

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE - HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE LE18 2HR ON WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2933

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
M H Charlesworth
C S Gore
K J Loydall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Kind Project Officer
M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

100. APOLOGIES

- Cllr. L Darling
- Cllr. J Ford

101. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Spion Kop update – It's understood that all of the work that is to be done is currently complete, with some works expected in the future to address the ironwork underneath the bridge structure. The road will not be fully closed whilst these works are ongoing.

Oadby Tip – Is now open as of 10 Nov, 9am-4pm everyday except Thursday and Friday.

Railway Bridge Missing Step – Update awaited. Responsibility is between County Council or Network Rail. Chair to pursue with the intention for this to be addressed before the next meeting.

Farm at rear of Little Hill – Ongoing enforcement action, no comment available due to this.

Land opposite Wigston Sorting Office – Privately owned, no works are expected to take place here as there is no application in place at present.

Nautical William – Subject to a new planning application for housing.

Bushloe House – Sale has been completed, contracts are signed and exchanged. A press release is imminent regarding this. There will be a part demolition of the newer parts of the site, but the older part itself is listed so is safe.

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102. POLICE UPDATE

No Police representative was present at this meeting.

103. FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS UPDATE

M Kind provided an update on the Council's new Food Waste Collection Scheme to residents. The Chair noted ahead of the update that this is due to instruction from Central Government, and is not an OWBC decision to implement. Funding for the collection scheme has been provided by Central Government. OWBC is "ahead of the game" with implementation of the scheme compared to other Council's in Leicestershire, with Councils all seeking to secure suitable bins and vehicles for the scheme from relevant suppliers. The collections will be weekly, alongside existing refuse and recycling collections, by a dedicated vehicle. Bins will be provided to residents in February / March 2026 with a 23 litre bin, a 7 litre bin, and a starter pack of recyclable food waste bags and a leaflet explaining the scheme, and what can and cannot be placed in the bins. OWBC bins will be grey with a brightly coloured lid. Collections from shared accommodation will be different, with those residents updated. New vehicles are promised to the Council in January 2026. If bins are found to have something in them that can't be composted then they will not be collected from the roadside. Assisted collections already in place for refuse and recycling will continue with the food waste collections. Currently waste is delivered from Oadby & Wigston to Whetstone as LCC are the disposal agency, BioGen will collect the food waste from Whetstone who will then put it through a pasteurisation process resulting in materials that will either be used as fertilizer, or used to generate renewable energy. There is no requirement for residents to use the bags in the bins, but it is recommended for hygiene reasons. Any plastic bag can be used in these bins as they are stripped out automatically as part of the waste processing performed by BioGen.

Residents asked if participation in the scheme is compulsory. It was confirmed that it isn't, but the bin will be delivered to the property regardless and will belong to the house as the current refuse and recycling bins do. Participation is compulsory for businesses however.

It was also asked if bigger bins would be available as some households generate a lot of vegetable waste, and are concerned that they would fill the bin despite weekly collections. There is uncertainty if a bigger bin would be available to residents upon request at present. Vegetable peelings etc. can be placed into garden waste bins, but no other food waste as this would create contamination.

The Chair noted that funding to run the service for the first year is from the Government, but no funding will be available afterwards. All districts and boroughs have written to DEFRA to request confirmation as to what funding and support is in place for the scheme after year one.

The bins will have a sticker on top which says no oils or liquids should be put in the bin. Meat can be placed in the bins too which is why the bins lock by folding the handle over the top of the bin. Residents are concerned that some animals may work out how to open the bins once they are placed out for collection, and that on a windy day the bins (especially empty) are vulnerable to being blown over.

There is a concern that putting food waste bins out will also attract rats into gardens etc. The lockable bins should deter rats but the Council does note that as a nationwide scheme it must implement it, and any issues that then arise will be addressed.

A resident also queried what can be placed in to the Council's 'dry' recycling bins as this

varies area by area. This variation highlights why the food waste collection scheme is a national scheme, with the same criteria in place nationwide. Dry recycling that can be placed in bins in the Borough is influenced by the contracts LCC have in place, as the disposal agency, with downstream waste processors. A list of suitable items is on the Council's website but residents note that it may not be easily found. It was requested that LCC's Waste Officers are invited to a future meeting, as per previous attendance, to talk about what can and can't be placed in our bins.

