

Estates Working Party

Report of the Estates Working Party meeting held on 6th May 2025.

Present: Cllrs V Armstrong, M Gillespie, C Ibbotson and J Thacker.

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

Head Groundsperson: Mr P Clarke

1. To receive apologies for absence, if any

Apologies were received from Cllrs S Kinvig and P Mount.

2. To receive disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. To receive the Head Groundsman's report

a. Projects programme update

The Head Groundsman reported that the repointing work to the Chapel of Rest is ongoing.

b. Routine maintenance programme

The Head Groundsman reported that mowing season continued to take priority. The ongoing maintenance schedule was discussed with items identified for action and inclusion on the schedule. These included strimming at Larchwood Avenue, weeding in and around Countesthorpe Parish Council's planters, rose beds and various open spaces, contacting a grave owner regarding a memorial exceeding its boundary, maintenance to the wildflower area and pathway which runs between the wildlife and wildflower area, distribution of mulch which had been gathered at the bottom of the cemetery, removal of self-set trees at the entrance to The Centenary Paddock and the ongoing maintenance of the open space on Skye Way.

It was noted that the hanging baskets were due to be installed on 12th June 2025.

There was a query regarding a memorial stone in the existing cemetery. This would be checked to see whether it is due to be included in the forthcoming memorial inspection.

Recommended for approval

To remove the edging from, and grass over, a section of unused pathway in the cemetery. This would still be in keeping with the rest of the cemetery and ensure easier maintenance going forward.

To obtain a quote for the repair or replacement of a coping stone which was damaged on the cemetery chapel.

4. To discuss the Cemetery, including

a. Cemetery (A) and (B)

i. Memorial Inspection – to receive an updated quotation

Recommended for approval

To accept the quotation received from Memsafe for a total of 441 memorials (356 at the cemetery and 76 at the closed churchyard) to be inspected at a total cost of £1620, £3.75 per memorial. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

Additionally, it was noted that correspondence had been received from The Commonwealth War Graves Commission advising that the application for a headstone for Herbert Swann had now been referred to the Regional Team. A ground check would be conducted to ensure eligibility prior to the Parish Council being contacted to request permission for its installation.

b. Cemetery B layout

There was nothing to discuss.

5. To consider any maintenance issues

There was nothing to discuss.

6. Closed Churchyard pathway

It was noted that St Andrews Church had recently conducted a trial clean on a memorial slab sited within the war memorial in the closed churchyard.

Recommended for approval

To accept the quotation of £900 received from Oswin Builders for the repair works to the pathway of the closed churchyard. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

Also, to submit a planning application to Blaby District Council and a faculty application to St Andrews Church, seeking approval for the works to be completed.

7. To discuss the footpaths at The Spinney

It was noted that quotations are being awaited from contractors with regard to making good the pathway through The Spinney.

8. To consider applications for use of The Centenary Paddock

The risk assessments for the Scouts Gala were received and reviewed.

Recommended for approval

To approve the request from the Countesthorpe Rangers and Guides to hire The Centenary Paddock on the evening of Wednesday 4th June for outdoor activities, including cooking, however to draw their attention to the fact that any damage which occurs as a result of the activities must be rectified by the hirer.

9. To consider the request regarding parking from St Andrews Church

Recommended for approval

To advise St Andrews Church that, unfortunately, the Parish Council would not be able to approve the Centenary Paddock's use for parking during one of their planned events.

10. To discuss School Streets Scheme

Recommended for approval

To contact Leicestershire County Council to enquire whether it considered Gwendoline Drive to be eligible under the 'School Streets' scheme, prior to any contact being made with the school regarding its possible implementation.

11. To receive any correspondence

There was no correspondence.

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

There were no matters raised.

13. To receive matters arising for information purposes

An update on the recent incidents of fines having been issued to vehicles parked in the spaces owned by the Parish Council in the Health Centre Car Park was received with it being noted that the cause had now been identified by the Health Centre and dealt with accordingly.

It was noted that the 'Parish Partnerships' scheme had been discussed at a recent meeting hosted by Leicestershire County Council, however, that information provided was still sparse. It was resolved to continue monitoring for updates and report back as required.

14. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for 9th June 2025.