



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 14th February 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 January 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**

A Speeding survey was carried out on Bradgate Road, Newtown Linford on 26/1/24 (see **Schedule One**).
7. **Bradgate Park**

A Councillor wishes to raise the possibility of river dredging at Bradgate Park.
8. **Newtown Linford Biodiversity**

Councillors to consider a motion put forward by Cllr. Pickles, in liaison with Newtown Linford Biodiversity, to review and update NLPC's current Biodiversity Policy in line with recent changes to legislation (see **Schedule Two**).
9. **Report by County Councillor Deborah Taylor.**
10. **Report by Borough Councillor David Snartt.**
11. **Village Governance and Residents**

Confirmation received from CBC that they have not received the required number of requests for an election following the Notice of Vacancy in Office of Councillor and therefore, the Parish Council may now co-opt to fill the vacancy 09/01/24.
12. **Planning: Buildings and Tree Issues - report by Tree Warden if in attendance.**
 - **Decisions**

- a) P/23/2101/2 - Leewood 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 - Prior Approval Granted 11/01/24.
- b) P/23/0645/2 - Lady Jane Mobile Home Park, Newtown Linford - Demolition of No. 532 Bradgate Road and erection of 7 dwelling houses with associated parking, landscaping and amenity space AMENDED - Grant Conditionally 26/01/24.
- c) P/22/0434/2 and P/22/0475/2 (Listed Building Consent) for 114 Main Street, Newtown Linford - Proposed detached garage with new access and single storey extension to rear. Changes to window/door colours and the demolition of rear outbuilding - Withdrawn 22/01/24.

- **Comments submitted through Planning Explorer**

- d) 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 - Objection 11/01/24

"Newtown Linford Parish Council object to this application. Councillors have concerns with regards to the safety of future residents living at the proposed care home and associated security issues, due to the locality being situated on an extremely busy road. Increased traffic from visitors to the site will also add to the traffic movements at the A50 roundabout, which already struggles at peak times for those trying to access the dual carriageway from Leicester Road, Markfield.

Additionally, concerns were raised with regards to the effect on the local health infrastructure, adding further demands on an already overstretched GP Surgery."

- e) 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) - Objection 11/01/24

"Newtown Linford Parish Council object to this revised proposal. Although this application has addressed some of the Council's previous concerns, Councillors still consider the proposals as overbearing on neighbouring properties.

The proposed elevation to the neighbouring property on the west side, constitutes a substantial change to the current outlook and light lines of the neighbouring bungalow. The current single storey car port is replaced by a large gable end extending to the new roofline and there is concern that the '45 degree' rule is not adhered to from the windows on the east elevation of the bungalow.

In addition, the windows to the first-floor west elevation (en-suites) would require obscured glass and although the windows on the 2nd floor rear elevation are all Velux style windows, they are much lower than those existing and therefore, still have sight lines into neighbouring properties, thus compromising privacy in both directions.

Properties on Bradgate Road also suffer with surface water run off at the rear and there is an added concern that further hard landscaping will only exacerbate existing flooding and drainage issues in this area."

- f) 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 - Mixed Comments 11/01/24

"Newtown Linford Parish Council had no objection to previous application P/23/0722/2, however, with the inclusion of a separate garage with storage room above and the increased footprint of the proposed Pool Room, Councillors would like to suggest that conditions of planning:

1. Do not allow incorporation of this garage into the main building at any point in the future;
 2. The room above the garage cannot be converted into habitable accommodation without a further planning application;
 3. No further outbuildings are to be added without a further planning application.
- Additionally, the single-storey pool house does increase the visual impact from Ulverscroft Lane and a suitable planting plan should be considered to mitigate this."*

- **Discuss**

- g) P/24/0093/2 – 241 Markfield Lane, Newtown Linford – Erection of two storey side extension and ground floor porch extension to front.
- h) P/24/0052/2 - 520B Bradgate Road, Newtown Linford - Erection of single storey pitched roof open fronted double car port.
- i) P/24/0166/2 - 486 Bradgate Road Newtown Linford - Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension, new render and cladding.
- j) P/24/0190/2 - Charnwood, 28 Groby Lane, Newtown Linford - Replacement of existing flat roof dormer on side elevation with new dormer with tiled hipped roof.

- **Trees**

- k) P/24/0061/2 - 114 Main Street, Newtown Linford – T1 – Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), rear garden right hand boundary – Pollard to around 50% of its current height.

- **Other**

- l) 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 correspondence thereafter (see **Schedule Three**).

