

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 14th March 2022 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman.

Councillors D W England, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, J A Parker, Mrs C L Sproats and Mrs A R Wyatt.

IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillor S J Corney
District Councillor M W Haines.
District Councillor G J Bull.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J M Cole, R J Dykstra, Mrs M H Harlock, R A Payne, P S Potts, Mrs S J Wilcox and G C M Willis.

192/21 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Ms Gifford, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

193/21 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

194/21 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the meeting held on 14th February 2022:-

(a) 66 High Street

Further to Minute No. 170/21(a), the Clerk reported that the owner of 66 High Street had requested a meeting on site with planning and conservation officers of the District Council to discuss the future of the building but no further information had been received.

(b) Bellway Homes

Further to Minute No 170/21(b), the Clerk reported that no further progress had been made with regard to the work promised by Bellway Homes to improve the surface of the path that they had installed at Jubilee Park and install a kissing gate between the park and their adjoining development.

(c) Bridleways

Further to Minute No. 170/21(c), the Clerk reported that he had e-mailed the County Council's Principal Rural Surveyor again to try to progress the proposed creation of a permissive bridleway to link bridleways 17 and 18.

(d) Speedwatch Signs

Further to Minute No. 170/21(d), the Clerk reported that he was still awaiting an estimate of cost from the County Council's local Highways Officer for the installation of Speedwatch signs at the entrances to the village as requested in a PFHI application by the Parish Council.

(e) Playground Safety Reports

Arising from Minute No. 170/21(e), the Clerk reported that he was meeting Wicksteed Leisure's Installation Manager on site on 23rd March to agree the location of the replacement play equipment at Jubilee Park prior to its installation in the week commencing 28th March.

(f) Shelter Near Jubilee Clock Tower

Further to Minute No. 170/21(f), Members were informed that Councillor Mrs Wilcox had supplied extracts from the Land Registry entries in respect of the land on which the shelter adjacent to the Jubilee Clock Tower was located. The documents had confirmed that the land had been conveyed to the Post Office (now BT) in 1971, including the buildings erected thereon with the shelter shown on the plan attached to the conveyance. The only restriction was a right of way in favour of the vendor to adjoining land which he then owned.

The Clerk reported that Councillor Mrs Wilcox's colleagues at Greenwoods Solicitors would be reviewing the documents and advising on their implications for the shelter.

(g) Parish Centre – Water Consumption

Further to Minute No. 170/21(g), Councillor Green drew attention to a firm he was aware of that specialised in the detection of water leaks who might be able to assist in trying to establish the cause of the excessive water consumption at the Parish Centre. The cost of undertaking up to 4 separate tests to establish the location of a potential leak was estimated to be between £800 and £1,000. As the next invoice for water consumption was due later in the month and the impact of certain repairs undertaken internally to fix a leak would then be known, Members agreed to review the matter again at the next meeting.

(h) Replacement Parish Centre

Arising from Minute No. 170/21(h), District Councillor Haines undertook to make enquiries as to progress by the District Council's planning officers in considering the application for planning permission for the replacement Parish Centre.

(i) Repairs to Lighting Column

Further to Minute No. 170/21(l), the Clerk reported that the Council's insurers had approved the cost of the additional work to replace a timer in the electricity feeder column at the Jubilee Clock Tower junction, following a road vehicle collision in November. Balfour Beatty had been asked to proceed with the work but it was not known whether this had yet been undertaken.

Following yet another vehicle collision at the junction in the week prior to the meeting, the Clerk reported that he had again sought confirmation from the local Highways Officer as to when the white lining around the Clock Tower would be renewed. The officer had confirmed that an order had been placed with the County Council's contractors but the work was weather dependant and it was not known when it would be undertaken. It was reported that a further collision had taken place on the day after the Highway Officer's reply.

(j) Felling of Tree in Conservation Area

Further to Minute No. 170/21(m), the Clerk reported that one of the District Council's Planning Enforcement Officers was obtaining statements and liaising with the Police with regard to the felling of a tree in the garden of 32 High Street in December without the necessary permission as the tree had been situated in the conservation area.

(k) Onyett's Field

Further to Minute No. 170/21(n), Members were informed that the working party would be meeting shortly to consider the report received from the local Wildlife Trust regarding the future management of Onyett's Field.

