

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

On Wednesday 6 November 2019

at Wicken Village Hall, Wicken at 7.00 pm

Action

73/19 Attendance and apologies

To receive and accept any apologies.

Cllr Philip Ivens – Chairman
Cllr Celina Francklin
Cllr Richard Forman
Cllr Alan Cartwright
Cllr Andrew Edmondson
Cllr Marcus Rixon
Cllr Ian Howett
County & District Cllr Allen Walker
District Cllr Dennis Loveland – apologies received
Valda Clapham - Clerk
7 members of the public

74/19 Members' interests

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.

The Chairman declared an interest in item 80/19 (proposed Solar Farm) and in the provision of village maintenance.

75/19 Report from District and County Councillor

Cllr Walker provided his report, covering:

- New unitary council – the order to establish the two new unitary authorities (North and West Northamptonshire) has been laid in parliament but has been held up by the election. Whether it goes ahead may depend upon the election result but subject to this it is expected to come into force in early 2020. Meanwhile a shadow authority and joint committee are being set up but the former will not be able to authorise expenditure without the agreement of existing councils. Details of the new arrangements are available on the NCC website.
- Budget – the proposed 2020/21 budget makes savings of £23.2m from a budget of over £440m, achieves better value and enables money to be put back into reserves. A budget consultation is available on the NCC website.
- Elections – there will be no SNC elections next May with existing Councillors continuing in office until 2021. There will be elections for the new shadow authority (Wicken will be in West Northamptonshire) and for parishes in 2020. Both will hold office until 2025.
- Silverstone Experience – this was well worth visiting and especially good for children.
- Cherwell and South Northants partnership – the relationship was being dissolved although the waste partnership was currently still in place.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Walker for a useful update.

76/19 Public forum

Responding to a member of the public the Chairman agreed to grass cutting close to Sports Club hedge.

77/19 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 4 September and 16 October 2019 – approved and signed by the Chairman. **Resolved**

78/19 Code of conduct for emails

Cllrs agreed that emails from the Parish Council should normally be sent by the Clerk and the Clerk should be copied on all Parish Council business emails, which should always maintain an appropriate tone.

79/19 Wicken streetlighting

To receive an update on streetlighting renewal and agree next steps.

Since the meeting on 16 October Cllr Cartwright had further negotiated with EON resulting in an excellent price of £7911 + VAT for the 13 new contemporary lights. EON had also agreed to run the trial of the heritage lamp for no cost. The lights would be grey rather than black (less attractive to birds).

After some discussion Cllrs confirmed that the lamppost for the trial should be renewed with a standard DW Windsor pole to give the best aesthetic effect. Depending upon the trial result this pole could later be used for a new contemporary light.

The trial would begin when both heritage and new contemporary lights were in place, expected to be in early 2020, and last for approximately a month. Residents' views should be submitted to the Clerk, by email or in writing. A key part of the trial will be the consideration of light spill.

The trial will be publicised in the next edition of Wicken News (Cllr Cartwright to arrange) and there will be a note on the website when the trial commences.

Cllr Cartwright

Responding to points raised at the previous meeting Cllr Cartwright had confirmed that there was no Highways Authority prohibition on installing new lights on telegraph poles, and the Clerk advised that as the new lights were replacements there was no requirement for comparison quotes. The Clerk also observed that the Parish Council could obtain its electricity from a supplier other than EON, whose tariff structure was now unfavourable, but this was better done when the new lights and corresponding reduced consumption were in place. Meanwhile it was noted that with an unmetered supply the cost was the same regardless of whether the lights were actually working.

80/19 Proposed Solar Farm

(Cllr Cartwright took the chair for this item.)

To receive an update on proposed Solar Farm and agree Community Benefit receipt mechanism.

Cllr Cartwright reported that the application for planning permission was still awaited. Meanwhile he had discussed two options for the Community Benefit with Elgin, either an upfront lump sum or 15 years of inflation proofed payments. The lump sum gave certainty, but would need to be appropriately invested according to local authority guidelines. The regular payments could be in doubt if the project was sold on since it was not possible to attach a charge to the land.

Consequently, the Council agreed to accept the lump sum option.

Resolved

Cllr Forman observed that the Council would need to consider at a later date how and when to utilise the money invested.

81/19 Solar Farm Committee

To receive and if appropriate approve recommendations from Solar Farm Committee.

Cllr Forman highlighted the requests for funding summarised on the last page of the Wicken Solar Fund Committee minutes. Some of these represented ongoing costs and some were new items, in particular an additional £3000 for streetlighting, an additional £750 for new village signs and £4425, being half the cost (on the usual 50:50 principle) of replacing the boiler, glass washer and cooker at the Sports Club.

