



## Questions regarding the Parish Council's purchase of the woodland behind Fernwood Day Nursery.

### Introduction

Many of these questions came from the consultation exercise that Fernwood Parish Council conducted in January 2021. The Parish Council took ownership of the woodland on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and announced this on local social media the next day. Some people have raised concerns regarding the Parish Council's intentions for the area. The responses below have been updated to reflect that the Parish Council now owns the area but the overall message is the same, the Parish Council intends to care for the area and maintain the natural habitat for flora and fauna.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose for the purchase? **The main reasons were: The footpath and streetlights can be better maintained; The trees can be managed/preserved to keep them safe for Fernwood residents; The Council can maintain the area in a way which is best for maintaining the natural habitat for flora and fauna.**
2. The main problem that seems to arise is the leaves and the potential for accidents. Have any occurred? **I am not aware of the answer to this. The main problem was the area was not looked after. The lights have been out for years so the Council's Contractor will be fixing these soon.**
3. Who is currently responsible for the leaves? Is it the landowner or are the paths the responsibility of NCC? **The landowner (now Fernwood Parish Council).**
4. How much are FPC paying? **The Council purchased the area for £19,000 plus legal costs**
5. How do they plan to maintain the area? Using a sub contractor or using the FPC own facilities. **Specialist work by contractors...light maintenance/tree work. Grass cutting/bin emptying N&SDC. Leaf blowing, checks by Fernwood Parish Council staff.**
6. How frequently would the area be checked/maintained? **We will survey the trees annually. Leaf blowing will be done as needed and weekly checks are done. Grass cutting fortnightly in growing season. Bin emptying will be done weekly (possibly more frequently – we will assess this once the bins are installed).**
7. Ask who will be maintaining the area and collecting the rubbish dumped daily by the teenagers? **We hope the installation of 2 bins and 1 dog bin will reduce the amount of littering. Parish Council staff will do some litter picks and we hope to set up a volunteers' group for this too.**
8. Will FirstPort have a hand in its upkeep? Will affect service charges? **No N&SDC are doing the grass cutting and we have a tree specialist to look after the trees. No, it won't affect the**

service charge from FirstPort or the precept paid by Council Tax payers to the Parish Council.

9. Will there be a reduction in first Port fees if the parish council take it over? **No. FirstPort do not look after this area so it doesn't affect fees.**
10. If they plan to maintain with current caretaker then will they need to purchase new equipment and how much will this cost? **No new equipment has been needed or will be.**
11. Have they taken expert advice about wildlife conservation (i.e., Notts wildlife Trust). – **yes, we have taken advice from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. We are currently arranging a preliminary ecological survey before any tree work is carried out.**
12. Health of the trees is paramount. Will they get expert opinion? There are concerns that the wrong contractor will cut away too much just to increase his fee also putting the ecology of the area at risk? **We have already had a tree survey conducted by a qualified company. The Parish Council intention is to preserve and protect. The survey results are available on the Parish Council website. 10 trees were identified as needing to be felled. The previous owner had 2 of the 10 felled. Five need to be felled within the next six months. We will have the ecological survey done before any more felling is done. We will follow professional guidance on this. The trees are under a Tree Protection Order so an application will be made to N&SDC to carry out any work. Work such as removing dead wood is also required for some trees – details can be found in the [Tree Assessment Table](#).**
13. It's important that FPC spends the parishioners' money wisely. There is no mention of costing in the consultation only that it won't affect the council tax payment. Should FPC put pressure on the landowner/NCC to take better care and instead use the money for other purposes. For example, to fund a youth group? **The Council holds enough Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to do both. The Council Tax charge from the Parish Council (precept) will not rise for any households as a result of the purchase.**  
  
**We try to keep amicable relationships with stakeholders in the village and make requests to benefit residents, but the Parish Council does not have the power to make any landowner do something. NCC are not responsible for the path/lights in the area we have purchased. A Youth Club has now commenced.**
14. What other proposals were considered for the use of the funds available for the purchase. Is this the only project considered to spend such an amount? **The Council has CIL funding which covered the woodland purchase and other significant projects if they had the land to carry them out on.**
15. Once the levy runs out how will the cost of the upkeep be covered? It has been stated on the PC page that the precept will not have to go up. How long will it be until it does have to go up to continue maintenance of the area? **With the number of new houses being built in the village, the income the Parish Council receives will go up (without changing the amount each householder pays) so we do not anticipate the amount of precept paid by each house**

to go up at any point because of the woodland purchase. (Currently £75.05 per band D property)

16. It may be worth having a survey done pre purchase to ensure there isn't anything overdue or unexpected. The Parish Council had a tree survey done and are aware of costs for repairs/work that are required.
17. There has been speculation that the council have plans for a children's activity area created to blend in with the woodland. Comments have been quite positive regarding this but have the closest residents been consulted considering the recent problems with youths in the area? This idea did not come from the Parish Council. Most feedback from the consultation that we did in 2021 was to keep it for nature (which is what the Parish Council wants too) so it is very unlikely. If there were plans to do anything different, the Parish Council would consult.
18. Isn't this what FirstPort should be doing? No, the area the Parish Council has bought was owned by the owner of Balderton Hall so FirstPort are in no way responsible for the area.
19. What section are you considering for the children's play area? The Parish Council does not think this area is suitable for a children's play area, therefore we will not be installing a children's play area in the woodland.
20. How are you going to ensure it is not another 'hang out' for teenagers after hours? The Parish Council's suggestion is to keep this area for wildlife/nature. We do not foresee any issues as other than being better kept, the area will not change significantly.
21. Another park? /Could we incorporate a woodland feel play area/park? The Parish Council want to keep the area natural (the majority of respondents are in favour of this proposal when consulted)

## Summary

To conclude, the Parish Council intends to care for the area and maintain the natural habitat for flora and fauna whilst keeping it safe.

I hope the answers to the questions above are useful. If you have any further questions, please email me. There is an update [report](#) on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup> (7pm, Fernwood Village Hall) . This is an open meeting so questions can also be raised in the public forum there.

Updated by Marion Fox Goddard, Parish Clerk – If you have any queries, please contact [clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk)

June 15<sup>th</sup> 2022