13. Bob Bown Memorial Field

14. Village Magazine.

Councillors to consider a request from the Village Hall Magazine Committee, to increase the annual donation amount towards printing costs, from £650 to £700 per annum.

15. Parish Council Website/Facebook Page.

The Parish Council Facebook group has increased to 492 members.

Message received from 2commune Limited on 05/01/24 – Notice of Discontinuation of Website Service (see **Schedule Four**).

Email received from Cuttlefish Multimedia on 09/01/24 – Important information about your website (see **Schedule Five**).

16. Village Hall.

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

18. Churchyard and Cemetery.

19. Correspondence.

Capturing data on flooded properties; request for information received from CBC 09/01/24 and actioned by the Clerk.

County Council Flood Update - January 2024 received by email from Cllr. Taylor 11/01/24 and cascaded to Councillors.

Webinar to support the LLR GP Practice Survey received and cascaded to Councillors 17/01/24.

Letter received from the Police and Crime Commissioner on 19/01/24 following the Inaugural evening on the 15th January 2024 and cascaded to Councillors.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland GP Patient Experience Survey received by email 23/01/24 and sent out to Councillors.

EMA Community Flyer - Winter 2023 and Community Stakeholder Survey 2024 received by email 29/01/24 and cascaded to Councillors.

Invitation to Communities Network Summit - Your Health, Your Community received 02/02/24 and cascaded to Councillors.

Update: LCC Budget Proposals received 02/02/24 and sent to Councillors.

Invite to the PCC Charnwood Surgery for Parish Councils received 07/02/24 and cascaded to Councillors.

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

Cllr. Pickles attended the PCC Parish Council Engagement Campaign Inaugural Event on 15/01/24.

Chairman and Clerk attended the Village Hall Committee AGM and meeting on 15/01/24.

Cllr. Pickles attended the Village Magazine Committee meeting on 15/01/24.

Cllrs. Pickles and Haylock attended the Plans Committee meeting on 25/01/24 and delivered a statement on behalf of NLPC (see **Schedule Six**).

21. Items of interest or for future meetings.

22. Finance.

Authorisation for payment of invoices: -

Ledger Date	Payee	Payment Description	Amount	Legal Power	Notes
05.01.24	HS	Expenses - 2 x Submersible Water Pumps	£159.98	LGA 1972 S137	
11.01.24	Peter Haddon	Village Maintenance Oct - Dec 2024	£90.00	LGA 1972, S214(6) & LGA (Misc.Prov.) 1976, S19	
11.01.24	LCC	Street Lighting Recharges & Maintenance 2023/2024	£7027.80	PCA 1957, S3 & HA 1980, S301	VAT £1171.30
12.01.24	PWLB	Public Works Loan Repayment	£2468.06	LGA 2003, Schedule 1, Para 2	
15.01.24	CBC	Annual independent play area inspection	£92.40	LGA 1972 S19	VAT £15.40
16.01.24	Firetree	Grounds Maintenance 2023/24 Inv 10 of 12	£1230.55	LGA 1972 SS 19, 214 & 215	
22.01.24	Leics. Footpath Association	Membership 2024	£6.00	HA 1980 SS43 & 50	
22.01.24	Arboreco	Tree Stump - Cut to ground level at Bob Bown	£120.00	LGA 1972 S19	£20.00
22.01.24	LRALC Ltd	Internal Audit 2024	£245.00	LGA 1972 S111	
26.01.24	HS	January Broadband & Out of Plan Calls	£68.92	LGA 1972 S111	
26.01.24	HS	January Salary	£1293.35	LGA 1972 S112	
31.01.24	NEST	Pension Contributions	£67.45	LGA 1972 S112	
08.02.24	NatureSpot	Annual maintenance charge for parish pages on NatureSpot website	£50.00	LGA 1972 S142	
Total			£12,919.51		

Bank Balances:

Business Current Account @ 08/02/24

£ 1,704.09

Business Reserve Account @ 08/02/24

£68,095.23

Total**£69,799.32**

Bank Reconciliation:

Carry Forward figure		£81,503.60
Expenditure	-	£ 12,919.51
Income	+	£ 1,215.23
Balance		£ 69,799.32

23. Date of the next two Parish Council Meetings.

Wednesday 13th March 2024 7.15pm

24. Staffing

The Staffing Committee request a confidential closed session following the Clerk's Annual Appraisal.

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Schedule One

Speeding survey in Newtown Linford 26/1/24.

Good morning,

We wanted to share the results of a covert speeding survey conducted yesterday on Bradgate Road, Newtown Linford - This is specifically the part of the road that comes into the village from Anstey and goes from a 40mph speed limit to a 30mph speed limit at the top of the hill.

