

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LE18 2HZ ON WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2556

COUNCILLORS

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M Smith Community Safety & Youth Officer

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

PCSO Hayter Leicestershire Police
PCSO Ikram Leicestershire Police
PC Morgan Leicestershire Police

41. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Buses on Newton Lane – It was minuted that the buses on Newton Lane could not pass side by side, but this is not the case currently with plenty of room for buses to pass safely without mounting the pavement.

The Minutes of the Previous Meeting were agreed true and accurate.

42. POLICE UPDATE

PC Morgan introduced himself and PCSO Hayter to residents as Wigston's Beat Team.

There has been a slight increase in burglaries which is to be expected with the darker nights, with the Police running a burglary operation in anticipation of this. The Police are offering packs of target hardening items to residents free of charge.

The Police are encouraging reports to continue of issues at Wigston Cemetery, as well as following the Police's social media accounts for the Oadby & Wigston area. Reports are still being made through Spotted Wigston but this is a private page unaffiliated with the Police. The site is monitored on occasion by the Police for local intelligence but it is not a reliable route to make reports through to them.

Neighbourhood Link – Road Safety & Highway Obstruction have been highlighted as priorities for the Borough in the latest Neighbourhood Link newsletter; they are

accompanied by dog fouling and ASB. These have been informed by responses by surveys ran by the Police across Leicestershire but they do not necessarily fall under the remit of the Police on a day to day basis; dog fouling for example would fall under OWBC and highways obstruction, unless dangerous, would fall under LCC. Speeding operations are being planned in relation to the road safety priority. The Police can attend vehicles that are fully blocking a path in a dangerous manner, however the priority response to this would still need to come via LCC parking enforcement officers. Some of the Police's powers to issue parking tickets have been removed and passed back to LCC in previous years. PC Morgan confirmed that he has previously directed the LCC Wardens when met on the street to 'hot spot' locations for problem parking.

eScooters – Raised as a concern by residents given the speed that some of the eScooters can reach. Local Beat Teams ran an operation on 26 September educating eScooter riders of the current legislation around their use. Legislation is expected to change nationally in the near future regarding their use, potentially making them legal to ride on the highway. The users of eScooters are not just children and young people, but also include adults including those using them for the school run or a commute to work. Leicestershire Police's Traffic Department has the use of eScooters firmly on their radar.

Nautical William – The Police spoke with the owners of the Nautical William regarding fly tipping on the site. Following this the fly tipping was removed and fencing erected around the site. Three young people who trespassed within the building were identified and will be subject to a Community Resolution.

43. LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE UPDATE

Item deferred due to no LFRS representation.

44. UKSPF COMMUNITY GRANTS

M Smith gave an overview of the UKSPF Community Grant as per the attached PowerPoint presentation.

45. CHAIR'S UPDATES

Electrification of the Midland Mainline

Spion Kop Bridge (Blaby Road) will be 'removed' as part of the works for a large period of time, resulting in a 7.5km diversion for traffic around the Borough. This is in the early stages of planning with no timescale given for the works to commence. A consultation paper will be sent out shortly but this will only facilitate comments relating to people with disabilities. The works will be happening with public complaints to not be addressed. A shared path for pedestrians and cyclists will be installed during the works. PC Morgan has requested that Leicestershire Police are kept informed of this as it will impact on how the Borough is policed.

Billy Cox's Shop

Has been granted Grade 2 listed status. The listing does not apply to the land to the rear of the property; the Civic Society has made two attempts to secure the land a similar listed status to no avail and is hopeful that no building will take place on it.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

The Council is struggling for cash (revenue) at present, and the County Council has to find

£100m by 2027. It is unclear if this situation will change in the next 14 months. Staff employed by OWBC has been reduced. It is believed that yesterday in parliament an announcement was made regarding a common approach to recycling, requiring all Council's to collect waste in the same manner. This may cause difficulties locally as all the recycled waste is currently taken to CasePak who are equipped to only deal with recycling in a specific manner. The parliamentary announcement made note that collections of recycling should take place every 2 weeks which would change the current weekly arrangement in the Borough. A separate food waste collection is also being discussed by parliament which would require another vehicle to collect, but would be collected on a weekly basis. Residents raised concerns that an increase in the number of bins for properties in the Borough could cause issues with bin storage. A query was raised regarding the 'Our Borough' newsletter costs which total £19k for two publications a year; this is being looked at as a cost saving option. The previous newsletter 'Letterbox' was stopped 3 years ago and was requested back by residents; this used to be delivered 4 times a year. It was noted that paper newsletters prevent some elements of the community being 'left behind' due to having no access to the internet. The sale of Bushloe House will not aid the Council's current financial situation. The bulk of Council Tax paid in the Borough goes to the County Council; the building has been sold subject to contract with a planning application expected imminently. The funds from the sale of Bushloe House will offset the redevelopment of the new Council Offices at Brocks Hill. Homelessness and Housing Benefits are one of the largest expenditures for the Council at present.

