

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

**On Wednesday 1 September 2021**

**at 7.00 pm in Wicken Church**

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**Action**

**95/21 Attendance and apologies**

To receive and accept any apologies.

Cllr Neil Gordon-Lee – Chair  
Cllr Philip Ivens – apologies received  
Cllr Alan Cartwright  
Cllr Ian Howett  
Cllr Viv Kime  
Cllr Petra Spencer-Jones  
Cllr Verity Robinson – apologies received  
Cllr Ken Pritchard  
Valda Clapham - Clerk  
Five members of the public

**96/21 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 not being present, nothing declared.

**97/21 To receive a report from County Councillor**

The Chair welcomed Cllr Pritchard and invited him to provide an update on current matters:

Towcester link road – work has commenced and is due for completion in approx. 18 months. Additionally, he is pushing for lorries to be banned from the town centre.

Oxford/Cambridge Arc – includes a rail link plus 1m new homes but no road link. The government has powers to override planning decisions which impact the Arc.

Milton Keynes 2050 – a wish list rather than a definitive plan.

Deanshanger flooding – imminent meeting to decide action but needs funding.

Church Close – he is working with environmental officers and others to improve the empty property. Some progress has been made recently and he will keep it under review.

Broadband – Cllr Howett queried the Gigaclear plan for installing full fibre broadband within the village which had raised concerns about damage to roads and footpaths. Cllr Pritchard observed that WNC would be keeping an eye on the project given their partial responsibility, and that reinstatement work in Potterspurty looked to be effective. There was not expected to be any need to dig up private gardens unless the homeowner requested a connection.

**98/21 Public forum**

Nothing noted.

**99/21 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 28 July 2021 were approved for signature by the Chair.

**Resolved**

**100/21 To note update on standing items (as set out in agenda)**

The Chair invited comments on the new system for updating Cllrs on standing items not requiring discussion, which was generally thought to be working well.

The Chair gave a further update on the Village Hall Trust. It was now understood that an outbuilding had been incorrectly registered as belonging to the adjoining landowner. Consequently, there would be a financial cost to the Trust to correct the position.

**101/21 To receive an update from Path Wardens (Justine and Peter Rutledge)**

Justine reported that the recent Zoom training for Path Wardens had focused on IT systems, in particular Street Doctor (also known as Fix My Street) which allowed anyone to report problems on paths. Alternatively, residents could raise issues with her. Further guidance on the role was expected and there would be a update for residents in the next edition of Wicken News.

One issue which had been raised concerned responsibility for grass cutting. It was understood that WNC was responsible for verge cutting within the village signs but in practice some was carried out by nearby residents.

She had recently been in touch with the owner of Wicken Woods. The new arrangements were working well with members of the Friends of Wicken Wood reporting damage and a lot of work being done to improve the woodland. She encouraged anyone interested to join up.

It was suggested that the Path Wardens' names should be included in the Welcome pack available to new residents, and Justine offered to show any newcomers around the local walks.

Cllr Kime queried the overhanging hedges within the village and Cllr Howett explained that the previous Parish Council had written to relevant residents requesting remedial action. This had been fairly successful and the situation was kept under review.

**102/21 Finance**

To receive and approve accounts, review actual expenditure against budget and confirm insurance provider.

**Resolved**

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

			Amount
12-Jul	Online	DNH Contracts (Jun)	<b>64.80</b>
12-Jul	Online	NCALC training (Neil)	<b>44.00</b>
12-Jul	Online	E.ON (to June 2021)	<b>34.31</b>
12-Jul	Online	B Bellhouse SNAST	<b>4700.00</b>
12-Jul	Online	Neighbourhood Watch subscription	<b>25.00</b>
21-Jul	D/D	CPRE subscription	<b>36.00</b>

Chairman's initials

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16-Aug	Online	NCALC election	<b>90.00</b>
16-Aug	Online	E.ON (to June 2021)	<b>245.99</b>
16-Aug	Online	DNH Contracts (Jul)	<b>43.20</b>

The clerk updated Cllrs on various matters:

- the current year's Solar Fund payment had now been received, £11678.92;
- the Chair had carried out his regular confirmation of the bank reconciliation;
- the budget spreadsheet had been updated to show the correct split between Solar and Precept funds, and the cost of village maintenance had been moved to Precept expenditure. Website maintenance cost would be moved next time so that Precept expenditure more closely matched routine costs;
- there had been an unexpected small charge for the recent non-contested election;
- otherwise expenditure against budget was more or less on track except for electricity charges. These were higher than expected whilst the new lighting was awaited and there was still a refund due on maintenance cost;
- the annual insurance premium to BHIB was due. Given the current three-year deal had expired the clerk had consulted a broker for an alternative quote, with Hiscox. Based on a similar three-year deal BHIB was marginally cheaper and, given there was little substantive difference between the two policies Cllrs agreed to renew with existing supplier;
- the clerk reminded Cllrs that the Precept funds included almost £4000 CIL money which needed to be spent on capital projects.

