

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 9th January 2023 at Murrow Village Hall, Murrow Bank, Murrow PE13 4HB

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

FDC Councillors: S Bligh & G Booth

Members of the public: 1

Also Present: Mark Peck – Rights of Way Officer for East Cambs & Fenland - Cambridgeshire County Council.

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 road side sessions will resume in February.
- The Chairman of Murrow Street Pride Group reported that two of their planter barrels near the War Memorial had been hit and damaged by a vehicle, these will be replaced as soon as possible.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Received and accepted from CCC Cllrs S King, S Count & J French.

3. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - None

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

- Item 13.1 (a) II. Councillor Blackmore declared a personal interest; therefore, he will not take part in any discussion or vote.
- Item 15. Councillor Fryett declared a personal interest as an acquaintance of the company awarded the Guyhirn Car Park Extension and will not vote on any decisions to be made.

5. TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING dated 12th December 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). - None

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

- Cllr King sent his apologies for the meeting and circulated his report via email.
- The Clerk drew attention to the response to the missing bus stop road marking outside WSM shop, which stated that the LHO couldn't find evidence that there had ever been road markings there, (having looked back as far as 2009). Councillors reported that they believed they were there prior to the major roadworks when the mains sewer works were completed around 2008. The Clerk to follow up with Cllr King.
- Cllr Booth reported that he had received a complaint from a WSM resident regarding the footpaths not being improved following completion of the Sayers Field/Crescent site. Planning Enforcement have been contacted for investigation.
- Cllr Booth also reported his attendance at FDC Overview & Scrutiny Meeting, to which Clarion attended; he questioned them over maintenance delays to properties and slow response times to queries. Due to national attention and pressures, mould issues have been taking priority.
- Cllr Booth reported that 60 new build Clarion social houses in the town of March have been held up due to break downs in communication with FDC Planning Department.
- Cllr Weldon reported a concern regarding the heating system of a Clarion resident of Thorney Toll, which Cllr Booth agreed to follow up on.
- Cllr Booth also reported that the proposed changes for the District Council boundaries still need to go through Parliament.
- Cllr Bligh reported that she had received a complaint that a business in WSM was using generators through the night, which were too noisy. Environmental Health had been contacted for investigation.

8. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

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

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8.2. Planning applications for discussion:

(a)	F/YR22/1382/F	Erect single-storey extensions to front and sides and alterations to existing dwelling and demolition of existing garage at Brynteg Plash Drove Tholomas Drove Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4SP The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL
(b)	F/YR22/1391/F	Temporary siting of 2 x interlinked mobile homes during alterations to existing dwelling (part-retrospective) at 85 Front Road Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4JQ The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

(a) FDC – Proposed closure of Wisbech St Mary Churchyard.

The Clerk reported that FDC have advised that they will carry out an inspection prior to any consideration of accepting maintenance liability. Therefore, if the Parish Council accepts it is in poor condition and then tries to pass it over to FDC (and the condition is unacceptable) that may leave the Parish Council with a considerable bill. The Clerk reported that FDC officers have been asked to keep the Parish Council informed of their assessment and when that is likely to take place. The Chairman expressed his concern regarding the condition of the trees and the wall. Cllr Booth questioned whether the assessment would be carried out by structural engineers or by FDC Officers? The Clerk reported that she was led to believe it would be completed by FDC Officers.

(b) FDC – Election Cost Estimates (May 2023) for Precept setting

The Clerk reported that FDC have advised their indicative costs for the 2023 Elections in respect to WSM Parish Council are £6308.40 if contested and £1352.28 if uncontested. The Clerk also advised that these figures are expected to change due to the new duties being placed upon local authorities with regards to photo ID regulations and New Burden grants becoming available.

10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

10.1. Street Lighting

The Clerk advised that the new column at Selwyn Corner has been installed following a previous traffic collision.

The Clerk also advised that the enplates for the three new lights will be in place as soon as possible.

The Chairman enquired as to how well the solar powered lights are working at the Guyhirn Playing Field entrance. Cllr Allen confirmed that they are working well.

The Chairman surmised whether a solar powered street light at the WSM Recycling Centre would work and that this should be considered in the next financial year.

10.2. Highways

(a) LHI Matters

I. LHI Bid 23/24 Arrangements - Update

The Clerk reported that both applications have been submitted.

