

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2024
WICKEN MISSION HALL

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
Cllrs R Barnes, M Hawes, S Hill, P Rash, B Pepper, C Robinson and J Rogers and 2 parishioners.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs L Houghton (holiday) and S Wilson (holiday), County Council B Hunt and District Councillor L Vellacott.

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.

Cllr Barnes declared an interest in item 14.

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.

A parishioner thanked Cllrs Robinson and Hill for their work with the grass cutting scheme which would take place from March 2025 and requested an amendment to the verge between 10 Stretham Road and Hawes Lane. Councillors agreed to look at that section and it would be discussed at the November meeting.

Item 15 was brought forward on the agenda.

15. Removal of Trees and Ditch Clearance – Afterway Allotments, Lower Road Wicken

Cllr Pepper had repaired the culvert at the entrance of the allotments and the Council thanked him for completing the work. Following further clearance by Mrs Crook the water in the ditch was now flowing. The Council thanked Mrs Crook for her work with this. The clerk had received a quote to remove the trees and bushes which had hindered the flow of water and to reprofile the ditch. The quote was £825 + vat (subject to checking with the digger operator). Now the culvert was repaired and the water running freely the removal of the trees was discussed. There were two proposals for work:

- A period on monitoring until January 2025 to see if further work was required.
- Removal of trees and bushes and to slub out the ditch

The majority vote was to monitor until January 2025.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10 September 2024

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

4. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 10 September 2024

- 4.1** Allotment access road and Maltings footpath—Cllr Rash would complete further work on the Maltings footpath.
- 4.2** Hawes Lane culvert –This would be looked at when the brambles had died back.
- 4.3** Pond Green Posts – The clerk had met with Les Yardy and work would take place 10 October 2024. The posts would be set back 1 meter, there would be 1 post gap and a diamond link chain to allow for access to the green on fete day and two posts near the pond would be installed after the maintenance work had been completed on the pond.
- 4.4** Cleaning of Parish Benches – This would be completed by the Parish Councillors when time allowed.
- 4.5** Pond Green Play Equipment Insurance Quote – The replacement equipment would be installed on the 11 October 2024.
- 4.6** Repair of the Manhole Cover – This was ongoing.
- 4.7** Wicken Lode Maintenance – Reeds would be cut back in October as part of the maintenance agreement with Wicken Fen. The Fen and Parish Council would work together with the slubbing out of the river. Cllr Robinson requested that the maintenance agreement was reviewed.
- 4.8** Crown Lift – the crown lift of the lime tree on Pond Green had taken place.
- 4.9** Changing Rooms Refurbishment – There had been a delay for the commencement of the work due to the original materials increasing in price. This would take place in October/November.
- 4.10** Bus Franchise – The consultation for the bus franchise continued. Cllr Rash had attended the Ely meeting on behalf of the Parish Council. A link would be put on Facebook. The Clerk would invite Stagecoach to present to the Parish Council.

5. Planning Matters

5.1 Proposed Garage/Store. 34 North Street Wicken Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 5XW. Ref 24/00991/FUL

There were no objections.

5.2 Installation of a remote-control operated roller shutter garage doors in the car port. 1 Augustine Place, Wicken, CB7 6AX. Ref 24/00908/FUL

There were no objections.

5.3 Installation of a remote-control operated roller shutter garage door in the car port. 4 Augustine Place, Wicken CB7 6AX. Ref 24/00901/FUL

There were no objections.

5.4 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

Approved

- Extension of an existing garage building to create a new home gymnasium. Paddock House, 6A Lower Road, Wicken. Ref 24/00824/FUL
- Installation of a balcony at the rear. 14 Upware. Ely 24/00611/FUL

6. County and District Councillor Reports

Written report form Cllr Vellacott

- Three duck signs had been installed in Soham.
- Demand Response Zone for a bus service was being considered under the Mayor's plans.
- Bus Delivery Model consultation was taking place.
- New waste service approved at Committee.
- Changes in the Government's new planning policy has resulted in ECDC embarking on a new Local Plan immediately.
- Cllr Vellacott would assist with Wicken Neighbourhood Plan
- ECDC considering motions to help prevent waste discharge into the River Ouse from 'sea toilets' and against the decision to means test winter fuel allowance alongside combative local measures to protect pensioners.
- Cllr Vellacott would ask the Leader about the ECDC's activity to boost youth employment.
- Investigation in to overgrown hedges.

7. Allotment Turnaround Grass Protection Mesh

Cllr Pepper had researched the cost of the protection mesh which was £681.30 including VAT and delivery. Cllr Pepper agreed to lay the mesh. Purchase of the mesh and the work to be completed was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Robinson. All were in favour.

