

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held remotely on 11th January 2021.

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 and G C M Willis

IN ATTENDANCE

District Councillor G J Bull.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs C Evans, R A Payne, Mrs J E Tavener and Mrs A R Wyatt.

138/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman wished those attending a Happy New Year and extended a hope that 2021 would see an early return to normality from the restrictions imposed to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

139/20 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Mrs Harlock, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

(Councillor England logged into the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

140/20 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor England declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 156/20 entitled 'Purchase of Land' as he farmed land adjacent to the site in question. He also declared non-statutory disclosable interests in Minute No. 149/20 entitled 'Sports Holiday Club Proposal' as he was a trustee of the Warboys Sports Field and Chairman of the Sports Field Committee and in Minute No. 151/20 entitled 'IDB Draft Byelaws' as he was a member of the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board'. He had received dispensations previously to speak but not vote on matters affecting those items.

141/20 MATTERS ARISING

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

(a) Damage to Sheepwash

Further to Minute No. 114/20(a), the Clerk reported that details of the damage caused to the Sheepwash in a traffic accident had been submitted to the assessors of the motorist's insurance company.

(b) Dredging of The Weir

Further to Minute No. 114/20(c), the Clerk reported that no further progress had been made with regard to the potential dredging of The Weir.

(c) 66 High Street

Further to Minute No. 114/20(e), the Clerk reported that the owner of 66 High Street had expressed concern over delays in progressing his plans for the renovation of the property. District Councillor Bull added that he had also been contacted by the owner for his help in expediting the matter and that he was liaising with officers of the Conservation Team about the measures that they required to the listed building.

Members were informed that one of the issues was the Conservation Team's insistence on the return of the shop fittings which the owner felt detracted from his ability to make the renovation financially viable. Having regard to the length of time that the building had remained empty in the centre of the High Street, the view of Members was that it was preferable for the building to be refurbished rather than insist on the return of the shop fittings if this resulted in the refurbishment work not being undertaken.

(d) Community Infrastructure Levy

Further to Minute No. 114/20(i), the Clerk reported that the District Council had requested the submission of further information in support of the applications for funding from their CIL strategic allocation towards the purchase of land and drainage equipment at the Sports Field. The information had been submitted by the Clerk in respect of the former application and by Councillor England in respect of the latter.

(e) Warboys Residents Against Noisy Traffic (RANT)

Further to Minute No. 121/20, the Clerk reported on the enquiries that he had made in respect of the matters raised at the last meeting of the RANT working party. Responses had been received from A F Blakemore & Son regarding the SPAR store, from the Police regarding the deployment of noise monitoring equipment, from the Police's Speedwatch Co-ordinator about the training of new volunteers, and from County Council Highway Officers regarding the procedure for weight limits and 20 mph zones.

Members were advised that the next meeting of the working party was scheduled to be held on 18th January and that a report on the discussions would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council.

(f) Community Roadwatch

Further to Minute No. 122/20, the Clerk reported on further correspondence from Community Roadwatch UK, expressing their continued concern over highway safety in Fenton Road and Ramsey Road.

As requested at the previous meeting, the Clerk confirmed that he had written an article to be published in the next edition of the Warboys Diary explaining the actions taken by the Parish Council in respect of highways in the village in recent years.

With regard to the situation in Mahaddie Way, Members were informed that the County Council's Development Management Engineer had acknowledged the Parish Council's concern that future complaints about speeding would be directed to the Parish to address once the estate highways had been adopted. He had therefore undertaken to approach David Wilson Homes to ask if they would fund traffic calming measures at the estate to highway standards.

The Clerk reported that he had yet to receive a reply from another of the County Council's Highway Officers regarding the condition of the single track length of Puddock Road north of the Ramsey Hollow junction.

(g) Traffic Speeds on A141

Further to Minute No. 123/20, the Clerk reported that he had been in touch with the Clerk of Chatteris Town Council regarding the response received from the County Council over traffic speeds on the A141 between Chatteris and Warboys. The County Council's view was that the risk of accidents was lower on this stretch of highway than others in Cambridgeshire and it was therefore not considered a priority for safety measures to be implemented. The Clerk explained that neither he nor the Town Clerk at Chatteris could suggest ways of pressing the County Council to reconsider their position but they would continue to monitor the situation.

Councillor England mentioned that there had been another fatality as a result of a traffic accident earlier that day with the incident happening north of Chatteris.

(h) Litter Bins – Mahaddie Way

Further to Minute No. 124/20, Members were informed that Councillor England had been able to obtain two litter bins from the District Council that were surplus to their requirements and which were suitable for installation in Mahaddie Way. As the open spaces on the estate were in private ownership, the Clerk reported that he would need to obtain permission for the installation of the bins from either the developer or the management company if the open spaces had been transferred.

