

## LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 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  
County Councillor Nick Chapman  
Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk to the Parish Council

### 24.1 To receive apologies for absence

None.

### 24.2 To receive disclosures of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Cllr. Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda items 24.6 (a) and 24.28 (a).

Cllr. Darlison declared an interest in agenda item 24.10.

### 24.3 To adjourn the meeting to receive questions from Members of the Public

One member of the public attended the meeting in person and asked why they had not been able to access the Zoom link for the Council meeting earlier in the evening. The Clerk explained that the Zoom meeting started at the same time as the Council meeting, 7.00pm.

*Clerk to investigate how Council can publish the Zoom link as a live link on the website.*

Secondly, the member of the public queried the frequency of bin empties, number of bins and size of bins on Forest House Lane (close to the SR Supermarket), Warren Lane and Pendragon Way. The Clerk explained these were under the ownership and responsibility of Blaby District Council.

*Clerk to contact BDC and raise resident's concerns regarding the frequency of bin empties, number of bins and size of bins on Forest House Lane (close to the SR Supermarket), Warren Lane and Pendragon Way. The resident wishes to be copied into this email.*

Thirdly, the member of the public expressed their concern that the size of the bin on the cut through from Lancelot onto Forest East Park (playing fields side) had been reduced. The Clerk explained this was because there had been continued fly-tipping into the large freestanding bin that was there previously. Therefore, Council resolved to remove that bin and add a smaller, post mounted bin with a smaller opening to help prevent for fly-tipping.

*Clerk to add 'To discuss resident's concerns over size of bin at cut through from Lancelot Close to playing fields' to the March Parks agenda.*

### 24.4 To receive reports from (a) County/District Councillors

County Cllr Nick Chapman attend the meeting in person and gave the following updates:

- LCC Council tax bill will be increased by 4.9% for the 2024-2025 financial year. This is the maximum 2.9% increase permitted without the need for referendum plus 2% adult social care allowance. The budget is now balanced but it will be hard going forward.
- In relation to the A47, speed monitoring was carried out last week due to the proposed island needed for the new development behind LFE Rugby Club. Also, re-lining works were carried out recently.
- There is a big issue with the flooding on the A47 and this is being investigated by the County Council. One significant problem is that ownership of the drain where the issue is occurring is unclear; it may well belong to several private landowners and if this is the case LCC will need their permission to carry out works. A team are attending the site next week to send down cameras into the drain to see if they need to dig it up or if a liner can be inserted to fix the

issue. Also, if they are unable to fix the issue quickly, they will look to raise the pavement so that it can be used by pedestrians (as it will no longer be covered in mud). Cllr Chapman advised he will keep the Parish Council updated on this issue.

The Council raised the issue of staff from Braunstone Crossroads Garage parking their vehicles on the pavements around Park Drive, Cllr Chapman explained that this issue would need to be reported to the Police as enforcement of highways rules is a Police matter.

The Council thanked Cllr Chapman for attending the meeting and for his updates.

*County Cllr Chapman left the meeting at 7.26pm.*

**(b) Leicestershire Police**

An email from Leicestershire Police confirmed that a sergeant is due to attend the March Council meeting.

**24.5 To discuss flooding on A47 and Beggars Lane**

County Cllr Chapman gave a detailed update of the progress on the A47 flooding at agenda point 24.4 (a) above.

District Cllr Coar had copied the Parish Council into an email to BDC expressing his concern over repeated flooding on Beggars Lane and an alleged road traffic accident caused by this flooding.

*Cllr Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda item 24.6 (a) and left the room at 7.28pm.*

**24.6 To discuss Finances:**

**(a) To approve item 1 on the order paper for February 2024**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to authorise the first item on the order paper for February 2024.

*Cllr Bozzoni re-entered the meeting room at 7.30pm.*

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

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to authorise the remaining order paper items on the February 2024 order paper.

**(c) To note bank the reconciliation for January 2024**

Noted.

**(d) To minute bank balances**

Bank balances as at 31.01.2024:

HSBC - £246,647.15

Unity Trust Bank - £78,631.42

**(e) To note top line budget items**

Top line budget items

- There will likely be around an £8k saving on salaries by end of the financial year 2023-2024.
- Long term hall hire is up slightly this month.

**(f) To discuss reserves**

Reserves as at 31.01.2024:

General reserves - £221,654

Parish hall development - £57,247

Parks/play area development - £25,005

Paths around the parish hall - £25,005

**(g) To consider any grant applications received**

None received this month.

