

# Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at Thorney Toll Village Hall.

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 & A Weldon.

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

Members of the public: 1

**OPEN FORUM** – Parishioners are invited to address the Council.

The Chairman of Murrow Street Pride reported that the group has resumed post COVID group sessions with a fantastic turn out. Thanks went to Cllr Scrimshaw for tending to the planter on Seadyke Bank and a committee meeting is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> August; where the long-term maintenance of this planter will be discussed.

The Co-Ordinator of Parson Drove and Wisbech St. Mary Ward Community Speedwatch reported that the group is fully functioning with the volunteers they have in place.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllr D Scrimshaw

### **2. PRESENTATION FROM ANGLIAN WATER VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Rose Shisler & Nathan Clark attended the Parish Council meeting via Zoom and were welcomed to the meeting.

Nathan shared a brief update on the current works in WSM - Station Road has 400m of pipe in the ground waiting to be commissioned and work is starting on the 400m – 800m section. There have been no issues on site. The team have met a lot of residents who are friendly and keen to get the works completed to help with the water pressure issues.

Nathan reported four other areas that have been identified for improvements as future schemes which will involve road closures.

- 1) Marshalls Bank – Parson Drove
- 2) Harolds Bank – Parson Drove
- 3) Allens Drove - Gorefield
- 4) Nettle Bank – South Brink A47 (Friday Bridge)

These will all be new water mains replacing the old cast iron mains to increase flow and pressure, they have been identified by infrastructure modellers as areas where the most burst mains are happening.

Rose commented that they are listening to the concerns of the wider community and they will be contacting the other respective Parish Councils in due course.

Rose outlined how AW wanted to offer community support to the village of WSM as a thank you to the communities understanding and patience. This would ideally be an environmental project that would leave a lasting legacy in the community.

Councillors suggested that the current pond project would be ideal and the Council would be grateful for their input. To give AW a better idea as to what the project entails, it was arranged that Nathan would meet with the Chairman and the Pond Working Group the following day.

The Chairman thanked Rose and Nathan for the update and for the offer of community support and the Zoom meeting was closed.

**3. TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING** dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The minutes were taken as read, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES** (information only)

(a) Elgoods – The Bell Inn

Councillors noted the response from Elgoods and agreed that there was no further action that the Parish Council could take.

(b) Highways England – Verge of Black Drove – Works completed - **Noted**

(c) Overgrown Churchyard Guyhirn – Works completed - **Noted**

(d) Land at Silt Pit Lane junction – Land owner enquiry

CCC have agreed the land is highways verge and are happy for the Parish Council to tidy the area up, adhering to highway safety.

Cllr Booth reported that the wreaths for remembrance had been ordered and RBL will invoice the Parish Council in due course

## **5. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - None**

## **6. MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTEREST - None**

## **7. 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. Prior to the questions from Councillors, Cllr King requested that Councillors email him to outline any complaints the Parish Council had received from residents following the previous weekend closures to the Guyhirn Roundabout to support his request for a temporary weight restriction.

Cllr King also reported the kerb stones outside The Oliver Twist have now been replaced.

The Chairman expressed his frustration regarding the Beckett Hamlett development and feels that the development should be given a stop work notice until they can use the correct site access, as it is causing problems within the village.

Cllr King has made contact with the Highways Officer and will escalate the issue. Developers have been told of the concerns but they are still continuing to use the emergency exit as a site access.

The Clerk reported that FDC Planning Officers are keeping the pressure on the developers but stress that any action with regards to enforcement has to be proportionate.

Cllr Booth mentioned the comment Cllr King had made in his report with regards to the MVAS/SID the Parish Council are aiming to site in Murrow. He felt there were some confusions as the Parish Council were wanting a permanent SID placed so the CSW could use it for roadside sessions and not the temporary version used by Highways for collecting a sample of data. The Clerk reported that she is still waiting for highways to approve the three locations the SID is aiming to be placed. Cllr King to follow up.

Cllr Knight expressed his frustration that the CCC Councillors that represent Wisbech St. Mary, Guyhirn and Thorney Toll are consistently absent from Parish Council meetings and feels they are not representing the whole area of their division for which they were elected for. He also thanked Cllr King for stepping into their role and is extremely grateful for his work with the Parish Council but feels it's unfair as it isn't strictly his role to do so.

Cllr Booth reported that the next Full Council meeting of FDC is due to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> August and the only item on the agenda is the boundary review for district wards. The first stage of the review is the confirmation of number of Councillors, which FDC are still waiting for. Next stage would then be warding arrangements. This is still being worked on and would report back as soon as any more information comes forward.

