

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 2HR ON WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2701

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
M H Charlesworth
J K Ford
C S Gore
C J R Martin

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer
J Wells Senior Strategic Development Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

PC G Morgan Leicestershire Police

67. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr. Gore and Cllr. Ford are marked as absent from the previous meeting but were present; this will be amended.

68. POLICE UPDATE

PC Morgan introduced himself to the residents present.

Since the previous Forum residential burglaries are on a slight increase due to the warmer weather and doors / windows being left open; residents were encouraged to secure properties when vacant.

ASB is expected to increase again due to the warm weather; the Police have been encouraging parents, carers, etc. to have an awareness of where their children are and what they are doing.

Shoplifting offences are also increasing in line with the above.

A resident raised that their car was stolen and their house burgled at 2am on 2 July. PC Morgan confirmed that there is an ongoing investigation in relation to car thefts and that some positive steps have been taken to identify those involved. It isn't possible to share any further details at this time. The resident noted that the Police were "excellent" in their response to the report. Advice was given to residents on how to safely store keys for vehicles with keyless entry, and around not keeping keys near doors or windows that can be easily accessed.

Cllr. Martin raised a group of young people travelling from South Wigston in to Wigston on bikes etc. doing wheelies and other unsafe riding. This is taking place every other day and a quadbike is also part of the group. PC Morgan believes that the group is one that is known to the Police and that they come from outside of the Borough; investigations are ongoing with the Police looking for CCTV footage. The riders often have face coverings, full face helmets, or no plates on their bikes. The Police do not have a 'no chase' policy for motorbikes but they are often unable to do so in school areas. Some other riders in Wigston have been visited by the Police and issued with a warning over their unsafe riding.

eScooters were raised by another resident; it was noted again that the Police are awaiting more legal directives around the handling of eScooter riding. The use of eScooters is extensive by professionals traveling to work, used by parents on the school run, and used as an 'eco friendly' travel solution. The Police are issuing warnings to riders and collecting details enabling seizure of scooters on the second occasion they are stopped. It is not illegal to own eScooters but they cannot be used on / within public spaces or the highway; they must be used on private land only with permission of the landowner. Exemption zones are present in some UK cities where the relevant Councils manage their own eScooter hire schemes. Nationally Police forces are seeking guidance from the Government on the future use of eScooters.

A resident queried on-street parking where there is a recovery vehicle parked most nights with a loaded vehicle, and other vehicles including a large van, on Bodmin Avenue which residents believe is an obstruction. The Police and Council have no specific powers over legally parked vehicles, and for illegally parked vehicles the powers sit with LCC Highways parking wardens. Untaxed, uninsured vehicles can be addressed by the Police. PC Morgan noted that he is happy for residents to contact him directly with the details of any vehicles they feel are an issue and he'll incorporate them into his patrols.

69. CHAIR'S UPDATES

- **Sweeping of Parlour Close**

This has been done.

- **Ross' Lane**

This has been swept.

- **Culworth Drive**

Lights have been reported to the County Council.

- **Newton Lane to Foston Gate Footpath**

The developer has agreed to install this footpath.

- **Bin Collections**

J Wells introduced himself to residents present. In addressing the question asked previously around both bins being collected on a week on / week off basis J Wells noted that all of the route planning has taken place for the bin crews; there was a desire to ensure that residents' collection days did not change. OWBC is the collection agency, LCC are the disposal agency – LCC direct OWBC to dispose of their waste at Whetstone, if there is an issue at Whetstone then Bardonia is the next site that is used. Recycling is handled by CasePak at Leicester Forest East. Staffing was a consideration for the changing in collection too, and the amount of waste that would be collected each week would necessitate the waste to be disposed of

at Bardon – this would not generate any cost savings for the Council given the distance the wagons would be required to travel. No other collections, such as medical and garden waste, will be affected by this. Communal bin collection days are likely to change however given the volume of waste. Christmas collections are still being planned for to ensure the two week collection schedule is still able to be followed. The Council will produce a calendar for households from the middle of August detailing collection dates up until July 2025.

