

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

On Wednesday 13 May 2020

at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Action

40/20 Attendance and apologies

To receive and accept any apologies.

Cllr Philip Ivens – Chairman until 42/20
Cllr Celina Francklin
Cllr Neil Gordon-Lee – Chairman from 43/20
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

41/20 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.

Cllr Ivens declared an interest in item 51/20 (proposed Solar Farm) and in the provision of village maintenance.

42/20 To elect a chair for 2020/21

Cllr Ivens indicated he wished to stand down as chairman after 14 years. Cllr Cartwright proposed Cllr Gordon-Lee in his place. Cllr Gordon-Lee indicated his willingness to serve and his election was unanimously approved.

Resolved

Cllrs expressed their sincere thanks to Cllr Ivens for his long and dedicated service as chairman.

43/20 To elect a vice chair for 2020/21

Cllr Cartwright indicated his willingness to continue as vice chair and this was unanimously approved.

Resolved

44/20 Report from District and County Councillor

A written report had been received. Cllr Ivens was pleased the report showed that county finances were now in better order.

45/20 Public forum

Fenlon Dunphy gave a brief update on the finances of the Wicken Sports club in light of the covid -19 epidemic. He was hopeful of being able to restart archery and tennis soon based on guidance from the relevant sporting bodies.

Meanwhile the Sports Club had received a £10k emergency grant. Most of this would be needed to replace lost income but if any remained it could be used for the planned kitchen/boiler renewal. The Club had also undertaken an electrical review

which had shown a need for approx £1k of remedial work before the kitchen/boiler works could go ahead.

Cllrs noted the risk that subscription income might be lower for some time.

46/20 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2020 – approved to be signed by the Chairman. **Resolved**

47/20 Policies and procedures

To consider, approve and adopt/readopt policies and procedures.

The Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and Standing Orders (incorporating the updates proposed by the clerk) were adopted/readopted. **Resolved**

The clerk drew attention to the Risk Assessment as a new document and asked that Cllrs review prior to its proposed approval at the next meeting. **All Cllrs**

Cllrs reviewed the Fixed Assets Register and asked that the grit bins for which the Parish Council was responsible be added. Cllr Rixon agreed to supply the necessary information. **Cllr Rixon**

48/20 Governance and accounting

To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, the Accounting Statements 2019/20 and the Certificate of Exemption from external audit (both income and expenditure being below £25k for the year).

The clerk introduced the documents and explained that the Chairman had reviewed and confirmed their accuracy.

All three documents were approved for signature by the Chairman and clerk as necessary. **Resolved**

49/20 Covid – 19 committee

To receive an update from the covid – 19 committee and agree policy on lunches for the vulnerable.

The Chairman reported that the group now had 11 volunteers and so far only 6 households had requested help. Nevertheless, Cllr Francklin observed that the initiative had been very well received.

The Parish Council had previously agreed to fund the cost of pub lunches provided twice weekly to vulnerable residents up to a total of £300, which had now been reached. Cllrs acknowledged that the support could not be indefinite (the amount being significantly greater than the weekly taxi cost it had temporarily replaced), nor was any covid related grant funding likely to be available.

Cllrs agreed to continue the funding until the end of May and to explain to recipients that they would need to self-fund any subsequent lunches. The necessary funds would be allocated from the Solar Fund. **Resolved**

The Chairman offered to explain the position to the affected residents. **Chairman**

50/20 Wicken streetlighting

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

Cllr Cartwright explained that installation of the new lamps had been delayed by the covid -19 epidemic, nor had he yet heard from DW Windsor whether the trial

heritage lamp could be 2200k rather than the 2700k originally planned. He was optimistic there would be some progress in the next couple of months.

51/20 Proposed Solar Farm

To receive an update on proposed Solar Farm.

Cllr Cartwright reported that the Highways Authority had expressed concern over the additional traffic on Wicken Park Road and had requested a traffic survey. Given the current situation the survey would probably not be possible until September at the earliest.

It was understood also that South Northants Council had raised concerns over the visual impact from outside the village.

Meanwhile the text of the proposed voluntary undertaking had now been agreed and would be circulated to Cllrs. Elgin were funding the whole of the Parish Council's legal costs.

Cllr Cartwright

The clerk indicated that two Cllr signatures and a witness were required for signing a deed.

52/20 Planning

To discuss current planning issues and agree response.

Mount Mill Farm – Cllrs had no objection [this application has subsequently been withdrawn as incorrect].

1 Quarry Green Close – Cllrs were concerned at the potential impact on neighbouring properties. The Chairman undertook to consult affected residents in order to inform the Parish Council's response, but otherwise no particular objection was raised. The clerk explained that for the time being applications were being posted on the village website as the planning authority was currently unable to carry out neighbour consultations.