We've aware that this particular bit of road often suffers with speeding issues and enforcement vehicles do visit there from time to time, but as a beat team we like to witness these issues ourselves, hence our survey yesterday.

These are the results -

30mph and under - 33%
31mph to 35 mph - 36%
36mph to 40 mph - 21%
41mph and over - 10 %

The fastest vehicle was travelling at 51mph!

It is incredibly disappointing to see that 67% of people driving into the village from the direction of Anstey are exceeding the speed limit. This is of course completely unacceptable. In 2022, excessive speed killed 303 people in the UK and seriously injured 2180 others. Next time you're speeding through Newtown Linford, please have a think about how you'd cope with being jailed / losing your job / losing your house should be involved in one of these types of collisions.

Enforcement will follow in due course.

PC 330 Greg Moore and PCSO 6093 Mitch Jarvis

Schedule Two – Suggested Model Biodiversity Policy

RESPONSE TO THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY 30 October 2023

INTRODUCTION - STATUTORY DUTY

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the [Government guidance](#) requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- note what action they are already taking to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree what further steps they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Such steps may include:

- reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities, e.g. potential for jointly-supported wildlife corridors.
- making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area, potentially involving residents in a [“BioBlitz”](#)
- gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity, such as from [Caring for God's Acre](#) and the [Eco Church initiative](#) in respect of churchyards
- drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

All these steps may inform an agreed biodiversity policy for which a model example is attached. Guidance for town and parish councils on developing a [local nature action plan](#) has been published by South Gloucestershire Council, as well as a [field guide](#) for those with little or no ecological background.

MODEL BIODIVERSITY POLICY

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, **[insert council name]** (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within the **parish / town** to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and property management

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's [regulations for plant protection products](#).
- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on **xx** (Minute reference **yy**) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate / each year at the Annual Meeting. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

DRAFT MODEL ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Cemetery / churchyard	Additional planting Maintain and renew bird boxes as required. Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance. Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.		
Recreation ground	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Leave some areas unmown. Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Food sources and cover Encourages insects. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.		
Common / other open spaces	Adopt a management plan. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety. Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear make it clear what is expected e.g. peat free compost and no chemicals.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats. Protecting habitats Protecting/enhancing habitats Regular attention.		

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p>	Ongoing	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine.</p> <p>Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals.</p>	Ongoing	Neighbourhood plan consultation
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>		

Date of publication: Thursday 8th February 2024

Schedule Three – Re CBC Democratic Process

Dr Susan Pritchard	Mr Rob Mitchell
Chair	Chief Executive
Newtown Linford Parish Council	Charnwood Borough Council

14th 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.

Response received from Rob Mitchell, Chief Executive of CBC

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 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.

Date of publication: Thursday 8th February 2024

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



Tel: 01509 634600
Mob: 07562 435835
Email: rob.mitchell@charnwood.gov.uk
Web: www.charnwood.gov.uk

Further reply sent by the Chairman on behalf of NLPC

Re: Changes to the Democratic Process adopted by the Plans Committee
From: susan pritchard <susanpritchard@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thu, Jan 18, 2024 at 10:46 am
To: Rob Mitchell, david snartt
Cc: parish council

Dear Mr Mitchell,

Thank you for your reply to my email. I delayed sending a response as I felt that this should be discussed amongst Newtown Linford Parish Councillors at our most recent meeting.

We understand the points you have made regarding the 3 min time limit on representations to the Planning Committee and, as you say, adaptations can be made to accommodate this.

However, we remain extremely concerned about the potential disenfranchisement of Parish Councils who sit within single member wards. This issue has prevented us from speaking at Plans Committee - even though we directly requested this -after our Councillor was unable to invite us to speak as he was recused from this application. Perhaps in this case we should have been redirected (by the Planning Dept) to the 'Head of Planning & Growth' who you maintain has the opportunity both to 'call in' an application and invite representation from the relevant Parish Council. But this did not occur and we were unable to present our arguments in person.

I understand that the number of single member wards such as ours has recently increased to 4. This must now increase the chances of this undemocratic process reoccurring and we feel very strongly that there should be a clearly defined and published process for dealing with this situation rather than a rather nebulous statement regarding the powers of the Charnwood Head of Planning and Growth. If this does not happen then single member wards will not enjoy the same level of representation at Planning meetings as those with multiple Borough Councillors and this cannot be right and fair.