(l) Environmental Strategy

Further to Minute No. 170/21(o), Councillor Mrs Sproats reported that she hoped that the working party would be able to submit a report to the Council's meeting in May with regard to the preparation of an environmental strategy and action plan.

(m) Proposed Development off Station Road

Further to Minute No. 173/21, the Clerk reported that District Councillor Haines had supplied a briefing note prepared by the Council's Housing Officer dealing with the proposed sale of land in Station Road to a housing association for the development of affordable housing. Councillor Haines had posted the paper on the Station Road Facebook site and the Clerk advised that he had sent a copy to Cheffins who were acting on the Parish Council's behalf.

It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted towards the end of March.

(n) Local Highway Improvement Scheme

Further to Minute No. 178/21, the Chairman reported that she had attended an on-line meeting of the County Council panel considering applications for Local Highway Improvement funding in 2022/23 to present the Parish Council's application for improvements to the footpath crossing of the A141 to access Onyett's Field. A decision on the bids was likely to be known later in the spring.

(o) Connections Bus Project

Arising from Minute No. 181/21, the Clerk reported that Councillor Ms Gifford had drawn attention to posts on the village Facebook site concerning an issue that had arisen during the visit by the Connections Bus to Warboys on the previous Friday. These had been referred to the Manager of the Project who had replied to advise that the staff had not witnessed any problems either on the bus or in the car park. He had supplied a response to post on the Facebook account in reply to the comments by parents and Councillor Ms Gifford reported that a number of parents had posted their thanks for the speedy response and reassurance.

(p) Holiday Sports Club

Further to Minute No. 183/21, Members noted that information was awaited from the Primary Academy which had been promised at Easter regarding the availability of dates for a proposed holiday sports club at the school over the summer holidays.

(q) Mahaddie Way – Additional Bins

Further to Minute No. 185/21, the Clerk reported that he and the Handymen had met Councillor Green on site and had agreed upon locations for two additional bins to be provided on phase II of the development. The developer had agreed to contribute towards the cost and the bins would be installed by the Handymen and emptied on a weekly basis as part of their normal round of the village.

(r) First Aid Training

Further to Minute No. 186/21, the Clerk reported that the company providing the Emergency First Aid at Work course on 22nd March which it was hoped the Handymen could attend had advised that too few people had registered to make the course viable. However, the company subsequently had agreed to continue with the course at a reduced cost for the hire of the Parish Centre which would be cost effective for the Council compared with registering the Handymen on an alternative course.

195/21 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14th February 2022 be received.

196/21 REPORT BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Corney reported on the amount of staff shortages at the County Council currently with many staff leaving and a consequential lack of continuity if pursuing enquiries or ongoing issues.

District Councillor Bull advised that he would not be standing for re-election as a ward councillor for Warboys at the election to be held on 5th May and that this would be the last meeting of the Parish Council that he would be attending. The Chairman thanked Councillor Bull for his service on behalf of the community during his time in office and in reply he extended his best wishes to Members for the future.

District Councillor Haines reported that he had arranged to meet Shailesh Vara MP on site in Warboys to discuss the proposed Station Road development and other issues but due to last minute delays, only a short meeting had been possible and it was hoped that a longer meeting could be arranged in the near future. Members also were informed that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending a Speedwatch session in the village on 28th March.

(Councillors Corney and Bull then submitted their apologies and left the meeting.)

197/21 POLICE REPORT

The Clerk reported that the new Neighbourhood Police Sergeant for St Ives and Ramsey who had hoped to attend the meeting had already been transferred elsewhere.

Reference was made to a recent on-line questionnaire issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner asking residents' views on the priorities for local policing. The survey initially had omitted several parishes in Huntingdonshire which had meant that it had not been possible for it to be completed in respect of Warboys until amendments had been made. However, an analysis of the survey results and an on-line meeting subsequently hosted by the Police had resulted in priorities being established which had included speeding and drug dealing across the District.

198/21 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION

The Chairman reported that Mrs C Evans had resigned from the Parish Council earlier in the day due to work commitments and had extended her best wishes to Members of the Council.

Members were reminded that the next election for the Parish Council would be held on 5th May 2022 and that the term of office of current Members would end four days after that date unless they were re-elected.

199/21 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Members considered a recommendation from the District Council for town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire to adopt a new model code of conduct published by the Local Government Association which had been prepared in consultation with other local government groups. Copies had been circulated to Members of a report by the Monitoring Officer explaining the changes, together with the Parish Council's existing code and the new model code.

