

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 26th September 2022 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman.

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, R J Dykstra, D W England, D R A Fabb, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, Ms M L Morrow, J A Parker, Mrs C L Sproats, G C M Willis and Mrs A R Wyatt.

District Councillor Ms C A Lowe

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors P S Potts and Mrs S J Wilcox, County Councillor S C Corney and District Councillor Mrs A E Costello.

78/22 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members stood for a minute's silence as a token of respect in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who had passed away earlier in the month.

The Chairman also reported that Mr M Tew who had represented the Warboys electoral division on the County Council for a number of years had died in July.

79/22 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Ms Morrow and seconded by Councillor Ms Gifford, the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th August 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

80/22 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor England declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute Nos 87/22 (Water Levels and Ponds) and 88/22 (Onyetts Field) as he leased land adjoining Onyetts Field. He had previously received a dispensation from the Council to speak but not vote on matters affecting the land.

81/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the meeting held on 8th August 2022:-

(a) **66 High Street**

Further to Minute No. 67/22(a), District Councillor Ms Lowe reported that she and District Councillor Mrs Costello would be meeting the owner of 66 High Street shortly. Members were informed that there was no news as to when the planning application for the refurbishment of the premises would be considered by the District Council.

(b) Bellway Homes

Further to Minute No. 67/22(b), the Clerk reported that Bellway Homes finally had installed a kissing gate and replaced the surface of the footpath that they had laid in Jubilee Park with a resin bonded material. After some four years of having dealt with the company requesting that the work be undertaken, the Clerk suggested that the matter could now be closed.

(c) Bridleways

Further to Minute No. 67/22(c), the Clerk reported that he had been unable to ascertain whether the Principal Rural Surveyor at the County Council who had been dealing with the proposed creation of a permissive bridleway to link bridleways 17 and 18 had been replaced after his departure from the Council's employment.

(d) Repairs to Lighting Column

Further to Minute No. 67/22(d), the Clerk reported that the Council's insurers had reimbursed the Council with the cost of repairing the lighting column at the Jubilee Clock Tower which had been damaged in a vehicle collision. The reimbursement had excluded the excess payable under the policy and the insurers were pursuing recovery of the cost in full from the driver's insurers. If successful, the excess under the policy would be repaid to the Council.

(Councillor Fabb arrived in the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

(e) Felling of Tree in Conservation Area

Further to Minute No. 67/22(e), the Clerk reported that no further information had been received from the District Council regarding the action to be taken following the unauthorised felling of a tree in the garden of 32 High Street.

(f) Holiday Sports Club

Further to Minute No. 67/22(f), the Clerk reported that excellent feedback had been received from the parents of children who had attended the sports holiday club funded by the Council at the Primary Academy for two weeks in August. Income of £1,162.50 had been received from Finding Fitness arising from the £5 charge per day made for attendance. Whittome Wind Trust had kindly agreed to offer a grant of 50% towards the cost net of VAT, as a result of which the cost to the Council of funding the club was £1,318.75.

It was reported that the school would be engaging an external company to undertake their out-of-school care for children with effect from January and that the company advertised that they offered play schemes during school holidays. As Chair of the

Governing Body, Councillor Parker advised that no further information was available as to the company's future intentions in this respect at Warboys and that it was unlikely that any plans would emerge until January at the earliest.

Any decision as to whether the Council would continue to fund a scheme in 2023 would be dependent on the setting of the budget for that year and liaison with the school as to the availability of accommodation.

(g) Parish Centre – Water Supply

Further to Minute No. 67/22(g), the Clerk reported that Source for Business had obtained reimbursement from Anglian Water of the excess sewerage charges incurred arising from the water leak detected in the supply to the Parish Centre. A credit note had been issued for £1,119.96.

Members were informed that the County Council had been asked to reimburse the Council with the cost of the excess water charges incurred as the leak had been located under the Library car park, together with reimbursement of the cost of engaging The Leak Specialists to identify the precise location. The Clerk reported that the County Council had agreed to reimburse the Parish Council with the sum of £1,675 and an invoice had been sent requesting payment.

Members were informed that part of the reimbursement would be passed to the Underfives Playgroup to offset the excess charges that they had incurred.

