

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

On Wednesday 1 July 2020

at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Action

63/20 Attendance and apologies

To receive and accept any apologies.

Cllr Neil Gordon-Lee – Chairman
Cllr Celina Francklin
Cllr Philip Ivens – until meeting interrupted
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
No members of the public

64/20 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 72/20 (proposed Solar Farm) and in the provision of village maintenance.

65/20 Report from District and County Councillor

No report had been received.

66/20 Public forum

No members of the public present.

67/20 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 13 May and 18 June 2020 – approved to be signed by the Chairman.

Resolved

68/20 Internal audit report

To review the internal audit report and agree any actions necessary.

Cllrs considered the issues raised in the report and noted:

- there was now a clerk in place;
- VAT reclaim would be submitted when the lighting invoice was received;
- a broker had been consulted at an early stage in the project to facilitate selection of an appropriate supplier, taking account of both cost and other factors – the Chairman and Cllr Cartwright agreed to supply relevant paperwork to the clerk;
- use of AOB as a heading in the minutes has ceased;
- Cllrs understood the need to advertise future vacancies before co-opting;
- internal control checks will begin again in September regardless of the

Clerk

**Chairman / Cllr
Cartwright**

- covid situation;
- Cllrs understood that cheque signatories should not be involved in approving payments to themselves;
- appropriate financial information has been posted onto the Wicken website; and
- Cllrs noted the recommendation regarding a ring-fenced reserve for the clerk's salary and would consider further when approving the 2021/22 budget.

Clerk

The internal auditor had also alerted the clerk to a new requirement for website accessibility (at a cost of approx. £250 plus VAT). Cllrs asked for further details but otherwise were content for the clerk to put in hand the necessary work.

Clerk

69/20 Risk assessment and asset register

To approve the annual Risk Assessment and note updated Fixed Assets Register.

Cllrs approved the Risk Assessment with the addition of the covid - 19 risk in relation to the play equipment, and noted the Fixed Assets Register which now included three grit bins.

Resolved

70/20 Covid – 19 committee

To receive an update from the covid – 19 committee.

There was nothing specific to report other than that the cost of lunches to vulnerable residents was now being borne by the residents themselves.

71/20 Wicken streetlighting

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

Cllr Cartwright had previously circulated a list of remedial work on the newly installed contemporary lights which, given Cllrs' agreement would now be put in hand. The work involved some cutting back of trees and Cllrs agreed that the residents concerned should be asked to contribute to the cost. Cllr Cartwright offered to obtain an estimate from E.ON for this purpose.

Cllr Cartwright

Given the time of year it was difficult to fully assess the effectiveness of the new lights and whether there was any significant light spill from these or the trial heritage light. Cllr Cartwright was asked to confirm that the trial light could be left in place until later in the year to allow a proper comparison.

Cllr Cartwright

Cllr Ivens raised some concerns on the effectiveness of particular lights and the colour and overall level of light provided by the new lanterns. The remedial work was expected to improve light direction and it was recognised that one of the new lights might need to be moved. Also, a possible phase 2 project to add one or two additional lights where there was a big gap had always been envisaged.

Other Cllrs observed that the new lights illuminated the area below very well and the sighting of bats circulating under the lanterns suggested they were less harmful to wildlife as had been intended.

Cllr Edmondson thought it was important to recognise that there was no perfect solution. The move to less powerful LED lighting was a very significant change and understandably required some getting used to. Cllrs noted that there had already been a number of positive comments from residents.

In terms of assessing residents' views on the trial heritage light Cllrs proposed articles for Wicken News, the website and the Wicken Facebook page, possibly accompanied by a flyer, but not until later in the year when earlier nightfall would facilitate the comparison. Meanwhile the Chairman proposed a holding note for the website.

Chairman

Finally, Cllr Cartwright offered to speak to the Unmetered Supply Team at E.ON with a view to getting the monthly electricity cost reduced.

Cllr Cartwright

72/20 Proposed Solar Farm

To receive an update on proposed Solar Farm.

The agreement with Elgin had now been signed but the planning application was still held up awaiting the traffic survey.

Meanwhile Cllr Cartwright agreed to chase up the reimbursement from Elgin of the Council's legal fees.

Cllr Cartwright

73/20 Planning

To discuss current planning issues and agree response.

1 Quarry Green Close – the Chairman reported that neighbouring residents were primarily concerned that contractors' vehicles did not block up the cul de sac during the construction. The clerk had flagged this concern to the planning authority.

Parked car in Cross Tree Road – it was understood that the complainant remained unhappy. Cllr Ivens explained that the car's owner would be returning to the village from lockdown shortly at which point the Chairman proposed to speak with her with a view to resolving the issue.

Chairman

War Memorial – discussed separately in minute 77/20.