Cllr Booth had received a complaint from a resident that the riverbank in Guyhirn is in a poorly maintained state, this has been reported to EA but received a standard response.

The manholes in Guyhirn were also a concern but Cllr Booth has since been made aware that these are currently being worked on by Highways.

Cllr Booth stated that there is a meeting of the Planning Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> August to consider FDC response to the Incinerator. The members of the public will still only be allowed to watch via zoom due to social distancing restrictions. This will purely be FDC technical response as the incinerator application (due to its size) will be decided by the secretary of state.

Cllr Bligh reported that she has been extremely busy with Planning Committee meetings as they are happening fortnightly. She has received many residential calls with private issues and has helped with them. Cllr Bligh felt Cllr Booth had covered everything else as August is traditionally a quite month within the Council, left her report there.

Cllr King left the meeting at this point – The Chairman thanked him for his attendance and support.

## 8. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

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

8.2. Planning applications for discussion:

(a)	<a href="#">F/YR21/0743/F</a>	Erect 2 x dwellings (2-storey 4-bed) at Plots 2 And 3 Pitt Farm Spencer Drove Guyhirn Cambridgeshire <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.</b>
(b)	<a href="#">F/YR21/0425/F</a> <b>RECONSULTATION</b>	Erect a dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) and detached garage, involving the demolition of the existing glasshouses at Land East of Bank View Gull Road Guyhirn Cambridgeshire <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.</b>
(c)	<a href="#">F/YR21/0800/F</a>	Erect a commercial unit (E1) with 1 x 1-bed flat above at Land West of The Cod Father High Road Wisbech St Mary Cambridgeshire <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL. They completely supported the addition of a commercial unit in the village and recognise that the application before them comes with the flat above. It is regarding the flat above that they have the following concerns: The scale of the development, impact on the neighbouring property and the visual impact to the street scene.</b>
(d)	<a href="#">F/YR21/0816/F</a>	Erect a first-floor extension to existing dwelling including render to exterior at Grapevines 66 Back Road Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JW <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.</b>
(e)	<a href="#">F/YR21/0764/F</a>	Erect a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling at Whitegates Hooks Drove Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4HH <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.</b>

## 9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

(a) MAGPAS – Thank you - **Noted**

(b) CCC & Cambs Police – Traffic Management at Remembrance Events - **Noted**

(c) Swann Edwards Architecture Ltd – F/YR21/0800/F – Regarding Parish Council Asset

The Chairman read out the letter received from the agent of planning application 8.2 (c) regarding the Parish Council bench in front of The Codfather on the High Road, WSM. Stating it would be an obstruction if planning application was approved by FDC. Councillors agreed to move the new replacement bench (already a project in progress) a metre over to sit centrally to the lower fence at this stage regardless of the outcome from the planning application.

## 10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

### 10.1. Street Lighting

The Chairman reported that Electrical Testing Ltd have been left short staffed due to 'pinging' from NHS COVID app and the new sites and replacement head are still waiting to be looked at/completed.

### 10.2. Highways

(a) Beckett Hamlet – Site entrance and associated issues.

Cllr Booth expressed his frustration that the developers are operating against the planning consent, but the developers are only breaking the law once enforcement notice has been served.

Cllr Fryett surmised that the movement of the bus shelter was the reasoning behind their use of the emergency exit, even though the Parish Council had met with the site manager and arranged details for the moving of it.

The Chairman expressed a small understanding of their actions as he is aware of the huge costs involved with creating a suitable roadway, however he stated that the developers need to respond to the concerns of the community, Parish Council and the LPA and take action to use the approved site access.

The Clerk will continue to chase for updates from Planning Officers.

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

Cllr Davies reported that deep puddles sit in front of the Gull Road bus stop (near Tall Trees) when it rains heavily, he surmised that there must be a low point in the road as he believes there are no gullies there. The Chairman stated that the whole of Gull Road needs looking at as it is rapidly deteriorating due to constant movement of HGVs and farm traffic. The Clerk to make Highways aware.

Cllr Davies also questioned when the gully drains on the High Road will be filled in around following the resurfacing, the Chairman advised that these are currently being completed.

Cllr Britain reported that the resurfacing is already failing on the High Road, Guyhirn from HGV movements due to the Guyhirn Roundabout being closed.

Cllr Britain mentioned a directive from 1968 that was regarding thistledown blowing in the wind, and that it made it illegal to willingly allow this to happen, and he feels that CCC verge cutting policy goes against this directive.

The Clerk mentioned that she had spoken to FDC Officers about this and although they couldn't confirm whether this was still law, they said it would be a good place to start your argument to push for more regular verge cutting from CCC.

