

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2025
WICKEN MISSION HALL

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
Cllrs R Barnes, A Cogan, M Hawes, B Pepper, C Robinson and J Rogers, District Councillor Bovingdon and 3 parishioners.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs L Houghton, S Hill and P Rash, County Councillor B Hunt and District Councillor 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 agenda item 19.

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 outlined plans for a replacement gravel driveway across the green to 42 High Street Wicken.

A parishioner outlined their amended plans for an extension following the demolition of the current extension at 12 Pond Green, Wicken.

One parishioner left the meeting 7.40pm

Item 11 was brought forward.

11. Request to Refresh the Gravel Drive Access to 42 High Street, Wicken

The request to refresh the drive across the Green to 42 High Street was approved and permission granted. The Parish Council requested the homeowners monitored the gravel overspill and ensured this was removed from the road due to being near the junction.

Two parishioners left the meeting at 7.45pm

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14 January 2025

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

5. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 14 January 2025

5.1 Hawes Lane culvert –Cllr Pepper had investigated the watercourse and found that the issue could be further along Lower Road where it was suspected that there was not a culvert under a field entrance. Investigations would continue.

5.2 Painting of the Parish Benches – This would be completed by the Parish Councillors when time allowed.

5.3 Changing Rooms Refurbishment –The drawing for the redesign of the changing rooms had been submitted to ECDC for a Certificate of Lawfulness confirming that full planning permission was not required.

5.4 Bus Franchise –The Parish Council had delivered flyers for Tiger on Demand to every household in the parish and posters had been put up around the village. The clerk would include details in the Around and About.

5.5 Thermal Camera Loan – The loan of the camera had been agreed and Cllr Robinson would undertake the training for the equipment. Details would be in the Around and About and also on social media.

5.6 St Andrews Primary School Admissions – A letter had been received from Charlotte Cane MP who was in support of the need for the children from Wicken, Upware and Padney to have priority in the admissions criteria for St Andrews Primary School. Charlotte Cane MP had also written the Secretary of State for Education and DEMAT. DEMAT had confirmed that Wicken children would have priority for the admissions for 2025/26.

5.7 Highways work on the Upware Corner – The work was due to take place on 17 March 2025.

5.8 Flooding of Footpath Along Church Road – This had been reported to Highways.

6. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on 20 January 2025

One amendment was required which was accepting apologies from Cllr Cogan. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true and correct copy and signed by the Chair.

7. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 20 January 2025

7.1 Application for a Grant – The grant application had been submitted and was successful.

7.2 Places4People had been appointed as the consultant for the first stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

8. Planning Matters

8.1 A self-build 4 bedroom detached single storey home at the rear of 54 North Street. 54 North Street, Wicken CB7 5XW. Ref 25/00077/FUL

The Parish Council had no objections.

8.2 To install solar panels on the garage roof. High Fen Farm House, 38 Stretham Road, Wicken. Ref 24/00656/FUL

The Parish Council had no objections.

8.3 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

Approved

Roller shutter garage door and erection of fence. 12 Augustine Place, Wicken. Ref 24/01220/FUL

Withdrawn

Rear extension, 12 Pond Green, Wicken. Ref 24/01339/FUL

9. County and District Councillor Reports

District Councillor Vellacott had submitted a written report on the following:

- Local Government reorganisation
- East Cambs was proposing to freeze Council Tax for the 12th consecutive year
- Tender of the Soham to Cambridge bus franchise had fallen through
- Upcoming election for Cambridgeshire County Council and Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

District Council Bovingdon advised the following:

- Concern over devolution
- Supportive of the Wicken Neighbourhood Plan

10. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The grant for the first stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process had been applied for and had been agreed. Places4People had been appointed as the consultant for the first stage. The Working Group would be meeting with the consultant on Teams on 19 February 2025. The drop-in event would take place on Saturday 15 March 2025. A application for the Housing Needs Survey had also been submitted.

12. Grass Cutting Tender for the 3 Year Contract from March 2025

The clerk had invited the following companies to tender for the grass cutting contract.

