

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD
AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 11 JULY 2023
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
L Houghton, J Rogers, B Pepper, P Rash, M Hawes and C Robinson and one parishioner

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S Wilson, R Barnes and District Councillor Lucius Vellacot.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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.

Samantha Hill introduced herself to the council.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 13 June 2023

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

5. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 13 June 2023

5.1 Mission Hall car park resurfacing –The clerk had not yet received permission from BT to raise the manhole.

5.2 Parking on the Village Greens – This would continue to be monitored.

5.3 Empty properties on North Street – This had been followed up by District Councillor Vellacott and had the issue of empty houses owned by Sanctuary Housing was now a focus for Anna Bailey Leader of ECDC. Information on the empty house had been passed to her and would be used as an example.

5.4 Cemetery Car Park – Cllr Pepper had installed the CCTV signs. Usage of the car park would continue to be monitored.

5.5 Hedgehog Highways - Cllr Robinson had distributed the hedgehog highways at the village fete. These had been very popular.

5.6 BT Landline Issues – The issues with the landlines had now been resolved.

5.7 Increased number of tipper trucks travelling through the village – The clerk had contacted Mick George Ltd who had advised that there were no large projects in the area which would result in an increase of trucks through the village. Mick George Ltd would put a message out to all truck drivers to ensure they stayed within the speed limits and if the registration number was taken for any speeding trucks they would deal with it. There had been a marked decrease in the number since the last meeting.

5.8 Offer of bark chippings – The kind offer of bark chippings was accepted and Cllr Pepper would put a circle around the tree on the Mission Hall green which had been identified during the tree walk as needing a circle of mulch around the trunk. It was noted by the Parish Council that a skip had been placed on the allotment turning circle whilst the work took place with the trees. As this was on Parish property the clerk would contact the resident and ask for copies of insurance and risk assessments. The clerk would also look at the illegal accesses across the ditch that ran along the back of Church Road. There is no public right of way along the headland of the acre allotments.

6. Planning Matters

6.1 **Erection of 2 detached four bedroom dwellings with car ports, off-street parking and associated landscaping. Amendment received 13 June 2023 includes updated site plan to address Tree officer concerns. Site to the East of 38A Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref22/01229/FUL**

The comments submitted on 14 April 2023 still stood and these were reinforced. It had been noted that ECDC had not added the Parish Council response to the planning consultant also dated 14 April 2023 to the planning portal. This had been queried with ECDC and the document had subsequently been uploaded.

6.2 **To vary condition 1 (approved plans), condition 13 (access crossover) & condition 12 (visibility splays) of previously approved 16/00024/OUT for demolition of existing outbuildings and construction of 5 No detached and 2 No semi-detached houses with associated access road. The amendment includes adjustments to the corner opposite plot 2 and the turning head to accommodate larger refuse lorries. 34 Chapel Lane, Wicken CB7 5XZ. Ref 23/00071/VAR**

The extension to the deadline had been denied by ECDC as this went past their decision deadline. This had been discussed via email and there were no concerns.

6.3 **To vary conditions 1 (approved plans), 4 (external surfaces materials), 5 (external doors, brise-solil & porch canopy materials), 6 (hard landscape), 7 (foul & surface water drainage schemes), 8 (soft landscaping according to 22:050-110), 9 (boundary treatments in accordance with 22:050-110), 11 on-site parking & turning area according 22:050-110), 13 (authorised lights), 15 (approved biodiversity improvements in accordance with 22:050-110) of previously approved 22/01265/FUL for demolition of existing barn with consent to convert to dwelling and replace with new dwelling. Land and Storage Building East of 14 Back Lane, Wicken. Ref 23/00659/VAR**

The Parish Council had no concerns with the application.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

6.4 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

There were no updates on applications approved/refused.

7. County and District Councillor Reports

There were no County or District Councillors in attendance.

8. Bier Way

Concern had been raised at the last meeting with regards to the surface of Bier Way and the Councillors had been asked to look at the surface with the item placed on this agenda. Councillors had reviewed the surface and it was felt that the surface was fine from a user's perspective. However, a number of hedges had grown over the path. The clerk would issue letters to residents requesting the hedges to be cut back to their boundaries.

