

Draft minutes not yet accepted.

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2024
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
B Pepper, L Houghton (chair), R Barnes, J Rogers, S Wilson, M Hawes, C Robinson, S Hill and District Councillor L Vellacott, County Councillor B Hunt and 1 member of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr P Rash (personal) and District Councillor Vellacott Ian Bovingdon.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest

- a) Councillors to declare any personal interest in any items on the agenda.
- b) Councillors to declare any prejudicial interest in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.
- c) Councillors to declare any pecuniary interest in any items on the agenda.

Cllr Robinson declared an interest in agenda item 14.

Cllr Rogers declared an interest in agenda item 15.

3. Public Participation.

The meeting will be adjourned for up to 10 minutes to allow any members of the public and Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to the business to be transacted at that meeting.

There were no requests to speak.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 13 February 2024

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

5. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 13 February 2024

5.1 Mission Hall BT manhole –There had been no response concerning the manhole cover and, as there is no way to contact OpenReach, the documents would be resubmitted via their online portal.

5.2 The memorial stability testing would take place on Saturday 16 March 2024.

5.3 Successful Application for 20mph Zones and Proposed Designs – This was ongoing.

5.4 Speedwatch Session in Upware – Cllr Pepper had obtained a location code for Upware and would hold a Speedwatch session.

5.5 Assets of Community Value for the Maid’s Head – This had been granted.

5.6 Allotment access road and Maltings footpath– this was ongoing.

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5.7 Anglian Water concerns regarding Lower Road and Chapel Lane – Anglian Water had investigated and advised that this had been caused by the high-water table and excess surface water from the field and highway run off going into the system. The pumping station was running at least 23 hours a day when it would normally be running a maximum of 4 hours a day. Numerous tankers were being used to support the pumping station at the bottom of Drury Lane. AWA would continue to monitor the sewage system and ensure the pumps were working at maximum level until flows returned to normal levels. Further investigations would then take place. It was agreed that obtaining regular updates of the monitoring data starting from January 2024 would be helpful to the Parish Council.

5.8 Repair of Village Sign – Jerry Woodroffe had agreed to paint the sign and would complete the work.

5.9 Refurbishment of the Changing Rooms – Cllr Pepper had met with representatives from the football club and the Recreation Committee and would discuss further with Dan Hardingham.

5.10 Repair of the Church Wall – Jerry Woodroffe had withdrawn his quote. The clerk would contact Johnson Construction and ask for references.

5.11 125th Anniversary of Wicken Fen – The Chair had contacted the National Trust with the concerns raised around the anniversary which included parking and the licence. The National Trust had responded with answers to the concerns. The licence application had been escalated to the Licensing Committee at ECDC for approval.

5.12 Hawes Lane – The clerk was yet to contact Highways regarding the culvert at the bottom of Hawes Lane.

5.13 Parish Council Website – The website had been amended to reflect that it was the website of the Parish Council.

6. Planning Matters

6.1 Development of a new health care facility of 1,895m² (GIA) and pharmacy of 120m² (GIA) (Use Class E9(e)), associated car parking, lighting, landscaping, public realm and utilities, demolition of existing Staploe Medical Centre, pharmacy, and 59 Brewhouse Lane (and associated structures), and utilisation of existing access on to Brewhouse Lane. Land rear of Health Centre, Brewhouse Lane, Soham, Cambs. Ref 24/00146/FUM

The Parish Council fully supported the application as this was much needed to help with the overstretched GP services. The Parish Council recognised that this was long overdue.

**6.2 Construction of new tractor barn with driveway, gate, fencing, and creation of new turning head for Back Lane. Land to the East of 16 back Lane, Wicken. Ref 23/0192/FUL
Amended plan for Land within highway boundary to stay as existing, plan altered to reflect this.**

The Parish Council had no objections.

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6.3 Re-roof with thatch and slate including plain tiles to existing dormers. new porch, new patio door, replace rear windows, infill existing door, create additional bathroom at 1st floor. 3 Pond Green, Wicken CB7 5XX. Ref 24/00213/LBC

The Parish Council had no objections.

6.4 Re-roof with thatch and slate including plain tiles to existing dormers. new porch, new patio door, replace rear windows, infill existing door, create additional bathroom at 1st floor. 3 Pond Green, Wicken CB7 5XX. Ref 24/00213/FUL

The Parish Council had no objections.

6.5 Updates on Planning Application Approve/Refused by ECDC

Approved

- Various tree works. The Old Chapel, Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 24/0052/TRE
- Vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans) of previously approved 22/00359/FUL for proposed 2 storey rear extension to dwelling and reconstruction of existing barn. The Vicarage, 5 Church Road, Wicken. Ref 24/00008/VAR.
- Various tree works. 3 Pond Green, Wicken Ref 24/00047/TRE
- Dropped kerb. 59 Church Road, Wicken. Ref 23/01306/FUL

7. County and District Councillor Reports

District Councillor Vellacott advised the following:

- There had been no update from the mayor regarding the complaint about bus services.
- East Cambs District Council was freezing their portion of the council tax for the 11th year running.
- The Bereavement Centre at Mepal had been approved.
- The government were part funding a new waste service which would collect food waste.
- ECDC were introducing black wheelie bins.
- CCC had reviewed the culvert at Upware and Cllr Vellacott was awaiting a reply.
- ECDC had a new grant scheme for small businesses for grants from £5k to £30k.
- CCC road repairs – Cllr Vellacott would continue to push for road repairs.

