



Report regarding the Fernwood Coat of Arms

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Marion Fox Goddard
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Fernwood Parish Council
November 14th, 2022

Introduction

This report has been written due to concerns raised on Facebook regarding Fernwood Parish Council's purchase of a Coat of Arms. Fernwood Parish Council has nothing to hide. We encourage anyone with an interest in the parish to read this report and regularly visit our website to look at our agendas and minutes. Everyone is welcome to attend Fernwood Parish Council meetings. These are on the third Monday of every month (except August and December when there isn't a meeting) at 7pm at Fernwood Village Hall.

We recognise that many people don't have time to come to meetings, but welcome queries and suggestions that come into the Council. If you have any questions, following reading this report, please email clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Fernwood Parish Council will be meeting on November 21st, 2022, at 7pm at Fernwood Village Hall. The Coat of Arms will be on the agenda. We request that you read this report in advance of the meeting; it gives insight into the decision made and answers many of the concerns and questions that have been raised on social media and in the two complaints that we have received. Everyone is invited and will be happy to answer questions raised on the night.

This report clarifies why the coat of arms has been bought and the documentation that we have published and where this has been publicised. All agendas and minutes for the meetings detailed in appendix 1 were sent to all the local county and district councillors that cover Fernwood. They are invited to every Parish Council meeting and their presence noted in the minutes.

The coat of arms is 100% a decision made by Fernwood Parish Council and the Council stand by its decision; the Councillors are happy to talk to residents about why the Council came to previous decisions. We welcome residents to come to Parish Council meetings to talk about any issues they may have.

In May 2023, there will be elections for the Parish Council and residents of Fernwood will have the opportunity to stand for election and vote for the candidates that stand¹. For anyone considering standing, we'd recommend coming to the Parish Council meetings to see the work of the Council or regularly reading agendas and minutes to keep up to date on issues the Council is working on. The Parish Clerk will gladly provide links to websites with useful information on the role of a Parish Councillor and the powers and duties of Parish Councils.

¹ Subject to having registered to vote and being eligible.

Reasons the Council have bought a Coat of Arms

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.

The Council would like to mark the boundaries of Fernwood parish, as many other parishes and towns do, with 'welcome to...' signs. The idea being to have a sign to clearly define that people are entering Fernwood; with this having the Coat of Arms on it which will include items relevant to the parish's local history. There is quite often debate on whether Fernwood is a village or an estate. Fernwood is a parish - and the Coat of Arms celebrates Fernwood's history – The iconic Water Tower, RAF Balderton as well as Balderton Hospital and the fantastic woodland that Fernwood has. The Council believes this is a legacy for the future.

What has been spent so far

The Council has spent £14555 on the Coat of Arms. There will be no more costs for the Coat of Arms other than having it framed which can be done locally.

The Council plan to invest in signage for the edge of the parish to mark the boundary. Any costs relating to this will be added to a Council agenda and we will ensure this is publicised so members of the public can come and discuss this with the Council if they are concerned. Regarding this, we draw your attention to the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy that the Council holds; there is more than enough money to cover these signs and any other projects residents wish to be considered.

We will also look into applying for grants towards the signage before we buy them, but we acknowledge it may be difficult to persuade a grant provider that we need the funding when we hold so much CIL. The local county councillor has mentioned applying for match funding through the [Nottinghamshire County Council Local Communities Fund](#); the Parish Council will consider this but it is worth knowing this is likely to come from council tax. Consideration will have to be given on whether it will be better to use CIL rather than take funds which ultimately come from council taxpayers.

How the Council has paid for the Coat of Arms

Fernwood Parish Council has received significant amounts of **Community Infrastructure Levy** over the last 3 years. Full details can be found on the Council's website here: [Financial information](#)²

Fernwood Parish Council has received **£650,186** of CIL over the last three years; we are due to receive an additional **£566,000**³ in November 2022. 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 **£450,000** more of CIL just from the Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDWH) and Allison Homes (AH) developments. These figures do not take into account the CIL that the Parish Council will receive from the Persimmon Homes⁴ development.

