

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD
AT 19.30 HRS ON TUESDAY 9th MARCH 2021
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, M Smith, P Rash and L Tory. County Councillor Hunt and 6 parishioners

1. Apologies for absence and any declarations of interest.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hawes (personal reasons) and Cllr Bye (personal reasons) and District Councillor Bovingdon.

Cllr Rash and Cllr Rogers declared an interest in item 4.4.

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.

Cllr Jilly Rogers spoke as a member of the public regarding the planning application under item 4.4. and voiced the following concerns: height of the proposed building, concerns with construction as the boundary runs long the footpath and the appearance as it will be visible from the conservation area.

Cllr Peter Rash confirmed a question raised by the Chair that the proposed building would be built over the top of the piped ditch.

Cllr Day joined the meeting at 19.39.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 9th February 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 Proposed erection of garage/games room and first floor gymnasium, Orwell Farm, 35 High Street, Wicken. AMENDMENT Ref 20/01734/FUL.

The amendment involved the reduction in scale and height of the proposed garage and change of window design. The Council had no objections but reiterated that further planning permission should be submitted if there was a change of use to residential in the future.

4.2 2no. Four Bedroom Semi Detached Houses. 29 Chapel Lane, Wicken. AMENDMENT. Ref 20/01689/FUL

The amendment was for the amended block plan to demonstrate the surface water disposal into the adjacent water course. The Council had no objections.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

4.3 Erection of a detached dwelling along with vehicular access point and the provision of a pedestrian footpath. Adjacent Second Breeds Farm, 9 Stretham Road, Wicken. Ref 21/00268/FUL

The Parish Council would like the planning refused as it was outside the development envelope.

Cllrs Rash and Rogers left the meeting at 19.47.

4.4 Partial demolition of existing garage and outbuilding and erection of replacement garage, potting shed, garden room and games room. 6 Butts Lane, Wicken. Ref 21/00302/FUL

The Council had the following concerns:

- The height of the property – the roof line is felt to be unnecessarily high for single storey and will have an effect on the neighbouring properties.
- Appearance of the property – although designed to reflect the new extension to the bungalow the modern design with its industrial style is felt to be visually out of keeping on the edge of the conservation area.
- Future use of the property. – The Council would like a condition added that further planning permission should be submitted if there was a change of use to residential in the future.

Cllrs Rash and Rogers returned to the meeting at 19.56.

Update on Planning Applications Granted

The following have been granted by ECDC:

- 2no four-bedroom semi-detached dwellings. 29 Chapel Lane, Wicken, Ely, Cambs CB7 5XZ. Ref 20/01689/FUL
- Replace existing flat roof with a pitched roof to accommodate solar heating panels – resubmission. Tyman Cottage, 1 Lower Road Wicken ref 21/00023/FUL

5. Reclassification of the A1123 to a B Road

This had been discussed at the last meeting and a decision had been made electronically on whether the Council agreed with the reclassification. However, the Clerk was not satisfied with the process and had requested that this be discussed in full with public participation and a presentation by County Councillor Hunt. The meeting would be adjourned after the presentation for an additional period for public participation.

County Councillor Hunt advised the following benefits:

- Reduced traffic and therefore reduced noise and emissions
- Increased safety
- More cycle friendly
- Easier to reduce the speed limit if required
- Easier to gain permission to install traffic calming

During his last election campaign County Councillor Hunt had spoken to a number of residents along the A1123 and all were concerned about the noise, pollution and speed.

The Council discussed the following concerns:

- Reduced gritting
- Reduced funding for repairs

Draft minutes not yet accepted

The meeting was adjourned for public participation.

A resident on High Street stated that she felt it was a very good idea as it would reduce the noise and speed and for safety for children.

A resident on Stretham Road was concerned about the poor road condition but could see the positives of downgrading to B-road for future speed restrictions.

The meeting resumed.

The Parish Council voted 5-1 in favour of supporting the reclassification to a B road. The Parish Council had strong concerns with the ongoing maintenance of the road in particular from Dimmock's Cote to St Laurence's Church.

6. County and District Councillor reports

County Councillor Hunt advised the following:

- He fully supported the LHI bid submitted to reduce the speeding in Upware and had supported the Parish Council at the LHI panel.
- The Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely had been approved for a new £45m refurbishment.
- Week commencing 22/2/2021 there had been 1637 road gullies cleared.
- Covid rates in ECDC for the last week in February was 56 per 100,000.
- There would be an increase of 2% on the regular council tax and 0.99% increase on the social care aspect of the council tax.
- County Cllr Hunt would not be standing for re-election in May.

On behalf of the Parish Council, Cllr Houghton thanked County Councillor Hunt for his support and hard work. Thanking him in particular for the work on the diversion route for the A14, the issue with the school bus, supporting the LHI bids and the footpath along Lode lane.

County Councillor Hunt left the meeting at 20.53

7. Progress report on matters arising from the last meeting 9th February 2021

7.1 Cycle path – Cllr Smith was ready to start work once the weather improved. Cllr Rash had attended the Soham Town Council meeting where the cycle path was discussed. The Soham cycle path would now include a path around the new solar farm at Angle Farm. It was envisaged that work would be completed in Autumn 2022.

7.2 Purchase of rubbish bin for the Rec. –Cllr Smith will install next week.

7.3 Non-payment of invoices by National Trust – The National Trust still owes the October 2020 invoice for the 2020/21 rent.