**24.7 To confirm minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 as a true and accurate record**

**Resolution:** Subject to minor amendments the Council resolved to confirm minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 as a true and accurate record

*Clerk to make minor amendments to the January 2024 Council minutes, remove word draft from them on the website and bring paper copy to March Council meeting for signing.*

**24.8 To discuss matters arising from those minutes**

**(a) To consider closing the HSBC account and to consider opening a new bank account**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to close the HSBC bank account due to continued issues with the bank. (The latest issue being that HSBC wrote to the Council before Christmas to say they were going to close the account due to inactivity and send the Council a cheque for the balance late January. On speaking with HSBC, it became clear that it would have needed two signatories to go into the branch every month to make both a withdrawal and a deposit to keep the account open. This was considered too onerous by Council. However, another letter was received after Christmas to say the account has been frozen and the only way to get the funds was for Council to send a closure form.) Council also resolved to move the balance of £246,647.15 to Market Harborough Building Society as they are the only account provider who will let the Council have the Clerk and Assistant Clerk as administrators on the account but not let them have authorisation to make payments. This is a protection against fraud. (Nationwide told the Clerk over the phone that they do not provide accounts for Parish Councils. Lloyds, Barclays and NatWest will not allow an administrator on the account without them also being a signatory.)

*Clerk to:*

- *Close the HSBC account (send-off closure form).*
- *Open Market Harborough building society account with opening balance from HSBC of £246,647.15 by putting cheque from HSBC into Unity account first and then transferring to open Market Harborough Building Society account.*

**(b) To consider potential revised plans for Parish Office alterations**

*Clerk to add 'To consider potential revised plans for Parish Office alterations' to the Parks agenda for March.*

**(c) To consider a plan for the next 12 months**

**Resolution:** Council resolved to keep the 2024-2025 financial year projects on the Council agenda as standing items and add estimated dates to them. Also, to add these projects and dates to the Action plan (which is reviewed quarterly and kept on the website) once these dates have been agreed by Council in March.

*Clerk to:*

- *Update Action Plan on website ahead of 31.03.2024, once dates for projects are agreed at March Council meeting.*
- *Add suggested dates to 24-25 projects ahead of March Council.*
- *Clerk to look at parish app for next month, get info for this and bring to March Council.*

**(d) To consider quotes to have gym equipment maintained from general reserves**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quote of £445 plus VAT for Caloo (manufacturer and installer) to inspect both sites' gym equipment and supply a written report of their findings. This money will be taken from general reserves.

*Clerk to:*

- *Tell Assistant Clerk to take the payment (£445 plus VAT) to Caloo for an inspection of gym equipment and written report, from general reserves.*
- *Accept quote from Caloo of £445 plus Vat to prepare report of findings on gym equipment.*
- *Add 'Gym Equipment Maintenance Inspection and Report' to March Parks Committee agenda (now it's been approved from general reserves by Council).*

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

None received.

It was noted that BDC had responded regarding the potential Baines Lane development to say they do not know how any developer would access the site.

*Cllr. Darlison declared an interest in agenda item 24.10 and left the room at 7.56pm.*

**24.10 To discuss matters arising from the Planning and Parks Committee meetings held Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**(a) To consider exactly which ditches need to be cleared on Forest East Park and to consider quote for clearing**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quote from SRP Landscapes of £995.00 to clear the 3 main ditches on Forest East Park.

*Clerk to:*

- Add quote from SRP Landscapes for £995.00 to clear the 3 main ditches on Forest East Park to the quotations file.
- Contact SRP Landscapes to accept the quote of £995.00 to clear the 3 main ditches on Forest East Park.

*Cllr. Darlison re-entered the meeting room at 8.01pm*

*The member of the public left at 8.01pm.*

**(b) To consider spending from reserves, on quote to fix small roundabout at Kings Walk Park**

**Resolution:** Council resolved to get the small roundabout at Kings Walk Park fixed by Proludic at a cost of £1,093.52 as it is a fail on the play inspection.

*Clerk to:*

- Accept quote from Proludic for £1,093.52 to fix the small roundabout at Kings Walk Park.
- Add quote from Proludic to fix the small roundabout at Kings Walk Park to the quotations file.
- Inform Assistant Clerk that the £1,093.52 to fix the small roundabout at Kings Walk Park will come from reserves.

**(c) To consider spending from reserves, on revised flagpole quotations**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quotation from flags and flagpoles.co.uk, at a cost of £1,257.42, for a 6-metre-high fibreglass flagpole, silver finial, 1 x union flag, 1 x custom LFEPCC logo flag, internal locking rigging door, hinged base and installation.

*Clerk to:*

- Contact flags and flagpoles.co.uk a.s.a.p. to accept quote of £1,257.42 for flagpole etc, and to send them the LFEPCC logo for a custom flag.
- Add all flagpole quotes to quotations file, plus meeting paper document plus this minute.
- Tell Assistant Clerk the flagpole will be paid for from general reserves.
- Add flagpole to Parish Hall risk assessment and add to March Council for interim review.

**24.11 To review the following Policies:**

**(a) Code of Conduct**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make minor amendments to the Code of Conduct Policy.

*Clerk to:*

- Make minor amendments to the Code of Conduct Policy and update the reviewed date on the website before 31.03.2024.

**(b) Financial Regulations**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make minor amendments to the Financial Regulations.