Chairman

Parked car in Cross Tree Road – Cllr Ivens explained that the car's owner was aware of the complaint but was currently 'locked down' away from the village. Cllrs recognised that the complaint could not be satisfactorily resolved until the car owner returned and the Chairman agreed to respond to the complainant accordingly.

Chairman

Fence in Cross Tree Road – the fence had been painted white in contrast to the wood coloured fences which were a long-standing feature of the conservation area. There had already been an exchange with the property owner (who was unwilling to restore the colour) and with the planning authority, and whilst it was not certain whether the conservation officer had been fully consulted the matter could now only be taken forward through a formal complaint. After some discussion Cllrs agreed that it would not be appropriate to take any further action at this point.

Windows in Deanshanger Road conservation area – the Parish Council appreciated being asked for a view on the potential replacement with PVC but could more appropriately comment on an actual application – clerk to inform resident accordingly.

Clerk

53/20 Village Hall

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

There had been no interest from prospective tenants. Cllr Howett wondered if the rent asked were too high in comparison with other available properties and whether it would be worth lowering the rent to attract a tenant in the current, difficult market. Cllr Cartwright agreed to discuss with the agent.

Cllr Cartwright

There is outstanding maintenance work required on painting and making good

woodwork, temporarily delayed because of the covid -19 situation. Even after this Cllr Rixon expected there to be funds in hand of some £4 -5k.

The clerk reminded Cllrs of the option of getting a legal advice letter (cost £295 plus VAT) in relation to the Village Hall trust deed, which was no longer appropriate. Cllrs agreed that the clerk should take this forward.

Clerk

54/20 Dangerous dogs

To receive an update in relation to dangerous dogs.

Cllr Ivens had spoken with the owner and relayed the Parish Council's concerns.

Meanwhile there had been no further incidents and when seen recently the dog had been muzzled, as required. The situation would continue to be monitored.

55/20 Road condition and overhanging trees

To receive an update re road condition and overhanging trees and agree next steps.

Cllr Cartwright reported that a safety survey would be carried out in June, which it was hoped would lead to repainting of white lines and speed roundels.

Cllr Ivens drew attention to the hole on Wicken Park Road near the bridge, which was susceptible to flooding. It was not thought the Highways Authority would fund remedial work. Consequently, Cllrs agreed that Cllr Ivens obtain a quote for the necessary work to provide a long-term solution.

Cllr Ivens

The hole at the junction of Larks Lane and Leckhampstead Road has been reported on Street Doctor and is being investigated.

There has been little action by affected householders as a result of letters requesting that overhanging trees/hedges be cut back. The Chairman undertook to review the position.

Chairman

56/20 War Memorial

Discussions are ongoing with the War Memorials Trust in relation to the plinth but hopefully moving towards agreement on a replacement. The type of stone to be used is yet to be agreed. Stone from one local quarry had proved unsuitable but another was being explored and York Stone, known to be long lasting, could be an option. The Chairman invited Cllrs to look at the York Stone sample on the plinth.

The Chairman observed that an original photograph showed a contrast in colour between plinth and memorial (as there would be with York Stone). He was keen that the work met residents' wishes, notably to provide a long-term solution.

Meanwhile consent has been received for the cleaning part of the project, but an application for permission to replace the plinth will still be necessary.

Cllr Francklin indicated she would inform Cllrs if the actual cost differed significantly from the estimate previously discussed. Currently only one of the two stonemasons approached was operating and might be keen for some work. It would be ideal if the work could be completed in time for the centenary in October this year.

Cllrs expressed their gratitude to the Chairman and Cllr Francklin for their good work in progressing the project.

57/20 Finance

To receive and approve accounts and agree annual contributions to village organisations.

The Council approved payments since the previous meeting, as follows:

Resolved

		Amount
DNH Contracts (Feb)	Online	43.20
DNH Contracts (Mar)	Online	43.20
E.ON (to March 2020)	Online	499.05
E.ON (to March 2020)	Online	73.15
NCALC annual sub	Online	516.75
White Lion (lunches)	Online	100.00
John Robson	Online	84.00
Pixel Creation	Online	300.00
DNH Contracts (Apr)	Online	43.20

The clerk noted that there would be a small additional cost this year for a Zoom subscription.

Cllrs considered the annual contributions to be made to village organisations and approved these in the same amounts as the previous year, being:

Resolved

	£	
Wicken Village Community	800	Funded from Solar Farm
Wicken Sports Club	500	
Wicken PCC	500	

Clerk

The clerk was asked to arrange payment.

58/20 Future meeting dates

The next meeting will be on 1 July 2020.

Further dates were noted as 2, September and 4 November 2020, and 13 January, 3 March and 19 May 2021.

59/20 Items for the next meeting

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

Nothing to report.

Cllrs noted that former Cllr Aaronson had recently lost his wife and that Cllr Francklin would be sending a card with Cllrs' sympathy.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Chairman's Signature

Date

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