

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF
WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL**

On Wednesday 4 September 2019

at Wicken Sports Club, Wicken at 7.00 pm

	Action
<p>51/19 Attendance and apologies</p> <p>To receive and accept any apologies.</p> <p>Cllr Philip Ivens – Chairman Cllr Celina Francklin Cllr Richard Forman – apologies received Cllr Alan Cartwright Cllr Andrew Edmondson Cllr Marcus Rixon Cllr Ian Howett District Cllr Dennis Loveland – apologies received County & District Cllr Allen Walker Valda Clapham - Clerk Michelle Howley, Gareth Gardener – for item 53/19 7 members of the public</p> <p>The Chairman and Cllrs welcomed the new clerk.</p>	
<p>52/19 Members' interests</p> <p>Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Wicken PC Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>The Chairman declared an interest in item 53/19 and absented himself, with Cllr Cartwright taking the chair for this item.</p>	
<p>53/19 Proposed Solar Farm</p> <p>To receive a presentation from representatives of Elgin Energy and to agree a response.</p> <p>Key points from the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback at public exhibition had been largely positive with the main concerns raised being landscaping, traffic and archaeology.• Landscaping – this had been improved by moving panels further back from boundaries and increasing density of planting to minimise visibility of site.• Traffic – site entrance in Wicken Park Road was confirmed but priority access would be given to local access including school traffic (with the potential for conditioning hours of use) and any other Highways Agency concerns would be addressed. Maximum movement during construction phase might be 15 HGVs per day.• Archaeology – nothing significant.• Ecology – nothing significant. The fencing will allow small mammal movements. The position re badger setts needs clarifying – Cllr Cartwright to follow up on response from Elgin Energy.• Timing – the planning application was expected this autumn with construction (over approx. 3 months) most likely in 2020.• Compensation – this would be payable as soon as grid connection made. A draft of the legal agreement could be provided to Council in advance.• Decommissioning – life expectancy of the facility was 30 years after which	<p>Cllr Cartwright</p>

there was an obligation to reinstate the land. This obligation would transfer to any subsequent leaseholders.

Cllr Cartwright thanked Elgin Energy representatives for their helpful presentation and they then left the meeting.

Cllrs felt that Elgin Energy had handled the consultation process well. Cllr Howett remained concerned about the size, the isolation of central woodland and the Council's expectation that the existing solar farm would be unique, but otherwise Cllrs were broadly content with the proposal.

The intention to pay the entire compensation up front was noted. Cllr Cartwright agreed to enquire whether the alternative of index linked annual payments was possible. Assuming up-front payment Council would look into investing the sum received so as to spread the benefit.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

Once the issue re badger setts had been clarified Council was minded to accept the planning application when it came without comment and the clerk was asked to respond to this effect.

54/19 Public forum

No points were raised.

55/19 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2019 – approved and signed by the Chairman.

Resolved

The next positioning of the speed camera should be on Leckhampstead Road.

Cllr Howett

Cllr Cartwright agreed to report the recent damage to sign at the bridge approach on Wicken Park Road.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

56/19 Policies and procedures

To consider, approve and adopt/re-adopt:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Management Policy
- Code of Conduct for Councillors

Cllrs approved all the documents.

Resolved

The clerk advised that the Standing Orders and Risk Management Policy might require some updating and offered to look at this prior to their next adoption.

Clerk

57/19 Audit reports

To receive internal and external audit reports and approve actions required.

The points raised in reports were:

- Lack of appropriate oversight of financial matters – Council agreed to proportionate oversight, and noted that the Precept had been misreported in the 2018/19 Accounting Statement.
- Adoption of Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Risk Assessment outstanding – dealt with under 56/19 above.
- Inspection regime required for play equipment – Cllr Edmondson agreed to obtain quotes for the annual inspection. Council agreed that informal inspections should take place prior to each Council meeting with responsibility rotating amongst Cllrs. Council noted the equipment was well used.
- Village Hall – the clerk advised that the Village Hall should be included on the Assets Register and the Council concurred.

**Cllr
Edmondson**

Clerk

Council approved necessary actions.

Resolved

58/19 Speed monitor

No data available.

59/19 Wicken Wood

To receive an update.

Brian Lloyd reported no issues with villagers' use of the woods. There had been no specific communication to registered users other than a general warning to be careful if entering whilst forestry works were ongoing. Some individuals had raised concerns about the need to register on the website and he was available to help if required. He would be providing a similar update for the next Wicken News.

The Chairman thanked Brian for his helpful update.

