

## LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 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 M. Bozzoni

One member of the public  
District Councillor Coar (via the telephone)  
Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk to the Parish Council

**23.285 To receive apologies for absence**

None.

**23.286 To receive disclosures of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct**

CLr. Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda items 23.289 (a), 23.290 (a), 23.298 (b) and 23.298 (c).

**23.287 To adjourn the meeting to receive questions from Members of the Public**

One member of the public suggested:

- (a) That the Council consider a metal store for the spades etc currently left behind the pavilion gates.
- (b) The consideration should be given to the Premises Officer when Parish Hall hires significantly over-run their allotted time (and the Premises officer, therefore, must stay at the hall very late into the night and spend a lot of time cleaning up).

The Council confirmed that the issues facing the Premises Officer with some hires will be discussed by Council during this meeting.

*The member of the public left the meeting at 7.04pm.*

**23.288 To receive reports from County/District Councillors**

District Councillor Coar attended the meeting via the telephone and gave the following updates:

Flooding Beggars Lane

The water bungs do not appear to be working and Councillor Coar has spoken to BDC to ensure this is looked into.

A47 Floods

District Councillor Coar has spoken to County Councillor Chapman about this issue who is confident he will be able to get the issue sorted. However, the mud of the footpath is unacceptable and needs to be sorted sooner; Councillors Coar and Chapman are working together to get this remedied as soon as possible.

Warren Lane Potholes

Highways have repaired several potholes on Warren Lane recently. However, several more have appeared since these repairs. Therefore, Councillor Coar will raise the issue with a County Councillor to find a suitable remedy as several residents have contacted him to say they have damaged their cars in potholes.

A47 Roadworks

A burst watermain caused the delays on the A47 last week.

Building works off Baines Lane

This development is currently sitting in abeyance. The Parish Council explained it had sent a letter to BDC expressing its concern that outline planning permission had been given for this development despite no decision being made on how construction traffic will reach the site. Councillor Coar replied that he would pick this up with BDC's Planning Department.

*District Councillor Coar left the meeting at 7.09pm.*

**23.289 To discuss Finances:**

*Councillor Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda item 23.289 (a) and left the room at 7.10pm.*

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

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to approve item 1 on the January 2024 order paper.

*Councillor Bozzoni re-entered the room at 7.12pm.*

**(b) To approve all remaining items on the order papers for January 2024**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to approve all remaining order paper items for January 2024.

**(c) To note bank the reconciliation for December 2023**

Noted.

**(d) To minute bank balances**

The bank balances as at 31.12.2023 are:

HSBC: £246,647.15

Unity Trust Bank: £100,649.45

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

Bank interest so far for 2023-2024 is at over 600% of the budgeted figure which is very positive.

Hall hire income, both regular and occasional, is down by over £3k against the budgeted figure. However, it was difficult to predict 2023-2024 figures when preparing the budget as the hall was, at that time, still recovering from the impact from Covid on hires.

**(f) To discuss reserves**

Reserves as at 31.12.2023:

General reserves - £242,571

Parish office alterations – £57,247

Paths around parish hall - £25,005

Parks/play area development - £25,005

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

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to make a grant to Leicester Forest East Community Library of £1,523.20 to enable the purchase several library furnishings which need replacing, namely: child's table x 2 – adjustable height – £765.60, child's chairs x 6 - £180.00, multi-cultural rug - £238.00, child beanbags x2 – £247.20, scientific workbench – £92.40

*Clerk to:*

- *Inform Leicester Forest East Community Library of the Parish Council's decision to grant it £1,523.20 for the purposes listed above; and*
- *Ask the Assistant Clerk to add a payment to the February order paper of £1,523.20 for the library.*

**23.290 To consider:**

*Councillor Bozzoni declared an interest in agenda item 23.290 (a) and left the room at 7.18pm.*

**(a) Proposed budget figure relating to employment expenses of Premises Officer for 2024-2025 financial year (as proposed by Finance and Policies Committee)**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the budget figure relating to employment expenses of the Premises Officer for the 2024-2025 financial year as proposed by the Finance Committee.

*Councillor Bozzoni re-entered the room at 7.19pm.*

**(b) Proposed overall budget figure for 2024-2025 financial year (as proposed by Finance and Policies Committee)**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to adopt a budget figure of £215,038.00 for the financial year 2024-2025.

