

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD
AT 19.30 HRS ON TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted): Cllrs E Houghton (Chair), J Day, J Rogers, M Hawes C Bye, P Rash and L Tory, County Councillor D Schumann, Domonic Peel from Anglian Water and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence and any declarations of interest.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Wilson (personal) and Cllr Smith (holiday) and District Councillor Bovingdon. Cllr Bye declared an interest with agenda item 13.

Item 3 was brought forward to item 2. Presentation by Anglian Water

Domonic Peel IMR Planned Works and Asset Health Co-Creation Programme Manager for Anglian Water updated the Parish Council on the planned works for the new pipe to be installed which would allow a fresh water supply link from Stretham which could be used if there were problems with the current supply from Soham.

Work was due to commence on the 11 October 2021 causing road works along the A1123 near Stretham for approximately 5 weeks.

Domonic Peel left the meeting at 7.45pm

2. Public Participation. The meeting will be adjourned for up to 10 minutes to allow members of the public and Councillors who have declared an interest to make a statement on matters to be discussed. The Chair advised speakers that by speaking their names and what they raise will be minuted and be in the public domain.

A resident expressed concerns with the planning application for Redit Lane stating concerns with the design of the building, extra vehicular movement on the narrow lane and the amount of paving causing possible flooding due to the runoff of rainwater with the high-water table.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 10 August 2021

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and correct copy and were signed by the Chair.

5. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 12 July 2021

5.1 Highways issues – The meeting with Highways had been cancelled by Highways and would take place as soon as a date could be arranged.

5.2 Cemetery tap – The tap had not yet been replaced.

5.3 Purchase of Streetlights – The streetlights had been replaced.

5.4 Debit card – The debit card had been ordered but not yet received

Draft minutes not yet accepted

5.5 Storage racking – The racking had been installed and an invoice for the work would be received at a later date. The container could now be emptied and returned to CJ Murfitts.

5.6 Cycle path – Further work would commence in the next few weeks. The clerk would order the plainings.

5.7 Code of Conduct Training – CAPALC had not yet confirmed the dates for the training.

5.8 Grass cutting – The clerk and Chair had met with the area manager and Brian Millard the Operations Manager from CGM Ltd. It was agreed that BM would discuss the incorrect invoicing and credit note with their finance department and the area manager would complete monthly audits. The clerk had further met with the Area Manager and the Chair had met again with the Area Manager. The verges had now been cut in Upware but some verges in Wicken had again been missed and complaints had been received regarding the verge at the top of Hawes Lane [post meeting note – this had now been cut].

5.9 Cemetery footpaths – John Cobb Ltd had advised that there would be some weeds growing through the footpaths. Cllr Rogers was also concerned about the grass growth along the edges of the path. It was agreed that this should be sprayed off.

5.10 Upware corner hedge – The corner hedge had been cut by Cllr Day. Cutting back the hedge along the Upware road was due to be discussed at the Highways meeting, but this had not taken place. The Clerk would report on the website.

5.11 Highways diversion complaint – There had been no further communication regarding the complaint. The cats eyes had still not been replaced and the red surface at the junction of Chapel Lane had not been replaced. The Chair would contact Highways.

5.12 Neighbourhood Plans consultations – The clerk had responded to the Isleham and Reach Neighbourhood Plan consultations on behalf of Wicken Parish Council. Further plans had been received from Haddenham and Swaffham Prior. The clerk would respond.

5.13 Longer lease for the National Trust – The clerk had written to the National Trust informing them of the decision for a longer lease but had not yet received a response. The Chair advised that she had met with Sarah Smith from Wicken Fen who had advised her of the following:

- Staff Changes – Matt Deacon had left the National Trust. A Programme and Partnership Officer had been employed for a 3-year project with money received from the Lottery Funding.
- Tuk tuk – The National Trust would be selling drinks and snacks from a tuk tuk in the car park.
- Wicken Fen has a huge hole in their budget due to Covid so planned projects were being postponed. Other revenue streams are being investigated.

