

# Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at Guyhirn Community Room, Playing Field, Guyhirn.

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

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

Members of the public: 3

### 1. OPEN FORUM - Parishioners are invited to address the Council.

- The Co-Ordinator of the Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speedwatch (CSW) reported that there is evidence that speeding is decreasing and that CSW will be looking to train more volunteers by campaigning at local events. A more targeted approach with all day sessions is also planned.
- The Chairman of Murrow Street Pride (MSP) expressed frustration regarding the Back Road Planter Plot in Murrow and the lack of help from Highways following a request to have a high kerb installed to stop vehicles destroying the grass verge.
- A Murrow resident thanked the Parish Council for supporting and attending the meeting at Back Road, Murrow with Highways. A way forward both short term and long term has been discussed.
- The Armed Forced Covenant Champion reported that he has started putting a blog together to connect with residents, which can be linked to the Parish Council's website.
- A Guyhirn resident expressed thanks (following her concerns reported at the last Parish Council meeting) that she had received a letter regarding future closures to the Guyhirn Roundabout.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Received and accepted from Cllr Allen.

### 3. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - None

### 4. MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTEREST for items on this agenda.

Item 14 (a) & (b) Cllr P Davies declared a prejudicial interest and will not be debating or voting on these items.

**5. TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING** dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The Council resolved including any amendments to accept as a true record, the minutes of the meeting. These were duly signed by the Chairman.

### 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (information only).

(a) Issue with Balfour Beatty regarding Street Light on Station Road, WSM – Works Complete.

(b) Fruit Trees on Murrow Pond – Tenant happy to comply with Tenancy Agreement.

(c) The Clerk, (responding to Cllr Knights concern from the previous meeting regarding how the public will be consulted on for the LHI works,) reported that the Projects team at Highways will send a letter to all affected residents and can also provide a poster for the Parish Council to put up in the village and add to Village Voices.

### 7. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS - Agenda item time limited to 10 minutes

- Cllr Booth reported that he had attended the Overview & Scrutiny meeting of Fenland District Council (FDC) where the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Agenda was discussed and they are planning investment to grow businesses in Fenland. The Transformation Program was also discussed, where changes to delays that residents are experiencing when calling in to FDC should improve under the new Fenland One Team.
- Cllr Count reported that the new Secondary School proposed for Wisbech appears to have been side-lined as there is a distinct lack of information surrounding it. He expressed frustration regarding the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) budget. The CCC portion of the Council Tax had a 2% increase, which was the maximum that could be applied, which in his opinion will add £6.5m into reserves that are already full due to underspends. A proposal to add £4m into a capital funds for flooding (as well as £100k towards modelling) was unsupported, which he states Anglian Water and the Environment Agency would match fund, stopping a valuable £12m being available to Fenland towns to mitigate against flooding. However, a flood strategy was being developed that would see communities being empowered to look after themselves.

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- Cllr Count raised concern regarding the £5m Community Capital Fund, as he had been made aware that it was no longer available. He also gave praise to the areas new Highways Officer for her quick replies to issues and willingness to solve them.
- Cllr King circulated his report and was happy to answer any questions.
- The Chairman questioned why £700k has to be available to make changes to Bellamy Bridge when just speed bumps would suffice? Cllr King answered that Highways Officers feel that speed bumps are not appropriate in that location due to the drain. So, the only option is re-aligning the junction, hence the expense. Cllr King will keep pushing for this to be solved.
- The Chairman reported that the barriers haven't been repaired following the latest accident. Cllr King advised that this has been requested along with a refresh of the lining.
- Cllr King advised that he would raise the question surrounding the availability of the Community Capital Fund with the chairman of that committee.
- Cllr Knight expressed frustration over Bellamy Bridge, and feels this is an issue that will not go away, and the issue is mainly down to speed, and if re-aligning the road leads to a straight road, it will become a race track even more.
- Cllr Britain raised two questions to Cllr Count. The first being a historic issue regarding a fence that encroaches onto the highway of Gull Drove, this now has a hedge growing up it and is a very blind corner. Drivers are now going over the verge to avoid an accident. Historically the enforcement officer felt there was no action to be taken as enforcement outweighed the infringement. Cllr Britain asked for this to be looked at again. Cllr Count supported this action. The second issue was regarding a Murrow resident wishing to change his garage into a living accommodation. Cllr Britain was advised that this was a district council question and the clerk gave Cllr Britain the contacts details of FDC planning.
- Cllr Bligh reported that she had attended Full Council of FDC on 24<sup>th</sup> February but had to leave early. She supported the 0% increase to the FDC portion of the Council Tax but had to leave before it was voted on.
- Cllr Bligh reported that following a full consultation of Guyhirn residents regarding a new playground, she had secured £48k for new Guyhirn Playground equipment, which will be aimed at 3-11 year-olds to comply with the trustees of the old Guyhirn village hall to release the extra £5k from them too. The money had been secured from historic S106 monies from 2005. There will be a site visit by FDC Officers and Councillors to look at what can be achieved.