**(c) Proposed precept figure for 2024-2025 financial year (as proposed by Finance and Policies Committee)**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to adopt a precept of £185,941.00 for the financial year 2024-2025 which will mean a band D council tax rate of £76.31, this is an increase of 2.72% increase from 2023-2024.

*Clerk to inform the Assistant Clerk of the Council's decisions on budget and precept.*

**23.291 To confirm minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as a true and accurate record**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as a true and accurate record.

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

**(a) To consider HSBC's impending closure of account and potential new bank accounts**

*Clerk to keep 'To consider HSBC's impending closure of account and potential new bank accounts' on the February Council agenda.*

**(b) Update on Parish Office alterations, including:**

**1. to consider logistics of moving parish office whilst works take place (e.g. who will move office furniture etc.)**

The Council agreed that the Council staff should use the Reg Neal room whilst the parish office alterations take place.

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quotation from Sharp of £330 to move the photocopier/printer/scanner into the Reg Neal room and then back into the parish office once the alterations are finished. It was noted that as the Parish Council only rent the machine from Sharp it would be best for them to move the machine so it does not get damaged. This decision is subject to the parish office alterations going ahead.

*Clerk to:*

- *Accept the quote from Sharp for moving the photocopier/printer/scanner, subject to the parish office alterations going ahead.*
- *Tell the Premises Officer that no bookings can be taken for Reg Neal room whilst the Council staff are using it as their office.*

**2. updated CCTV works quote**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quote of £1,250 from the current CCTV company to provide four extra CCTV cameras, moving the CCTV cabinet and relocating the current monitor as part of the parish office alterations. This decision is subject to the parish office alterations going ahead.

*Clerk to inform CCTV company that the Council accepts their quote subject to the parish office alterations going ahead and that either the Clerk or an appointed contractor will be in touch with them over the next few months to confirm.*

**3. quote from alarm company for necessary associated works**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to accept the quotation from the current alarm system provider of £799 for a new surface mounted door contact to the new parish office door, dualtec detector and new proximity keypad for setting and unsetting the alarm. This is subject to the parish office alterations going ahead.

*Clerk to contact alarm company and explain that Council accepts their quote subject to the works on the parish office alterations going ahead.*

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

**(a) 23/1074/HH – Cherrytrees, 26 Beggars Lane – 2 storey side and partial front extension and single storey**

**front garage extension and new dropped curb**

No Comment.

**(b) 23/0746/FUL – 203 Hinckley Road – amended plan pack**

No Comment.

**(c) 23/1023/HH – 4 Carnation Close – amended plans**

No Comment.

**23.294 To discuss matters arising from the Planning and Parks Committee meetings held Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

One Councillor wrote a letter to BDC's Planning department raising concerns over access for construction traffic to the proposed development on Baines Lane but they have not yet received a response. District Councillor Coar had, previously during this meeting, stated he would chase up a response to this.

**23.295 To review the following Policies:**

**(a) Grievance Policy**

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

*Clerk to amend the reviewed date of the Grievance Policy.*

**(b) Financial Regulations**

*Clerk to:*

- *Keep the review of the Financial Regulations on the February Council agenda.*
- *Re-draft paragraph 5.6 of the Financial Regulations, to explain LFEPC authorise every single payment, every month and that direct debits are listed on the order paper. Paragraph 5.11 should be re-drafted to state that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk check any supplier details changes (e.g. bank account changes), not a Councillor.*
- *Tell Assistant Clerk to add direct debits to all order papers going forward.*

**23.296 To consider a plan for the next 12 months**

The Council agreed to produce a plan for the next financial year, to include projects and predicted timeframes.

*Clerk to keep the 12-month plan on the February Council agenda.*

**23.297 To consider resolution made by Council stating that if a seventh goal pin is found on the playing fields then the football club will be banned from using the field and facilities**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to overturn the resolution which stated that if another goal pin was found on the playing fields that Epworth football club would be banned from using the pitches. However, if another goal pin causes damage to the grounds maintenance contractor's mower Epworth will be billed, if it is one of their goal pins, and the situation will continue to be monitored.

*Clerk to inform Epworth Football Club that the Parish Council has overturned its decision that if another goal pin was found on the playing fields they will be banned from the pitches.*

**23.298 To consider occasional hire issues including:**

**(a) Whether deposits for two recent parties should be returned**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved that two recent hirers who both overran their hire will not have their deposits returned to them.