Company	Quote
Brookfield Ltd	Unable to quote due to workload
East Cambs Trading Company	£12102.30 plus VAT
Majestic Garden Services Ltd	Unable to quote due to current workload
RH Landscapes	£8120 plus VAT
S and P Landscapes	£8855.00 plus VAT

It was agreed that the access pathway at Butts Lane allotments should also be included in the monthly cutting plan and it was acknowledged that this would be an additional cost to the contract.

RH Landscapes was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Robinson. All were in favour.

13. Update from the Recreation Ground Management Committee Meeting – 19 January 2025

- Proposal for the fees to remain the same and reviewed when the changing rooms were completed. This was agreed by the Parish Council.
- Weed killer would be purchased to spray the weeds on the surface of the MUGA and the surface would then be reviewed
- Ditch and pond were overgrown and required clearing (this would be in the March 2025 Parish Council agenda)
- The surface under the slide was reviewed and it was felt that no action was required at present
- Request for the repair of the main entrance (this would be on the March 2025 Parish Council agenda)
- Plastic tree protectors to be removed

14. Request from the National Trust to Remove the Wooden Boat on the Parish Owned Property and Replace with a Play Equipment Wooden Boat

The National Trust had requested to replace the wooden boat with a play equipment wooden boat (or two if required) and temporary paving slabs for the base. The request was approved but the Parish Council suggested the boats be placed slightly further back to keep away from the edge of the roadway.

Cllr Bovingdon left the meeting at 8.30pm

15. Repair of the Churchyard Footpaths

Cllr Pepper had measured the area from the side door to the church car park and the cost of the plastic grid for this was around £600. The cost for the full area was around £1700.00. The clerk would apply for a faculty from the Diocese for plastic gravel grids from the side door to the car park.

16. Village Planting Design to Combine the Pride of Place Grant and Donation of Bulbs from Wicken Garden and Produce Show Committee

The daffodil bulbs purchased with the Pride of Place grant had been planted in the meadow area. Cllr Robinson suggested that additional daffodil bulbs were purchased instead of the wildflower seeds as it would be difficult to prepare the land for the wildflower seeds within the tight deadline of 31 March 2025. It was agreed that the remaining funds should be spent on daffodil bulbs. Further planting would be completed in the Autumn and a plan for 2-3 years would be drawn up for planting further daffodils, snowdrops and crocuses to spread the blooming period. This would be on the April agenda.

17. Empowering the Young Councillors of Tomorrow

Cllr Rogers had attended a training session on empowering the young councillors of tomorrow and engaging with young parishioners. Cllr Rogers would lead on this.

18. Financial Matters

18.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages February 2025	£680.23
HMRC	Employers PAYE	£173.40
Nest Pension	Employees Contribution	£13.90
Nest Pension	Employers Contribution	£10.43
HMRC NI	Employers NI for February 2025	£15.11
Balfour Beatty	Streetlight maintenance contract	£540.00
A & M Window	Bus stop cleaning	£50.00
RH Landscapes	Cemetery hedge cutting	£1035.00
RH Landscapes	Rec hedge cutting	£480.00
SSE	Streetlight electric 1.11.24 to 31.1.25	£120.91
SLCC	Membership fee	£190.00

18.2 Monthly Finance update

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

18.3 Bank Reconciliation to 30 January 2025

This had been circulated and noted.

18.4 Clerk's Pension

The clerk had set up a pension with Nest.

18.5 Non-payment of the Maids Head Invoice

The invoice for the rental of the marquee in June 2024 remained unpaid by the previous landlord of the Maids Head. A number of reminders had been sent but there had been no response. It was agreed that this should be pursued through the small claims court.

19. Request from the Fete Committee to hire the Green and use of the bbqs and marquees for the fete on 28 June 2025.

This was agreed

20. Items for Information

- A letter regarding hedges had been received. This would be on the March agenda.
- The URA were considering asking for assistance with the costs of the Upware defibrillator. This would be on the March agenda.
- Speeding along Old School Lane in Upware continued to be an issue. The Parish Council would consider this for the 2026/27 LHI bid.
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There were no further items for information and the meeting closed at 9.35pm