Fernwood Parish Council produced a Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted and means the parish receives 25% of CIL that the developers pay to N&SDC. The figure would be 15% if the work hadn't been put in to get a neighbourhood plan for Fernwood.

If Fernwood Parish Council does not spend the funds within the prescribed time frame, they will be returned to Newark and Sherwood District Council.

Fernwood Parish Council does not have a Community Infrastructure Levy Policy at this stage, but this will be written early next year. This will be on a Parish Council agenda and discussed in an open meeting. We will publicise this.

There are regulations on what CIL can be spent on. Government guidance can be read here: [Community Infrastructure Levy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

² www.fernwood-pc.co.uk – Financial information can be found under the Parish Council Documents tab

³ NSDC has confirmed this figure on 8/11/22 (Higher than previously advised)

⁴ Persimmon have outline planning permission to build 1800 homes, we understand they are due to submit their reserved matters in the next couple of months so envisage construction will commence in 2023. We have not had projected figures for CIL for this development, but it is likely to exceed the BDWH (1050 homes) and AL (350 homes) figures combined.

Will this purchase stop us doing other projects in Fernwood? A new park for example.

The purchase of the Coat of Arms will not stop Fernwood Parish Council investing in other projects. There is an abundance of CIL. This does not mean we take decisions lightly on how to spend this money, but this was relevant when assessing whether a Coat of Arms should be purchased.

To date, the Council has consulted residents on a project by project basis to inform decisions on spending.

Projects which the Council has consulted/are consulting on⁵ with Fernwood residents, which could potentially use CIL funding on are:

- Purchase of the woodland in central Fernwood (January 2021)
- Crime and fear of crime in the parish - based on the recent survey 2 CCTV cameras have been requested through N&SDC's CCTV partnership (we are currently awaiting feedback on whether they are willing to proceed with this) (June 2022)
- Hollowdyke Lane (October 2022 – currently open) - based on the feedback from the survey, Council will decide whether to investigate costs of employing a consultancy to look at the feasibility/safety of keeping Hollowdyke Lane open and the potential costs of an application/works. The next stage would be to consult with residents on whether they think it would be a worthy use of CIL.

We have also posted consultation letters to residents in specific areas⁶ of Fernwood regarding proposals close by to their homes.

The Council will be doing further consultations next year. The Council does not consult on every purchase it makes but we will continue to try to involve residents.

⁵ Consultations done electronically and shared through social media and other electronic means.

⁶ Homes around Dale Crescent Green and those on Marron Court/Close which back on to the woodland.

New Play Park for Fernwood Central

We are committed to replacing/improving this park. The Council has yet to consult with respect to this as the land transfer⁷ has not been completed yet, but the Council is fully committed to working with FirstPort to see how we can deliver this project.

It has been questioned why the council did not invest in the park years ago. At the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 May 2018. The following minute was taken:

‘A parent and 2 school children presented ideas the children have come up with to improve facilities in Fernwood. This was a project done by the year 4 children at the school; the majority of the year 4 children wanted to see improved play facilities in the village. A key request was for items for older children and to name a new play area in Daniel’s honour’.

At the time, the Parish Council had no CIL and were not eligible for grants to enhance the park⁸; the council would have to increase the precept. The Council’s responsibility for spending money and ensuring our assets are insured, would mean we would need legal agreements in place on ownership of assets and liabilities with Barratt David Wilson Homes and FirstPort, as well as pay for the park.

We decided that it would be better for us to get the land transferred first rather than need to have 2 legal agreements in place. We still stand by the logic for getting the land transfer done first and then working with one other body (FirstPort) rather than two, although we understand the frustration that waiting for an enhanced park causes.

The situation with regards to the open spaces not being handed over by the developer for such a long time after the development finished is by no means ideal. The Parish Council has been trying to tackle this issue for many years in addition to lobbying the local MP for rights for freeholders in managed estates. We met with Robert Jenrick again in May 2022 to seek his support with the land transfer and to press for the rights of freeholders on managed estates amongst many other issues.

