

LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 20th December 2023, 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 M. Bozzoni

District Councillor Coar (via the telephone)

Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk to the Parish Council

23.260 To receive apologies for absence

None.

23.261 To receive disclosures of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Councillor Darlison declared an interest in agenda items 23.265 (b) and (d).

Councillor Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda item 23.265 (e).

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

None.

23.263 To receive reports from County/District Councillors

District Councillor Coar gave the following updates via the telephone:

Bollards

One set of new bollards has been installed on the A47 and another is still to be installed.

Flooding on Beggars Lane

BDC's planning department have assured Cllr Coar flooding on Beggars Lane will not happen again. The flooding was caused by a farmer's ditch being blocked and it has now been cleared.

Pizza Restaurant

A planning application has been made for a pizza restaurant on Hinckley Road but they have been told to reapply with suitable ventilation to be included in the plans, to alleviate smells.

Flooding on A47

This is the largest issue at present; vacuum tankers have been onsite to investigate the issue but the issue remains unrectified. Cllr Coar will continue to pressure Highways until it is sorted.

The Council noted the frequency of the car transporter unloading and blocking the A47 seems to have significantly lessened.

23.264 To consider:

(a) planning enforcement case E23/0298/COUCOM – 150D Hinckley Road – change of use from retail unit to hot food takeaway – status PCO

Noted.

(b) 23/1056/FUL – 150 Hinckley Road – external alterations and change of use of building to class E(b) restaurant

Noted.

23.265 To discuss Finances:

(a) To consider granting a dispensation for one Councillor for a specific reason and for further Councillors where necessary

Dispensation request forms were received from Councillors Wells and Bozzoni.

Resolution: The Council resolved to grant a dispensation to allow Cllr Wells to discuss and vote on budget and precept matters and for Cllr Bozzoni to discuss and vote on precept and budget matters not pertaining to the Premises Officer's employment.

Councillor Darlison left the room at 7.13pm.

(b) To approve spend on invoice to have trees delivered from Beaumanor Hall so the Council's 2023 orchard trees delivery spot was not missed

Resolution: The Council resolved to approve spend on invoice to have trees delivered from Beaumanor Hall so the Council's 2023 orchard trees delivery spot was not missed.

Councillor Darlison returned to the room at 7.15pm.

(c) To approve emergency spend on roof leak at Parish Hall under Financial regulation 4.5 and to consider approving spend on suggested gutter replacement to prevent problem recurring

Resolution: The Council resolved to approve emergency spend on roof leak at Parish Hall under Financial regulation 4.5 and to get the gutter fixed to prevent problem recurring

Clerk to arrange to get the guttering fixed on the parish hall roof (after leak in ladies' toilets).

Councillor Darlison left the room at 7.18pm.

(d) To approve item 1 on the order paper for December 2023

Resolution: The Council approved item 1 on the order paper for December 2023.

Councillor Darlison returned to the room at 7.19pm.

Councillor Bozzoni left the room at 7.20pm.

(e) To approve items 2, 3 & 4 on the order paper for December 2023

Resolution: The Council resolved to approve items 2, 3 & 4 on the order paper for December 2023

Councillor Bozzoni returned to the room at 7.21pm.

(f) To approve all remaining items on the order paper for December 2023

Resolution: The Council resolved to approve all remaining items on the order paper for December 2023.

(g) To note bank the reconciliation for November 2023

Note.

(h) To consider any grant applications received

None received.

(i) To minute bank balances

As at 30.11.2023:

HSBC – £245,451.23

Unity Trust Bank – £113,609.31

(j) To consider top line budget items

Top line budget items:

Insurance	– just over 100% due to new cyber insurance which wasn't budgeted for.
Course fees	– there's £180 to come back for the 4 people who attended the first aid course who were not affiliated with LFEPC.
Subs and memberships	– £284 SLCC membership paid this month for the Clerk's PSLCC membership.
Gas	- The £1,778 credit has now come through.

Play equipment maintenance – £4,921 spend this month but £3,000 of this is grass matting, of which approx. £2,500 will be refunded due to Wicksteed overordering.

