

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

**On Wednesday 12 January 2022**

**at 7.00 pm in Wicken Sports Club**

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|-------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>1/22</b> | <b>Attendance and apologies</b><br><br>To receive and accept any apologies.<br><br>Cllr Neil Gordon-Lee – Chair<br>Cllr Philip Ivens<br>Cllr Alan Cartwright<br>Cllr Ian Howett<br>Cllr Viv Kime<br>Cllr Petra Spencer-Jones<br>Cllr Verity Robinson<br>Cllr Ken Pritchard – apologies received<br>Valda Clapham - Clerk<br>One member of the public   | <b>Action</b>   |
| <b>2/22</b> | <b>Members' interests</b><br><br>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.<br><br>Cllr Ivens declared an interest in the Solar Farms and in the provision of village maintenance.   |                 |
| <b>3/22</b> | <b>To receive a report from County Councillor</b><br><br>In the absence of Cllr Pritchard there was no report.<br><br>The clerk advised Cllrs that there was some funding (up to £500) available to Wicken for local organisations for some Covid related purpose, but which needed to be spent before the end of March 2022. No immediate ideas were forthcoming but the clerk agreed to request further details of the scheme. | <b>Clerk</b>    |
| <b>4/22</b> | <b>Public forum</b><br><br>Nothing noted.  |                 |
| <b>5/22</b> | <b>Minutes</b><br><br>The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2021 were approved for signature by the Chair.   | <b>Resolved</b> |

Chairman's initials

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02/03/2022

**6/22 To note update on standing items (as set out in agenda)**

Cllr Ivens explained that the padlocked gate referenced in the Path Warden's update was not in fact on the route of the path, which information would be passed back to the Path Warden.

Cllr Ivens reported that the drainage improvement work at Wicken Park Road bridge would begin the following week.

**7/22 Finance**

To receive and approve accounts, review actual expenditure against budget and to approve the 2022/23 budget and precept.

**Resolved**

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

24 Nov	Online	DNH Contracts (Sept)	<b>£43.20</b>
24 Nov	Online	E.ON (to Sept 2021)	<b>£4.31</b>
24 Nov	Online	E.ON (to Sept 2021)	<b>£260.81</b>
2 Dec	Online	P H Ivens (maintenance)	<b>£420.00</b>
2 Dec	Online	J N Gordon-Lee (RBL donation)	<b>£25.00</b>
2 Dec	Online	G Butterfield (battery)	<b>£130.80</b>
2 Dec	Online	DNH Contracts (Oct/Nov)	<b>£86.40</b>
2 Dec	Online	NCALC training (Verity/Petra)	<b>£88.00</b>
2 Dec	Online	V Clapham (Heart sub)	<b>£57.46</b>

The Chair explained that Cllrs needed to approve the precept for 2022/23 at this meeting. The proposed precept of £8,400 was a 5% rise on the previous year. He pointed out that the precept was still insufficient to cover the normal running costs of the Council but there was a risk that a bigger increase would be challenged.

A precept of £8,400 for 2022/23 was unanimously approved.

**Resolved**

The Chair referred Cllrs to the draft 2022/23 budget which did not necessarily need to be agreed at this meeting. He had received no comments to date. The clerk suggested that the amounts for audit and electricity supply be increased to reflect the anticipated need for external audit (after paying for the new streetlights) and the increased unit rate charged by Npower.

The Chair reported that the Solar Farm Committee were aware that there could be a small amount left over after paying for the new lights and already had several projects in mind.

Chairman's initials

02/03/2022

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The clerk updated Cllrs on various matters:

- the CIL funds of almost £4k had still to be allocated to a capital project;
- the Chair had carried out his regular check of the bank reconciliation and confirmed everything to be in order; and
- nothing major emerged from the budget spreadsheet.

Cllr Spencer-Jones volunteered to become an additional signatory on the bank accounts.

## **8/22 Planning**

To discuss current planning issues and agree any action.

West Northants Strategy – the Chair had provided an update in the note for standing items. The key advice from our MP was that the more comments received the more likely the proposals were to be rejected or re-thought. She encouraged constituents to write to her so that she could pass comments onto the relevant person within local government. It was not clear how many actual responses to the consultation there had been but worth noting that all would be reflected in the final report.

The Chair went on to explain that WNC had pushed on with the Strategy without waiting for the overarching Oxford Cambridge Arc plan although this had been recommended by the A5 Alliance. It has transpired that the last Local Plan passed in July 2020 omitted some of the key protections which would normally be included. Regardless of the outcome of the Strategy consultation he thought there would be further development in Deanshanger itself but so far Wicken was excluded despite various parcels of land having been put forward for development.

