

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 12th December 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, J A Parker, P S Potts, Mrs C L Sproats, Mrs S C Wilcox, G C M Willis and Mrs A R Wyatt.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S J Green, Ms M L Morrow and A Ntuk and District Councillors Ms C A Lowe and Mrs A E Costello.

144/22 MINUTES

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

145/22 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor England declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute Nos 152/22 (Onyetts Field) and 153/22 (Onyetts Field Byelaws) 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.

Councillor Mrs Wyatt declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute No. 164/22 (Warboys Diary) as she was the Chairman of Warboys Community Association. She had received a dispensation previously from the Council to speak but not vote on matters affecting the Association.

146/22 MATTERS ARISING

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

(a) Bridleways

Further to Minute No. 127/22(a), the Clerk reported that he had been informed by the County Council's Rural Asset Manager that she was contacting the County's Rights of Way team to progress the proposed creation of a permissive bridleway to link bridleways 17 and 18.

(b) Repairs to Lighting Column

Further to Minute No. 127/22(b), the Clerk reported that the excess paid by the Council under the insurance policy to repair the lighting column at the Jubilee Clock Tower damaged in a vehicle collision had now been recovered. All of the costs incurred by the Council had therefore now been recovered.

(c) Parish Centre – Water Supply

Further to Minute No.127/22(c), the Clerk reported that reimbursement was still awaited from the County Council for the excess water charges incurred as a result of the leak located under the Library car park, together with the cost of engaging specialists to identify its precise location.

(d) Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List

Further to Minute No. 127/22(e), the Clerk reported that, as the Conservation Team at the District Council had ceased assessing submissions in Huntingdonshire for the creation of a Local Heritage List, the identification of potential additions to the list in Warboys would no longer be regarded as a priority.

(e) Flaxen Walk – Litter Bins

Further to Minute No. 127/22(g), the Clerk reported that Muir Housing Group had reimbursed the Council with the cost of a new litter bin at Flaxen Walk and this had been installed by the Handymen.

(f) Climate and Environment Strategy

Further to Minute No. 133/22, Councillor Mrs Sproats reported that dates were being arranged for bi-monthly meetings of the individuals interested in supporting climate and environment initiatives in the village. Members were advised that a poster was being drafted showing venues where materials could be re cycled in addition to those placed in the fortnightly domestic blue bin collections.

Councillor Mrs Sproats also reported that she was liaising with the primary academy who were interested in becoming involved. A topic on recycling was currently being undertaken at the academy, together with the design of a poster which could be displayed in the village.

(g) Landfill Site

Arising from Minute No. 136/22, Members were informed that one of the County Council's Planning Officers had supplied information provided by the proposed developers of a refuse derived fuel plant at the Landfill Site about a plant that was currently in operation. The information had been forwarded to all Members by the Clerk.

Those Members who had attended the exhibition about the proposed development held at the Parish Centre on 16th November were of the opinion that this had not been particularly informative nor reassuring.

(h) Proposed New Reservoir

Further to Minute No, 137/22, Members were informed that Anglian Water had acknowledged receipt of the observations submitted by the Council regarding the proposed new reservoir at Chatteris but had not responded to the observations made about its siting, other than to confirm that, in their opinion, this was the best location having regard to all relevant factors.

147/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

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

148/22 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 28th November 2022 be received and the recommendations contained therein approved, with the exception of those contained in Minutes No. 10/22 and 11/22.

149/22 LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Further to Minute No. 135/22, the Clerk reported that he had invited comments from horse riders and via social media with regard to the Council's decision to apply for Local Highways Initiative funding for a footway on the northern side of Puddock Hill.

Members were informed that a number of expressions of support had been received but that one of the horse riders had asked the Council to submit an alternative bid for a 40 mph speed limit from the junction with Fenside Road to the entrance to the village and for the cutting back of the carriageway hedging which was currently overgrown. Her view was that this would slow the traffic and enable riders and pedestrians to step onto the verge to avoid passing traffic. The Clerk suggested that these were both relatively inexpensive and could be incorporated in the LHI bid.

