

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

On Wednesday 7 July 2021

at 7.00 pm in Wicken Church

Action

70/21 Attendance and apologies

To receive and accept any apologies.

Cllr Neil Gordon-Lee – Chair

Cllr Philip Ivens

Cllr Alan Cartwright

Cllr Ian Howett – apologies received, present from minute 89/21

Cllr Viv Kime

Cllr Ken Pritchard

Cllr Ian McCord – until minute 78/21

Cllr William Barter

Valda Clapham - Clerk

Two members of the public

71/21 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 the Solar Farms and in the provision of village maintenance.

72/21 To receive a report from County Councillors

Three of the West Northamptonshire councillors cover Wicken (all present) and each introduced himself:

Cllr Pritchard – lives in Puxley and knows the local area well, has been a councillor for 5 years and serves on the Planning Committee.

Cllr Barter – newly elected but has resided near Towcester for many years.

Cllr McCord – lives in Yardley Gobion and was previously Leader of South Northants Council.

It was understood that Cllr Pritchard would be the point man for Wicken and he would try to attend Parish Council meetings whenever he could.

73/21 Public forum

No new points were raised by members of the public but the opportunity was taken to provide an update on matters raised at the Annual Parish Meeting:

- Japanese Knotweed – the local Housing Association was dealing with the reoccurrence.
- Litter and dog fouling on the sports field – was an ongoing problem for the Sports Club.
- Roadwork signs left in place too long – remained an irritation.
- Impact of Milton Keynes expansion – Cllr McCord explained that the

Milton Keynes 2050 Vision document showing housing development up the A5 was purely visionary rather than a definite plan, and the land in question remained under the control of West Northants Council as far as future development was concerned. Nevertheless, we could expect significant housing development in Milton Keynes in the years ahead (to reach expected population of some 500k), and there would inevitably be further development within West Northants to meet housing needs. From this perspective the impact of the proposed changes to planning rules on the ability of local authorities to influence planning decisions would be important.

74/21 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021 were approved for signature by the Chair.

Resolved

Cllr Kime reported that the location of the suggestion box referred to in minute 55/21 had been decided as the White Lion car park entrance lobby.

75/21 Transparency

To consider and approve documents for publication recommended by the Transparency working party – GDPR and Privacy policy, Complaints procedure and Parish map.

The Chair appreciated that Cllrs had not necessarily had time to read the detail prior to the meeting but suggested that, as before, the documents be published on the website, accepting that they could be revisited if necessary and would in any case be reviewed from time to time.

Cllrs approved publication of the documents as proposed.

Resolved

The Chair reported that the documents approved at the May meeting were now available on the website.

76/21 Finance

To receive and approve accounts and review actual expenditure against budget.

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

Resolved

			Amount
07-Jun	Online	Pixel Creation	420.00
07-Jun	Online	DNH Contracts (Apr/May)	120.18
15-Jun	Online	Wicken Village Community	800.00
15-Jun	Online	Wicken PCC	500.00
15-Jun	Online	Wicken Sports Club	500.00

The clerk updated Cllrs on various matters:

- the current year's Solar Fund payment had not yet been received;
- the Chair had carried out his regular confirmation of the bank reconciliation;
- the issue with the number of signatories required for online payments may have resolved itself;

- membership of CPRE had been initiated as requested at the May meeting.

The clerk then took Cllrs through the spreadsheet showing performance against budget, explaining that positive numbers indicated where current spending was less than expected and negative numbers where spending was higher, and the reasons therefor. There was nothing of concern so far.

77/21 To receive an update on co-option

The Chair reported that two residents had expressed interest in the two unfilled councillor places. He had spoken in detail with one of them, Petra Spencer-Jones, and she had indicated her willingness to be co-opted. Accordingly, with Cllr Cartwright proposing and Cllr Kime seconding, Cllrs unanimously approved the co-option of Petra Spencer-Jones.

Resolved

The Chair would follow up with the second potential candidate after the meeting.

Chair

78/21 Streetlighting

To receive an update on streetlighting renewal.

The papers circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting showed revised costings for the agreed heritage style lights and poles from three different suppliers (ranging from £20k + to £27k+), suggested draft wording for the letter to residents most likely to be affected by the new lights and a set of slides showing the expected light pattern for each of the proposed new lights.

Cllrs noted that the additional cost of moving the Rectory Corner light across the road would be £1180.

It was not thought that proceeding piecemeal would make any significant difference to the overall cost. On the other hand, there was an expectation in the village that the project would be completed as soon as possible, subject to funds being available.

There were differences between suppliers in the expected light pattern, with DW Windsor showing a significantly wider light pattern and this needed to be looked into. Additionally, DW Windsor could provide a brighter light for the Sports Club entrance if required.

