

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 12th October 2020 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J M Cole, Mrs C Evans and Mrs J E Tavener, County Councillor T V Rogers and District Councillor G J Bull.

63/20 MINUTES

Upon being moved and seconded, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of the following words at the end of the fifth paragraph of Minute No. 49/20(c) entitled 'Meeting Arrangements' – 'Councillor Green offered to assist in identifying a solution.'

64/20 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Clerk reported that Councillor England had declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 86/20 entitled 'Purchase of Land' as he farmed land adjoining the site. He had submitted an application for a dispensation to speak and vote on the matter as he had spoken to the landowner and had asked for the matter to be dealt with as an extra item at the meeting.

RESOLVED

that an application to speak but not vote be granted to Councillor England in respect of the land in question for a period of six months.

(Councillor Mrs Wilcox arrived at the meeting during discussion on the above item.)

65/20 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020:-

(a) 66 High Street

Further to Minute No. 49/20(a), the Clerk reported that no further information had been received regarding a resolution of the situation at No. 66 High Street.

(b) Damage to Sheepwash

Further to Minute No. 49/20(b), the Clerk reported that he had received a reply from the insurers of the driver who had damaged the Sheepwash in a vehicle collision. This had now been passed to assessors who were dealing with the Council's claim for reinstatement.

(c) Parish Centre – Security Arrangements

Further to Minute No. 49/20(f), the Clerk reported that Business Watch had re-set the log-on arrangements for the recently installed CCTV unit at the Parish Centre.

(d) Adams Lyons Playground – Trees

Further to Minute No. 49/20(h), the Clerk reported that Global Tree Solutions were still awaiting the outcome of an application to the District Council for consent to the cutting back of the trees in Adams Lyons playground.

Members were also informed that a complaint had been received from the occupier of a property in Farriers Way about the branch of a tree in Jubilee Park overhanging his garden and greenhouse. The branch was too large and high to be dealt with by the Handymen and could fall on the greenhouse when lopped. The Clerk reported that he had obtained a price for the lopping of the branch from Global Tree Solutions but having regard to the price quoted, Members asked for further quotations to be received.

(e) Dredging of The Weir

Arising from Minute No. 49/20(i), the Clerk reported that he had been unable to yet contact other contractors with a view to the possible dredging of The Weir.

(f) Traffic in Warboys

Further to Minute No. 52/20, Members were informed that correspondence had not been received from Community Roadwatch on behalf of Warboys Residents Against Nuisance Traffic until after the despatch of the agenda. This would therefore be brought to the attention of the Council at its next meeting.

(g) Village of the Year Signs

Arising from Minute No. 54/20, the Clerk reported that the County Council had suggested that the Village of the Year signs in Ramsey Road be relocated in the verge near the junction with Jubilee Avenue as the verge adjacent to Wiggs Close was thought to be too narrow.

Members had no objection to the suggestion which would be incorporated in the implementation of the Local Highway Improvement scheme approved for the current year.

66/20 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14th September 2020 be received.

67/20 POLICE REPORT

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

68/20 A141 SPEED REDUCTION MEASURES

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Chatteris Town Council to the County Council requesting the installation of average speed cameras on the A141, particularly between Chatteris and Warboys. The Town Council had drawn attention to the excessive speed of motorists using the A141 and the number of accidents that had occurred, including one recently that had involved the death of a Warboys resident.

Members concurred with the sentiments expressed by the Town Council and it was

RESOLVED

that the request for average speed cameras on the A141 between Warboys and Chatteris be supported.

69/20 LAY-BY AT ST MARY'S GREEN

A report by the Clerk was submitted (copies of which had been circulated) following the receipt of correspondence from Community Roadwatch (CRW) regarding the lay-by at St Mary's Green. The footway alongside Ramsey Road terminated at both ends of the lay-by used by residents of St Mary's Green for parking and this required pedestrians to walk across the lay-by itself.

