

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL
at 7.00pm on Wednesday 2nd November, 2022
in Wicken Sports Club**

Action

82/22 Attendance and apologies

In attendance:

- Cllr. Neil Gordon Lee: Chair
- Cllr. Alan Cartwright
- Cllr. Philip Ivens
- Cllr. Petra Spencer-Jones
- John Westlake: Clerk

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs. Verity Robinson and Ian Howlett

83/22 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th September, 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.

84/22 Members Interests: Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Wicken Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011

The Chair encouraged those relevant councillors to make the necessary declarations. Cllr. Ivens undertook to check that his declaration had been made. Cllr. Howlett will also need to do this on his return.

Cllr. Ivens

Cllr. Howlett

85/22 Resignation of Councillors/Co-option of replacements

The Chair confirmed that Cllr. Viv Kime has resigned from the council and Cllr. Alan Cartwright has tendered his resignation from 30th November. He expressed his thanks, and the appreciation of the council for Cllr. Cartwright's exemplary service since joining the council in July 2010. The two vacancies have been posted on the village website and will be advertised in the Wicken News at the end of the current month. In addition those present, including members of the public, were encouraged to notify the council of any expressions of interest from potential councillors.

86/22 To receive a report from West Northamptonshire Councillor: Ken Pritchard

Cllr. Pritchard was not in attendance, therefore there was no report.

87/22 Public Forum

The following points were raised by members of the public:

- The bank adjacent to bridge over the brook on Wicken Park Road, on which trees have recently been removed is overgrown with nettles. If the bank was cleared and planted with wild flowers it would improve appearance of the entrance into the village. The area was also susceptible to flooding. Cllr. Ivens described the "tidying up" work that he is undertaking on the bank following the removal of the trees,

following which planting of wild flowers can proceed.

- Several beech trees on the Deanshanger Road appear to require attention. The Chair suggested that the firm who has been asked to cut back the tree on Cross Tree Road is asked to provide a quotation for the work on the beech trees. Cllr. Cartwright agreed to arrange this.
- It may be necessary for the sports club to request that funds currently committed for various projects be diverted to remedy a major issue with the club house roof. The exact extent of the problem will only be assessed when the roof is stripped. It was agreed that funds can be diverted and the Chair requested that the council is informed when the cost of repairing the roof is known.

Cllr.
Cartwright

88/22 To note update on standing items

Information had been previously circulated on standing items i.e.:

- Gigaclear: Subsequently the Parish Council has been advised that a request has been made to close Leckhampstead from the junction with Larks Lane to The Shaw for two weeks from 28th November. Although access will be allowed to the houses in that stretch of road it will not be possible to leave or enter the village by vehicle that way.
- Flood prevention
- Village Hall
- New housing
- Road condition and overhanging trees
- Solar farm 2
- Speed monitor: The Chair undertook to establish with Cllr. Howlett if the monitor has had any impact on speeding behavior.
- Path wardens
- Tree on Cross Tree Road
- Resident complaints
- Wicken Village signs: These have been ordered; the delivery date is yet unknown.

89/22 Financial data:

- The Chair referred to the table on the agenda listing receipts and payments to be approved. The Clerk explained the over payment to NCalc and how this has been corrected.
- The proposed grants listed on the agenda were approved.
- There are no training costs.
- An amount of £20 was approved for the purchase of a wreath for Remembrance Day.

90/22 To decide on action following the WNC order on dog fouling

The Chair referred to the Public Space Protection Order which was agreed by WNC on 11th October and came into force on 1st November. This specifies about how dogs are managed in public in addition to smoking and vaping. Specifically in Wicken it means that dogs must be kept on leads in the churchyard and on the sports field. In addition picking up dogs' faeces in these areas and on footpaths, pavements and bridleways within the parish boundaries is required. It is unclear how this order will be enforced. The Chair asked for ideas on how to encourage compliance with the order. The sports

club will erect signs at the three entry points to the club.

91/22 Playground maintenance

Cllr. Spencer Jones is awaiting two quotations from RMS, i.e. for critical work and for all requirements. She stated that an inspection of the playground is due in the next few months. The Chair stated that the need for any urgent work should be monitored. There is one aspect that requires repair and this will be attended to.

Cllr. Ivens

92/22 To consider the provision of a “warm space” in Wicken Sports Club

The Chair raised the possibility of providing a “warm space” for residents who may be experiencing difficulties during cold weather, resulting from the cost of heating. Several councils in Northamptonshire are planning to provide this type of facility for residents who may be in need because of increased energy bills etc. A discussion followed on the “pros and cons” of a possible initiative, including resourcing, logistics and if this would be appropriate for Wicken. It was decided that if a need arose an extraordinary meeting would be convened to decide on the response.

93/22 To consider output of the NCALC conference

The Chair who had attended the conference raised the following:

- There is a strong desire from the police authority for there to be a representative in each parish/community to act as a point of contact. He felt that there would be advantages for the village in having a direct contact with the police, e.g. in the event of a local incident or emergency, and asked all present to approach possible candidates.
- WNC, in common with other local authorities, is likely to restrict itself to statutory activities, delegating non statutory functions to parish councils without necessarily providing the funding for these.
- WNC will be introducing an online process by which residents may nominate specific trees for preservation orders.
- In connection with the Asset Management Project:
 - Parish councils are often criticised for their communications policy. The Chair asked councilors to consider if the council should use the village Facebook facility to provide information.
 - The Chair stated that if the extra functions are delegated to the parish council the scope of its insurance would have to be considered.
 - It is not clear what assets and functions (e.g. grass cutting of verges within the village confines, street furniture) for which the parish council would be responsible. It may be necessary to budget for replacements, repairs etc.

94/22 To consider tree planting

The Chair advised he is awaiting a suggested plan for tree planting in the village. He is hoping that this will materialise soon. In the meantime this item will be deferred to the January meeting.

95/22 To consider a planning issue which may arise in connection with a house for sale on the A422

Cllr. Ivens raised a concern that the sale of a one acre strip of land adjacent to Wicken Park Road to the owner of the house may be an incentive to a prospective buyer to run a commercial enterprise, bearing in mind that there is already business use. Further development could spoil this attractive access to the village.

96/22 To note future meeting dates: 4th January 2023, 1st March 2023 and 3rd May 2023

97/22 To note/consider items for next meeting

No items were raised.

Councillor Neil Gordon Lee
Chair, Wicken Parish Council