



NEWTOWN LINFORD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the Newtown Linford Parish Council Meeting at the Village Hall on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7.15 p.m. at which your attendance is required.

Signed by the Clerk *Hannah Shaw*

1. **Record of attendance.**
2. **Apologies for absence.**
3. **Confirm and sign minutes of the December Meeting.**
4. **Declaration of Parish Councillors' personal and/or prejudicial interests on agenda items.**
5. **Public Participation**

To receive representations from the public on items on the agenda.

6. **Police Matters and NHW Update**

Crime statistics received for the period between 20th November to 21st December 2023:

Theft of Motor Vehicle (inc. Attempts) - 1

Burglary Dwelling (inc. Attempts) - 2

Criminal Damage (non-dwelling) (Business Premises, Shed, Garage Etc) - 1

Theft Property (inc. Attempts) - 1

7. **Bradgate Park**
8. **Newtown Linford Biodiversity**

To consider, the proposed extended area of the Markfield Lane wildflower verge, which has been marked out by Newtown Linford biodiversity, as requested.

9. **Report by County Councillor Deborah Taylor.**
10. **Report by Borough Councillor David Snartt.**

11. **Village Governance and Residents**

A number of properties within Newtown Linford Parish were affected by floods on 02/01/24. 72 Hydrosnakes (36 packs) were issued to residents affected.

LCC Highways are involved in two of the incidents of flooding, the others were caused by surface water run-off from the fields. Flooding occurred on Main Street, Bradgate Road, Grey Crescent and Ulverscroft Lane.

All routes in and out of the Village were also affected but not impassable. 5 properties suffered water ingress and remaining properties had floods within gardens/sheds/outbuildings etc but it did not get into homes. Pumps were deployed where available.

12. Planning: Buildings and Tree Issues – report by Tree Warden if in attendance.

- **Decisions**

- a) P/23/1352/2 - 88 Main Street, Newtown Linford - Erection of detached garage. Alteration to vehicular access including installation of gate to front boundary, with associated works - Withdrawn 05/12/23.
- b) P/23/1331/2 (Listed Building Consent) and P/23/1329/2 - Rear of Old Sunday School, Bradgate Park, Newtown Linford - Conversion of existing outhouse to form mobility scooter storage and staff welfare facility, with associated external works, including partial demolition of boundary walls and erection of gate/fencing - Grant Conditionally 19/12/23.

- **Comments submitted through Planning Explorer**

- c) P/23/2101/2 - Leewoods Farm, Markfield Lane, Newtown Linford - Change of use of agricultural building to dwellinghouse (Use Class C3), and building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion. (Prior notification under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q) - No Objection 14/12/23.
- d) P/23/1963/2 - Bensliffe Hay, Sharpley Hill, Newtown Linford - Change of Use of Stables to Dwelling house (Class C3) and construction of single-storey rear extension - Objection 14/12/23.

“Although the proposed changes outlined are modest, this application would result in the creation of a separate dwelling on a single site and not for the purpose of housing agricultural workers. Newtown Linford Parish Council believes this is contrary to Charnwood Borough Council's policy of development within the countryside and therefore, wish to object to this application.”

- e) P/23/2029/2 - Land at Charley Road, Shepshed, Leicestershire, LE12 9YA - Construction of a 49.9MW solar farm with a battery storage facility with associated access, landscaping and infrastructure and P/23/1989/2 - Land at Charley Road, Shepshed, Leicestershire, LE12 9YA - Consultation from North West Leicestershire District Council - Construction of a solar farm together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure (NWLDC ref 23/01407/FULM) - Objection 14/12/23.

“Although Newtown Linford Parish is not directly affected by this application, we share concerns of the effect on the wider Charnwood Forest environment. Whilst Charnwood Forest is attempting to acquire UNESCO Geopark status, it seems extremely unwise to change the look of the environment in such a drastic way, especially when the views from a historic location as Beacon Hill, would be so badly affected.”

- **Discuss**

- f) P/23/2197/2 - Land off Leicester Road, Markfield, Leicestershire - Erection of 72 bedroom Residential Care Home (Use Class C2) with associated parking provision, cycle parking, bin store, landscaping, air source heat pump enclosure and associated works.

- g) P/23/2204/2- 482 Bradgate Road Newtown Linford - Proposed erection of detached garden room, installation of external pool in rear garden with pergola, front boundary wall with vehicular gates (Resubmission of Planning Application ref: P/23/1279/2).
- h) P/23/2341/2 Polly Botts Farm, Polly Botts Lane, Newtown Linford - Erection of replacement dwelling and triple garage building to front, and associated works following demolition of existing dwelling.

- **Trees**

- **Other**

- i) To ratify, Changes to the Democratic Process adopted by the Plans Committee - response sent to Rob Mitchell, Chief Executive at CBC on 14/12/23 and response received on 18/12/23 (see Schedule One).

13. Bob Bown Memorial Field

14. Village Magazine.

To note, the Annual Parish Magazine Committee meeting will be held on 15/01/24. Cllr. Pickles will report back at the February meeting.