## 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/YR22/0125/O</a>	Erect 1no dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land West of Camelot Back Road Murrow Cambridgeshire <b>The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL based on the continued overdevelopment of a road without adequate infrastructure. The Parish Council wish to note that should the infrastructure have been adequate then the recommendation would have been favourable.</b>	Applicant: Mr & Mrs Thrower Agent: Fendraw Design
(b)	<a href="#">F/YR22/0179/F</a>	Erect a part 2-storey part single-storey side and rear extension including installation of external insulation and render to existing dwelling, and detached outbuilding involving the demolition of existing outbuildings at 22 Station Drive Wisbech St Mary Cambridgeshire PE13 4RX <b>The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL</b>	Applicant: Mr Matthew Walker Agent: N/A

### 8.3. Planning Enforcement (ENF/257/19) Land south east of Gore Villas, Mill Road, Murrow relating to a breach of condition 6 of planning permission F/YR18/0190/VOC – Update

The Clerk reported that there had been a change of staffing and the previous enforcement officer had left FDC. The new officer will do a site visit on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March to see if enforcement is appropriate.

## 9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

### (a) LGBCE – Electoral Review Briefing – Teams Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> March 22 at 6pm

The Chairman asked the Clerk to recirculate the information to all Councillors.

### (b) FDC – Developing a Community Emergency Action Plan- **Noted**

### (c) WSM & Guyhirn PCC – Possible Closure of WSM Churchyard Burial Ground

The Chairman reported that the PCC are struggling with very limited income and that there was a real possibility that the closed burial ground to the rear of WSM Church will be passed onto the Parish Council. The Parish Council noted the correspondence and will await the PCC decision. Cllr Knight reported that the Parish Council can pass the maintenance of the burial ground onto the District Council.

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## 10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

### 10.1. Street Lighting

The Chairman stated that he had still been unable to contact Electrical Testing regarding the three new streetlights, but was very impressed with the two solar lights installed on the path through the Guyhirn Playing Field. He queried as to whether these could be a possible solution for the three new ones and other areas where an electrical supply is unavailable.

The Chairman also mentioned that the renumbering of the streetlights. The clerk advised until we put up the new ones and finalise the asset register the renumbering couldn't start. The Clerk to start working on the process.

### 10.2. Highways

#### (a) Back Road, Murrow – Outcome of meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Cllr Fryett attended the meeting and outlined that he felt the Local Highways Officer (LHO) is willing to help but there are limits to what they can do as they only deal with maintenance. There is a need for the projects team to be involved if any solution to Back Road is to come forward. The short-term solution of the pot hole repairs couldn't happen yet as it is too cold. Cllr Fryett realises that the LHI option would not be a viable option due to the costs involved. The passing places on Back Road need to be established with road planings but these are currently unavailable.

Cllr King reported that there could be a solution involving a new scheme from CCC involving 20mph road limits. This is only available in the new financial year and the criteria is still being worked on. He considered the suggestion of blocking the road halfway unlikely due to the lack of room to create a turning circle.

Cllr Booth queried the 20mph scheme as the Parish Council is having to fund their own Private Highways Improvement to make roads 30mph, and would lowering to a 30mph speed limit be considered within this scheme?

#### (b) Service Covers – High Road, Guyhirn

Cllr Davies expressed frustration regarding how these are being fixed sporadically, the Clerk confirmed they have all been reported to Anglian Water.

#### (c) Highways Enforcement Update

- I. Hedge encroaching highway Gull Road, Guyhirn
- II. Trees/Hedging encroaching onto footpath o/s St Lynne, High Road, Wisbech St. Mary
- III. Encroachment onto Highways Verge opp WSM Village Shops

The Chairman reported that the LHO has been made aware of all the potential enforcement issues and is working through them. He noted that the groins encroaching on the highways land opposite the WSM shops have now been struck by a vehicle.

#### (d) Any other Highways issues to be raised by Councillors.

Cllr Fryett reported an overgrown hedge at Pigeons Corner and a privet hedge encroaching onto the footpath opposite the Bell Inn on Front Road, Murrow.

Cllr Davies reported that Gull Drove had been repaired in December and was already failing again.

Cllr Fryett also reported that water is pooling in front of the Bus Shelter near Tall Trees on Gull Road, Guyhirn, he believes the gully there has failed.