(h) Climate and Environment Strategy

Further to Minute No. 67/22(k), Councillor Mrs Sproats advised that she and Councillor Ms Gifford had discussed the format of the first meeting of people who had expressed an interest in becoming involved in the implementation of the Climate and Environment Strategy and Action Plan which would be held on 19th October.

Councillor Ms Morrow advised that the management of the SPAR store intended to become more involved in environmental issues and that she would relay any information of help to the working party.

(i) Pond Creation

Further to Minute No. 67/22(m), the Clerk reported that Councillor England had suggested an alternative location for the proposed new pond for great crested newts at Onyetts Field which tended to remain wetter than the site originally chosen. However, in order to ensure that the exact location was identified, the process had been delayed until significant rainfall had occurred. The matter would then be pursued further with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust.

(j) Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List

Further to Minute No. 73/22, the Clerk reported that both the local History Society and Archaeological Group had nominated representatives to assist in identifying

potential features in Warboys for inclusion in the Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List. An invitation had been circulated for Members to express an interest in also being involved and the Clerk reported that Councillors Mrs Cole and Green had volunteered to assist. A meeting would be convened shortly to discuss the process involved in identifying features for consideration by the Council.

82/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th August 2022 be received.

83/22 POLICE REPORT

Members noted that there were no incidents to report in respect of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Parish since the previous meeting.

84/22 REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Ms Lowe drew attention to a number of issues of interest as follows –

Huntingdonshire Futures and Climate Change focus groups
approval of the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet road improvement scheme.
Slip into Slippers for Age UK day
Stagecoach bus route withdrawals
the start of a consultation exercise in respect of the Huntingdonshire Travel Plan
advice on the District Council's website on 'Making Your Money Go Further'
cases of Bird Flu in the locality
a Flood Conference organised by the County Council.

Concern was expressed by Members about the decision by Stagecoach to withdraw all bus services through Warboys at the end of October and the impact on those members of the public who relied on public transport. The Clerk reported that he had raised the matter with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority which was now the passenger transport authority and had been advised that they were reviewing the situation.

In response to a suggestion by a Member that the Parish Council become involved in subsidising bus services in Warboys, the Clerk explained that the Council had very limited powers in relation to public transport and these did not include subsidies to enable bus services to be provided for the general public.

85/22 OPERATION LONDON BRIDGE

The Chairman reported on the actions taken to implement Operation London Bridge following the death of Her Majesty The Queen on 8th September and she thanked the Clerk for organising the Council's response. This had included a Book of Condolence at the

SPAR which had been open from 10th to 18th September, organising a rota of volunteers to oversee the signing of the Book by the public, arranging for the laying and collection of flowers at the flagpole and the reading of the Proclamation of the King's accession. Thanks were extended to all those who had volunteered to assist at The SPAR where over 450 people had signed the Book and to the SPAR management for their co-operation. A further Book of Condolence had been opened at the Parish Church and a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of The Queen had been conducted at the Church on the eve of the funeral.

The Chairman reported that the Operation London Bridge plan would be reviewed in the light of the events earlier in the month and submitted to the Council for approval in due course.

86/22 MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING PARTIES

The Chairman reported that Councillor Green had decided to withdraw from the working parties for the replacement of the Parish Centre and Climate Change.

Councillor Mrs Sproats advised that a replacement on the Climate Change working party was unnecessary at the present time as, depending on the outcome of the forthcoming meeting with interested individuals, it was hoped that the members of the public would be taking a more active role. However, she indicated that she would advise the Council if she felt that further support was required in terms of Member representation on the working party.

The Chairman pointed out that that while former Councillor Payne had been co-opted to the Parish Centre Replacement working party, Councillor Green was the only current Member of the Council with relevant experience and expertise in project management and construction work. In view of the importance of having Member representation on the working party, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor England be appointed to the working party.

87/22 WATER LEVELS AND PONDS

Further to Minute No. 81/22, a report by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted assessing the impact of the dry weather over the summer months on the ponds for which the Council was responsible at The Weir, Heath Pond and Onyetts Field.

