



PRESS RELEASE

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Fernwood Parish Council Coat of Arms

Following a [freedom of information request](#)¹, on November 3rd, Fernwood Parish Council provided information on what the council had spent Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds on. Shortly after, the response was sent, a resident added a post to the 'MyFernwoodResidents' Facebook group asking '[Fernwood Parish Council](#) looking through the accounts is it true that £14555 was spent on a coat of arms for the village?'

This led to many questions being raised by residents with concerns including that money was being spent on such things at the expense of other projects.

Transparency

All the Council's decisions and expenditure are published in publicly available agendas and minutes on the [council's website](#); a link to which is sent to the Newark advertiser, the local county councillor and the three district councillors for the area. Fernwood Parish Council is one of the most open and transparent local councils in the area. Not only are the agendas (including the agenda pack which has information that the councillors consider) and minutes published on the council's website and noticeboards, they are also promoted on the council's Facebook page and the two local social media groups which some members of the community run in Fernwood.

Council Funds

Fernwood Parish Council has received £650,186 of CIL over the last three years and with thousands more houses due to be built in the parish over the next 10 years, it is projected that the council will receive over one million pounds of CIL in addition to the amount that has already been received. This is mainly from the Barratt David

¹ FOI Request and response can be read through the link: [FOI requests received by Fernwood Parish Council](#)

Wilson Homes and Allison Homes developments. It does not take into account the CIL that the Parish Council will receive from the Persimmon Homes development.

In addition to CIL, the Parish Council requests a precept for the administration of the Council and delivery of Council Services. This is paid through residents' council tax bills. Precept has not been used to pay for the coat of arms; CIL which the council has in abundance has been used.

Why the Coat of Arms has been purchased

In January 2022, the council unanimously took the decision to request a Coat of Arms from the [College of Arms](#) with the knowledge that there are more than enough funds to allocate to other projects which the council knows are important to local residents. Fernwood is a growing parish in terms of development with original hospital dwellings, Fernwood Central, Greater Fernwood (Barratt David Wilson Homes current development) and Fernwood Meadows (Allison Homes development). To date, a fern leaf has been used on the parish council logo. The coat of arms which is currently being designed will take into account the rich history of the Parish.

Councillor Dee Harrison confirmed 'The Council would like to mark the boundaries of Fernwood parish, as many other parishes and towns do, with the 'welcome to...' signs and that's when the idea of a coat of arms came about. The Council wishes to promote civic pride in the community. There is quite often debate on whether Fernwood is a village or an estate. Fernwood is a parish - and this was a way of marking the parish boundaries as well as celebrating Fernwood's history - the Hall and grounds, RAF Balderton as well as Balderton Hospital. We wouldn't have spent this amount out of the precept, we considered the idea because it could come out of the CIL'.

Councillor Mollie Weale said 'We have a lot of money which we can spend on the village or lose it. Unfortunately, the coat of arms is expensive, and some residents will be taken aback but in the long term we all thought it a very good idea and a legacy for the future'.

Fernwood Parish Council is committed to spending CIL on projects that will benefit the community. Recently the council has bought woodland in the centre of the village. The Council has repaired streetlamps in there that have been out for over 2 years, installed bins, worked to ensure the trees are made safe and wildlife preserved. The Youth Club is another example of where the Parish Council is using CIL to deliver more for the community of Fernwood. The Council are currently investigating the possibility of extending the village hall and has requested to have

centrally monitored CCTV in the centre of the parish which will be funded through CIL, if approved.

The Parish Council also has plans to renew/enhance the play park in central Fernwood. Before this project is commenced, the council is waiting for the completion of the transfer of the open spaces in central Fernwood into Fernwood Parish Council ownership. It is currently still owned by the developer, but legal work is underway with Newark and Sherwood District Council and Barratt David Wilson Homes to complete the transfer. This is taking longer than Fernwood Parish Council would have liked, but the speed of this transaction is dependent on various parties; the Council have regularly requested for this to be completed as quickly as possible though.

The parish council consults residents regularly on issues affecting the village and use feedback to inform decisions made by the Council.. As more projects become possible the council will consult with local residents.

About the Council

Marion Fox Goddard, Clerk to the parish council said:

‘Fernwood Parish Council is made up of 7 councillors who volunteer their time to serve on the Council. It is my job to deliver the work of the parish council including communications. The Coat of arms purchase was covered in the agenda and minutes for the January 17th, 2022, Fernwood Parish Council meeting, was briefly covered in the October issue of the Fernwood Gazette and also covered in the budget review in the October agenda pack. I try to keep residents as up to date as possible through social media posts and agendas/minutes; the council has nothing to hide in terms of its spending or decisions.

There is one thing that is guaranteed; you will never please everyone. The coat of arms has clearly raised some questions for residents. Social media can be a divisive arena and it is easy to criticise, particularly when the full picture has not been given. I would ask that if anyone has any concerns regarding decisions of the council, that these are raised through me; I will be sure to provide an answer with context and be happy to share this through social media’

Parish Council meeting – November 21st, 2022, 7pm

In light of the concerns raised following the Facebook post regarding the Coat of Arms, this will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on November 21st. The

decision will not be changed but the Council invite residents to come to the meeting to raise any questions that they have.

Parish Council meetings are held on the third Monday of each month (except December and August - when there isn't a meeting) at 7:00 PM at the village hall. Residents are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings. They can raise any suggestions/concerns in the public forum at the beginning of the meeting and stay for the whole meeting to hear the business discussed . Alternatively, suggestions can be emailed or posted to the parish council at the village hall.