Cllr Humphrey queried the start date for the undulations on Sandbank, WSM.

The Chairman queried when the recycling centre on Church Road would have the trees tidied up by FDC.

Cllr Knight asked for an update on the access to Beckett Hamlet, and when it would be finished. The clerk to enquire to FDC for the latter two questions.

## 11. FINANCE MATTERS

11.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2021/22 to date. The bank reconciliation of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 balanced at £99,526.07 which was agreed to and signed off by Cllr David Scrimshaw.

11.2. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Clerk February 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 (February)	£60.80	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed

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(d)	Nest Pensions - February (Direct Debit)	£43.13	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Npower Lighting Energy January & February	TBC	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(f)	Tamar IT – Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£11.32	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(g)	T A Blackamore Ltd – Grass Verges	£3772.80	Highways Act 1980 S96	Agreed
(h)	K. Clarke Carpentry – Guyhirn Notice Board	£148.50	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(i)	Wetland Plants – Pond Plants	£365.50	LG Misc Prov Act 1976 S19	Agreed
(j)	Balfour Beatty – Station Road, WSM	£465.32	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(k)	SWARCO Traffic Ltd – Murrow MVAS/SID	£5337.60	Highways Act 1980	Agreed
(l)	T A Blackamore Ltd – General Maintenance 21/22	£4768.20	LG Misc Prov Act 1976 S19	Agreed

The Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of February totalling £15989.46. The invoices and schedule of payments to be made (and of any payments already made) were checked and signed off by the Chairman and Cllr Humphrey.

11.3. For Councillors to agree to the Clerk (in conjunction with the Chairman) making payment to Npower if the Streetlight Energy invoices for January and February are supplied before the financial year end. The Council agreed for the invoices to be paid up to a total of £3000 if they arrive before the financial year end. Proposed by Cllr Booth and Seconded by Cllr Weldon.

11.4. Grant Applications - **Nil**

## **12. PARISH PROPERTY**

### **12.1. Maintenance**

#### **(a) General Maintenance – Changes to Schedule for 2022/23**

The clerk reported that as well as the two bus shelters at Tholomas Drove and on the A47 at Thorney Toll being cleaned monthly through Winter, she had added WSM Pond to be maintained as this was missed off last year, and that she had removed the weed spraying from around the planters. It was also reported that David Rowell had asked for permission to continue maintaining the triangle of grass beside the Chequers, this was agreed and a letter of thanks to be sent.

#### **(b) RoSPA Inspections – For Councillors to consider booking pond inspections for 2022/23**

The Chairman questioned whether the ponds could be inspected bi-annually by RoSPA?

Cllr Booth stated that we have a duty of care to make sure they are safe, but so long as members monitor them and the risk assessment is altered to two yearly checks, he felt this was adequate. The Council resolved to proceed on this basis.

### **12.2. Bus Shelters – No Issues Reported.**

### **12.3. Planters**

#### **(a) Planter Policy 2022/23 - For Councillors to discuss Summer Plants purchase and distribution.**

Cllr Knight acknowledged the report circulated on the OneDrive distributing the sponsorship money to maintain the planters and that £300 (exc VAT) can be spent on Summer Plants as well as £120 (exc VAT) for compost. He will order the plants and deliver to volunteers nearer Summer.

The Clerk asked for Fenland Timbers planter to be added to the list for plants as they had donated their planter to the Parish Council to be looked after.

Cllr Booth asked that the report be referred to as a Schedule and not a policy in future – the Clerk to amend.

### **12.4. Defibrillators**

Cllr Knight asked whether the Community First Responders would be able to hold another First Aid event, and the Parish Council make a contribution to them in return? The Clerk to enquire.

## **13. LAND AT SILT PIT LANE JUNCTION**

For Councillors to receive progress report on Community Project with Galliford Try. – No further updates to the projected start date of beginning of April.

## **14. GUYHIRN LAND TENANCIES**

For clerk to give a report on historical tenancy agreement and proposal to move forward.

#### **(a) Tenancy agreement and rent for Land known as the Guyhirn Playing Field**

#### **(b) Tenancy agreement and rent for Land known as Guyhirn Football Field and Guyhirn Dog Walkers Field**

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The Clerk gave a report referring to both items (a) & (b). A 20-year tenancy agreement had been found that was between WSM PC & Guyhirn Playing Field Association for the Football Field and Dog Walkers Field, these were supposed to have been leased at £10 per year, but this had not happened for at least the last 9 years, most likely due to the change of Clerks. The tenancy agreement ceased in January 2022 and the Clerk requested that there be no attempt to claim the back dated money as it was the Parish Councils error for not invoicing. However, the Clerk requested that two tenancy agreements remain separate going forward, both for £10 per year and both with individual terms and conditions.

