

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 12th July 2021 at Wisbech St Mary Community Centre.

Attended by: Councillors D Wheeler (Chairman), J Humphrey (Vice Chairman), M Knight MBE DL, C Allen, P Davies and M Fryett, B Britain, G Booth, S Mann, D Scrimshaw & A Weldon.

FDC Councillors: G Booth & S Bligh | CCC Councillor: S King

Members of the public: 3

OPEN FORUM – Parishioners are invited to address the Council.

The Co-Ordinator of Parson Drove and Wisbech St. Mary Ward Community Speedwatch reported that roadside sessions have resumed and residents have reacted positively to its return. Additional Speed Checks from Fenland Police have been appreciated. Cambs Police have a Safer Speeds team, who can arrange further speed checks and monitor data from the Parish MVAS/SID to look for areas of speeding. New volunteers are starting to get trained and will be a welcome addition to the team.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None

2. TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING dated 14th June 2021.

Item 13 (a) The minutes were requested to be corrected by Cllr Booth to say Working Group instead of Sub – Committee. Following this amendment, the minutes were then proposed for approval by Cllr Britain and seconded by Cllr Humphrey and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (information only)

(a) Allotment Land - Land Agents contacted: Cruso & Wilkin, Carter Jonas & Maxeys

The Clerk reported that requests had been made to three land agents to send details should they have a suitable piece of land become available for allotments.

(b) Four plots on Mill Road, Murrow – Planning Enforcement imminent regarding footway.

The Clerk reported that Plot 2 is still unfinished. Once completed planning enforcement would step in should the pathway not be provided as per the planning consent conditions.

4. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - None

5. MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr Humphrey declared a pecuniary interest on agenda item 7.2 (c) and will be leaving the room for this item.

Cllr Britain declared a pecuniary interest on agenda item 7.2 (d) and will be leaving the room for this item.

Cllr Davies declared a possible interest on agenda item 18 due to being a member of the Guyhirn Playing Field Association, but was currently unaware what the item was regarding.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr King had circulated a report prior to the meeting and was happy to answer any questions regarding it.

The Chairman thanked Cllr King for arranging the trimming of the hedges on Sandbank as it made a huge difference.

Cllr King reported that Cllr French is dealing with some overgrown hedges along Gull Road which had been reported by Cllr Britain.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that nothing has been achieved to rectify the pavement outside the Beckett Hamlet development on the High Road, WSM. This has now caused an accident with a pedestrian falling over. Cllr King reported that the developer had put in an application to widen the dropped kerb at this access point. Cllr King also believed that there were no conditions placed on the planning consent to place responsibility onto the developer to maintain the site entrance. The Chairman argued that this was not the site entrance according to planning consent but was in fact the emergency exit and should not be used for two-way movement of HGVs.

The Chairman also felt that the verge cutting by CCC was not frequent enough, the Parish verges were cut in April and would not be cut again until September/October and he felt this was inadequate, leaving some roads dangerously overgrown. Cllr King said this was agreed by the Highways and Transport committee about a year ago to increase biodiversity and some councils now opt to not cut the verges at all.

The Clerk asked for clarification regarding the arbitration process regarding a bench placement on Front Road, Murrow, Cllr King gave his full support to go ahead with the placement as planned having visited the site. Cllr Knight requested confirmation with Highways regarding the ownership of the land before we move forward. Cllr King to investigate.

Cllr Knight questioned whether a S106 Viability assessment can be revisited and Cllr Booth said there is a study that proves land this side of the A47 is not viable and developers use this to get out of S106 contributions.

Cllr Fryett queried the cutting of a designated public footpath that leads out towards Tholomas Drove from Front Road, Murrow opposite the Old Corpus Christi Church. The Clerk confirmed that this was not cut by the Parish Council and Cllr Booth believed this is supposed to be cut by CCC, but is only cut once a year and could have been missed. The clerk to report for cutting.

Cllr Booth reported that the next FDC Full Council is scheduled in August which focuses on the district wards boundary review, he attended an all-members seminar regarding this where the boundary commission gave a presentation.

Cllr Booth queried when the report regarding the Parish Councillors Allowance Scheme would be available. It is ready to be issued, however there are concerns that it may have to go to Full Council first and he will update as soon as that is known.

Cllr Booth reported communications with Highways England regarding the Guyhirn Roundabout and residents' concerns regarding speeding, he has requested better joined up thinking with the Police for the villages and closure dates will be circulated to residents via postcards.

Cllr Booth attending a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and brought forward the argument regarding speeding in the villages.