(k) To discuss reserves

General reserves – £252,880

Parish hall development – £60,000

Parks and play area development – £25,005

Paths around the parish hall – £25,005

(l) To confirm appointment of internal auditor for 2024

Resolution: The Council resolved to appoint LRALC as internal auditors for the financial year 2023-2024.

(m) To discuss hire price increases for 2024-2025

Resolution: The Council resolved to increase hall hire for occasional hirers to £30 per hour from 01.04.2024, to include café area. Regular hirers will remain at £15 per hour, to include café area. Café area alone and Reg Neal rooms will remain at £11 per hour.

Clerk to:

- *Change new hire prices on website and booking form (increase hall hire for occasional hirers to £30 per hour from 01.04.2024, to include café area. Regular hirers will remain at £15 per hour, to include café area. Café area alone and Reg Neal rooms will remain at £11 per hour).*
- *Ask Premises Officer and Assistant Clerk to inform all regular hirers of changes to hall hire prices from 01.04.2024. Also, to check for any bookings already taken which will need amending.*

23.266 To confirm minutes from:

(a) The Council meeting on Wednesday 15th November 2023 as a true and accurate record

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 15th November 2023 as a true and accurate record.

Clerk to remove the word draft from the minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 15th November 2023.

(b) The Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on Friday 15th December as a true and accurate record

Resolution: The Council resolved to accept the minutes from the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on Friday 15th December as a true and accurate record.

Clerk to remove the word draft from the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on Friday 15th December.

23.267 To discuss matters arising from those minutes

Resolution: The Council resolved to ask Epworth to remove the percentage price increases from their proposed new club statement and to include an apology.

(a) To consider adding a flagpole to the Parish Hall

Resolution: The Council resolved to purchase one union flag and one flag with the LFE PC logo on, from the Parish Hall repair and maintenance budget heading, to be erected between the MUGA and the Parish Hall from flagpole express at a cost of £1,435.50 (due to superior quality).

Clerk to

- *Tell insurance company new flagpole to be erected.*
- *Accept quote from Flagpole express.*
- *Add flagpole quotes to quotations file, with this minute and meeting paper showing the quotes.*

(b) Update on Parish Office alterations

The Parish office alterations project has now gone out to tender. The deadline for tenders is 5pm Monday 5th February with a view to Council deciding on a contractor at the February Council meeting.

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

(a) 23/1023/HH – 4 Carnation Close – first floor rear extension

No comment.

23.269 To discuss matters arising from the Planning and Parks Committee meetings held Tuesday 5th December 2023
(a) To note incident in which a Council contractor was threatened with violence and the Police were called
Noted.

23.270 To review the following Policies:

(a) Risk Management Policy

Resolution: The Council resolved to make no amendments to the Risk management Policy.

Clerk to update the reviewed date on the Risk Management Policy.

(b) Financial Reserves Policy

Resolution: The Council resolved to make no amendments to the Financial Reserves Policy.

Clerk to update the reviewed date on the Financial Reserves Policy.

23.271 To consider HSBC's impending closure of account and potential new bank accounts

HSBC have written to the council to explain it will close its account with the bank unless it can make regular transactions on it. This would involve two Councillors going to make a withdrawal each month, in person, from the bank. It would also mean a payment into the account each month on the order paper. This would be incredibly onerous as the council uses the account as a savings account, not a current account.

Therefore, on the 22nd January HSBC will close the account and send a cheque to the Council with the balance. This will be paid into the council's Unity Trust bank account a.s.a.p.

The Clerk proposes looking into other bank accounts recommended by other Clerks. As Council will appreciate, Parish Councils are unique in their banking needs so it is not as simple as picking a bank, some research needs to be done to see if they can properly accommodate a Parish Council. Those of you who have been with the Council for some years will also remember how many issues have been caused by HSBC. These banks include:

- Nationwide
- Lloyds
- NatWest
- Market Harborough Building Society

Clerk to look into other bank accounts (specifically Lloyds, Nationwide, NatWest and Market Harborough Building Society) and report back to Council.

23.272 To consider a pared down meeting for August 2024 with only payments being added as agenda item

Resolution: The Council resolved to have a pared down meeting in August 2024, only to authorise payments.