15. Parish Council Website/Facebook Page.

The Parish Council Facebook group has increased to 492 members.

16. Village Hall.

To note, the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Committee will be held on 15/01/24.

17. Highways, footpaths, street furniture, traffic, transport.

18. Churchyard and Cemetery.

19. Correspondence.

Launch of webcasting of Plans Committee meetings received by email 07/12/23 and cascaded to Councillors.

LRALC Membership (revised) Fee Bandings 2024-25 received 07/12/23. NLPC will now pay £400 per annum whilst the electorate number remains under 900.

LCC Budget Update - December 2023 received by email 14/12/23 and cascaded to Councillors.

Leicestershire County Council Consultation on Budget Proposals received by email 20/12/23 and cascaded to Councillors.

Invitation to the Charnwood Timebank Launch Event received by email 21/12/23 and sent to Councillors.

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Young People Physical Activity & Sport Hardship Fund received by email from CBC 22/12/23 and sent to Councillors.

East Midlands Airport Future Airspace - Stage 2 information sharing/Q&A sessions received by email 22/12/23 and sent to Councillors.

20. Reports on Meetings and Trainings by Clerk and Councillors.

Cllr. Pickles to attend PCC Parish Council Engagement Campaign Inaugural Event on 15/01/24.

21. Items of interest or for future meetings.

22. Finance.

Authorisation for payment of invoices: -

Ledger Date	Payee	Payment Description	Amount	Legal Power	Notes
12.12.23	APB	Village Hall Rent 25.12.23 to 24.03.24 inc.	£750.00	LGA 1972 s133	
13.12.23	Firetree	Grounds Maintenance 2023/24 Inv 10 of 12	£1230.55	LGA 1972 SS 19, 214 & 215	
14.12.23	Gravitas	Hydrosnakes 2PK x 200 Units	£2040.00	LGA 1972 S137	Vat £340
14.12.23	CBC	Bob Bown Rent Q3	£75.00	PHA 1875, s164	
21.12.23	HMRC	Tax and NI Contributions	£1030.98	LGA 1972 S111	
22.12.23	Firetree	Cut shrubs/tree to ground level at Churchyard (cost to be borne by All Saints')	£165.00	LG1972 SS 19, 214 & 215	
28.12.23	HS	December Broadband & Out of Plan Calls	£69.22	LGA 1972 S111	
28.12.23	HS	December Salary	£1284.64	LGA 1972 S112	
03.01.24	NEST	Pension Contributions	£67.45	LGA 1972 S112	
Total			£6712.84		

Bank Balances:

Business Current Account @ 04/01/24

£ 3,409.40

Business Reserve Account @ 04/01/24

£78,094.20

Total	£81,503.60
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Bank Reconciliation:

Carry Forward figure	£ 86,792.24
Expenditure	- £ 6,712.84
Income	+ £ 1,424.20

Balance	£ 81,503.60
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23. Date of the next two Parish Council Meetings.

Wednesday 14th February 2024 7.15pm (please note date change)

Wednesday 13th March 2024 7.15pm

Schedule One

Dr Susan Pritchard Chair Newtown Linford Parish Council	Mr Rob Mitchell Chief Executive Charnwood Borough Council
14 th December 2024	

Dear Mr Mitchell

As Chairman of Newtown Linford Parish Council I have been mandated by the Council to contact you regarding the recent constitutional changes to Planning Procedures (November 6th 2023).

Newtown Linford is a 'single member ward' and as such we were unable to speak at a planning meeting when our single Councillor (David Snartt) rightly recused himself due to a personal link to an affected neighbour. Despite our request directly to the planning committee I was not allowed to represent my Parish and to speak at this meeting. We were, therefore, dismayed to note that a proposal put forward on 6th November to allow the 'call in' and an invitation to be extended by an alternative councillor under these circumstances was refused. How can this possibly meet your stated aims of improving the democratic process when it directly discriminates against Parishes in single member wards compared to other wards where a second councillor can extend an invitation to speak even if the first is recused? I appreciate that the second councillor may not 'fully understand the community dynamics' and has 'not otherwise been elected to represent their interest', and therefore may not be best to represent the ward view, but by refusing to allow an invitation to the affected Parish you are effectively excluding these elected councillors from expressing the views of their Parishioners.

We are also very unhappy that the time allocated for such presentations has been reduced to 3 minutes. Applications that are 'called in' are, by their very nature, those that have caused the most reaction within the local community. Distilling a Parish representation to 3 minutes will, in our view, degrade the quality of the supporting information that can be put before the planning committee and, without those voices being heard by the planning committee, further reduce our democratic representation.

Finally the decision to allow the Chair/ Vice Chair of the planning committee to override a 'call in' to the Planning Committee has the potential to completely disenfranchise local representation in what should be a clear and democratic process. Local voices deserve to be heard when far reaching decisions are to be made. The excuse that a long meeting may 'adversely affect the ability of participants to remain focused' should not over-ride the local democratic process.