## **11. FINANCE MATTERS**

11.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2021/22 to date. The Clerk drew attention to £650 received so far for Planter Sponsorship. The bank reconciliation of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 balanced at £110,687.62

11.2. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Clerk July 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 (July)	£71.87	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	Nest Pensions - July (Direct Debit)	£43.13	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	E-on Lighting Energy July	£399.88	Parish Councils Act 1957	Agreed
(f)	Waverley Nurseries (B Wakefield)	£30.00	LG Misc Prov Act 1976 S196	Agreed
(g)	Rapier Signs (Planter Signs)	£30.00	LG Misc Prov Act 1976 S196	Agreed
(h)	WSM Community Centre (Hall Hire)	£144.00	LG Act 1972 S134	Agreed

11.3. Grant Applications - NIL

## **12. PARISH PROPERTY**

12.1. Maintenance

(a) Guyhirn Pond Willow Trees – TPO

The Clerk reported that the decision notice from our previous application for works to the willows allows us a continuing permission to maintain the willows every two years. Following a consultation with the FDC Tree Officer, it was agreed for the Parish Council to obtain quotes for repollarding back to original knuckle points (approx. 5m point) on all five willow trees. The willow closest to the road was observed to have a cavity in it but the officer did not want it to be felled. The clerk reported that she has sent out for quotes and will report back at the next meeting.

(b) Trees/Weed Spraying at Tholomas Drove

Cllr Knight was approached by a resident of Tholomas Drove asking whether the weed spray used around the base of the trees was suitable for use, considering that children and animals walk on the land. The clerk to get confirmation from contractor and send resident a letter.

Cllr Knight also wanted confirmation that the railings on the war memorials will be painted prior to remembrance, the clerk confirmed that is on the maintenance contract for October with Kevin Clarke.

The Clerk advised Councillors that following a request from MSP and permission from the Chairman, she had also asked for a quote from MJ Coates on Lynn Road, Wisbech to redo the lettering on the Murrow War Memorial.

12.2. Bus Shelters

The clerk confirmed that the Guyhirn bus shelter requested to be repainted had been completed.

12.3. Planters

(a) Sponsorship arrangements & renewals for 2021/22 following invoicing.

(b) Planter Policy

The Clerk outlined the reasoning behind the policy was to make sure all sponsorship money was spent on the planters. By projecting the income, the policy allows for an allotted spend on plants over the year, compost, maintenance and new plaques when needed and to donate money to the Street Pride Groups that volunteer to weed and plant up the planters. The policy was agreed and Councillors also decided to give the clerk delegated authority to manage the planter sponsorship arrangements and authorise spending on

plants/compost as per the policy.

#### 12.4. Defibrillators

The Chairman thanked Cllr Britain for 'touching up' the defib cabinets that were showing signs of deterioration and also mentioned that the Council may need to replace all the cabinets to Poly Carbonate ones in the fullness of time.

### 13. MURROW BANK/FRONT ROAD JUNCTION

(a) Update on junction improvements and Speed Limit changes.

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

The Clerk reported that the PFHI for Murrow Bank and Sand Bank had been blocked by the Police due to the proposal not having physical build outs (chicanes/speed cushions) and expectation would be on the police to enforce. Highways will not support the application without the Police support. The Clerk has emailed the Police and Crime Commissioner to try and get this policy reviewed. Cllr Booth advised also contacting Matt Staton at CCC as he is the Police Support Officer looking at Speeding. Cllr Booth also advised looking at Department of Transport guidance on speed limits in villages as CCC is at odds with other County Councils around the country.

The Chairman advised that the MVAS/SID had already been discussed during Cllr Kings report and there was nothing further to add.

### 14. PARISH PONDS

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

(b) Any reports from Pond working group.

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

The Chairman opened the item up for discussion for the above three items, by detailing everything that had happened thus far. ADC has jetted the gullies and checked they are running clear via a CCTV camera. They had also provided a water test FOC, this showed a PH level which was indicative of sewerage traces in the water, however EA reported that the test performed may not conclusively show sewerage and that the decaying vegetation in the pond could still be the cause. The EA had also mentioned that the discharge plant flowing into the pond was not ideal as it is something they no longer recommend but this decision was made by WSM Parish Council back in 2004 for which they received £2000 from the builder of Goodfellows Terrace. The Chairman requested that the clerk write to Steve Barclay regarding their experience with the EA and their lack of action and unwillingness to help.

