

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 13th January 2020 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, R J Dykstra, D W England, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, Mrs M H Harlock, J A Parker, P S Potts, Mrs J E Tavener, Mrs S J Wilcox and G C M Willis.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillor T V Rogers

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs C Evans, R A Payne and Mrs A R Wyatt and District Councillor G J Bull.

180/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman commenced the meeting by wishing fellow members a Happy New Year.

The Chairman also informed Members of the recent death of former Councillor G B Joseph who had been a Member of the Council from June 2017 to July 2018.

Members stood in silence as a mark of respect in remembrance of former Councillor Joseph.

181/19 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Potts, the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to a correction in the list of apologies with regard to the initials of Councillor Mrs Wilcox to read 'Councillor Mrs S J Wilcox'.

182/19 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared by Members in respect of items appearing on the agenda.

183/19 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the meeting held on 9th December 2019:-

(a) Bellway Notice

Further to Minute No. 161/19(c), the Clerk reported that he had heard nothing further from Bellway Homes with regard to the placing of a notice on the Weir railings advertising their development south of Farriers Way and under the circumstances it was assumed that the company did not intend to proceed.

(b) Bollard at Jubilee Clock Tower

Further to Minute No. 161/19(e), the Clerk reported that the welder from Somersham had undertaken the repair of the fixing plate for the bollard missing from the Jubilee Clock Tower which had enabled it to be installed.

(c) 66 High Street

Further to Minute No. 161/19(f), the Clerk reported that further information had yet to be received from Conservation Officers at the District Council about action to be taken in the case of 66 High Street.

(d) Replacement Parish Centre

Further to Minute No. 161/19(g), the Chairman reported that the working party established to investigate the replacement of the Parish Centre would be visiting the new Coneygear Centre in Huntingdon and also meeting again later in the week.

(Councillor Green arrived at the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

(e) Adams Lyons Playground – Play Equipment/Sleeper Replacement

Further to Minute No. 165/19, the Clerk reported that Wicksteed Leisure had advised that the new play equipment would be available for installation at Adams Lyons playground in the week commencing 23rd March. A quotation was expected shortly from Dyers of Warboys for the replacement of the sleepers and removal of the sensory garden but the company had confirmed that they would be able to undertake the work in time for the installation of the play equipment. The Clerk reported that the quotation would be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

(f) Parish Centre Energy Costs

Further to Minute No. 171/19, the Clerk reported that, subsequent to the last meeting, he had been able to negotiate a more competitive rate for gas and electricity for the Parish Centre with the existing supplier E.ON than those offered by a price comparison company and earlier by E.ON themselves. As a result the Clerk advised that the price had been accepted for a new contract period of three years.

(g) Annual Parish Meeting

Further to Minute No. 174/19, Members were informed that a reply had yet to be received from Shailesh Vara MP in response to the invitation for him to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 22nd April 2020. In the event of the Member of Parliament being unavailable, it was agreed that Ms S French of the County Council be invited to speak on the subject of climate change.

184/19 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th December 2019 be received.

185/19 POLICE REPORT

Attention was drawn to the information on crimes recorded in the Parish which were contained in the weekly update provided by the Police and forwarded by the Clerk to Members.

The Clerk advised that Councillor Green had drawn attention recently to graffiti in the Jubilee Clock Tower shelter. This had been removed by the Handymen and the walls repainted where necessary.

Members' attention was also drawn to an invitation from the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner to comment on the setting of the precept for the Police Authority for 2020/21. In his covering remarks, the Commissioner had indicated that an additional 50 police officers had been recruited in Cambridgeshire as a result of the above average increase in the precept for 2019/20, that police officer numbers were at record levels in Cambridgeshire and that a further 62 officers would be employed in the forthcoming year as a result of the Government's announcement of an additional 20,000 new officers nationwide.

While acknowledging the reference by the Commissioner to the growing complexity of crimes such as child sex exploitation, modern day slavery and drug dealing that had to be dealt with by the Police, Members were of the opinion that the growth in police numbers was not evident in the rural parts of the County where less support was provided than previously. Short staffing in neighbourhood policing teams had meant that local liaison meetings were no longer held and assistance had been withdrawn for events such as Remembrance Sunday parades. Moreover crimes such as burglary, criminal damage, minor thefts appeared to be regarded as low priority and seldom investigated.

