

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD  
AT 19.30 HRS ON TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021  
VIA SKYPE**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted): Cllrs E Houghton (Chair), C Bye, M Hawes, J Day, S Wilson, J Rogers, M Smith, P Rash and L Tory. District Councillor Schumann and 4 parishioners

**1. Apologies for absence and any declarations of interest.**

Apologies were received and accepted from County Councillor Hunt.

The Clerk granted the application of dispensation for all Councillors to discuss agenda item 4.1 and 4.2. The application was granted as all members of the council have a disclosable pecuniary interest that would impede the transaction of the business.

There were no further declarations of interest.

**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 letter from David Werner was read covering his views on the security proposal at Wicken Fen. Letters were read on behalf of Jack White and David Werner regarding the concerns around the proposed street trading consent for Lapwing café on Lode Lane. Milla Myslikova wished to make the council aware of the plans for Lapwing mobile café but her broadband connection was poor. She requested that the clerk read the information which had already been sent via email.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 9 March 2021**

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

**4. Planning Matters**

**4.1 Creation of a new 4m X 4m pond (with maximum water depth of 0.5m). Recreation Ground Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 21/00340/FUL**

The planning application had been submitted by Acre on behalf of Wicken Parish Council for the New Life in the Old West project.

**4.2 The proposal is part of a 3-year habitat improvement project. Recreation Ground, Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 21/00347/FUL**

The planning application had been submitted by Acre on behalf of Wicken Parish Council for the New Life in the Old West project.

**4.3 Proposed part demolition of existing commercial building and conversion to four bed house plus construction of new three bed dwelling. 15-17 North Street, Wicken CB7 5XW. Ref 21/00345/FUL**

Although both properties had the designated number of off-road parking the Parish Council had concerns with visiting and additional cars parking on the bend of North Street.

**4.4 To vary condition 1 (Approved Plans) of previously approved 17/00376/RMA for approval of the details for reserved matters for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Scale and Layout of planning application 16/01052/OUT. Peacock House 8 Stretham Road Wicken. Ref 21/00420/VAR**

The Parish Council had no objections.

**4.5 Residential development comprising three dwellings, garaging, parking, turning and associated site works – phased development. Land adjacent to 14 Church Road, Wicken. Ref 21/00273/FUL**

This application for 3 large houses did not comply with the WIC02 statement on the Local Plan in three areas:

**• Provide an element of affordable housing (currently 30%) as required under Policy HOU 3, with priority given to people in local housing need.**

The application does not provide an element of affordable housing and will not be affordable to residents of Wicken on the local average wage.

**• Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect current evidence of need within Wicken.**

Wicken is in need of smaller properties preferably two-bedroom dwellings and bungalows.

**• Have particular regard to the layout, scale, height, design and massing of buildings, and landscaping, in order to minimise impact on the open countryside.**

The style of the houses are not in keeping with the mix of housing stock in the village.

The majority of dwellings along the south of Church Road are bungalows. These large properties will have a direct impact on these neighbours.

The size of the dwellings will dominate the area and block the open vista towards Wicken Fen.

The houses are too large and will impact the visible entrance to the village.

**Wicken Parish Council supports the planning application already approved for this site under reference 20/01393 and do not wish to see any deviation from this.**

**4.6 Street Trading Consent – Lapwing Café, Lode Lane, Wicken CB7 5XP**

In principle, the Parish Council supported the idea of a local person starting a business and felt the competition with the National Trust Café would be positive. However, the Parish Council had the following concerns:

Location – the café is situated too close to neighbouring properties

Vehicle movements and parking – the only parking near to the proposed cafe is the National Trust car park. This area of Lode Lane is particularly narrow and vehicles would need to reverse which is a health and safety concern with the large numbers of walkers and cyclists.

Litter – the additional café would generate extra litter and there is a limited number of litter bins in the area.

**4.7 Update on Planning Applications Granted**

**Planning applications approved**

Proposed erection of garage/games room and first floor gymnasium. Orwell farm 35 High Street Wicken. Ref 20/01734/FUL

Various tree work. 4 High Street, Wicken. Ref 21/00173/TRE and ref 21/00265/TRE

## **5. County and District Councillor reports**

District Councillor Dan Schumann advised the following:

- ECDC was currently recycling 56.5% of waste and had been rated 27 out of 341 councils.
- The Princess of Wales hospital had been awarded £45m for refurbishment which would greatly enhance the minor injuries unit.
- ECDC had not increased their element of the council tax for 2021/22. This was the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the council tax freeze.
- Work on the Anglian Water pipe from Stretham would commence in April 2021.
- An update on the planning reform meant that there was now a right to convert a commercial property to a residential property. This amendment is due to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

Cllr Schumann advised that if residents had problems accessing the ECDC Planning Department he would act as an advocate for them.

District Councillor Schumann left the meeting.