The Chairman then reported a quote received from ADC to dredge WSM pond for £5700 (+VAT) which required WSM Parish Council to dispose of the de watered silt and suitable sites need to be arranged for this to go on which would be decided at a later date. The Chairman mentioned the TTRO road closure in place on Station Road by AW (whilst the main replacement was being carried out), allowed ADC to bring their equipment in safely. Permission also needed to be sought from the land owner between the pond and the road allowing for pipes and movement over.

The Chairman requested a letter of thanks be sent to ADC for all their hard work so far and their support for the community.

Cllr Britain mentioned that Guyhirn pond had the same 'manky' appearance about four years ago but it has now cleared. Cllr Davies believes this is thanks to the surrounding new properties being built. The Chairman stated that WSM pond has more surface water from the road going into the pond than Guyhirn.

Cllr Knight questioned whether the original agreement for the discharge plant could be looked at and whether that could be revoked. The Chairman stated that would involve legal costs.

Cllr Knight continued that he believed that a third of the reeds to the front will need to be removed too.

Finally, The Chairman questioned whether there was agreement for the WSM Pond being the suitable project for the AW offer and it was agreed by Councillors to go ahead.

An update from the meeting with AW will be made at the September meeting.

### 15. POLICE MATTERS

For Councillors to note report received following Police Forum. – **No meeting occurred.**

## **16. PARISH BENCH PROJECT**

(a) Update on project progression – **No new update.**

(b) Placement sites including arbitration process update.

Councillors have been made aware that this is Highway's land and Cllr Simon King has given the Parish Council his support to place a bench on 'site 12'. The Chairman recommended that the objectors be contacted prior to any works taking place explaining the process taken.

## **17. ALLOTMENT LAND – SUBLET REQUEST**

The Chairman opened the item up for discussion by explaining the clerk had been contacted by Maxeys asking for the Parish Councils permission to allow subletting to take place on the 3+ hectares of land off the A47 currently leased to tenants.

Cllr Allen explained that the farmers wishing to sublet had been on a management plan with our tenants but they are now taking over the entire tenancy.

As the land in question sits in the middle of the area farmed by the tenant, they need to transfer the tenancy of this piece also.

The Clerk stated that the Parish Council cannot just re let the land to the potential subtenant or allow subletting to take place. Subletting goes against the signed contract and due to transparency rules, if the land became available for re letting it would have to be advertised for tender.

Cllr Davies asked whether something similar to a legal codicil could be arranged to modify the lease to allow subletting?

Cllr Humphrey mentioned that if the land was re let it would be at a substantially lower value, due to current rates for farming land.

Cllr Knight expressed concern that the tenant is now breaking the tenancy if this was ignored and allowed to continue and feels the Parish Council need legal advice.

Cllr Britain explained that the land used to be one-acre allotments years ago.

Cllr Booth suggested allowing the land to be transferred to the potential subtenant as allotment land and was concerned that a line had been blurred between allotments (how the Parish Council consider the land) and a Commercial Farming Tenancy (drawn up by Maxeys).

Cllr Knight again expressed concern that any automatic transfer (in any way) over to the potential subtenant would appear to be preferential treatment.

The Chairman mentioned the possibility of selling the land, however that also would need to be transparently advertised and not directly offered to an individual party.

Cllr Davies asked whether a new lease could be drawn up with the daughter of the tenant, who signed as a partner on the original lease, and remove the underlet clause?

The Chairman stated that we cannot make a decision on this item until we have firm legal advice and requested the clerk go back to Maxeys to speak to the tenant with the suggestions covered and state that subletting would not be allowed and that the Parish Council would assume that the tenant commence their 12 months' notice to quit unless informed otherwise.

The Clerk to update at the following meeting.

## **18. WRYDECROFT WIND FARM GRANTS**

For Councillors to note applications made

(a) Info Graphic Boards – Amount applied for £4810.00 - **Noted**

(b) New Bins – Amount applied for £3087.40

Cllr Fryett questioned that a bin next to the new bench on the Murrow planter plot hadn't been included however FDC felt the bin at the new bus shelter would be close enough.

## **19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (for information only)**

Cllr Allen requested that Councillors support the Community Speedwatch and volunteer.

The Chairman reiterated that a letter be sent to the County Councillors asking that they attend more often.

## **21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – 7pm – The Chequers Public House, Tholomas Drove

**DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/2022**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 – 7pm – WSM Community Centre

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 7pm – New Community Room, Guyhirn

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 7pm – Thorney Toll Village Hall

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 7pm – Murrow Village Hall

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – 7pm – The Chequers Public House, Tholomas Drove

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – 7pm – New Community Room, Guyhirn

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – 7pm – Murrow Village Hall

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

Meeting closed at 9:40 pm

Signed: Cllr. D Wheeler, Chairman