A resident noted that she had used a similar scheme in South London previously, and that there shouldn't be a large amount of food waste being generated. The bin also creates a lot of condensation so needs to be emptied regularly. Soft plastics can be disposed off at most supermarkets for recycling, including Sainsburys and Tesco. There is a feeling that some households will rethink their approach to food and portion sizes etc. once they see how much waste they are generating.

104. CHAIR'S UPDATES

Devolution

Oadby & Wigston will be abolished within 18 months to 2 years as part of devolution, with three separate plans submitted to Central Government as to the future of local government in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The City plan focuses on expansion into parts of Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, and Harborough, but a second option within their plan sees the City take all of those areas as per the districts existing boundaries. The County Council would like to see the whole County under one authority, and the Districts and Boroughs are promoting a "North, City, South" plan with three authorities created. Plans must be submitted by the end of November, with Central Government making a decision on which plan proceeds in the spring. There is a large opposition in the County to seeing the City expand its control into the districts and boroughs. There will be shadow elections in May 2027 for the new authorities, with 70-90 councillors elected depending on which model of devolution is opted for, who will shadow existing councillors until April 2028. It is expected that the City Mayor role will be eliminated within all three devolution plans, with a strategic mayor elected for the entirety of LLR. There is a possibility that within some of the devolution plans a 'town council' for Oadby & Wigston may be setup.

Remembrance Services

Good turnout for all events across the Borough in the last week.

Speeding Traffic / Burglaries

No police attendance to address these topics.

Council Budget

The Council is currently setting its budgets for the coming year. At present there are over 1000 homeless people in temporary accommodation (not asylum seekers) that the Council is required to fund accommodation for. Approximately £1m is being spent by the Council on homelessness related costs, out of the Council's £7m budget. This is a statutory duty that the Council has to provide. A planning application has been submitted for the conversion of a flat at Maromme Square into a HMO to reduce B&B costs for homeless individuals. The Council is also approaching landlords for long-term leases of properties in the Borough to ease the number of people on the Housing Register, the Council is also looking at purchasing properties for the same purposes. The Council owns roughly 1200 properties in the Borough which are mostly flats. A resident queried if it would be more cost effective to buy sites, such as the Nautical William, for the Council to develop itself into housing – this was costed out and it is more cost effective to buy suitable properties as it has a quicker turnaround.

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The Government has setup a new Housing Regulator who will be visiting the Borough within 18 months to assess the Council's properties. The rankings are 1, 2, and 3, with most authorities at present having properties rated at 3 which is a fail. The Council is hoping to achieve a 2 based on its current position. This looks at compliance around gas, electric, water and asbestos safety within properties.

Everyone the Council has placed in temporary accommodation, and has on their housing register, has a local connection to the Borough. There are a few exceptions for this where domestic violence is a concern.

A resident queried if it was true that a resident who has bought their home under the "right to buy" scheme and wants to sell within 5 years must offer it back to the Council for cost first – this is true.

The amount the Council is able to spend on the purchase of a property is capped by Government regulation.

105. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Public Toilets

There is one public toilet in Wigston on Peace Memorial Park, which is open everyday except at weekends. A resident asked if the toilets on Junction Road car park will be brought back into use – there are no plans to do this. There was an attempt by the Council to encourage local businesses to open their toilets for public use but there was resistance to their use by non-paying customers.

Oadby & Wigston Civic Orchestra – 60th Anniversary Season

The Orchestra was founded in 1966 and is coming up to its 60th year. The Orchestra is looked after by a gentlemen named Keith Smith who has conducted most of their concerts over its 60 years. The anniversary season was brought to the attention of residents for concerts on 3 January and 28 February 2026. There is a possibility that the Orchestra will not continue after these events unless another individual is prepared to take on the running, and organisation, of it. Venues for the concerts will be confirmed in the near future.

Greater Wigston Historical Society – Search for New Premises

From 2019 the Society operated out of a premises at the former Guthlaxton College, but has recently moved to Fenix Pharmacy in South Wigston. The pharmacy is expanding which means the Society has to now move. A suitable premises is to be sought which can be opened to the public for 1 day a week, with a request made for any suitable premises to be brought to the attention of the Society.

The Elms Bar and Restaurant - Windows

This is subject to an enforcement process with no further update available due to this. Timescales for this are set within legal frameworks so the Council cannot expedite enforcement.

Planning Portal

Residents noted that the portal is not great and this makes it difficult to find information regarding planning. It was asked where else applications are advertised. The Council undertook a survey on the returns received from site notices and online returns for planning applications – the majority of them came via online returns. Site notices will still

go up but letters to houses are no longer being delivered.

