

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD  
AT 19.30 HRS ON TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020  
VIA SKYPE**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted): Cllrs E Houghton (Chair), J Day, S Wilson, J Rogers, P Rash, M Smith and L Tory and District Councillor Dan Schumann and County Councillor Hunt. Two members of the public were present.

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

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Bye and Hawes.

There were no declarations of interest with any item on the agenda.

**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.**

There were no requests to speak.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

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

**4. Presentation from Kingfisher Bridge Nature Reserve**

James Moss (Nature Reserve Manager) updated the Council on the number of visitors for 2020 and the expected number of visitors of 20-25k for 2021. The Councillors and James Moss discussed the concerns regarding the access of a single-track road and parking now the reserve had increased in popularity. The Parish Council offered their support with Highways. County Councillor Hunt would monitor the situation.

James Moss left the meeting at 8pm

**5.1 Reserved matters of Access, Appearance, landscaping, Layout and Scale of planning application 17/01945/OUT for residential development for 6no. new dwellings. Land Adjacent to 14 Church Road Wicken. Cambs 20/01393/RMA**

**5.2 Reserved matters of Access, Appearance, landscaping, Layout and Scale of planning application 17/01945/OUT for residential development for 6no. new dwellings. Land Adjacent to 14 Church Road Wicken. Cambs 20/01393/RMA. Amendment.**

Items 5.1 and 5.2 were taken at the same time. The Council had the following concerns:

- The houses were in a visible part of the village and the Parish Council feel that the style of the houses was not in keeping with the mix of housing stock in the village.
- Concern that the height of the houses would dominate the properties opposite and next to the site

Draft minutes not yet accepted

**5.3 T1 Ash (possibly on Parish Council Land) – fell due to its location and crown growing into phone lines. T2 Apple – fell to allow more space in garden. 1 High Street Wicken, Cambs CB7 5XR**

The council had no objections.

**5.4 Update on Planning Applications Granted**

The following have been granted by ECDC:

- Proposed 6-bed dwelling with detached double garage. Plot 1 Land South of 3 Old School Lane Upware. Ref 20/001165/FUL

The following had been granted by CCC:

- Erection of Solar PV Panels and associated infrastructure and landscaping. North Angle Farm Soham. Ref CCC/20/051/FUL

The following had been refused by ECDC:

- Removal of Condition 12 (General Permitted Development). Walnut tree Cottage, Back Lane, Wicken. Ref 20/01257/VAR

The following had been withdrawn:

- Proposed 3-bedroom 1 storey detached dwelling. Ref 20/01352/FUL

**6. County and District Councillor reports**

County Councillor Hunt updated the council on the following:

- CC Hunt had submitted a motion to the Full County Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 'Instruct the Executive Director for Place and Economy to pursue the reclassification of the A1123 (and A1421) from "A" to "B".'
- £15 per week for eligible pupils/students for food vouchers for the two-week Christmas break and one-week February 2021 half term.
- 80% or people were responding to test and trace
- The BP/A10/A142 roundabout had been completed under budget and ahead of time. The remaining budget for this project would be put towards the Lancaster Way roundabout.
- Cllr Hunt would not be standing in the May 2021 County elections but would remain as a District Councillor (although not representing Wicken)

District Councillor Schumann updated the council on the following:

- ECDC had been the first district council to start to distribute the second lockdown COVID grants
- External auditors had signed off the ECDC accounts
- ECDC were offering two opportunities to meet Father Christmas virtually
- AWA had agreed to meet with Cllr D Schumann and other interested parties following the letter from Lucy Fazer MP
- Cllr D Schumann would be meeting with all connected parties regarding the expansion of the Staploe Medical Centre

County Councillor Hunt and District Councillor D Schumann left the meeting at 8.30pm

**7. Progress report on matters arising from the last meeting 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**7.1** Cycle path – Cllr Smith was ready to start work once the weather improved.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

**7.2** Maids Head sign – the hole had not yet been made good. The clerk had discussed this with CJ Murfitts.

**7.3** EA car park in Upware – This had been repaired.

**7.4** Mortuary Chapel and Cemetery Paths – Cllr Rogers advised that Amey Cespa had agreed an advance to pay John Cobb (see item 8). The floor in the Mortuary Chapel required additional work due to one of the floor joists and some of the floorboards being rotten. There was money in the budget for unforeseen expenses.

**7.5** Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme – The Rural Gigabit Team would be attending the January meeting.

**7.6** Purchase of rubbish bin for the Rec. – The clerk was awaiting delivery.

**7.7** Non-payment of invoices by National Trust – The National Trust had paid the outstanding invoice for rent in 2019/20 and for the mirror at the top of Lode Lane.

