Estates Working Party

Report of the Estates Working Party meeting held 9th November 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

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 2026/2027 projects list was reviewed with the following being noted:
      . The large Phormium located in the planter on The Paddock would be removed and relocated to Larchwood with immediate effect
      . The Hebe's planted towards the front of the Buckingham Planter, which were noted as obscuring view of the plaque, would be removed and replanted in The Paddock planter with immediate effect
      . The works to the bottom of the cemetery, which require machinery to be completed, would be postponed until the Spring, once the box hedging had been reviewed, as the equipment could be used for both projects at the same time. Costings for the equipment hire were received
      . The scheduled rotavation of the wildflower area had been delayed due to it starting to flower, it would therefore be undertaken when appropriate

   b. To receive the Head Groundsman's report
      The Head Groundsman reported that hedge cutting was close to completion and that the larger hedges had now also been cut by an external contractor. He also reported that leaf collecting and blowing, as well as PAT testing were ongoing tasks although the focus currently was on planting the 420 trees which had recently been delivered by the Woodland Trust. The monitoring and watering of these trees would be included in the maintenance schedule. It was also noted that the Christmas lights would be displayed from the last week of November.

   c. Ongoing maintenance items including items raised by members of the public or councillors prior to the agenda being distributed
      Correspondence had been received from a resident regarding the condition and ownership of a bench on Peatling Road. This would be further investigated by the Parish Manager and brought back to a future meeting, should it be required.

4. To discuss the Cemetery, including
   a. Cemetery (A) and (B)
      i. Necessary works
         It was noted that the Lonicera Gold hedging, located near cremation plots in the existing cemetery, appeared to be dying. This would be monitored over the winter months before being brought back to a meeting in spring, should alternatives need to be considered.

      ii. To discuss options for box hedging replacement
         It was reported that some of the box hedging appeared to be showing signs of recovery and so would also be monitored over the winter months before being brought back to a meeting in spring where alternatives, if required, would be discussed.

      iii. Cemetery fees
         This item was referred to the Finance Working Party for recommendation due to its bearing on the budget.

b. Cemetery B layout
There was nothing to discuss.

5. Willoughby Road access
The opening and closing of the entrance gate to Willoughby Road Playing Fields was discussed following correspondence received from residents. Various options, including solar powered timed gates and pedestrian access, were considered, paying particular attention to their practicality and cost.

Recommended for approval
To continue leaving the gates permanently unlocked and open but to consider alternative deterrents, including CCTV cameras, and to publish a rationale for this decision on social media and the parish council's website.

6. Play Inspection 2026/2027
It was noted that all works arising from the 2026/2027 play inspection had now been completed.

7. New meeting dates
The proposal for the Estates Working Party meeting dates to be moved to a different week of the month was discussed with it being noted that the existing suggestion, to hold the meeting a week earlier, would not be practical due to bank holidays. Alternative suggestions, such as holding the full council meeting on the first Thursday of the month with the Estates and Finance Working Party meetings being the week before that, would be considered further, should this be deemed a suitable option by the parish council. Should any changes be introduced, it would be after the elections in May 27.

8. To receive any correspondence
There was no correspondence.

9. To receive items for inclusion on the next agenda
There were no items raised.

10. To receive matters arising for information purposes
An update had been received from Leicestershire County Council's Highways Department regarding a tree belonging to a property on Station Road which was perceived to be large and potentially dangerous. It was noted that, should this be deemed a concern by the department, it would utilise its powers of enforcement but, at present, there was no perceived risk.

11. Date of next meeting
The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 7th December 2026 at 10am.