Residents queried if they are able to use any tip to dispose of any additional waste they may generate – This shouldn't usually be an issue however Freemans Common, ran by the City Council, have checked postcodes on occasion and turned Borough residents away. This is perfectly legal for the City Council to do as the tips accept different waste to the County. Links and guidance on what the Leicestershire tips accept will be included on the bin calendar provided to residents.

Bank Holiday collections will remain unchanged to the current arrangements at present, with Bank Holidays being collection days as normal for residents.

Cllr. Gore queried if there is a danger of cross-contamination where residents may put household waste into recycling bins if their black bin is full – this would not be found until the waste arrives at CasePak and would result in the recycling being rejected. This is a risk currently so would not change on a fortnightly basis so no other options have been considered around this; residents asked if a percentage of the Borough could have their recycling collected per week but this is not feasible.

Recycling is likely to fill up quicker over a fortnightly basis and bigger bins have not been offered. Cardboard can be left at the side of the recycling bins and will still be collected by the OWBC crews. Cllr. Boulter noted that the Government is going to be ensuring that packaging will be reduced from supermarkets etc. which should reduce the amount of recycling and waste being generated. Supermarkets and other businesses can be fined for not complying with this. For non-recyclable packaging companies will be forced to pay a premium rate for the packaging. Fast food outlets are also affected by this.

A resident noted that some plastics are not recyclable at home and need to go to specific collection points; the Government will providing more guidance to households regarding this.

Around 2500 households have the larger bin size already (240ltr) and note that they are filling this bin on a weekly basis; they have been offered 360ltr bins ahead of the change if they met specific criteria such as medical waste etc. – only 10 households have been able to upgrade to the 360ltr bins in the Borough. Households with 120ltr bins were able to pay £38.00 to upgrade to 240ltr bins.

Food waste collections will be coming in for households on 31 March 2026 which will further reduce the amount of waste households need to fit into black bins.

Some household furniture will also need to be collected for disposal by a dedicated service.

A resident queried ownership of the bin as it has OWBC branding on it; it was confirmed that the bin is owned by the resident and that if they move house they can take it with them should they wish to do so.

Bin crews will work up to and including Christmas Eve, and return to collections on 27 December. They also cannot collect on New Year's Eve. These are the only three days that the bin crews will not be collecting in the Borough.

Residents expressed thanks for the refuse crews for their speed of work presently. Others noted however that the crews are leaving bins in the middle of the pavement on collection day which causes significant obstructions; this will be passed back to the bin crews. It was also noted that some crews are taking plastic bags out of one bin and placing them in others ahead of the collection; this should not be happening.

Residents queried if disabled residents can apply for their bins to be collected from elsewhere on their property if they are unable to get them to the curbside. Assisted collections are expected to have a small increase in requests with the weight of bins potentially increasing; the weight of a bin will not qualify someone for an assisted collection and this will be assessed upon application.

- **Spion Kop**

No further information at this time.

- **Nautical William**

An objection by LCC Highways has been lifted so planning for housing can go ahead. This means that some of the planning conditions have been removed.

- **Council Offices**

Slight error in the Minutes of the previous meeting; it is Bushloe House that has been held up by Historic England, not Brocks Hill. A non-returnable deposit has been paid as part of the sale of Bushloe House.

- **The Elms Social Club**

Works were taking place but now appear to have stopped. Some windows have been changed at The Elms that fall foul of planning restrictions on the building. It will be opening in the future as a restaurant.

70. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

- **Grass Cutting**

County Council and other bodies have been invited to participate in 'No Mow May' which they opted to participate in again this year; this was an issue due to it being a very wet spring which saw grass grow very quickly. For OWBC the tractor driver that pulled the mower left the authority and there was a gap where no mowing could take place; steps are being taken to ensure this is not a reoccurring matter. The first round of mowing for all Council owned grass has taken place, and they are now being revisited.

