

# WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held remotely on 8th February 2021.

## **PRESENT**

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman

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

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

District Councillor G J Bull.

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mrs J E Tavener and County Councillor T V Rogers.

## **157/20 MINUTES**

Upon being moved by Councillor Dykstra and seconded by Councillor Mrs Evans, the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

## **158/20 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor England declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute No. 170/20 entitled 'Sports Holiday Club Proposal' as he was a trustee of the Warboys Sports Field and Chairman of the Sports Field Committee.

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

## **159/20 MATTERS ARISING**

The Council considered the following matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021:-

### **(a) 66 High Street**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(c), District Councillor Bull reported that he had met the owner of 66 High Street on site recently and had viewed the extent of the site and the condition of the existing buildings. He had also spoken to the Planning Officers dealing with the case and the relevant portfolio holder at the District Council and had apprised them of the Parish Council's wish for the situation to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion after the building had stood empty for so many years.

Members took the opportunity to thank Councillor Bull for his efforts in trying to resolve the situation.

**(b) Community Infrastructure Levy**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(d), the Clerk reported that the District Council were likely to announce the outcome of the applications for CIL funding towards the purchase of land and for drainage equipment at the Sports Field before the end of the month.

**(c) Mahaddie Way Traffic**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(f), the Clerk informed Members that he had received a further complaint from a resident of the Mahaddie Way development expressing concern over the excessive speed of traffic on the estate roads. Councillor Green reported that he was aware of similar complaints and had directed the complainants to the Officer at the County Council who was dealing with the matter. As a reply had not been received following an approach by the County Council to David Wilson Homes to ask if they would fund traffic calming measures at the estate to highway standards, the Clerk reported that he would seek an update on the situation.

**(d) Puddock Road**

Also in relation to Minute No. 141/20(f), the Clerk reported on enquiries into the condition of the single track length of Puddock Road north of the Ramsey Hollow junction. A reply had been received from a County Council Road Safety Engineer to indicate that the authority had started to undertake some accident investigation work with the Police but this had been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

The Clerk also advised Members that he had extended an apology to Ramsey Town Council for inadvertently raising enquiries with the County Council without realising that this stretch of Puddock Road was located in Ramsey. The Town Clerk had replied to confirm that the Town Council had also raised concerns about the frequency of recent fatal accidents and had been advised that the single-track section had been moved from an annual safety inspection to every three months to pick up any major defects in a timely manner. In addition to routine maintenance works, improvement works had been undertaken by the County Council in early 2019 including signs indicating road narrows ahead, additional water hazard signs, passing place signs, cutting back the vegetation on the western verge to highlight the passing places and haunching at various locations. This had all occurred at the same time as the southern section of Puddock Road towards Warboys had been reconstructed. As a result, the temporary advisory speed signs due to uneven road surface had been removed.

**(e) Traffic Speeds on A141**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(g), Councillor England mentioned that there had been another serious collision earlier that day on the A141 south of Chatteris that had resulted in the road being blocked and traffic diverted around local roads.

**(f) Litter Bins – Mahaddie Way**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(h), Members were informed that a reply had yet to be received from David Wilson Homes to the proposed installation of two

litter bins at the Mahaddie Way development to address the problem of dog fouling of the open spaces.

**(g) Purchase of Land**

Further to Minute No. 156/20, the Chairman announced that a special meeting of the Council would be held on 25th February to consider the potential purchase of land adjoining the A141.

**160/20 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th January 2021 be received.

**161/20 RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE**

As Chairman of the Rights of Way Committee, Councillor Potts provided an update on the situation relating to the bridleways in the Parish following the meeting of the Committee held on 25th February. He advised that he had walked the bridleways since the meeting and had taken photographs at various points that showed bridleways 15 and 16 being virtually impassable for horse riders and pedestrians. The photographs were shown at the meeting and Members were informed that these had been forwarded to the County Council's Rights of Way team for their attention.

The Clerk also reported that he and Councillor Potts would be meeting an officer from the County Farms Estate later in the week to discuss the possible linking up of bridleways 17 and 18.

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Rights of Way Committee held on 25th January 2021 be received.

**162/20 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.

Members were informed that youngsters had been gathering in the Parish Centre car park again for the first time since the March lockdown. As a result the Police had been informed of the possible breach of lockdown restrictions.

