

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT THYTHORN HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, HORSEWELL LANE, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE18 2HR ON WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair



Meeting ID: 2761

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
L M Broadley
F S Broadley
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

S Jamal Leicestershire County Council

87. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

In Item 84.E - A resident noted that there is no mention of their point at the last meeting about there being very few empty shops in Wigston Magna and that if the Council had had any involvement in this excellent position then it should be congratulated! This has been noted and feedback provided to the relevant officers. The Chair noted that vacant occupancy in Wigston is 4% where the Government average is 14%. South Wigston is 6% and Oadby is 8%.

88. POLICE UPDATE

No update available due to no representation.

89. CHAIR'S UPDATES

Spion Kop – Works are expected to start in June, one lane will remain open throughout the period of works.

VE Day Celebration – 8 May event went very well at both the morning and evening sessions. The bells at All Saints Church were also rung. The spire at All Saints has been lit for the last few days in memory of Edna May Charles following her passing.

90. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

a) Meadows Estate – Sale of Green Spaces / Planning Permission

Jelsons did own, and have sold, the green spaces but nothing can be built on them. New owners must maintain the land – some residents noted that some of the spaces have gone unmown, this may be in relation to No Mow May but Council officers are keeping an eye on these – the Council has powers to fine people should the sites not be maintained. Trees on the sites have TPOs in place too preventing any development. Sites near to Abington Close were also raised as being for sale – there will be no development permitted on these sites either. The non-maintained site was raised as a concern with the Council's Legal Team in April, and notice given.

b) Levelling Up Funded Wigston Sign

Some people like it, some people don't – it accompanies the murals across the Borough and new street furniture in town centres. The money used to fund the sign came from central Government and had specific criteria attached to it on how it could be spent. Additional funding has been made available to the Council this financial year for the improvement of town centres – residents suggested bus shelters were looked at within these works. Residents raised concerns with the condition of some parks in the Borough, including Willow Park and the park on Kelmars Avenue – the Chair noted that a programme of parks works has now started, starting with Willow Park, and all parks will receive works. Planting in Bell Street was also raised querying if there was a programme of watering, some planters have also had plants taken from them. Plants are dying quickly due to the lack of watering, and potentially due to the concrete planters wicking water away from the compost / planting material. Additional benches are being returned to Bell Street and Leicester Road following refurbishment. Residents queried the lack of backs on the concrete seats – this is being looked into. The mural on Leicester Road features All Saints' Church but it does not truly represent All Saints' Church – this has been checked with the Historical Society website and is thought to be correct but residents note that the website has now been amended, and that the church may be incorrect. Willow Park – will the netting be reinstated around the basketball court? This may be a different programme of works

A resident queried the £10,000 cost of the Wigston Sign and how it may fit with the Levelling Up criteria – the Council could have spent this money elsewhere. Cllr Bentley noted that the cost of the this sign is less than 0.7% of the £1.34m available for works and was approved by the Visit Leicester process, and met Levelling Up criteria. Cllrs stressed that the monies used is not Council Tax monies, and came from Central Government.

c) Cooks Lane New Road

Part of the second phase of direction of growth; there are now two access points to the estate. Highways believe a scheme has been developed that won't see an impact on walkers using Cooks Lane, and that traffic is not expected to turn left or right at the location. A school was part of the first phase but has been delayed until 2029. Access to the site for lorries is now via Newton Lane / Guthlaxton Way which is causing headaches for residents.

d) Removal of Bins

2 bins have been removed from the Borough to date due to damage. Originally dog waste was not permitted in general waste bins, this is no longer the case so the Council is removing the dog bins that are adjacent to general waste bins. Bins that are being removed due to damage, and do not have another bin nearby, will be replaced. For parks dog bins will be moved closer to entrance / exit points and, if near to a general waste bin, will be removed entirely. These works have been halted by the Council as Councillors were unhappy with the process.

e) Access to Brocks Hill from Meadows Estate

The former landowner previously allowed a permissive path over his land from Tendering Way to Brocks Hill; following his passing the new landowner has refused permission for this to remain, as is his right to do. Anyone using this route currently is trespassing. The Council approached the school about using their path but this is not viable; the academy declined this due to the fencing and the need to install lights along the pathway. A resident suggested that the Council utilise a compulsory purchase order to acquire the land to access Brocks Hill via Tendering Drive – this would aid in the Council's environmental aims. The Chair noted that a compulsory purchase is an expensive and drawn out process. Cllr. Charlesworth raised the bridge that joins the land to Brocks Hill as it was in a state of disrepair, and when raising the issue with the Council it was noted that Jelsons own this bridge as they did the drainage around the site. Should a housing plan come forward for this field, as Jelsons have an option on it, it should be added as a condition that a public path is installed as part of the development. The field is featured in the local plan which is out for consultation currently.

f) eScooters

No police present to address the query. Cllr Loydall noted that they are on the Agenda of the CSP, and that he raises them at the Police and Crime Panel regularly. The works within the City Centre should be duplicated within the Borough.