Clerk to:

- *Make minor amendments to the Financial Regulations and update the reviewed date on the website before 31.03.2024.*

**(c) Disciplinary Policy**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make no amendments to the Disciplinary Policy.

*Clerk to update reviewed date on website of the Disciplinary Policy before 31.03.2024.*

**(d) Laptop Policy**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make no amendments to the Laptop Policy.

*Clerk to update reviewed date on website of the Laptop Policy before 31.03.2024.*

**(e) Internal Controls Policy – and to review effectiveness of Council’s internal controls**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make minor amendments to the Internal Controls Policy.

Clerk to:

- *Make minor amendments to the Internal Controls Policy and update the reviewed date on the website before 31.03.2024.*

**Resolution:** The Council reviewed the effectiveness of its Internal Controls and resolved that these controls are adequate.

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

*Clerk to keep ‘To review the litter bin and dog bin emptying contract for the parks (without litter-picking)’ on March agenda and chase final quote.*

*Clerk to add to Parks agenda to make good cut off pole at cut through to Lancelot where old red bin was.*

**24.13 To consider allowing the Clerk to continue to work from home on Monday and Tuesday afternoons**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved that the Clerk can work from home on Monday and Tuesday afternoons.

**24.14 To consider purchasing to new McAfee security packages for the two Councillor laptops**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to purchase two McAfee security packages from Amazon, for Councillor laptops, at a cost of £12.99 each.

**24.15 To consider imminent Martyn’s Law legislation and the impact it might have on the Council**

The Clerk has been to a pre-legislation consultation on Martyn’s Law but it has not yet been decided exactly how smaller venues (100+ people capacity) will be affected. NALC had advised Councils to have the item listed in an agenda for discussion. The Clerk will bring any future updates to Council.

**24.16 To consider holding the shortened August Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> August instead of 21<sup>st</sup>**

Clerk to:

- *Establish if, instead of having an abbreviated meeting in August, the August order paper (which would include any regular payments) could be authorised at the July Council meeting (e.g. check SOs, FRs etc.). also check any contracts/policies that are due for reviewing in August and see if they could be added to the July Council meeting agenda.*
- *Leave ‘To consider holding the shortened August Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> August instead of 21<sup>st</sup> or whether the August order paper could be authorised at the July Council meeting’ on March Council agenda.*

**24.17 To consider whether to retain some of the deposit from a recent problematic hire**

Council decided to stick with their previous decision to retain the hall hirer’s deposit.

*Clerk to contact hirer re Council’s decision to retain all of the hall hire deposit.*

**24.18 To consider progress on 2024-2025 projects:**

*Discussed at 24.8 (c) above.*

**(a) Parish App**

Work due to begin in 2024-2025 financial year.

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

Work due to begin in 2024-2025 financial year.

**(c) Replacement Sliding Doors for Parish Hall**

Work due to begin in 2024-2025 financial year.

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

Work due to begin in 2024-2025 financial year.

**(e) Scarification of wildflower garden**

Work due to begin in 2024-2025 financial year.

**24.19 To consider whether to change the timings of the Planning and Parks Committee meetings on a permanent basis**

The Council decided to leave the Committee meetings timings as they currently stand.

**24.20 To consider adopting the removing snow from the canopy roof risk assessment**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to adopt the removing snow from the canopy roof risk assessment.

**24.21 Quarterly review of Action Plan**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make several amendments to the Action Plan.

*Clerk to make minor amendments to Action Plan ahead of 31.03.2024 and add reviewed date.*

**24.22 To review emergency action plan**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make several minor amendments to the restricted and unrestricted versions of the Emergency Action Plan and to re-send the plan to all Councillors.

**24.23 To consider insurance company's suggestion to cut down some trees in relation to an insurance claim**

**Resolution:** Council resolved that it will not chop down trees at the back of Lancelot Close, on Forest East Park (in relation to an insurance claim) as the trees were planted before the houses were built.

*Clerk to advise insurance company that Council has decided that they will not chop down the trees as the trees were planted before the houses were built.*

**24.24 Plan of Work**

Noted.

**24.25 Clerk's report**

Nothing to report.

**24.26 Councillors' forum**

The Chair thanked one Councillor for writing a report on the new community orchard.

**24.27 Delegates reports**

*Cllr Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda item 24.28 (a) and left the meeting at 9.17pm.*

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to exclude the press and public and to enter a closed session to discuss amendments to the Premises Officer's contract and to set the objectives, date and time of the Clerk's appraisal.

**24.28 To consider a closed session to:**

**(a) Consider amendments to the Premises Officer's contract**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make several amendments to the Premises Officer's Contract.

*Clerk to get Premises Officer to sign new, amended contract.*

*Cllr. Bozzoni re-entered the meeting room at 9.20pm.*

**(b) Set objectives, date and time for Clerk's appraisal**

The Clerk left the room at this point.

*When the Clerk re-entered the room, she was asked to send her previous appraisal to the Chair and Vice-Chair.*

**24.29 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.