

MINUTES OF THE EAST LEAKE PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT EAST LEAKE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 24TH MAY 2023 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kevin Shaw, Mel Roper, William Birch, David Davis, Liz Taylor, Eleanor Robinson, Donna Griggs, Lynn Forsyth, Chris Garbett, Jason Billin, and Lynne Twigg

ALSO PRESENT: The Clerk, Sue Lewis; Assistant Clerk, Ally Moore; Cllr Matt Barney; Cllr Lesley Way, and 1 member of the public.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs Wendy Thompson, Chris Jennison, and Stefano Forlani – reasons given and accepted.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

The former Chairman, Cllr Kevin Shaw, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ANNUAL REPORT ON PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND ACCOUNTS

Report by the Chairman of the Parish Council 2023:

Good evening everyone and welcome to our Annual Parish Meeting. Whilst the virus hasn't gone away, the worst of the pandemic is now behind us, and we can once again enjoy some semblance of normality and hold this annual opportunity for the residents of East Leake to meet their Council and ask any questions they may have.

The Council's sole aim continues to be improving village facilities and the village's appearance, and we certainly make sure we access all the section 106 monies available as a result of the explosion in new housing. This made it possible to provide the new playground on Costock Road, and we will shortly be introducing a new piece of equipment for the older users on the Gotham Road playground. A very unusual feature for East Leake Parish Council over the past four years has been a high turnover of Councilors due to changes in family circumstances, but I am delighted to be able to report that we have never had a problem filling the casual vacancies.

After more than 10 years of dreaming, the Parish Council were also able to drive forward the construction of the new pavilion at the Costock Road sports fields which is already proving to be a valuable asset to the village.

We have also increased the village center floral displays and are working to improve 'The Friendship Garden' which is the small green area behind the health center and opposite the Post Office - formally known as 'The Rest Garden'. The bench on the roadside of that garden has seen the addition of two armchair benches facing inwards. This set up will become a 'friendship seat' and, in due course, the garden will have an ornamental arch entrance.

The Parish Council also has a number of representatives on the East Leake Growth Board which is chaired by Rushcliffe Borough Council. The board is using its additional weight to press for improvements to the sewerage pumping station and the construction of a new health center, but both are progressing very slowly.

One final large project still to be completed is the building of the new car park on Costock Road which will be situated opposite the playing fields and will take the cars off the road when there are large gatherings at the playing fields. Revised plans have now been approved, we have gone out to tender for the contract, the funding is in place, and it should be completed by the end of the year.

May 4th saw 13 new independent councilors elected, including a few new faces, and I am delighted to be able to report that the two vacancies have already been filled. I was also

delighted to see 3 independents once again elected to represent us at Rushcliffe Borough Council and I know that the experience and depth of knowledge that Carys and Lesley have acquired over the past four years will make them even more effective advocates.

I think that's about all I need to say except to thank all the Councilors who have given of their time over the past 4 years for the benefit of the village; our Parish Clerk Susan Lewis, who has over 25 years' service with the Council; her very able Assistant Clerk Ally Moore who has been a great addition to the team; and, of course, our two grounds men.

If there are any questions, I will do my best to answer them.

Cllr Kevin Shaw

Report by the Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee 2023:

The Finance & Personnel committee have worked hard this year. We were pleased to be able to set an expenditure budget resulting in a precept which was reduced by 3.1% compared to the previous year, but which will still allow for inflationary increases and provides funds to complete planned projects.

In addition, the committee has been working closely with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to review Council policies, assess the risk of the Council's activities, support the HR function, and maintain the Council's assets.

At the recent Annual Parish Council meeting, we reviewed committee membership and portfolios to ensure tasks and responsibilities are shared appropriately across the newly elected Council.

The committee is keen to see the project to provide additional car parking on Costock Road completed as soon as possible. Now that planning permission has finally been granted, we will be going out to tender, as required by financial regulations, and pushing to complete the project as soon as possible.

I would like to end my report by thanking the councillors on the Finance & Personnel Committee and all the staff for their work during the year.

Cllr Donna Griggs

Report by the Chair of the Planning Committee 2023:

As you are aware there have been no applications for large scale developments in East Leake in the last year. Building is still underway on 2 approved sites, namely on Rempstone Road and Lantern Lane and houses are going up at an alarming rate. The temporary school, Millside Spencer Academy, close to the Skylark development is now up and running and the permanent school is well under way at the bottom of the development.

Over the year the Planning Committee has considered individual planning applications and has either approved or objected with valid reasons. Any applications in the East Leake Conservation Area are always given special consideration as these affect the overall appearance, character, and ambience of the village centre. You may be interested that the Conservation Area is currently under review and may be extended once the review has been completed and the suggestions would then be approved by the Conservation Officer at Rushcliffe Borough Council.

