

Draft minutes not yet accepted

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD
AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023
WICKEN MISSION HALL**

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
B Pepper, M Hawes, L Houghton (chair), J Rogers, R Barnes, S Hill, C Robinson, S Wilson, District Councillor I Bovingdon and District Councillor L Vellacott.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Rash and County Councillor B Hunt.

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.

There was no public participation.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10 October 2023

One amendment was required to note the Cllr Robinson was in attendance at the October meeting. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true and correct copy and signed by the Chair.

5. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 10 October 2023

5.1 Mission Hall BT manhole –The Chair was in the process of applying to the wayleave department at Openreach to enable the manhole to be elevated.

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

6.3 Offer of bark chippings – Cllr Pepper would arrange for the chippings to be spread around the tree base.

5.4 Church Yard Paths –The stone had appeared to bond due to the heavy rain. This would be monitored.

5.5 Hedge Adjacent to Wicken Mission Hall Car Park – The clerk had provided 2 dates for a meeting, but the owner had not responded. The clerk would write again.

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5.6 Speeding tractors – This had been picked up by ECDC and there had been an article in the Ely Standard.

5.7 Demolition of existing outbuilding and replacement with a triple garage, garden room and gym at 6 Butts Lane – The application had been withdrawn.

5.8 Redit Lane Highways issues – The clerk had contacted Highways and was waiting to hear back.

5.9 Mission Hall Green tree – ECDC had given permission to remove the tree but suggested leaving the tree until the Spring to see if it improved. This was agreed and would be reviewed again in April 2024.

5.10 The memorial stability testing had been postponed due to the weather. This would now take place in January 2024.

5.11 East Cambridgeshire Growth and Infrastructure Fund – Cllrs Houghton and Rogers had attended the ECDC Parish Council Conference and had been informed that some grants which were available from ECDC could not be applied for if the Parish Council had enough CIL money to cover the project.

5.12 Maids Head Public House – The clerk had written to Mr Holland but had not received a response. The Maid's Head was due to reopen under new management on 17 November 2023. The clerk would write to the new owner regarding parking and benches.

5.13 Repairs required to the bridge over the footpath – Cllr Barnes had donated some chicken wire and Cllr Pepper had installed the wire making the surface less slippery.

5.14 Church Road path edge – The clerk had reported the path edge to Highways.

6. Planning Matters

6.1 Erection of a Detached Building for Use as a Cycle Repair facility and Associated Shop. Land Rear of 20 Stretham Road, Wicken. Ref 23/00460/FUL. Ratification of response made to ECDC on 20 October 2023.

An extension to the deadline had not been granted by ECDC. The following comments were made following email discussion:

- The Parish Council would like a condition applied that the building should not deviate from commercial use and would require a further planning application in the future if the owner would like to change to residential.
- This is a rural setting and the Parish Council feel some trees and hedgerows should be left to echo the rural environment.
- The road is single track, and the Parish Council would like Highways to consider the effect of the increase of traffic.

6.2 To Vary Condition 1 (Approved Plans) of Previously Approved 23/00136/FUL for First Floor Extension. Twyman Cottage, 1 Lower Road, Wicken. Ref 23/01150/VAR

The Parish Council had no comments or concerns.

6.3 Updates on Planning Application Approve/Refused by ECDC

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Approved:

Removal of Thuja tree, 7 Pond Green Wicken. Ref 23/00998/TRE

7. County and District Councillor Reports

Cllr Vellacott reported on the following:

- He had met with Sally Bonnett of ?? regarding housing mix and affordable housing and reported that housing mix and affordable housing only had to be considered for applications of 10 or more houses on a development according to HOU1 and HOU3.
- The planning application for the houses on Stretham Road would be going to Planning Committee and Cllr Vellacott would either attend or write a statement.
- The public consultation for the Soham and Barway neighbourhood plan was underway.
- The mayor had brought back the Transport and Connectivity plan. ECDC would be voting against.
- The revised Housing Plan for ECDC had a lower target for the number of houses.
- He had met with Steph James from ECDC to discuss youth provisions and was championing it for Soham and Wicken
- He had attended the Seminar on the Environment Act 2021 – this covered waste and biodiversity which would see black wheelie bins and weekly collection of food waste (separate to the green wheelie bin)
- He had attended the Operations Services Committee and updated the council of the matters discussed at the meeting.
- ECDC had a statutory duty to ensure biodiversity net gain. Cllr Bovingdon advised that to maintain the 5-year housing supply the biodiversity had to be managed carefully to ensure the biodiversity clauses did not restrict development too much.
- Cllrs Bovingdon and Vellacott now represented ECDC on the Middle Mere Internal Drainage Board