142/20 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

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

143/20 POLICE REPORT

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

144/20 REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

District Councillor Bull advised that, due to the pandemic restrictions, the Council's One Leisure facilities again had had to be closed. Some funding had been obtained from Government to help local shops in St Neots and he hoped that similar assistance could be obtained for Ramsey.

Members were informed that the Boundary Commission was embarking on a review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries which would result in the creation of an additional 3 constituencies in the Eastern Region. As North West Cambs was currently one of the largest constituencies, it was expected that the review would result boundary changes locally.

Councillor Bull referred to the flooding that had taken place in the days prior to Christmas when properties in the neighbouring village of Broughton had been badly affected. As a result of the calls for assistance, the District Council was reviewing its response to such incidents but Councillor Bull warned that there was a very limited supply of sandbags available. Councillor Mrs Cole reported that it had come to her attention that some properties in the new development at The Furrows in Warboys had been affected by flooding but no further details were available.

(Councillor Bull then left the meeting.)

145/20 PANDEMIC

Following the recent surge in the number of people being tested positive for the Covid-19 virus and the further restrictions announced by the Government, the Clerk reported that the Parish Centre had had to be closed again for use. Although the Day Centre had been permitted to continue to hire the Parish Centre during the second lockdown starting in November as an exempt activity, they also had decided not to meet until the situation improved.

To avoid close contact, the Handymen had been asked to work alternate weeks so that only one of them was at work at any one time. They were currently using holidays that would otherwise be lost at the end of March but the situation would be kept under review. The playgrounds remained open with the Handymen disinfecting the equipment weekly.

Meetings of the Council would need to continue to be held remotely. The Clerk explained that the Regulations permitting on-line meetings expired on 7th May and would need to be extended if the pandemic restrictions remained in force. It was not clear how this would affect the requirement for an Annual Parish Meeting to be held annually between 1st March and 1st June but the Clerk explained that further information might become available in the coming weeks.

Councillor Ms Gifford reported that Warboys Unites continued to play an active role in supporting vulnerable people in the community and that the committee were due to meet later that week. In terms of the vaccination programme against the virus, several Members mentioned that they knew of Warboys residents over the age of 80 who had received invitations recently to be vaccinated at St Ives.

146/20 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE

Further to Minute No. 114/20(h), a copy of the response of the District Council's Planning Services Division to the pre-application enquiry for the replacement of the Parish Centre had been circulated to all Members. This had been considered by the working party and their views were reported to Members.

The Clerk highlighted the various issues raised in the response, many of which dealt with standard information and reports which would need to accompany a full application for planning permission. Specific comments had drawn attention to a suggested raising of the roof height to accommodate badminton, an alteration to the roof line and front elevation to provide a more attractive external aspect, internal reconfigurations and the loss of the tennis court.

Several Members expressed support for the design of the main hall to facilitate the playing of sports such as badminton and carpet bowls and the working party had acknowledged the need to address the location and size of kitchen and toilet accommodation to meet the needs of users.

Members were informed that the working party would be meeting the Architects shortly and that amended plans would be circulated in due course for further comment.

147/20 BELLWAY HOMES

Further to Minute No. 125/20, the Clerk reported that Bellway had commenced the construction of the footpath link from their development at The Furrows through Jubilee Park. However the path had been sited so close to one of the items of play equipment that it was probable that it would fail the annual safety inspection because of its proximity to a hard surface in the case of falls. The Clerk indicated that he had spoken to one of the site supervisors who had agreed to relocate the play equipment but no further work appeared to have been undertaken since prior to the Christmas break.

Members also drew attention to the fact that the grassed open space provided by Bellway on the boundary with Jubilee Park had flooded during the heavy rainfall prior to Christmas and had remained under water after New Year.

The Clerk reported that the County Council's Sustainable Drainage team had advised that Bellway were unwilling to make a financial contribution towards the clearance of the culvert in the watercourse draining the development where it had collapsed before joining the main sewer in Mill Green. The County Council would therefore be requesting the riparian owners of the watercourse to pay for the whole cost of repair. As the survey undertaken of the watercourse had suggested that there might be a further collapse in Mill Green, the Clerk reported that he had requested information from the County Council as to which organisation was responsible for repairing that part of the network.

Members were informed that concerns had been raised by residents of Madecroft about the level of water in the watercourse after the heavy rainfall prior to Christmas but although the level had reached the top of the bank, water had now overflowed into gardens.