Your reply also did not address the question of the Chair/Vice Chair of the planning committee being able to override a 'call in' without full reasons for such a refusal being communicated to the Parish council.

Date of publication: Thursday 8th February 2024

I was interested to read your comments re Planning enforcement although I had not raised this with you in my original letter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Susan Pritchard

Further response received from Rob Mitchell, Chief Executive of CBC

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

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

Sent: Mon, Jan 29, 2024 at 8:47 am

To: susan pritchard, Cllr. David Snartt

Cc: Newtown Linford Parish Council

Dear Dr Pritchard,

Thank you for the email and I note that the Parish has considered this further.

In regard to the Parish being disenfranchised I am not sure I follow the concern fully. Parish Councils will always have the opportunity to comment on planning applications and if that application goes to committee, then they can register to speak. The starting point in our constitution is that all applications are delegated to the Head of Planning unless they meet certain criteria. This is also the thrust of the recent direction from Government which is clear that very few applications should go to committees. Ward Members can only call in an application where there are material planning concerns. So, in the event that the single ward member is recused but the application is contentious then it is likely that the Head of Planning would take it to committee anyway. This to my mind means the risk of an application which warrants calling in but cannot be called in because the ward Councillor is recused is already mitigated. That said I recognise the concerns and that there is a difference between single and multi member wards. We have agreed to consider the issue further as part of the annual review of the constitution. I will feed your concerns into those discussions.

In regard to the changes relating to the Chair and Vice Chair and the veto I have for ease copied/paraphrased some information provided in response to a Councillors enquiry. I hope this provides reassurance in regard to that issue.

If you require more information or further clarification it may be easier to speak on the phone or have a Teams meeting.

Regards

Rob

In regard to the Chair and Vice Chair call-in change to the constitution, I have copied (below in italics) the response from the then Deputy Monitoring Officer that was sent to some Conservative Cllrs in November 2023. This was also explained in the FAQ. The officer view hasn't changed and to be clear I am not concerned about the changes. No member has since the changes had their call in refused and they will only ever be refused if the conditions set out in the constitution are met. I can see no scenario where a Chair or Vice chair will be able to veto a justifiable member call in. The constitution frames the extent of their power in this regard. As stated below if in the unlikely event this becomes an issue, we can revise it.

MO response – Nov 23

Reviewing your emails again I am concerned that you are taking the sentence relating to the Call-in process shown in red below out of context and in isolation:

*In addition, if, following a call-in which has not been withdrawn, officers believe that the issues raised by the ward councillor in his/her call-in have been addressed, officers will submit the recommendation report, which is prepared for each application, to the ward councillor. The report, which will contain a summary of the main issues regarding the application, will enable ward councillors to consider whether they wish to maintain or withdraw their call-in of an application. **Ultimately, the Chair (or vice chair in their absence) will decide if the item will be added to the committee agenda.***

Indeed, if you read that sentence in isolation this would imply the Chair/Vice Chair could veto any planning application being placed on a Plans Committee agenda. This is not the case at all. This change is referring to the Call-in process only. A Cllr will continue to have the right to call-in a planning application. This right is not being removed. This change to the Constitution means that where planning issues raised by the Cllr have been satisfactorily overcome but the Cllr still presses on with a call-in, then in those exceptional circumstances the Chair/Vice Chair will be contacted by the Head of Planning and Growth to explain the circumstances and guide them on whether the application is added or not to a future Plans Committee agenda. This was a major concern highlighted by Cllrs interviewed by the POSe team that planning applications were still appearing on the Plans Committee agenda when the call-in issues had been satisfactorily resolved. This is not a good use of committee time and in fact diverts time and attention away from the more complex planning applications. Furthermore, your concerns of the Chair/Vice Chair being lobbied by developers, householders, and other Cllrs to remove applications off the Plans committee agenda is unfounded. We are talking about Call-ins when the planning issues raised by the Cllr have been satisfactorily overcome.

*There are many instances in the Constitution where if you isolate a sentence from the surrounding context and wording the meaning and intent are considerably changed. One significant delegation that comes to mind relates to the Head of Paid Service who has authority to **“Take such action as is required in the case of emergency or urgency”**. The following sentences then go on to say this action needs to be undertaken in consultation, with the Mayor, Chair of the relevant Committee or in their absence the Vice Chair, consultation with relevant directors etc. Taken in isolation this would then imply the Head of Paid Service can take any emergency or urgent action they so wished. Likewise, the Director of Commercial and Economic Development can **“Make amendments to the Climate Change Policy”** but the subsequent sentence says it must be in response to legislative changes or changes at local or regional level in consultation with the relevant lead member. I have used these examples to demonstrate how easy it is to isolate and derive different meanings which you may or may not have drawn with the new constitution wording..*

Hopefully, I have addressed your concerns and explained how this new change will work in practice. The changes will be monitored and if in the unlikely event they lead to issues then they can be revisited in the future.