- 1) WSM Parish Council – Speed calming (including road narrowing and chicanes) along High Road, Guyhirn outside the School.
- 2) WSM Primary Academy (As the community bid) – Speed calming and speed limit lowering at the Sandbank end of the village.

The Chairman advised that both schools will be doing drawings and writing letters to help support these applications.

II. 20mph LHI Scheme – Back Road, Murrow – Update

Cllr Booth requested confirmation that the survey would be completed on behalf of both Parish Councils. The Clerk confirmed that the paper survey would be on behalf of both Parish Councils but the hyperlink for online responses would direct residents to the WSM website as the Parson Drove one was currently under construction.

The Clerk confirmed that the paper survey (once written) would be sent over to Parson Drove for their consideration before anything goes live.

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

- Cllr Weldon reported that two signs on the A47 had been destroyed and need replacing. A speed camera sign and the Thorney Toll village marker sign westbound. The Clerk to report to National Highways.
- Cllr Fryett expressed concern at the state of Gull Road, Guyhirn with mud on the road due to the building works ongoing at the site that was previously 'Dove Cottage'. The clerk to request assistance from the Police.
- Cllr Allen also expressed concern that this land that is having major earthworks and causing the mess doesn't have planning permission. The clerk to investigate with FDC planning.
- Cllr Fryett expressed frustration at the lack of enforcement regarding the footpath that is conditioned as part of the

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planning permission to the front of four properties in Mill Road, Murrow. The Clerk to request an update from FDC Planning Enforcement whilst also copying in Head of Planning and the Portfolio holder for Planning.

- The Chairman expressed frustration at the lack of enforcement regarding the permitted access to the Queensbridge Homes site in WSM. The Clerk reported that the issue had definitely been referred to enforcement as she had seen the correspondence. The Clerk to follow up.
- Cllr Allen reported that the dog poo bins are very full in Guyhirn. The Clerk reported that she had raised the issue of more frequent emptying with refuse at FDC and will contact them again. Cllr Allen surmised that the problem is being exasperated by people driving to the bin and filling it up with large bags most likely from their own gardens. The Clerk to report this information back to FDC.
- Cllr Fryett expressed concern regarding the amount of dog mess on Murrow Playing Field. The Clerk advised that the field is privately owned and maintained by the Murrow Playing Field Association. Cllr Booth suggested that Murrow Street Pride could spray the piles of mess with fluorescent paint, which could embarrass the offending dog owners into picking the mess up and binning it. The Clerk to speak to FDC and Murrow Playing Field Association to seek a solution and possibly obtain signage for 'clearing up after your dog'.

11. PUBLIC FOOTPATHS & RIGHTS OF WAY

(a) For Councillors to discuss adopting the footpath between Back Road & Front Road, Murrow to ensure its maintenance.

The Chairman opened the item up for discussion by allowing the Rights of Way (RoW) Officer from CCC to speak for full consideration of the facts.

The footpath in question runs between Back Road and Front Road in Murrow beside the old Corpus Christi Church. The RoW Officer advised that CCC are only required to maintain a 4ft surface strip on any public footpath, this requirement is being met. The RoW officer also advised that anything over 4ft is the responsibility of the land owner and in this case the land is unregistered and seems to belong to no-one. However, the Parish Council have recognised the problem that exists and have unanimously agreed to maintain the extra width of the footpath for the betterment of the community.

12. FINANCE MATTERS

12.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2022/23 to date. The bank reconciliation of 30th December 2022 balanced at £110,964.23 which was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Gavin Booth.

12.2. Budget & Precept 2023/24

For members to agree the Budget & Precept as per attached Draft Budget Precept.

The Chairman brought the draft precept forward for ratification following in depth discussion during December's meeting. Cllr Booth requested clarification on Councillor training as 2023 is an election year for the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that £1000 has been allocated within the reserves and there is always the opportunity for virement between budgets within the expenditure for Council administration. Following this confirmation Cllr Booth proposed that the Council agree to ratify the precept at £78,230 and the allocated cash reserves for the year 2023/24, this was seconded by Councillor Allen and unanimously agreed. With a projected end of year bank balance of £66,888.09, the allocated cash reserves for the following year would total £35,000.00:

Streetlighting New	£10,000.00
Streetlighting Maintenance	£1,000.00
LHI & PFHI Schemes	£21,000.00
Councillor Training	£1,000.00
Election Costs	£2,000.00