**163/20 REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

District Councillor Bull reported that staff at the District Council were still working from home while the pandemic restrictions were in place which meant that it was taking longer than normal to carry out routine activities. In reply to concerns expressed by Councillor Payne regarding the time being taken to determine planning applications,

Councillor Bull referred to the difficulty in recruiting trained officers but advised that he would investigate the situation.

(Councillor Bull then left the meeting.)

### **164/20 TRAFFIC WORKING PARTY**

The report of the meeting of the Traffic (formerly RANT) Working Party held on 18th January 2021 (copies of which had been circulated) was noted.

### **165/20 LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT (LHI) PROGRAMME**

Further to Minute No. 35/20(k), the Clerk reported that he had received an invitation from the County Council to attend a Panel meeting on 24th February to speak in support of the Parish Council's application under the LHI programme for 2021/22 for further traffic calming measures in Ramsey Road. A 500 word presentation also had to be submitted prior to the meeting.

Members were reminded that the County Council had approved a 40 mph buffer zone and village gateway signs in the current year's programme in order to slow the traffic entering the village and enable a further bid to be made for physical measures in the carriageway. Following a meeting on site with a Highways Officer in July, the Clerk reminded Members that the bid for funding had comprised a traffic island, narrowing point and speed cushions between the entrance to the 30 mph zone and the first bend in Ramsey Road.

However the Clerk reported that the feasibility study now received from the County Council provided for two red high friction surfacing strips, one between the 30 mph signs and the bend and the other between the bend and the junction with Humberdale Way. The estimated cost was £8,310. The Clerk reported that he had asked the officers to reconsider the study's recommendations which differed fundamentally from the application and what had been discussed on site with a Highway Officer.

### **166/20 PUDDOCK HILL**

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from a member of the public for a footway to be provided in the verge on Puddock Hill resulting from the increase in the number of people using the route to access the fen bridleways and Fenside Road and as part of a circular walk using public footpath 7. Members were informed that the only route out of the village on foot using a metalled footpath along Church Road had proved extremely popular during the pandemic lockdown as people walked and ran for exercise and that a footpath on Puddock Hill would provide another safe route out of the village into the countryside.

Members were informed that the Clerk had made enquiries with the Local Highways Officer and had been informed that even a footpath with a non-metalled surface would be costly as this would have to be constructed to County Council standard.

Members drew attention to the encroachment of the hedges on both sides of the carriageway on Puddock Hill which meant that visibility was obscured and made it difficult for pedestrians to step on to the verge to avoid oncoming traffic. Several Members also commented on the poor condition of many footways in the village itself

which had been flooded in the recent wet weather and felt that the cost of a new footway on Puddock Hill could not be justified.

### **167/20 DAMAGE TO SHEEPWASH**

Further to Minute No. 141/20(a), the Clerk reported that he had received an offer of settlement of the Council's claim for damage to the Sheepwash caused by a vehicle collision in December 2019. The loss adjuster acting for the driver's insurers had offered a sum of £2,600 having viewed photographs of the damage supplied by the Clerk. As the lowest quote obtained for the repair had been £2,700 plus VAT, the Clerk recommended acceptance of the offer.

Councillor Mrs Cole offered to supply historical information to help with the renovation of the structure and it was

### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the offer from the loss adjuster of £2,600 be accepted; and
- (b) that the Clerk be requested to liaise with Councillor Mrs Cole with regard to the works to be undertaken to repair the Sheepwash.

### **168/20 BELLWAY HOMES**

Further to Minute No. 147/20, the Clerk reported that he and Councillor Willis had met representatives of Bellway Homes on site with regard to the provision of a footpath link from their development at The Furrows through Jubilee Park. The path had now been constructed and was in use but had been located too close to one of the items of play equipment. Members were informed that the suppliers of the play equipment had confirmed that a clearance of two metres was required around the equipment to meet safety standards. As a result Bellway had agreed to relocate the equipment at a location considered acceptable at the site meeting.

The Clerk reported that concerns had been raised at the meeting that the surface material used in the construction of the footpath would not be hard wearing and likely to be deteriorate rapidly. The Bellway representatives had therefore agreed to review the specification for the path.

Bellway were also reviewing the situation with regard to the flooding of the open space on the estate adjoining Jubilee Park which had been under water for several weeks.