During the course of monitoring traffic speeds in Ramsey Road, CRW had noticed that the white line denoting the edge of the carriageway adjacent to the lay-by had faded and that some vehicles approached close to or over the white line. CRW considered this posed an unacceptable risk to pedestrians crossing the lay-by and had asked the County Council to re-mark the carriageway marking. At the same time, they had recommended that the Parish Council install a footway around the lay-by.

The Clerk reported that he had been notified by the County Council that the carriageway markings in Church Road and Ramsey Road would be renewed early in November. Members were informed that if a footway was to be installed, this would require barriers to prevent pedestrians from taking the shortest route across the lay-by. The Clerk also pointed out that the Parish Council was not the highway authority and could not incur expenditure in installing a footway other than by the use of its section 137 powers.

RESOLVED

that the report be received and no further action taken.

(Councillors England and Payne arrived at the meeting during the discussion on the above matter.)

70/20 FOOTPATH LINK TO THE FURROWS DEVELOPMENT

Further to Minute No. 49/20(d), the Clerk reported on a further meeting on site with representatives of Bellway Homes with regard to the proposed footpath link between their development at the Furrows and Jubilee Park.

Members were reminded that Councillor Willis and the Clerk had agreed on a route at a previous meeting on site with Bellway and had specifically requested that the footpath avoid passing through Jubilee Park where the community orchard had been planted and play equipment installed. However Bellway had built a footpath to their site boundary at the precise location to which the Council had objected.

The Clerk reported that at the subsequent site meeting the Site Manager had stated that it would not be possible to construct a footpath on the route previously agreed. The reason given was that this would have required the installation of steps to negotiate the slope that had been created at the edge of the open space on the estate. However he had agreed to deviate the line of the existing path slightly to link with a new path inside the estate boundary fence to the location previously agreed. Bellway would then create an opening in the fence line and construct a new path inside Jubilee Park to link with the existing path in the park.

The Clerk suggested that the compromise solution offered the best that could be achieved and it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the amended route of the footpath agreed.

71/20 OUTFALL DITCH FROM THE FURROWS DEVELOPMENT

Further to Minute No. 228/19, the Clerk reported on action being taken by the County Council to address the drainage from the Furrows development into the ditch at the rear of Madecroft. Following complaints from residents that the watercourse had been in danger of overflowing on a number of occasions since the development had commenced, the County Council had commissioned a survey of the culvert between the properties in Madecroft and the junction with the sewer in Mill Green. This had established that the culvert was blocked and, as the watercourse was in riparian ownership, the County Council had notified the owner of the need to undertake work to clear the obstruction.

On a related matter, the Clerk reported that he had drawn the County Council's attention to the effects of a heavy rainstorm in Warboys in August. A complaint had been received from a resident in Fenton Road that their house had almost been flooded and Councillor Payne had drawn attention to flooding in the road outside 1 New Road. The County Council's Flood Risk Officer had replied that the incidents had not been reported to them by the residents affected who would need to do so using the County Council's website. The Clerk and Councillor Payne advised that they had passed the information to the relevant residents.

72/20 JUBILEE CLOCK REPAIR

Further to Minute No. 56/20, the Clerk reported on the outcome of his enquiries with Smith of Derby as to the advisability of undertaking further repairs to the Jubilee Clock. The company were currently repairing a part that had failed in one of the clock faces and Members had enquired whether it would be cost-effective to repair the similar part in the other three faces if they were also likely to fail in the future.

The Clerk reported that Smith of Derby had indicated that it was impossible to predict if or when the individual parts in the other three faces would require repair and they had suggested that there was no benefit in undertaking any repairs prior to this becoming necessary.

Members were also informed that the installation of the part that had been repaired would be undertaken on 23rd October.

Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

that no further action be taken at the present time.

73/20 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY ARRANGEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 58/20, the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the arrangements for the forthcoming Remembrance Sunday in November following liaison with the Warboys Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Rector.

