

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Warboys Parish Council** held on 13th February 2023 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, Ms M L Morrow, J A Parker, P S Potts, Mrs C L Sproats, Mrs S C Wilcox, G C M Willis and Mrs A R Wyatt.

IN ATTENDANCE

District Councillor Ms C A Lowe
Mr R A Payne

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of County Councillor S J Corney and District Councillor Mrs A E Costello.

188/22 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Willis, the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the substitution of the words 'remove the larger' by the words 'reduce the number of' in the sixth line of Minute No. 174/22(h) entitled 'The Weir'.

189/22 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor England declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 202/22 entitled 'Onyetts Field' but received a dispensation previously to speak but not vote on the matter.

190/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Council considered the following matters arising from the meeting held on 9th January 2023:-

(a) Bridleways

Further to Minute No. 174/22(a), the Clerk reported that he was still awaiting a reply from the County Council's Rural Asset Manager with regard to the proposed creation of a permissive bridleway to link bridleways 17 and 18.

(b) Repairs to Lighting Column

Further to Minute No. 174/22(b), the Chairman reported that three of the four uprighters on the lighting columns at the Jubilee Clock Tower were not working.

(c) Local Highway Improvement Scheme

Further to Minute No, 174/22(e), the Clerk reported that he had noticed that the improvements to the A141 crossing to access Onyetts Field had been marked out on site prior to the work being undertaken. However, there had been no further information as to when the roadside hedge would be cut back.

It was anticipated that a draft feasibility study would be supplied by the County Council shortly regarding the application for funding under the Local Highway Improvement scheme for 2023/24 for the creation of a footway on Puddock Hill

(d) The Weir

Further to Minute No. 174/22(h), Councillor Mrs Cole reported that she had been present on site while fish had been removed from The Weir on the Council's behalf and she provided details of the number and species of fish that had been relocated by employees of Bedwell Fish Farm. Six of the larger fish had been retained in the pond to provide local interest, together with a proportion of the smaller fish.

(e) Parish Centre – Ventilation Monitors

Further to Minute No. 174/22(i), the Clerk reported that the County Council had now supplied the Day Centre with two portable ventilation monitors for use at the Parish Centre while their sessions were being held.

(f) Parish Centre Energy Costs

Further to Minute No. 179/22, the Clerk informed Members that he had renewed the contracts with E.ON on a one year fixed cost basis for the supply of electricity and gas to the Parish Centre. The costs per kilowatt hour had fallen by approximately 30% from those presented to the Council at the previous meeting but still remained over three times higher than the existing costs under the previous contract.

(g) Former Youthie Building

Further to Minute No. 182/22, the Clerk reported that he had met officers from the County Council to discuss the future of the former Youthie building. The officers maintained that the building was in a dangerous condition and was now affecting the adjoining Library premises. Under the circumstances the County Council remained of the view that the building should be demolished as they had no further use for it. They had offered to attend a meeting of the Parish Council to discuss the future of the site and it was

RESOLVED

that arrangements be made for representatives of the County Council to attend a future meeting.

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

(h) Jubilee Clock

Further to Minute No. 186/22, Members were informed that Councillor Fabb had been able to make and fit a replacement spring for the Jubilee Clock which had saved several hundred pounds in having to engage the specialist maintenance company under contract to the Council.

191/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th January 2023 be received.

192/22 RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Rights of Way Committee held on 6th February 2023 be received.

193/22 POLICE REPORT

The Clerk reported that he had been alerted by a local resident that a number of fires had been lit during the past two weeks in the field adjoining the A141 owned by travelling showpeople. The fire brigade had been called on the last two occasions and the Police had been informed.

The Chairman also drew attention to the monthly report from the local Speedwatch team which had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

194/22 REPLACEMENT PARISH CENTRE

Further to Minute No. 180/22, a report (copies of which had been circulated) was submitted by the Clerk summarising the discussions at a recent meeting of the Working Party to discuss the replacement Parish Centre. Members also were informed that the Chairman and former Councillor Payne who was a member of the working party had attended a recent meeting of the Community Association to provide an update about the project and answer questions which had been well received by those present.

Having been welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman, Mr Payne informed Members that he had liaised with the Council's Architect in response to the ongoing concern by a member

of the working party about the potential cost of the project and the latter's suggestion that a quantity surveyor be engaged to provide an estimate of cost before tenders were invited.