The Clerk advised that the old tenancy agreement did restrict the football field to sport use only and this will remain the case going forward, but will have a clause that allows for use outside sport if approved in writing by the Landlord (The Parish Council).

This was agreed by the Parish Council and the Clerk to issue both tenancy agreements.

## **15. POLICE MATTERS**

For Councillors to note report following Police Forum. – No meeting occurred; next meeting planned for 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## **16. A1 INFORMATION BOARDS PROJECT**

### **(a) Guyhirn Pond Board**

Cllr Knight reported that thanks to Anglian Water and Wrydecroft Windfarm, the Parish Council had funding for 7 information boards, the WSM board was in place and the Guyhirn pond board had been signed off by the Chairman and Guyhirn Councillors and will be despatched soon.

### **(b) Information Board Design suggestions x 5**

Cllr Knight stated that he had started on the WSM village map, and wanted clarification on whether businesses should be included or not? It was decided by the Council that businesses would not be included to try and future proof the board.

Cllr Booth added that the boards shouldn't advertise businesses but should promote the heritage homes and community buildings. Cllr Knight and the Chairman felt they should not include privately owned homes as it could be an invasion into the home owner's privacy.

It was decided that the map would include any community buildings and community assets (Jubilee Wood & Pond) and include a 'You are here' arrow. The WSM information board will be placed on the grass next to the shops and the bus shelter, which may include moving the rubbish bin slightly.

Following discussion, the remaining four boards would be placed in Murrow, Tholomas Drove, Guyhirn Chapel of Ease and WSM Church.

Cllr Fryett requested that two boards be placed in Murrow, one based on the history of the Railway and the other being a similar village map. This was proposed by Cllr Weldon, seconded by Cllr Mann and unanimously supported by the Council. The Clerk noted that the extra board could be funded from the Community Projects budget.

Cllr Knight reported that the two boards for the churches may need permission from the diocese, and this was in the Church Wardens hands to enquire.

## **17. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE**

### **(a) Update on dates for distribution of commemorative mugs to Parish Primary Schools**

Following discussion, it was noted that all three schools had been approached to organise respective assemblies to present the mugs. WSM and Guyhirn would possibly be the end of April, with Murrow looking at early May.

Cllr Booth recommended taking a few extra mugs to each assembly in case of any breakages. The Chairman agreed and confirmed extras had been ordered.

Cllr Knight agreed to produce a Power Point presentation for each assembly and will circulate to respective Councillors.

### **(b) For Councillors to consider quote for 450 acrylic mug gift boxes.**

Councillors, by majority vote decided against boxes being supplied with the mug. The acrylic boxes were quoted at £360.00 (ex VAT) for 450 boxes.

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## 18. ASSETS REGISTER AND INSPECTION OF ASSETS.

(a) For Councillors to note the Asset Inspection will be completed on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - **Noted**

## 19. 2022/2023 MUNICIPAL YEAR PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSED DATES & LOCATIONS - **Noted**

2022/2023 MUNICIPAL YEAR PARISH COUNCIL DATES & LOCATIONS		
Proposed Date	Time	Proposed Location
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	7:00pm	The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	7:00pm	New Community Room – Guyhirn
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	7:00pm	Murrow Village Hall
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	7:00pm	Thorney Toll Village Hall
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	7:00pm	New Community Room – Guyhirn
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	7:00pm	The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	7:00pm	Thorney Toll Village Hall
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	7:00pm	Murrow Village Hall
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	7:00pm	New Community Room – Guyhirn
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	7:00pm	The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2023	7:00pm	Murrow Village Hall
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	7:00pm	WSM Community Centre – Sidings Room

## 20. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

To consider any items for a future meeting agenda

- Cllr Fryett questioned what had happened to the old wooden benches, the Chairman advised that they were currently stored at his works and as they were in a poor condition with no value they would be written off, and available for disposal.
- Cllr Weldon gave her apologies for the next meeting.
- Cllr Britain asked for a letter of thanks be sent to Mr & Mrs Payne for looking after the Guyhirn Notice Board for approx. 8 years.
- Cllr Britain also mentioned his concern regarding an abandoned car, he was asked to take a photo and send to the clerk.

## 21. EXEMPT ITEM

To consider entering into a confidential session to discuss a Staffing Matter

This was proposed by Cllr Booth and Seconded by Cllr Weldon.

## 22. PARISH CLERK – ANNUAL REVIEW Confidential Item.

Please see appendix A for confidential minutes.

## 23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

## DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/2022

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

Meeting closed at 9:15pm

.....Date:.....

Chairman

Cllr David Wheeler