RESOLVED

that the bid to be submitted under the LHI programme for 2023/24 to create of a footway on the northern side of Puddock Hill be expanded to include a 40 mph buffer zone when entering the village via Station Road and the cutting back of the roadside hedging.

150/22 POLICE REPORT

It was noted that none of the Members had attended an on-line engagement meeting for the Huntingdon and Ramsey area organised by the Police on 6th December.

The report of the Speedwatch group for October and November had been circulated to all Members for information prior to the meeting. Members noted that three sessions had been undertaken in the village during that period in Humberdale Way and Ramsey Road.

151/22 REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

The District Councillors had submitted their apologies for the meeting and advised that there was nothing specific to bring to the attention of the Council.

152/22 ONYETTS FIELD

Further to Minute No. 87/22, the report of a meeting of the Onyetts Field working party was submitted (copies of which had been circulated) which had also been attended by Councillors Mrs Cole and England.

The working party had addressed a number of issues relating to the pond on the land, the question of fishing, hedge planting and cutting, the planting of the commemoration oak in memory of the late Queen and the creation of a newt pond in association with the Wildlife Trust.

With regard to the problem of low water levels experienced over the past summer due to the dry weather, the working party had accepted that it would be impractical to relocate the fish if a similar situation arose in the future. It had also been suggested that a consistent approach should be taken by the Council as to when fishing should be permitted or restricted at both Onyetts Field and the Weir. An offer to remove some of the silt in the pond and secure the banksides was reported which should assist in the event of future dry periods.

Following a site visit to agree the location, the hedging pack supplied by the Woodland Trust had been planted by the Handymen with the help of volunteers on the north-eastern boundary of the land. A site had been agreed for the planting of a commemorative oak in memory of the Queen which had been supplied by a local businessman. An offer had also been made by Councillor England to donate a number of smaller oaks for planting on the eastern boundary of the field.

The County Council had been asked to expedite the cutting of the roadside hedge adjoining the A141 which had formed part of the LHI scheme approved for 2022/23. It was also recommended that the hedging be cut on the southern finger of land forming part of the Field and Councillor England had contacted a contractor who would be cutting the hedging at the Sports Field shortly.

Although a revised location for the newt pond to be dug by the Wildlife Trust had been identified during the site inspection, Councillor England suggested that it might be more appropriate for the pond to be sited on the land adjoining Hallgate Allotments which was

currently let by the Council to a third party. He suggested that this would avoid encroachment on to the land available for public use at Onyetts Field and establish the pond in a less public location nearby.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report of the working party be received and its suggestions and proposals accepted,
- (b) that arrangements be made for the planting of the oak to commemorate the life of the late Queen and an invitation extended to Members to attend; and
- (c) that the Clerk be requested to approach the tenant of the land adjoining Hallgate Allotments regarding the possible creation of a new pond on the land that he rented near the boundary with Onyetts Field.

153/22 ONYETTS FIELD – BYELAWS

A report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) in response to a suggestion by the Onyetts Field working party that byelaws be made to enable fishing to be regulated and to deter activities of an anti-social nature.

The report summarised the process involved in making byelaws which would require public consultation at two stages and the submission of draft byelaws to the relevant Government department for consent to proceed. Attached to the report was a copy of the model byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces which the Clerk explained could be modified to relate to the land but which could not be expanded without considerable additional liaison and consultation with the Government and interested bodies.

RESOLVED

that the procedure to make byelaws in respect of Onyetts Field be commenced and the working party requested to draft byelaws for consideration based upon the model byelaws circulated.

154/22 THE WEIR

Councillor Mrs Cole drew attention to a proliferation in the number of fish in The Weir. Although many of the larger fish had been relocated in 2019 with the help of the Environment Agency and a local fishery, Councillor Mrs Cole advised that those remaining had subsequently multiplied and grown in size and she suggested that the Environment Agency be requested to assist again in the removal of the larger fish.

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs Cole be authorised to approach the Environment Agency to ask if they would arrange for the relocation of some of the fish in the pond.

