

## Leek Wootton Focus Group

22 WALLER CLOSE, LEEK WOOTTON, WARWICK. CV35 7QG

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Warwickshire Police  
3 Northgate Street  
Warwick  
Warwickshire CV34 4SP

Email 16 October 2023

For the attention of Ms Polly Reed PCC Chief Executive

Dear Ms Reed

### **Re: Warwickshire Police Headquarters - Estate management update October 2023**

Further to our correspondence dated 20 September, 22 September – email, 24 September and the 11 October 2023, we acknowledge your reply dated the 13th October 2023. For ease of reference your reply outlined in your letter is set out in red, our response is in blue.

#### **1 PCC Estate Masterplan.**

Eighteen months have passed since our initial request for a Masterplan of the estate. Your comment contained in your letter 17th November 2022 that “*careful thought needs to be put into how the entirety of the PCC’s estate should be used,*”

**Q1 - has this been concluded? Sight of your completed masterplan would be welcomed. Have you made contact with Cala Homes / WDC since the sale in Dec 2021 regarding the production of a masterplan? If so what actions have been undertaken ?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - A masterplan has not been prepared. No discussions have taken place with CALA about a masterplan.**

**LWFG - we will refrain from asking further questions on this subject, because it is obvious that you do not intend to produce a masterplan**

#### **1A. Building condition survey**

In your letter dated 17th November 2022 you confirmed that building condition surveys had commenced and would be released to the public .

**Q2 - Could you please make this available.**

PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is exempt from release under s43 of the Freedom of Information Act

LWFG - Section 43(2) exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of a the public authority. What commercial intrests are there. The sale of Woodcote House?

**1B. PCC Improvements to Woodcote House.**

On the 20 July 2022, reference WA3532 we asked for detail of works that have been undertaken on the Woodcote Estate since January 2021, and works planned throughout 2022.

Your detailed report in your letter dated 28th October 2022 was welcomed.

Could this be updated and extended to include works scheduled for 2023 and made available.

As stated in our letter of the 29th January 2023, and obviously linked to your building condition survey, do you have a schedule of works for Woodcote House. Your response on the 4th May 2023 “This information is not held” was disappointing.

**Q3 - Is this still your position?**

PCC reply 13 Oct - The information is as follows:

Date	Works	Cost	
July 2022	Phase 3 Improvement Works – Decorating of 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Woodcote House	£161, 725	Complete
July 2022	Works to Belltower	£150,000 indicative	Estimated completion October 2023
September 2022	Renovation works at North Lodge	£141,000	March 2024
October 2022	Replacement roof on workshop	£185,000	Complete
October 2022	Roof and masonry works for Woodcote House		In design
October 2022	Replacement roof and windows in 60s block	£367,000	Complete
October 2022	District heating system		In design
September 23	Car park clearance and alterations	£11,000 indicative cost	Ongoing

LWFG - See our attached report LWFG - "A Timeline of abuse - Update " 16th October 2023 v1

## 2. Maintenance of the Upper and lower lakes.

On the 29 Jan 2023 we wrote to you stating: "we have been approached by several elderly residents who have reminisced about the time the lakes were open to the public for fishing. These gentlemen are in their 70s and wish to fish by the lakes. Could you give this some thought as they have been told that it is a security problem.

I think the benefit of having knowledgeable fisherman spending time around the lakes would benefit the community and also provide valuable information as to the health and well-being of this valuable asset."

Your reply on the 28th April 2023, "We may consider your request for fishing in due course" is noted.

**Q4 - Can we have your current position on this.**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - This position has not changed.**

LWFG - noted

2A. Our report on the estate was issued to you on the 5th August 2022. The Focus Group gave a detailed report on both lakes. "The lakes were dying, caused by decades of silt resulting in a lack of oxygen for the fish. 30 years ago the Environment agency & the County Council carried out the mammoth task of dredging both lakes removing 100s of tons of silt and in the process restoring the lakes".

"30 years later both lakes are once again silting up. Water levels are diminishing and the lakes are being strangled by reeds".