Mr Payne pointed out that the only accurate way of determining the cost of the development was the invitation of tenders and that engaging a quantity surveyor would create additional cost and delay without providing a definitive final cost. As Members had been concerned at the previous meeting about the cost of engaging a mechanical and electrical consultant before tenders were invited, Mr Payne proposed that tenders be invited with a provisional sum included for mechanical and electrical work as part of the project cost. M & E consultants could then be invited to provide the detailed design once the Council had reviewed the tenders and agreed on the affordability of the project. However, drainage consultants would need to be engaged at a cost of £2,500 before tenders could be invited.

As a public authority, the Clerk pointed out that it would be necessary for public notice to be given to invite tenders on an open basis and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council's Architects be authorised to engage drainage consultants at a cost of £2,500 and to invite tenders by public advertisement for the development of the replacement Parish Centre.

(District Councillor Ms Lowe arrived at the meeting during the course of the discussion on the previous item.)

195/22 REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Corney had provided the Clerk with information prior to the meeting about the size of the precepts to be levied by the County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for 2023/24 and cuts in budgeted expenditure agreed by the former authority in respect of a number of services.

District Councillor Ms Lowe drew attention to several grant opportunities which might be of interest. She also agreed with concerns raised by Members about the proliferation and poor standard of repair of pot holes locally by the County Council and the dangerous condition of Puddock Road as a result of subsidence.

In response to a question by Councillor Willis as to the current ownership of the land at Station Road which was the subject of an outstanding planning application for development, Councillor Ms Lowe undertook to make enquiries within the District Council.

196/22 VACANCY

Further to Minute No. 172/22, the Clerk reported that the requisite number of electors had not asked for an election to be held to fill the vacancy resulting from the resignation of former Councillor S J Green and that expressions of interest could therefore be invited to fill the vacancy by co-option. The position would be advertised and a report would be submitted to the next meeting to enable a decision to be made as to who to co-opt.

197/22 ASSISTANT CLERK

Members were advised that the advertisement for the newly created position of Assistant Clerk had resulted in 31 requests for information packs to date with a closing date of the end of February for the receipt of completed applications. The Chairman referred to the fact that the Appointments Panel currently comprised all women and she suggested that it would be preferable the Panel was better balanced. As a result, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Parker be appointed to the Appointments Panel.

198/22 SPORTS HOLIDAY CLUB

Further to Minute No. 187/22, the Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) with regard to a sports holiday club being funded by the Council in 2023. Members were informed that confirmation had now been received from the Primary Academy that the school would no longer be available for hire during the summer term as Smartkidz would be operating a summer club throughout that period. In addition, Finding Fitness who had been commissioned by the Parish Council to provide the sports club in the past two summers had advised that they no longer would be offering that service.

Members were reminded that a sports club required access to an indoor facility in the event of bad weather plus toilets and handwashing arrangements in addition to an outdoor area for sporting activities. The Primary Academy was the only suitable venue with alternative indoor facilities in Warboys and the Clerk pointed out that any club funded by the Council would be competing for children with the Smartkidz activities at the school.

A number of Members drew attention to the high cost of the activities being provided by Smartkidz during the current half-term holiday but it was acknowledged that it would not be possible for the Parish Council to fund and operate a sports club in Warboys under the circumstances this year.

RESOLVED

that the report be received and no further action be taken by the Council to organise a holiday sports club in 2023.

199/22 GRASSCUTTING

Members considered a report by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) on the cutting of Adams Lyons playground and Jubilee Park in 2023. It had been reported at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting in November (Minute No. 07/22 refers) that the contractor engaged to cut the grass in 2022 would no longer be able to quote for the work. However, he had subsequently advised that his circumstances might change and he might be able to undertake the work again this year. Quotations had therefore been invited from that person and two other contractors whose responses were contained in the report circulated.

RESOLVED

that the quotation from MAM Garden Services of £170 per cut be accepted for the cutting and strimming of Adams Lyons playground and Jubilee Park in 2023.

200/22 ADAMS LYONS PLAYGROUD

Further to Minute No. 174/22(j), the Clerk reported that he was still awaiting an amended quotation from a playground provider to install safety surfacing around some items of play equipment at Adams Lyons Playground. Consideration was therefore deferred to the next meeting.