155/22 CONNECTIONS BUS PROJECT

Councillor England referred to the funding of the visits by the Connections Bus Project to Warboys on Friday evenings to provide support for young people and help discourage anti-social behaviour. Although numbers attending the sessions during the course of the autumn term had been high, Councillor England reported that it had been brought to his attention that some of those attending did not live in the Parish. As the visits were being financed exclusively by the Council, he suggested that either membership should be restricted to those living in the Parish or other parish councils should be asked to contribute towards the cost.

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be requested to liaise with the Connections Bus Project to ascertain whether information was available as to the homes of the children who were attending.

156/22 BANNERS AT THE WEIR

The Clerk reported an approach from an objector to the proposed Station Road development seeking permission to attach two banners with the words 'Save Our Farmland' on the railings at The Weir. Similar banners had been installed near the land which the District Council hoped to develop in Station Road.

Although the Parish Council had agreed that banners could be attached to the railings to support the Christmas Lighting Group to raise sponsorship funding for the lights, Members were of the opinion that the circumstances were different in this case and that approval of the request would establish a precedent which could attract further requests for other banners.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the request be refused.

157/22 PARISH CENTRE – VENTILATION MONITORS

The Clerk reported that, following a visit by the County Council's Property Compliance Team regarding the use of the Parish Centre by the Day Centre, the County Council had offered to supply and install two CO2 monitor, provided that the Parish Council accepted responsibility for their future maintenance and battery replacement.

RESOLVED

that the offer be accepted.

158/22 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE

Further to Minute No. 139/22, the Clerk reported that the working party would be meeting the Architect on the following day to progress the plans for the replacement of the Parish Centre.

Members were also informed that the Community Association had invited representatives from the Council to attend their next meeting to discuss the plans.

159/22 SOCIAL MEDIA

Further to Minute No. 127/22(h), Councillor Mrs Sproats submitted suggested guidelines (copies of which had been circulated) for adoption in respect of the posting of information on social media. The platform used to disseminate information would remain Facebook with Councillors Ms Gifford and Mrs Sproats authorised to post information provided by the Clerk and working group leads. In the case of information provided by the latter, this would be supplied to the Chairman or Clerk for confirmation before being forwarded for posting.

RESOLVED

that the guidelines be adopted as drafted.

160/22 ADAMS LYONS PLAYGROUND

Further to Minute No. 13/22(a) of the Leisure Areas Committee, the Clerk reported that a quotation had been received from a second play equipment provider for the fitting of safety surfacing at Adams Lyons playground as suggested in the annual safety report.

However, during the course of the meeting on site with the company's representative, the Clerk reported that it was apparent that the retaining wall of the mound was slipping and that further investigation would be required to secure its effective repair. Enquiries had been made with the contractor who had fitted the replacement sleepers in 2020 and a reply was awaited.

Consequently, the two play equipment providers had quoted for slightly different work which would require further liaison with them to ensure that comparative costs were obtained.

Members were informed that a further report would be provided in due course.

161/22 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Members were reminded that the next Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 19th April 2023. It had been customary prior to the pandemic lockdown to invite guest speakers to previous parish meetings to try to encourage the public to attend but the meeting in 2020 had been cancelled and the minimum of business conducted at the meetings in 2021 and 2022 because of the risk of infection.

With regard to the meeting in April 2023, Members were of the opinion that the plans for the replacement Parish Centre should feature on the agenda and possibly a talk on fire safety by the Fire Brigade.

162/22 CORONATION

Members were invited to consider the possibility of local events to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023. Councillor Mrs Wyatt advised that the Community Association would be concentrating their efforts on the bank holiday event earlier that week and it was reported that the Palace had asked that beacons not be lit as this would be too soon after the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee when beacons had been lit as part of a national chain.

Members agreed to defer consideration for discussion at the next meeting.

163/22 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Following the submission of the suggested calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2023/24 (copies of which had been circulated), it was

RESOLVED

that the calendar of meetings be approved as submitted.