RESOLVED

that the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner be advised of the Parish Council's concerns as described above.

186/19 DAMAGE TO SHEEPWASH

Further to Minute No. 164/19, the Clerk reported that he had been able to obtain the name of the driver, registration number of the vehicle and contact details of the insurance company from the Police arising from the incident when a vehicle had left the A141 and demolished walls at the Sheepwash. Following an approach to the insurers, the company had confirmed that they were aware of the incident and would meet the cost of repair if two estimates were submitted by the Council.

The Clerk reported that he would be meeting Dyers of Warboys on site later in the week and was trying to identify another company that could be asked to quote. Councillor

Mrs Cole confirmed that she would be able to assist with photographs showing the previous condition of the Sheepwash.

187/19 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Further to Minute Nos. 168/19, 169/19 and 170/19, Members considered a report by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) drawing attention to the recent publication by the County Council of a draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy and Action Plan on which comments were invited. Attached to the report was a list of 20 actions prepared by Friends of the Earth that could be undertaken by parish and town councils on the climate and nature emergency.

Councillor Mrs Harlock advised that she had attended a climate change event at Buckden recently and had collected various information that would be of use locally. As regular liaison meetings had been reinstated with Greener Futures recently, Members were of the opinion that this provided an opportunity to explore what actions could be taken by the Council within the community to both reduce its own carbon footprint and encourage others to do so.

Following an approach to the County Council's Estates Division for permission to install a charging point for electric vehicles in the Library car park, the Clerk reported that the request had been refused on the basis that the car park was too small to accommodate a charging point and a loss of parking space.

(Councillor Mrs Tavener arrived at the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

188/19 ALLOTMENTS – FINANCIAL RESERVE

A report by the Clerk was submitted (copies of which had been circulated) reminding Members that part of the Council's reserves was held for allotment purposes. The money had been derived from the sale of land at the Hallgate Allotments over 30 years previously for the construction of the A141 bypass and plots for housing development.

The Clerk explained that expenditure of the money was limited by statute to the discharge of the debt on the original purchase of the land for allotment purposes or the acquisition, adaptation or improvement of other land for allotments in place of that which had been sold. If the money was not required for either of those purposes, it could be used for any purpose for which capital money could be spent by the Council provided that permission had been obtained by the Secretary of State.

Members were informed that the land had been acquired for allotment purposes in 1914 at a cost of £480. A waiting list for allotments had not existed for a number of years and there had been 6 or 7 plots vacant for at least 5 years. Moreover sufficient of the land remained to enable approximately 50 additional plots to be created should demand arise in the future. As a result there is no foreseeable need to purchase other land to replace the land sold in the 1980s.

As the Council had decided to proceed with the replacement of the Parish Centre and the cost was likely to exceed the funding reserves held by the Council, it was

RESOLVED

that permission be sought from the Secretary of State for the money generated by the sale of part of Hallgate Allotments in the 1980s to be used for the replacement of the Parish Centre or other capital purposes.

189/19 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21

Following the submission of a draft calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2020/21 (copies of which had been circulated), it was

RESOLVED

that the calendar of meetings for 2020/21 be approved as submitted.

190/19 JUBILEE PARK – LINK TO BELLWAY DEVELOPMENT

Further to Minute No. 11/19 of the Leisure Areas Committee, the Clerk reported that he and Councillor Willis had been due to meet a representative of Bellway Homes earlier in the day to discuss the proposed link from their new development south of Farriers Way to Jubilee Park. However Members were informed that the latter had postponed the meeting as a result of other commitments and arrangements hopefully were being made for the meeting to be re-arranged later in the month.

As the developers had raised the level of the site to improve drainage prior to construction beginning, it was reported that the boundary between the land and Jubilee Park was now flooded and Councillor Willis and the Clerk indicated that they would address this issue also in the meeting.

191/19 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that the following item of correspondence had been received since the previous meeting and he indicated that he would arrange for it to be circulated to Members for information:-

Clerk & Councils Direct - January 2020 edition

The Chairman also drew attention to an invitation by Disability Huntingdonshire to their AGM at Godmanchester on 23rd January if any Member wished to attend.

