

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

On Wednesday 3 November 2021

at 7.00 pm in Wicken Sports Club

	Action
111/21 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	
Cllr Viv Kime	
Cllr Petra Spencer-Jones	
Cllr Verity Robinson	
Cllr Ken Pritchard	
Valda Clapham - Clerk	
One member of the public	
112/21 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.	
113/21 To receive a report from County Councillor	
The Chair welcomed Cllr Pritchard and invited him to provide an update on current matters:	
Church Close – it is understood that the owner intends to return and renovate at some point, meanwhile nothing further can be done.	
Potterspurty solar farm application – plan was for a 40MW farm over 60 hectares.	
Police bus – the neighbourhood policing team would be visiting Deanshanger on the morning of 10 November.	
Planning – an application for 9 industrial units on land at Furtho Pits (already designated as commercial land) was in train but had now been varied to include a large distribution warehouse on the Old Stratford roundabout with access via a new roundabout onto the A508. Further distribution development was proposed at Bell Plantation and between Whittlebury and Silverstone. The local Cllrs were taking an active interest and were very aware of the impact on traffic flows.	

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Green bins – WNC was considering an annual charge of £42 for green bin emptying to bring all wards into line with Daventry. The Chair speculated that the charge might result in increased flytipping and Cllr Cartwright queried the national position on charging. Cllr Robinson observed that green waste collection was free in Milton Keynes.

114/21 Public forum

It was noted that the local Housing Association had left some waste material on the bank of the brook when clearing around the garden of the neighbouring property.

115/21 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021 were approved for signature by the Chair. **Resolved**

116/21 To note update on standing items (as set out in agenda)

Responding to a query from Cllr Robinson it was explained that the ‘over 30%’ column in the speed data referred to the number of vehicles travelling at more than 30% over the speed limit, that the first timing was outside the restricted zone and that the monitor was rotated between the four access points to the village. The Chair observed that the monitor had proved successful in slowing traffic through the village.

The Chair noted that he had not yet received a reply from the school following his latest letter.

117/21 Finance

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

Resolved

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

			Amount
02-Sep	Online	DNH Contracts (Aug and new bins)	328.98
02-Sep	Online	BHIB	607.35

and noted the following outstanding payments:

DNH Contracts (Sept)	43.20
E.ON maintenance to Sept 2021	34.31
E.ON supply to Sept 2021	260.81
DNH Contracts (Oct)	43.20
NCALC training	88.00
Giles defibrillator batteries	130.80
Clerk Heart internet sub	57.46

The clerk updated Cllrs on various matters:

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- payments were being delayed whilst Cllr Howett recovered his online access;
- the second tranche of the precept (£4000) had been received;
- the budget spreadsheet had been updated but showed little change. Cllr Ivens provided an invoice for village maintenance and observed there would be a significant saving against budget;
- there was still a refund due on electricity maintenance which Cllr Cartwright was pursuing;
- Cllrs would need to approve the 2022/23 budget at the January meeting and would receive further communication about this before the meeting, meanwhile it was expected that the precept would increase.

**Cllr
Cartwright**

Cllrs noted that no donation was necessary for use of the Church as meeting venue but agreed to donate £25 to the Royal British Legion in lieu of providing a wreath for Remembrance Day.

Resolved

118/21 Solar Farm Committee

An updated summary of income and expenditure had recently been posted on the website showing approximately £2k not yet reserved for specific projects. If the replacement streetlights cost less than estimated there would be more still.

Proposed projects included:

- an interpretation board for the War Memorial since it was not possible to make the names on the Memorial any clearer. Various approvals would be needed before this could go ahead;
- laying hardcore to improve the surface of the footpath by the 1840 bridge. Cost could be minimised with residents' help; and
- replacing the Wicken village signs, likely to cost approx. £800 each (£1500 having already been reserved).

Cllr Robinson reported a resident's request for more tree planting possibly connected to the forthcoming Platinum Jubilee. Potential sites included the Green and the Sports Club.

To improve transparency the Chair agreed to add the names of Committee members and an email contact address to the website.

Chair

119/21 Planning

To discuss current planning issues and agree any action.

West Northants Strategy – WNC was consulting on the various options to deliver the estimated future housing needs. One of the possible sites for new housing development was the land north of the Old Stratford roundabout where it was suggested over 6000 houses could be built, and there was another option for more than 4000 houses south of Towcester. Cllr Pritchard confirmed that the three local Cllrs were all adamantly opposed to both suggestions. He was also aware of other likely developments in the area which were not reflected in the Strategy, in particular another 1400 or so houses in Deanshanger and almost 400 houses around the petrol station.