Regards,

Rob Mitchell (He / Him / His)
Chief Executive

Date of publication: Thursday 8th February 2024

Schedule Four - Message from 2commune Limited - Notice of Discontinuation of Website Service

Dear Customer,

As you may be aware, we resell websites provided by our business partner Cuttlefish Multimedia Limited (Cuttlefish).

We regretfully need to advise you that due to an ongoing dispute with Cuttlefish they have notified us that they will no longer supply the website technology to us (2commune) after 31st March 2024. Therefore, we will not be able to continue to supply your website after that date and you will need to find an alternative website supplier.

We are very sorry and deeply saddened to have to advise you of this. We've loved working with you over the years and we thank you for your business and support.

It is our intention to continue with the supply of domains and email accounts (if you have them with us). We are currently investigating the possibility of working with other website suppliers / providers and we will provide you with more details about this as soon as possible.

We will be in touch with your council regarding your account.

Kind Regards

Tina

Please could you confirm receipt of this message.

Tina Britt

Managing Director - 2Commune Ltd.

Schedule Five - Follow on email received from Cuttlefish Multimedia 09/01/24



Parish & Town
Councils

Important information about your website

You will have heard that 2commune will no longer be licensing Cuttlefish website software from 31st March 2024 - but please don't worry, because if you want to keep your existing website going, we can provide your hosting directly from then onwards!

Date of publication: Thursday 8th February 2024

You'll keep the **same** website, with the **same** features at the **same** price, but will contract with the software developers directly (Cuttlefish) rather than 2commune.

Is my website being shut down?

Not if you want to keep it! Although 2commune will no longer be licensing Cuttlefish's website software, we are still happy to provide the hosting to clients directly.

Therefore if you wish to keep your existing website, you'll just pay us direct. Your website and price is remaining the same, but you'll now get support straight from our team.

How do I contract directly with Cuttlefish?

Don't worry, we're going to make it nice and easy!

If you wish to keep your current website, just let us know and we'll send you a link to our Cuttlefish contract to eSign. We'll then send you an invoice for payment with a few options on how to pay. We understand the importance of your budgets and so will prorate your payments to keep renewals in the same month annually that you are used to.

Further information and updates will be shared on our website here:
<https://cuttlefish.com/local-councils>

Schedule Six - Statement to Plans Committee re P/23/0645/2 - Lady Jane Park, Newtown Linford

Good evening my name isand I represent Newtown Linford Parish Council

This site, in the middle of Newtown Linford Conservation Area, was previously a development of 1- and 2-bedroom mobile homes which were mainly rented and owned by older members of our community.

In 2019 an application to develop this site was made and this was completely supported by the Parish Council. It felt that the proposed designs, materials and layout of the development, sensitively reflected the local vernacular and laid well within the conservation area.

In particular the smaller sized bungalow style dwellings addressed housing needs that had been previously identified in our Village Design Statement. Many residents of our village look to downsize their properties due to age or infirmity, but currently have no option to remain within their community, due to a shortage of smaller single-story dwellings. Concerns were expressed at the time re the potential impact on neighbouring properties but this was minimised by the proposed property heights and single-story nature of the dwellings.

Indeed, this previous application was so popular with residents that the developers were approached with regard to reserving properties before even planning permission had been granted.

However..... this amended application being discussed today which replaces these bungalows with houses containing 4/5 bedrooms represents a major change :-

Namely

- 1) This amendment no longer meets the housing needs providing for smaller dwellings in Newtown Linford.
- 2) This amendment no longer gives provision for elderly and disabled residents who wish to downsize to remain within their community
- 3) The proposed increased height of the buildings will greatly increase the visual impact from within the historically important centre of the Village (with its grade 2 listed buildings and rural, historical Church) and also from within Bradgate Park- which is currently seeking to achieve UNESCO Geo-Park status.
- 4) The impact on neighbouring dwellings is greatly increased due to the inclusion of first floor accommodation, both from loss of privacy and the increased visual intrusion of these higher roofs.

In conclusion this amended planning application has lost all the benefits of an original application which was welcomed by the community, whilst also increasing the detrimental effects to the Conservation area and a very popular tourist attraction. We therefore request that the amendments to this planning application is refused and reverted to the original granted Planning application.