During a brief discussion Cllrs:

- confirmed that village maintenance was much improved now that the Chairman had assumed responsibility and that his efforts were much appreciated;
- agreed that the cost reserved for village maintenance should be reduced in line with the expected actual cost;
- noted that the Sports Club had identified a long list of future projects amongst which was improved security to prevent vehicles accessing grass areas;
- understood that the £800 annual grant to Wicken Village Community could be used to support any WVC project and was not specifically allocated;
- expressed their appreciation of the good work Fenlon Dunphy had done in improving the operation of Wicken Village Community and Wicken Sports Club; and
- recognised that it was the responsibility of the village to look after the War Memorial, which is Grade 1 listed, but that there were limitations on what could be done, such memorials being expected to degrade naturally – Cllr Francklin agreed to discuss further with Neil Gordon-Lee and come back with a recommendation.

Cllr Francklin

Following the discussion Cllr Forman proposed that the Parish Council approve all the new funding requests set out in the Solar Fund minutes subject only to reducing the sum for village maintenance to £600. All Cllrs voted in favour.

Resolved

82/19 Dangerous dogs

To consider any actions required in relation to dangerous dogs.

A recent incident in which one dog had been attacked by another had been reported to the local dog warden. In addition, Cllrs agreed to send a letter to the owner requesting that the attacking dog be muzzled and kept on a lead when out – Chairman and Clerk to action.

Chairman/Clerk

83/19 Speed monitor

Cllr Howett reported that this had been moved to Leckhampstead Road but no further data was available yet. The equipment recorded vehicle speed at 2 points, in advance of the monitor as a warning and at the monitor to record actual speeding.

84/19 Playground inspection

An inspection has been booked at a cost of £100 + VAT and will take place when the inspection company is next in the area. Cllr Edmondson suggested that the inspection report received be used as a template for the more informal inspections to take place before Parish Council meetings in future.

85/19 Village Hall

To receive an update on the Village Hall and agree next steps.

Cllr Rixon reported no change to the financial position. It was expected that the new windows would be installed in January at the latest. Meanwhile, there is some

recent damage to the ceiling/roof which will be investigated.

Cllr Cartwright agreed to explore whether the Hall could be marketed for rent in advance of receiving a new EPC certificate after the work on windows was completed.

Cllr Cartwright

The Clerk suggested that the Trust Deed governing the management of the Hall needed updating to reflect the current arrangements and to clarify the VAT position. Cllr Forman offered to make some initial enquiries as to the best way forward.

Cllr Forman

86/19 British Legion wreath/VE Day commemoration

The Council approved an annual donation of £25 for a wreath to be laid on Remembrance Sunday by the Chairman or another Cllr.

Resolved

Discussion on the VE Day commemoration to be held on 8 May 2020 was carried forward to the next meeting.

87/19 Elections

To consider the need to promote candidacy at the May 2020 local elections.

All Cllrs would be up for re-election in May 2020. It was not known if there were other village residents wishing to stand but Cllrs would discuss further in January with a view to publicising the election in the February edition of Wicken News.

The cost of an election to be borne by the Parish would be approximately £300.

It was confirmed that no action was necessary in relation to the forthcoming General Election.

88/19 Post Office

To consider and approve in principle a proposal for a village Post Office.

The proposal was for the Deanshanger Postmaster to provide post office services for a few hours each week in the Wicken pub.

Cllrs were very supportive and unanimously approved the proposal in principle.

Resolved

89/19 Northamptonshire village awards

Cllrs had no interest in entering these.

90/19 Finance

To receive and approve accounts and budget.

The Clerk provided a schedule showing payments since the previous meeting against budget and the Council approved the payments, as follows:

PKF	827	360.00
DNH Contracts	828	43.20
EON	829	73.15
EON	830	504.54
Lloyds		7.50
DNH Contracts	831	43.20
Northants CALC	832	429.25
Clerk re Website	833	57.46
ICO (data protection)	DD	35.00
J Robson	834	156.00
British Legion	835	25.00

The Clerk encouraged the Chairman and Cllr Rixon (to become a cheque signatory) to arrange online access so that this could be put into operation.

Chairman/Cllr Rixon

Cllr Howett agreed to have oversight of the accounts prior to the next meeting and report back to Cllrs.

Cllr Howett

The Clerk noted that VAT invoices were required to support reclamation of VAT paid by the Council.

91/19 Future meeting dates

Cllrs were content with the proposed dates set out in the agenda.

92/19 Any other business

To receive updates on outstanding items and to consider items for next meeting.

Cllr Cartwright reported that gritting of Deanshanger Road had been reinstated and it was noted that existing salt bins are full. Cllr Howett suggested having an additional salt bin in Pound Close and the Clerk agreed to explore options.

Clerk

Cllr Howett raised the issue of overhanging trees blocking footpath or highway – to be picked up at the next meeting.

Cllr Rixon observed that the white road markings needed repainting – Cllr Cartwright offered to take this up with Northamptonshire Highways.

Cllr Cartwright

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Chairman's Signature

Date

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