The Chair had received a number of complaints regarding the tuk tuk. This had also been reported by members of the public to the ECDC Licensing Officer. ECDC had contacted the National Trust and the tuk tuk had been removed

Draft minutes not yet accepted

6. Planning Matters

6.1 Proposed one bedroom detached dwelling. 11 Back Lane, Wicken CB7 5YL. Reference 21/01147/FUL

The Parish Council did not support the application for the following reasons:

- Not in keeping with the surrounding area and street scene.
- Highways concerns with the additional traffic using Redit Lane which was narrow and was popular with walkers and cyclists as well as a high number of vehicles.

6.2 T1 Sycamore - Section fell to ground level - This tree has large areas and amounts of die back and is in a severe state of decline T2 Ash - Section fell to ground level - The Tree is interfering with the power and phone wires above and is beginning to push the clients gate post over and the neighbour has concerns regarding the size of the tree and its proximity to their property. 68 High Street, Wicken CB7 5XR. Ref 21/01306/TRE

The Parish Council agreed with the felling of the sycamore tree but would prefer the Ash tree was pollarded.

6.3 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

The following had been agreed by ECDC:

- Various tree works at 7 Pond Green Wicken
- Various tree work at 47 High Street Wicken
- Redesign of one dwelling on Plot 1 Dimmocks Cote
- Redesign of single dwelling on Plot 3 Dimmocks Cote

County Councillor Dan Schumann arrived 8.45pm

7. County and District Councillor Reports

County Councillor Schumann advised that he continued to push Anglian Water with the installation of the freshwater pipe from Stretham. There had been some delay with this due to Highways permissions.

He continued to support the downgrading of the A1123 to a B road and urged the Parish Council to comment.

ECDC had created an Audit Committee which would internally hold the District Council to account ensuring everything was transparent.

CLlr Rash asked for CLlr Schumann's help with upgrading the Burwell Lode bridge. CLlrs Rash and Schumann would discuss this further.

The Combined Authority had looked further into the cycle path from Soham to Wicken and had estimated the cost at £1m. This could qualify as a match funding scheme.

Soham train station was due to open in December 2021.

Items 10 and 11 were brought forward

Draft minutes not yet accepted

10. Downgrading of the A1123 to a B Road

The clerk had received the official report from CCC, and the Parish Council had been asked to formally reply by 30th September 2021. The clerk had therefore not submitted the wording agreed at the last meeting with the thought that the Council may want to add further thoughts. The clerk had contacted Highways regarding the LHI bid system for the A1123 and had been informed that there would not be any different rules for the parishes applying along the A1123 and a contribution of around 10% would still be required for the alternatives suggested in the report. It was agreed that the Parish Council should respond with the following:

Wicken Parish Council strongly objects to the decision to overturn the democratic decision to downgrade the A1123 to a B road. The Parish Council found the document to be extremely patronising as all of the alternatives had been discussed over many years and rejected as unsuitable for this section of the A1123. The suggested traffic calming measures for our village of priority give ways, raised tables, speed cushions and visual pinch points or road hatchings would bring other issues for example, increased noise from air brakes and empty trailers and increased emissions as vehicles stop and start and are totally inappropriate. We feel the only effective alternative would be speed cameras which are not included in the LHI bid system.

11. Local Highways Improvement 2022/23

The following suggestions were discussed:

- 20mph speed limit in Butts Lane
- Double yellow lines along the bend between Kings Way and Barton's Yard
- Red surfacing along certain areas in High Street and North Street.

It was agreed that a bid should be submitted for the double yellow lines.

County Councillor Schumann left at 9.10pm

8. Mission Hall Green Meadow Update

Caroline Robinson updated the Parish Council on the meadow experiment. Details of the wildlife etc would be placed on Facebook and asked that the area around the ant hills was left when the grass was cut in October. It was agreed that an area would be left for a further year, and Caroline Robinson agreed to maintain it in the winter. The rest of the meadow would be cut in October and the first cut in March and would then be left uncut for another year. The request to extend the area was declined.