It is 18 months since the developer did agree to hand over the land so we are very hopeful that this will happen soon. Newark and Sherwood District Council have assured us that BDWH are still committed to this.

⁷ Barratt David Wilson Homes owns most of the land in central Fernwood still (see question 15 for more information on this)

⁸ The fact that the land was owned by a private business meant any application we made would not meet the criteria for all the grants we looked into.

Questions/Comments and Answers from residents

1. Why couldn't local school children design the Coat of Arms?

The [College of Arms](#) are responsible for the granting of new coats of arms. This is where all arms are designed.

2. Why did it cost so much?

The price could not be negotiated or a cheaper supplier found as arms are solely granted by the [College of Arms](#).

3. Why did the Parish Council not consult about the Coat of Arms?

The Council has a track record of consulting with residents. We have recently consulted on purchases that are going to have ongoing costs such as the woodland and CCTV. Anything that would have a significant cost to the council tax payer⁹ or use a significant amount of the CIL, would of course be consulted on. Although the figure of £14,555, may seem high, when looked at in context of how much CIL the Council has, this is a relatively low amount.

Fernwood Parish Council has received **£650,186** of CIL over the last three years; we are due to receive an additional **£566,000**¹⁰ in November 2022. 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 **£450,000** of CIL just from the Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDWH) and Allison Homes (AH) developments. It does not take into account the CIL that the Parish Council will receive from the Persimmon Homes¹¹ development.

The Coat of Arms will have no ongoing costs for residents of Fernwood. The £14,555 fee is a one off charge, and the arms will be used by the Parish Council as long as the parish exists.

The amount of CIL that the Parish Council holds and will be receiving, made the Council confident that spending this amount would have no effect on the delivery of any other project that could/would be planned for Fernwood. The 3 housing

⁹ Fernwood Parish Council gets its funds for running Council services through a precept. This is included in the Council Tax that residents pay to N&SDC.

¹⁰ NSDC has confirmed this figure on 8/11/22 (Higher than previously advised)

¹¹ Persimmon have outline planning permission to build 1800 homes, we understand they are due to submit their reserved matters in the next couple of months so envisage construction will commence in 2023. We have not had projected figures for CIL for this development, but it is likely to exceed the BDWH and AL figures combined.

developments which are in progress/being planned have play parks, tennis courts, allotments, community buildings and more. We know these facilities are coming without the use of CIL as they are facilities already planned and agreed in section 106 agreements (the developers will deliver these).

That said, the Parish Council is aware that residents want to see improved facilities at the play park; this is something the Parish Council want to work on and will do so, when the land is transferred from Barrett David Wilson Homes. The Council also understands that residents wanted to see improved facilities for teenagers; the Parish Council having recently funded a youth club provision for this reason.

4.Are there any more costs for the arms?

We will need to buy a frame for the arms. Quotes will be obtained, and this will be on a Parish Council agenda for consideration.

5.Will this lead to any more costs such as insurance, letterheads, signage?

Insurance premiums for Fernwood Parish Council will not change due to the purchase of the Coat of Arms.

The Council holds no printed stationery and has no plans to do so. We will change the electronic header on a letter and agendas etc this will be a matter of cutting and pasting; no costs will be incurred.

We have seen on local social media that it is being suggested that the council will buy regalia such as mayoral chains etc. This is something that other local Councils have but it's not something that is being considered by the current administration of Fernwood Parish Council.

The Council's action plan includes having 'welcome to' signage on edges of the parish. This is common in villages/parishes across the country. At this stage, these have not been arranged as there is so much planned roadworks due to the developments around the parish. The Council will consider this at some point in the future; when the costs are being considered, this will be fully publicised in a council agenda and we will add Facebook posts to let residents know about this.

6.Why didn't I know about this money being spent?

Fernwood Parish Council endeavours to reach out to residents as much as possible, using it's notice boards, website, Facebook and Fernwood Gazette. The Coat of Arms was agreed at the January 17th, 2022, meeting. The agenda was on the notice boards, our website, our Facebook page and shared to the two local Facebook

groups including event invites¹². The Coat of Arms has been mentioned in every Parish Council meeting agenda pack since, the latest one being in the budget report in the October agenda pack. Appendix one has details on when the Coat of Arms has been mentioned in public documents up to October 2022.

