

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

On Wednesday 8 January 2020

at Wicken Village Hall, Wicken at 7.00 pm

Action

1/20 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 – apologies received
District Cllr Dennis Loveland – apologies received
Valda Clapham - Clerk
1 member of the public

2/20 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 7/20 (proposed Solar Farm) and in the provision of village maintenance.

3/20 Report from District and County Councillor

No report received.

4/20 Public forum

No points raised.

5/20 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 – approved and signed by the Chairman.

Resolved

6/20 Wicken streetlighting

To receive an update on streetlighting renewal and agree trial assessment procedure.

Since the November meeting a lighting consultant had undertaken a study of the village and advised that the proposed 32 LED arrays operating at 65% power would provide too much light, and that 16 LED arrays would be more appropriate for the village, even at road junctions. 16 LED arrays were a cheaper option which meant that the more expensive 2200k colour temperature (giving a warmer light) became feasible.

There was some support for trialling this new option but on balance, given the already significant lead time and the clear wish of residents for the project to proceed as soon as possible, Cllrs decided to accept the consultant's advice.

Cllrs agreed to revise the order placed with EON to 16 array LEDs and 2200k colour temperature. **Resolved**

Cllr Cartwright was authorised to agree revised pricing with EON, keeping other Cllrs informed as necessary. **Cllr Cartwright**

Cllr Cartwright also agreed to ask DW Windsor if their trial heritage light could be set at 2200k to provide a direct comparison. **Cllr Cartwright**

It was noted that the trial assessment would need to take account of the views of both nearby residents (light pollution) and residents generally (aesthetics).

7/20 Proposed Solar Farm

(Cllr Cartwright took the chair for this item.)

To receive an update on proposed Solar Farm.

Cllr Cartwright reported that if the project went ahead the village would receive a community benefit of approx. £80k based on a set formula of £4k per megawatt hour. Cllrs had opted for an upfront payment to protect against the paying entity going out of business.

Cllr Forman had arranged for a legal review of the voluntary undertaking implementing the community benefit, paid for by Elgin. The most significant point raised was a risk of non-payment if the lease were assigned. Elgin had been receptive to updating the draft and a revised undertaking was awaited.

Cllrs agreed that Cllr Forman's contact should review the revised draft even if this was at Council's expense. **Resolved**

8/20 Planning

To discuss current planning issues and agree any actions required.

Wicken Manor and Dagnall Cottage – Cllrs confirmed they had no objection to these applications. **Resolved**

Land at the rear of St John's Lane – a speculative proposal to develop at the back of the houses adjoining the sports field had been mooted with residents. The Chairman indicated that the bridleway access was owned by The Merchant Venturers, who also owned the sports field, so any development needed their agreement. Cllrs were not supportive of the suggested development and anticipated that the planning authority would also not be keen. However, no action is needed unless an actual proposal emerges.

It was noted that the Sports Club is looking at marking out an additional football pitch which would reduce the possibility of development on Sports Club land.

Planning consultation on proposed Local Development Order – Neil Gordon-Lee explained that the LDO was merely a way of putting the rules into practice more efficiently and did not change the regulations on permitted extensions. Nevertheless, it would be worth pointing out that such development should always be in line with the Village Design Statement. Cllr Rixon suggested that properties adjacent to those within the Conservation Area would ideally also be excluded from the new streamlined process. Neil agreed to draft an appropriate response for circulation to Cllrs. **Neil Gordon-Lee**

Letter from Deanshanger resident – the Chairman noted that the locked gate referred to was on land farmed by Jonathan Gurney, with whom he would raise the issue. The clerk agreed to notify the letter writer accordingly. **Chairman Clerk**

9/20 Speed monitor

To receive data from speed monitor.

Cllr Howett circulated a summary of all data to date. This did not indicate any significant problem, with the percentage still exceeding the speed limit at the second reading remaining very low. Cllr Howett expressed his willingness to continue moving the speed monitor from time to time and the other Cllrs noted their appreciation of his efforts.

10/20 Playground inspection

To receive report on playground inspection.

The inspection had been very thorough and the report was broadly satisfactory with only a few minor repairs needed. Cllr Edmondson offered to circulate a list of actions required to Cllrs and to arrange for implementation. He would also develop a simple template to support the proposed interim informal inspections he or Cllr Rixon would be carrying out in future.

Cllr Edmondson

Cllr Edmondson was thanked for his efforts.

11/20 Village Hall

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

The new windows had been installed and looked good. The agent was working on remarketing the Hall and Cllr Cartwright would arrange for the EPC rating to be updated. The Chairman expected the ceiling repair to be done at the end of January and confirmed that there was no damage to the roof itself.