*Clerk to inform both hirers that they will not receive their deposits back as they overran their hire time and the hall was not left as found.*

*Councillor Bozzoni left the room at 8.19pm.*

**(b) Whether to increase the deposit for evening occasional hirers**

The Council resolved to consider agenda items 23.298 (b) and (c) together.

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to increase the refundable hall hire deposit from £150 to £200, from 01.04.2024, for hires lasting longer than 5 hours of those starting after 5.30pm at night.

**Resolution:** The Council resolved that any hirer leaving the hall after 10pm will lose all their £200 from 01.04.2024, subject to a Council resolution.

**Resolution:** If the Premises Officer has to stay later than 10.15pm to either wait for a hirer to leave or because there is a large amount of clearing away to do, which was not done by the hirer as it should have been, then the Premises officer will be given a payment of two hours salary. This will be added to the next order paper. An email will be sent from the Premises Officer to the Assistant Clerk for audit purposes should this occur.

Clerk to:

- Add the Council decisions: 'The Council resolved that any hirer leaving the hall after 10pm will lose all their £200 deposit from 01.04.2024, subject to a Council resolution' and 'The Council resolved to increase the refundable hall hire deposit from £150 to £200 from 01.04.2024 for hires lasting longer than 5 hours of those starting after 5.30pm at night.' to the website.
- Clerk to make the necessary amendments to the Premises Officer's contract, reflecting the changes above, to the February Council meeting.

**(c) to consider the issues recently seen with some occasional evening hirers more generally**

Considered above.

Councillor Bozzoni re-entered the room at 8.39pm.

**23.299 To discuss recent issues with flooding in Parish Hall garage and around Forest East Park**

Clerk to add 'To discuss recent issues with flooding in Parish Hall garage and around Forest East Park' to the February Parks agenda.

**23.300 To consider path by MUGA which has been partly washed away by flooding**

Clerk to add 'To consider path by MUGA which has been partly washed away by flooding' to the February Parks Committee agenda.

**23.301 To consider quotes to have gym equipment maintained from general reserves**

Clerk to leave 'To consider quotes to have gym equipment maintained from general reserves' on the February Council agenda.

**23.302 To consider request from another football club asking if they can hire pitches and for pricing**

The Council asked that the Clerk contact Kirby Muxloe Football Club and explain there is no capacity for more football clubs at the playing fields at present.

**23.303 To discuss issue with current website provider**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to change the website provider to Cuttlefish as 2Commune are no longer providing websites.

Clerk to reply to email from Cuttlefish to change to them as website provider.

**23.304 To discuss whether to remove the litter pick part of the park and dog bin emptying contract**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to remove the litter-picking aspect of the bin emptying contract when it is reviewed (at a saving of approximately £7,500).

Councillor Bozzoni left the meeting at 8.56pm.

**23.305 To discuss whether the Premises Officer can have one weekend every four weeks off, instead of a Tuesday**

**Resolution:** The Council resolved to allow the Premises Officer to have very fourth weekend off and to work the Tuesday of that week instead. However, the Premises Officer is allowed to swap weekends should she wish to. This equates to 13 weekends a year which the security company will cover.

Clerk to amend the Premises officer's contract and bring back to the February Council meeting for review.

Councillor Bozzoni re-entered the room at 9pm.

**23.306 Plan of Work**

Noted.

**23.307 Clerk's report**

LRALC Internal Audit

The Clerk has decided not to work as an internal auditor for this financial year.

Film Evening

The film evening passed on positive comments from several residents on the new Christmas lights. Also, that the wheelchair the Council has provided has proved to be invaluable.

In-House Chairman's Training Potential Dates

*Clerk to tell LRALC the Council is available for in-house, face-to-face, Chairman training on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of April.*

Guide Dog Group

The Guide dog training group who had enquired about hiring the hall did not turn up for their hire. However, the Council decided to leave on the plan of work to possibly make a charitable donation to a Guide Dog charity later in the year.

Teams

The IT company the PC uses has explained that to set up Teams for Council meetings would incur a prohibitive cost. Therefore, the Council decided to stick with Zoom and telephone calls from those who wish to join meetings remotely.

*Clerk to inform a District Councillor of Council's decision not to get Microsoft Teams and the reasons why.*

**23.308 Councillors' forum**

*Clerk to ensure Picnic in the Park is on the February Parks Committee agenda.*

**23.309 Delegates reports**

No update on planting of Christmas tree from St. Andrew's Church.

**23.310 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.