8. Update from Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Cllr Pepper and the clerk had met with 3 further residents who had all agreed to join the Working Group bringing the total to 8. The application for a Neighbourhood Plan had been submitted which would take 13 weeks to approve. The next meeting was taking place on 11 November 2024.

9. Pond Maintenance and Repair of the Duck House

Work on the pond would take place w/c 28 October 2024. The clerk had spoken to Meads, and they had grab lorries and were happy to pick the reeds up from the side of the pond. This would be put on Facebook closer to the time.

10. LHI Bid 2025/26

The LHI bid for Reddit Lane for 2024/25 had been unsuccessful. This would be resubmitted again for 2025/26.

11. St Andrews Primary School Admissions

The School Adjudicator had agreed with the Parish Council that the consultation to change the submission criteria for St Andrews for September 2025 had not been carried out correctly and could not take place. DEMAT would need to consult again between October 2024 and January 2025 to change the admissions criteria for September 2026. The proposed change in criteria would mean that children in Wicken, Padney and Upware no longer had guaranteed places at St

Andrews Primary School. When the consultation takes place, the Parish Council would ensure residents in the Wicken Parish knew how important it was to respond.

12. Volunteer Day to Paint the Play Area Swings

A number of residents had volunteered to help tidy up the Pond Green Play Park. Once the equipment had been repaired the Clerk would arrange a volunteer day including painting the frame of the swings. The frame was currently green which was an issue for visually impaired people. Cllr Hawes proposed this be changed to red. This was seconded by Cllr Barnes. All were in favour.

13. Minute Binding

The clerk currently had 10 years' worth of signed minutes in paper form and had investigated having them bound. However, this would cost in the region of £700 so it was agreed that this would not take place.

14. Request from the Hall Committee to Use the BBQs

Cllr Barnes left the meeting at 8.50pm

The Hall Committee had requested to use one BBQ for the Christmas Fair on 1 December 2024. This was agreed.

Cllr Barnes joined the meeting at 8.52pm

15. This had already been discussed at the start of the meeting.

16. Removal of the Canopy and Hedge on Footpath 27

The hedge on footpath 27 had grown over and created a canopy. This had been trimmed each time the footpaths had been cut but was now too heavy to be trimmed back. The clerk had received a quote from RH Landscapes to complete the work which was £1440 plus VAT. Cllr Rogers proposed the work should take place. This was seconded by Cllr Rash. All were in favour.

17. Financial Matters

17.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages October 2024	£509.60
HMRC PAYE	PAYE October 2024	£127.40
RH Landscapes	Grass cutting September 2024	£840.00
Roland Fletcher	Late season footpath cut	£979.20
British Gas	Changing rooms electric 8 August to 8 September 24	£28.83
Wicken Mission Hall	Hall rent July to September	£90.00
CAPALC	Chair/Vice chair training B Pepper and J Rogers	£100.00
Jerry Woodroffe	Repair and painting of the village sign	£555.00
Ultimate One	Purchase of grass protector mesh and pins for allotment turnaround (CIL money)	£681.30
CCC	Half year rent for allotments	£1068.00
PWLB	Loan payment for Mission Hall	£2640.77
Boxrap	Bench for Upware Open Space (CIL money)	£612.00

17.2 Monthly Finance update

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

17.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 September 2024

This had been circulated.

18. Items for Information

Cllr Robinson asked whether the Parish Council could apply for a grant to plant some bulbs. It was suggested the Cllr Robinson applied for the Pride of Place grant. This would be put on the November agenda.

Information on an Energy Storage Facility had been circulated and a public consultation was taking place in the village hall on 29 October 2024. The Parish Council had not been previously notified and was only made aware a day before leaflets were circulated. This would be on the November agenda.

Parking along North Street was still an issue. The clerk would write to the residents of North Street asking them to park on their drives where possible.

A large number of lorries were using the village as a 'rat run'. The clerk would write to the companies. Councillors were asked to note which lorry companies were using it regularly.

Cllr Pepper would be having a meeting with County Councillor Hunt and Highways in November.

Cllr Pepper had seen some information on a Net Zero Village grant. Cllr Barnes would add this to the next Village Hall Committee agenda.

Cllr Pepper had attended the Community Liaison Forum meeting and reported the following:

- The National Trust had suffered some vandalism at Reach involving the toilets and benches.
- The badgers had returned to their old set and were causing further damage to the riverbank.
- The summer celebration activities had been successful and brought in large numbers of visitors.
- The National Trust were seeking partnerships with farmers to extend the Wicken Fen project.
- Wicken Fen representatives had attended a large number of fetes and fayres but unfortunately had not attended the Wicken Fete.
- A project manager had been appointed to manage the Burwell Lode bridge.
- The Dragonfly Centre would be made into a meeting space.

There was no further business, and the meeting closed at 9.20pm