Clerk to inform Assistant Clerk of pared down meeting in August 2024 as she may be Clerking this meeting.

23.273 To consider whether a group training guide dogs would be allowed to hire the hall

Resolution: The Council resolved to allow a guide dog training group to hire the Parish Hall.

Clerk to:

- *Complete a risk assessment for the guide dog training group.*
- *Ensure the guide dog training group have public liability insurance in place.*
- *Take some photographs of the guide dog training group for the next LiFE magazine.*
- *Add to plan of work to make donation to the guide dog charity in the future.*

23.274 To note decisions made and consider issues raised at the extraordinary meeting of the Council on 15.12.2023
Noted.

23.275 To consider relocating memorial bench donated by resident

Resolution: The Council resolved to move the donated memorial bench to a slightly different location.

Clerk to:

- Ask handyman to move bench after a Cllr. and resident who donated the bench have agreed location, to new location. Also ask handyman to make good where the bench is currently located (i.e. remove concrete and re-turf etc.). arrange for resident, Cllr. and handyman to get together to ensure correct location is decided.

23.276 To review the following Parish Council risk assessments:

- (a) Parish Hall
- (b) Fire
- (c) Parks
- (d) Film Evening
- (e) Tree Wardens
- (f) Volunteers and Volunteer Litter-Pickers

Resolution: The Council resolved to make no amendments to the Fire, Parks, Film Evening, Tree wardens and Volunteers & Volunteer Litter Pickers risk assessments. The Council also resolved to make minor amendments to the Parish Hall risk assessment.

Clerk to:

- Make amendments to the Parish Hall risk assessment (as per meeting papers for Council 20.12.2023) and amend reviewed dates for all other risk assessments.
- Purchase a sign, to put in car park, to show where to congregate if there's a fire and arrange for handyman to put it up.

23.277 To approve quote to have a small number of lighting columns re-tested in January 2024 as advised by structural testing company in 2020 report (ahead of 2024 hanging baskets and Christmas lights)

Resolution: The Council resolved to pay £430.00 to RH Smith Associates to get the lamp posts tested which need to be re-tested 2024.

Clerk to:

- Accept quote from RH Smith retest lamp posts January 2024 and add to quote to quotations file.
- Also send list of lamp posts to Highways to ask which can have extra Christmas lights on.

23.278 To consider booking an in-house training session on Chairman Training from LRALC for the 2024-2025 year.

Resolution: The Council resolved to book in an in-house Chairman training session from LRALC for the 2024-2025 year for the whole Council and any Council staff who wish to attend.

Clerk to ask LRALC for dates after 01.04.2024 when they can deliver the in-house Chairman training and arrange the training date.

23.279 To consider spending £40 from IT budget heading on safe destruction of Assistant Clerk's old laptop

Resolution: The Council resolved to spend £40 on the safe destruction of Assistant Clerk's old laptop.

Clerk to ask IT man to safely destroy the Assistant Clerk's old laptop as a cost of £40.00.

23.280 Plan of Work

Noted.

23.281 Clerk's report

Film Evening

The projector is wonky so Clerk to arrange for Film Evening organiser and Cllr. to meet at the Parish Hall to sort.

The Council resolved that the Film Evening can use the chairs with arms from the Reg Neal room but they must put them back as they found them.

LRALC office move

LRALC are temporarily moving to Birstall (until July 2024) so there may be a delay in them responding to any tickets raised.

Planning Nuts and Bolts Training Course

The Clerk explained that the Planning Nuts and Bolts training course (LRALC) has changed and suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair may wish to attend.

Parish Hall Gate Curb

The Council decided not to paint the curb at the gates to the Parish Hall.

Potential Email sent to someone other than Cllrs.

A resident had emailed the Clerk to say they had received emails meant for Cllrs. The Clerk has checked her sent items and there is no evidence that anything had been sent other than information which was already in the public domain. The Clerk reported the incident to the ICO who said there was no further action necessary and that there was no data breach. As a result, a new Councillor email distribution list has been set up to ensure this does not happen again.

23.282 Councillors' forum

The Council discussed clearing the ditches around Forest East Park due to flooding.

23.283 Delegates reports

None.

23.284 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.