There is a current trend for Solar Farms in this area and this is probably because the parish is in close proximity to Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station and the national grid. The small farm approved on Sharpley Hill off Lantern Lane should be started early next year. Although not in

our parish the large Solar farm that was proposed between Stocking Lane and Gotham has been turned down.

There has been a lot of publicity about the redevelopment of Radcliffe Power Station. Plans are still in the early stages, but ELPC has been very vocal in objecting to some of the proposals as there would potentially be a big increase in traffic from the site through local villages including East Leake.

On another note, we are always grateful to local residents who make comments either directly to the PC or on the portal for individual applications. We will continue to fight for our village and will strenuously object to any further large-scale applications likely to come our way in the future.

Lastly a big thank you to the members of the Planning Committee for their sensible contributions and for their shared wealth of knowledge which has been a big help to me.

Cllr Liz Taylor

Report by the Chair of the Amenities Committee 2023:

The Amenities Committee have been working hard on the upkeep of the village over the past year and I'm delighted to the report on the progress and what we achieved.

We slightly increased the number of planters fitted to the rails compared to the year before and look forward to another beautiful display this summer. The planters outside the butchers have been maintained well over the last year or so, and still include the 'pick your own herbs' planter. Our groundsmen have done a great job of maintaining the planting in other areas of the village, with the garden opposite Pinfold Vets (The Glebe) looking particularly stunning this year.

We also made the difficult decision this year to remove the balance beam bridge that crosses the Kingston Brook between the Recreation Ground and Meadow Park. This decision wasn't taken lightly, but followed a period where we explored various options for either replacing the entire bridge or fitting rails. The existing bridge did have rails at one point as I'm sure many of you will remember, but they were damaged beyond repair by vandals and removed. As it happens, when the bridge was removed it was found to be severely rotten inside, so we do feel that we made the correct decision.

Pinfold – Work has continued to make improvements to the Pinfold. General tidying up and cleaning of the plaque was done by members of the committee, and British Gypsum were kind enough to finance a new information board.

Friendship Garden – We are currently in the middle of a project to make improvements to what used to be called the Rest Garden (the small garden in the centre of the village between Studio 83 and John Germans). As part of this project, we have created a raised bed that we hope will become part of a community garden. With this in mind we have changed the name of the garden, to the Friendship Garden, and we have recently ordered a decorative arch for the entrance. You may also have noticed that we recently placed 2 seats in a group with the existing bench outside the Friendship Garden, with plaques to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III earlier this month.

Gotham Road Play Area: We currently have a working party who are hoping to make some additions to the play area, with older children in mind. Hopefully you will see some changes later this year. We did also have to remove the old climbing frame this year for safety reasons, and we plan to include some kind of replacement for them as part of the same project. This year's annual inspection of the existing equipment also highlighted a number of wear and tear

repairs that needed to be made, and I'm happy to say that all of those repairs have now been completed. The council purchased 2 sets of goalposts and placed them on the recreation ground. Sadly, they were vandalised beyond repair almost immediately, and it is too expensive to keep replacing them.

Christmas Lights: We replaced quite a few sets of tree lights this year after finding that several sets had failed last year and would like to thank British Gypsum for their kind donation which enabled us to do so. As usual, we also provided lit trees to many of the shops & businesses, and the village looked lovely over the festive season.

This is an overview of the major projects the Amenities Committee achieved this year. If any of you are interested or have something you would like to suggest to the committee, we would be delighted to hear from you or welcome you to a meeting. A Lantern Lane pupil did just that last year when he wrote us a letter with his ideas on reducing litter and dog fouling, and we were very happy to have him visit us at our August meeting where he gave an excellent presentation about his ideas.

Looking forward, I was delighted to be re-elected as the Chair of the Amenities Committee. This year our priorities will focus on the Costock Road car park and the Gotham Road play area as well as the numerous other things we take care of throughout the year.

Cllr Lynn Forsyth

REPORTS FROM RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Matt Barney:

Congratulated Rushcliffe Borough Councillors Lesley Way and Carys Thomas on their re-election, and Cllr Jason Billin in his election.

Thanked Cllr Kevin Shaw for his services to the Parish Council, the Borough Council, and the Costock Road Pavilion project.

School build progressing really well and on track to open this year. Temporary school has been a success.

Ransom strip

Brookside regarding releasing the caretaker cottage to become part of the school estate which was originally not allowed due to policies. Lead of Education Officer visited and the CC have released

Really delighted to report that the CC have widened pavement from Lantern Lane to St Mary's Crescent.

