

LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 19th March 2025, held in the Reg Neal Room of the Parish Hall, Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: R. Darlison (Chairman) P. Kitchen (Vice-Chairman) D. Di Palma
C. Wells S. Garner D. Dawes

County Cllr Nick Chapman
Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk to the parish council

25.38 To receive apologies for absence
None.

25.39 To receive disclosures of interest in accordance with the code of conduct
Cllr Wells declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 25.42 (c).

25.40 To receive reports from County/District Councillors
District Cllr Stuart Coar sent his apologies for the meeting and had nothing to report.

County Cllr Nick Chapman attended the meeting and gave the following updates:

- Cllr Chapman thanked the parish council for its support over the past four years.
- Whatever happens in the upcoming elections, Cllr Chapman will be fighting against the potential city boundary expansion and will continue to help the parish council with this. To this end, Cllr Chapman has agreed to take all leaflets completed by LFE residents opposing the change, to Peter Bedford MP. The county council's original plan for unitary authorities in Leicestershire included city boundary expansion but many county Cllrs lobbied against this so this was taken out of the county council's plans.

The council thanked Cllr Chapman for attending this meeting and for all of the many parish council meetings he has attended in the past four years, it is very much appreciated.

25.41 To adjourn the meeting to receive questions from members of the public
None.

25.42 To discuss finances:
(a) To minute bank balances for March
As at 28.02.2025

Petty cash - £161.90
Unity Trust Current Account - £75,273.70
Unity Trust Savings Account - £243,046.28

(b) To note which two Cllrs will approve the March payments
Cllrs Darlison and Kitchen agreed to approve the March order paper payments.

Cllr Wells declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 25.42 (c) and left the room at 7.12pm.

(c) To consider approving the order paper for March 2025
Resolution: To approve the order paper for March 2025.

Cllr Wells re-entered the room at 7.15pm.

(d) To consider approving the bank statement and bank the reconciliation (including petty cash account) for February 2025

Resolution: To approve the bank statement and bank the reconciliation (including petty cash account) for February 2025.

(e) To note monthly accounts, namely the Income and Expenditure Report

Noted.

(f) To note top line budget items

The following items of predicted saving/overspend were noted:

- employee costs - £5,848 saving,
- IT costs - £1,000 saving,
- Cllr laptop - £500 saving,
- Course fees - £1,200 saving,
- Insurances - £174 overspend,
- Christmas tree (and associated costs) - £500 saving,
- Accounting package maintenance - £1,000 overspend due to invoicing issues last year which are now rectified,
- Grants - £3,760 saving,
- Occasional hire - £5,000 deficit against budget,
- Replacement sliding doors - £2,000 saving,
- An invoice of £1,094 has been issued but not paid.

(g) To note reserves for March

As at 28.02.2025

EMR – parish hall development - £44,689

EMR – parks/play area dev. - £25,005

EMR – paths around the parish hall - £21,122

General reserves - £228,038

(h) To consider any grant applications received

None.

(j) To discuss predicted EOY reserves

EMR – parish hall development - £44,689

EMR – parks/play area dev. - £25,005

EMR – paths around the parish hall - £21,122

General reserves - £206,000

25.43 To note the resignation of a councillor

Noted.

Clerk to write to former councillor to thank them for their service and time and explain they are welcome back at any time.

25.44 To consider confirming the minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 12th February 2025 as a true and accurate record

Resolution: To confirm the minutes from the Council meeting on Wednesday 12th February 2025 as a true and accurate record.

25.45 To discuss matters arising from those minutes:

(a) To consider whether to keep the parish noticeboards now that the parish app is up and running and to consider consulting the community

Clerk to put a notice in all noticeboards, apart from the parish hall noticeboard and Somerfield Way car park noticeboard, to tell residents to look for parish council information on the app, website and Facebook pages and that all statutory notice will be published on the parish hall noticeboard. Also, to explain that, other than the parish hall noticeboard and Somerfield Way car park noticeboard, all noticeboards will be removed by the end of 2025.

