

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD  
AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 8 AUGUST 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, S Hill and S Wilson and District Councillors Vellacott and Bovingdon

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M Hawes (holiday) and R Barnes (holiday).

**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 Wilson declared an interest in agenda item 6.1.

**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 were no requests to speak.

**4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11 July 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 11 July 2023**

**5.1** Mission Hall BT manhole –The clerk was finding it difficult to find the correct department at BT/Openreach to seek permission.

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

**5.3** Cemetery Car Park – Cllr Pepper had sprayed the weeds in the cemetery car park. The antisocial use of the car park would continue to be monitored.

**5.4** Offer of bark chippings – The bark chipping had all been used prior to Parish Council collection. The clerk would look into the cost of purchasing some mulch.

**5.5** Public Meeting – The hall had been booked for Saturday 14 October 2023. This would be advertised.

Draft minutes not yet accepted

**5.6** Pond Green Play Area – The swings had been mended and were now back in use. The safety surface had been ordered and would be installed after the summer holidays. Thank you to Cllr Pepper for his work with this.

**5.7** Vitality of Inonnotus Hispdus tree – The clerk had contacted RH Landscapes and awaited a report from them.

**5.8** Visit to Wicken Fen – This would be taking place on 21 August 2023.

**5.9** Donation – The generous donation of £10,000 had been received.

**5.10** Cloudy Water – The clerk had asked residents for details of areas in the village who were suffering from cloudy water. No concerns had been received.

**5.11** Speedwatch – Cllr Pepper would be leading a Speedwatch session in the village later in the week.

**5.12** CIL Money – The clerk had contacted ECDC regarding spending the CIL money but had not yet received a reply.

## **6. Planning Matters**

**6.1** Update on the planning application for the Site East to 38A Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 22/01229/FUL

The Chair, Clerk and District Councillor Vellacott had attended the ECDC Planning Committee meeting on 2 August 2023. It was resolved by the Planning Committee: That planning application ref 22/01229/FUL be REFUSED on the following grounds:

- i) that the site is outside the development envelope and is neither an allocated site nor an affordable housing exception site or other exception and therefore fails to comply with policy GROWTH2 of the Local Plan 2015, and that there were no other material considerations that would warrant a departure from the Local Plan.
- ii) that the development would cause the loss of and damage to existing and well-established landscape features which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and therefore in conflict with policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the Local Plan 2015 and the Natural Environment SPD 2020

### **6.2 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC**

- **Approved**

To vary conditions. Land and storage building east of 14 Back Lane Wicken. Ref 23/00659/VAR.

#### **Refused**

- Erection of 2 detached four-bedroom dwellings and car ports. Site to the East of 38A Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 22/01229/FUL

## **7. County and District Councillor Reports**

Draft minutes not yet accepted

### **District Council Vellacott**

- Will give evidence if the planning application for the site to the east of 38A Chapel Lane is appealed.
- Sanctuary Housing – evidence is being compiled by ECDC.
- Congestion charge – a motion had been passed by ECDC to try to stop the congestion charge which was being put forward by the Cambridgeshire Partnership
- Refuge vehicles – 7 of the ECDC refuge vehicles would be powered by vegetable oil.
- Cycle path – work should commence soon.
- Illegal parking – scheme for enforcers (similar to police specials) rolling out shortly and targeting Ely, Soham and Littleport
- Pride of Place grant - the scheme was now open and applications would be accepted until September 2024

### **District Councillor Bovingdon**

- Electric charging points in Soham car park were now working.
- ECDC is financially sound.
- Cllr Bovingdon would be working with the Internal Drainage Board.

## **8. ECDC Local Plan – Single Issue Review**

ECDC were on track to have enough housing stock for the next 5 years. The Parish Council supports the review.

## **9. Safer Communities Fund**

The Safer Communities Fund was established by the Police and Crime Commissioner and aimed to fund long term projects to reassure local issues of crime and disorder. The Parish Council agreed to investigate a possible application for mobile CCTV cameras.

## **10. Resignation of the Internal Auditor and Approval to Advertise the Vacancy**

Stephen Joyce had decided to step down from the role of internal auditor. The Parish Council thanked Mr Joyce for his work and support over the last 15 years. It was agreed that an advert would be placed in the Around and About and on Facebook. The position had a small remuneration of £100 per annum.

## **11. Request from the Wicken Amateurs Football Club for Additional Cuts and Maintenance of the Football Pitch**

The football club had requested additional cuts and the rolling of the pitch. It was agreed that the clerk would ask RH Landscapes to cut the pitch shorter in the first instance. It was suggested that the football club asked for a donation from Wicken Fete to cover the cost of rolling the pitch.

The agreement between the football club and Recreation Committee had been signed a number of years ago and those on the agreement were no longer connected to the football club. The clerk would contact the football club to discuss updating the agreement.

## **12. Church Yard Paths**

Draft minutes not yet accepted

The clerk had asked James Homes and Gardens for a quote for the work on the churchyard footpaths and car park. The work would be to remove the current surface, install a terram, replace the wooden edges and apply new shingle. The quote for the work was materials £350 and labour £160 with an additional £90 for the car park. Cllr Pepper proposed that the Parish Council would purchase the materials and ask James to complete the work. This was seconded by Cllr Rogers. All were in favour.

### **13. Butts Lane Allotments**

There had been reports of rats on the Butts Lane allotments. The clerk would write to all allotment holders in October reminding them of rodent control.

The Parish Council had received complaints about the use of the turning area for skips. Although these had now been removed there was still heris fencing on Parish Council land which did not have permission. The Chair and Cllr Pepper would investigate, and Cllr Pepper would discuss this with the homeowner.

### **14. Financial Matters**

#### **14.1 Bill payments**

Rachel James	Clerk wages August 2023	£474.86
HMRC PAYE	PAYE July 2023	£118.80
RH Landscapes	July cuts	£1320.0
SSE	Streetlight electricity July 2023	£48.91
Amazon (card payment)	CCTV signs	£13.98
British Gas	Electricity for changing rooms	£245.35
Currys (card payment)	New printer scanner	£229.99

#### **14.2 Monthly Finance update**

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

#### **14.3 Bank Reconciliation to 30 July 2023**

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

### **15. Items for Information**

At the ECDC Planning Committee meeting the Chair had been asked if Wicken had a Neighbourhood Plan as a plan would help ensure the Parish Council had a say in the growth of the village. This would be put on the October agenda and the clerk would ask a representative from ECDC to present at the meeting.

A hedge had been planted on the strip of land between the car park surface and the boundary of number 52 High Street. The clerk would write to ask that the hedge is removed.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 21.19.