It had been acknowledged at the previous meeting that the usual service at the war memorial and subsequent parade to the church would not be feasible without a risk of breaching the current Covid-19 restrictions on gatherings. The morning service at the Parish Church would therefore now incorporate the Remembrance Sunday service and would incorporate the laying of wreaths on the altar. The Council's wreath would be laid by the Chairman and all wreaths would be transferred to the war memorial later in the day. Given the restriction on the number of persons who could be accommodated in the church to meet social distancing requirements, Members were asked to notify the Clerk by the end of the week if they wished to attend.

Members were also informed that the service would be attended by a Deputy Lieutenant and by a representative from RAF Wyton who would lay a wreath at the memorial to the Pathfinder Force in the church.

74/20 CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

The Clerk reported on information provided by the Christmas Lighting Group with regard to the arrangements for the Christmas lighting display in the village. Because of the restriction on gatherings, an organised switch-on event could not be held but the lights would be lit from 28th November to 5th January inclusive from 4.00 p.m. to midnight daily.

Arrangements had been made to obtain an unmetered supply certificate from UK Power Networks and Balfour Beatty had been asked to check a number of lighting columns

where the timers had failed to operate and switch on the Christmas light attachments in 2019. The Lighting Group had managed to obtain sponsorship for the Christmas tree from village organisations and businesses but had asked the Council fund the cost of engaging a contractor to erect and dismantle the lighting display again. As this had been met by the Council for a number of years and provision had been made in the budget, it was

RESOLVED

that the cost of erecting and dismantling the display by an external company be again funded by the Council in 2020.

75/20 REMOTE ACCESS TO MEETINGS

Further to Minute No. 49/20(c), the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the feasibility of permitting remote access to face-to-face meetings of the Council in the Parish Centre.

The Clerk advised that recent amendments to the Regulations permitting meetings to be held remotely had required the meeting link to be displayed on the agenda to enable members of the public to attend the meeting and speak where appropriate. Members were reminded that they had indicated a preference for face-to-face meetings when this had become practicable under the Government's Covid-19 guidance. However two Members had indicated that they were unable to attend face to face meetings for personal reasons. Conversely if the Council began to hold meetings remotely, a different Member would be unable to attend unless she joined another Member at home which might not be possible if further restrictions were introduced.

If meetings were to be held at the Parish Centre with remote access, the Clerk reported that the Members attending remotely had to be able to hear and be heard and preferably see and be seen. The same applied to members of the public. Due to the absence of a BT connection to the building, this would require the installation of mobile broadband at a cost of £40 per month plus the purchase of audio and visual aids.

Various views were expressed by Members as to the appropriate method for holding meetings during the current pandemic but, after a vote had been taken, it was agreed that the cost of installing a telephone connection and facilities to enable remote access to meetings held in the Parish Centre be investigated.

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to obtain information on the feasibility and cost of allowing remote access to meetings held at the Parish Centre.

76/20 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

A report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) on the need for the Council's website to be compliant with the accessibility regulations introduced by the Government in 2018. The deadline for compliance was 23rd September 2020.

The Clerk reported that the person who maintained the Council's website had undertaken the necessary changes to ensure compliance and had supplied a report indicating that all pages met the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines. An

Accessibility Statement had to be approved by the Council and a draft had been attached to the report now submitted which had been prepared using the Government's template and approved by the website provider.

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the Accessibility Statement attached to the report now submitted be approved.

77/20 PAVEMENT PARKING

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) following the issue of a consultation paper by the Government on parking on pavements. Members were informed that complaints were often received from local residents about the obstruction of pavements by parked vehicles which presented problems for pedestrians with mobility difficulties and those with pushchairs. In addition, the parking of vehicles on grass verges resulted in verges being damaged, making them appear both unsightly and more difficult to maintain.