Estimated Expenditure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Clerks Salary	£13,600.00	£20,000.00	£21,000.00	£22,000.00
Clerks Expenses	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Chairmans Allowance	-	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00
Councillor Allowances	-	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Insurance & General Admin	£4,560.00	£5,300.00	£5,500.00	£6,000.00
Legal Fees	-	£1,523.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Capital Expenditure	£5,000.00	£7,000.00	£6,000.00	£6,000.00
Section 137 grants	£8,000.00	£6,000.00	£4,500.00	£4,500.00
Community Grants	£14,000.00	£16,000.00	£17,000.00	£18,000.00
Allotment Expenses	£14.00	£15.00	£15.00	£16.00

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Street Lighting new	-	-	-	-
Energy costs for street lights	£7,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Maintenance & Risk Management of Assets	£13,000.00	£14,000.00	£16,000.00	£17,000.00
Clerk & Councillor Training	£1,000.00	-	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Parish Council Election Costs	£1,000.00	£4,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Local Highway Improvement schemes	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Privately Funded Highways Improvement Schemes	£8,000.00	£5,000.00	-	-
Planter Policy	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
Community Projects	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Total Expenditure	£94,774.00	£108,938.00	£103,365.00	£107,116.00

Estimated Income				
VAT refund	£7,000.00	£20,000.00	£9,000.00	£8,000.00
Concurrent Functions Grant FDC	£4,660.00	£4,660.00	£4,660.00	£4,660.00
CCC grant for cutting roadside verges	£3,177.00	£3,177.00	£3,177.00	£3,177.00
Garden & Allotment Rents	£1,763.00	£1,771.00	£1,771.00	£1,771.00
Planter Policy	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
Total Income	£17,700.00	£30,708.00	£19,708.00	£18,708.00
EXPENDITURE LESS INCOME PRECEPT	£77,074.00	£78,230.00	£83,657.00	£88,408.00
Increase/Decrease %		+1.50%	+6.94%	+5.68%

12.3. Land Tenancies Rent Review 2023/24.

The Clerk reported that as part of the Parish Councils Financial Regulations land tenancies rent has to be reviewed on an annual basis. Following discussion, Cllr Weldon proposed that there was no requirement for any changes to the rental amounts for the year 2023/24, this was seconded by Cllr Humphrey and unanimously agreed.

12.4. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Clerk December Salary	£1344.71	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Clerk HMRC Tax and NI	£286.65	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	Clerk Monthly Expenses (December)	£60.80	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	Nest Pensions – December (Direct Debit)	£93.78	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Npower Lighting December Energy	£460.07	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(f)	Tamar IT – Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£13.54	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(g)	Electrical Testing Ltd – Guyhirn & Murrow New Lights	£7744.51	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(h)	Electrical Testing Ltd – Chapelfield Road, Guyhirn	£2587.68	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(i)	ICO – Data Protection Renewal	£40.00	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed

12.5. For Councillors to ratify payments made by the Chairman and Clerk using their powers as outlined in the Financial Regulations under **Budgetary Control and authority to spend (4.1)** arranged for the following invoices to be paid due to time constraints:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Fiona Davies – Guyhirn Sign Refurbishment	£222.50	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 S72	Agreed

The Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of December and **ratified** the payments already made totalling £12,854.24. The invoices and schedule of payments to be made were checked and signed off by the Chairman and Cllr Knight.

12.6. Grant Applications - Nil

13. PARISH PROPERTY

13.1. Maintenance

(a) General Maintenance Contract Review

- I. For Councillors to consider extending the contract with TA Blackmore for the final year 2023/24.
Cllr Knight expressed a need to make sure that all areas of grass, whether verges or small areas, are maintained well.
The Clerk confirmed that T A Blackmore have a good understanding of what is required, as they are now two years into

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the contract. The Clerk also recommended that some of the smaller areas of grass cutting (for example next to the WSM bus shelter near to the shop) could be placed onto the Handy Man contract moving forward. Following this discussion, Cllr Booth proposed that the Council agree to extending the contract for a third year, this was seconded by Cllr Knight and unanimously agreed to.