It had been reported to the meeting in August that a standpipe had been hired from Cambridge Water who had given permission for mains water to be used to fill The Weir and the Clerk reported that a hose had been used to fill the pond at Onyetts Field from premises some distance away. However, this had occurred without the Council's prior knowledge. In order to plan for a potential repetition of the events in August at the pond at Onyetts Field, the report contained a series of questions for the Council to consider.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that consideration of the report be referred to the Onyetts Field working party, together with Councillor Mrs Cole.

(District Councillor Ms Lowe left at this point in the proceedings.)

88/22 ONYETTS FIELD

Councillor England drew attention to the number of rabbit burrows in a boundary ditch at Onyetts Field adjoining land that he farmed. He advised that the rabbits had damaged crops in the field during the course of the year and he requested action by the Council to prevent a recurrence in future years. Members were advised that rabbits were classed as a pest under the Pests Act 1954 and that a landowner had a duty to prevent them causing a nuisance to others.

Under the circumstances, the Clerk was requested to investigate the action that could be taken by the Council and report back to a future meeting.

89/22 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE

Further to Minute No. 67/22(1), a report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) following a recent meeting of the Replacement Parish Centre working party.

The meeting also had been attended by Councillor Ms Gifford who had reported on comments that had arisen at a recent meeting of the Community Association on which she represented the Council. Members were informed that it had been the view of the working party that all of the comments had been raised in the initial consultation period and addressed by the Council in finalising the plans for the submission of the application for planning permission. Members were informed that the Community Association would discuss the scheme by way of an agenda item at their next meeting and that former Councillor Payne and the Clerk had been asked to attend the ensuing meeting in January if necessary to respond to any questions that had arisen.

The report submitted contained information regarding the possible offer of a free broadband connection to the new Parish Centre by Gigaclear that had been reported at the previous meeting. Following enquiries with the company by the Clerk, it had transpired that this was unlikely to be feasible, given the timescales involved.

Members were informed that the Council's Architects were continuing to progress the detailed design of the new Parish Centre and that a meeting with potential mechanical and engineering consultants would be held later in the week which would be attended by the Chairman and former Councillor Payne.

90/22 TRAFFIC SURVEY

Further to Minute No. 67/22(h), a draft brief was submitted by Councillor Green proposing the engagement of traffic consultants to undertake a study of highway conditions in

Warboys, together with a covering report by the Clerk. (Copies of the documents had been circulated to all Members,)

Councillor Green advised that the brief had listed all of the issues of concern in terms of traffic and highways issues that had been raised by members of the public in recent years and recommended the engagement of traffic consultants to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the situation and identify proposed solutions. He pointed out that the brief was a draft that could be amended as required but that the first stage of the process would be to invite quotations from traffic consultants to ascertain the costs involved in a study to enable an informed decision to be made by the Council as to whether to progress the matter further.

In his covering report, the Clerk explained that relatively few approaches had been made to the Council by members of the public over the past two years and he reminded Members that meetings of the Traffic Working Party that had been established by the Council in 2020 in response to the formation of Residents Against Noisy Traffic had been discontinued as members of the public representing RANT had failed to attend.

It was suggested by Councillor Parker that the issues included in the brief had all been discussed previously by the Council. Councillor England expressed the opinion that speeding in the High Street was being effectively controlled by the volume of vehicles being parked in the carriageway.

Following discussion and a vote had been taken, it was

RESOLVED

that no further action be taken.

91/22 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A report by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted regarding the arrangements for the Remembrance Sunday service on 13th November.

Members were reminded that the Royal British Legion no longer were involved in the organisation of services and that they now regarded them as civic events which were matters for local councils. Similarly, the Police no longer were prepared to assist in traffic control and accompanying parades. Details of the arrangements made by the Council in previous years were contained in the report, together with the actions necessary for the Council to undertake if the service and parade was to be continued in November.

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to make arrangements for the Remembrance Sunday service to be held in Warboys as set out in the report submitted.

92/22 FLAXEN WALK - LITTER BINS

Arising from Minute No. 67/22(j), the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the installation of litter bins at Flaxen Walk.

Members were reminded that the issue had been raised originally after the organised litter pick earlier in the year which had identified an area in Flaxen Walk near public footpath 4 where an accumulation of litter had been evident. Muir Housing who owned the estate had responded to a request by the Council to install a litter bin near the footpath by agreeing to pay for a bin together with the cost of installation if this was undertaken by the Council. The housing group had subsequently offered to pay for a further three bins on the estate if they were installed and emptied weekly by the Council.