Although the District Council hoped to achieve consistency in the code adopted by the town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire, the Clerk reported that the model code had not been adopted by the County Council.

As a meeting of the Cambridgeshire Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks was to be held shortly, consideration of the adoption of the new code was deferred pending information as to what other town and parish councils planned to do.

200/21 COVID-19 – PARISH CENTRE CAPACITY

The Clerk reported that special conditions had been applied to the hire of the Parish Centre once it could be re-opened after the lockdowns announced by the Government. The conditions had been updated many times as Government directions and guidance had changed since the first lockdown in March 2020 and had followed advice provided by Action for Rural Communities in England (ACRE) which represented the village hall sector.

The latest iteration of the special conditions which accorded with advice from Cambridgeshire ACRE had been circulated by the Clerk and Members were invited to decide whether the capacity limits introduced during the pandemic to help with social distancing should be retained.

Although the advice was intended to help keep vulnerable users of the premises safe from Covid, Members suggested that attendance should be a matter for personal discretion on the part of the public and that there was no further need for capacity limitations due to a reduction in daily case numbers, the success of the vaccination programme and the fact that other venues locally had no limits on attendance.

Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

that the capacity limits on the use of the Parish Centre introduced during the pandemic be withdrawn.

201/21 GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN

Members were informed that the Great British Spring Clean 2022 organised by Keep Britain Tidy would take place between 25th March and 10th April. This had been

organised in recent years by the Timebank Co-ordinator who was no longer employed by the Council.

Councillor Mrs Wyatt advised that she would raise the subject at a meeting of the Community Association later in the week and would liaise with the Clerk subsequently.

202/21 BROADBAND INSTALLATION IN WARBOYS

The Clerk reported on an approach from Gigaclear who were proposing to install high speed broadband throughout the village and who had offered to host a meeting with Members to explain their proposals. The company had advised that their plans were not dependent on seeking expressions of interest from residents before proceeding and that the meeting was intended to make the Council aware of their plans.

As the Council had agreed not to meet County Broadband when they were seeking the support of the Council in writing to residents in Warboys in 2021 to obtain expressions of interest before proceeding with their broadband proposal, Members decided not to arrange a meeting with Gigaclear.

203/21 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Members considered an invitation from the Boundary Commission for England to comment in the second round of consultation on their review of Parliamentary boundaries which, if implemented as proposed, would transfer the Parish of Warboys from the North-West Cambridgeshire constituency to the Huntingdon constituency. Members had raised no objection to the proposal in the first round of consultation and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council's position remains unchanged and no objection submitted.

204/21 QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Further to Minute No. 179/21, Councillor Mrs Sproats advised Members that the working party were of the opinion that as the sports field was more central, it might be preferable if the beacon was lit there rather than at Adams Lyons playground on 2nd June. Councillor England explained that he had no objection to the suggestion but would seek the views of the sports field committee at their meeting later in the week. The Clerk also reported that he had been approached by the Rector who had offered to host a service of celebration of the Queen's reign on that evening which could be followed by the beacon lighting at the church.

Councillor Mrs Sproats reported that the Wildlife Trust had offered advice on the choice of tree for planting at Onyett's Field in the autumn as part of the Queen's Green Canopy scheme and that enquiries would be made as to the costs involved as the year progressed.

The Clerk advised that the Community Association planned to include a single page flyer in the next edition of the Diary, listing the events that would be taking place over the course

of the Jubilee weekend and they had asked if the Council would meet 50% of the cost which was expected to amount to £160.60.

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to agreement with the Rector, a service of celebration of the Queen's Jubilee be held at the Church on the evening of 2nd June, followed by the beacon lighting;
- (b) that enquiries be made into the cost of purchasing and planting a tree to commemorate the Jubilee at Onyett's Field in the next planting season; and
- (c) that half of the cost of printing the Diary flyer of Jubilee events be met by the Council.

205/21 JUBILEE PARK – FENCING OF PLAY EQUIPMENT

The Clerk submitted a request from a member of the public for the area around the play equipment in Jubilee Park to be fenced in order to exclude dogs from that area and avoid the risk of children being infected by dog faeces left on the ground. Members were reminded that due to the length of time that had elapsed before the land had been transferred by the developer to Parish Council ownership, it had been used extensively by dog owners. Following the installation of the play equipment, the Council had attempted to make an order to exclude dogs from the park but due to a subsequent change in legislation, dog control orders could no longer be made by town and parish councils.