Cllrs Bovingdon and Vellacott left the meeting at 8.30pm

8. Update from the Cycle Path Consultation

Cllrs Houghton and Rash and the Clerk had attended the cycle path consultation meeting held with the project managers and Footpaths Officer and advised the following:

- Tenders for the work were due to be submitted by the end of the year.
- Vegetation clearance taking place in February 2024.
- Work starting in March 2024 and should take 4 months to complete.
- The pinch point area would be re-profiled at the start of the bridleway to make the area wider.
- There would be three trial surface areas along the bridal way section. These would be replaced if they were not suitable.
- No lighting as this would make it too urban but safety studs on the tight bends.

9. Follow Up from the Coffee Morning 14 October 2023

The Coffee Morning had gone well with a number of residents attending and discussing a range of subjects with the councillors. The main concern was the speeding through the village.

10. Speedwatch Session in Upware and Use of the Speedwatch Signs

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Cllr Pepper agreed to hold a Speedwatch session in Upware. Permission was given to use one of the flashing signs in Upware for a week to obtain data on the speeds of the vehicles. This information would then be used as evidence for the 20mph speed limit application which had previously ranked 41st on the list of applications.

11. Successful Application for 20mph Zones and Proposed Designs

Wicken had been successful in applying for 20mph zones in the village. The Parish Council had originally applied for all the side roads to be 20mph with the A1123 remaining at 30mph. This was due to the ambiguous nature of the original guidance which seemed to imply A-roads did not qualify for the 20mph scheme. However, when the proposed design had been received from CCC all the side roads had been reduced to 20mph with the exception of Hawes Lane and Lower Road which were to be reduced to 40mph and included the A1123 being reduced to 20mph.

After discussion, the Parish Council agreed to request Hawes Lane and Lower Road to also be reduced to 20mph and to support the side roads being 20mph

Further detailed discussion took place regarding the CCC proposal to reduce the whole of the current A1123 30mph limit to 20mph. It was agreed there are considerable ongoing road and pedestrian safety concerns about speeding through the village as evidenced at the coffee morning, at representations made at Parish Council meetings and to councillors directly by parishioners. Speedwatch sessions undertaken in the past and more recently continue to record excessive speed from road users. In addition, Haddenham PC had provided evidence that showed the reduction of the speed limit there from 30mph to 20mph had brought the overall average speed down by 10mph. The reduction to 20mph may also encourage road users to select an alternative route. It was acknowledged that enforcement is still required by the police whatever the speed limit is and pressure for this to take place would continue.

The Parish Council discussed the following three options for the A1123:

- A1123 to remain 30mph, i.e. no change
- Partial reduction to 20mph of A1123 from Lode Lane junction to Butts Lane junction.

Full length of the village to be reduced to 20mph, as proposed by CCC. This was put to the vote, and it was agreed 6 votes to 1 that the full length of the village should be reduced to 20mph. One vote was in favour of a partial reduction to 20mph. There were no votes in favour of retaining the 30mph limit.

12. Design Plan for Successful LHI Bid 2023/24 for Give Way on Hawes Lane/Lower Road Junction

The plans for the proposed design for the LHI bid had been received and were approved. This placed a give way at the bottom of Hawes Lane.

13. LHI Bid 2024/25

It was agreed that the LHI bid for 2024/25 would be submitted for Reddit Lane to add signage to showing the road was unsuitable for large vehicles.

14. Church Wall

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The Clerk had contacted the Diocese about possibly replacing the complete wall but had been informed a Faculty would be required to replace the complete wall, but like for like repairs could be made immediately. The clerk would obtain quotes for repairs.

15. Assets of Community Value

It was agreed that an asset of community value application should be re-submitted for the Maids Head.

16. Parish Nature Recovery Plan

Cllrs Robinson and Hill agreed to complete the Parish Nature Recovery Plan. This needed to be submitted to ECDC by 1 January 2024 in line with the Environment Act. It would be placed on next months agenda for review before submission.