148/20 NAMING OF STREETS

Further to Minute No. 131/20, Members discussed possible names for the development to be constructed at the rear of 21 Ramsey Road for submission to a future developer. Councillors Mrs Harlock and Mrs Cole both reported that they had researched old maps of the area and ownership records and suggested the names of West End Close and Strode Lane respectively. Following discussion and a vote had been taken, it was

RESOLVED

that the name proposed for the development be West End Close and the future developers invited to consider adopting this as the name of the estate road.

149/20 SPORTS HOLIDAY CLUB PROPOSAL

Further to Minute No. 114/20(f), the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) following further investigation into the idea of a sports holiday club being provided in Warboys for one week during a school holiday period.

Members were informed that a reply had been received from the Warboys Primary Academy confirming that the school could be made available as the venue, provided that the caretaker was available. However the charge for use would be £450 for a week's hire based on it being used for 7 hours per day. No objection was raised to the cost by Members but the Clerk indicated that he would liaise again with the Sports Field Committee and Sports and Social Club about the potential use of the sports field.

Although the District Council's Active Lifestyles team also had expressed an interest in organising the programme, the Clerk reported that it had been difficult to discuss the matter with them as they had been furloughed during the second national lockdown and then furloughed again after the Christmas/New Year holiday period. In view of the current pandemic infection rates, the Clerk suggested that it was looking increasingly unlikely that it would be possible to provide a holiday club before the summer holidays but that he would report back when he had undertaken further investigations.

(Councillor Parker declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in the above matter as the Chair of the Governing Body of the school but had received a dispensation previously to speak but not vote on matters affecting the school. Having declared a similar interest in view of his involvement with the Sports Field, Councillor England left the meeting for the duration of the discussion on the item.)

150/20 GREENER FUTURES

The Clerk reported that a liaison meeting with Greener Futures representatives had not taken place since February and that the organisation had written to ask what progress had been made by the Council with the issues that had been raised at that time.

The Clerk indicated that he would arrange another meeting with the organisation's representatives to be held remotely. However as Councillors Mrs Tavener and Mrs Wyatt who had been two of the Council's four representatives at the liaison meetings were unable to attend meetings currently, Councillor Green offered to attend the meetings in addition to Councillors Mrs Evans and Mrs Harlock.

151/20 WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

The Clerk reported that notification had been received that draft byelaws had been advertised by the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board for comment.

RESOLVED

that no comments be raised in respect of the draft byelaws.

152/20 OPEN FORUM

Members noted that no matters had been raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council.

153/20 ACCOUNTS

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

RESOLVED

that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
M J Buddle	Salary – December 2020	1,140.18
W E Batterbee	Salary – December 2020	137.58
R Edwards	Salary – December 2020	158.40
R Reeves	Salary - December 2020	1,045.58
Mrs N Everett	Salary – December 2020	569.30
HMRC	Tax & NIC – December 2020	1,513.24
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39
R Reeves	Mileage claim	31.50
Vodafone	Mobile phone contract (Timebank) (paid by direct debit)	10.06
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	65.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	135.14
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support – December (paid by direct debit)	157.67

Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	76.82
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity Supply - November	5.67
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity Supply - November	5.15
EDGE IT Systems Ltd.	Planning system software charge	181.20
Warboys Community Association	Grant for Warboys Diary production	200.00
Citizens Advice Rural Cambs	Grant for operating costs	100.00
The Open Spaces Society	Grant towards campaign to protect open spaces	50.00
T Patel	Defibrillator agreement	25.00
A Notman	Website maintenance for 2019 and 2020	543.46
Arthur Ibbett Ltd.	Parts for mower repair	84.96

154/20 BUDGETARY CONTROL

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

155/20 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 costs of potentially acquiring land.

156/20 PURCHASE OF LAND

Further to Minute No. 110/20, the Clerk submitted a further report (copies of which had been circulated) on investigations into the purchase of land adjacent to the A141.

Members were informed that the County Council's Highways Officers had explained that they could no longer provide advice on a possible diversion of public footpath 6 to access the land as they needed to retain impartiality to assess any formal application for its diversion. The officers had recommended that the Parish Council obtain a road safety audit of the existing route of the footpath and the possible alternatives. It was also suggested that the Council obtain legal advice on their duty of care responsibilities and a draft brief for both purposes was attached to the report submitted.

While the costs of obtaining the advice were not available, the Clerk reported that he had been notified by the County Council's Asset Information Definitive Map Officer that the cost of a footpath diversion order would be £3,650 to £3,850 plus VAT.

Members acknowledged the necessity of obtaining professional advice to assess the Council's potential liability and also requested that advice be sought from the Council's insurers.

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be authorised to obtain the necessary advice.

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

Chairman.