

THE PARISH OF WARBOYS

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** for the **Parish of Warboys** held on 19th April 2023 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman of the Parish Council in the Chair.

Nine Members and the Clerk of the Parish Council
Nine members of the public.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Parker, P S Potts and Mrs A R Wyatt, together with Ms A Murphy.

MINUTES

Upon being moved and seconded, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th April 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th April 2022.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A copy of the Chairman's report on activities in the Parish over the past year had been appended to the agenda which had been circulated and the Chairman thanked those people who were present for attending the meeting.

The Chairman referred to changes in membership of the Parish Council following the election in May 2022, when 12 councillors had stood for re-election. Councillor A Ntuk had also been elected for the first time and Councillors D Fabb and Ms M Morrow had subsequently been co-opted to fill the remaining two vacancies. Former Councillor S Green had resigned in January and Councillor J Land had been co-opted to replace him.

New ward councillors, Councillors Ms C Lowe and Mrs A Costello, had been elected at the District Council elections in May 2022 and the Chairman expressed her appreciation to them and to County Councillor S Corney for their help and support over the previous year.

The Chairman referred to the impact of events relating to the Royal Family during the year with the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, followed by her death in September. A book of condolence at the SPAR had been signed by over 450 people and another book organised by the Church. Oak trees and new hedging had been planted at

Onyetts Field and registered as part of Queen's Green Canopy in memory of the Queen. The Proclamation of the accession of King Charles had been read by the Chairman in Warboys as part of national proclamation process and arrangements made to commemorate the coronation of the King in May with a Coronation Fete and Big Help Out organised by Community Association. A commemorative seat was being funded by a local businessman and civic services were being held at the Parish Church and Baptist Chapel.

The Chairman drew attention to the efforts made by the Council to highlight activities in the village with regular articles in the Warboys Diary and Ramsey and District Informer. The Council's website was maintained and updated by a webmaster who happened to be the chairman of a neighbouring parish council. The Chairman also gave particular thanks to Councillors Ms L Gifford and Mrs C Sproats for maintaining the Council's Facebook account which reached many people quickly with news and information.

It was reported that the Council had adopted a strategy and draft action plan to address the impact of Climate Change with explanatory information published on the Council's website. A working party involving interested members of the public was being led by Councillor Mrs Sproats who updated those present at the meeting about the recycling poster which had been included in the latest edition of the Warboys Diary and a questionnaire that had been launched inviting residents to highlight their concerns about the environment and climate change and to suggest actions that should be taken in village.

The Chairman reported that little progress had been made with regard to the former Newmans Stores at 66 High Street which had stood empty now for over 25 years. A new owner had tried unsuccessfully to obtain planning permission to refurbish the building as flats and the derelict bakehouse on site as a dwelling, together with the development of two semi-detached houses. The property had now been sold again, although the land at the rear of the site had been retained by the previous owner for possible development.

The Chairman advised that planning permission had been obtained for the replacement of the Parish Centre on the car park behind the existing building. Former Councillor R Payne who had remained on the working party dealing with the project explained that tenders would be invited shortly. Following a number of questions about the design and funding of the new building by those present, it was explained that it had been designed to be as flexible as possible and that a replacement was required urgently for the existing building which was beyond economic repair and now too small to accommodate the needs of the village.

Turning to the Landfill Site, the Chairman reported that restoration work on the landfill site itself still had not been finally completed. An application for the external crushing of waste at the materials recycling facility had been recommended for refusal by the Parish Council and was still to be determined. The planning permission for a combined heat and power plant and waste water treatment plant on site had lapsed in 2022 but an application had been made for a thermal treatment plant at site to incinerate 87,000 tonnes of municipal waste annually. Following a special meeting of the Council's Planning Committee, the application had been recommended for refusal.

The Chairman reported that the controversial planning application submitted by the Longhurst Group for 48 affordable homes on land owned by the District Council in

Station Road had still to be determined. Another special meeting of the Planning Committee had taken place in February to consider revised plans but the application had again been recommended for refusal. The Council had engaged specialist planning advice to advise on the application and a local residents group were actively campaigning against the proposed development.