The Clerk pointed out that the estate was owned by the housing group who were responsible for litter collection but that the installation of so many bins could potentially lead to an expectation that the Council would clear any rubbish left in the proximity of the bins.

Councillor Mrs Cole also requested that an additional bin be provided on the jetty at The Weir which the Clerk undertook to investigate.

Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

that the offer to fund an additional three litter bins by Muir Housing be declined and the Clerk authorised to make arrangements for a bin to be installed near footpath 4 to be funded by the housing group.

93/22 LITTER PICKING

The Clerk report upon an invitation from the District Council for groups involved in litter picking activities to join a new Facebook Group to share experiences and request support or guidance from the wider community.

Members' attention also was drawn to information received from the Community Association about a further litter pick in the village by volunteers on 15th and 16th October which diary entry suggested was being organised by Councillor Green. However, he informed Members that he was unaware of the arrangements.

94/22 INSURANCE

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by Community Action Suffolk (CAS) that RSA would no longer provide insurance for local councils and groups when the current policy expired at the end of September. CAS had therefore identified Ansvar as the preferred replacement insurer. Unlike the more general policy offered by RSA, the policy with Ansvar had required the submission of extensive information about the Council's actions and activities which had been provided by the Clerk.

Members were informed that the policy and detailed schedule had now been received from CAS for consideration. The premium quoted was £4,687.13 or £4,451.41 for a long term undertaking of three years. This compared with a premium of £3,225.34 in 2021 but the Clerk advised that the RSA policy had been significantly lower than the previous policy with Zurich Insurance which in 2018 had required a premium of £4,075.40. The Clerk also reported on recent posts on the SLCC Forum by Clerks commenting on significant increases in insurance premiums when renewing policies in recent weeks.

RESOLVED

that the quotation submitted by CAS for a three year undertaking with Ansvar be accepted.

95/22 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

Further to Minute Nos 37/22 and 38/22, the Clerk reported that notification had been received from PKF Littlejohn that they had completed their audit of the Council's accounts for 2021/22 and had certified that there were no matters to bring to the attention of the Council.

96/22 EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk explained that the local government audit arrangements permitted a town or parish council to choose their own external auditor or use the one nominated by the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA). As the existing five year arrangement with PKF Littlejohn was coming to an end, the SAAA had enquired whether the Council wished to opt out of the next period of appointment from 2022/23 to 2026/27 which would also be with PKF Littlejohn.

RESOLVED

that no change be made to the external audit arrangements.

97/22 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT

Members' attention was drawn to an invitation for the Council to sign up to a Civility and Respect Pledge promoted by the NALC and SLCC (copies of which had been circulated). Signing the pledge required town and parish councils to agree to treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.

RESOLVED

that the Council agrees to comply with the Civility and Respect Pledge issued by NALC and SLCC.

98/22 NEW RESERVOIRS

Members noted that Anglian Water had started a consultation process on the creation of two new reservoirs, one of which would be located in The Fens, although the locations had yet to be announced.

99/22 DROPBOX

Councillor Mrs Sproats advised that the Environment and Climate Change working party was investigating the use of a file sharing medium for members of the group.

100/22 INVITATIONS TO EVENTS

Members considered invitations to attend the events below. As the dates of some of the events had passed due to the postponement of the Council meeting from 12th September, the invitations had been circulated to Members electronically to enable them to attend if they so wished.

- (a) Summer Reading Challenge celebration ceremony at Warboys Library on 22nd September. Councillor Mrs Sproats reported that she had attended and she informed Members that the Parish Council had been thanked at the ceremony for their financial support for the reading challenge that had encouraged children to read books during the holiday period.
- (b) First annual Cambridgeshire Flood Groups Conference on 22nd September at Alconbury Enterprise Campus.
- (c) Cambridgeshire ACRE AGM to be held on line on 28th September.
- (d) AGM of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CPRE to be held on line on 20th October.
- (e) Town and parish engagement sessions to be held on line by the District Council on various dates to follow up the Parish Council Forum held in July.
- (f) Connections Bus Project AGM to be held on line on 25th October.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Clerk be authorised to attend the Cambridgeshire ACRE AGM; and
- (b) that Councillor Parker and the Clerk be authorised to attend the town and parish engagement sessions.