Jubilee Park had been included by the District Council in a composite order for the whole of Huntingdonshire requiring owners to pick up after their pets but the member of the public had pointed out that this did not prevent faecal waste being left in the grass and from dogs being exercised where small children were using the play equipment.

Before deciding whether to fence the area containing the play equipment, the Clerk was requested to obtain quotations for the cost of the fencing required and to enquire whether the District Council would extend the order to exclude dogs if the play area was fenced off.

206/21 DISTRICT COUNCIL ENFORCEMENT

Members' attention was drawn to an approach from the District Council's local Community Protection and Enforcement Officer explaining his role in dealing with various environmental issues including fly-tipping, litter, abandoned vehicles, anti-social behaviour and dogs.

207/21 NATIONAL PAY INCREASE

The Clerk reported that agreement had finally been reached on the salary award for local government employees for 2021/22 which was a flat rate increase of 1.75% effective from 1st April 2021. Negotiations on the pay award for 2022/23 had yet to commence.

208/21 NATIONAL INSURANCE INCREASE

The Clerk drew attention to the Government's decision to increase National Insurance contributions by 1.25% for both employers and employees for the financial year 2022/23 which would be replaced by a special levy from 6th April 2023 of an equivalent amount. HMRC had asked employers to include a message on the pay slips of employees affected by the national insurance increase which read '1.25% uplift in NICs funds NHS, health & social care'. No objection was raised by Members.

209/21 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk reported that Mr G Hansell had acted as the Council's Internal Auditor for many years since the audit arrangements for local councils had changed and the District Audit service had been replaced by lighter touch arrangements. Members were informed that Mr Hansell had advised that he no longer wished to undertake the role but that his wife had offered to continue to act in that capacity.

RESOLVED

that arrangements be made for Mrs I Hansell to act as the Council's Internal Auditor and her husband thanked for his years of service for the Council.

210/21 COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT 2022/23

Further to Minute No. 144/21, the Clerk reported the receipt of confirmation from the District Council that the Band D Council Tax charge for the parish precept for 2022/23 would be £85.68, generating a precept of £136,745 for that year.

211/21 CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Members decided not to accept an invitation from CAPALC for the Council to become a member of the Association at a cost of £857.41 in 2022/23.

212/21 OPEN FORUM

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

213/21 ACCOUNTS

Upon being moved by Councillor Ms Gifford and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wyatt, it was

RESOLVED

(a) that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
W E Batterbee	Salary – February 2022	1,244.70
D A Warwick	Salary – February 2022	1,201.68
R Edwards	Salary – February 2022	276.80
R Reeves	Salary - February 2022	1,228.38
M J Buddle	Backdated salary for 2021	117.70
Mrs N Everett	Backdated salary for 2021	40.20
HMRC	Tax & NIC – February 2022	1,653.83
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Ink cartridges	30.99
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Queen’s Jubilee flag	9.95
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Portable PA	210.48
R Reeves	Mileage claim	26.55
Vodafone	Mobile phone contract (paid by direct debit)	10.28
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	78.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	479.82
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support + 365 licence (paid by direct debit)	33.88
Chess ICT Ltd	IT broadband and back-up service (paid by direct debit)	54.83
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	81.20
Allstar	Admin. charge (paid by direct debit)	5.02
Allstar	Monthly card fee (paid by direct debit)	1.80
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply (February)	5.45

Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply (February)	4.81
ESPO	Miscellaneous supplies	216.84
ESPO	Paper	19.74
Ramsey Builders Merchants Ltd	Postcrete	30.00
Xerox UK Ltd	Photocopying charges	23.75
Ivan Barrett Ltd	Miscellaneous supplies	90.20
Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd	Street lighting maintenance contract 2022 – quarter 1	144.90
E-Vehicle Training	First aid course for Handymen	100.00
(b) that payment of the following invoices required to be made before the meeting be endorsed:-		
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Attendance at Climate Change summit	54.00
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214/21 BUDGETARY CONTROL

The Council received the budgetary control statement for February 2022 together with the list of Parish Centre bookings for that month, copies of which had been circulated to all Members.

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

Chairman.