The report summarised the current legislation which meant that action could be taken only when the pavement adjoined a road with no waiting restrictions or a vehicle was causing an obstruction or had been parked dangerously. The Government had suggested three options, the first being a retention of the status quo but with a simplification of the order making process for no waiting restrictions to reduce cost and time. The second option would allow local authorities to issue fines for an unnecessary obstruction of the pavement which would be difficult to quantify. The third option would be an extension of the London-wide prohibition of pavement parking throughout England except where local authorities defined exemptions which would require highway markings and traffic signs.

A number of Members drew attention to the extent of the problem in Warboys which created difficulty for pedestrians and users of mobility scooters and resulted in grass verges appearing unsightly. However it was suggested that enforcement would be dependent on the presence of Police or relevant enforcement officers which was unlikely to occur in Warboys. It was therefore

RESOLVED

- (a) that a response be not submitted to the consultation paper; and
- (b) that the Clerk be requested to draft an article for Facebook and the Warboys Diary drawing attention to the problems caused by pavement parking and asking drivers to be considerate when parking their vehicles.

78/20 INTEREST RATES

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated), following the receipt of notifications from National Savings and Investments (NS&I) and Cambridge and Counties Bank of a reduction in interest rates. Most of the Council's reserves had been invested in NS&I income bonds where the interest rate would fall from 1.16% to 0.01% in November. The remainder was deposited with Cambridge and Counties Bank where the interest rate had been reduced recently to 1.25% from 1.5%. The Clerk

reported that this was likely to result in a loss of interest of approximately £450 per month.

Members were reminded that the Council's Investment Strategy required investments to have regard to security, liquidity and yield in descending order of importance. The rate of interest on most secure investments had fallen in recent months and continued to fall which meant that it was difficult to identify alternative investment opportunities which were both secure and offered a higher interest rate for savers. The Clerk indicated that he would continue to look for suitable alternatives and would report back to a future meeting if these could be identified.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

79/20 DISPLAY BOARDS

Arising from a suggestion made at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council, the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the names of the Clerks of the Council being added to the display boards located in the Parish Centre. The Council's minute books were only available from 1935 but during that time, the Council had only employed five people as Clerks. Members were of the opinion that the names of those Clerks who could be identified from the records should be added to the display board with the names of the Chairman and it was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to make the necessary arrangements.

80/20 POP-UP BISTRO

Members considered a report from the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) following the receipt of a request to locate a pop-up bistro in Warboys on one evening each month. Members drew attention to the fact that mobile food outlets were sometimes located at the Royal Oak and Sports and Social Club car parks with the latter's consent and it was suggested that it would be inappropriate to permit use of the Parish Centre car park in such circumstances.

RESOLVED

that the owner of the pop-up bistro be advised to contact the proprietors of the licensed venues in Warboys.

81/20 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE

(Councillor England declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in the following matter as he was a trustee of the Warboys Sports Field and a member of the Sports Field Committee and Warboys Cricket Club. He had previously been granted a dispensation to speak but not vote on matters affecting those bodies.)

Further to Minute No. 49/20(g), a report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) regarding the proposed replacement of the Parish Centre. The

working party had met the Architects again since the previous meeting of the Council and amended plans had been circulated to Members for informal discussion at a Zoom meeting on 8th October. The Clerk and Councillor Green had apprised the Architect of the outcome of the discussion at that meeting on the following day. A pre-application enquiry had been submitted to the District Council following agreement by the working party.

The Clerk reminded Members that extensive discussions with the Sports Field Committee and sports clubs in 2015/16 had resulted in decisions on their part that they were not interested in a joint development. Under the circumstances, the Council had decided to proceed with the replacement of the Parish Centre alone. However Councillor England reported that most of the membership of those organisations had changed since that time and he was of the opinion that the pre-application enquiry should have incorporated a larger development including sports facilities which could have been reduced, if necessary, at a later date.

Councillor Payne stressed that the pre-application enquiry would not commit the Council to the plans submitted and was intended only to establish the principle of development and what further information might be required by the Planning Department when an application for planning permission was submitted. The Clerk pointed out that the District Council had offered to contribute a grant of £200,000 from their Community Infrastructure Levy income but would not enter into a firm commitment to do so until a pre-application enquiry had been submitted. As the offer had been made some time previously, the Clerk expressed concern that this might be withdrawn if the District Council could not be satisfied that progress was being made with the scheme.