Cllr Bligh reported that she has forwarded the closure dates circulated by Highways England to Wisbech Police to Speed Check the villages of Guyhirn, WSM and Parson Drove, the main concern being a weekend in November when the A47 will be closed for two consecutive days and nights.

Cllr Booth pointed out these are provisional dates and Cllr Bligh confirmed the Police are aware they are liable to change and will be updated if that's the case.

Cllr Davies asked when the new Local Plan is due for release, and Cllr Booth said that due to COVID it is a year behind to what was originally planned so most likely won't be ready for adoption until 2023.

7. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

7.1. Planning applications determined by the Fenland District Council (FDC). - **Noted**

7.2. Planning applications for discussion:

(a)	F/YR21/0610/F	Erect single-storey front and rear extensions, front porch, and loft conversion to existing dwelling at 66 Murrow Bank Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4HD The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL
(b)	F/YR21/0643/F	Erect a 2-bed annexe ancillary to the main dwelling involving demolition of existing dog kennels at Primrose Villa Thorney Road Guyhirn Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4AD The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL
(c)	F/YR21/0702/O	Erect 1no dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land North Of 15 Sandbank Wisbech St Mary Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL
(d)	F/YR21/0721/F	Change of use of land to form a mini golf course at Land West of Dismantled Railway Line Gull Drove Guyhirn Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL, but would like to note their reservations and concerns regarding Phase Two as detailed in the design and access statement at 3.2 (In time this site is to be developed and the path is to continue through an Under 5's adventure playground, pedal cart track, balance adventure trail, a 'beach', zipwire, 600mm high traversing wall, under 12's play area) due to noise issues.

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

(a) Mrs J Morley – Regarding F/YR20/1011/F Erect a dwelling (2-storey 3-bed) involving demolition of existing garages and Anglian Water pumping station at Site of Anglian Water Treatment Works Access Via Back Road Murrow Cambridgeshire

The Clerk read out the correspondence which expressed disappointment at the Parish Councils majority decision to now support the application at appeal stage.

(b) Community First Responders – Thank You letter & offer of training dates.

The Clerk read out the correspondence which thanked the Parish Council for their generous grant of £1500 and also sent possible training dates. Cllr Booth recommended we open this up as a community event, the Chairman recommended that willing attendees should have to prebook. Clerk to speak to WSM CFR and arrange.

9. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

9.1. Street Lighting – No further update regarding the new Streetlights requested. Clerk to chase.

9.2. Highways

(a) Any Highways issues to be raised by Councillors.

The Chairman asked when the gullies at the side of the newly resurfaced High Road in Guyhirn would be raised to meet the new level of the road? Cllr King to follow up on this.

Cllr Allen reported a concern for the Landlord of the Oliver Twist Country Inn, that the kerb stones have been disturbed since resurfacing and now allow surface water to pass onto the patio of the public house. Cllr King to follow up.

Cllr Knight asked when the road sweeper would be in WSM and also asked about the weeds within the village. The Clerk to follow up regarding the sweeper with FDC and report weeds on CCC portal.

Cllr Scrimshaw reported that the overgrown verges on the A47 with the Black Drove junction were affecting visibility splays. – Clerk to report to Highways England.

(b) Local Highways Improvements – Bids for 22/23

- 1) Continuation of WSM High Road – Speed change from 40mph – 30mph and traffic calming.
- 2) Traffic calming (Chicanes) for Guyhirn High Road.
- 3) Speed Management/Traffic calming to Gull Road, Guyhirn.
- 4) Speed limit change in Tholomas Drove (Residential Area) from 60mph – 40mph.

The Chairman opened the item up for discussion and it was broadly supported that the continuation of WSM High Road would be the LHI bid for 22/23 as Cllr Booth felt that finishing a project that is currently 66% complete would make for a more successful bid. Cllr Allen felt strongly that speed calming in Guyhirn has waited long enough and should be the next bid. It was agreed by majority vote to apply for the completion of WSM High Road as the LHI bid for 22/23, with Guyhirn High Road chicanes being guaranteed to be the LHI bid for 23/24 until its completion regardless of the outcome for the WSM High Road bid for 22/23. Proposed by Cllr Weldon and Seconded by Cllr Fryett.

The Chairman recommended that speed changes in Tholomas Drove should be undertaken via a PFHI as the precept allowed for more infrastructure changes to be funded by the Parish Council. This approach was supported by Cllr Booth by way of the complaints he and Cllr Bligh had received for action. Cllr Humphrey proposed the Parish Council apply for Plash Drove to be changed to 30mph and Tholomas Drove, High Road to be changed to 40mph and be privately funded. This was Seconded by Cllr Britain. Clerk to apply to CCC for quote and bring back to Council to decide whether the application will be budgeted from this financial year or next.

