

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT
FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHESHIRE DRIVE, SOUTH WIGSTON,
LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 4WA ON WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2024 COMMENCING AT
7.00 PM**

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2722

COUNCILLORS

R H Adams
J K Ford
C S Gore
C A M Walter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

PCSO A Haq Leicestershire Police
PCSO D Judge Leicestershire Police

71. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Page 7 – Windlass Drive is referred to as Windlass Road.

72. POLICE UPDATE

PCSO Judge and PCSO Haq introduced themselves to residents present.

Next week is a National Policing Week focussing on ASB; this is already a priority in South Wigston but there will be an increase in Police work in the area including school visits and a focus on eScooters. National legislation around eScooters is still not clear and there is a cost to the taxpayer every time one is seized.

Residents asked how the Police make a decision around when to seize eScooters or when education takes place. Usually education is aimed at children / young people. Residents highlighted that eScooters are not legal on the public highway and yet they see fairly regularly parents using them on the school run including having children as pillion passengers. PCSOs do not have the power to seize eScooters but do pass information through to PCs who are empowered to do so.

eScooters are not illegal to own, and can be used on private land with the consent of the landowner. Retailers are not breaking the law selling eScooters which are usually displayed alongside a disclaimer.

Residents raised concerns with delivery riders for Deliveroo and other services using eScooters; the response to this falls in line with the above raised points around enforcement.

The fire risk around the charging of eScooters, and the inclusion of upgraded batteries, was also raised as a concern by residents.

Trial schemes for the use of eScooters in other cities were raised where the scheme is managed and insurance is provided, making the use of eScooters operated under the scheme legal in those areas.

If a pedestrian is hit by an eScooter rider they are covered under Dangerous Driving laws.

Residents asked for an update on Police staffing in South Wigston; this is currently 2 PCs and 2 PCSOs although 1 PC is currently on reduced duties and 1 PCSO is leaving in a couple of weeks. Residents enquired about a number of shop thefts where, when reported to the Police, the Police were unable to attend or had asked for CCTV to be provided instead of attending the shop. PCSO Judge spoke on how the Police call handlers grade calls received based on priority and risk, and how this can affect Police responding to lower risk incidents. It was mentioned that shops are not always forthcoming with providing CCTV evidence to support investigations.

Residents noted that in the last 5 years the Council Tax contribution to the Police has raised 29% and they do not feel they have seen an improvement. Victims of crime are providing good feedback to the Police which highlights that, whilst residents may not see an improvement, there are improvements noted by individuals engaged with the Police as victims of crime.

M Smith highlighted that 20 additional CCTV cameras are currently being installed in the Borough; these are redeployable units that will be moved around the Borough based on crime trends and operational need. The cameras can be live monitored when required, and the camera located on Blaby Road Park has proved incredibly useful in identifying a number of prolific ASB offenders in South Wigston. Families are generally supportive of the work the Police are taking to address ASB where their children are involved.

Residents raised concerns about an individual around the Marston Avenue area who dresses as a Deliveroo / Just Eat rider and tries car / van doors in the area; a plumbers van was recently broken into by this individual. Officers present were not aware of this particular offence but it was noted that it took place several months ago. This will be looked in to by the Police.

ASB reports have decreased by a huge amount.

Theft offences have reduced by 20% this month from last month.

"Non-crime incidents" such as neighbour disputes etc. have reduced by 30% since last month. This is a reduction of 5 incidents.

Public order incidents have increased by 1 incident this month.

There has been 1 incident in October of an individual possessing a weapon in public.

A report of a firearm was made to the Police, as a call of good intent, but there is no reason for the public to worry in respect of this.

PCSOs asked residents present what priorities they would like to see the Police address in South Wigston. Residents raised a blue trails bike alongside Lansdowne Grove and

Waterside Gardens area; the Police are aware of this bike. The rider is travelling in from Wigston and the Police are taking action around this, and a second bike that is usually present.

There have been 3 speed gun sessions in Dorset Avenue in the last few weeks, and on the last occasion 8 vehicles were caught speed. Gloucester Crescent was highlighted as another location for speeding vehicles. The speed sign on Dorset Avenue was funded with County Councillor funds via Cllr. Boulter and can be relocated to Gloucester Crescent in the future. Speeding vehicles at this location were noted by residents as a concern at the start and end of the school day.

School parking on Cheshire and Suffolk Close at the start and end of the school day was raised as an issue which is getting worse; residents are concerned that emergency vehicles may be unable to get down the affected roads. The Chair highlighted that the County Council has two vehicles equipped to deal with problem parking outside school but these cover the entire County so availability is not great. The Police had their parking powers devolved to the County Council but can still address dangerous parking such as on street corners.

Officers spoke about the Message in a Bottle scheme and provided a small number of bottles to residents free of charge. Reflective "Be Safe Been Seen" bands were also provided alongside 30mph stickers for wheelie bins.