As the pre-application had been submitted, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the Architects requested to inform the Planners that there was a possibility that the scheme could incorporate facilities for the sports clubs and a revised site plan submitted showing the potential footprint of a larger development.

82/20 OPEN FORUM

The Clerk reported on the issues raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council. A member of the public had suggested that the names of Clerks of the Council be added to the display boards in the Parish Centre which had been dealt with under Minute No. 79/20 above. Attention had been drawn to flooding at 1 New Road in August which had been referred to in Minute No. 71/20 above.

A member of the public had drawn attention to the fact that gullies in the High Street were blocked at various locations. The Clerk reported that he had been informed by the County Council's Local Highways Officer that routine gully emptying had ceased as a cost cutting measure and that, although some work was still undertaken, none was scheduled in Warboys. However he had offered to inspect any gullies that were reported as blocked and Members were asked to notify the Clerk by the end of the week if they were aware of any particular problems.

Councillor Mrs Wyatt had reported that she had been informed by a family that they had visited Jubilee Park to pick fruit from the community orchard but had discovered that all of the fruit had been collected.

83/20 ACCOUNTS

Upon being moved by Councillor Payne and seconded by Councillor Potts, it was

RESOLVED

(a) that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
M J Buddle	Salary – September 2020	1,092.12
W E Batterbee	Salary – September 2020	1,090.52
R Edwards	Salary – September 2020	172.80
R Reeves	Salary - September 2020	1,045.18
Mrs N Everett	Salary – September 2020	569.30
HMRC	Tax & NIC – September 2020	1,477.04
G Hansell	Half year Internal Auditor's fee	50.00
R Martin	Half year Clockwinder's honorarium	125.00
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Disposable gloves	13.00
M J Buddle	Reimbursement – Plasterboard fixings	2.99
Vodafone	Mobile phone contract (Timebank) (paid by direct debit)	10.66
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	65.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	19.61
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support – August (paid by direct debit)	175.67
Chess ICT Ltd	Office 365	13.68
Chess ICT Ltd	Credit note for Office 365	-16.51
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	69.73

Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply September	3.88
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply September	3.31
Royal British Legion	Poppy wreath	40.00
ESPO	Light bulbs	51.48
ESPO	Disinfectant	33.24
Tibbett Architectural Services	Professional fees – Parish Centre replacement	2,740.00
Ms N Hughes	Refund of allotment deposit (plot 43)	25.00
Information Commissioner’s Office	Annual registration fee (paid by direct debit)	35.00
Ivan Barrett Ltd.	Repairs to van	474.72
CGM Group	Grass cutting	204.00
ESPO	Disposable gloves	13.50

(b) that payment of the following accounts due before the date of the meeting be endorsed:-

Cambridge Water Business	Water and sewerage rates – Parish Centre	316.74
Cambridge Water Business	Water rates – Hallgate Allotments	57.99

84/20 BUDGETARY CONTROL

The Council received the budgetary control statement and the list of Parish Centre bookings for September, copies of which had been circulated to all Members.

(The Chairman reported that she had agreed to the following items for discussion at the meeting subsequent to the despatch of the agenda as it had been reported that the land in question was due to be offered for sale in the near future.)

85/20 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item, on the grounds that it contained information relating to the potential sale price of land.

86/20 PURCHASE OF LAND

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) following a request by Councillor England that the Council consider the purchase of land which he had been advised would be offered for sale by auction shortly.

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the owner of the land to ascertain his intentions and that the report submitted had incorporated the information received.

After he had spoken, Councillor England left the meeting and took no further part in the discussion.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that consideration of the matter be deferred until the next meeting and the Clerk requested to obtain an estimate of the value of the site from a land agent prior to the meeting.

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

Chairman.