25.46 To receive planning applications/decisions/enforcement cases received after the Planning Committee meeting was held:

(a) 25/1444/TPO – 19 Warren Lane – T1 oak crown reduction by approximately 6-8 ft from height, 6ft from width

No comment.

(b) 24/0575/FUL – highway verge and agricultural land on Leicester Road/Hinckley Road A47 and Desford Road (B582) between Thurlaston and Enderby

No comment.

(c) 25/1062/HH – 2 Ratby Lane – demolition of existing garage and erection of single storey side and rear extension, change from hipped to gable roof and insertion of dormer windows and roof lights

No comment.

(d) 25/0165/HH – 2 Churchill Drive -single storey rear extension

No comment.

(e) E25/0027/COUCOM – 150D Hinckley Road – hot food takeaway in operation – status PCO

Noted.

(f) E25/0029/UDCOM – 150A Hinckley Road – installation of washing machine unit – status PCO

Noted.

25.47 To discuss matters arising from the Planning and Parks Committee meetings held Tuesday 4th March 2025

(a) To discuss Epworth Football Club and the potential new cricket club

Clerk to:

- *Contact LRALC for advice on how to proceed with an unpaid invoice and on drawing up a written contract with the potential new cricket club.*
- *Depending on the advice from LRALC, contact the Leicestershire FA to advise of non-payment of invoice and giving details of dates the pc have contacted the club.*
- *Contact the cricket club and ask them to send a representative to the April parks committee meeting to finalise details, the parish council is keen to move forwards. Also, to apologise to the club, explaining that the parish council is not prevaricating but have been unable to get a response from the football club.*

(b) To receive quote from building company to apply for building control for the internal garage store room and in case building control stipulate foundations must be dug

Clerk to keep 'To receive quote from building company to apply for building control for the internal garage store room and in case building control stipulate foundations must be dug' Parks committee agenda.

(c) To consider allowing the Parks committee to spend more than the £500.00 budgeted for a new car park sign

Resolution: To allow the Parks committee to spend circa £722.00 plus VAT on the new parish hall car park sign, this is partly from the budget heading for the new sign and partly from the new earmarked reserve 'parish hall and parks maintenance and development'.

Power to spend: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s. 19.

(d) To approve the risk assessment for Picnic in the Park 2025

Clerk to:

- *Add stage and potential associated risks and mitigation (e.g. people climbing on stage) to the Picnic in the Park 2025 risk assessment. Also, an addendum add that each contractor will have their own risk assessment (as appropriate) so to refer to third party risk assessments as appropriate. Also, that generators must be roped off.*
- *Keep 'To approve the risk assessment for Picnic in the Park 2025' on the council agenda.*

(e) To consider increasing the budget for Picnic in the Park 2025

Clerk to leave 'To consider increasing the budget for Picnic in the Park 2025' on the April council budget.

(f) To consider actions to be taken to move forward Picnic in the Park 2025, from the March Parks committee meeting

- Unfortunately, Quorn Ukulele Orchestra are already booked for Saturday 2nd August.
- The ABBA tribute band have been booked and their invoice is being paid on this month's order paper.
- Also, Leicester Co-op Band (brass band) has been booked.

Resolution: The council resolved to accept The Fun Experts' quote for five hours of: manned hook-a-duck, bouncy castle, face painting and complimentary Test of Strength at a cost of £1,854.00 (inc. VAT). (Council asked the clerk to ensure the company brings their own generator as outside sockets are limited).

Resolution: To book Non-Stop Kids to provide an hour's on-stage entertainment to start off Picnic in the Park 2025

Power to spend: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s. 145.

Clerk to:

- *Ensure the entertainers have public liability insurance and ask for copies of any risk assessments.*
- *Check what the Abba tribute band need in terms of staging, lighting etc.*

(g) To consider allowing the Parks committee to spend over the threshold limit of £5,000 on tarmac/resin being laid on the playing field perimeter path

Noted.