The Chair indicated that he would continue to place relevant material onto the village website and Cllrs indicated their appreciation of his efforts.

Tall Cedars – no objection.

Proposed Leckhampstead solar farm electricity connection – no objection.

Old Stratford industrial park – the original plan for small industrial units had been amended to include a large distribution warehouse the exact dimensions of which were unclear. The Chair was concerned that its size would dwarf the surrounding area and at the traffic implications.

A detailed application was expected in February. The A5 Alliance would be objecting on the basis that the plan took no account of the proposed nearby housing development and the impact on traffic flows through an already congested roundabout.

Cllr Kime observed that there was still empty warehouse capacity in Milton Keynes.

**Chair**

Chairman's initials

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02/03/2022

Tree policy – the Chair would respond to a questionnaire on tree policy received from WNC (suggesting the Council aligned with the national policy already set) and would copy Cllrs in.

**9/22 Traffic incidents**

To discuss recent traffic incidents and agree any action.

The Chair referred to the recent incident of a car coming off the road just before the speed limit sign on Deanshanger Road. It was not clear what had caused the accident as there were no skid marks. The incident had also been raised by a nearby resident concerned at traffic speeding into the village, prompting discussion at this meeting.

The Chair reminded Cllrs that Northamptonshire had switched off its fixed speed cameras in 2011 and relied on the 6 mobile units. Details of sites are available online. Therefore, a new fixed camera was not an option. The data from our own speed monitor demonstrated that it encouraged drivers to slow down and this was regularly sited on the Deanshanger Road. Its position, however, was too far inside the village boundary to be fully effective. Whilst local drivers were aware of the need to slow down for the parked cars and potholes, others might react only to the warning from the speed monitor. Ideally a new pole should be placed close to the speed limit sign and the Chair offered to take this forward with former Cllr Edmondson.

**Chair**

Cllr Robinson reported a couple of near accidents with dogwalkers not wearing hi vis clothing at the blind bend outside Deanshanger. A joint reminder with Deanshanger Parish Council was suggested.

**Chair**

**10/22 Asset Mapping Project**

To engage with the Northants CALC Asset Mapping Project (AMP) and to appoint an AMP Working Group.

Council had previously discussed the possibility of some activities carried out at county level being delegated to parish councils and it was thought this exercise could be a precursor. Consequently, the mapping should reflect both physical assets (as on the Asset Register) and services, such as grass cutting.

**Chair to initiate**

Cllrs Ivens and Robinson offered to work with the Chair on this project.

**11/22 Playground**

To agree further action required re playground maintenance.

The annual inspection report had been received and would be circulated to Cllrs Robinson and Spencer-Jones to review for any major concerns. In addition, they would continue formalising the process of their regular checks. It was suggested that weedkiller be used to remove excess weeds whilst carrying out sports field or streetlight maintenance.

**Cllrs Robinson and Spencer-Jones**

Cllr Howett indicated that he had more tree cutting to carry out.

**Cllr Howett**

Chairman's initials

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02/03/2022

**12/22 Village fete**

To discuss village fete in 2022.

Cllr Kime provided Cllrs with an update on progress and explained that the next committee meeting would be allocating responsibility for the various tasks. An App had been set up to monitor progress.

The Chair reported that he had received two comments about the proposed date of 25 June – why it was not the Platinum Jubilee weekend and why nothing was planned for that weekend. Cllrs’ view was that the fete’s success relied on attracting non-residents into the village and this would not be possible with so many other events taking place on Jubilee weekend. Also, the date had been deliberately chosen to fall between the end of exams and the beginning of the school holidays and when the weather was likely to be best. However, the fete did not preclude another lower key event being held on the actual Jubilee weekend.

Cllr Kime also offered to distribute the Age UK leaflet Cllrs had recently received.

**13/22 Clerk**

To note progress on appointment of new clerk and agree interim cover if necessary.

The Chair thanked the retiring clerk for her efforts and updated Cllrs on recruitment of her successor. The only applicant had now withdrawn and so the position would be readvertised.

Meanwhile he was exploring the options for interim cover.

**Chair**

**14/22 Future meeting dates**

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

**15/22 Items for the next meeting**

The following were put forward:

- fallen tree on the road to Deanshanger on Jonathan Gurney’s land; and
- plans for Jubilee weekend (noting that if a road closure were envisaged this needed to be applied for three months in advance).

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

**Chairman’s Signature**

**Date**

Chairman’s initials

02/03/2022

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