## **6. Progress report on matters arising from the last meeting 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

- 6.1** Cycle path – Work would commence on the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.
- 6.2** Purchase of rubbish bin for the Rec. –Cllr Smith had installed the bin.
- 6.3** Non-payment of invoices by National Trust – The National Trust still owes the October 2020 invoice for the 2020/21 rent.
- 6.4** Parish trees – The guelder-rose would be replaced with a tree.
- 6.5** Highways issues – The clerk had not yet received a reply from Highways in regards to the boundary question in Upware and the sign for Redit Lane.
- 6.6** Grass Cutting tender – The clerk and Chair had met with CGM Ltd.
- 6.7** LHI Bid – Upware Speeding. Cllr Tory had presented to the LHI panel. A decision should be received by June/July.
- 6.8** Cemetery tap – The clerk had asked Rory Woodroffe to replace the tap.
- 6.9** Cemetery hedge and brambles – The clerk had asked CGM Ltd to cut back the brambles [clerks note this has now been completed]. It was now too late to cut back the hedge due to nesting birds. This would be completed when possible.
- 6.10** Felling of the crab apple tree – This had not yet taken place.

## **7. Financial Matters**

### **7.1 Bill payments**

Rachel Earl	Clerk wages April 2021	£368.20
HMRC PAYE	PAYE April 2021	£92.00
SSE	Electric for streetlights for March 2021	£112.11
CAPALC	Affiliation Fee 1/4/21-31/3/21	£347.23
Parish Online (Geosphere Ltd)	Annual fee	£36.00
CGM Group Ltd	March cuts	£737.15
CGM Group Ltd	April cuts	£737.15
Fasthosts	Domain renewal	£12.59
Cambs County Council	Half Year rent	£975.00
PWLB	Loan repayment for Mission Hall	£2640.77
ROSPA Play Safety	Annual checks	£181.20
CJ Murfitt	Mortuary Chapel renovations	£21658.80

## 7.2 Monthly Finance Update

The Council noted the stable position.

## 7.3 Clerks Salary and Hours

*The clerk left the meeting.*

It was agreed to move the salary scale to SCP16 of the NALC & SLCC Pay Scales for Clerks. This would be effective from 1 April 2021. The Council is extremely grateful to the work that the Clerk provides.

*The clerk returned to the meeting.*

## 7.4 Donation for Work Installing Posts

As the work for installing the posts along Lode Lane had been instigated and undertaken by a resident the Council agreed they would not contribute to the costs as this could set a precedence for others to retrospectively request funding for work undertaken.

## 7.5 Mortuary Chapel Air Bricks

Following the renovations on the Mortuary Chapel the Clerk and Chair had discovered condensation in the building. CJ Murfitt's had visited the chapel and had agreed that additional air bricks needed to be installed which would cost around £100. It was proposed by Cllr Day and seconded by Cllr Bye that the work should be completed. This work was still within the budgeted figure for the project.

## 8. Upware Open Space

A quote for supplying and drilling the grass seed was received from CGM Ltd and was £1500 plus vat. The clerk was trying to obtain a quote from a local famer. This would be rolled over to the next meeting.

The Parish Council discussed the offer of 30 beech saplings. It was felt that this was not the correct time of year to plant the saplings. Cllr Tory would decline the offer.

## **9. Code of Conduct Training**

Following two issues it was agreed that the councillors should complete Code of Conduct training. The clerk would arrange this.

## **10. Why representation in local councils matters – webinar update by Cllr Rogers**

Cllr Rogers had attended a webinar and updated the council on the content of the webinar. The Parish Council would look into the following:

- Engaging with younger people
- Active communication
- Saturday morning surgeries (2 per year)
- Questionnaire asking what residents would like for the village

## **11. Wicken Fen Security Proposal**

The Parish Council felt that the proposed measures by the National Trust would be beneficial to security but that it would be better to have the gates at the entrance to the car park rather than just locking the back car park at night.

## **12. Village Clean Up**

The annual village clean up had been postponed due to COVID-19 regulations. A Nationwide Clean Up event was taking place 28 May to 13 June. It was agreed that Wicken should take part. The clerk will contact ECDC to borrow the equipment and will advertise a date.

## **13. Use of the Green for the Maids Head Benches**

It was agreed that the Maids Head benches should be adjacent to the drive from the front of the pub up the old sign and level with the end of the Maids Head wall. The clerk had received a request from the landlord to hire the 30ft x 30ft marquee for one month. The Parish Council had concerns over public safety with the marquee being left out during the week when the pub was shut and the condition of the green once the marquee was removed. It was agreed that the marquee could be rented at £300 per weekend (current commercial rate) but should be taken down on the Monday and put back up on the Thursday. Cllr Smith agreed to oversee.

## **14. Purchase of a Storage Container**

The clerk had measured the area next to the container on the Rec and it was noted that the fence would require moving if a new container was to fit next to the current container. This would need to be discussed by the Recreation Ground committee.

## **15. Permission for an Egg Seller to Trade from the Mission Hall Car park**

The Trustees of the Mission Hall had received a request for an egg seller to trade from the Mission Hall car park on Thursday mornings. The egg seller had a trading licence. It was suggested that he contact the Maids Head pub.

## **16. Items for Information**

Cllr Bye advised that the sign from AmeyCespa for the Pond Green Playground had been delivered. This would be erected.

Cllr Wilson advised that a member of the public had driven down the footpath of the cemetery. This would be monitored.

Cllr Houghton advised that all of the allotments at Butts Lane and Afterway were now rented. The possibility of an Allotment Association would be discussed in the future.

There was no further items of information and the meeting closed at 22.15.