60/19 Website

No formal feedback but noted as a big improvement on its predecessor.

61/19 Village Hall

To receive an update.

Council approved the accounts tabled by Cllr Rixon showing a balance in hand of almost £28k. Work was ongoing to replace the windows so as to improve EPC rating and permit further letting. Further improvement could be made by insulating the roof but was not essential.

Council noted that a future tenant had not yet been identified and in the interim the only use was for occasional overflow from the Sports Club and the hiring of chairs.

Cllr Rixon confirmed that the deposit withheld from the outgoing tenant balanced out the unpaid rent arrears so there was no overall loss. Forthcoming costs would be the balance of window renewal cost (total cost approx. £14k excluding VAT) and for maintenance of rear garden.

The Council agreed that the rear woodwork required repainting, preferably before winter – Cllrs Cartwright and Edmondson to obtain quotes.

**Cllrs
Cartwright /
Edmondson**

62/19 Letter from member of the public

The letter concerned the path between 38 and 44 Cross Tree Road which had no footpath sign and was currently very overgrown. In response Cllr Cartwright agreed to speak with the residents of the adjoining properties about cutting back the hedges. The possibility of installing a sign would be taken up by Wicken Village Community.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

The clerk was asked to send an appropriate response.

Clerk

63/19 Draft Sports & Leisure Strategy 2018 – 2024

To consider response.

This would be considered by Wicken Village Community.

64/19 Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018 – 2028)

To consider response.

No response required.

65/19 Finance

To receive and approve accounts and budget.
 The clerk tabled a schedule showing payments to date against budget and Council approved payments for year to date as follows:

Lloyds		7.50
EON	804	72.34
EON (? overpayment)	805	72.34
DNH Contracts (bin emptying)	806	43.20
DNH Contracts	807	43.20
Clerk (April/May)		204.12
HMRC		15.00
ICO (data protection)	810	40.00
Conservation Society (WVC)	811	800.00
Wicken PCC	812	500.00
Sports Club	813	500.00
J Robson (taxi)	814	96.00
Pixel Creations (website)	815	300.00
Conservation Society (WVC) (1/2 x benches)	816	585.00
W H Ivens & Son (maintenance)	817	229.92
C Francklin (taxi)	818	108.00
EON	819	73.15
DNH Contracts (+ poo bags)	820	96.59
SNAST (Neighbourhood watch)	821	20.00
BHIB Ltd (insurance)	822	552.24
DNH Contracts	823	86.40
EON	824	971.77
DNH Contracts	825	43.20
J Robson	826	108.00

Council intended to move to online payments as soon as possible and Cllr Cartwright would speak to Cllr Forman about this.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

The clerk was asked to check the position re payment to Wicken Village Community for hire of hall.

Clerk

66/19 Date for extraordinary meeting re streetlighting

To agree date when all Cllrs can be present.

The week beginning 14 October looked the most promising - Cllr Cartwright to check with Cllr Forman and confirm date.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

67/19 Future meeting dates

The Chairman noted that meetings are held every two months normally on the first Wednesday of the month, future dates being:

- 6 November 2019
- 8 January 2020

- 4 March 2020

Cllr Cartwright agreed to discuss future attendance with Cllr Forman. The clerk advised that Cllrs could be disqualified if they failed to attend at least one meeting in a six months' period.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

68/19 New clerk

The proposal was to appoint Valda Clapham to act as unpaid clerk. Cllr Cartwright alerted Cllrs to the risks of a voluntary appointment, namely possible challenge from HMRC and Cllrs' inability to apply any sanction, but Council was content to proceed.

Council unanimously approved the appointment of Valda Clapham as clerk, either party to say if the arrangement was not working.

Resolved

69/19 Outstanding items and items for next meeting

Streetlighting

Cllrs agreed to take up Neil Gordon-Lee's offer to prepare a summary of the available data to support Cllrs' discussion – Cllr Cartwright to advise Neil accordingly. The summary would be made available to Cllrs well in advance of the meeting and, after Cllrs had commented, publicised on the website. Relevant technical information from a potential supplier could be included in the document rather than inviting the supplier to attend the meeting. Cllr Francklin drew Cllrs' attention to recent helpful correspondence with Castlethorpe PC, which had been circulated.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

Further debate was deferred until the extraordinary meeting.

Grass cutting by church

The delay had allowed wild flowers to seed but could now take place. Cllr Rixon agreed to arrange in conjunction with churchyard maintenance.

Cllr Rixon

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Chairman's Signature

Date

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