g) Speeding Vehicles Along Newton Lane

M Smith update re. ANPR units and Beat Team feedback. Individual reports were encouraged.

h) Wakes Road Island Art Installation

An art installation depicting two steeples was proposed via email for the island. The island belongs to the County Council however meaning any installation there would result in a cost OWBC would need to pay annually. Concerns were also raised by residents about impact of such an installation on the number of road traffic accidents in the area, with the artwork potentially being a distraction to drivers. Fences previously in the area were removed for this reason. The art installation could form part of the next round of Levelling Up funding at an alternate location. St Wistan's Church was noted as being closed since 2018 due to the danger the building's condition posed to the public – last year the church commissioners made the church redundant and is no longer a place of worship, the building is still Grade 2 listed however. Since last year the Greater Wigston Historical Society applied to the Council to list the church as a building of community value – this application was rejected however, and there is no appeals process. St Wistan's will soon be up for sale, and the GWHS has designs to purchase it and use it as their new Heritage Centre. A resident raised concerns of the church becoming a mosque but this is very unlikely as the Diocese will not allow its change, and there are Christian burials in the grounds meaning other faith groups are not likely to consider the location suitable.

i) Homelessness

82 families are currently in temporary accommodation funded by the Council, totalling nearly £1m a year. Landlords are selling properties rather than renting them out, and No Fault Evictions are currently still legal. The Council has a legal obligation to house homeless individuals in suitable accommodation. The Council is currently looking to rent additional properties to ease homelessness, and will maintain the properties accordingly during the rental period.

j) Temporary Road and Compound Follow Railway Works

These are still in place in Little Hill but should have been removed already – Planning will

look into this. There is also an issue with the bridge as the step leaving the bridge, near Navies' Pit, has worn away resulting in a large step – an additional step is required to lessen the height. Cllr Charlesworth will look into this.

k) Pelican Crossings

The crossings at Moat Street and the top of Bell Street do not appear to be operating via the button and instead rely on the traffic cameras, meaning that pedestrians are waiting to cross for long periods of time.

l) Former Age Concern

The hedge here is being cut back from the pavement.

m) Bushloe House Planning Application

This will be discussed at the June Planning Committee.

n) The Lanes – No Cycling Signs

The signs require cleaning as cyclists are using them and causing a risk to other pedestrians.

o) Oadby Refuse Site

A resident noted that they have attended several times to dispose of plastics, but there has not been a bin there for it resulting in them being asked to place it into the general waste bins. It was noted that there are several different types of plastic that can't be recycled. Residents noted that there is a bin by the office for recyclable plastics.

p) Wigston College – Planning for Sixth Form Block

These works may impact traffic along Station Road, and it is hoped that they will not occur at the same time as the works to Spion Kop. The demolition may take place in the summer holiday so at the same time as the Spion Kop works.

q) Devolution

An update on the current position was requested in respect of the three submitted plans for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. An answer from Central Government in response to these is expected by November. It is unclear which bid the new administration at LCC will be supporting, but it is thought to be the existing County Council bid.

r) Parking on / Driving along Footpaths

Kerbs and footpaths are being demolished by vehicles parking on and driving along footpaths. Leicester City Council is doing a survey on this within their area currently. Residents feel that the Police have lost interest in this issue, with the matter falling to Councils, specifically the County Council, to enforce. There is signage appearing in the City areas noting "This is a footway not a car park" to discourage pavement parking. The County Council has engaged in a process of "managed decline" for the highways – funding has been made available from Central Government for potholes but this does not extend to footpaths. It is hoped that the new administration at County Hall will address this concern. County Council is reluctant to enforce against vehicles parking on green verges.

s) Leicester Road Arcade

This is privately owned, and is managed by a property company. The flooring is uneven in the precinct which residents are unhappy with. A proposal was made for a pocket park within the precinct dedicated to veterans and the armed forces – this can be raised with the landowner for consideration.

t) Boots, Bell Street

The shop was broken into recently with the shutters having been cut to gain access. The Chair noted that there are similar issues facing the One Stop on Gloucester Crescent. Shoplifting is historically underreported nationally although local businesses are being encouraged to report incidents to build a better picture of local levels. Residents expressed concerns that shoplifters of note, having featured in local news, have no real deterrent to prevent them shoplifting despite having been previously arrested and prosecuted. The CPS are thought to not be pursuing convictions for shoplifting under £200.

u) Bell Street Community Hub

L Franklin introduced herself to residents and gave an overview of the services offered by the Community Hub on Bell Street, Wigston. Residents were encouraged to visit the Community Hub.

v) Recycling

New Recycling Regime being introduced nationally, including food waste collections, coming next year. Wagons and bins have been ordered by OWBC but funding from Central Government is still awaited.

91. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Attendance by LFRS has been requested for the next meeting of this Forum.

92. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 16 July 2025 – 19:00 – Thythorn Hill Community Centre, Wigston

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.12 pm