

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 9 JULY 2024
WICKEN MISSION HALL

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
B Pepper (Chair), L Houghton, R Barnes, M Hawes, P Rash, S Hill, C Robinson, S Wilson and J Rogers,
District Councillor Vellacott, Nicola Acklam (Reach Parish Council) and 3 parishioners.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from 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.

The clerk had received a letter from a parishioner regarding grass cutting. This was read out and would be addressed at the August meeting.

A parishioner informed the council about their reasons behind the planning application for 11 Lode Lane.

4. Neighbourhood Plan

Nicolas Acklam from Reach Parish Council presented on the process Reach Parish Council took for their neighbourhood plan and the amount of work involved. This would be on the August agenda.

Nicolas Acklam left the meeting at 8.25 pm.

The agenda was taken out of order to allow for the reports from the County and District Councillors and planning.

7.2 Two single storey front extensions and new solid roof to existing conservatory. Fenway's, 11 Lode Lane, Wicken. Ref 24/00581/FUL

The Parish Council had no objections.

8. County and District Councillors Reports

Cllr Vellacott reported on the following:

- Congratulated Charlotte Cane on becoming Ely and East Cambridgeshire MP and thanked Lucy Fraser for her work in the role.
- Culvert at Upware was now fully cleared.
- There would be an extra ordinary meeting of the ECDC Planning Committee to discuss the Eastern Gateway and Staploe Medical Centre on 13 August 2024.
- Would be supporting the rural bus routes as part of the Bus Reform Plan and advised that developers could agree that their section 106 money be used towards the public transport strategy.
- Waste Service decision is due in October 2024.
- Weekly food waste collection service
- 120L black wheelie bin for every household but residents can request a larger bin if needed. These will be collected every other week.
- Blue and green bins to remain the same.

Cllrs Vellacott and Hunt left the meeting at 8.47pm

5. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11 June 2024

There was one amendment required to the minutes which was to note the Cllr Barnes had suggested a defibrillator be positioned at the recreation ground. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true and correct copy and signed by the Chair.

6. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 11 June 2024

6.1 Mission Hall BT manhole –This was ongoing, Cllr Houghton had now logged this as a complaint.

6.2 Allotment access road and Maltings footpath– this was ongoing.

6.3 Repair of Village Sign –This was ongoing.

6.4 Repair of the Church Wall – Written permission had been received from the Archdeacon and Johnsons Builders had confirmed that they would complete the work in August.

6.5 Hawes Lane culvert – Due to brambles and overgrowth Cllr Pepper was unable to investigate the culvert. This would be looked at when the brambles had died back.

6.6 Hedge Adjacent to the Mission Hall Car Park – The clerk would contact the homeowner noting that no response had been received.

6.7 Pond Green Posts – Les Yardy would complete the work as requested.

6.8 Church Road Flooding – The homeowners close to the area which was flooding had cut back the grass and edged the area which would hopefully improve the flooding. This would be monitored and reported to Highways if necessary.

6.9 Willow tree bough removal – The bough had been removed.

6.10 Cleaning of Parish Benches – The Parish Council would form a working group to treat the wood and paint the benches.

6.11 Pond Green Pay Equipment Insurance Quote – The insurance claim had been confirmed, less the excess, and the equipment ordered. Cllr Houghton raised the issue with grass growing through the safety surface. This would be raised with Caloo.

6.12 Changing Room Project – The Recreation Committee had met on 8 July but the plans were not yet available which was disappointing. The Recreation Committee would meet again once the plans had been received and would report to the Parish Council at the August meeting.

6.13 St Andrews Primary School Admissions – this was still being dealt with by the School Adjudicator.

7. Planning Matters

7.1 Installation of a remote-control operated roller shutter garage door in the car port and erection of an 1800mm high close boarded timber fence on 100mm x 100mm timber fence posts on the rear boundary. 8 Augustine Place, Wicken. Ref 24/00601/FUL

The Parish Council had no concerns.

7.3 Updates on Planning Application Approve/Refused by ECDC

Approved

- Various tree works. 3 Church Road, Wicken. Ref 24/00532/TRE

Refused

- Erection of 2 three-bedroom bungalows. Site to the east of 38A Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 24/00318/FUL

9. Eastern Gateway and Soham Medical Centre Planning Application

The 2 applications were being discussed and an Extra Ordinary Planning Committee meeting on 13 August 2024 and the Parish Council had the option of commenting at the meeting or sending a written statement. It was agreed that the Parish Council would not comment on the Eastern Gateway and had already supported the Medical Centre during the planning application stage and did not therefore need to send representation or provide another statement.