101/22 REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Arising from a request from Magpas for a grant towards the work of that organisation, it was

RESOLVED

that a grant of £100 be paid to the organisation.

102/22 OPEN FORUM

The Clerk reported that there had been no matters raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council.

103/22 ACCOUNTS

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

RESOLVED

(a) that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
R Reeves	Reimbursement – ink cartridges	31.99
Greenwoods	Land registry search – Clock Tower shelter	28.80
Thomas Deacon Education Trust	Hire of school for holiday play scheme	960.00
CPRE	Annual subscription	36.00
National Savings & Investments	Deposit	75,000.00
Premier Gas Services	Service of Parish Centre gas appliances	140.00

(b) that payment of the following invoices prior to the meeting be endorsed:-

W E Batterbee	Salary – August 2022	1,198.16
D A Warwick	Salary – August 2022	1,263.95
R Edwards	Salary – August 2022	238.40
R Reeves	Salary - August 2022	1,063.66
HMRC	Tax & NIC – August 2022	1,506.67
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39

E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	78.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	16.54
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support (paid by direct debit)	100.36
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	96.16
Allstar	Fuel card fee (paid by direct debit)	1.80
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply (August)	11.86
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply (August)	10.19
ESPO	Miscellaneous supplies	170.79
ESPO	Stationery	3.48
Xerox (UK) Ltd	Photocopying charges	21.30
Roy Parker Garden Services	Grass cutting	140.00
PKF Littlejohn	Audit fees	720.00
Arthur Ibbett Ltd	Miscellaneous supplies	196.68
NVPC Ltd	PAT Testing	134.40
Cambridge Water	Hire of standpipe	70.96

104/22 BUDGETARY CONTROL

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

105/22 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be conducted as the following matter contained information about named individuals.

(Councillor Green left the meeting part way through consideration of the following item.)

106/22 VOLUNTEERS

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the implications of volunteers assisting with Council activities.

The Clerk advised that the Council's existing insurance policy covered employees, Members and volunteers undertaking services on behalf of the Council and the new policy contained similar provisions. However, the question as to who fell into this category had only been considered in an ad hoc manner previously when the need arose and Members were invited therefore to review the activities undertaken by individuals in the community which related to the Council's services and functions, some of which had a direct link whereas others were more tenuous. To be classed as a volunteer, a person would need to be subject to the control of the Council in terms of the provision of instructions, risk assessments and health and safety.

Members agreed that those who assisted in the cleaning of the Parish Centre, winding of the Jubilee Clock, Remembrance Sunday service and parade, Onyetts Field and the Council's administration should be regarded as volunteers while acting on behalf of the Council. The Council also had agreed previously to insure volunteers helping with the installation and dismantling of Christmas lighting in the village.

Individuals involved in Speedwatch activities were covered by the insurance of Cambridgeshire Constabulary and those involved in winter gritting of approved footways by the County Council. Members agreed that volunteers who collected litter from time to time, either individually or as part of organised litter picks were not acting under the direction of the Council. Councillor Mrs Cole advised that one person regularly helped her with supervision of The Weir and others only infrequently.

With regard to an individual who had been cutting the grass verge in the High Street since the first pandemic lockdown in 2020, Members felt that it would be advisable to regard that person as a volunteer, due to the possibility of accidental damage and potential insurance claims. In the event of the individual concerned not being prepared to formalise the arrangements for grass cutting, Members felt that this should revert to being undertaken by the Handymen.

RESOLVED

- (a) that those persons assisting in the cleaning of the Parish Centre, winding of the Jubilee Clock, Remembrance Sunday service and parade, Onyetts Field, Christmas lighting installation and dismantling, supervision of The Weir and the Council's administration be classed as volunteers acting on behalf of the Council; and
- (b) that the Clerk be requested to approach the person who had been cutting the High Street verge to ascertain whether he was prepared to be classed as a volunteer for insurance purposes with the implications that this entailed and, if he was not, that the Handymen be requested to resume cutting the verge.

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

Chairman.