

LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 20th March 2024, held in the Reg Neal Room of the Parish Hall, Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: R. Darlison (Chair) P. Kitchen (Vice-Chair) D. Di Palma
C. Wells M. Bozzoni D. Dawes

One member of the public – via Zoom (for a few moments only)
District Cllr Coar – via the phone
A Police Seargent from Leicestershire Police
Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk to the Parish Council

24.30 To receive apologies for absence
None.

24.31 To receive disclosures of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct
Cllr. Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda items 24.34 (a) and 24.55.

24.32 To adjourn the meeting to receive questions from Members of the Public

Clerk to add to April council agenda all issues raised by this resident – via email - and inform resident of this.

24.33 To receive reports from
(a) County/District Councillors

District Councillor Coar gave the following updates via the telephone:

- CCTV cameras will be sent down very soon to investigate the drain issue on the A47.
- There have been concerns raised by residents regarding construction traffic access if the development off Baines Lane is given the go-ahead and this is being looked into.
- A totem pole advertising board has been erected on Hinckley Road without prior consent so this is being looked into.
- The potential new pizza restaurant will be a challenge as works have been progressing despite no permissions being granted.
- They are installing faster broadband cable on Warren Lane.

District Councillor Tomeo gave the following update, via email: *'The budget for 2024/25 has been agreed and Blaby District Council is set to increase its element of Council Tax by 2.99%, this amounts to around 11p extra each week or an extra £5.49 a year for a band D property. The council acknowledges that the budget will continue to be a challenge over the coming years and stands ready to make the difficult decisions needed to close the forecasted gap. All decisions will be based on the District plan priorities.'*

County Councillor Breckon gave an update, via email, regarding Network North Funding prior to the meeting.

County Councillor Chapman gave an update, via email, regarding the jetting of the drain on the A47. This will be completed at the end of March.

(b) Leicestershire Police

The Council thanked the Police Seargent for attending the meeting. The sergeant explained he is new to neighbourhood policing and hopes to get more police visibly on the streets. However, there is currently a neighbourhood policing officer vacancy to fill.

The Council raised the issue of parking on pavements and the sergeant explained the Police will only get involved if the parking poses a danger, e.g. if emergency vehicles could not pass.

The sergeant explained there are not many burglaries in this area which is a positive. However, there are problems with cross-county crimes as LFE is an easy access points for the M1, M69, A47 and A5. Criminals have been targeting ford fiestas, land rovers and range rovers (plus other high-end vehicles); they are copying car keys remotely and coming back a few days later to steal the cars. Therefore, put less expensive cars in front of more expensive ones on driveways or use security pillars so expensive cars cannot be towed away.

Electric scooters – these are being targeted by beat officers at the moment. However, there are various new pieces of legislation to take into consideration.

The Police Seargent left at 7.30pm.

Cllr Bozzoni declared an interest and left the room at 7.30pm.

24.34 To discuss Finances:

(a) To approve item 1 & 2 on the order paper for March 2024

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept items 1 and 2 on the March 2024 order paper.

Cllr Bozzoni returned to the meeting room at 7.32pm

(b) To approve all remaining items on the order paper for March 2024

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the remaining items on the March 2024 order paper.

(c) To note bank the reconciliation for February 2024
Noted.

There will be a new bank account soon, a savings account with Mkt Harborough Building Society soon. All bank statements will need to be signed.

(d) To minute bank balances

Bank Balances as at 29.02.2024:

HSBC - £246,647.15

Unity Trust Current Account - £35,624.22

Unity Trust Savings Account - £30,000.00

(e) To note top line budget items

Predicted for EOY –

- 8k saving salaries
- Extra 1k bank interest to come than was budgeted for
- 6k saving on administration
- 3.5k savings on grants
- 2k each for long term and occasional hall hire less income than budgeted for
- Parish Hall repair and maintenance- 2.5k saving
- Parks 7k overspend
- 5k saving highways

Overall, overspends balance underspends so likely to be approx. 10k left over at EOY but will also need to pay some accruals for next year which will come out of that 7k.

(f) To discuss reserves

As at 29.02.2024:

General reserves - £209,137

Earmarked Reserve – Parish Hall Development - £57,247

Earmarked Reserve – Parks/Play Area Development - £25,005

Earmarked Reserve – Paths Around the Parish Hall - £25,005.

(g) To minute predicted earmarked reserves and general reserves for EOY 23-24

Predicted EOY – general reserves – £221,654

Parish hall dev – £57,247
Parks play area dev - £25,005
Paths around the parish hall – £25,005

(h) To consider any grant applications received

None received.

24.35 To approve spending from earmarked reserves on (for the Parks Committee to advance these projects):

(a) Minor alterations and redecoration of the Parish Office from the Parish Office Alterations earmarked reserve

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the Parks Committee's decision not to proceed with the parish office alterations.

Resolution: The parish office alterations earmarked reserve can be used to fund minor alterations and redecoration (of the parish office) up to the sum of the earmarked reserve. The Parks Committee can authorise spends from the earmarked reserve for this purpose.

(b) Relaying the slab path, and adding extra slabs to the path, from the Paths Around the Parish Hall earmarked reserve

Resolution: Council resolved that, subject to the quote being below the earmarked reserve figure of £25,0005, the Parks Committee can spend money on having a new slab path around the Parish Hall.

24.36 To confirm minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st February 2024 as a true and accurate record

Resolution: Subject to minor amends, the Council accepted the confirm minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st February 2024 as a true and accurate record

Clerk to amend Feb Council minutes and remove the word draft.