The Parish Council adds an event invite to the Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page and shares this to the two local Facebook groups. Our meeting dates follow a regular pattern (the third Monday of every month except August and December when there isn't a meeting); they are also listed in the Fernwood Gazette. We try to make it as clear as possible, but everybody can attend our meetings; we accept that people may have other priorities and are clear that people can write to the Council and express their views.

7. How can you spend this much money on a Coat of Arms with the current economic climate? This money could have been spent on people in poverty.

Details on what CIL can be used for can be found here: [Community Infrastructure Levy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-infrastructure-levy)

8. Is there an opportunity for us to get involved with the design?

The Coat of Arms is nearly ready. When we looked into the process we were asked about the history of the Parish; the following ideas were sent:

- Fernwood Water Tower
- Balderton Hospital
- Avro Lancaster
- Balderton Hall
- Trees: Turkey Oak, Wellingtonia, Horse Chestnut, Yew, Sycamore
- Woodpeckers – Green and Great Spotted ones

¹² Parish Council meeting are set up as events on Facebook as this application sends reminders to people.

9.This is purely a vanity project.

We disagree. The Coat of Arms has not been related to a particular Councillor; the Council unanimously agreed it was a good idea to buy it. Noone's name will be linked to the Coat of Arms. It will purely be for the Parish Council (current and future) to use to promote Fernwood as a place to live and work in. If signs are erected on the entrances to the parish, this will clearly show Fernwood is not an 'estate' and make Fernwood's identity clear. The parish is a lot bigger than the current development and those in progress; 'welcome to' signage would help to mark that¹³.

We assure you that spending £14,555 on the granting of the arms has not cost taxpayers of Fernwood anything and will not stop other large projects being delivered in Fernwood. The Council will receive hundreds of thousands of pounds in CIL.

10.Where is this Coat of Arms?

It is close to being completed. As soon as we have it, we will publicise it.

11.Parish Council meetings are not publicised well enough. Why don't you send us more reminders?

Our meeting dates follow a regular pattern (the third Monday of every month except August and December when there isn't a meeting). The dates are listed in the Fernwood Gazette. Agendas are posted on the Parish Council notice boards, our website, our Facebook page and shared to the two local Facebook groups.

The Parish Council adds an event invite to the Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page and shares this to the 2 local Facebook groups.

We feel we're proactive in letting residents know when our meetings are. Not many other local Parish Councils have active Facebook pages which invite residents to come to the meetings with links to agendas et cetera and share this to local Facebook groups.

We do encourage you to follow the Parish Council Facebook page so you get notifications of our events (which include Parish Council meetings); hopefully this will mean Facebook will remind you. Alternatively, a recurring reminder in your electronic calendar on your phone could be set up to remind you to look for the agenda for the Parish Council meeting on the second Wednesday each month (it will be published on the Tuesday) and another reminder of the Parish Council Meeting (third Monday of each month).

¹³ Another local government body recently missed Fernwood Parish Council out on their consultation regarding an application from a local business on the edge of the parish. The Parish Council found out about the consultation anyway and this is by no means a complaint against the other authority but it does give an indication of the fact that it is not clear where the boundaries of Fernwood are to some people. This is not the first time this has happened. Signage would not guarantee that this would happen again, but we believe it would improve local knowledge on the parish boundaries.

12. Why haven't you got a CIL policy and why haven't you consulted residents up to now?

We have consulted residents on projects we are considering that CIL could be used for, and we plan to have a draft CIL policy at the January 2023 Parish Council meeting.

It is clear this is something we need. To date it hasn't been written for a variety of reasons. We have recently employed an administration assistant to allow more time for the Parish Clerk to spend on writing such policies.

13. Why hasn't the Parish Council used CIL to replace the play park in central Fernwood? We want a skatepark or something for teenagers.

