

The meeting of Countesthorpe Parish Council was held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 when there were present:

Councillors: M Smith, V Armstrong, R Bayliss, D Billings, A Clifford, M Gillespie, C Ibbotson, S Kinvig, P Mount, S Palmer, K Pearce, W Read, A Spooner, J Thacker and S Turner.

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

Also present was Blaby District Councillor, R Holdridge, and two members of the public.

2026/27 001. Election of Chairman and signing o Declaration of Office

It was resolved to elect Cllr M Smith as Chairman of the Parish Council. He signed the declaration of acceptance of office as Chairman.

2026/27 002. Election of Vice Chairman

It was resolved to elect Cllr M Gillespie as Vice Chairman on a temporary basis but to review this regularly at future meetings of the Parish Council.

2026/27 003. To receive apologies for absence, if any

Apologies were received from Cllrs K McGovern and D Shuttleworth and Leicestershire County Councillor, G Cooke.

2026/27 004. To receive disclosures of interest and to consider any requests for dispensation

Cllrs R Bayliss and A Clifford declared non-disclosable pecuniary interests in Blaby District Council (BDC).

2026/27 005. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Minutes of the meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026 were circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved to approve the minutes, which were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

2026/27 006. To appoint representatives to Committees, Working Parties and outside bodies, and discuss Terms of Reference for the Committees and Working Parties

The following representatives were appointed to the following Working Parties:

Estates – Cllrs V Armstrong, M Gillespie, C Ibbotson, S Kinvig, P Mount, D Shuttleworth, A Spooner, and J Thacker

Finance – Cllrs M Gillespie, P Mount, K Pearce, W Read, M Smith and S Turner

Community Engagement – To be formed as required by the Parish Council

Emergency Plan – Cllrs M Gillespie, C Ibbotson, S Kinvig, K Pearce, D Shuttleworth and M Smith

Net Zero – Cllrs A Clifford, K Pearce, M Gillespie and W Read

The following representatives were appointed to the following Committees:

Village Hall Management – Cllrs M Gillespie, P Mount, W Read, M Smith, J Thacker and Mrs J Downs, Mr D Norris, Mrs P Gosling and Mrs J Hart

Library – Cllrs M Gillespie, P Mount, K McGovern and M Smith

Planning – Cllrs S Kinvig, V Armstrong, A Clifford, C Ibbotson, K McGovern, D Shuttleworth, A Spooner and J Thacker

Strategic Planning and Policy – Membership will be the Chairman of the other Working Parties and Committees

Human Resources – Chairman and Cllrs V Armstrong, M Gillespie and S Turner

Disciplinary/Appeals – A panel of three Councillors, as selected by the Parish manager, will sit on either Committee as required

The following representatives were appointed to the following Outside Bodies:  
Blaby Branch of the Local Association of Parish Councils: Cllrs A Clifford and K McGovern

Police Liaison: Cllrs A Clifford and K McGovern

The following representatives were appointed to the following:  
Footpath Warden: Cllr A Clifford

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council are ex-officio members on all Committees and Working Parties.

The Committees and Working Parties were asked to review their terms of reference.

2026/27 007. To receive reports and questions from Representatives, County Councillor, District Councillor and Parish Councillors

Blaby District Councillor, A Clifford, reported that he was working to resolve an issue related to a gate and the access provided by it on the Redrow Estate.

Blaby District Councillor, R Bayliss, reported that the District Council had appointed a new Chair.

2026/27.008 To arrange dates, times and venues for future meetings

It was resolved that the Parish Council meeting would continue to take place on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30pm in the library.

It was resolved that one of the two monthly meetings of the Planning Committee changed to start at 6.30pm in the village hall.

2026/27 009. Public participation session

There were two members of the public present who wished to discuss their recent correspondence and proposal for the creation of a wheeled sports facility in Countesthorpe or the immediate vicinity, the Country Park. There was discussion regarding project viability including specifically funding and location of the facility. It was resolved for the Parish Council to support the project in principle whilst acknowledging that there was a great deal more information needed. Further to this, Blaby District Councillor, A Clifford, offered to meet with the residents and Countesthorpe Academy to discuss a potential collaboration of projects. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council itself did not have a suitable location for such a facility.

2026/27 010. To report any matters arising for information purposes only

There were no matters arising.

2026/27 011. To discuss police matters

In the absence of Cllr K McGovern, and in response to a report received from the local PCSO, the Parish Manager reported on local police matters, including ongoing issues and the latest crime statistics.

2026/27 012. To discuss youth work matters, including receiving the monthly report

The youth workers report on activities which had taken place during April 2026 was received.