In summary our Parish Council are dismayed at the direction of these changes and would request, in particular, that

a) A mechanism be retained in order that Parish Council representation is preserved in the case of a single member Ward where the Ward Councillor is recused.

b) The ability of the Chair/Vice-Chair to refuse a 'call in' request is revisited. At the very least full reasons for such a refusal be clearly communicated to the Parish(es) involved.

c) Parish Council representation to be retained at 5 minutes.

Yours sincerely

Susan Pritchard on behalf of Newtown Linford Parish Council.

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Response received

From: Rob Mitchell <Rob.Mitchell@charnwood.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2023 8:57:32 AM

To: susan pritchard <susanpritchard@hotmail.com>

Cc: Cllr. Sandra Forrest <Cllr.Sandra.Forrest@charnwood.gov.uk>; Cllr. David Snartt

<Cllr.David.Snartt@charnwood.gov.uk>; Richard Bennett <Richard.Bennett@charnwood.gov.uk>; Karey Summers <karey.summers@charnwood.gov.uk>; Fleur Grieve <Fleur.Grieve@charnwood.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Changes to the Democratic Process adopted by the Plans Committee

Dear Dr Pritchard,

Thank you for your letter and for raising the Parish Councils concerns with me. I hope the response below provides reassurance. I have had a similar approach from Woodhouse Parish Council and have shared the same response with them.

In early 2023, the council commissioned an independent team of experts to review the performance of the Planning Service and identify efficiencies with particular emphasis on the democratic interface. The Planning Officers Society Enterprises (POSE) team found there were many legacy processes in the planning service that were out of step with national best practice or that could be improved, and they made several recommendations that were discussed with Members in June. An action plan was prepared and proposals to take forward recommendations were discussed with councillors through technical briefings over the summer. While some of the changes made were operational, some required changes to the constitution and the Enforcement Policy was also revised. Cabinet considered these proposals and their justification in October and Council agreed the changes in November. Having set out the background I will turn to the key points of your letter.

Public speaking is not a legal requirement of the planning process. It is provided as an additional means for people who have made written comments on planning applications to have an opportunity to address the planning committee with their concerns. It is not open to anyone who wishes to speak. The planning committee will already have viewed the planning file and the concerns of speakers will be familiar to them from the file as well as the officer's committee report. Therefore, the public speaking slot is intended to be a forum in which submitted written concerns can be highlighted; it is not an alternative to written representation. In considering the changes members were mindful that providing five minutes for each speaker, if all the speaking slots were taken, can add up to 25 minutes to each agenda item on the committee. Given there are often up to 6 items on the committee agenda it was felt a reduction in public speaking time in line with national good practice was appropriate in the interests of good decision making. 3 minutes has become the established time period for many councils across the country including North West Leicestershire District Council, Melton Borough Council, Harborough District Council, , North Northants Council and Broxtowe Council just to name a few. I have worked for Councils where this time allowance is the case and it was not an issue as people quickly became accustomed to it.

The reduction in public speaking time takes nothing away from the legal requirement for decision makers to consider planning applications having regard to the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. You can be assured that the documents cited in your email are development plan documents or are studies that are material considerations.

The Council has changed the call in process to give ward councillors more time to consider whether to call in planning applications or not. The time period has been extended from 21 days to 28 days. However, the Council did not change the rules to allow a councillor in a single member ward the ability to nominate

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another ward councillor to call in an application on their behalf so that they can remain on the plans committee to contribute to the decision. On the advice of the Monitoring Officer, this was considered to be a conflict of interest. The current situation is that councillors in single member wards who sit on the plans committee and wish to call in an application must step away from the committee and speak on it in the speaking slot for councillors. Furthermore, where ward councillors in a single member ward have a disclosable interest, they cannot call in an application whether they are on the plans committee or not. Again, the advice is that this would amount to a conflict of interest and nomination of another ward councillor would not extinguish that conflict. There remains the opportunity for the Head of Planning & Growth to refer applications to committee if in their opinion “the application is controversial or likely to be of significant public interest or would have a significant impact on the environment” and residents or the Parish Council can invite them to consider this in cases where the ward councillor is conflicted. This is an issue we will keep under review.

In relation to Planning Enforcement, the POSe team were very clear that the old arrangements for ward referral of planning enforcement reports was very unusual, and they were unaware of any other council in England that had the same arrangement. Amongst other things they were concerned that the approach involved councillors, often with no training and experience in planning matters and no planning responsibilities, making decisions about technical and legal planning issues. Consultation with ward councillors on the issues and proposed changes to the approach through a new enforcement policy was welcomed by members and there was consensus.

I do not believe that the changes will undermine local democracy and I expect they will improve the engagement of councillors in decision making. However, we will keep the changes under review to ensure that we remain in step with best practice and respond to issues if they arise.

Regards
Rob

Regards,

Rob Mitchell (He / Him / His)
Chief Executive

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