The Parish Council does plan to invest in the park just off Rubys Way. At present the Council does not have ownership of the majority of the open spaces in Fernwood central.

The transfer of the open spaces was agreed in principle in the Spring of 2021 but the legal work for this has taken much longer than we had expected. The legal transaction involves BDWH, N&SDC and the Parish Council as the land must be transferred to N&SDC based on the section 106 agreement that was agreed in 1999. A back to back transfer is planned with the land being transferred to N&SDC and then to the Parish Council immediately.

The Parish Council investigated the feasibility of buying a piece of land across the B6326, towards Suthers School, with a view to creating a recreational space with older children in mind. We were told that this is designated as business use land and would cost around £1m, so therefore not possible.

A resident wrote to the Council recently asking for all age groups to be kept in mind when designing parks; this was discussed at the September Parish Council meeting and the Council agreed to contact N&SDC and Persimmon Homes about this. An N&SDC officer has confirmed the request has been sent to Persimmon.

As soon as we take ownership of the open spaces, we will get onto working with FirstPort on improving the play park in central Fernwood.

14. This money could have been used on improving the parking issues on Goldstraw Lane. Why haven't you done this?

In December 2019, Fernwood Parish Council representatives met with a senior officer from Via East Midlands (Nottinghamshire County Council) and the then County Councillor, Keith Walker, to discuss parking issues in Fernwood, in particular, along Goldstraw Lane.

The officer advised that adding double yellow lines often only displaces issues and recommended that a polite request be given to residents to park considerately. She also said less parked cars, from her experience would increase the speed of some drivers.

Another issue that was raised around that time was the fact that the services are quite close to the surface of pavements so the cost to adapt pavements to move cars away from parking on the road, would be quite costly.

The roads in Fernwood were approved by NCC and are the responsibility of NCC/Via East Midlands; that said, should they provide a quote for a feasibility study on changing the road/path on Goldstraw Lane, with an outline figure of what any proposed changes may cost, the Council would consider this and consult with residents regarding the issue.

Appendix 1: List of References to the Coat of Arms in publicly available documents

Date	Meeting Date/Document Type	Where in document?	Published on Parish Council website, event and agenda ¹⁴ /minutes added on Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page, shared from Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page to MyFernwood Facebook and Fernwood Village Groups on Facebook	On Parish Council notice boards ¹⁵	Delivered to Homes
11/1/22	17/1/22 Agenda	Agenda item Clerk's report Quote	✓	✓	✗
8/2/22	17/1/22 Minutes	Clerk's report Minuted decision	✓	✓	✗
10/2/22	21/2/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
24/2/22	21/2/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
22/3/22	28/3/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report Action Plan	✓	✓	✗
28/4/22	28/3/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
19/4/22	25/4/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
3/5/22	25/4/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
10/5/22	16/5/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
23/5/22	16/5/22 Minutes	Clerk's report	✓	✓	✗

¹⁴ Full agenda pack

¹⁵ On notice boards, just the agenda is posted not the full agenda pack

Date	Meeting Date/Document Type	Where in document?	Published on Parish Council website, event and agenda¹⁴/minutes added on Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page, shared from Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page to MyFernwood Facebook and Fernwood Village Groups on Facebook	On Parish Council notice boards¹⁵	Delivered to Homes
14/6/22	20/6/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
24/6/22	20/6/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
12/7/22	18/7/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
22/7/22	18/7/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
20/9/22	26/9/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
Delivered end of September	October Fernwood Gazette	Page 4	✓	✗	✓
3/10/22	26/9/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report	✓	✓	✗
11/10/22	17/10/22 Agenda	Clerk's Report Budget Report	✓	✓	✗
21/10/22	17/10/22 Minutes	Clerk's Report		✓	✗

Appendix 2: Complaints

Complaint 1

From: REDACTED

Sent: 07 November 2022 13:46

To: feedback@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Subject: Formal complaint

Dear Fernwood PC,

I would like to raise a formal complaint against the PC regarding the spending of £14500 to purchase a Coat of Arms for the village.