Nautical William

There has been no progress with planning applications for the site at present.

Car Parking Costs

The car parking has now broken even and is now generating revenue for the Council. Some of the parking machines have been vandalised with the Police are aware of.

46. REMEMBRANCE EVENTS

10:45 – Peace Memorial Park – 11 November

12 November – Parade from Elizabeth Court to All Saints Church. The Police will be participating in the Parade.

The War Memorial in front of All Saints Church has been removed for repair and will be returned within the next 7 days. The Room of Remembrance at the Elms Social Club was emptied at the request of the building's owner and will be reinstated at the Chapel of Remembrance at Wigston Cemetery in due course; this can be visited by appointment only at present but this is being reviewed. The Boards listing regiments and the war dead at the Council Offices have been removed and will return to the Borough in 2024.

Wigston Cemetery is now officially a Commonwealth War Graves Site with a board having been erected on site confirming this.

A 'to let' sign on the Elms' Room of Remembrance applies to the whole building, and no planning applications have been received in relation to this site. The Elms was originally to become a restaurant but was then sold on to another party. The frontage of the building is listed however which needs to be taken into account for any future development of the site.

47. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

Rear Gate to Wigston Cemetery at Horsewell Lane – Access is not disabled friendly at present due to a zig-zag on the gate preventing wheelchair and mobility scooter access. The Council have stated they are happy to carry out the works to rectify this, and have received a quote of **£350.00** to make the alterations, but does not have an available budget for this. The majority of residents living near to the cemetery are happy for these works to take place. The forum has agreed to fund these works from their budget.

Surface Treatments on Roadways, including Horsewell Lane – These works are for the carriageway only and will not include repairs to pavements. The state of disrepair of some of the pavements is now dangerous to the public. It was recommended that these areas of concern are raised with the relevant County Councillors as the repairs fall under the remit of LCC Highways. It is known that there is likely to be a significant delays in repairs to pavements commencing unless holes in the pavements are classed as dangerous against their own criteria. The replacement of traffic lights in the Borough is also causing confusion as the lights have seemingly been replaced despite being in full working order.

37 Newton Lane, Wigston – The building is now an eyesore. Action is being taken around this by the Council but it cannot be discussed within the Forum setting. Concerns were raised that under current planning law if works start in line with an approved planning application there is no obligation for the works to be finished by the developer; this is under review currently by the Government.

Former Working Men's Club, Long Street – The land is all grassed over with no works taking place. As per the previous item the Council is currently unable to enforce works to take place at the location. The fence surrounding the site has now fallen into disrepair and is posing a danger to the public. Someone from the Council will be asked to go and look at this.

Noticeboard on Blaby Road Park, Blaby Road end – The board is 'unusable' with notices unable to be placed on it. This will be looked at.

Vaping Shops – The Council has no powers to prevent Vape Shops opening. These are commercial activity dictated by market forces. National legislation regarding tobacco and alcohol is changing, and it is agreed that vaping should not be targeted at young people when they are not legally allowed to purchase these items.

Vacant Wilko Building – A matter for the landlord of the building. The Council has no control over this matter although the Council's Town Centre Manager is pursuing routes of enquiry to see the empty unit filled.

Pavement Parking – Covered as part of the Police's update in this meeting.

Pedestrian Footpath at Tendring Drive to Brocks Hill – Covered in the Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

Metal Shutters on Commercial Properties – These are for security and prevent vandalism, and are dictated by landlords.

Defibrillator at Daisy Chain Children's Nursery – The nursery on the corner of Manor Street / Station Road has requested funding for a defibrillator for public use to be installed on their building. This would be installed on the outside of the building to ensure 24/7 access

to it as per the unit removed from Bushloe House. The nursery is aiming to raise funds themselves but would like support from the Forum. The Chair believes the cost to be in the region of £1200. The defibrillator removed from Bushloe House is currently at the OWBC Depot, and is awaiting permission from Two Steeples Pub to be installed on the site there. A request was made for figures from the Ambulance Service regarding how frequently defibrillators are being used locally.

Wilkos Car Park – A tree has been removed from the car park. This is not on Council land and was not removed by OWBC.

Peter Cousins will be launching a new book regarding 'Ten Row', cottages that used to be on Station Road. The launch is on Tuesday, 17 November at 10am at the Liberal Club, Wigston.

48. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A request was made for the Council's Revenue and Benefits Team to attend a future meeting and discuss their role within the Council.

49. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Planned for Wednesday, 14 February 2024 – 18:30 – Thythorn Hill Community Centre but the date is subject to change due to Valentine's Day.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.09 pm