

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD
AT 19.30 HRS ON TUESDAY 10 MAY 2022
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted): Cllrs E Houghton (Chair), S Wilson, L Tory, P Rash, J Rogers, M Hawes, M Smith and J Day. Also in attendance were County and District Councillor D Schumann and 1 parishioner.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Pepper (personal)

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair and Acceptance of Office

The meeting was handed to the Clerk.

Election of Chair

Cllr Houghton was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Rogers. As there were no other nominations and all were in favour Cllr Houghton was appointed. Cllr Houghton accepted the role of Chair.

The meeting was handed back to the Chair.

Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Rogers was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Wilson. As there were no other nominations and all were in favour Cllr Rogers was appointed. Cllr Rogers accepted the role of Vice Chair.

The Acceptance of Office was signed.

3. 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

There were no declarations of interest.

4. 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.

A parishioner informed the Council of her wish for the pinch point in Hawes Lane to remain and advised of the petition signed by members of the local community to support this view which had been submitted to ECDC.

5. Appointment of Committee Trustees

The following membership of committees was agreed:

Burial Board	Cllr Pepper Cllr Tory Cllr Wilson
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	Cllr Smith
Allotment Committee	Cllr Wilson Cllr Rash Cllr Day
Recreation Committee	Cllr Hawes
Mary Hatch Alms Houses	Cllr Wilson
Village Hall Committee	Cllr Wilson
The Chair and Vice Chair were members of all Parish Council committees	

6. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 12 April 2022

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

7. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 8 February 2022

7.1 Cycle path – Cllrs Smith, Day and Pepper would complete the work on the last stretch of cycle path in the coming weeks. The Clerk would hire the equipment and arrange the insurance for this.

Cllr Houghton advised that the Soham to Wicken cycle path would be end to end but would not be for approximately another 2 years.

7.2 Resurfacing of the paths and cleaning of the culvert at the Hawes Lane junction – This was ongoing. The work on the footpaths was imminent.

7.3 Local Council Award Scheme – The panel had requested the review of the disciplinary policy and would then agree the award.

7.4 Assets of Community Value – This was ongoing.

7.5 Hawes Lane – Once the six-month rule had expired the Parish Council would review the decision to ask for Hawes Lane to be widened which had previously been agreed by ECDC as part of the planning application for the 16 houses in Hawes Lane. The clerk would discuss the give way sign on the junction of Hawes Lane and Lower Road with Highways.

7.6 A1123 repairs – This was ongoing

7.7 Jubilee Celebrations – The numbers of parishioners attending the Jubilee lunch remained low. A letterbox drop would take place

7.8 Parish Council Emails – The Clerk was now using the parish council email addresses.

7.9 LHI Bid – This had been awarded but it was unclear when the work would commence. The LHI bid was for double yellow line on the blind bend along the High Steet on the A1123

7.10 Potholes on the Maids Head Green track – this was ongoing

7.11 Upware Streetlight – This had been reported to Balfour Beatty for repair

7.12 Upware ditch – The ditch had been reported to the Environmental Agency

7.13 Fodder Fen Drove (from the Annual parish Meeting) – This had been reported to the Rights of Way officer who had advised that the surface would be repaired when planings were available.

There was a suggestion that an order be applied to restrict 4 wheel drive vehicles during the winter months. The clerk would ask the Rights of Way officer.

8. Planning Matters

8.1 Proposed residential development of 6 dwellings (Phased) Land adjacent to 14 Church Road, Wicken. Ref 22/00183/FUL. Additional information received includes submission of an Arboriculturally Impact Assessment

The Parish Council had no comments.

8.2 To vary conditions 1 (approved drawings), 7 (Pavement) & 9 (Materials) of previously approved 19/01291/FUL for construction of a single storey 3 bedroom dwelling with associated garage and off-road parking facilities, with the addition of permission to install a temporary static caravan on the site for the remainder of build period. Land South of 1 to 7 Old School Lane, Upware CB7 5YQ. Ref 22/00489/VAR

The Parish Council would like to ensure that the caravan was sited to allow sufficient space on site for vehicles to be kept within the perimeter of the plot. The Parish Council would also like to see the pavement retained.

8.3 Proposed dwelling with detached garage. Plot 1 Land South of 3 Old School Lane, Upware. Ref 22/00500/FUL

The Parish Council had the following objections:

- Overdevelopment of the site with the size, scale and mass being too large and having an effect on the character of the village.
- Should the application be successful the Parish Council would like to ensure that the ridge line of the roof is in keeping with other properties, so it does not dominate properties in the vicinity.
- The Parish Council would like a restriction added that the garage should not be used as a separate dwelling.

8.4 Construction of horse manege and associated landscape bunds on existing paddock. 4 Lower Road, Wicken, CB7 5YA. 22/00508/FUL

The Parish Council would like the following restrictions applied:

- For personal use only by the homeowner and should not at any time be used for commercial activity.
- Lights not to be used after 8pm to limit light pollution for neighbouring properties.
- As this is sited on a narrow track road, ensure there is enough room for vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear.
- Landscape bunds not to be converted to another use in the future.

8.5 Proposed 3 storey rear extension including loft conversion. The Old Chapel, 10 Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref22/00506/FUL

The Parish Council would like to ensure there is enough off-road parking on site whilst construction takes place

8.6 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

The following applications had been approved by ECDC:

- Various tree works at Meadow House, Cross Green, Wicken
- Conversion of an existing agricultural unit to a four-bed dwelling. Land and storage building east of 14 Back Lane, Wicken. Ref 21/01434/ARN had been granted prior approval.