**7.8** Upware Open Space – The clerk had instructed Peter Haine to remove the remaining trees and clear the stumps. [Clerk's note – this has now been completed]. The weed protector had been purchased and the clerk had requested a quote from Truelink for seeding the area with grass. Cllr Tory advised that the seedlings need to be planted. Cllr Tory would discuss with the URA and arrange a day to plant the hedges.

**7.10** Deed of Easement 26 High Street Wicken – The fee for the Deed of Easement had been agreed and the papers drawn up.

**7.11** Picnic benches at the Maids head – The picnic benches had been moved closer to the Maids Head wall. The council had requested these be moved closer to the drive to stop people parking on the green.

## **8. Financial matters.**

### **8.1 Bill payments**

Rachel Earl	Clerk wages December 2020	£359.36
HMRC PAYE	PAYE November 2020	£90
Truelink Ltd	Cuts in November	£117.60
Haine Tree Services	Removal of Horse Chestnut in the churchyard	£1140.00
British Gas Lite	Electricity for Rec 11/10/20 to 11/11/20	£16.10
ACRE	Annual membership	£57.00
SSE	Streetlight electric November 2020	£105.55
EACH	Donation	£50.00
Wave	Water charges for the cemetery 3/6/20-2/12/20	£23.82
Wave	Water charges for Recreation Ground 3/9/20-2/12/20	£14.64
Wave	Water charges Butts Lane allotments 3/6/20-2/12/20	£60.09
AmeyCespa Ltd*	11% of total grant	£2777.28
John Cobb & Sons*	Payment for the cemetery paths	£11823.60

\*The cheques for AmeyCespa Ltd and John Cobb & Sons Ltd had been written between meetings. The grant from AmeyCespa would be issued when all of the works was completed. However, John Cobb Ltd had completed the work on the paths in October and required payment. Cllr Rogers had discussed this with AmeyCespa, and they had agreed to issue a £10k advance to the Parish Council upon receipt of the cheque for £2777.28 which is the 11% of the total grant payable by the Parish Council (taken from CIL money). Cllr Rogers had received written confirmation that the payment would be made to the Council and not direct to John Cobb Ltd.

## **8.2 Monthly Finance Update**

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

## **8.3 Donation to EACH**

Although currently not used by any parishioner, it was agreed that this could be a service required by a parishioner at any time and therefore qualified to receive a donation. A donation of £50 was proposed by Cllr Day and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All were in favour.

## **8.4 Clerks Wages**

The Council agreed to increase the rate of pay from £10.37 per hour to £10.62 per hour, backdated to 1 April 2020. This followed the late issue of the 2020 NALC Pay Scales dated 24 August 2020 and brings the clerk into line with the correct rate of pay for SCP8. This was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All were in favour.

## **9. Grass Cutting Tender**

The invitation to tender for a three-year contract for the parish grass cutting had been sent to Truelink Ltd, CGM Group, East Cambs Trading Company and TS Grounds Solution. Responses had been received from Truelink Ltd and CGM Group. The decision was deferred until the clerk could obtain references for CGM Group.

## **10. Draft Precept 2021/22**

The current precept stood at £26k. The following projects would need to be allowed for:

- Slubbing of the village pond
- Repair of the Mission Hall car park
- Electric charging points (future project in 2-3 years)
- IT

This would be on the January 2021 agenda.

## **11. Parish Trees**

A Guelder-rose had been planted on the Maids Head green, but it was felt that this would be better suited to the Recreation Ground. Cllr Rogers would arrange the transfer.

Tree number 8 on the Mission Hall Green was on the tree survey monitor list and had already had a bough break off around 2 years ago. It was agreed that this tree should be removed and replaced.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

Tree number 37 on the Maids Head Green was on the tree survey monitor list and, although a branch had broken off, there was still life in the tree. It was agreed to retain the tree but continue to monitor.

## **12. Items for Information**

Cllr Day advised that a gate with a padlock had been placed across the bridleway at the bottom of High Fen Drove. Landowners could access their land by using the concrete road at Kingfisher but there was concern over future rights of way. The clerk would look into this.

Cllr Tory advised that a fence had been installed outside Cannon House at Upware and there was some confusion as to whether this was in the correct place. The Chair had been in contact with the owner of the property and this would be referred to Highways.

There had been some large lorries trying to gain access to Back Lane by using Redit Lane and finding that the lane was too small. Residents had voiced concerns on Facebook. The Council were unsure where a 'no through way' sign could be installed. The clerk would contact Highways.

There was no further items of information and the meeting closed at 21.31.