Three parishioners left the meeting

9. Notes and Ratification of the Meeting on Tuesday 31 August 2021

The Parish Council had met via Skype on the 31 August 2021 to further discuss the fibre to the door scheme now that there was a possibility that Openreach would be bringing fibre to the door at some point in 2022. It had been agreed that the Parish Council should continue to facilitate Cambridge Fibre Ltd, and a village meeting had been held on the 2 September 2021. A recording of the meeting had been put on Facebook by the clerk following complaints from some residents that they were unable to access the meeting.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

12. Upware Open Space

The clerk had not had any success with the digging of the ditch. Cllr Day passed on details of a contact in the IDB.

The clerk had received a further quote for the fence from Les Yardy which was £1690.00 plus VAT. The clerk was meeting another fencing contractor the next day.

13. Request for Permission for a Ground Level Gutter Replacement, 24 High Street, Wicken

Cllr Bye left the meeting at 9.30pm

The Parish Council agreed for the installation of the ground level drain as detailed by the residents. The clerk would put this in writing.

Cllr Bye returned to the meeting at 9.34pm

14. Replacement Street Lights for 2021/22

The Parish Council had agreed a rolling plan to replace the council owned streetlights in the village as part of the village climate strategy. It was agreed that the following lights should be replaced using CIL money:

- Light opposite 42 Drury Lane
- Light at the pedestrian entrance of the Recreation Ground
- Light adjacent to 24 Lode Lane

15. Completion of the Limited Assurance Review for the year Ended 31 March 2021

The audit for the year end 31 March 2021 had been received from PKF Littlejohn. No matters had come to their attention and the notice of conclusion for the audit could now be displayed.

16. Minutes from the Allotment Committee Meeting 8 September 2021 and Matters Arising

The minutes from the meeting were signed as a true and correct copy. The meeting was a result of a letter received from one of the allotment holders. The following suggestions were submitted to full council by the Allotment Committee and the following was agreed:

- The rent was currently collected in April each year, but this would be moved to Michaelmas in line with the other rent collections.
- The imbalance in the cost of the half allotment and full allotment would be reviewed during the annual review of charges.
- The issue with the flooding of certain allotments would be looked at when the area was wetter.

17. Water Heater Switch in the Recreation Ground Pavilion

The cost of installing a timer switch on the water heater had been estimated at £100. This was £40 per switch and £20 for labour. Acceptance of this estimate was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Houghton. All were in favour.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

18. Financial Matters

18.1 Bill payments

Rachel Earl	Clerk wages September 2021	£432.80
HMRC PAYE	PAYE September 2021	£108.00
British Gas	Electricity for the Pavilion	£18.97
SSE	Electricity for streetlights for August 2021	£108.91
Balfour Beatty	Maintenance contract. Error with cheque 102602 written for £136.00 instead of £138.00	£2.00
Balfour Beatty	Replacement of 2 streetlights (CIL money)	£2061.50
Wave	Water bill Recreation Ground 3/6/21-2/9/21	£12.58
Wave	Water bill 3/6/21-2/9/21 Cemetery	11.09
Wave	Water bill 3/6/21-2/9/21 Butts Lane	44.00
Sitemaker (RJ White)	Annual website charge	43.20
CGM Ltd	Grass cutting charges for August	737.13
CGM Ltd	grass cutting charges for July less credit note	617.30
Community Heartbeat	Annual support cost (Defibrillator ringfenced money)	151.20
CAMSAR	Donation	50.00

18.2 Monthly Finance Update

The monthly report showed that the Parish Council was in a stable position.

19. Items for Information

The Chair updated the Parish Council on an onsite meeting held with the Clerk and Highways at Chapel Lane to discuss the lighting and path for the new development. As a result of this meeting Highways had received agreement from the developer to install 3 streetlights. The path would be built from the new access towards 38 Chapel Lane but there would be no path from the new access to 42 Chapel Lane.

Cllr Tory had reported the lack of white lines at the top of Old School Lane, Upware on the Highways website. The road which had subsided had been repaired.

Cllr Rash had been approached by a resident about the state of the paths in Wicken. The clerk has repeatedly reported a high number of paths in Wicken on the Highways website, most recently in August but had received a reply stating that the paths were part of a three-year rolling programme. The clerk would contact Cllr Schumann and ask for assistance.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10pm.