2B. The retaining wall / walkway separating the upper and lower lakes is in a hazardous condition (see photos below)



Q5 - Since the issuing of our report 13 months ago have you carried out a dilapidation survey / instructed consultants / or carried out internal reports relating to the lakes. If so under the "The Environmental Information Regulations Act 2004 can these be made available.

PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is not held and I have no update.

LWFG - It is concerning that you have no interest in the deterioration of your estate. Is lack of funding?

#### **4. Temporary accommodation**

The LWFG report "Who polices the Police? 5 Aug 2022" stated; "The building was to be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to ensure that the visual amenities of the area were protected. Because the building was of a temporary nature and form, it was to be removed by the 13 August 2006. The site was to be restored to its former condition before the removal date".

Your comment as your letter 17th November 2022; "I can confirm that we already know they (Temporary accommodation) will not form part of the estates requirement going forward, and that they are in scope therefore to be removed".

6 months later on the 12th April 2023 we wrote; "On Friday the 7th April I walked around the back of the headquarters and took a series of photographs of the temporary accommodation. Despite assurances that the area would be cleared there are as you can see in the photographs the hulk of the abandoned office and now two abandoned caravans remain rotting away. The whole area is a dumping ground, a disgrace.

Your previous statement was then altered in your letter 28th April 2023.....'No timescale is currently available for the removal of the modular buildings, as it is part of a wider project this financial year.

**Q6 - Could you confirm what is meant by "part of a wider project" and why this illegal building and 2 caravans have not been removed.**

PCC reply 13 Oct - This position has not changed and these works will continue as planned. The wider project relates to the clear up of the Leek Wootton Estate.

LWFG - the "wider project" please provide details

#### **5 Parking on the Tennis courts.**

With the proposed loss of the tennis courts to Cala, what is your master plan for the location of 400 vehicles around the rest of the estate that will have a reduced capacity for 295 vehicles?

On the 28th April 2023 you stated “We are taking forward a project to consider car park requirements this financial year” What are your proposals?

PCC reply 13 Oct - Not numbered within para 5 - We are currently considering plans for parking to take into account the loss of the tennis courts.

LWFG - “plans for parking” please provide details

## 6 Two illegal tips & general litter

The tips were brought to your attention in August 2022. Your statement on the 17th November 2022 that “*a cleanup of the whole estate is being carried out*” was extremely encouraging and long overdue.

We wrote on the 29 January 2023 asking if you had a date when these areas would be cleared. This was followed up by a further letter to you on the 18th April 2023 with photographs of litter scattered over a widespread area. The comments made in your reply dated 28th April 2023 “The work is ongoing in this area and the force estate’s team are working with the contractors to ensure the site is fully cleared up” whilst welcomed it would appear that very little has been achieved.

An inspection on the 9th September 2023 has revealed;

6A) The two illegal tips appear at first glance to have been cleared. Upon closer inspection buried scrap metal, tyres etc remain.

**Q7 - What if any further action do you intend to take?**

PCC reply 13 Oct - I have asked the estates team to look into this.

LWFG - it is now 12 months since this was brought to your attention please provide a date when this will be completed

6B) Litter is still prevalent throughout the site.

**Q8 - What if any further action do you intend to take?**

PCC reply 13 Oct - I have asked the estates team to look into this.

LWFG - it is now 12 months since this was brought to your attention please provide a date when this will be completed

## 7 Woodland - Tree Protection status.

7a). Your statement that you are “*in the process of specifying the activity required to manage the woodland*” is noted.

Your statement that in September you met with the Wildlife Trust was a surprise to us as we have received no communication from them. On the 29th January 2023

we commented that we had been in touch with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and have spoken to Carl, who stated that he attended a brief meeting with the PCC. He offered his thoughts regarding woodland management.

**Q9 - It has been confirmed by both parties that no notes were taken, we therefore question the relevance of this meeting. Why were minutes not taken? Are further meetings been planned?**

PCC reply 13 Oct - The meeting was not minuted as it was informal. Going forward we will engage the Wildlife Trust as appropriate.

LWFG - we would question the purpose of your engagement with the Wildlife Trust as it would appear, that no action has resulted from it.