Items 9 and 10 would be delayed until the arrival of Councillor Schumann

11. Upware Open Space

The URA had discussed the use of the Open Space and would like the front area cut leaving the back area to grow. The clerk would obtain a quote from RH Landscapes.

The need for a culvert was discussed or whether a hard surface in front of the gate would be suffice. Cllrs Day and Smith would look.

12. RoSPA Reports

The annual inspection had been completed and the reports had been received. Although no items had been listed as a high risk there were a number of maintenance issues. The Parish Council asked the clerk to send the report to Calloo for a quote to complete the repairs.

13. Mission Hall Car Park

The Trustees of the Mission Hall had not agreed to 50% of the costs but would put some funding towards the resurfacing of the car park. It had been suggested that some funds were used from the Community Fund and a Community Fund Committee meeting had been held. It had been agreed that £3k could be contributed by the Community Funds and a further proposal would be discussed at the next Hall Trustees meeting.

Cllr Schumann joined the meeting at 8.45pm and the Parish Council returned to items 9 and 10 on the agenda.

9. East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Single Issue Review – Proposed Submission Consultation 3 May 2022 to 13 June 2022.

Cllr Schumann advised of the reasons around the review. The Council agreed with the proposal and the clerk would submit this.

10. County and District Councillors Reports:

Cllr Schumann advised the following:

CCC

- Whilst the ECDC element of the Council Tax had been frozen for the 8th year running, the CCC element had increase by 4.9% to build reserve.

- It was understood that any surpluses from 2021/22 would be ploughed back into front line services.

ECDC

- ECDC was looking into legislation to unlock the power to enforce car parking penalties with the use of volunteers e.g. Special Constables.
- Cllr Hunt and supporting councillors continued to campaign for the A1123 to be converted to a B road.
- The Princess of Wales Hospital was receiving £45m to create additional services making the hospital the place to go for the majority of health needs locally.
- ECDC was supporting the St Mary's Surgery upgrade
- Soham Station as proving very popular and campaigners were now pushing for the next stage which was a dual track. This was also helping the cycle path campaign.
- There were ongoing complicated ecology issues with the site for the Mepal Crematorium.
- Councillor Schumann continued to support the duelling of the A10.
- Bin collection had been an issue but it was hoped that the new routes would mean a return to 'business as usual'.

14. Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Maintenance

The Churchwarden had raised the following items of maintenance of the churchyard:

- Ivy growing on the old gravestones – the clerk had requested a quote from RH Landscapes to remove the ivy. Cllr Smith would look to see if it could be sprayed and then removed when dead.
- Church wall – This was an ongoing concern and being monitored as the cost of replacing was not affordable. One section of the wall had been damaged and Cllr Smith would look to see if this could be easily repaired.
- Branch over the Lych Gate – the branch belonged to the owners of Wicken Hall who had agreed to arrange a tree survey.

15. CCC Transport Strategy

The consultation had opened for the CCC transport strategy. This was completed online at the meeting.

Cllr Schumann left the meeting at 9.35pm

16. Use of the Greens

The Maids Head had invited a number of takeaway food vans to provide takeaways on Monday and Tuesday evenings. It was noted that the vans had parked on the Maids Head Green rather than in the pub car park. Whilst the Parish Council would like to support the Maids Head, permission had not been requested and a complaint had been received. The Parish Council also had concerns regarding trading licences on its land if a public area was being used. The clerk would look into this.

17. General Village Maintenance.

The clerk had noted the following maintenance issues in the village:

Wooden posts on the Mission Hall Green – Cllr Day would repair or replace
Painting of the old phone box containing the defibrillator – the clerk would ask James Home and Garden to paint this.

18. Financial Matters

18.1 Bill payments

Rachel Earl	Clerk wages May 2022	£440.33
HMRC PAYE	PAYE May 2022	£110.00
SSE	Electricity for streetlights for April 2022	£115.50
RH Landscapes	April grass cutting	£1200.00
E Houghton	Chairman’s expenses	£150.00
Playsafety Ltd	RoSPA reports	£184.80

18.2 Monthly Finance update

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

18.3 Bank Reconciliation to 30April 2022

The bank statements and reconciliation reports had been circulated to all Councillors. This was noted.

18.4 Chairman’s Expenses

The chairman’s expenses for 2021/22 were agreed and paid at the rate of £150.00.

19. Approval for the Clerk to Undertake the Insurance Tender Process

The Parish Council requested the Clerk to go to tender for the three year contract for the parish insurance.

20. Policies

20.1 Disciplinary Policy (for renewal)

Approval of the policy was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Rogers. All were in favour.

11. Items for Information

Cllr Day advised that the sign for Dockings Lanes and Fodder Fen Drove had been removed. The clerk would report to the Rights of Way officer.

Cllr Wilson advised that the grass in the cremation area of the cemetery had not been cut. The clerk would discuss this with RH Landscapes.

Cllr Hawes advised that he had reported the potholes on Padney Road and would report the fly tipping on the Wicken to Stretham road.

Cllr Houghton had attended the Wicken Fen Community Forum and advised the following:

- Martin Lester was retiring from the National Trust
- The design of the hide which could be used by disabled visitors was being reduced and resubmitted for planning approval.

- The Wicken Fen Advisory Committee had reported that raising the water table in the fen could help to keep carbon in the soil.
- Swaffham Prior, Reach and Burwell Parish Councils had purchased nitro oxide monitors to monitor the nitro oxide created by cars travelling through their villages.
- The National Trust were reviewing the public access points into the Fen,
- The National Trust was monitoring the building of the new sewage farm which was being built on the edge of the Vision area between Fen Ditton and Horningsea.

It was noted that Open Reach had been working in the village bringing fibre to the door.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.53pm

Minutes accepted as a true and correct copy.....