Having spoken to another PC please advise on the below:

- * There's no mention of this crest on the November agenda or minutes.
- * Nothing on your website for December so assuming they didn't meet in that month?
- * January 17th agenda and minutes weren't uploaded to the website until Feb 8th (along with the paperwork) and all it says is: item expenditure for consideration - Coat of Arms, then the price which was unanimously agreed.

There's nothing to confirm this agenda was made public ahead of the meeting, which by law they have to give three clear days notice so if she didn't put a copy on a noticeboard, Joe public wouldn't have known to attend and object.

Ultimately, I believe that this to be nothing more than a vanity project and that the money could have spent far better enriching the lives of residents and the residents should have been consulted formally on this.

REDACTED

On Mon, 7 Nov 2022 at 14:52, <clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk> wrote:

Good afternoon REDACTED,

Thank you for your complaint. I have assessed your complaint and this is answered below

The agenda for the meeting on January 17th meeting was published on Tuesday 11th January 2022. This was posted on the notice boards at the village hall and Goldstraw Lane. Below I show a screen shot of evidence of this; the invite was sent to the Newark Advertiser and the local Councillors. Details of the meeting were also shared on Facebook on January 12th. Screen shots of the evidence below.

The screenshot shows an email client window titled "Fernwood Parish Council meeting - January 17th 7pm - Message (HTML)". The interface includes a search bar, a menu bar (File, Message, Help), and a toolbar with various actions like Ignore, Delete, Archive, Reply, Forward, Meeting, Councillors, Team Email, Create New, Move, Rules, Actions, Mark Unread, Follow Up, Find, Related, Select, Read Aloud, Immersive Reader, Translate, and Zoom. The email content is as follows:

Fernwood Parish Council meeting - January 17th 7pm

CP clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk
To: County Councillor John Lee; Ivor Walker (ivor.walker@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk); Keith Walker (keith.walker@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk); Neill Mison (neill.mison@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk); news@newarkadvertiser.co.uk

Good afternoon,

The next Fernwood Parish Council meeting is on Monday at 7pm in the small hall. The agenda and papers for our Parish Council next Monday can be read here: [FERNWOOD PARISH COUNCIL \(fernwood-pc.co.uk\)](https://www.fernwood-pc.co.uk) (too big to attach)

Please do not attend the meeting if you have any covid symptoms or have tested positive. If possible, do a test before you come.

Alternatively, you can access the meeting via Zoom : <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84754283416>

We would appreciate your attendance in person or online.

Hope to see you next week.

Best wishes,

Marion Fox Goddard
Parish Clerk
Fernwood Parish Council
Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk
Tel: 01636 613024

fernwood

The agenda was on the website from the 11th of January 2022. Councillor Lee's report had not been put in the agenda pack published on 11/1/22 so I uploaded a second copy with his report and an apology – this can be seen on page 15 of this link: [FERNWOOD PARISH COUNCIL \(fernwood-pc.co.uk\)](http://www.fernwood-pc.co.uk) I recall that I removed the original agenda but then had second thoughts thinking it would be better to leave the original one on so they could be compared if there was any need to go back to the agendas. So, I uploaded the initial agenda again. Fernwood Parish Council has nothing to hide.

To clarify, the meeting was convened and publicised as it is required to by law:

Agenda Item

8d: Items of expenditure for consideration

v. Coat of Arms (Page 23 has the quote that the Council considered).

The Council's decision to buy the Coat of Arms was minuted the minutes were published (Online and on the notice boards) and available for everybody to read.

I'm not sure what relevance November or December have to your complaint - if you could confirm I will come back to you.

I hope this clarifies the situation and explains to you that the Council made this decision lawfully. If you have any further questions on the legality of the decision, please let me know.

Regarding the Council's decision, we have released attached document today to give insight into the Council's decision. Regarding your comment that the funding could have been spent on 'enriching the lives of residents and the residents', the Council would not have agreed the spend if it was to be at the expense of any other project that was needed. The following document which is on the Council's website, will give you insight into the significant amounts of money the Council has and will receive; I can assure you that investing in the Coat of Arms will not affect any other project: [CIL](#)

I invite you to come to the Parish Council meeting this month and discuss this directly with the Council. They will be meeting on November the 21st at 7:00 PM at the village hall.