17. Review and Approval of Fees and Charges

It was agreed that the charges should remain the same from April 2024

	Fee
Acre allotments	£110.00
Afterway allotments	£6
Garden land	£70
Burwell land	£110.00
Poor's Fen	£200.00
Green Licences	£30
Pavilion Rent	£1
Use of Pitch	£25
Changing Rooms	£20.00
Use of MUGA	£5 per hour (off peak) £2.50 for residents £10 per hour (peak) £5 for residents
Use of lights	£5 per hour
Clerk	SCP16
Annual expenses	£550
Chairman allowance	£150
Internal auditor	£100
Marquee 30x30	£150 parishioner £300 commercial
Marquee 30x20	£120 parishioner £240 commercial
Marquee 20x15	£80 parishioner £160 commercial
Folding tables	£5

Burial Fees with effect from April 2024

Interments

Interment in the cemetery in a grave for which an exclusive right of burial has been granted at a depth not exceeding 5 feet 6 inches of:

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		Current	From April 2024
a	the body of a still born child or a child whose age at the time of death did not exceed one month	£30.00	£30
b	a person whose age at the time of death exceeded one month but did not exceed 12 years	£45.00	£50
c	a person whose age at the time of death exceeded 12 years	£120.00	£150
d	cremated remains	£70.00	£100
e	cremated remains in ashes plot 2 feet by 2 feet for which exclusive right of burial has been granted (Single-depth plot 18 in, double-depth 2 ft.):	£70.00	£100

Burial Grants

Exclusive right of burial for a period not exceeding 99 years in the first instance in:

f	an earthen grave 9 feet by 4 feet in the cemetery	£160	£200
g	an infant plot in the cemetery	£70	£70
h	ashes plot 2 feet by 2 feet in the church yard or cemetery	£70	£100

Memorials

For erection of:

i	a headstone not exceeding 3 feet in height	£120	£150
j	a monument in the form of a vase not exceeding an overall height of 2 feet	£70	£100
k	a grey stone plaque with white lettering 1 foot by 1 foot on ashes plots	£70	£100
l	a stone vase 6"x6"x6" in the churchyard or cemetery	£40	£60
m	any inscription after the first one on a gravestone or monument	£40	£60

Clerk's fee increase from £15 to £20.

18. Financial Matters

18.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages November 2023	£474.86
HMRC PAYE	PAYE November 2023	£118.80
RH Landscapes	October cuts	£1260.00
SSE	Streetlight electricity October 2023	£49.98
British Gas	Electric for changing rooms October 2023	£25.91
Rachel James	Clerk's annual expenses	£550.00
PW Direct (card payment)	Signs for Recreation ground and footpath	£37.48
CCC	Half yearly rent for allotments	£1068.00
Fresh & Proper (card payment)	Refreshments for coffee morning	£23.68

18.2 Monthly Finance update

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

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18.3 Bank Reconciliation to 30 October 2023

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

18.4 Pay Increase for Clerk in line with the NALC recommendations backdated to 1 April 2023.

NALC recommendations for SCP16 was £14.70 per hour backdated to 1 April 2023. This was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Houghton. All were in favour.

18.5 Payment of the Clerks Annual Expenses

The annual expenses included stamps, stationery, contribution for utilities (working from home) and fuel. Payment was made.

18.6 Donation to the Royal British Legion

A donation of £100 was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All were in favour. The Parish Council would like to thank Martin Hopkins for organising the wreaths and procedures on Remembrance Day.

18.7 Half Yearly Budget

The half yearly budget was presented and showed that the council was in a stable position.

19. Review of Council Documents

Due to the lateness of the meeting, it was agreed to roll the reviews of the Risk Register (19.1) and Village Action Plan including Climate Strategy (19.2) over to the December meeting.

19.3 Review of the Model Financial Regulations

The model financial regulations were unchanged from 2019 and these were approved by the Parish Council. Cllr Houghton proposed that the tender limit was raised from £1500 to £3000 due to the rise in the cost of materials and obtaining three quotes etc. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson. All were in favour.

20. Items for Information

Cllr Houghton advised that the three benches had been installed by The National Trust along Wicken Lode.

A wooden post near the war memorial had been knocked and was broken. The clerk would ask Jim Day if he would replace the post.

The storage yard behind the industrial area along Stretham Road was encroaching on to agricultural land and becoming unsightly. The Clerk would report to ECDC.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 10.24pm