

The Meeting of Countesthorpe Parish Council was held on Thursday 11th January 2024 when there were present:

Councillors: M Gillespie, A Clifford, P Cornforth, S Kinvig, K McGovern, P Mount, S Palmer, K Pearce, W Read, P Servadei, M Smith, J Thacker and S Turner.

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

Also in attendance was Leicestershire County Councillor, L Phillimore, and Blaby District Councillors, R Bayliss and R Holdridge.

2023/24 165. To receive apologies for absence, if any

Apologies were received from Cllrs V Armstrong S Burditt and C Ibbottson.

2023/24 166. To receive disclosures of interest and to consider any requests for dispensation

Cllr A Clifford declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in Blaby District Council (BDC).

2023/24 167. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 14th December 2023

Minutes of the meeting held 14th December 2023 were circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved to approve the minutes, which were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

2023/24 168. To consider applications for the Councillor vacancies

There were no applications received.

2023/24 169. To report any matters arising for information purposes only

There were no matters arising.

2023/24 170. To appoint representatives to Committees, Working Parties and outside bodies, and discuss terms of reference for the Committees and Working Parties

There was nothing to discuss.

2023/24 171. To receive reports and questions from Representatives, County Councillor, District Councillor and Parish Councillors

Leicestershire County Councillor, L Phillimore, reported on the recent flooding and expressed growing concern in the number of scams being conducted in the aftermath. He also advised that the County Council believed that everybody affected had now been contacted, however, if there were any households who had been missed, they must register with the County Council via their website. He further advised that there was no update to provide regarding the previously reported unreliability of the local Arriva bus service.

Cllr S Palmer requested whether there was any update regarding the one-way signage located on Central Street and Church Street due to ongoing incidents of vehicles trying to access the no entry road.

Leicestershire County Councillor, L Phillimore, would look into this.

Blaby District Councillor, A Clifford, also reported on the recent flooding, confirming that welfare checks had been undertaken for those most impacted. He also reported that residents had been in touch regarding the geography of dog bins located on the Country Park, with either end being served well but bins noticeably lacking in the main park itself. He enquired as to whether the Parish Council would be willing to fund the purchase of an additional bin. Due to issues surrounding the practicalities of collection, the Parish Council requested that Cllr A Clifford provide additional information regarding the proposed location before it was further considered.

Blaby District Councillor, R Bayliss, reported on the burst water pipe on Church Street and the fact that it had resulted in residents using alternative routes, including one-way roads, incorrectly.

2023/24 172. Public participation session

There were no members of the public present.

2023/24 173. To discuss police matters

Cllr K McGovern provided an update on local police matters on behalf of the local PCSO. It was reported that there had recently been some antisocial behaviour in Poplar Avenue which was being investigated. Additionally, speeding on both Foston Road and Wigston Street had been reported, with the local PCSO confirming that speed operations were currently being looked into. It was resolved to proceed with the recommendation of contacting Leicestershire County Council to make enquiries regarding any speed deterrents which could be installed. It was also reported that there had been a recent spike in car key burglaries in Countesthorpe which were being investigated, and that, faraday pouches were available from local police stations for residents.

Cllr K McGovern further reported that recent crime data provided by Blaby for November 2023 showed that, throughout Countesthorpe, Foston and Kilby, there were 28 reported crimes with 26 of those occurring in Countesthorpe. The reported priorities for Countesthorpe include parking and road safety, general antisocial behaviour and nuisance motorbikes.

It was resolved that the link to the Leicestershire Police Crime Prevention Advice webpage, which had been included on the Parish Council's website and referenced in the next issue of The Herald, would also be shared via the Council's facebook page.

It was noted that the next local beat surgery was scheduled to take place in the library on Monday 22nd January.

2023/24 174. To discuss youth work matters, including receiving the monthly report

There was nothing to report as the youth worker sessions are on hold over the winter months.

2023/24 175. To approve accounts for payment as verified by the Finance Working Party

It was resolved to approve the following Direct Debit and Business Card accounts for payment:

Parish Council			
	£		£
Gallagher Insurance	2120.21	Lloyds Bank	29.67
BNP Paribas	312.00	Clover International Marketplace	23.00
Water-plus	30.82	Wages	16636.45
Petty Cash	100.00	Cardinus Risk Management	168.00
Leicestershire County Council	5910.92	HMRC	4639.20
IRIS Business Software Ltd	13.32	Lloyds Bank	32.03
ElemenTel	233.98	TotalEnergies Gas & Power	188.02
TotalEnergies Gas & Power	378.81	Fuel Genie	162.24
Amberol	77.52	Enva England Ltd	305.12
Xerox	2340.00	K.Tee Tyres Ltd	9.99
Favells Garage	368.62	J B Green Upholstery	72.00
Blaby Building Supplies	30.12	ESPO	43.86
E H Smith	20.76	ITSolutions	475.20
Itsa Goal	826.51	Palmers Garden Centre	131.00
Gostcote Nurseries	139.90	IRIS Business Software Ltd	13.32
Paynes of Hinckley	16.01	IRIS Business Software Ltd	51.60
Total			35900.20

Village Hall			
	£		£
Refunds	250.00	ESPO	327.48
TotalEnergies Gas & Power	774.55	TotalEnergies Gas & Power	774.55
E H Smith	57.12	System-Matic Ltd	135.00
Collets Plumbing	178.46	ESPO	121.32
The Beer & Gas Man	30.00	Libra Drinks	399.35
RCD Electrical	373.39		
Total			3421.22

It was resolved that the Salary, Pension and HMRC payments for December 2023 were approved.