Cllr Cartwright

After some discussion Cllrs agreed:

- that the papers circulated should be placed on the Wicken website;
- provisionally, to go with the cheapest supplier (DW Windsor) at a cost of £20372, subject to a satisfactory outcome to the investigation into light pattern;
- not to proceed with moving the Rectory Corner light across the road – this was already the most expensive location and there was not unanimous support amongst neighbouring houses;
- that the draft letter should be sent to all houses in Pound Close and others within 30m of one of the new lights and should refer to the documents on the website; and
- to allow the recipients three weeks to respond to their letter, but no chaser would be sent.

Clerk

Resolved

The Chair offered to share the list of letter recipients with Cllrs prior to their despatch.

Chair

Cllr Cartwright reported that the drone damage (alleged) to the trial heritage light was greater than thought and might need replacement at an additional cost.

79/21 Planning

To discuss current planning issues and agree any action.

8 Leckhampstead Road – this application had not yet been approved

41 Leckhampstead Road – the Chair had come across an old minute referring to a possible change in village confines which made it difficult to argue the Council had no knowledge of the revision. Nevertheless, Cllrs remained unhappy, particularly about the risk of further development, and the Chair proposed to discuss Council's concerns in more detail with Cllr Pritchard outside the meeting.

Chair

80/21 Road condition

To receive an update re road condition and consider further action including re pavement parking.

Cllr Cartwright reported that all white lines had been repainted except that outside the school. He was in touch with the Northamptonshire Highways to ensure the latter was completed as soon as possible.

Cllr Ivens wondered if the school could be asked to erect a warning sign. The Chair explained that he had recently written to the school principal about the problem and suggested additional signage but so far without response.

Cllr Cartwright had carried out his review of potholes within the village and reported all those meeting the size criteria for repair on Street Doctor. Various potholes had recently been marked with white/yellow paint and repair was awaited.

Discussion on pavement parking was deferred until September in the absence of Cllr Howett.

Clerk

81/21 War Memorial

To receive an update on War Memorial.

The new stone had been installed and looked good. This work had been invoiced at the cost already approved.

There was still work to be done on the surround for which former Cllrs Edmondson and Rixon had kindly donated some materials.

82/21 Flood risk and river clearance

To receive an update on flood risk and river clearance.

Work to clear the brook between the two bridges was progressing well and Cllrs were appreciative of former Cllr Edmondson's efforts. There remained an issue with the Wicken Park Road bridge which was susceptible to flooding. Cllrs agreed that Cllr Ivens obtain an estimate for the work required to clear vegetation and improve water flow. This should also resolve the drainage issue by the bridge.

Cllr Ivens

83/21 To receive data from speed monitor

No data was available.

84/21 Path warden

To note the appointment of Path warden and discuss any action needed.

Cllrs were grateful to Justine and Peter Rutledge for volunteering to jointly take on the role of Path warden for the village.

The Chair noted that surface improvement to the path from the 1840 bridge was on the list of possible Solar Farm projects, and Cllr Cartwright reported that the path from the Wicken Park Road bridge was now cleared thanks to former Cllr Edmondson's efforts.

85/21 Playground

To consider further action required re playground maintenance.

The Chair drew attention to recent guidance from NCALC emphasising the importance of regular safety checks on playground equipment. There was also the proposed improvement to the playground entrance to take forward. A councillor to lead on this would be decided at the September meeting by which time it was hoped to have a full complement of councillors.

86/21 Dog bins

To consider renewal of dog bins and dog fouling signage.

Cllrs approved the replacement of two of the three dog bins which were badly rusted at a cost of £210 plus VAT.

Resolved

Cllr Cartwright observed that he already had some new signage and would discuss installation outside the meeting.

Cllr Cartwright

87/21 Village fete

To consider possible village fete in 2022.

Cllr Kime reported that a number of people had suggested the idea of holding a village fete again. Cllrs were generally supportive and invited Cllr Kime to bring an outline proposal to the next meeting. Those promoting the idea might provide a useful support group.

Cllr Kime

88/21 Village Hall

To receive an update on Village Hall CIO.

Various documents had been received for signing but a query on the accompanying map needed to be resolved first.

89/21 To discuss ways of working

Dealing with standing agenda items not requiring debate – to save time at meetings the clerk agreed to ask relevant Cllrs for a written update to include with agenda papers. A composite agenda item covering these items would allow Cllrs to still raise questions etc.

Clerk

Follow up actions not requiring ratification – Cllrs accepted that non-contentious follow up emails did not need to be pre-circulated.

Monthly surgery in Wicken pub – Cllrs agreed to trial this.

90/21 Future meeting dates

Future meeting dates - 1 September and 3 November 2021, and 12 January, 2 March and 4 May 2022.

91/21 Items for the next meeting

Nothing noted.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

Chairman’s Signature

Date

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