Cllr. Boulter highlighted that a resident reported a patch of grass and a tree previously maintained by the Council had not been addressed. The Council looked in to this and found that they did not own the land and so could not maintain it due to insurance reasons. A review of all land in the Borough took place and landowners contacted stating that they should either maintain the land themselves or can pay the Council a fee to do so; non-compliance could result in the Council cutting the grass and fining the landowner. All landowners have until the end of this month to respond to the Council's letters. Landowners are also responsible for trees etc. on their land.

The Spinney on Launceston Road is owned by the Council – a resident noted that a tree in the spinney is blocking her view and asked if she can arrange for it to be cut. This would not be allowed and the resident has been directed to contact the Council for it to be addressed. Cllr. Charlesworth will look into this.

Weeds on the highway were also raised by residents – this falls under the responsibility of the County Council who spray with a contact weedkiller; other weedkillers aren't able to be used as they enter the water-table. This is done twice a year and should be done shortly.

Queries were raised around what happens to land that the Council has maintained for a number of years; could the developer state that precedent has been made for the Council to continue to maintain the land? No, the land remains under the control of the landowner.

Now the Council has highlighted packets of land that developers still own is there a risk that the land is now used for further development? It is unlikely that any planning application for these packets of land will be permitted as they don't feature in the Council's local plan. There is a risk that the landowners opt to fence the land they own off instead of maintaining it; the Council could then serve untidy site notices on the landowners should this occur.

Changes to Government level planning may affect how land in the Borough is utilised in the future.

Developers pay the Council 106 monies that can cover a large number of things pre-agreed as part of the planning application process; land maintenance could be a part of this in the future.

- **Drain Maintenance**

The corner of Meadow Way and Newton Lane saw flooding earlier in the year; likely due to drains not being cleaned out. LCC Highways changed their schedule of drain maintenance to take place between 12 and 18 months depending on how blocked the drains are. Problems should be reported to LCC so that flooding does not reoccur.

- **Guthlaxton Way Bus Stops**

The stops are no longer in use but people do stand there on a regular basis. These are the responsibility of the bus company and not either Council.

- **Bus Stop Outside Wigston Cemetery**

This is overgrown and can hardly be seen; the Council's Clean and Green Team will address this.

- **Willow Park Basketball / Tennis Courts**

The fencing around the courts was removed without Members' awareness; it was noted that this was because it was unsafe. Members are seeking its reinstallation.

- **Bench at Willow Park**

Residents proposed and seconded a bench is installed at Willow Park. Costings for this should be brought to the next meeting of the Forum to be voted on.

- **£20m Grant from the Government**

Residents queried the Grant raised by the MP pre-election. Cllr. Gore noted that this was promised under the previous Governments' 'New Town' scheme and would have come with a number of conditions. It is unclear if this grant would be honoured by the incoming Government and the MP has been contacted asking for clarification on this grant. Cllr. Gore will share any response with all Borough Councillors.

- **Levelling Up Funding**

Residents queried if this money is still available. Cllr. Boulter confirmed that the money is still within the Council and Cllr. Bentley provided further information that this funding was part of the UKSPF funding, around £1.3m, that the Council received to spend on specific projects over 3 years. There is £700,000 remaining that will be spent across the three town centres over the coming year. A second bid was made for improvements to the access routes to the Borough but this bid was not supported or successful. Businesses were able to apply for grants through the Borough's UKSPF funding for shop front improvements which is an ongoing process.

- **Former Working Men's Club Site**

The site has been cleared again but it is unclear as to what the purpose of this is.

- **Long Street Flats Development**

Development appears to have halted and signs have appeared suggesting that the company responsible for works has changed hands.

- **Dog Waste Bins on Willow Park**

Dog waste can be placed in regular bins around the park from now on. Residents noted that there is a lack of bins on the Aylestone Lane side of the park.

71. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

J Wells was asked by Cllr. Boulter to prepare a presentation on recycling for the next Forum.

72. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

30 October 2024, Thythorn Hill Community Centre, Wigston, 7:00pm

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.21 pm