With regard to the wall adjoining the mound where the sleepers were starting to move slightly, the Clerk reported that Councillor Fabb had offered to investigate a possible solution.

201/22 ORCHARD CLOSE PLAYGROUND – ENTRANCE GATE

A report was submitted by the Clerk (copies of which had been circulated) regarding the entrance gate at Orchard Close playground. The self-closing mechanism had broken which had resulted in the gate not shutting after use. The Clerk reported that the Handymen had been unable to release the mechanism, as a result of which quotations had been obtained from two fencing companies to install a replacement gate, the lowest cost for which would be £1,095 plus VAT.

However, since the agenda had been published, the Handymen had successfully managed to retrieve the broken spring and a replacement had been manufactured by a local company. As a result, the gate could be repaired at minimum cost compared to the purchase of a replacement.

202/22 ONYETTS FIELD

Further to Minute Nos. 174(f) and (g), Members were provided with a summary of actions at Onyetts Field since the previous meeting.

A length of boundary hedge had been cut by a contractor. Councillors Fabb and England had carried out work to dredge part of the pond and spread the silt on the adjoining field. As a result of a burst main in Mill Green during the previous week, Anglian Water had been pumping water into a pipe which had discharged into the drainage channel in Onyetts Field and refilled the pond to capacity.

The Handymen had planted a second oak tree donated by a member of the public which had been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. Councillor England mentioned that he hoped to also be able to supply some additional oaks for planting shortly.

The Chairman reported that the local businessman who had donated the first oak tree had also offered to fund the purchase of a seat for installation either around the tree or elsewhere at Onyetts Field. However, the Clerk cautioned against the installation of a seat at this

location as this would be likely to attract litter and vandalism by youngsters, particularly bearing in mind the recent cases of fires being lit on an adjoining field referred to in Minute No. 193/22 above.

Members were reminded that they had agreed previously to the creation of a newt pond by the Wildlife Trust. However, the location agreed on site with representatives of the Trust had been changed at the suggestion of a Member and then changed again to land adjoining the allotments which was let to a third party. The Clerk reported that he had approached the tenant but had been advised that he was unwell currently and unable to respond. Under the circumstances, Members agreed to defer consideration of the exact location of the pond until such time as the matter could be raised again with the tenant of the adjoining field.

The Clerk reported that the Onyetts Field working party had met since the previous meeting to consider byelaws for adoption and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting.

With regard to the concerns raised by Councillor England over the damage being caused by rabbits to crops in an adjoining field that he farmed, Members discussed a range of measures to address the problem. A number of potential solutions were considered, having regard to the fact that open access to the field was permitted for members of the public. Members were informed that the potential measures would be explored further later in the week.

203/22 CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

The Clerk reported on correspondence received from the Christmas Lighting Group with regard to their plans for the Christmas period in 2023, following a review of the previous switch-on arrangements at the end of November.

The Lighting Group had asked for the road to be closed slightly earlier on the Saturday afternoon of the switch-on to provide more time to set up. They also had been concerned about the number of people who had been crossing Mill Green to access the SPAR for refreshments while the switch-on was taking place. The large number of people attending the event in 2022 following the cancellations in the previous two years due to the pandemic and bad weather prompted Members to discuss the possible extension of the road closure to the junction of High Street and Station Road or alternatively the closure of Mill Green as opposed to the High Street. Both suggestions could affect the level of custom at Kim's and the SPAR while the highway was closed and the Clerk was requested to approach the Lighting Group for their views.

Members were informed that the Lighting Group were exploring the possibility of Merlin Lighting carrying out more of the installation and removal work for the displays on health and safety grounds and also the installation of additional displays on lighting columns in Mill Green. The Clerk advised Members to expect a request for additional financial support from the Council in the event of the Lighting Group wanting to proceed. The Lighting Group also had drawn attention to continuing problems with the electrical connections on some of the lighting columns which the Clerk indicated he would raise with Balfour Beatty.