2026/27 013. 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			
	£		£
Wages	17,142.47	IRIS Business Software Ltd	36.00
Lakul Communications	273.60	Amazon	9.34
Beanmachine	22.29	Screwfix	81.73
Sainsburys	38.18	TotalEnergies Gas & Power	514.83
TotalEnergies Gas & Power	93.04	Clover International Marketplace	23.00
Lloyds Bank	28.13	Water-plus	329.75
Leicestershire County Council	4,358.98	HMRC	5,795.25

Lloyds Bank	8.50	Water-plus	30.22
IRIS Business Software Ltd	33.60	Petty Cash	100.00
Lakul Communications	273.60	ESPO	453.08
Lloyds Bank	32.00	HQ Sewing Parts	25.98
Jewson	266.96	Leicestershire County Council	56.22
Leicestershire County Council	8.40	Leicestershire County Council	8.40
J B Green Upholstery	2,940.00	E H Smith	32.82
Secom Plc	276.66	Secom Plc	212.41
ESPO	204.66	ITSolutions	192.00
Ireland & Company	942.00	Legal and General	154.54
IAE	542.33	Fuel Genie	396.80
Chandlers Farm Equipment	2,288.75	VisionICT	90.00
Crown Heating Services Limited	732.00	The Next Chapter Horse Rescue	500.00
Total			39,548.52

Village Hall			
	£		£
Refunds	600.00	Libra Drinks Wholesale Ltd	1,027.88
Amazon	35.46		
Total			1,663.34

It was resolved that the Salary, Pension and HMRC payments for April 2026 were approved.

2026/27 014. To receive any correspondence

- a. Miller Homes regarding the maintenance of the public open space at the Foston Road/Leicester Road development

It was noted that correspondence had been received from Miller Homes advising that they intend to transfer the ongoing maintenance of open space on the new Foston Road/Leicester Road to a management company.

- b. Miller Homes regarding works to install Leicester Road entrance

It was noted that Miller Homes had contacted the Parish Council requesting support ahead of a meeting with Leicestershire County Council's Highways Department regarding the schedule of works to create the Leicester Road entrance of the new Foston Road/Leicester Road development. This, however, was noted to have already been resolved with a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order having been issued for the works.

- c. PCSO with regard to Christmas events

Correspondence had been received from the local PCSO enquiring about jointly hosting a Christmas event on the Paddock in 2026. It was resolved to respond advising that the Parish Council was not in a position to host an event on The Paddock for Christmas.

- d. Countesthorpe Skatepark project

This item was discussed under 2026/27.009.

- e. Blaby District Council response to the Parish Council's complaint

The response to Countesthorpe Parish Council's complaint regarding the early issue of the decision notice for planning application 26/0150/NMAT was received and noted. It was resolved to publish the response on Facebook.

2026/27 015. To consider and approve documents relating to the 2025-2026 AGAR

The following documents were received, noted and resolved to be adopted by the Parish Council for submission to the External Auditor:

- The effectiveness of internal control of financial systems in informing the responses to Section 1 of the AGAR
- The Annual Internal Auditor's Report 2025/2026, including any recommendations

- c. The Annual Governance Statement 2025-2026 (Section 1), to be signed by the Chair and Parish Council Manager
- d. The Accounting Statements 2025/26 (Section 2), to be signed by the RFO
- e. The Accounting Statements 2025-2026 (Section 2), to be signed by the Chair
- f. The additional information to be submitted to the External Auditor
  - i. The bank reconciliation Year Ended 31st March 2026
  - ii. The explanation of variances
  - iii. The reconciliation between Box 7 and Box 8 of Section 2
  - iv. A breakdown of reserves held
- g. The additional information requested by the External Auditor
  - i. An explanation of answer 'no' to assertion 6 of the AGAR.
- h. The dates for the period of public rights

2026/27 016. Local Government Reorganisation

There was nothing to discuss.

2026/27 017. To report and approve the recommendations from the Estates Working Party meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The report of the Estates Working Party meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 was received. It was resolved to approve the following recommendations and the report be adopted.

- *To include an item in The Herald regarding the Parish Council's reasoning for cutting down bluebells, when required, as well as the trees which will need to be removed at the bottom of the cemetery*
- *To accept the quote from Memsafe for undertaking memorial inspections on four areas of the cemetery, containing 602 memorials, at a cost of £2,257*
- *To begin accepting requests for plot purchases and interments in the new cemetery, following a request received from a resident to purchase a cremation plot*
- *To consider whether the remaining plots in the existing cemetery be reserved for Countesthorpe residents only, due to the limited number remaining, and to offer only plots within the new cemetery to those enquiries received from non-residents*
- *To postpone selling memorial trees in the new cemetery until interments begin taking place in the new cemetery, to prevent them all from being sold prior to any interments taking place*
- *To apply to the Woodland Trust for a total of 420 trees to be planted within the new cemetery area and to purchase the required tree stakes, guards and compost to support their growth from Tudor Environmental at a cost of £390.40*
- *To accept, in principle, the quote received from G Seller Funeral Directors for the repainting of the war memorial lettering, at a cost of £920.40, providing that the Estates Working Party is satisfied with evidence of similar works completed*
- *To accept the quote of £324 received from Online Playgrounds for the annual play inspection. Also to accept their quote of £746 for the two yearly zipwire tension check (noting that there would be additional costs should any issues arise)*