[LHI : Local Highways Improvement / PFHI : Privately Funded Highways Improvement]

10. FINANCE MATTERS

10.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2021/22 to date. The Clerk drew attention to the FDC Concurrent Functions grant of £4660 having been received and £4294 from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation which was the grant money from Wrydecroft Windfarm for the MVAS/SID for Murrow. The bank reconciliation of 2nd July 2021 balanced at £121,339.78.

10.2. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Clerk June Salary	£860.83	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Clerk HMRC Tax and NI	£155.46	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	Clerk Monthly Expenses (June)	£79.70	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	Nest Pensions - June (Direct Debit)	£43.13	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	E-on Lighting Energy June	£523.40	Parish Councils Act 1957	Agreed
(f)	Rapier Signs	£45.00	Misc Prov 1976 S196	Agreed
(g)	Andrew Deptford (Defib & Cabinet)	£1800.00	Public Health Act 1936 S234	Agreed
(h)	Yvonne Reader (Audit assistance)	£100.00	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(i)	Wisbech Electrical Ltd (Fitting of Defibrillator)	£300.00	Public Health Act 1936 S234	Agreed
(j)	Electrical Testing Ltd (Thorney Toll Lights)	£4986.24	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(k)	Fenland Timber Ltd (New Planters Sleepers)	£308.40	Misc Prov 1976 S196	Agreed

10.3. Grant Applications

(a) Murrow PFA | £2000 - Grass Cutting & Insurance Costs

LG Misc Prov 1976 S19

Following discussion, it was decided to support the grant for £2000. Proposed by Cllr Davies and Seconded by Cllr Allen

(b) MAGPAS Air Ambulance | £1000 - Fuel for Helicopter

LG Act 1972 S137

Following discussion, it was decided that based on S137 calculations for the Parish, a lesser amount of £100 should be awarded. Cllr Humphrey recommended that they apply to all the Parish Councils in the area. Cllr Knight commented that if they had sent in the two years of accounts as required the decision could have been different. Proposed by Cllr Booth and Seconded by Cllr Allen.

11. PARISH PROPERTY

11.1. Maintenance

Cllr Fryett asked Councillors how satisfied they were with the grass cutting from the new contractor thus far? The Chairman mentioned that he felt we were in a learning curve with our new maintenance contractor. Cllr Booth supported the Chairman's comments and recognised that the first year of a contract will always have teething problems, and is subjected to unknown weather conditions where the grass has grown rapidly this year. The Clerk reported that she always follows up the queries from Councillors and the Contractor always does his best to rectify any issues or concerns.

11.2. Bus Shelters

Cllr Knight asked for a start date on the Guyhirn bus shelter opposite Chapelfield Road for repainting. Clerk confirmed the works had been ordered. Clerk to chase with contractor

11.3. Planters

(a) Councillors to discuss future plans for planters – Proposal by Cllr Knight

Cllr Knight outlined his proposal for a policy regarding the planters moving forward. He recognised the need for the planters to all have synergy. It is known that that the two new planters in Guyhirn, the two new planters at Plash Drove junction and the two on Murrow Bank that MSP look after all supply their own plants and would not have any maintenance costs.

In the past many of the remaining planters had been full of perennials and as much as that made them easy to manage, they didn't serve the purpose they were created for, which was to put colour into the Parish. Over the years the planters have become full of green foliage, with no room for anything else. He proposed that they are filled 1/3rd by perennials, leaving 2/3rd of the planter free for flowering plants. With the recommendation that they have two flowering seasons. Spring/Summer season in May and Autumn/Winter season in September.

Parish Council would work with the volunteers of the Parish Street Pride groups and supply plants accordingly.

Currently being Murrow and Wisbech St. Mary, with Guyhirn hoping to form later in the year.

The supply of plants would come from Wakefield Nursery at a possible cost of £50 per planter per year (including compost supplied from Long Acre, if needed) for a duration of two years.

This was unanimously supported by Council. - The Clerk to produce a policy and write to suppliers.

Cllr Britain questioned whether the compost supplied by FDC was suitable for the new Guyhirn planters,

however it was decided to utilise a local nursery instead.

11.4. Defibrillators

The Chairman was pleased to see the defibrillator installed in Tholomas Drove and thanked Cllr Knight for producing the press release and taking the photographs.