I hope I've addressed your complaint to your satisfaction but if you would like to raise anything else, please do not hesitate to come back to me.

Best wishes,

Marion Fox Goddard

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Fernwood Parish Council

Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Tel: 01636 613024

Office opening times: Monday & Friday 10am-12pm, Tuesday to Thursday 10am - 1pm

From: REDACTED

Sent: 07 November 2022 15:05

To: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Subject: Re: Formal complaint Coat of Arms

Thanks,

That's a great reply (as always).

So my next question - please - is reading the statement signs are being requested, have these been costed up? I have contacted a couple of signmakers and they quoted 'roughly' £3000 each for a 'traditional type' village sign. By my estimation we want at least 2, possibly 3 (Goldstraw/ Dale and the new entrance) and in addition there are maintenance/ insurance/ replacement costs to be considered. And finally there's stationery to be considered etc.

Thanks again,

REDACTED

From: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk <clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk>

Sent: 07 November 2022 15:32

To: REDACTED

Subject: RE: Formal complaint Coat of Arms

Hello REDACTED,

Thanks for coming back to me.

No, at this stage the signs haven't been costed fully. We wanted to get the Coat of Arms organised so we could provide a brief of the design to any companies that quote and, to be honest, delivery of the signs may take some time as we know there are going to be a lot of traffic works on the edge of the Parish over the coming years with the bridge widening etc. so we need to be sure they won't just get dug up as part of road works before we get them.

I don't think you are far out; the costs of the signs will be approx.£10,000 which is again a drop in the ocean when it comes to how much CIL we have now/will have when the signs are purchased. When we're closer to buying them and considering the cost, I will check with the Council's insurer if the signs will increase the cost of our premium but from my experience, this is going to be unlikely because this question was raised about our buying the woodland and it had absolutely no effect on the premium. Replacement costs will be something the Council will consider. In terms of where they go, this will be looked at in detail when we have the Coat of Arms ready and are able to look at where would be best for the signs to go.

Regarding stationery, we don't we don't hold branded stationery so there will be no right off costs and no new costs. With respect to this, the header will be changed but this is just pasted into documents and then printed.

Please feel free to let me have any queries. I can't guarantee I can get back to you as quickly as today, but I hope that I have reassured you that the Council does take into account the implications of projects they are considering.

Best wishes,

Marion Fox Goddard
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Fernwood Parish Council
Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Complaint 2

From: REDACTED
Sent: 07 November 2022 17:30
To: office@Fernwood-pc.co.uk
Subject: Contact via HugoFox

Dear Parish,

You have received the following message from REDACTED

Sirs I am absolutely astounded by the news that someone has had the ridiculous notion that in these fiscally problematic times it is ok to spend thousands on a Coat of Arms for Fernwood. Frankly, whoever has rubber stamped this selfish vanity project, should be removed from office. Completely shameful decision making. Sincerely REDACTED

From: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk <clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk>
Sent: 08 November 2022 10:22
To: REDACTED

Subject: Coat of Arms Feedback

Good morning,

Thank you for your message which I will redact and pass on to the Council. (If you would prefer it not to be redacted please let me know).

The following press release, which was published yesterday, gives some insight as to why the Council made the decision. If you have any further feedback after reading the release, do let me know.

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

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

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 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.

Best wishes,

Marion Fox Goddard
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Fernwood Parish Council
Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk
Tel: 01636 613024

Office opening times: Monday & Friday 10am-12pm, Tuesday to Thursday 10am - 1pm

Appendix 3: Press Release¹⁶ (In full – note the Newark Advertiser only published part of this)

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Marion Fox Goddard, Parish Clerk, Fernwood Parish Council

Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Telephone: 01636 613024

Issue date: 7 November 2022

Fernwood Parish Council Coat of Arms

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Council Funds

¹⁶ Press release that was published on the Council's website, Facebook page and on local social media.

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