

District Cllrs Karen Roberts and Peter Harris Report for March 2024

Full documentation for each of these meetings are on the Council's website - see The Council-Calendar of Meetings for links to each of the papers and reports

Cabinets Feb 20 and Mar 6 The Cabinet [and subsequently the Council] approved the Capital programme including the £5.5m project for the replacement of the swimming pool - subject to getting the land required free of charge. A Cost of living response was agreed. Two solar panels at Council property have been installed with further ones to come.

The Playing Field strategy was approved - still showing significant deficits in grass pitches for both football and rugby, and space for netball. A new 3G artificial pitch is recommended to be built as well as protecting all current provision from degradation.

Active for Today's [A4T] performance was reviewed. A grant of £147k to support swimming operating costs was gained, but despite this A4T expects an increased deficit of £457,000. Membership and other income at Southwell has already dropped by £43,000, adult membership to December had dropped by 200 and children by more than 100 since March 2023.

Arkwood, the wholly owned development company of N&SDC made a profit last year of £407k. It is involved in 3 developments in Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire as well as one in Balderton and the old Marks and Spencer's building in Newark. Arkwood is looking to build 1000 homes across the country next year.

Licensing and GP Committees Feb 29 reviewed the location of our polling stations, but are propose to continue to use the Barn at the Hearty Goodfellow, despite its location away from nearly all of the ward's housing, as the better located Army Cadet Drill Hall continues to be unsuitable due to its gravel driveways. There are no changes proposed

The Policy & Performance Improvement Committee of Mar 4 considered two reports on Active Lifestyles and a second on improving Members involvement of and information on Council activities in our Ward. The later has not been implemented yet, but we will let you know how this information can be passed onto the councils

Audit and Governance Committee Feb 21 received a number of statutory reports and strategies

Planning Committee Feb 15 and Mar 14 considered unacceptable alterations to the former barn at Foxglove Edingley and the request for permission for these retrospective changes were rejected. The impacts of the new Biodiversity laws were reviewed - they require a minimum of 10% gain in biodiversity on most significant applications from April 2. This stipulation may be met by developers buying land away from the site to comply. This is a complex area and you are advised to seek guidance from the Planners for further information. Enforcement action was also reviewed. There have been an increasing number and a significant number of 'enforcement notices' are being delivered, although none in our area were highlighted.

Full Council Feb 13 debated the petition from 2300+ signatures on the closure of Southwell's Swimming Pool. Sent into the Council in December, this should have been scheduled for a debate in the Council. However, this was not tabled in February and again not on the agenda for March. After an intervention by both the proposer and Peter, the petition was discussed at the March meeting. Peter Harris was not permitted to speak first to the petition. Only after the Leader and another Cabinet member had spoken was Peter called to speak. The Council's Leader, Cllr Paul Peacock [Edwinstowe and Clipstone] repeated the position that the Council will not repair the pool and is planning to rebuild but will only start work to plan anything on this after the land issue has been resolved. One member commented that they would prefer the money to be spent elsewhere in the District Karen Roberts was not able to attend as she was away. This position was agreed by the Council with only Peter voting against it.

The organiser of the petition, a Southwell resident, has complained to the Council on how the petition was dealt with as the Constitution was not followed and none of the signatories were able to attend and very few knew that the debate was to be held.