2026/27 018. To receive the report from the Library Committee meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The report of the Library Committee meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026 was received. It was noted that the Library Committee had reviewed its budget, including final balances for the 2025/26 financial year, and that there were no items of concern. A copy of the budget report was made available to all councillors on the members area of the website.

2026/27 019. To receive the reports from the Planning Committee meetings held 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The reports of the Planning Committee meetings held 23<sup>rd</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 were received.

It was resolved to circulate the following to all councillors:

- . Comments submitted to planning applications considered at meetings held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> May, due to their length
- . The letter submitted to Leicestershire County Council's Highways Department regarding the request for highways improvements in relation to housing developments
- . The response received from Blaby District Council's Planning Department to the additional comment submitted regarding planning application 25/0876/OUT

2026/27 020. To report and approve the recommendations from the Finance Working Party meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The report of the Finance Working Party Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 was received. It was noted that the Finance Working Party had reviewed the budget to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and it is reported to the Parish Council that the council tax charges which had been received would be checked against budget headings. The final balances for the 2025/2026 financial year were received and the variances between estimated and actual year end figures were noted and it was further noted also that budget headings would be reviewed ahead of the 2027/2028 budget being considered.

It was noted that Cllr K McGovern had verified the bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments for all accounts for the final quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, to 31st March 2026. It was also noted that Cllr C Ibbotson had verified the bank statements against bank reconciliations for all accounts for the final quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, to 31st March 2026.

A copy of the budget report was made available to all councillors on the members area of the website. It was resolved to approve the following recommendations and the report be adopted.

- *To purchase a bunch of flowers from the Parish Council for one of the members of the cleaning staff who was retiring after 20 years of service*
- *To support the following recommendations of the Estates Working Party:*
  - . *To begin accepting requests for plot purchases and interments in the new cemetery*
  - . *To limit the sale of remaining plots in the existing cemetery to residents of Countesthorpe and to offer plots within the new cemetery area to non-residents, however, to be flexible with this and assess each enquiry on a case by case basis*
  - . *To apply to the Woodland Trust for a total of 420 trees to be planted within the new cemetery area and to purchase the required tree stakes, guards and compost to support their growth from Tudor Environmental at a cost of £390.40*
  - . *To accept, in principle, the quote received from G Seller Funeral Directors for the repainting of the war memorial lettering, at a cost of £920.40, providing that satisfactory evidence of similar works having been completed was received*
  - . *To accept the quote of £324 received from Online Playgrounds for the annual play inspection. Also to accept their quote of £746 for the two yearly zipwire tension check (noting that there would be additional costs should any issues arise)*
- *To proceed with the insurance renewal with Hiscox, at a cost of £7,057*
- *For the following documents to be adopted by the Parish Council for submission to the External Auditor, following them being received, reviewed and noted:*
  - . *The effectiveness of internal control of financial systems in informing the responses to Section 1 of the AGAR*
  - . *The Annual Internal Auditor's Report 2025/2026, including any recommendations*

- . *The Annual Governance Statement 2025-2026 (Section 1), to be signed by the Chair and Parish Council Manager*
- . *The Accounting Statements 2025/26 (Section 2), to be signed by the RFO*
- . *The Accounting Statements 2025-2026 (Section 2), to be signed by the Chair*
- . *The additional information to be submitted to the External Auditor*
  - *The bank reconciliation Year Ended 31st March 2026*
  - *The explanation of variances*
  - *The reconciliation between Box 7 and Box 8 of Section 2*
  - *A breakdown of reserves held*
- . *The additional information requested by the External Auditor*
  - *To receive an explanation of answer 'no' to assertion 6 of the AGAR*
- . *The dates for the period of public rights*
- *To accept the quote from FEP Energy for the energy performance certificate renewal, at a cost of £225*
- *To accept the quote from Memsafe for undertaking memorial inspections on four areas of the cemetery, containing 602 memorials, at a cost of £2,257, supporting also the recommendation of the Estates Working Party*

2026/27 021. To receive any matters the Parish Manager may wish to raise for information purposes only  
There were no matters to raise.

2026/27 022. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated..... 2026