

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT 19:30 HRS ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2025
WICKEN MISSION HALL

In Attendance (a minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for business to be conducted):
Cllrs R Barnes, A Cogan, S Hill, L Houghton, B Pepper, P Rash and J Rogers, District Councillor Vellacott, County Councillor Hawker-Dawson.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs M Hawes and C Robinson

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair handed the meeting to the Clerk.

Cllr Pepper was proposed for Chair by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All were in favour.

Cllr Rogers was proposed for Vice Chair by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All were in favour.

The Clerk handed the meeting back to the Chair.

3. Acceptance of Office

Cllr Pepper accepted the role of Chair and signed the Acceptance of Office declaration.

4. 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.

5. Appointment of Committee and Trusts

Burial Board	Cllr Houghton Cllr Cogan Cllr Hill
Allotment Committee	Cllr Rash Cllr Barnes Cllr Hill
Recreation Committee	Cllr Hawes Cllr Robinson
Mary Hatch Alms Houses	Sue Wilson (on behalf of Wicken Parish Council)
Village Hall Committee	Cllr Barnes

Wicken Fen Forum	Cllr Pepper Cllr Robinson Cllr Rash
The Chair and Vice Chair are members of all committees.	

6. 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.

Item 10 was brought forward.

10. County and District Councillor Reports

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Hawker-Dawson and congratulated him on the new role.

County Councillor Hawker-Dawson advised the following:

- Third annual Quality of Life Survey was taking place. CCC would reach out to selected residents, but all residents could complete the survey through the Cambs County Council website.

District Council Vellacott advised the following:

- Thanked Cllr Bill Hunt for his dedication in the role of County Councillor.
- Working with Highways to review Kingfisher Bridge road
- Would be working with the new Mayor Paul Bristow focusing on buses and rail service at Soham.
- Put forward a motion to the ECDC Annual Council meeting regarding how planning applications were handled and the commitment to Neighbourhood Plans.
- Had 'called in' the application for the BESS to the Planning Committee.
- Four appeals had been lodged by JD Homes for the site to the East of 38A Chapel Lane.

County Councillor Hawker-Dawson and District Councillor Vellacott left the meeting at 8pm

The Parish Council agreed to write to Cllr Hunt for all of his hard work and dedication.

7. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 8 April 2025

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

8. Progress Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes 8 April 2025

8.1 Painting of the Parish Benches – Cllrs Barnes, Houghton, Pepper and Rogers all volunteered to paint a bench each.

8.2 Highways work on the Upware Corner – Highways had confirmed that the surface installed was anti-slip.

8.3 Church paths – This was ongoing.

8.4 Non-payment of the marquee invoice of £300 by the previous landlord of the Maids Head – Cllr Pepper had spoken to Mr Henderson, but no payment had been received. The clerk would submit the papers for the claims court.

8.5 Parish Council Website – the clerk and Cllr Hawes would complete a review of the website with Matt Cannon.

8.6 Parking on the Village Greens – Cllr Pepper would be meeting with Les Yardy to discuss the location of the new posts on Cross Green.

8.7 Upware Open Space – The suggestion to preserve an excavated area of the Upware Open Space would be put to the URA.

8.8 Lode Lane 20mph Signs – Highways had confirmed that Lode Lane was not wide enough to show the 20mph signs on the road surface. The clerk would ask for additional 20mph signs on posts.

9. Planning Matters

9.1 Accessible Ramp Access, The Pavillion, Chapel Lane. Wicken. Ref 25/00474/FUL

The Parish Council approved the application.

9.2 Update on Planning Applications Approved/Refused by ECDC

Approved

Tree works at 41 High Street, Wicken. Ref 25/00374/TRE

Tree works at 43 High Street, Wicken. Ref 25/00375/TRE

Refused

Application for a self-build detached home at the rear of 54 North Street, Wicken had been refused.

11. Internal Auditors Report

The 2024/25 accounts had been audited by David Leonard MSc, CDipAF, CPIM in his role as Internal Auditor. The report showed all objectives were met and there were no recommendations.

12. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

The Parish Council answered Yes to all sections of the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25. The AGAR form was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

13. Approval of the Accounting Statements 2024/25

The Council agreed that the Accounting Statements 2024/25 presented fairly the financial position of the authority, and this was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

14. Approval of the Standing Orders

Approval of the Standing Orders was proposed by Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Hill. All were in favour.

15. Approval of the Financial Regulations

Approval of the Financial Regulations was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All were in favour.

16. RoSPA Report of the Recreation Ground and Pond Green Area

The report was discussed in full by the Parish Council. The report would be given to James Homes and Gardens to complete the remedial work if he was willing.

17. Insurance tender and Fixed Assets for Insurance

The fixed assets were reviewed and some updates to figures were required. It was agreed that the clerk could complete an insurance tender.

18. Update from Wicken Fen Forum

Cllrs Rash and Pepper had attended the Wicken Fen Forum and reported the following:

- Andrew Powell was stepping down as Chairman. He had been Chair of the Forum since it began.
- The design and funding of the bridge over Burwell Lode was still being reviewed and discussed. Cllr Rash had made some suggestions and would continue to follow this up.

19. Changing Rooms Project.

George Laurel and Partners had encountered some issues with the certificate of lawfulness for the work on the changing rooms on the Rec and ECDC had advised that a planning application would need to be submitted for the access ramp. This had been submitted on behalf of the Parish Council.

20. Churchyard Garden of Remembrance

The Vicar of Burwell had raised the issue of the Parish Council being paid for any internments in the churchyard ashes plot. The clerk had provided a copy of the letter from Revd Beloe and the PCC from 1980 advising that fees from internments should go to the Parish Council. This had been referred to the Diocese of Ely who had advised that the PCC in 1980 did not have the authority to authorise this and suggested that a pragmatic approach should be taken that future payments should be made to the Diocese. This approach had been agreed by the Churchwardens and PCC. The Parish Council noted this and the clerk would work with the Vicar of Burwell to update the church burial records accordingly.

21. Neighbourhood Plan Update

There would be another meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on 21 May 2025.

22. Financial Matters

22.1 Bill payments

Rachel James	Clerk wages May 2025	£680.03
HMRC	Employers PAYE	£173.60
Nest Pension	Employees Contribution	£13.90
Nest Pension	Employers Contribution	£10.42
HMRC NI	Employers NI for May 2025	£67.58
RH Landscapes	April cut	£1392.00
British gas	Changing rooms electric 7 April to 12 May	£23.89
SSE	Streetlight electric 1 Feb 2025 to 30 April 2025	£116.94
ROSPA report	Annual inspection of Recreation Ground and Pond Green Play Park	£211.20
Gorilaa Gazebos	3 new gazebos for use of the village. Agreed by the Community Fund Committee and funds from the Community Fund help in the Parish Council bank account	£599.97
W Pepper	Chairmans expenses 2024/25	£150.00

22.2 Monthly Finance update

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

22.3 Bank Reconciliation to 29 April 2025

This had been circulated and noted.

23. Items for Information

- The A10 would be closed for 2 days but would be open for rush hour.
- The pavement surface along Church Road was damaged and required reporting to Highways.
- The road sweeper had been through Wicken and made an excellent job.
- A number of hedges were getting overgrown. The clerk would contact the homeowners.
- Some of the trees on the allotment had not been reduced in height as requested. The clerk would follow this up.
- Cllr Hill had completed a review of the ponds on the Rec. The small pond created by NLOW was in need of attention. The clerk would talk to Kingfisher Bridge.
- The war memorial needed attention around the seals as water was getting in. Cllr Pepper would look to see what work was required.
- Work had started on the cycle path between Wicken and Soham with the fencing and culvert work being completed.
- Cllr Pepper suggested pickleball courts on the MUGA. This would be discussed by the Recreation Committee. Communication was needed around the hiring of the MUGA for tennis. The clerk would follow this up.

There was no further business, and the meeting closed at 9.30pm