Cllr Britain was concerned that the cabinet purchased by the Parish Council to house the WSM Community Centres defibrillator was showing signs of deteriorating. Cllr Britain offered to repair and repaint as best he could but ultimately it may need to be replaced by a polycarbonate cabinet.

12. MURROW BANK/FRONT ROAD JUNCTION

(a) Update on junction improvements and Speed Limit changes. – No further updates.

(b) Murrow MVAS/SID (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign/Speed Indicator Device) update.

The Clerk reported that the MVAS/SID was on order but was awaiting approval and costs from Highways regarding placement of poles to bracket the MVAS/SID on to.

13. PARISH PONDS

Cllr Knight along with Cllr Humphrey and Cllr Booth met with a Wildlife Trust Officer to look for recommendations on how to move forward with the ponds in Wisbech St. Mary & Guyhirn.

Wisbech St. Mary ponds most urgent point is finding the source of the sewerage odour and Cllr Knight proposed that the £300 (+Postage and VAT) quote from ADC be approved and ordered as a matter of urgency. This was agreed unanimously by the Council. – Clerk to place order.

Also noted as areas for improvement were the reeds and weeds to the front of the pond and dredging was recommended. Overhanging trees to be trimmed back. The project looking to be in excess of £2000 to get the pond into a reasonable state.

There could possibly be areas of grant funding the project could obtain, especially if great crested newts were present.

Guyhirn pond was a different matter, the officer felt it was a lovely pond and the only area of caution was to cut back the willows and remove the self-sown willows to the front of the pond. The reeds will need to be managed in the winter time.

The clerk to enquire whether TPOs are on the willows and arrange trimming. Possibility of applying to Wrydecroft by the working group for funding help to improve both of the ponds but due to time restraints this won't be until the Spring funding round.

(a) Update on progress with Environment Agency / NL IDB – Wisbech St. Mary.

The Clerk had spoken to an EA officer from the fisheries department. The Clerk followed up with an email outlining the history of the situation and this was to be passed on to the relevant EA officer. No further contact has been received.

(b) Formation of a Working Group and sourcing of Barley Straw.

Cllr Humphrey added three bags of barley straw but has since been advised that new season barley straw works better and will source when available. Cllr Booth also spoke in support of applying to Wrydecroft for a grant.

(c) Update on works carried out by ADC Drainage.

The Chairman met onsite with ADC when they jetted two drains, one is a dead end and the other one goes under the road to the gulley opposite. ADC discovered this drain to be blocked about 6ft away from the gulley and they would be following this up with a CCTV camera check to confirm whether or not it is blocked due to a road collapse.

14. POLICE MATTERS

For Councillors to note report received following Police Forum on 9th July 2021. The Clerk reported that due to a change in staff and report programming within the Police, the reports would be harder to produce. The Clerk attended the meeting and brought up some ASB issues within the Parish. The Clerk suggested inviting the Co-Ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch for Cambridgeshire along to a meeting in the near future. This was agreed by Council and Councillors felt this should be well advertised to try and have a public audience that could possibly follow up by starting village Neighbourhood Watch Groups.

Cllr Knight reported ASB occurring in the WSM Church Graveyard to the rear of the Church with cans being left on memorial stones. – Clerk to report to the Police for inclusion in their ASB operation.

15. CLERK PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For Councillors to agree to the Clerk registering for CiLCA qualification at a combined cost of £810.00. CAPALC training being £400.00 & Registration and submission is £410.00 with SLCC. This was unanimously approved by Council.

16. PARISH BENCH PROJECT

- (a) Update on project progression – Project progressing along the 8-week lead time.
- (b) Placement sites including arbitration process update.

Cllr King acted as arbitrator and has offered the Parish Council his full support, he will be following up regarding land ownership and will advise accordingly.

The Chairman recommended a letter to the two home owners/occupiers that wrote to the Parish Council with their objections, once a decision has been made and prior to any work commencing.

17. NEW PROJECTS

For Councillors to discuss how to move projects forward and agree budgets/funding options.

- (a) Bins next to new benches

Following discussion, it was suggested by Cllr Booth to obtain a quote from FDC and that should be sufficient to apply for Wrydecroft as FDC do their own procurement process. Cllr Booth also mentioned that FDC are in the process of replacing damaged fibre glass bins with plastic ones. Clerk to speak with FDC and apply to Wrydecroft.

- (b) Noticeboards – Item deferred until later in year.