192/19 OPEN FORUM

The Clerk reported that no matters had been raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council.

193/19 ACCOUNTS

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Tavener and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilcox, it was

RESOLVED

that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
M J Buddle	Salary – December 2019	1,064.11
W E Batterbee	Salary – December 2019	1,070.96
R Edwards	Salary – December 2019	211.20
R Reeves	Salary - December 2019	1,017.33
Mrs N Everett	Salary – December 2019	470.54
HMRC	Tax & NIC – December 2019	1,526.55
Vodafone	Mobile phone contract (Timebank) (paid by direct debit)	10.40
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	101.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	426.66
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support – December (paid by direct debit)	155.99
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	80.82
T Patel	Defibrillator agreement	25.00
Ivan Barrett	Miscellaneous supplies	165.35
ESPO	Stationery	38.46
Sutcliffe Play	Spares	75.14
Connections Bus Project	13 visits autumn term	601.00
ESPO	Cleaning materials	54.82
R Reeves	Reimbursement – printer ink cartridges	20.04
R Reeves	Petty cash	30.00
AES Europe Ltd	50% deposit for Weir dredging	13,433.95
EDGE IT Systems Ltd	Annual software maintenance	176.40
Glasdon UK Ltd	Lifebuoy rings	105.44

194/19 BUDGETARY CONTROL

The Council received the budgetary control statement and the list of Parish Centre bookings for December 2019, together with the bank reconciliation statement for the third quarter of the year, copies of which had been circulated to all Members.

195/19 THE WEIR

(The Chairman indicated that she was prepared to allow consideration of the following matter not included on the agenda, given the imminence of the proposed starting date for the work.)

Further to Minute 144/19, the Clerk reported that AES Europe Ltd had been due to commence dredging operations at The Weir earlier that day but had delayed the start until 20th January as they had been delayed by the weather on a previous contract. In supplying the information, the company also had sent what had been described as ‘the formal quotation’ for the work. Having previously accepted a quotation, the Clerk reported that, after consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Cole, he had queried several aspects of the document. A reply had been received from the company shortly before the commencement of the meeting.

Members were informed that the principal points raised had been the arrangements to discharge the water from the pond prior to the commencement of silt removal, the volume of silt to be removed, and the relocation of the remaining fish.

It had been intended to pump water from the pond through the outfall pipe but concerns were raised by Members that the condition of the outfall pipe which was thought to drain to Wilthorn was not known and that forcing water through the pipe at pressure might lead to its collapse and damage to nearby property from potential subsidence and flooding. The company had sought permission from Anglian Water for the discharge of water through the surface water sewer in High Street but a reply had not been received. Members concluded that it would be preferable if the water was pumped through the sewer system as opposed to the outfall pipe.

The company had quoted for the removal of silt to the pond’s natural basin. In the formal quotation recently received, they had indicated that they estimated that this would require the removal of 419 tonnes of silt but would charge an additional £439.20 per 15 tonne load if further silt needed to be removed to reach the natural basin. Members acknowledged the difficulty in estimating how much silt would need to be removed and agreed that once the pond had been drained and equipment was in place, it would not be practical to leave the dredging incomplete if further loads were found to be required. As the contract price had been lower than the provision made in the budget, Members were of the opinion that further silt could be removed if this was found to be necessary, provided that the budget was not exceeded.

With regard to the removal of the fish, Councillor Mrs Cole reported that she would endeavour to identify a suitable location to which they could be relocated.

Given the further investigations to be undertaken, Members had no objection to a further delay in the start date, provided that the work was commenced before the end of February.

After considerable discussion, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that AES Europe be requested to arrange for the discharge of the water from The Weir through the surface water sewer system;
- (b) that Councillor Mrs Cole be requested to try to arrange for the relocation of the remaining fish in the pond to a suitable alternative location;
- (c) that, after consultation with the Chairman, the Clerk be authorised to approve the removal of additional loads of silt from the pond in excess of 419 tonnes, provided that the financial provision in the budget was not exceeded; and
- (d) that no objection be raised to a further delay in the starting date of the works on site, provided that works commenced before the end of February.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman.