

Chair report for Full Council 21st July 2025

- **A formal thanks to the Wroughton Community Asset Trust and also Friends of Wroughton Library (WoLF)**

The Parish Council would like to extend its sincere thanks to the Friends of Wroughton Library (WoLF) for their dedication, time, and outstanding fundraising efforts over the past few years. The group has worked tirelessly to organise events and engage the wider community through a variety of new activities and opportunities.

WoLF has played a crucial role in supporting the recent refurbishment of the library, including improvements to painting, lighting, new furniture, and IT equipment. Their commitment has significantly enhanced the library environment for all users.

As WoLF now begins to draw to a close, the remaining funds raised have been generously transferred to the Parish Council for ongoing management. Moving forward, the library is in the capable hands of Hannah Dosanjh, our Library Supervisor and her staff. All future expenditure relating to the library and its activities will be managed through the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee.

We are deeply grateful to WoLF for their invaluable contributions, which will benefit the community for years to come.

- **Closure of Wroughton Community Asset Trust has now been completed,** and that the parish council may now consider storing data in the parish safe.
- **Thanks to the councillors and staff who took part in the Carnival this year and to the Grounds team for working at full capacity in what has been a very hot few weeks.**

- **Shared Leadership Forum**

Emma and I attended this meeting last Tuesday 15th, which was for all chairs and clerks, and headed by CE Sam Mowbray, Leader Cllr Jim Robbins, Cllr Jim Grant, Cabinet member, responsible for Parish and Town council liaison. Kirsten Nelson, Director of Prevention and Communities, Helena Robinson, Director of integrated Communities and Partnerships.

Gayle was listed as the shadow spokesperson for Parish and Town liaison, but I gave apologies for you Gayle.

Sam Mowbray presented the financial position, they are working on a budget of £188 million, plus another 14.5 Mill, and neither Emma or I caught where that came from. There is an increasing call for Adult and Social care, and 87% of that budget goes on that leaving the rest for everything else.

There are some Parishes that have already taken on some tasks to help with the situation and there will be conversations to be had in the future I'm sure, but at the moment they are only talking to the larger parishes.

We need to get together with the other parishes to push for more information to be kept in the loop.

The meeting was supposed to be a strategy meeting for working together, but it quickly became focussed on Operation issues from the Parishes.

This seemed to annoy the Officers, particularly SM.

To help with the shortfall caused by the call for A&SC is a case for change to find ways to help those heading for crisis before it gets too bad for further expensive help. Again some parishes are helping with the Live Well initiative.

Other positive news is that they are trialling is a Parish Hotline which could be good.

The date for the opening of the Bus Boulevard is Sunday 31st August 2025. Yes – this year !!

We now have a date for the Local Plan consultation here at the ECC which is Monday 6th October from 4.30 to 7.30.

The next Planning meeting will have an agenda item to consider the comms to send out.

All Councillors welcome to attend, - planning is sometimes interesting !

- **Ashen Copse**

On Wednesday 9th July, Emma and I met with Richard Codrington to explain what is happening on his fields behind Ashen Copse.

All farmers are looking at ways to improve the efficiency of their land, and Richard and his family are doing the same.

Soil testing has been carried out to help with identifying where fertilizer is needed, as these days the computerised machinery can spread seeds and fertilizer at different rates in good and poor soil conditions.

There has also been an ecological survey.

He Acknowledged that Ainscough Land agents had been in touch with him, but was clear that they had not presented any plans to him. If any building were to be applied for, it would be on 25 acres, and behind Ashen copse, not the properties on Ashen Copse and the field next to it.

I am usually particularly cynical when these type of discussions take place, but Richard promised that he would get back in touch if and when plans would be submitted.

- **VE Day 80th Anniversary Commemorative Planting, Belmont Green by Listers Estate**

Proposals for this planting scheme which includes an avenue of flowering cherries, wildflower planting, orchard trees and two new benches are now available for residents to see online. Two boards with the plans and proposals on are now also in place at the site so do please take a look. The 27 cherry trees will represent the names of the fallen military personnel from Wroughton who gave their lives in World War Two.

The public consultation period will end on Thursday 7th August and the completed bid document will be sent to the SBC Trees for Climate scheme soon after that. WPC will need to complete a short procurement process to select the appropriate contractor to plant the trees. There will be some contribution in kind from WPC in the form of Grounds Team labour but all capital costs, including 15 years of maintenance will be included in an upfront payment to WPC.

We hope to have a ceremonial launch of the new planting on Armistice Day, 11 November 2025

Recently we have relaxed the formality of our meetings to enable the public and members to understand and debate items collectively.

However following the recent planning meeting, and some discussions were getting out of hand, so I am proposing to ask the chairs of meetings, and all members to follow our standing orders and the process of resolving decisions made.

The public are allowed 10 minutes, (longer with the discretion of the chair) to ask questions etc.

During this time there should be no debating of the issue, and the chair will thank the member of the public and explain that the points made will be discussed as an agenda item in the future.

The public then should not be able to speak or interrupt after the public session, but may indicate their wish to speak by raising their hand, and the chair (if the point is relevant) will then suspend standing orders to allow this. Standing orders should then be re-instated after.

Minutes

When the minutes are presented, the chair should ask if everyone is happy with the minutes, and if no comments, should state that they propose the minutes are a true record of the meeting of the 21st July and of all decisions made. A seconder is needed and a show of hands to confirm acceptance. Chair may also ask if and one is against the motion. This process should be made with every decision that is made.

During meetings members should raise their hand if they wish to speak, and the chair with the assistance of the clerk, will direct in turn those to speak.

Following my chairs report last month, I want to again emphasise what I said then - the need for all members to have read all the documents and minutes prior to the meeting, to fully understand what they are voting for. **We** will be putting a statement on our website, confirming that all the standing orders and policies are available to view on the website.

Just a further reminder, our policy does state - not to engage in discussions or debates on any Social media, or post anything that has not been authorised by the office.

Reminder of no meetings in August other than F&GP on 18th August