7b). It was noted that your Estates Team have appointed a contractor and they have carried out a tree survey. This is indeed a mammoth task

Perhaps when your Estates team have received this report you will share this with the Focus Group. Several of our members are part of the Woodland Trust and are the process of sharing our surveying notes with the Woodland Trust regarding the identification of ancient and veteran trees on the Estate.

Your contractors survey would prove extremely useful to all parties in relationship to their numbering and classifications of the trees on the estate and would avoid duplication and confusion later on.

PCC reply 13 Oct - I remind you of my communication requesting that members of the public do not enter the policing estate. I'd be grateful if you could share this with members of the LFWG.

LWFG - your message has been passed on.

**See 7c below**

On the 29th January 2023 we asked

7c). Is it possible to share any of your results regarding tree surveys?

**Q10 - You state that you have appointed a contractor and they have carried out a tree survey then state "This information is not held". Please clarify your position.**

PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is exempt from release under s21 of the Act, as it has previously been released to you.

LWFG - your comment that the information has been released previously to us is obviously incorrect. You have provided in part a Tree survey carried out in December 22. This covers 1% of the trees on the estate.

By your refusal to fully reply I presume that you do not wish to share information.  
Can you please explain why.

7d). Do you have a topographical survey of the whole site?

**Q11 - Your response on the 4th May 2023 “This information is not held” is disappointing. Is this still your position?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - this position has not changed**

**LWFG - see our comment above .**

7f) Have you had a meeting with the WDC Tree Officer in the last 12 months? If so do you have any notes of this meeting?

**Q12 - Your response on the 4th May 2023 “This information is not held” is extremely worrying. Can you elaborate why contact has not been made with the WDC Tree Officer?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - this position has not changed. I have no further information to offer.**

**LWFG -. The WDC TREE AND WOODLANDS STRATEGY document states;**

*3.1.3 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Council has powers to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and designate Conservation Areas (CAs) within which all established trees are protected. It is usually only in cases of potential threat that a local authority will seek to legally protect trees by use of TPO. Resources rarely allow the proactive use of orders and desirable updating and re-surveying. The implementation of such statutory restrictions on the rights of a land owner is always a potential source of conflict and difficulty.*

*3.1.4 Protection has not only been achieved through the statutory process. A substantial number of trees have been saved from inappropriate pruning or premature felling by the offer of expert advice from the Council’s officers. Advice is offered to the owners of protected trees and other tree owners, this advice is offered free and is seen as a valuable part of tree protection.*

Can you please explain why there has been no contact with WDC

## **8 Woodland Management Plan.**

As per our requests on the 31 March 2022, 12 May 2022 and the 17 June 2022 can you provide a copy of your woodland management plan for the Woodcote Estate (UKFS) as per the guidelines set out by the Forestry Commission.

We asked - Do you have a date when a Woodland Management Plan will be in place?

**Q13 - On the 26 May 2022 the PCC Philip Seccombe wrote; “We are continuing to assess the condition of the trees on the land, and complete the work to produce a woodland management plan”.**

**A year later on the 4th May 2023 your response was - information is not held.**

**A further 4 months have elapsed since this statement, you are now saying this information is not held. Having started your woodland management plan in May 2022 why was it presumably stopped, or has it been misplaced ?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is not held and I have no update.**

**LWFG - we will refrain from asking further questions on this subject, because it is obvious that you do not intend to produce a woodland management plan**

## **8A. Tree risk management report**

On the 4th May 2023 you issued “A tree risk management report to the Focus Group and was initially welcomed.

On the 14th June, 19th June and the 26th August 2023, within a space of 6 weeks 3 large branches/ trees have fallen. In reviewing your Tree Risk Management Report dated December 2022 issued to the Focus Group 5 months later on the 4th May 2023, it was noted that in all cases trees in a vulnerable position to a number of residents were not surveyed within your report.

You will recall our earlier correspondence to you on the 19th June 2022 and the 23rd July 2022 relating to the removal of fallen trees in the East Lunch woodland south of the stream backing onto the gardens on Waller Close. On the 31st March 2022 we raised the issue of the management of the woodland and the removal of dangerous trees suspended in adjacent trees. Between the 13th and 19th June 2022 41 trees were felled by your subcontractor without adequate instructions and supervision.