24.37 To discuss matters arising from those minutes

(a) To review the litter bin and dog bin emptying contract for the parks (without litter-picking)

Resolution – The Council resolved to accept Blaby District Council's quote for litter and dog bin emptying, minus litter-picking.

Clerk to review litter and dog bin emptying contract every 3 years – amend plan of work and contract review schedule.

(b) To consider a plan for the next 12 months and dates for 24-25 projects

Clerk to add suggested project dates to outlook and Council agenda.

(c) To consider holding the shortened August Council meeting on 14th August instead of 21st

Resolution: The Council resolved not to hold a meeting in August and to pay all regular invoices in July (with a date in August for the August invoices to be paid).

Clerk to consider process map for payments in July/August due to council not holding an August meeting.

24.38 To receive planning applications/decisions/enforcement cases received after the Planning meeting was held

24/0196/ADV – was considered as planning committee is not until after the deadline. Will be added to April planning committee agenda.

Clerk to send response to planning application 24/0196/ADV to BDC.

(a) 24/0086/HH – 18 Kings Drive – single storey rear extension and two storey extension to side of property, internal works and demolition of rear lean-to room and outbuilding

No comment.

- (b) **24/0141/HH – 22 Beggars Lane – first floor front extension over existing garage and single storey front extension, alterations to driveway and new dropped kerb**
No comment.

24.39 To discuss matters arising from the Planning and Parks Committee meetings held Tuesday 5th March 2024

(a) To approve HIC testing from general reserves

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the quote of £395.00 for HIC testing by the annual play inspections company, on several pieces of play safety surfacing to ensure its safety.

Clerk to contact HIC testers to arrange testing (emailed company 05.04.2024).

24.40 To review the following Policies:

(a) Committees' Terms of Reference

Resolution: Council resolved to make minor amendments to the committees' terms of reference.

Clerk to amend committees' terms of reference on policies page and on committee page of website.

(b) Health and Safety Policy

Resolution: The Council resolved to make no amendments to the health and Safety Policy.

24.41 To approve pay band increase for Clerk and Assistant Clerk subject to satisfactory appraisals

Resolution: Council resolved to move the Clerk and Assistant Clerk up one pay band each if they achieve satisfactory appraisals.

24.42 Per Financial Regulation 4.2, to consider a virement from or to general reserves either to transfer any underspend to general reserves or an earmarked reserve, or to transfer any overspend from general reserves

Resolution: Council resolved to add any 23-24 underspend to the general reserves.

24.43 To approve risk assessment for use of the whacker plate

Resolution: The Council adopted the whacker plate risk assessment.

24.44 To consider Parish Hall risk assessment with amendments per new flag pole

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the parish hall risk assessment with alterations made in view of the new flag pole being installed.

24.45 To consider whether Epworth can use the playing fields on good Friday (a bank holiday)

Resolution: The Council resolved Epworth can play on the fields on good Friday, a bank holiday, but reiterated the gates will not be opened and Epworth has its own key to access the changing room. Also, please can Epworth ensure people do not park on Lancelot Close or on Kings Drive.

24.46 To consider the adequacy of the Council's insurances

Resolution: The Council reviewed all of its insurances (public liability, employers' liability, cyber, and ill-health) and considered them to be accurate.

24.47 To consider progress on 2024-2025 projects:

(a) Parish App

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept Aubergine IT's quote for a Parish App.

Clerk to:

- *Add quotes for apps to quotation file (including meeting paper detailing app quotes for ease of reference).*
- *Contact Aubergine IT and accept quote for parish app.*

(b) Outside power supply and to replace lights in Reg Neal room for LED

(c) Replacement Sliding Doors for Parish Hall

(d) 3 new bins for Kings Walk Park and moving them to different locations + extra bin near MUGA and installation of all

(e) Scarification of wildflower garden

Items b, c, d and e were considered at agenda item 24.38 (b) above.

24.48 Update on gov.uk websites

Clerk to get quotes form Cuttlefish for gov.uk website and for Cllr and staff emails.

24.49 To consider advertising in the LiFE Magazine after LRALC advice on s. 142 LGA 1942

Council noted that under LGA 1972, s 142, it cannot allow commercial entities to be advertised in the LiFE magazine.

Clerk to contact previous advertisers to make them aware that council cannot allow commercial entities to be advertised in the LiFE magazine.

24.50 To consider problematic hall hire and return of deposit

Resolution: Council resolved to keep the £150.00 deposit from a hall hire as they overran their time.

24.51 Plan of Work

Nothing to note.

24.52 Clerk's report

HSBC account now closed and funds now safely in unity current account– will open Market Harborough Building Society soon.

The Clerk's laptop has been examined (as it is not working properly) and it is on its last legs.

24.53 Councillors' forum

Nothing.

24.54 Delegates reports

Two Cllrs went on planning nuts and bolts training.

Cllr Bozzoni declared an interest and left the room at 9.17pm.

24.55 To consider excluding the press and public and to enter a closed session to consider potential partial retirement of the Premises Officer and a potential Council staff re-structure

Resolution: The council resolved to exclude the press and public and enter a closed session.

Council entered a closed session at 9.18pm.

More information is needed before a decision can be made on potential partial retirement of the Premises Officer and a potential Council staff re-structure.

The meeting reconvened at 9.22pm.

Cllr Bozzoni re-entered the meeting at 9.23pm.

24.56 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday April 17th 2024 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.24pm.