10. Review and Approval of the Financial Regulations

Cllrs Houghton and the Clerk had reviewed and updated a draft version of the Financial Regulations. It was agreed to roll this over to the August meeting.

11. Pond Maintenance

The village pond was becoming overgrown with reeds and required maintenance in the form of removing the reeds and silt from the bottom of the pond. This would require the hire of a digger and operator and muck away. There was a discussion around the timing of the work and whether the work could be reduced. It was proposed that the work should take place in September/October this year and a plan put in place for successive years which was sympathetic

with a dual perspective of biodiversity and recreational. This was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Rogers. It was put to a vote:

- 6 in favour
- 2 abstained.

The clerk would obtain quotes.

12. Wicken Lode Maintenance

The reed bed had not been cut along Wicken Lode by the Environment Agency which made it impossible to navigate. Fishing points had also not been cut. Cllr Pepper would discuss the issue with the EA and National Trust and would report to the August meeting.

13. Allotment Committee Minutes and Actions

The Allotment Committee had met on the 3 July 2024 at the Butts Lane Allotments. The minutes were not yet available but would be on the August agenda.

The committee had discussed the following:

- The need for a reinforced grass matting for the turning area to form a foundation. Cllr Pepper would obtain a quote.
- The clerk would write to the allotment holders for number 1 and 2 and Cllr Pepper would contact the holder of number 3.
- Trees needed to be pruned and a maximum height of 7ft was agreed.
- Cllr Pepper agreed to cut some of the brambles next to allotment number 7 to stop them from growing over the fence.

14. Wicken Parish Council Social Media

Cllr Houghton and the Clerk had met with Kelly Woodroffe to set up a Facebook page for the Parish Council. This would be launched and would allow posting from the Parish Council account rather than personal accounts.

15. Tree Plaque for the Kings Oak Tree

The Parish Council agreed the plaque to be purchased and the wording which would be 'This oak tree was planted by Wicken Parish Council to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III'.

16. Parking on Nort Street

Parking on North Street was becoming an issue, but it was noted that the parking was not illegal.

17. Financial Matters

17.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages July 2024	£509.60
HMRC PAYE	PAYE July 2024	£127.40
RH Landscapes	Grass cutting June 2024 with additional cuts and grass collection	£2304.00

RH Landscapes	Gras cutting April 2024	£1260.00
Fasthosts	Domain renewal	£28.78
Fasthosts	Domain renewal	£14.39
Wicken Mission Hall	Rent for April, May and June	£90.00
R Barlow	Materials for reinforcing the strength of the BBQs	£30.21

17.2 Monthly Finance update

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

17.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 June 2024

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

17.4 Recharge of Around and About Costs to the Horticultural Show

The printing of the schedule and entry form for the Horticultural Show had created extra costs for the printing of the Around and About. The clerk was still seeking clarification around the invoicing with Burwell Print Centre. The recharge to the Horticultural Show (when the amount was known) was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Hawes. All were in favour.

17.5 Donation to the Alzheimer's Association

A large number of the Parish Councillors had attended the funeral of Peter Fuller. His wish was that donations should be split between the Alzheimer's Association and Wicken Church. The Parish Council was unable to make donations to the church, but it was agreed that £100 should be donated to the Alzheimer's Association in memory of Peter Fuller and with grateful thanks for his service on the Parish Council and all he did for the village.

20. Items for Information

Cllr Rogers raised an issue with brambles growing alongside the footpath near the allotments. Cllr Pepper would cut these back.

Cllr Hill offered to complete a review of the beetles and bats on the Recreation ground.

The Parish Council congratulated Cllrs Barnes and the Fete Committee on a successful fete.

Cllr Pepper advised that the results from the latest Speedwatch session had shown 25% of vehicles were speeding along Stretham Road. Cllr Pepper requested new solar batteries for the Speedwatch signs. This would be on the August agenda.

Cllr Pepper would attend the URA meeting on 17 July 2024

Cllr Pepper raised concerns regarding the railings at the cemetery. This would be on the August agenda.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

Minutes accepted as a true and correct copy.....