- (c) Parish Info Graphic Boards – Proposal by Cllr Knight

Cllr Knight outlined how he wanted to enhance the villages with information boards. They would focus on listed buildings and their history, street mapping that showed where public interest sites were (for example the Community centre, shops etc) and individual boards for the ponds and churches that went into more detail.

He recognised that any listed building that is privately owned would need to give us their permission, and we would indeed do that moving forward. Recently Thorney had applied to Wrydecroft for something similar and Cllr Knight felt this would make a good visual improvement in the Parish and we should apply too.

He recommended a three phased approach.

Phase One – Apply for funding to Wrydecroft for five boards using a few examples.

Phase Two – If funding successful – create a working group to collate information and proof designs.

Phase Three – Apply for any more boards needed.

Cllr Knight recognised the importance of the Parish Council being behind the project not only with support but financially as well, he proposed that the Parish Council fund £250 per board themselves, so when we apply to Wrydecroft we wouldn't be asking for the full amount.

It was agreed unanimously to support the project with £1250 from the Community projects budget.

Cllr Allen outlined the need to make sure the boards feature in all the villages and Cllr Booth suggested that the first phase focuses on historical buildings and history of the area and the third phase focuses on the ponds.

18. GUYHIRN PLAY EQUIPMENT

Clerk to discuss with Councillors the legal implications surrounding this project.

The Clerk outlined that it was agreed at the previous meeting that WSM Parish Council would apply to Wrydecroft for the Guyhirn Play Equipment, but since that meeting, she has explored the legal implications and this application has to be completed under Guyhirn Playing Field Association otherwise the Parish Council would own the equipment and would be legally obliged to carry out safety checks, hold insurance and undertake maintenance. To progress the project correctly the Clerk requested this be made by Guyhirn PFA. This was agreed by Cllr Davies – Treasurer of Guyhirn PFA.

19. OVERHANGING TREES IN PARISH

For Councillors to discuss any actions needed.

The Chairman discussed the pictures circulated via the one drive. There are trees between Tholomas Drove and WSM that JS Holmes have complained about as their car deliveries are being scratched by overhanging

trees, these have been reported to CCC and shall be followed up by Cllr French. Cllr King outlined the policy adhered to by Officers of CCC; firstly, they had to research for all the land owners, then write three letters a month apart and the final stage would be to complete the works and charge the land owner.

The other pictures circulated to Councillors are of overhanging trees/bushes encroaching onto the public footpath between Church Road and High Road. Cllr Knight suggested in this instance not to contact CCC but to write an open letter to each house that surrounds the 'little jetty footpath' and politely request that they cut back anything that has grown through or over their fences into the footpath. – Agreed by Councillors and Clerk to follow up.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for information only)

Cllr Allen reported that the shrubbery from the churchyard in Guyhirn was encroaching onto the path. – Clerk to speak to Churchwarden and Diocese to arrange cutting it back.

Cllr Allen also reported that applications were open for the John Bends Charity and if Councillors were aware of anyone that may benefit, to ask them to apply.

Cllr Booth reminded Council that wreaths needed ordering for November and the Chairman asked Cllr Booth to order three wreaths on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Fryett asked whether a response had been received from Elgoods regarding The Bell Inn? The clerk advised nothing received and the Chairman asked for the Clerk to resend.

Cllr Britain asked whether a piece of land at the junction of Silt Pit Lane, Tholomas Drove could be tidied up and made something of. Cllr King to advise land ownership and inform the Clerk.

The Chairman mentioned the need for a larger bin (or a split recycling and general waste bin) at the WSM Shop, the Clerk reported that this had been requested and will chase up with FDC.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This may be subject to change due to capacity restrictions and social distancing

Monday 9th August 2021 – 7pm – Thorney Toll Village Hall

DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/2022

Monday 13th September 2021 – 7pm – The Chequers Public House, Tholomas Drove

Monday 11th October 2021 – 7pm – WSM Community Centre

Monday 8th November 2021 – 7pm – New Community Room, Guyhirn

Monday 13th December 2021 – 7pm – Thorney Toll Village Hall

Monday 10th January 2022 – 7pm – Murrow Village Hall

Monday 14th February 2022 – 7pm – The Chequers Public House, Tholomas Drove

Monday 7th March 2022 – 7pm – New Community Room, Guyhirn

Monday 11th April 2022 – 7pm – Murrow Village Hall

Monday 9th May 2022 – 7pm – Parish Assembly/Annual Meeting – WSM Community Centre

Meeting closed at 9:33 pm

Signed: Cllr. D Wheeler, Chairman