74/20 Village Hall

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

The Chairman provided an update. Research had revealed that the charity's Managing Trustees had resigned en masse twice, in 2006 and in 2011. However, he had been able to contact sufficient of the most recent Trustees and received their written authority for the transfer of responsibility to the Parish Council. This would expedite implementation of the proposed CIO. The Chairman proposed to send out a draft template for the new CIO and asked that Cllrs come back quickly with any comments.

All Cllrs

Meanwhile the lawyer had explained there was presently no authority to enter into a lease with the prospective tenant, Musication, who had offered the full asking rental of £15k pa. The letting agent had suggested using a tenancy at will initially in order to fit with Musication's timing.

[Meeting interrupted at this point, resuming several minutes later.]

Under a tenancy at will rent was payable as normal but either party had the ability to walk away without notice, so the intention would be to replace it with a traditional tenancy agreement as soon as possible.

Cllr Cartwright observed that Musication wished to make some modifications to the property, but these would be easily reversible when the tenancy ended. He would be obtaining a breakdown for Cllrs to approve. The Council would still be able to access the rear of the building for repainting etc. Cllr Francklin said she would circulate the estimate for this work.

Cllr Cartwright

Cllr Francklin

Cllr Howett asked for a more detailed explanation of a tenancy at will (which was subsequently supplied) but otherwise Cllrs agreed to proceed with the letting using a tenancy at will.

Resolved

It was agreed that advice on setting up such a tenancy be sought from the lawyer before Cllr Cartwright went back to the agent. Cllrs accepted that this would involve some additional cost.

Resolved

75/20 Dangerous dogs

To receive an update in relation to dangerous dogs.

There had been no further incidents.

The clerk was asked to post the Countryside Code advice which Cllr Rixon had received onto the village website.

Clerk

76/20 Road condition and overhanging trees

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

The blocked drain on Larks Lane previously reported on Street Doctor had now been fixed.

Cllr Cartwright reported that the safety survey on road markings had been carried out in June. No action was proposed by the Highways Authority which was disappointing but he would be asking them to review again in a year.

Cllr Cartwright

Cllr Edmondson referred to the exposed cable in Wicken Park Road which had been reported to Openreach. An inspection had taken place and the cable would be reburied potentially also involving the Highways Authority. Cllr Edmondson would liaise with Cllr Ivens to ensure no duplication with the work proposed at Willow Bridge.

Cllr Edmondson

There had still been no action by householders regarding overhanging trees/hedges, arguably because of covid – 19. However, one affected householder had indicated they wished for their hedge to be removed and Cllr Edmondson planned to commission his tree man to undertake the work, with himself and Cllr Cartwright removing the waste. He would check if conservation approval were needed first and ensure there was no damage to live cables.

Cllr Edmondson

77/20 War Memorial

To receive an update on War Memorial and agree next steps.

A planning application had been lodged. Meanwhile the intention was to commence the cleaning work which would allow a proper comparison of the options for plinth replacement. Ideally the work would be completed in time for the centenary in the autumn.

The cleaning would cost £500 plus VAT, which Cllrs approved. The cost of other renovations was expected to have increased from the original estimate as the price of stone had risen. The revised estimate would be circulated to Cllrs when received.

Resolved

Cllr Francklin

78/20 Speed monitor

To receive any data from speed monitor.

No recent data available in view of lighter traffic volumes but Cllr Howett agreed to confirm the monitor was still working correctly.

Cllr Howett

79/20 Playground

To receive update on playground inspection and maintenance.

Cllrs agreed that the playground should be reopened as soon as the necessary risk assessment had been done – the Chairman and Cllr Edmondson to liaise over this.

Chairman / Cllr Edmondson

Cllr Edmondson had reloked at the previous annual inspection which identified three issues to be addressed:

- surface cleaning of the rubber tiles under the old equipment
- installation of missing plastic plugs
- installation of appropriate signage including how to report faults.

He was happy to deal with these points with support from other Cllrs as necessary and Cllrs approved any necessary expenditure.

**Cllr
Edmondson**

Cllr Edmondson also proposed to contact the inspection company to agree the timing of this year's review.

**Cllr
Edmondson**

80/20 Finance

To receive and approve accounts and review budget for 2020/21

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

Resolved

		Amount
White Lion (lunches)	Online	195.00
Wicken PCC	Online	500.00
Wicken Sports Club	Online	500.00
DNH Contracts (May)	Online	74.99
EMW Law LLP	Online	1080.00

The clerk noted that the annual contribution to Wicken Village Community had not yet been paid pending a meeting of the Solar Fund Committee, and that some adjustments to the budget were necessary to reflect, for example, the cost of lunches for vulnerable residents.

81/20 To discuss the proposal to increase the number of Councillors

Item to be carried forward to the September meeting.

82/20 Future meeting dates

Future meeting dates - 2 September and 4 November 2020, and 13 January, 3 March and 19 May 2021.

83/20 Items for the next meeting

Nothing to report.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Chairman's Signature

Date

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