Of the 41 trees only 11 were considered to be an immediate danger. Our correspondence dated 6th October 2022 to the Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Commission cc to you was a 7 page detailed account of the dangerous and illegal actions undertaken by your workforce. Our letter dated the 19th July 2022 resulted in you suspending work immediately at noon on the 19th June 2022.

Numerous questions were asked in this letter. Your replies are in RED:

4 Have you carried out a survey and identified the trees to be removed. If so please provide details PCC reply on the 4th October 2022 - This information is not held



5 Have the trees been marked so they are readily identifiable. Note - there appears to be no marking on the trees. PCC reply on the 4th October 2022 - This information is not held

6 Have you carried out a Bat survey. If so please provide all communication and contact details PCC reply on the 4th October 2022 - This information is not held

7 Have you identified nesting birds in the trees identified for removal and nearby trees likely to be affected by the felling. If so please provide all survey details and any contact details

The 'Bird Nesting Season' is officially from February until August (Natural England) and it is recommended that vegetation works (tree or hedge cutting) or site clearance should be done outside of the nesting season. PCC reply on the 4th October 2022 - This information is not held

8 Do you have the completed application forms from the WDC for the felling of protected trees. If so please provide all communication and contact details

PCC reply on the 4th October 2022 - email correspondence sent to WDC. No reply received.

Since the 19th June 2022, a year has passed, and trees still remain suspended in adjoining trees, a danger to all who enter the woodland.

No further activity has taken place. Your tree risk management report based on surveys conducted in December 2022 have failed to record them.

We therefore repeat our comment highlighted in our letter to you of the 14th June 2023 .....

**Q14 - What actions are you taking to prevent a similar incident from occurring as your tree risk management report appears to be incomplete?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is exempt from release under s42 of the Act**

**LWFG - Section 42 states that: (1) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege.**

**Please explain as this has no bearing to the question asked, What actions are you taking to prevent a similar incident?**

We asked; please provide a record of concerns raised by residents of trees that pose a risk to their property and the action taken or pending.

Your reply; This information is not held, no correspondence has been located.

LWFG - This statement is incorrect. It is incumbent upon you to keep a register of all incidents.

We have compiled a record of incidents known to us, see below.

Leek Wootton Focus Group - Warwickshire Police Estates Tree Incidents		Issue date 15 September 2023		
Item	Tree incidents	Date	Cost	Action
1	Trees by the Upper lake removed on the land belonging to Diane Richardson - compensation paid		?	
2	Oak tree located off Woodcote Lane by the back of 1 Waller Close housing woodpecker and bats cut down by Timber merchants from Stratford upon Avon work stopped after intervention by Andrew Bostock			
3	Tree fell on boat at 9 Waller Close and damaged roof			
4	See LWFG letter 19 June 2022 & 13 July 2022 - Tree removal and Woodland management to the East Lunch with a follow up letter to the Chief Executive Officer. Forestry Commission Complaints dated 6th Oct 2022. 41 Trees felled between 13 - 19th June 2022 of which 30 required a felling licence.	13 - 19th June 2022	?	Work stopped 19th June 2022 no further work carried out
5	Tree & Woodland - Tree Risk Management Report carried out issued to LWFG in May 2023	1 Dec 2022		
6	See LWFG letter 14 June 2023 - Incident at 1 Waller Close. 50 foot tree fell in garden	28th May 2023		Remained there for 2.5 weeks
7	See LWFG letter 19 June 2023 - A branch from the East Lunch fell onto a motor home	June 2022	?	Compensation paid
8	See LWFG letter 19 June 2023 - Incident at Broadlane Carevans	10th June 2023	£200,000.00	
9	See LWFG email 25 August 2023 - Branch from T8 blocking Woodcote Drive	25 Aug 23	£0.00	Removed Sat 26th Aug at 11am
			£200,000.00	

**Q15 - Can you confirm with further details or deny the accuracy of these incidents.**

PCC reply 13 Oct - This information is exempt from release under s42 of the Act

LWFG - Section 42 states that: (1) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege.