7.4 Parish trees – The guelder-rose had not yet been transferred to the Recreation Ground.

7.5 High Fen Drove padlocked gate – The gate was now unlocked.

7.6 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.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

7.7 Grass Cutting tender – The clerk and Chair had met with CGM Ltd and would meet again at the end of March once the first cut had been completed.

7.8 LHI Bid – Upware Speeding. Cllr Tory had presented to the LHI panel. A decision should be received by June/July.

7.9 Reflectors Along Lode Lane – The National Trust were investigating an alternative reflector post to be used along Lode Lane.

7.10 The Maltings Footpath – The clerk had reported the damage to the path to CCC

8. Cemetery Tap

The tap in the cemetery had been vandalised resulting in a water leak. The incident had been reported to the police and Rory Woodroffe had repaired the leak. It was agreed that the tap should be replaced with a water limiting tap to ensure the tap was not left on.

9. Financial Matters

9.1 Bill payments

Rachel Earl	Clerk wages March 2021	£368.20
HMRC PAYE	PAYE February 2021	£92.00
British Gas Electric	March 2021. Electric for changing rooms. Incorrect reading in January 2021	Credit £30.95
SSE	Electric for streetlights for January 2021	£102.19
SSE	Electric for streetlights February 2021	£102.19
Wave	Cemetery water 3/12/20-2/3/21	£11.72
Wave	Water for Recreation Ground 3/12/20-2/3/21	£14.51
Wave	Water for Butts Lane allotments 3/12/20-2/3/21	£25.67
CAPALC	Councillor training Cllr Smith	£75.00
CAPALC	Councillor training Cllr Tory	£75.00
CAPALC	Chairmanship training Cllr Houghton	£50.00
Weatherhill Brothers	Marquee cleaning and repairs	£662.80

The clerk was in the process of getting ready for the audit and the following was noted and agreed by the council:

A & M Window Cleaning	Bus shelter cleaning. Agreed but missed from the February 2021 minutes	£45.00
Anglian Water	Missed from July minutes	£14.50
Eon	Electric for changing rooms – May 2020	£17.40
SSE	Electric for streetlights for August 2020	£101.99
British Gas Lite	Payment on the 25/11/20 minutes as £16.10 ddr for £16.74	
Truelink Ltd	Payment minuted as £359.36 but should have been £694.44 (typing error)	

Draft minutes not yet accepted

9.2 Monthly Finance Update

The Council noted the stable position.

10. Proposal to Make the Village a 'Dogs on Leads' Area

The clerk had investigated the proposal but had found that the rules for dogs to be kept on a lead were only for pedestrian areas, near livestock or if the area was subject to a Public Space Protections Order. Wicken did not fit with these requirements so the matter was dropped.

11. Village Ditches and Drainage System

Following the recent wet weather it had become apparent that some of the ditches in the village had either not been maintained or had been filled in without piping. The clerk will complete an audit of the ditches in the village.

The Parish Council ditch along Lower Road next to the Recreation Ground required flailing and redefining. This would be completed in September by Cllr Day and Cllr Smith. The ditch along the east boundary of the Recreation Ground also needed slubbing out.

12. Cutting of the Cemetery Hedge and Car Park Hedge

A quote of £550 had been received from CGM Ltd for cutting the cemetery and car park hedge. A quote from Truelink had not yet been received. The Parish Council gave the clerk permission to order the work to be completed for £550 or less. A quote for £150 from CGM Ltd had been received for cutting down the brambles in the cemetery. It was agreed that this work should be completed. Both were proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Rogers. All were in favour.

13. Policies

13.1 COVID Policy

The COVID statement was agreed.

13.2 Dignity at Work Policy

The policy was agreed.

14. Upware Open Space

The clerk had not yet received a replacement quote from Truelink.

15. Felling of the Crab Apple Tree on the Mission Hall Green

Permission had been received from the Tree Warden at ECDC to fell the tree on health and safety grounds. Cllr Rash proposed that the tree was replaced by a walnut tree. This would be considered at a later date.

16. Future Use of the Mortuary Chapel

Now the Mortuary Chapel had been refurbished it seemed a shame to use it for storage. Cllr Rash proposed that it be turned into a museum. Storage would be required for the current contents.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

The clerk will obtain the measurements of the current container on loan from CJ Murfitts and Cllr Rash will obtain a quote for the container to be stored on the Recreation Ground.

17. Review of the cemetery Rules

The need to revise the cemetery rules had arisen and the clerk required clarification on when the Christmas wreaths should be removed. It was agreed that Christmas wreaths should be removed by the end of January. Further work would be completed on the wording of the cemetery rules and would be agreed by the Burial Board.

18. Items for Information

The Council would be returning to face to face meetings with effect from the May meeting. Cllr Houghton had received a request from residents of Pond Green for the reeds in the pond nearest to the outlet pipe to be cut back when the pond was slubbed out.

There were concerns about the damage to the verges by the lorries using Lower Road whilst Hawes Lane was closed. Cllr Rash had moved the reflector posts to protect the resident's lawn. Cllr Smith would ask the developers to not use Lower Road. *[Post meeting note – the builders had agreed to stop the removal of the dirt until they could use Hawes Lane. They would also sweep Lower Road and make good the grass.]*

Cllr Rogers had attended a webinar on engaging with the community and this would be on the April agenda.

There was no further items of information and the meeting closed at 22.07.