Rectory Close

Drains blocked from Council grass cutting – Cllr Bentley has been shown pictures of this and will follow up. Residents were unhappy that a Council maintenance officer was supposed to attend the site and didn't do so. Housing Officers have informed residents that there will not be a gate installed at the rear of Rectory Close – residents note that this would be a replacement gate for one that had blown down, and that rear access to the property is not possible with residents having to go via Falmouth Drive.

Bus Stops

The stop outside of Bushloe House is still advertised on the buses as "Council Offices" which is no longer the case. Residents have raised this with the bus operators but nothing has changed – it was asked if Councillors could do this but it is likely it will need to be raised by County Councillors.

The electronic bus timetable near the shops is stated by the County Council to be included in the current programme of works.

Flags on Lampposts

A resident asked why there weren't many flags placed on lampposts in the Borough, and who had put them up, and had the Council taken any down? OWBC has not been involved in any of these works, with the lampposts belonging to the County Council. In formal cases OWBC has had to apply to the County Council for permission to affix items to lampposts. The Leader of the County Council has confirmed that they will not take any action to remove flags from the lampposts, or fine anybody caught placing them on them – the PCC has also noted a similar position with local Councillors placing objections to this lack of action on record. Cllrs noted that when raising queries with them it is usually best practice to email all Ward Councillors collectively to ensure a response.

Children's Park on Kelmarsh Avenue

A new swing was noted as being installed. Any further works will occur when a budget is available. A new play area at Willow Park for disabled children is also to be created, placed here due to the adjacent car park. UKSPF funding is also available for some works in parks across the Borough.

Grass Areas on Meadows Estate

The areas purchased by a private individual must be maintained by them, with enforcement action being considered. Some of the areas owned by Jelsons are also not being maintained.

Ash Trees on Cooks Lane

Several of these have died and are either falling down or shedding branches, particularly heading toward the canal. There is a concern that these may cause injury to pedestrians or motorists. The landowner will be notified of this, and it may be possible for the dead trees to be replaced under some national schemes.

Pigeon Droppings

Previous minutes state that the Council can't do anything about pigeons, especially where they are being fed on private land. It was asked if a polite letter could be sent to residents in affected areas asking for pigeons to not be fed – the Chair indicated that this is probably not feasible.

Meadow Way Development

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A resident asked if the development would be starting soon. It was noted that it is already underway as it will be built piecemeal. The existing local plan which included the site to the rear of Brocks Hill was paused due to a change in government legislation, with a new local plan being developed. The Council is currently looking at if it can achieve its government set housing targets, with concerns that it will not be able to due to the land it has available. If OWBC declares an 'unmet need' then other neighbouring councils must pick up the development of those houses – this is partly why the City is thought to have its designs on parts of the Council. More of a variety of house sizes is being sought within the Borough's local plan.

A resident queried if "permission given" developments that aren't yet being built are included in the decision-making process for successive planning applications, particularly for large housing developments. It was confirmed that this does form part of the planning process.

Increase in Contractor Parking on Cooks Lane

Residents are concerned that a large number of vehicles are parking here on the grass verges, with some signage having been placed advising against this. This is likely down to the County Council to enforce, but OWBC cannot force them to park elsewhere. It is uncertain if there are conditions in place on the development regarding parking, but if there are the Council may be able to undertake some enforcement – Cllr Bentley will look into this.

Former Birkett House Site

This will likely be sold off for housing development. The three-storey house adjacent to the site on Newgate End is not a part of this site and will not be included in the sale.

The Old Crown

This has been bought but there is no planning application submitted for a change of use to date.

Aylestone Lane – Bus Stop near Car Park

Corrugated fencing at the bus stop near Leicester Road is dilapidated. This is owned by a private individual.

Christmas Lights Switch On

29 November.

106. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None raised.

107. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 18 February 2025 – 19:00 – Thythorn Hill Community Centre

108. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AGREED

1. **Chair** to pursue replacement of missing step on the railway bridge with County Council and Network Rail, with an update to be provided at the next meeting of this Forum.
2. **M Smith** to invite LCC Waste Officers to provide a recycling presentation at

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a future meeting of this Forum.

3. **Cllr. Bentley** to follow up with the Council regarding blocked drains on Rectory Close after grass cutting.
4. **Cllr. Bentley** to look into planning conditions regarding parking during site development at Cooks Lane.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.33 pm