Road safety: In 2021, there were 27 road deaths on Nottinghamshire roads, 2 of which were in Sutton Bonington. Crossroads in Sutton Bonington – due to lack of fatalities. Over the moon to report that Uni £50k, NCC £15k. Happening in June.

Speed reduction West Leake Road – consultation will be coming out – make sure you say 40mph.

The acquisition on-demand bus service is already proving to be a massive success.

Cllr Jason Billin asked Cllr Barney

Clerk addressed Cllr Barney about the ever-worsening situation with potholes. The recent extremes in weather have caused the potholes to be more severe than ever.

Cllr Lesley Way thanked Kevin for all his hard work and support over the year.

Cllr Lesley Way:

First of all, thank you for voting for us and putting your trust in us to continue working for our community for the next four years. Kevin, Carys, and I have been Rushcliffe Councillors for the last four years but now Kevin has decided to retire. I would like to thank Kevin for his hard work and support over this time and wish him well for the future. Carys and I are now joined by Jason, so we still have three independent ward councillors. Be assured that however you voted we will be working on behalf of everyone.

Over the last year we have tackled an array of topics through scrutiny groups, motions to council and working with Rushcliffe officers and our tree warden, Wendy Thompson. We have instigated measures to enhance our environment, replenishing hedges, and hedgerows (there is a difference), encouraging the no-mow initiatives, reducing the use of pesticides, and trying to curb the use of plastic grass. Some of these may be controversial but we don't shy away from controversy when we feel it is of benefit to wildlife, the climate, and our green spaces and ultimately for the future of our surroundings.

We continue raising the issue of open space fees on the new estates. We know that these are concerning many of our residents and are causing a lot of difficulties. The issues are complicated and made more so by the lack of consistency among the management companies and developers. We have been meeting with people from the estates, gathering a lot of information, which is being passed on to Ruth Edward's, our MP, and officers at RBC. This is ongoing work so please get in touch if you want to be part of the conversation.

We objected to the application for the huge solar farm at the top of Stocking Lane that would stretch across to Gotham and Kingston, a beautiful area criss-crossed by many foot paths and bridle ways, so important to our wellbeing. We are not anti-solar energy. In fact, quite the opposite. We will continue to judge each application on its own merits and do our best to protect green belt land and amenity spaces and to oppose destruction of wildlife habitats. Our position remains that solar panels are better placed on roofs.

One of the major issues affecting Rushcliffe and surrounding areas is the redevelopment of the power station. This is due to close in the near future and consultations about a local development order (LDO) were held in some local villages but not in West or East Leake which are likely to be considerably affected by increased traffic. An LDO would allow planning decisions to be made independently of councillors so that the borough planning committee would be powerless to object to or prevent any application. We, along with representatives from the other villages at the southern end of the borough, have been challenging the transport reports, the use of green belt land to the south of the A453, the destruction of trees and copses, the heights of the proposed buildings, the lack of public transport servicing the site. This is meant to be an environmentally sustainable site and yet there are no plans to enforce the provision of solar panels on any roofs.

Following numbers of complaints about out-of-control dogs and fouling, the dog warden has committed to making frequent and random visits to monitor the situation and offer advice or in cases of persistent offence, issue fines.

In last 4 years no more large housing estates have approved in Leake Ward. We will continue to challenge planning applications and influence planning policies

We have been part of the East Leake Growth Board, a group chaired by a member of the majority party, which looks at ways to improve facilities in the village. Members of this group come from the schools, traders, councillors, and the Parish clerk. It can call on relevant organisations for information and receives reports from outside bodies such as Severn Trent,

keeping us up to date with plans and progress to alleviate flooding, and the Integrated Care Board, keeping us informed about progress with the new health centre.

Now we want to look ahead and to find out what issues are important to you and try to find solutions. At this point I need to say that potholes are not in the remit of parish or borough councils and are the responsibility of the county council. There is a reporting mechanism on the NCC website, and I encourage you to use it. As with all such issues, using the correct reporting system is more likely to achieve results.

Each of us has access to a small community fund. Last year we helped to fund equipment and uniforms for brownies and volunteers, equipment for making hedgehog highways, lighting for ELAPS, sound system for the playing fields, the speed watch programme shared with Normanton on Soar. If you would like to apply for funding for a project benefitting members of the community, please get in touch.

We will keep you informed about issues we are working on and consultations where you are able to have your say, through our Facebook page. You can contact us by email or phone, our details are on the RBC website, and there are some cards with our contact details on them if you would like to take one. We will also be restarting our monthly surgery drop-in sessions, to be held in the Parish Office on the first Saturday of each month. And of course, you will see us out and about in the village so stop and chat to us.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were none.

QUESTIONS

There were none.

CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS AND CLOSE

The former Chair expressed his thanks for all those who attended the meeting.

Meeting closed at: 19.35pm