parking, and that staff have been informed that they should be, where physically fit, parking at the overflow car park to the rear of Parklands Leisure Centre. If parking cannot be dealt with in any other way a recommendation may be made of a 3-4 hour limit on the Brocks Hill car park.

***Brocks Hill Country Park – Walking Access from Meadows Estate*** – There is an existing route across the back of the Meadows and in to Brocks Hill. This route is fine in the summer months, but in the winter months the route is very muddy and unsuitable for prams or bikes. There is an existing path at the rear of Glenmere Primary School which is tarmacked and would provide access in the winter months. In August 2011 a report was drafted concerning this path, back when the school was operated by the County Council, where an agreement was drafted where the path could be utilised into Brocks Hill with an entrance reinstated for the public. There is a route that follows a permissive path on the farmer's field, and the original landowner of the farm was happy for this to be used for a fee, with a path constructed. When the school became an Academy the decision was taken to not allow the Council to use the path. When the landowner passed the successors to the land opted to not allow the permissive path. Installation costs would have been £100k at the time.

***Public Toilets*** – The lack of public toilets in Wigston was raised. Peace Memorial Park are the only public toilets in Wigston. Junction Road toilets were closed due to vandalism and their condition prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. An agreement was sought with shopkeepers where the Council could pay a fee to allow for their toilets to be used as public toilets; some venues were accepting of this. Costa, Two Steeples, and Wetherspools are already happy for the public to use their facilities. The Council still pays business rates on the closed toilet block on Junction Road. There are no public toilets in Oadby.

***New Arriva Bus Route – Newton Lane*** – Arriva are now utilising Newton Lane as their main bus route out of the Borough, but the road is not wide enough to accommodate two buses passing alongside each other; buses are mounting kerbs to pass one another. When reported to Arriva's main body they were unaware of the route along Newton Lane existing. 47/48/49 buses are increasing, with buses to Leicester every 12 minutes from August 2023. As bus services have been deregulated the County Council has no power over them as they are public sector. Recommended that any buses seen mounting the kerb to pass another vehicle have their number recorded, and reported to Arriva; the buses are covered by CCTV and drivers will be retrained accordingly.

***Funding Bid – Wigston Guide Rooms*** – Oadby & Wigston Girl Guiding have approached the Forum regarding funding for a storage shed at the Guide Rooms on Welford Road. The shed is sought for storage for gardening equipment to separate the items from the toys and other play equipment the group uses. The request is for £350 - £400 to purchase the shed, with the Guides putting money toward the cost of ground works to accommodate the shed. Residents voted in favour of this, and M Smith will work with the Guides to enable this.

**City Fibre** – “When are we going to free of them?” – pavements are being blocked on both sides of the road during installations. Infrastructure installation is nearly complete. The company has been given permission by the Government to install boxes and cables where required on the highway. Pavements have been left dug up over weekends on some occasions without ramps being installed for pedestrians.

**Severn Trent works on Bell Street** – Trench dug on Bell Street is still in place, with no works taking place. Due to the weather the trench is now collapsing and the fencing is down. Cllr. Boulter will take this up with Severn Trent.

**Washbrook Lane** – The pavement on the corner of Washbrook Lane is in an awful condition, and part of the pavement has collapsed. The hedge on one side of the road has also reduced the width of the footpath to nearly half. M Smith will alert County Council Highways to this.

**Traffic Light Camera requested for the Newton Lane, Moat Street Junction** – Vehicles are racing through the junction towards Newton Lane, with vehicles trying to beat the amber lights. Issue to be brought to the attention of County Council Highways.

**Pedestrian Crossing at the top of Bell Street** – Unclear if the crossing button is working from the Bell Street side to the middle island, but the other side is working. Cllr. Charlesworth will look into this.

**Digital Display Board on Bell Street** – New board is being installed after issues with the previous board. New litter bins have also been installed on Bell Street that have wider openings, and a pointed top to prevent people sitting on them. Items displayed on the boards are managed by the Council’s Comms Team.

**Planters on Bell Street** – The trees on Bell Street are in a poor condition. A resident contacted the Council and spoke to Stuart Marbrook who stated that a new tree would be installed to replace it within a week, this has not taken place to date after several weeks.

**Arndale** – Land to the rear of the houses between Arndale and Newton Lane; who owns this land as it’s not the County Council or Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. It was noted that this area of land is the flood basin for that section of the estate. M Smith will look to find the answer to this.

**St. Wistan’s Church** - The Church is currently being decommissioned. There is hope that it will be picked up for use by the community but finding a group to take the church building on is proving difficult. The Council will be maintaining the grass in the church yard as a risk assessment has taken place that allows works that don’t encroach on the scaffolding to take place. There is also money allocated to pollard the trees on site. If the diocese opt to sell the site there isn’t anything the Council will be able to do.

**Nautical William** – No planning application has been received for anything other than the previously approved plans for flats and bungalows to be built on the site. It is thought the building will be up for option by the end of the month.

**The Elms** – Had been sold to a gentleman who intended to turn it into a high-class restaurant. This was sold on to another gentlemen who would like to demolish the site to build flats, but the building is listed. Arrangements have been made to remove items from the Room of Remembrance and place them at Wigston Cemetery. The items may be temporarily stored at Bushloe House if necessary for the short term. The remembrance

boards at the old Council Chamber cannot be moved to the new offices due to size; these will be moved to All Saints in Leicester for storage, with a plan to return them to Wigston in the long term. The memorial outside of All Saints Church, Wigston is in a poor state of repair, with a plan to copy the names on to a sheet of aluminium, and the frame rebuilt from oak to host it.

### **39. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Government has decreed that Council's need to do a waste food collection from each household. There is no date set for this to start, and no plans in place as to how it will be collected. Normal bin wagons will not be able to accommodate these additional collections as the food waste will need to be transported in a different manner. Residents note that the current bins are not placed back in place by workers when they are being collected, often with them being left strewn in the pavement. The Council is looking into this.

Soft furnishings can still be collected in the same manner as bulk items, but must be collected by a different wagon to avoid contamination from some pollutants in soft furnishings.

Is there anything the Council can do to encourage people to clear up the front of their houses? Legislation does exist but properties must be in a significantly poor condition, and often requires a court hearing. If there are rodents present the Council has some powers that will allow action to be taken.

### **40. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 25 October 2023, 7pm – Thythorn Hill (TBC)

**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.38 pm**