9. Co-option of New Member Following the Advert for a Vacancy

The clerk had received three applications for the vacancy. These were from Samantha Hill, Stephen Joyce and David Werner. The vote was held and Samantha Hill was appointed to the Council. The clerk has retained the voting slips for the records.

10. Church Yard Paths

The clerk had contacted Ely Diocese with regards to the repairs to the church yard paths. The additional shingle could be done without approval under List category A7(2). This would also allow for the replacement of wood edging. However, if the Parish Council wanted to change the edging to metal, this would require a Faculty which costs £317 plus VAT for application. It was agreed that the edging would remain wooden and the clerk would obtain quotes.

11. Public Meeting

It was agreed that the Parish Council would hold a 'Coffee Morning with the Parish Council' to encourage greater interaction with the community and for residents to learn about what the Parish Council does. This will be held on Saturday 14 October 2023 (depending on the availability of the Mission Hall).

Cllr Hawes left the meeting at 9.05pm

12. Pond Green Swings and Safety Surface

A quote of £160.98 had been received from Youngs Agricultural Services to repair the swing frame. It was proposed by Cllr Rogers that the swings be repaired by Youngs and a new safety surface installed by Caloo. This would ensure the swings could be used during the school holidays. The purchase of a new frame would be revisited following the next annual safety report. This was seconded by Cllr Robinson. All were in favour.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

13. Purchase of a New Parish Council Printer/Scanner

The current printer/scanner had stopped scanning around 2 years ago and, although all of the ink cartridges had been replaced, the printer had now also stopped printing. The clerk had researched printer/scanners and had found the Epson Ecotank ET-2850 all in one at the cost of £227.48 would suit the needs of the Parish Council. Purchase of the printer/scanner (or similar) was proposed by Cllr Pepper and seconded by Cllr Robinson. All were in favour. The Parish Council card would be used to purchase the printer.

14. Upware Open Space

The Chair and Clerk had met with the owner of Plot 1 and the boundaries agreed. There was a covenant on the Open Space land allowing for the drainage from plot 1 to go across the Open Space to connect to the main drain. The owner of Plot 1 would confirm where the drains would be installed and this would be passed on to the URA so they were aware before they installed the benches.

15. Vitality of Inonotus Hispidus Tree on Mission Hall Green

The tree at the entrance of the Mission Hall car park had been noted on the tree report completed in August 2022 to watch for vitality. This had been monitored by the clerk and although the tree was still alive it now required attention. It was agreed that the clerk would ask a tree surgeon to look at the tree and advise the best course of action.

16. Request to Borrow the Village BBQs by The Swallowtails Club

A request to borrow the village bbqs was accepted by the Parish Council.

17. Visit to Wicken Fen

The dates for the proposed visit to Wicken Fen by members of the Parish Council to meet the new management would be circulated again.

18. Financial Matters

18.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages July 2023	£474.86
HMRC PAYE	PAYE July 2023	£118.80
RH Landscapes	June cuts	£1260.00
SSE	Streetlight electricity May 2023	£105.98
SSE	Streetlight electricity June 2023	£53.53
Burwell Community Print	Around and About June to August edition	£259.38
Wicken Mission Hall	Hall rent April, May & June	£72.00
Zurich Insurance	Annual insurance	£1742.41
Mark Finneran	Cemetery railings	£800.00
Wave	Water 3 March – 2 June 2023 cemetery	£14.88
Wave	Water 3 March – 2 June 2023 Rec	£25.76
Wave	Water 3 March – 2 June 2023	£14.88

Draft minutes not yet accepted

18.2 Monthly Finance update

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

18.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 June 2023

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

The CIL balance had increased to £44,414.73 following the most recent CIL payment which was largely made up of contributions from the new houses along Church Road. The clerk would discuss possible uses for this with ECDC and this would be on the next agenda.

19. Items for Information

A generous donation of £10,000 had been offered to the Parish Council by a parishioner. This was accepted with grateful thanks. A project would be discussed.

Cloudy water was still being reported by parishioners following the repair of the main pipe by Anglian Water. The clerk would report to Anglian Water.

A road sweeper had cleaned the sides of the roads but had not done a particularly good job. The clerk would report back to Highways.

Cllr Pepper would arrange a Speedwatch session in the village.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.40pm