

Estates Working Party

Report of the Estates Working Party meeting held 7th September 2026.

Present: Cllrs V Armstrong, M Gillespie, C Ibbotson, P Mount, D Shuttleworth, A Spooner and J Thacker

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

Head Groundsman: Mr P Clarke

Also present was Cllr D Billings.

1. To receive apologies for absence, if any
Apologies were received from Cllr S Kinvig.
2. To receive disclosures of interest
There were no disclosures of interest.
3. Grounds maintenance update
 - a. To review the 2026/27 projects list
The updated 2026/2027 projects list was reviewed with it being reported that the works to the Chapel of Rest were now complete.

- b. To receive the Head Groundsman's report
The Head Groundsman reported that the recent dry weather had enabled the grounds staff to complete some lower priority jobs but that the focus would now be on hedge cutting and tree works, including those previously agreed to be undertaken on trees at the bottom of the cemetery, as well as mowing.

It was also reported that the planters had been emptied earlier than usual due to the plants suffering in the heat and that some winter plants had been planted.

- c. Routine maintenance programme
It was reported that Plantscape had been contacted regarding the hanging baskets, drawing their attention to the one plant that seemed to have suffered during the hot weather and requesting it not be included in baskets next year.

Following the recent request that the Parish Council reverts back to locking the gates to Willoughby Road Playing Fields overnight, Blaby Parish Council had been contacted due to them experiencing the same issues with regards antisocial behaviour on open spaces. There would be further exploration regarding gate options, including a pedestrian entrance and solar powered timed gates before being brought back to a future meeting for discussion.

It was reported that East Midlands Homes had acknowledged the request to cut the grass on the corner of Dale Acre and Reed Pool Close, advising that the grounds team were anticipated to action the request within five days.

- d. Items raised by members of the public or councillors prior to the agenda being distributed
There were no items raised by members of the public and councillors for action.

4. To discuss the Cemetery, including

- a. Cemetery (A) and (B)

- i. Necessary works

There was nothing to discuss.

- b. Cemetery B layout

It was noted that the Parish Council's application to Blaby District Council's Big Tree Giveaway had been successful and that the fifteen saplings would be supplied towards the end of the year.

There was discussion regarding the future management of the new cemetery area with it being noted that software options were currently being researched.

Recommended for approval

To offer burial plots sequentially, at the time they are required for immediate interments, with no reservation of specific plot numbers permitted. However, to investigate the feasibility and financial implications of allowing the pre-purchase of plots to be made, but for the plot allocated to be that which is next available at the time of interment.

5. Annual playground inspection reports

The annual playground inspection reports had been received with it being noted that there were no high-risk items identified and that all repairs required could be completed in house with costings for parts totalling no more than £500.

A query would be raised with the playground inspector as to why two items of accessible equipment on Leysland Play Area had not been included in the report.

6. Christmas tree/lights churchyard

Recommended for approval

To not purchase a Christmas tree for installation in St Andrews Churchyard due to the obstruction caused by a recently installed noticeboard, but to install battery operated lights in The Square, at a cost not exceeding £500. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

To purchase a Christmas tree for installation at the Village Hall, as usual, at a cost of £80 for collection. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

7. Tree survey 2026

Recommended for approval

To accept the quote of £5180 received from Beddows Tree Specialists for the three yearly tree survey, to be completed in December 2026. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

8. Leicestershire County Council's minor improvements programme

Recommended for approval

To submit the following issues for consideration for improvement under the minor improvement scheme being run by Leicestershire County Council:

- . Unsuitable fencing outside Countesthorpe Academy along the highway*
- . Speeding throughout the village*
- . Parking around schools, including Leysland Avenue*
- . Unsuitable pavements throughout the village*
- . General lack of parking*
- . Illegal e-bikes and e-scooters*

9. To receive any correspondence

a. Blaby District Council – review of existing bins

Correspondence had been received from Blaby District Council to advise that the current dog waste bins were being reviewed and those located on The Rowans and The Elms were being replaced for larger bins.

Recommended for approval

To respond to Blaby District Council with the suggestion that the bin at the junction of Penfold Drive/Wheatlands Drive also be replaced with a larger capacity bin.

10. To consider matters raised to the attention of the Estates Working Party by non-member Councillors

There were no matters raised.

11. To receive matters arising for information purposes

There were no matter arising.

12. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 5th October 2026 at 10am.