



Fernwood Parish Council
Fernwood Village Hall
Rubys Avenue
Fernwood
Newark
NG24 3RS

Monday, 05 December 2022

Dear Mr Mison,

Thank you for the petition that you handed in on November 21st at the Fernwood Parish Council meeting.

Please find enclosed a response to your petition.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

M Fox Goddard

Marion Fox Goddard
Clerk to Fernwood Parish Council

Petition: Petition against further spending on a Fernwood Coat of Arms

Response compiled by Marion Fox Goddard on December 2nd, 2022.

Owner	Neill Mison
Type	Electronic. Change.org
Distribution	Fernwood and Newark Spotted Facebook groups.
Start date	8/11/22
Hand in date	21/11/22
Number of signatures	83
Number of signatures from Fernwood residents	64 (see page 6)
Petition request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We ask the Fernwood Parish Council to immediately stop any more spending relating to a coat of arms. Including but not limited to new signs, letter heads, press releases and officer time. 2. We ask that there is a full consultation with the residents of Fernwood before any decisions are made on the coat of arms, and to consult the residents of Fernwood on their views as to how the funds raised via the Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) could be spent on projects to improve community facilities and infrastructure though out the whole of Fernwood, such as play parks, better parking residents, sports and recreation facilities. 3. We strongly disagree with Fernwood Parish Councils policy that they do not spend money on land they do not own. 4. We insist that independent third party advice is sought for future proposed spending and that a full consultation process with the residents of Fernwood be followed providing residents with transparency and trust.
Petition response from Fernwood Parish Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Coat of Arms was paid for in May 2022. No further expenditure is planned on the coat of arms although we will need to have it framed. Quotes will be obtained, and this will be on a parish council agenda which is published. Discussion on this expenditure will be conducted at an open meeting where everyone is welcome. b. Welcome to Fernwood Signs will be purchased for the edges of the Parish. Reasoning for getting these signs is detailed in Appendix 1– see page 4. c. The council holds no printed stationery and has no plans to do so. The letterhead that the council uses is pasted into the top of each document so having a coat of arms will lead to no costs in terms of stationery. d. Officer time will be spent obtaining quotes for the frame and signs, but this will be a relatively a small job.

	<p>2. All decisions regarding coat of arms were made prior to the petition being started. The decision to buy the coat of arms was made in January 2022.</p> <p>Fernwood Parish Council is currently drafting a community infrastructure levy policy and there will be a consultation on this including an application for residents to apply for funding to deliver projects.</p> <p>Fernwood has already earmarked money for the improvement of the play park in central Fernwood. We welcome suggestions on what residents would like the money to be spent on and we will include any suggestions in the consultation.</p> <p>3. Fernwood Parish Council does not have a policy of not spending money on non-owned land.</p> <p>We believe this statement is regarding the Council's decision not to invest in the play park until Barratt David Wilson Homes hand over the open spaces to the parish council. Appendix 2 on page 5 includes details on the Council's reasoning for this.</p> <p>4. Fernwood Parish Council will have a CIL policy in place early next year and we will consult with residents on use of this funding. We do not believe a consultant is required to establish what the needs of Fernwood are. Our staff and councillors will work together to deliver this in consultation with Fernwood residents.</p> <p>Fernwood Parish Council is open and transparent. Full agenda packs are published on our website every month as our minutes. Links to these are posted on the Fernwood Parish Council Facebook page and shared to the 2 local Facebook groups. Draft minutes are published within one week of meetings. Residents are welcome to join our meetings or come and talk to us to about issues in the village and items on the parish council agenda.</p> <p>The Council has a track record of consulting with residents, and we see no reason for this to change.</p> <p><i>On November 14th, 2022, Fernwood Parish Council published a report on the Coat of Arms: Coat of Arms. We encourage anyone who is interested in the background to this topic to read this report as it answers all the questions raised in this petition.</i></p>
Contact	<p>Marion Fox Goddard Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk Telephone: 01636 613024</p>

Appendix One: Why Fernwood Parish Council has bought the Coat of Arms

Fernwood Parish Council wants 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.

An example of why welcome to signage would be helpful:

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.

Appendix 2: Renewal of the Park off Ruby's Way

Fernwood Parish Council is committed to replacing/improving this park. The Council has yet to consult with respect to this as the land transfer¹ 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 park²; 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.

The Council 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.

¹ Barratt David Wilson Homes owns most of the land in central Fernwood still (see question 15 for more information on this)

² 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.

Appendix 3: Signatures believed not from Fernwood residents:

Name	Electoral Register for Fernwood	Fernwood Facebook Group	Details on Survey
J. Lee	x	✓	NG24, Newark
L. Buckley	x	x	NG7, Nottingham
T. Thomas	x	x	NG24, Newark
D. Daft	x	x	NG22, Nottingham
R. Johnson	x	x	NG23, Newark
K. Whitehead	x	x	SW6, London
S. Lockhart	x	x	HX3, Halifax
J c	x	x	SW12, London
H. Parfitt	x	x	NG24, Newark
J. Myers	x	x	CM20, Harlow
J. Hui	x	x	California, US
S. Sergeant	x	x	NG24, Newark
G. Leonardo	x	x	Trapani, Italy
A. MacInnes	x	x	DE7, Ilkeston
R. Lawler	x	x	NG24, Newark
G. Hilton	x	x	NG24, Newark
H. Hecox	x	x	Michigan, US
I. Ullrich	x	x	Sydney, Australia
J. Beaumont	x	x	CV1, Coventry

Notes

1. Cross check done on the survey postcode, electoral register and MyFernwood Facebook group.
2. Many respondents had a 'city' name not in Newark/Fernwood. However, their names have been found on the electoral register for Fernwood so are not included in the list above. i.e. Their responses have been counted despite the city/postcode being outside of Fernwood.