Residents expressed thanks to the Police for the work they are currently doing.

Safer Streets event – Brocks Hill. M Smith provided further detail about how the postcodes were chosen for the scheme and what will happen with the remaining stock following the event on 15 November.

73. CHAIR'S UPDATES

Spion Kop Bridge: The current plans for the railway is to now lower the line rather than remove the bridge. For a period of time the bridge will be reduced to one lane for traffic but this will be less disruptive for the wider area. Originally the line was thought to not be possible to lower due to the risk of flooding.

NHS Hub, Magna Road: This opened yesterday as a dialysis unit for up to 50 patients at any one time.

Remembrance Service: 10 November at St Thomas' Church at 10am. Events are also taking place on 11 November.

Christmas Capers: This will be taking place on 7 December and is a larger event than previous years.

Subsidised Weekly Bin Collections: In November 2012 the Council applied for funding to keep weekly collections, receiving funding for 5 years. This funded ended and the Council kept the weekly service for as long as possible.

Council Budget: In 2011/12 the Council's budget was £16m, and is now £7.5m following local government cuts. Residents queried the new OWBC bin lorries they have seen around the Borough; these were bought at the end of last year from the Council's capital fund to replace an aging fleet which were costing significantly in repairs. The cost of new wheelie

bins was also queried, at £38.00, which Members noting the originally pitched cost was £54.00. Garden Waste collection scheme costs will not be increasing. The breakdown of Council Tax by percentage was provided to residents, with OWBC receiving 11.4% of the Council Tax bill in the Borough. Increases in Council Tax income due to new houses being built is offset by the service cost to the Council for bin collections etc. to these houses.

Homelessness: At present 60 people are housed in B&B and 20 in other accommodation; this has to be funded by the Council as a statutory responsibility. All of these individuals are residents of the Borough and will cost presently around £600k. Leicester City Council has over 700 people in B&Bs. The Council is lobbying the Government for additional funding to support these costs.

Menphys: Robert, the new Menphys CEO, and Sarah, Head of Family Support, introduced themselves to residents and highlighted how much Menphys wants to engage with the South Wigston community. Presently, alongside the café, Menphys are offering some after school provision for disabled young people. The building is available for community use and Menphys are keen to encourage bookings, and for anyone interested to get in touch with them.

Drain Clearing: Drains are cleaned and maintained by the County Council. General street cleaning is managed by the Borough Council.

New Town Development: A new town development is being proposed alongside the Oadby & Wigston / Harborough border; this will mostly be within Harborough District and, due to the size of the development, will see new facilities such as shops, schools, and GP surgeries required to be built within it.

William Gunning Park: There is a house adjacent to the park undergoing building works that appears to be encroaching onto the park. Residents believe at least "a tile and a half" of the building is overhanging the park and could be causing a public liability issue. This has previously been reported to Planning and an update is to be requested. The owner is also using the park as public access to the rear of their premises by moving fence panels.

Windlass Drive Bin: This was noted as "coming" in the previous minutes. The Council is undertaking a review of bins in the Borough in respect of condition and location, and dog bins will be phased out.

Countesthorpe Road Car Park: What income has this car park generated? This is difficult to answer as its possible to state how much money is in the machine, but vehicles can be covered by a 'South Wigston Permit' which enables use of all South Wigston car parks; this means that cost per individual car parks cannot be calculated. There is also a permit for Countesthorpe Road for school drop off and pick up which can be purchased. A total amount of money raised by the South Wigston car parks based on monies from the machines and permit sales can be calculated for the next meeting. Footfall in the Borough remains on a par with the footfall prior to Covid despite parking now being charged for. Residents queried the number of disabled car parking spaces available in the car parks; there is a government formula used to calculate this.

74. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Flooding on the Fairfield Estate: Anglesey Road, Lincoln Drive, Cornwall Road, Gloucester Crescent and surrounding areas are being increasingly affected by flooding. Water travels from the park through the estate and out through a culvert on the Magna Road industrial estate down to Crow Mills. Residents expressed frustration that when

reporting the issues they are referred on to other agencies, including the MP who residents feel ignores their concerns. Leicestershire County Council are the lead flood agency for the area who coordinate with other agencies to address flooding in the area; LCC should have powers to force agencies to take action to resolve flooding issues. Cllr. Boulter will follow this up with LCC tomorrow. Properties in this area are being flooded and causing residents anxiety whenever heavy rain is forecast. Residents expressed concerns that the drains on William Gunning Park do not appear to have been serviced for some time and may be contributing to this issue. Residents also noted that in conversations with LCC they have been told that as the sewer drain heads toward Blaby Road it reduces in diameter; this may cause a bottleneck where the risk of flooding increases. M Smith will provide the residents' email address to Bill.

75. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Recycling
- Flooding

76. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 26 February 2025 – 7pm – South Wigston Methodist Church

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.23 pm