Turning to the question of transport, the Chairman referred to the decision by Stagecoach last autumn to withdraw various bus routes, including all those through Warboys. Although funding had been guaranteed by the Combined Authority until the end of March to enable the routes to be operated by other bus companies, no further information was available about future subsidy levels although a review of bus transport throughout County and Peterborough was currently being undertaken. However, the Chairman pointed out that, although the bus services through the village offered the only option for some passengers, usage was low.

Complaints continued to be received from time to time about the volume and speed of traffic through village. The Chairman reported that the Council had bid successfully for various small-scale schemes in recent years to try to slow traffic through the County Council's Local Highway Improvement programme. The previous year's scheme to improve safety on the crossing of the A141 to access Onyetts Field had still to be implemented and the current year's bid for the introduction of a 40 mph buffer zone when entering the village in Station Road had yet to be determined by County Council. The condition of the highways locally continued to deteriorate with many potholes and subsidence due to the hot summer of 2022 but it was explained that the County Council had insufficient funding to undertake extensive repairs. The Chairman reported that the local Speedwatch team continued to provide a valuable role in monitoring traffic speeds but more volunteers were needed to enable monitoring sessions to be undertaken more frequently.

The Chairman reported that the Council had funded a very successful sports holiday club again for two weeks in August at the Primary Academy the with help of a grant from the Whittome Wind Trust. This had been extremely popular with parents and children but it was understood that an external company contracted to the school would be offering its own range of holiday provision in the current year. Under the circumstances, the Council had decided not to take any further action to provide any holiday activities this year but would review the situation again in 2024.

The Chairman expressed her appreciation to Warboys Unites and the Community Association for their actions during the pandemic and subsequently in helping those in need in the community. Although Warboys Unites had closed in 2022, food was still being collected locally in association with Ramsey Foodbank for delivery to households in Warboys. The Association had introduced a street market in the High Street on Feast Sunday in 2022 when the road had been closed awaiting the arrival of the funfair attractions. The Association had organised a litter pick in the village to be undertaken later in April and the Fete at the sports field on 1st May and a 'Big Help Out' volunteering event at the Royal Oak on 8th May in connection with the King's coronation.

Attention was drawn to the need for more volunteers to become involved in the community, with numbers having fallen during the pandemic. Nevertheless, the first Christmas Lights switch-on for 3 years in November had attracted the largest attendance

to date and the annual Fireworks Display earlier in the month continued to be very successful raising money for local clubs.

The Chairman thanked the employees of the Council for their work over the previous year, while mentioning that an additional member of staff would be starting in August in the newly created role of Assistant Clerk. She ended by thanking all in the community for their support for the Council and local services over the previous 12 months.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Clerk presented the provisional financial statement for the Parish Council for 2022/23, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

As at the preparation of the report, the Clerk reported that the balances were -

Earmarked reserves	£692,940
General Fund	£ 99,795

with the earmarked reserves comprising –

Landfill site fees	£ 12,694
Replacement Parish Centre	£205,000
Capital receipts allocated to replacement Parish Centre	£105,039
CIL	£366,207
Vehicle Replacement	£ 4,000

The Clerk pointed out that income from Community Infrastructure Levy receipts had amounted to £59,334 in 2021/22 which had been the last payment for the major housing developments in the village at Mahaddie Way and the Bellway development south of Farriers Way. Receipts had fallen to £838 in 2022/23 and were unlikely to increase again significantly until such time as some of the other developments in the Local Plan came forward

Grants had been obtained towards the holiday sports club, replacement play equipment and delivery of soil improver for allotment tenants. A successful claim had been made under the Council's insurance policy to cover the cost of damage to a street light and feeder column at the Clock Tower junction. Due to rising interest rates, substantially more income had been received in 2022/23 from investments than in recent years.

With no major changes in expenditure in 2022/23, the Clerk reported that an estimated surplus had been achieved in the year of £35,066.

With the growth of the village, the Clerk reported that the Council Tax Base continued to increase which provided additional revenue. Having regard to the major scheme to replace the Parish Centre, the Parish Council had decided to increase the council tax precept by 5% for 2023/24 to £89.96 for a Band D property which still remained one of the lowest for the larger towns and parishes in Huntingdonshire.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Questions had been raised and dealt with in the minute dealing with the Chairman's report, as a result of which no other business was raised by those attending.

NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and informed everyone that the next Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 17th April 2024.

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

Chairman.