

**WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING HELD
AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 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), R Barnes, C Robinson, P Rash, County Councillor B Hunt and District Councillor L Vellacott.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr J Rogers, S Hill and S Wilson.

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 14 November 2023

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 November 2023

5.1 Mission Hall BT manhole –This was ongoing.

5.2 Parking on the Village Greens – This would continue to be monitored. There had been some damage to Pond Green due to parking for the Christmas Market.

5.3 Bark chippings – Cllr Pepper would arrange for the chippings to be spread around the tree base.

5.4 Hedge Adjacent to Wicken Mission Hall Car Park – The clerk had received a response from the owners and would reply accordingly.

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

5.6 Maids Head Public House – The clerk would write to the new owner regarding parking and benches.

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

5.7 Church Road path edge – The clerk had reported the path edge to Highways. They had responded to say the Local Highways Officer would investigate in terms of the vehicular crossover approvals.

5.8 Successful Application for 20mph Zones and Proposed Designs – The clerk had requested that Lower Road to the junction of Hawes Lane was included in the scheme as this road was popular with pedestrians, horse riders and children accessing the Rec and was also part of national cycle route 11. However, as this was an unpopulated road the designers would only agree to a reduction to 40mph. Acceptance of the designs was proposed by Cllr Robinson and seconded by Cllr Pepper. All were in favour.

5.9 Speedwatch Session in Upware – Cllr Pepper would obtain a Speedwatch location code for Upware and complete a session in January/February 2024.

5.10 LHI Bid – The bid for signage showing that Redit Lane was unsuitable for large vehicles had been submitted.

5.11 Church Wall Repairs – The clerk was obtaining quotes for repairs to the wall.

5.12 Assets of Community Value for the Maid’s Head – The clerk would submit an application in December as the signed minutes from the November meeting were required for the application.

5.13 Unsightly Storage Yard, Stretham Road – The clerk had reported this to ECDC.

6. Planning Matters

6.1 Demolition of an existing derelict, two storey structure and construction of two detached, two-storey dwellings and associated landscaping and infrastructure. 16 Chapel Lane, Wicken. Ref 23/0130/FUL

- The Parish Council would like to ensure that the ridge height is subservient to neighbouring properties and is not raised in any subsequent application amendments or variation of conditions.
- All trees to be retained.
- The Parish Council preferred the design of the previous application as the village required smaller houses.

6.2 Update on the Parish Planning Forum

Cllrs Houghton, Rash and the Clerk attended the Parish Planning Forum at ECDC and gave an update on the issues raised. It was confirmed at the forum that ECDC would start work on the new Local Plan in 2024 and it would be adopted in 2027.

6.3 Update on the Planning Application 23/0894/FUL Following the Planning Committee Meeting on 6 December 2023

Cllr Houghton and the Clerk had attended the ECDC Planning Committee meeting on 6 December 2023 to request that the planning application for Stretham Road be refused as this was outside the planning envelope. The Planning Committee refused the application on the grounds of Policy GROWTH2.

6.4 Updates on Planning Application Approve/Refused by ECDC

Approved:

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

- Variation of conditions for 34 Chapel Lane, Wicken
- Reduction in height of T1 Chamaecyparis. 3 Pond Green, Wicken
- Erection of detached building for cycle repair shop. Land rear of 20 Stretham Road
- Vary condition 1, Twyman Cottage, 1 Lower Road, Wicken

Refused:

- Change of use and erection of 4 houses, Land North of 9 Stretham Road, Wicken.

7. County and District Councillor Reports

County Councillor Hunt reported on the following:

- Update on the proposed doctors’ surgery at Stretham
- Dueling of the A10
- Opposing congestion charge
- Update on Mayor’s breach of the code of conduct
- Decision on Sunnica has been put back to 7 March 2024
- Supports the rebuilding of the Soham to Newmarket rail link allowing trains to go directly into Cambridge from Soham
- Advised that there have been suggested improvements to the Catholic Church junction in Cambridge.

County Councillor Hunt left the meeting at 8.40pm

District Councillor Vellacott:

- Inform Cllr Vellacott of any fly tipping issues as ECDC can now charge the maximum penalty.
- ECDC had recently approved a Domestic Abuse Policy
- Working with Lizzie White on youth provision in Soham which would include Wicken. This includes a Youth Bus for a 3-month period.
- Staploe Medical Centre has space for 14,000 patients but currently has 23,000 patients a new building would provide space for 30,000 patients. This Land was giving the land for the new medical centre but there was a need to push for the infrastructure first.
- ECDC performing well financially and has healthy reserves.

8. Soham Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

Wicken Parish Council thanked Soham Town Council for sharing the information and supported the plan.

9. Parish Nature Recovery Plan

Cllrs Hill and Robinson had completed the Parish Nature Recovery Plan. Following a few amendments, the final plan would be submitted to ECDC and published on the website. The Parish Council thanked Cllrs Hill and Robinson for completing the plan.

10. Precept 2024/25

Cllr Houghton proposed that the precept remained at £32,500 for 2024/25. This was seconded by Cllr Hawes. All were in favour.

11. Parish Council Representation on Wicken Fen Community Liaison Forum

Cllr Houghton and the clerk had represented Wicken Parish Council on the forum for many years and it was felt others may prefer to represent the Parish Council in future . Cllrs Robinson and Pepper agreed to attend going forward.

12. Refurbishment of the Recreation Ground Changing Rooms

The recreation ground changing rooms were in need of refurbishment to bring them up to regulations standards for both disabled access and FA rules. Members of the Recreation Committee had met with Dan Hardingham (architect) and discussed a number of ideas on changing the layout. It was agreed that CIL money could be used for the refurbishment as well as a contribution from the Recreation Committee. Cllr Pepper agreed to lead the project.

13. Financial Matters

13.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages December 2023 and backdated pay increase from April 2023.	£786.92
HMRC PAYE	PAYE December 2023	£196.80
RH Landscapes	November cuts (additional football pitch cut due to mild weather)	£108.00
SSE	Streetlight electricity November 2023	£49.98
British Gas	Electric for changing rooms November 2023	£21.42
Cambridgeshire Acre	Annual membership	£60.00
Society for Local Council Professionals	Annua membership fee	£144.00
Fasthosts	Domain renewal (card payment)	£28.78

13.2 Monthly Finance update

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

13.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 November 2023

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

It was agreed to ringfence the following CIL money:

- Refurbishment of changing rooms £20k
- Nature Recovery Plan projects £1k

14. Review of Council Documents

Due to the lateness of the meeting, it was agreed to roll the reviews of the Risk Register (14.1) and Village Action Plan including Climate Strategy (14.2) over to the January meeting.

15. Items for Information

Cllr Houghton had discussed the Tuk Tuk licence at Wicken Fen with the National Trust and they had confirmed that they do have a licence.

The Parish Council had written a letter of support to Stretham & Wilburton Community Land Trust (SWCLT) who were trying to obtain a grant for funding for a new GP surgery in Stretham.

Cllr Rash reported the Hawes Lane surface was getting worse with potholes and general condition. The clerk would report and contact ECDC to find the status on the removal of the pinch point in Hawes Lane.

Cllr Rash requested permission to use some of the road plainings for the potholes in the road leading to the Butts Lane allotments. He would also look at the footpath beyond Cross Green and the Maid's Head Green, permission was granted.

Cllr Barnes had attended the planning training and recommended it to other councillors.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.50pm

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