Cllr Vellacott left the meeting at 8.35pm

County Councillor Hunt advised the following:

- The public consultation for the Soham 20mph had received 6 responses.
- The Stretham CLT had received £1.3m from ECDC for the Stretham GP surgery. This could mean a choice of GP surgeries for Wicken and Upware residents.
- Council tax – The Mayor had increased the mayoral portion of the council tax by 200%.
- ECDC had installed a new disabled toilet in Soham.
- Cllr Hunt was continuing to push for the dualling of the A10 from Ely to A14
- Cllr Hunt was working with Haddenham Parish Council regarding lorries and speeding. If successful, this could have an affect on the number of lorries using the A1123.

County Cllr Hunt left the meeting at 9.05pm

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8. Hedge Adjacent to the Mission Hall Wicken

Cllrs Houghton, Rogers and Barnes and the Clerk had met with the owners of the hedge. The owners had proposed an agreement for £1 for 100-year lease. After discussion, the Parish Council counter proposed this with an agreement of £20 per year in line with other agreements within the village.

9. Lower Road Ditch

Cllrs Rash and Pepper had investigated the drainage along Lower Road. Although a culvert had been installed under the roadway at the Afterway allotments it was thought that this had collapsed over time. Cllr Pepper offered to reinstall the culvert when the weather improved. Cllr Rash had contacted the landowners of the field adjacent to the allotments and they had agreed to clear the ditch once the crops had been removed. Cllr Rash would continue to work to get landowners to clear the ditches on both sides of Lower Road.

10. Padney Road Flooding

Cllr Hawes reported that there were flooding issues along Padney Road due to the lack of grips and the condition of the ditches. Cllr Hawes would contact the landowners along Padney Road.

11. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllrs Barnes, Hill, Pepper and the clerk had attended the CAPALC Neighbourhood Plan training on 26 February 2024. It was agreed that all Councillors would review other local neighbourhood plans especially Lode and Reach who were similar in size and amenities to Wicken This would be on the April agenda.

The parishioner left the meeting at 9.45pm

12. Pond Green Posts

The Clerk had obtained a quote from Les Yardy Fencing to install posts around Pond Green. The quote was for £1630.00 plus VAT. This was for installation of the posts sited 5ft apart with 2 posts being slightly wider and chains put across for access to the green for fete day etc. This was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Houghton. All were in favour. CIL money would be used for the project.

13. Social Media

Cllrs Rogers and Houghton had attended a course on social media. Cllr Rogers had put together a report on the findings from the course. It was very helpful and clearly identified the need for greater use of social media by all Councils. A social media strategy would be drafted and this would be on the agenda for the April meeting.

14. Repair of the Vehicular Access to 44 High Street, Wicken.

Cllr Robinson, as the homeowner, asked for permission to re-install, like for like, 2 tracks of gravel across the green from the road to 44 High Street entrance to reinstate the driveway.

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Cllr Robinson left the meeting at 10.10pm

This was agreed by the Parish Council.

Cllr Robinson returned to the meeting at 10.12pm

15. Request to Site a Skip on Parish Lane at the Butts Lane Allotments

Cllr Rogers requested permission to site a skip on the Butts Lane allotments turning circle for a maximum of one week whilst work was being completed on her property.

Cllr Rogers left the meeting at 10.15pm

This was agreed by the Parish Council

Cllrs Rogers rejoined the meeting at 10.17pm

16. Financial Matters

16.1 Bill payments

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| Rachel James | Clerk wages March 2024 | £509.60 |
| HMRC PAYE | PAYE March 2024 | £127.40 |
| British Gas | Electric for changing rooms 12/2/24-12/3/24 | £20.62 |
| SSE Energy | 3/1/24-31/1/24 | £48.61 |
| RH Landscaping | Grass cutting March 2024 | £420.00 |
| CAPALC | Neighbourhood Plan training Cllrs Hill and Pepper | £100.00 |
| CAPALC | Neighbourhood Plan training Cllr Barnes and the clerk | £100.00 |
| Wave | Water 3/6/23 – 2/9/23 Butts Lane | £48.62 |
| Wave | Water 3/6/23 – 2/9/23 Cemetery | £16.56 |
| Wave | Water 3/6/23-2/9/23 Recreation Ground | £21.89 |
| Wave | Water 3/9/23-2/12/23 Butts Lane | £19.95 |
| Wave | Water 3/9/23-2/12/23 Cemetery | £16.39 |
| Wave | Water 3/9/23-2/12/23 Recreation Ground | £25.30 |
| Fasthosts | Domain renewal | £14.39 |
| British Gas | Electric 9/7/23-7/8/23 | £27.32 |

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| Fresh and Proper | Error in minutes November 2023. Recorded as £23.68 should have been £23.90 |
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16.2 Monthly Finance update

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

16.3 Bank Reconciliation to 28 February 2024

The bank statements and reconciliation reports had been circulated. These were noted.

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17. Items for Information

Cllr Houghton announced that she would be standing down as Chair at the May meeting.

Cllr Hawes advised that he would be contacting Highways regarding the signs and chevrons along the A1123 from Stretham to Soham.

Cllr Rogers advised that the grass had been too wet when it was cut and the machines had damaged the surface in some areas. The clerk had spoken to RH Landscapes.

Cllr Pepper advised that the Back Lane surface was becoming much worse. The clerk would report.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10.26pm