Cllr Cartwright

Cllr Rixon circulated accounts to date showing funds in hand of some £11k, with payment to the joiner and for insurance (approx. £2k and £500 respectively) outstanding. He noted that the electricity supply had recently been moved to a cheaper tariff.

Cllr Forman reported that his legal contact was unable to advise on updating the trust deed. The clerk suggested utilising the free legal advice session being offered by NALC and indicated her willingness to attend this on Cllrs' behalf, which Cllrs agreed. Necessary updating of the Charity Commission website and review of the VAT position could be undertaken once the constitutional issue was resolved.

Clerk

12/20 VE Day commemoration

To discuss VE Day commemoration.

The idea of rededicating the War Memorial on VE Day was mooted, but was agreed not to be practical as it was unlikely the restoration work could be completed by 8 May. Neil Gordon-Lee was still awaiting a second estimate from the specialist stonemason suggested by Andy Bush, which he agreed to chase up. He wished to be certain of the type of stone used for the plinth in order to ensure any work done was appropriate. The project also envisaged improving the legibility of the inscriptions.

Neil Gordon-Lee

Neil and Cllr Francklin would come back with their recommendation in due course.

**Cllr Francklin
Neil Gordon-Lee**

Meanwhile Cllrs agreed there would be no specific VE Day commemoration in the village.

13/20 Elections

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

Cllr Cartwright offered to draft a brief explanation of the Councillor role for the next edition of Wicken News which would also publicise the election.

Cllr Cartwright

The clerk requested that Cllrs indicate their intention for the forthcoming election (if

known) to enable her to respond to a NCALC survey. Cllr Forman stated that he wished to step down, ideally with immediate effect, but was happy to continue to be available to be consulted on matters within his expertise. All other Cllrs confirmed their intention to stand for re-election either at or subsequent to the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Forman for the time and commitment he had given to the role.

Cllr Forman stepping down created an immediate vacancy and Cllrs unanimously agreed to co-opt Neil Gordon-Lee as a Cllr until the May election. **Resolved**

14/20 Dangerous dogs

There had been no further incidents.

15/20 Gritting, roadmarkings and overhanging trees

To agree any actions required.

Cllrs agreed with Cllr Howett that overhanging trees and bushes needed cutting back in the properties noted in his email. The Chairman agreed to send a letter from the Council to the relevant householders requesting action. If necessary the local authority would be involved subsequently. **Chairman**

The clerk confirmed that the Highways Authority had agreed to supply a grit bin for the corner of Pound close and Whittlebury Road and this would be delivered soon.

Cllr Cartwright reported that the Highways Authority was aware that roadmarkings needed renewal but currently lacked funds to do so. Cllr Cartwright agreed to remind them in April when new funding should be available. **Cllr Cartwright**

It was noted that the condition of the recently filled potholes in Deanshanger Road had deteriorated and would be kept under review.

16/20 Wicken Wood

There was no specific update other than to note that the replanting looked good.

17/20 Wicken website

No feedback had been received. The clerk was asked to request usage statistics from Richard Wiggins. **Clerk**

18/20 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:

Wicken Sports Club	836	120.00
DNH Contracts	837	43.20
Play Inspection Co	838	120.00
DNH Contracts	839	43.20
E.ON	840	73.15
E.ON	841	504.54
W H Ivens & Son (maintenance)	842	336.00
J Robson	843	84.00

The clerk encouraged the Chairman and Cllr Rixon (replacing Cllr Forman as cheque signatory) to arrange online access as soon as possible so that this could be put into operation. **Chairman/Cllr Rixon**

The clerk reminded Cllr Howett of the need for someone to have oversight of the accounts and to report back to Cllrs.

Cllr Howett

The clerk noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy money had already been received, but the Council would need to report on how it had been spent.

Cllrs considered the draft budget prepared by the clerk and agreed a placeholder of £1000 for the cost of a clerk. Other key changes from the previous year were a reduction in anticipated electricity costs and the addition of a small amount for playground repairs.

Taking account of the budget the Council approved an annual precept for 2020/21 of £7700, being a modest increase on that for 2019/20.

Resolved

19/20 Future meeting dates

The next meeting will be on 4 March 2020.

20/20 Any other business

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

There has been some fly-tipping on Wicken Park Road, which will be removed in due course by the Chairman/Cllr Edmondson.

Chairman/Cllr Edmondson

Cllr Cartwright reported that Sue Oswell (who had done an excellent job) wished to stand down as Neighbourhood Watch contact. He would arrange to advertise the vacancy in Wicken News.

Cllr Cartwright

The Chairman noted that Lynda Clarke's funeral would be held on Friday 10 January, 2pm at Crownhill. He wished to place on record the Council's gratitude for the very valuable service she had given to the community as a Councillor.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Chairman's Signature

Date

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