The Clerk reported that the County Council's Sustainable Drainage team were pursuing the repair of the culvert downstream which carried surface water from the estate. The watercourse was in riparian ownership where the culvert had collapsed but a further collapse had been identified where the outfall ran under Mill Green which was also being investigated by the County Council.

### **169/20 SOIL IMPROVER**

Members were reminded that the Allotments Committee had agreed to a request by the Allotments Association to apply for a grant for the distribution of soil improver again to allotment tenants. The Clerk reported that Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd had

agreed to a grant of £360 which should be sufficient to arrange for a delivery of soil improver

## **RESOLVED**

that the Trust be thanked for the offer of grant and the Clerk requested to make the necessary arrangements for the delivery of the material.

## **170/20 SPORTS HOLIDAY CLUB PROPOSAL**

Further to Minute No. 149/20, the Clerk reported that he had been unable to progress the proposal for a holiday sports club in Warboys as staff at the District Council were still furloughed. However the pandemic restrictions meant that it was unlikely that this could take place before the summer holiday period.

The Clerk reported that he had applied to Whittome Wind Trust for assistance towards the cost of the venture and a grant had been approved of 50% of the cost of the scheme, subject to a maximum of £1,000.

## **RESOLVED**

that the Trust be thanked for their offer of grant and the Clerk requested to pursue his investigations into the possibility of the scheme proceeding.

## **171/0 PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT ZOOM MEETINGS**

Councillor Potts referred to a number of occasions at recent meetings held remotely which had been 'attended' by members of the public who had kept their screens blank. A number of Members expressed the view that they would prefer to see who was attending the meeting rather than having screens kept blank.

The Clerk pointed out that there was no requirement for members of the public to be seen visually and that the legislation provided for means of access to meetings by voice only. Councillor Green also mentioned, as a frequent user of virtual meetings, that the available technology and broadband sometimes prevented the display of visual images.

Under the circumstances, it was accepted that no further action should be taken on the matter.

## **172/20 LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANT**

The Clerk reminded Members that grants had previously been received of £10,000 and £1,334 under the Government's relief package because the Parish Centre had had to be closed during the national lockdown measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a result of the restrictions in place since December, the Clerk reported that the availability of further grants had been announced. An application had been submitted to the District Council who were administering the system and a further four grants had been paid totalling £7,278.

## **173/20 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE**

Further to Minute No. 146/20, the Chairman reported that the Parish Centre Replacement Working Party had met the architects acting on behalf of the Council to discuss the response to the pre-application enquiry that had been received from the District Council's Planning Division. The architects had also been made aware of the comments of Members at their previous meeting.

Members were informed that the architects would now be modifying the design and would be supplying revised plans for consideration by the Council.

## **174/20 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Clerk submitted a request from the Service by Emergency Response Volunteers Suffolk and Cambridgeshire (SERV), an organisation for volunteers to assist in transporting essential supplies for the NHS, Air Ambulance, hospices, pharmacies and donor banks.

Members' attention also was drawn to letters of thanks for financial assistance by the Council from the Community Association for the production of the Warboys Diary, Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, and the Warboys Christmas Lighting Group for the erection and dismantling of the festive lighting in the village over the Christmas period.

### **RESOLVED**

that a grant of £100 be made to the Service by Emergency Response Volunteers Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

## **175/20 OPEN FORUM**

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

## **176/20 ACCOUNTS**

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Harlock and seconded by Councillor England, it was

### **RESOLVED**

that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
M J Buddle	Salary – January 2021	1,044.26
W E Batterbee	Salary – January 2021	1,043.66
R Edwards	Salary – January 2021	120.00
R Reeves	Salary - January 2021	1,045.58

Mrs N Everett	Salary – January 2021	569.30
HMRC	Tax & NIC – January 2021	1,422.83
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39.
R Reeves	Reimbursement – printer cartridges	28.49
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)	194.05
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support – January (paid by direct debit)	157.67
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	104.02
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply November	5.72
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply November	5.15
ESPO	Miscellaneous supplies	167.64
Ramsey Builders Merchants Ltd	Timber	45.12
J H Chandler	Refund of allotment deposit	20.00
Balfour Beatty Living Places	Street lighting maintenance	144.90
R Reeves	Reimbursement for DVLA tax for van	265.00

### **177/20 BUDGETARY CONTROL**

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

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

Chairman.