Please explain as this has no bearing to the question asked. Can you confirm with further details or deny the accuracy of these incidents.

**9 Protection of wildlife.**

On the 29th January 2023 we offered .....”Focus Group members have assisted us in compiling our Ecology report this has been shared with the Warwickshire Wildlife trust. Again we would welcome the opportunity to share this information with you in order to continue with the monitoring of the wildlife on the estate”. **No reply was forthcoming.**

We asked

- a). Is there was a Wildlife management system in place?
- b). Have any wildlife surveys been carried out in the last 12 months?

**Q16 - Your response on the 4th May 2023 “This information is not held” is disappointing. Why have you not taken the opportunity to discuss with the Focus Group the presence and location of Wildlife on your estate.**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - this position has not changed. I have no further update to offer.**

LWFG - we will refrain from asking further questions on this subject, because it is obvious that you do not wish to obtain information from the Focus Group regarding wildlife on your estate.

## **10 North Lodge, a grade 2 listed curtilage building**

Work on the North Lodge in 2022, re the removal of the garage and outbuildings has certainly improved the exterior of the building. In your letter 17th November 2022 you stated “the plan is in place to improve the exterior of the building this financial year, to stop further deterioration by making it watertight. It is intended that internal works will take place next financial year. “

Upon closer inspection it would appear that none of this work has been carried out. When asked do you have a revised schedule of works for the North Lodge?

**Q17 - Your response on the 4th May 2023 “This information is not held” is disappointing. Is this still your position?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - The works for North Lodge required planning permission to be gained before they can commence. Preparations are taking place for this work to be carried out.**

LWFG - we pleased to hear the news that you intend to commence work in March 2024

## **11 Woodland leasing agreement between the PCC and Cala Homes**

Our letter of the 14th August 2023 under the the FOIA and the “The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 remains unanswered

**Q18 - When can we expect your reply?**

**PCC reply 13 Oct - A response is provided in this letter. The information is exempt under s43 of the Freedom of Information Act and Regulation 12(5)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations.**

LWFG - we will refrain from asking further questions on this subject, because it is obvious that you do not intend to release any information on this subject

## 12. W/22/1877 - Boundary lines

Our letter issued on the 29th June 2023 formally requesting confirmation by means of a plan the outline of the land (plots 1,2 & 3 ) sold to the Cala Homes with all site boundary lines accurately marked and areas marked under the control of the PCC. Remains unanswered.

### Q19 - When can we expect your reply?

PCC reply 13 Oct - A response is provided in this letter. the boundary plan is attached.

LWFG - Thank you

LWFG email 22 September re Gas canisters The Lunch Woodland

PCC reply 13 Oct - 22 September – email regarding Gas Cannisters in the private woodland. This has been addressed.

LWFG - Thank you

LWFG letter dated 24 September 2023 - re Estate occupancy levels  
Freedom of Information request

What are the projected police numbers within the HQ between 2022 - 2029

PCC reply 13 Oct - 24 September – This information is not held in the format you requested. However in order to be of some help I can confirm that the estimated figure of attendance at Leek Wootton is 464 people.

LWFG - we will refrain from asking further questions on this subject, because it is obvious that you do not intend to release any information on this subject

LWFG letter dated 11 October 2023 - re Litter

PCC reply 13 Oct - 11 October – please see the response above .

LWFG - see Q8 .....it is now 12 months since this was brought to your attention please provide a date when this will be completed

Overall, we are extremely disappointed by your response. It is evident that you do not wish to depart any information to us regarding the Estate.

I am happy to meet with you over a cup of coffee to try and resolve this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Harry Wilson

On behalf of the  
Leek Wootton Focus Group

Cc

LWFG members, Simon Stanion, Reiss Sadler

Leek Wootton Parish Council

Leek Wootton Councillor's

Warwick District Councillors

Planning Committee

Chris Elliott - WDC

Louise Sherwell WCC Ecologist

Ed Green - Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

BBC