164/22 WARBOYS DIARY

Members considered a request from the Community Association for a grant to assist with the cost of printing the Warboys Diary. The Council had provided an annual grant of £200 in recent years but the Association had advised that their printing costs had increased by almost £100 per issue and their income from Diary advertisements had fallen by £500 in 2022.

In view of the importance of the Diary as a source of information about activities in the village, Members

RESOLVED

that a grant of £300 be made towards the cost of producing the Diary.

165/22 PARISH CENTRE CHARGES

A report (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted by the Clerk regarding the charges for the hire of the Parish Centre in 2023/24.

Although the Finance and General Purposes Committee had recommended that the charge for the first hour of hire be increased by £1 and that other charges remain unchanged (Minute 10/22 of that Committee refers), the Clerk reported that he had subsequently

received an indication from E.ON as to the cost of energy when the current contracts with the company expired in February for electricity and March for gas. Alternative quotes had been obtained from EDF and British Gas which were similar in price. As a result, it was expected that the cost per unit for electricity would quadruple and the cost of gas increase sixfold.

Members acknowledged that, if the increase in energy costs were to be recovered, the cost of hiring the Parish Centre would have to increase substantially. However, several of the clubs using the Centre contained mostly elderly members and various users were providing a service within the community. It was likely therefore that an increase in the hire charges of the magnitude required would have an adverse effect on a number of clubs and groups which might be unable to continue. Members therefore felt that the increased energy costs should be absorbed by the Council in the short term, especially with the plans to replace the Parish Centre in the near future.

RESOLVED

that the charges for the hire of the Parish Centre as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee be approved.

166/22 COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT 2023/24

Members considered the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (Minute No. 11/22 of that Committee refers) with regard to the determination of the budget and Council Tax precept for 2023/24. The budgetary estimates had been circulated to all Members with the agenda for the meeting.

The Committee had recommended the setting of a precept of £144,655 based upon an increase in the Council Tax Base to 1,608. This would result in an increase of 5% in the level of Council Tax for a Band D property from its current level of £85.68 to £89.96.

Having regard to the expenditure required for the replacement of the Parish Centre, Members were of the opinion that the Council Tax proposed was an acceptable level of increase. It was therefore

RESOLVED

- (a) that a sum of £75,000 be transferred from the unallocated budget in the current year to the earmarked reserve for the replacement Parish Centre;
- (b) that the precept for 2023/24 be set at £144,655 which would require a Band D Council Tax level of £89.96, representing an increase in the level of Council Tax for a Band D property of 5%; and
- (b) that the budgetary estimates attached to the report now submitted be approved for 2023/24.

167/22 OPEN FORUM

The Clerk reported on matters raised at the Open Forum following the previous meeting of the Council. These had included the deteriorating condition of Puddock Road, the death of a prominent local resident and the display of a picture of the new King in the Meeting Room.

168/22 ACCOUNTS

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

RESOLVED

that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
W E Batterbee	Salary – November 2022	2,097.76
D A Warwick	Salary – November 2022	2,039.83
R Edwards	Salary – November 2022	313.60
R Reeves	Salary - November 2022	1,563.33
HMRC	Tax & NIC – November 2022	2,838.95
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Dyofix dye	70.20
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Ink cartridges	31.99
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	78.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	140.57
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support (paid by direct debit)	100.27
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	98.98
Allstar	Fuel card fee (paid by direct debit)	1.80
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply (October and November)	14.81
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply (October and November)	12.53

ESPO	Miscellaneous supplies	242.36
SLCC	Annual membership fee for Clerk	222.00
Balfour Beatty Living Places	Quarterly maintenance of street lighting	144.90
Information Commissioner's Office	Annual registration fee for Council Office	35.00
Xerox (UK) Ltd	Photocopying charges	45.53
Merlin Lighting (Installations) Ltd	Installation of Christmas lighting	600.00
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	Play equipment parts	198.98
Parrot Print	Printing	65.00

169/22 BUDGETARY CONTROL

The Council received the budgetary control statement for November 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.