

Estates Working Party

Report of the Estates Working Party meeting held on 7th July 2025.

Present: Cllrs V Armstrong, C Ibbotson, P Mount 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 M Gillespie and S Kinvig.
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 still ongoing and will be for the remainder of 2025.

Recommended for approval
To purchase the replacement guttering for the chapel of rest at a cost of £1709. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

To proceed with undertaking improvement works to the area at the front of the village hall in Winter 2025, creating a retaining wall out of slabs, at a cost of £2541.75. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration. Should this be approved by the Parish Council, a site meeting would be scheduled to discuss landscaping details.
 - b. Routine maintenance programme
Recommended for approval
To proceed with purchasing three tonnes of topsoil for The Square at a cost of £261, as well as hiring the relevant equipment at a cost of no more than £200. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.
4. To discuss the Cemetery, including
 - a. Cemetery (A) and (B)
It was noted that some of the memorial trees in the new cemetery needed new ties and that one appeared to be suffering with the recent bout of hot weather. This would be monitored to see whether it survives or needs replacing.
 - b. Cemetery B layout
There was nothing to discuss.
 - c. Memorial inspections
It was noted that the notices of inspection were still being displayed and the memorial inspections should take place towards the end of July.
5. To consider any maintenance issues
It was reported that an open spaces review had been conducted with the Grounds Staff with each area being visited and discussed to set out expectations. More thought would be given to how the areas could be checked going forward with initial ideas such as a check form, visual inspections and councillor feedback being considered.

The following observations and recommendations were discussed by the Estates Working Party as part of this review:

. It was agreed to continue strimming 1 metre behind the birds mouth fencing at Larchwood to keep the nettles back and maintain a tidy appearance. More thought would be given to how nettles in the larger corner space could be managed before any new shrubs are considered for planting as a visual screen

. The compound at Willoughby Road would be tidied up as much as possible via weed spraying and strimming

. Pathways in the cemetery would be weed sprayed and edges tidied with it being noted also that resurfacing works would need to be considered in the near future

Recommended for approval

To allow appropriate areas in the border next to the pathway at The Spinney to be left more natural, including wildflowers, providing that it does not encroach on the path itself, and for the remainder to be strimmed.

To obtain costings from Blaby District Council for emptying an additional dog waste bin following the request from a resident for a bin to be installed at Larchwood to prevent the ongoing issue of dog waste being thrown over their fence and into their garden.

For future budgeting, to obtain quotations for resurfacing works which are now required at Willoughby Road Car Park, at the entrance area at the bottom of the driveway, as a minimum.

To remove the more dominant grasses which had taken over the planters at The Square in September and replace with lower maintenance shrubs and bedding plants.

To undertake research and obtain costings for suitable replacements for those hedges which had died as a result of being infected by box blight which is rampant throughout the cemetery. An initial suggestion would be to replace the hedging in sections so as to spread the cost and review how the replacements take once planted.

6. To discuss the footpaths at The Spinney

It was reported that quotations had been requested from other contractors however no response had yet been received.

7. Annual play inspection

It was noted that the date for the annual play inspection had not yet been scheduled.

It was also reported that an item of play equipment on Dale Acre Play Area, the large basket swing, had been damaged and so, for safety reasons, had been removed. The incident had been reported to the local police and the youth workers had also been notified.

Recommended for approval

To purchase replacement ropes for the large basket swing at a cost of £360. This recommendation would be referred to the Finance Working Party for consideration.

8. To receive any correspondence

There was no correspondence.

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

There were no matters raised.

10. To receive matters arising for information purposes

Recommended for approval

To contact Countesthorpe Scouts regarding the volume of amplification which occurred at the recent Gala on The Paddock, to advise that, for any future events, it would need to be lower and contained to The Paddock area.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for 11th August 2025.