2023/24 176. To adopt the proposed budget and precept requirement for 2024/2025

It was resolved to adopt the proposed budget and precept requirement for 2024/2025 of £424,107.79, representing an increase of 6.08%.

2023/24 177. Duty to consider biodiversity – To consider recommending to the Strategy Planning & Policy Committee to consider forming a policy

It was resolved that the Strategy Planning & Policy Committee would meet to consider forming a Biodiversity Policy. This followed correspondence received from LRALC advising that Councils would have a new duty to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

2023/24 178. To consider the outcome of recent local flooding

There was discussion regarding the recent incident of local flooding and it was noted that, at one point, there was only one entry and exit route for Countesthorpe, with areas flooding which have never been known to flood.

It was noted that Blaby District Council were in the process of setting up a whatsapp group, to include all Parish Council Clerks, to enable fast and effective distribution of information in the event of an emergency. It was confirmed that the Parish Council Manager and Assistant Parish Council Manager had provided their contact numbers.

There was general feedback from District Councillors that the response provided by Blaby was good in the face of such unprecedented flooding across the District

Leicestershire County Councillor, L Phillimore, advised that there will be a thorough investigation commencing in order to review and inform the response for any future emergencies which may arise, no matter the nature of the emergency. It was resolved to wait for the outcome of the investigation along with the response provided by Leicestershire County Council and Blaby District Council to inform how the Parish Council proceed with preparing for any future emergencies. As part of this, Ben Nandrame would be invited back to a future meeting to discuss a community response plan.

2023/24 179. To receive any correspondence

There was no correspondence.

2023/24 180. To report and approve the recommendations from the Estates Working Party meeting held 8th January 2024

The report of the Estates Working Party meeting held 8th January 2024 was received. It was resolved to approve the following recommendations and the report be adopted.

- *To proceed with purchasing additional topsoil for the ground which had dropped following the recent water installation within the cemetery, at a cost of up to £400, dependant on the amount of soil required*
- *To obtain further information and costings from specialist contractors for additional Christmas lights to be installed outside of the village hall. Also, for costings for alternative option for lights at the churchyard tree to be sought*
- *To respond to correspondence received from Birkett House School, offering their assistance with planting at The Square and other open space planting and maintenance, to advise that the Estates Working Party would be looking into other areas which could be explored in the future, due to The Square now being completed, and would be in touch when any arise*
- *To respond to Cllr A Clifford advising that, in principle, there would be no objection to installing a memorial bench at The Spinney, however, that there would be no additional plantings due to there not being anywhere appropriate*

2023/24 181. To receive the report from the Planning Committee meeting held 11th January 2024

The report of the Planning Committee meeting held 11th January 2024 was received.

It was resolved that a public meeting would be held for each of the four proposed developments, once the planning applications had been received, as well as one surgery style public session.

Correspondence regarding the upcoming consultation for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan would be circulated to all Councillors for information for those who may wish to attend.

2023/24 182. To report and approve the recommendations from the Finance Working Party meeting held 10th January 2024

The report of the Finance Working Party meeting held 10th January 2024 was received. It was resolved to approve the following recommendations and the report be adopted.

- *To obtain quotes for the purchase of a water pump and generator, following the recent incident of flooding in the village*
- *To request Farol's review the deck on the John Deere Mower before the new grass cutting season begins*
- *To approve the action of the Parish Council Manager in proceeding with the repair of the hot water tap in the main kitchen, at a cost of £148.72*
- *To proceed with the following purchases:*
 - . *Bench grinder and wire wheel, following a failed PAT test, at a cost of £193.20*
 - . *Replacement set of stepladders, due to Health & Safety reasons, at a cost of £363.24*
 - . *Winter hanging basket for The Pound, as per the Estates Working Party, at a cost of £64.60*
 - . *First Aid training for all relevant staff members, at a total cost of £538*
 - . *Equipment hire for approved repair works on Willoughby Road Playing Field car park, as per the Estates Working Party, at a cost of £431*
 - . *Platform hire to undertake necessary hedgecutting at the cemetery, as per the Estates Working Party, at a cost of £31*
 - . *Topsoil, for the ground which has dropped following the recent water installation within the cemetery, as per the Estates Working Party, at a cost of up to £400*
- *To recommend to the Parish Council for comment and adoption, the proposed budget and precept requirement for 2024/2025*
- *To accept the quotation of £705 from James Ireland to carry out the year end internal audit for the financial year 2023/24*

Additionally, it was also noted that the main garage door had a damaged spring and, as a result, needed to be replaced. Due to this being time critical, quotes were being obtained for a replacement.

2023/24 183. To receive any matters the Parish Council Manager may wish to raise for information purposes only

There was nothing to raise.

2023/24 184. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8th February 2024 at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated..... 2023