25.48 To review the following policies:

(a) Committees' terms of reference

Resolution: To accept the amended committees' terms of reference.

(b) Health and safety policy

Resolution: To make no amendments to the health and safety policy.

(c) To review the grant policy now that the 2025-2026 budget has reduced the grant amount available

Resolution: To amend the amount for grants on the grant policy.

25.49 To consider progress on 2024-2025 projects:

(a) 3 new bins for Kings Walk Park and moving them to different locations + extra bin near MUGA and installation of all – February 2025

The new bins have been installed on Kings Walk Park.

25.50 To discuss:

(a) The possibility of installing a permanent armoured cable in the grounds of St Andrew's Church for the Christmas tree lights

Clerk to:

- *Contact the electrician and explain that the church has stipulated that a lockable cabinet will be needed for the electric point from the armoured cable, it will need to be in a lockable metal cabinet, the cabinet will need to be painted green and the trench will need to be 450mm deep instead of 400mm deep and to ask if this will increase the quote.*
- *Add 'To receive quote for permanent armoured cable' to the April council agenda.*

(b) To discuss planting a permanent Christmas tree in the grounds of St Andrew's Church

As background, one councillor explained that the church has had permission to plant a permanent Christmas tree in its grounds. However, it has proved impossible for the parish council to source the very specific variety of tree the church has stipulated it wants planting. Planting a larger tree would cause numerous issues, especially as it would have to be craned into position (likely causing a road closure on the A47). Planting a smaller tree would mean waiting several years until it grew to a suitable height to be used as the main Christmas tree for lights so there would still be the expense of purchasing a large, cut tree each year for several years.

Resolution: The council resolved not to purchase a permanent Christmas tree to be planted in the grounds of St. Andrew's Church.

25.51 To discuss whether or not to refund the deposit for the hire 01.03.2025 as the hire overran by an hour

Resolution: To withhold the £100 deposit paid by a hirer whose hire overran by an hour on 01.03.2025.

- 25.52 To discuss the civility and respect pledge**
Clerk to keep the civility and respect pledge on the April council agenda and look further into what this entails.
- 25.53 To note LCC's rights of way improvement plan**
 Noted.
- 25.54 To discuss parks checks going forward**
 The council decided that one councillor will accompany the Premises Officer when she does her weekly parks checks as and when needed. Another councillor will cover when the first is indisposed or on holiday.
- 25.55 To review the adequacy of the council's insurances**
Resolution: The council reviewed all of its insurances and resolved they are all adequate.
- 25.56 To consider LCC's request to host a 'Dinosaur T-Reks' interactive quest for children on Forest East Park**
Resolution: The council resolved that Leicestershire County Council can hold their Dinosaur T-Reks event in Forest East Park.
- 25.57 Clerk's report**
 The parish hall floor is due to be re-sealed w/c 07.04.2025 and the hall will be closed to all hirers.
- 25.58 Councillors' forum**
 None.
- 25.59 Delegates reports**
 Councillor Kitchen had been to a meeting with new MP, Peter Bedford and representatives from various parish and town councils; he was very impressed with the new MP's enthusiasm and determination to tackle local issues. It became apparent that the issues Leicester Forest East Parish Council faces, especially in terms of planning, are common amongst many parish and town councils.
- 25.60 To consider entering a closed session to discuss pay increases for the council staff and potential contract amendments to reflect this**
Resolution: The council resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting and enter a closed session to discuss potential pay increases for council staff.
- The council entered a closed session at 9.01pm.*
- Resolution:** To award two pay increases of two pay scale points for each council staff member, subject to satisfactory appraisals.
- Power to spend:** Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s. 112.
- Resolution:** To amend the Premises officer's contract to bring it up-to date.
- Resolution:** To amend the Assistant Clerk's contract to bring it up-to date, including deletion of paragraph 6.2.
- Resolution:** To amend the Clerk's contract to bring it up-to date, including deletion of paragraph 6.3.
- 25.61 Date of next meeting**
 Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.