**Resolved**

### 103/21 Streetlighting

To decide supplier for streetlighting renewal and agree placement of order.

The Chair observed that both he and Cllr Howett lived adjacent to one of the new lights. Nevertheless, they could express their views as Cllrs.

All other households directly impacted had been consulted and any comments received circulated to Cllrs. There was only one substantive comment, expressing a preference for the existing lights, to which the Chair had responded. It was noted that residents would still be able to raise concerns after the new lights were installed and adjustments, such as blanking one side, could be made in response.

The paper circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting summarised the key points for each alternative lighting supplier. Ark (the supplier of the contemporary lights already installed) was slightly more expensive (£750 more in total) but had a tighter light pattern which could reduce any adverse impact on nearby residents. There was also a difference in materials used but given both were black painted this was less significant.

There was some risk that the cost of the poles could increase substantially if the project were implemented piecemeal, and the Chair confirmed funds were available, with the Precept funds bearing the cashflow cost of VAT.

The Chair also confirmed that there was more flexibility regarding individual lights than previously, making it possible for the Sports Club light to be made brighter.

Taking account of all the above Cllrs agreed (four in favour, one abstention) to place an order with Ark for the remaining nine lights. Cllr Cartwright was invited to take this forward and, in doing so, to seek to get Ark to match the slightly lower price offered by DW Windsor. He would revert back to Council if the price had gone up.

**Resolved**

**Cllr Cartwright**

It was confirmed that the drone damage (alleged) to the trial heritage light would be repaired at the same time the new lights were installed.

### 104/21 Planning

Chairman's initials

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To discuss current planning issues and agree any action.

The new solar farm proposed for Leckhampstead did not directly affect Wicken but Cllr Cartwright would be attending the open meeting on 15 September and would report back.

**Cllr Cartwright**

**105/21 Pavement parking**

To consider possible action re pavement parking.

There were conflicting issues here. Vehicles parked on the pavement impeded pedestrians and particularly those with wheelchairs or pushchairs. On the other hand, where the road was narrow parked vehicles on the road prevented fire appliances from getting through. A related issue was vehicles parked dangerously close to a corner.

The Chair observed that there might be legislation coming which would make pavement parking illegal, although it would be each local authority's choice whether to enforce it. If this happened then a village awareness campaign might be needed.

Given the uncertainty further discussion was deferred until the legislative position became clear.

**106/21 Playground**

To agree further action required re playground maintenance.

The Chair explained that Cllrs Spencer-Jones and Robinson were considering taking over responsibility for regular checks of the play equipment and would be discussing this outside the meeting and then coming back to the Chair.

**Cllr Spencer-Jones  
Cllr Robinson**

Meanwhile it was uncertain whether former Cllr Edmondson had done anything further on the outstanding tasks.

Cllr Howett offered to cut back an overhanging tree.

**Cllr Howett**

**107/21 Village fete**

To discuss village fete in 2022.

Cllr Kime had circulated a list of ideas and already had a number of volunteers. The idea was to encourage residents to start socialising again and to bring the village (and village organisations) together. The aim was to break even rather than to raise money, recognising that splitting profits between different contributors could be tricky.

Fenlon Dunphy queried timing so as not to conflict with the regular WVC events in May and September provided the village could support that many events. Cllr Kime suggested late June, which might tie in with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

It would be sensible to advertise outside the village so as to raise attendance and there could also be something in Wicken News.

Cllrs remained supportive and suggested that Cllr Kime and Fenlon Dunphy (as Chair of WVC) meet outside the meeting to discuss dates and the potential for working together on the fete, and that Cllr Kime go ahead and form a committee to take the planning further.

**Cllr Kime**

**108/21 Drainage improvement**

To consider proposal for drainage improvement work at Wicken Park Road bridge.

The work needed was on land owned by WNC and was designed to improve the

flow of water away from the bridge so as to prevent flooding across the road. Cllr Ivens had already obtained one estimate and would now seek further quotes as the cost was significant.

**Cllr Ivens**

The Chair requested that Cllr Pritchard investigate whether there were any plans to hold back the water flow upstream at his forthcoming meeting to discuss Deanshanger flooding.

**109/21 Future meeting dates**

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

**110/21 Items for the next meeting**

Nothing noted.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

**Chairman's Signature**

**Date**

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