Cllr Pritchard referred to the newsletter he and his fellow Cllrs had produced highlighting their concerns and encouraging opposition. The newsletter advertised a Deanshanger Parish meeting and a meeting to

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explain the proposals run by WNC which he hoped many residents would attend. He also explained the consultation timetable with initial responses due by 6 December [since extended to 24 December] and which culminated in the adoption of the Strategy in late 2023.

Clerk

The Parish Council offered to help with distribution of the newsletter and to publish it on the village website and Facebook page.

The Chair proposed that the Parish Council should respond to the consultation and indicated that he also was completely opposed given that the land in question was greenfield and therefore contrary to the national policy to use brownfield sites, that considerable infrastructure development would be needed to service the housing and there would be significant light pollution. Other Cllrs challenged the evidence so much new housing was needed. The Chair agreed to draft a response on behalf of the Parish Council and circulate it for comment.

Chair

Hurst Cottage – no objection.

1 Quarry Green Close – the Parish Council had not objected to a previous proposal to convert the existing dwelling, but the current plan was to demolish and rebuild a significantly larger property. The type of stone to be used had also changed. Cllrs expressed concern at the level of disruption to be caused to neighbouring residents, at the disparity with other local properties and the likely dominance of the proposed building. The Chair agreed to submit the Council's objections and to propose conditions on implementation to minimise the disturbance to neighbours should the application be approved.

Chair

120/21 Playground

To agree action required re playground maintenance.

The Chair reported that Cllrs Robinson and Spencer-Jones had agreed to undertake regular monitoring of the condition of the playground. The next annual inspection which was due before the end of the year might be an opportunity to gain insight on what the regular checks should involve. It would also be necessary to confirm with former Cllr Edmondson the extent of any outstanding work following the previous inspection.

**Cllrs
Robinson
and
Spencer-
Jones**

121/21 Village fete

To discuss village fete in 2022.

Cllr Kime reported on a good meeting with Fenlon Dunphy which had led to broad agreement with the original proposal. She intended for the proposed Fete Committee to be set up and running by the end of November so that detailed planning could commence and would report on progress at the next meeting. Cllrs remained very supportive and indicated willingness to fund any public liability insurance required.

Cllr Kime

Cllr Kime suggested various dates for the event [a proposed date of Saturday 25 June 2022 was subsequently agreed].

122/21 Drainage improvement

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

Cllr Ivens provided Cllrs with three estimates for the work needed and indicated that a further estimate was anticipated. Cllrs preferred the lowest quote of £1200 from Steve Haywood, particularly as he was in a position to proceed promptly. Cllr Ivens advised that he still needed to confirm appropriate insurance was in place but otherwise was authorised to proceed with Haywood, unless the fourth estimate came in significantly lower. In that case he would need to revert to Cllrs.

Cllr Ivens

123/21 Gigaclear

The Chair had emailed Gigaclear to find out when/if local roads would be shut to enable the work to proceed and would circulate the response he received. Meanwhile Cllr Pritchard observed that the work in other villages had been completed speedily and to a high standard and the team had been accommodating of local travel needs.

Chair

124/21 Northamptonshire Village Awards

Cllrs recognised the value of the Awards but were not minded to enter this time. Instead it was suggested that the Fete Committee might wish to consider if any further village events were appropriate.

125/21 Nextdoor

The Parish Council noted that a number of residents had received a communication inviting them to join the social media community Nextdoor. Various negative views were expressed and the clerk was asked to make clear in the record that the Parish Council did not endorse or support the network and anyone joining it should exercise appropriate caution.

126/21 Website

From time to time the clerk received communications such as Police Commissioner newsletters which merited a wider audience. The Chair proposed that the clerk should publish such items on the website without further reference to Cllrs and this was agreed.

127/21 Clerk

The clerk had indicated that she would be leaving the village after Christmas which meant the Council needed to recruit a replacement. Cllrs were invited to consider if they knew of anyone in the village who might be interested and Cllr Cartwright was asked to investigate the appropriate salary level. It would be advantageous for the new clerk to have some financial capability.

**Cllrs
Cllr
Cartwright**

The clerk advised that recent experience with online banking when one of the two signatories lost access for a period because of a computer issue indicated that a further online signatory would be helpful. Cllrs were invited to volunteer.

Cllrs

128/21 Future meeting dates

Future meeting dates - 12 January, 2 March, 4 May and 6 July 2022.

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129/21 Items for the next meeting

Nothing noted.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.47pm.

Chairman's Signature

Date

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