204/22 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Further to Minute No. 174/22(d), Councillor Mrs Sproats provided an update on the activities of the Climate and Environment Community Liaison Group which had met since the previous meeting of the Council. A report had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

Dates had been agreed for bi-monthly meetings of the Group and arrangements were being made to obtain the views of residents both on line and at community events as to what they perceived to be environmental priorities. Collaboration with the Primary Academy had resulted in recycling posters designed by the children being displayed on the village notice boards. A poster had been designed showing where small items could be recycled locally which could not be disposed of the normal blue bin collection. This had been displayed on notice boards and on line and the Group had asked whether the Council would fund an insert in the next edition of the Warboys Diary containing the information.

Members were informed that the cost of a colour insert would be £153 for the printing and £31 plus VAT for the insertion. Councillor Ms Morrow advised that the SPAR were keen to become more involved in community activities in the village and might be prepared to contribute towards the cost.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received; and
- (b) that the cost of an insert in the Warboys Diary containing information on local recycling outlets be met by the Council, subject to any contribution that might be made towards the cost by the SPAR.

205/22 BUS STRATEGY

The Clerk reported that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority had re-launched their on-line survey to review their bus strategy. The strategy proposed investment to provide a more frequent and affordable service to encourage greater travel by bus, including investment in new vehicles using green fuel. However in rural areas, the survey document referred to the possible need for demand responsive and community transport to be part of the solution if insufficient demand existed for normal scheduled bus routes.

Members were reminded that the consultation was open to all members of the public to respond individually.

206/22 CORONATION

Further to Minute No 181/22, Members' attention was drawn to a letter from the Secretary of State addressed to all local authorities (copies of which had been circulated) on the organisation of local events and activities to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023.

As the Community Association would be actively involved in organising their May Day Madness event on the first bank holiday in May, the Clerk reported that the Association were not planning any other events to commemorate the coronation. The Clerk advised that he was now regularly receiving e-mails from merchandising companies advertising commemorative articles such as flags, benches, mugs etc. Members were reminded that it had been customary on the occasion of previous coronations for commemorative gifts to be distributed to children and Councillor Parker undertook to liaise with the Primary Academy to determine whether they might be interested in sharing the cost if this was organised by the Council.

If a commemorative seat was to be installed, Members felt that this would need to be in a prominent location in the centre of the village. As a local businessman had offered to fund a seat at Onyetts Field, the Clerk was asked to approach him to determine whether he would be prepared to fund a commemorative seat as an alternative.

Councillor Mrs Wyatt reported that the White Hart was arranging a medieval banquet on the coronation weekend and the Church intended to hold a service on the day following the coronation followed by a cream tea.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that a commemorative flag be purchased to be flown in the village at the time of the coronation;
- (b) that a local businessman be approached to ask if he would fund the purchase of a commemorative seat for a central location in the village; and
- (c) that further consideration be given at the next meeting to the possibility of a commemorative gift for local children.

207/22 OPEN FORUM

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

208/22 ACCOUNTS

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

RESOLVED

that the following accounts be approved:-

		£
W E Batterbee	Salary – January 2023	1,253.84

D A Warwick	Salary – January 2023	1,332.82
R Edwards	Salary – January 2023	351.20
R Reeves	Salary - January 2023	1,126.12
HMRC	Tax & NIC – January 2023	1,623.57
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Zoom subscription	14.39
R Reeves	Reimbursement – Printer ink	67.98
D W Warwick	Mileage – attendance at course	20.70
E.ON	Electricity supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	78.00
E.ON	Gas supply - Parish Centre (paid by direct debit)	348.97
Chess ICT Ltd.	IT support (paid by direct debit)	107.50
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	84.58
Allstar	Monthly fuel card fee (paid by direct debit)	1.80
Allstar	Fuel (paid by direct debit)	112.03
Total Gas & Power	UMS 1 street lighting electricity supply (January)	7.94
Total Gas & Power	UMS 3 street lighting electricity supply (January)	6.53
EDGE IT Systems Ltd	Software user licence	246.00
ESPO	Refuse sacks & stationery	167.16
ESPO	Cleaning materials	129.00
The Ramsey Initiative	Assistant Clerk advert in Ramsey Informer	138.00
Bedwell Fish Farm	Removal of fish at Weir	540.00
R Reeves	Petty cash	30.00
R Reeves	Reimbursement – DVLA tax for van	290.00
Warboys Community Association	Affiliation fee 2023	15.00

209/22 BUDGETARY CONTROL

Members received the budgetary control statement for January 2023, together with the list of Parish Centre bookings for that month, copies of which had been circulated.

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

Chairman.