II. For Councillors to consider extending the contract with Kevin Clarke for the final year 2023/24.

The Clerk reported that some of the tasks that Kevin Clarke currently undertakes for the Parish Council may be merged into the Handy Man contract, and that the next year will be a slow transition for streamlining all the maintenance of the Parish Council. Following discussion Cllr Booth proposed that the Council agree to extending his contract for a third year whilst this transition takes place, this was seconded by Cllr Humphrey and unanimously agreed to.

(b) To collate a list of road name signs that need repair and advise FDC.

The Chairman recommended that individual Councillors take note of any missing road name signs and take photos of any that look damaged and need replacing; and forward this information to the Clerk, who in turn will report to FDC.

13.2. Bus Shelters – No Items of discussion

13.3. Planters – No Items of discussion

13.4. Other Fixed Assets

(a) For Councillors to note essential accessories ordered for the Guyhirn MVAS.

The Clerk reported that a new battery and two sets of post brackets had been purchased from SWARCO at a cost of £370.00 (exc VAT) for the continued use of the Guyhirn MVAS.

14. GUYHIRN CHURCH – ST MARY MAGDELENE

For Councillors to discuss the draft scheme from Church Commissioners of England regarding the demolition of the Church.

Cllr Allen reported that he along with Cllr Blackmore and the Chairman had attended the public consultation earlier today (9th January 2023) held at the school.

Cllr Allen advised the Parish Council that the Church is currently still for sale and that the Church Commissioners do not need planning permission for its demolition. There are however, scant details available of how any planned development would look, should the Church be demolished to make way for new development.

Cllr Allen also advised that any windows and bells would hopefully be saved and relocated to other Churches. There wouldn't be any money available to the Parish even though the village would suffer the loss of a community asset. Cllr Allen expressed his concern for the War Memorial in its current location and it was recommended [at the public consultation] that the Parish Council obtain a quote for the relocation of the Guyhirn War Memorial to the Chapel of Ease and approach the Parochial Church Council for financial assistance.

Cllr Humphrey expressed his frustration that there would be no financial compensation to the village as he surmised that the land was most likely donated to the Church by a local farmer for the betterment of Guyhirn.

The Chairman also expressed his desire for any development on the site to be of an affordable housing nature for people with a local connection.

Following this discussion, it was agreed by a majority vote that the Parish Council would support the draft scheme which proposed that the church be demolished, albeit with a heavy heart. The Clerk to write to the Church Commissioners of England with the Parish Councils consultation response.

15. GUYHIRN CAR PARK EXTENSION

For Councillors to receive a report from the working group.

Cllr Fryett reported that Warden & Son were hoping to get started by the end of the month but that would be weather dependant. The Clerk reported that she still hadn't managed to obtain a subsequent quote from them for the height barrier. Cllr Fryett recommended that the Parish Council source the height barrier and ask Warden & Son to put it in place. Cllr Fryett to forward specifications to the clerk for the height barrier so she can obtain three quotes.

16. KING CHARLES III CORONATION

(a) For Councillors to note advert inviting community groups to apply for S137 funding. - **Noted**

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(b) For Councillors to discuss Commemorative Coins for Parish School Children.

Following discussion Councillors agreed to order 500 coins (including case) at £1.95 (exc VAT) each from Severn C Products Ltd T/A School Bears and that these would be presented to School Children in a similar way to the mugs at last year's Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations. This was proposed by Cllr Booth, seconded by Cllr Fryett and unanimously agreed. The Clerk asked Councillors permission to obtain a sticker for each case that stated 'Presented by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council'. This was also unanimously agreed to.

17. POLICE MATTERS

For Councillors to note Police Report & Crime Statistics for the Parish.

The Clerk circulated the Crime Statistics Report from the month of November 2022, with Murrow having the most reported crime in the Parish.

18. THORNEY TOLL VILLAGE HALL

For Councillors to receive any updates.

Cllr Knight reported that he had received the Thorney Toll Village Hall Trust Deed documents from the Charity Commission, and expressed a need to seek legal advice to know what the options are should the hall close.

Cllr Booth recommended speaking to Cambs ACRE for their help and advice before seeking a solicitor. The Clerk to follow this up.

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

To consider any items for a future meeting agenda.

Cllr Fryett requested confirmation for the location of the two Murrow Information Boards, these were confirmed as 1) On the grass verge, next to the bench opposite Murrow Shop and 2) On the grass verge on Murrow Bank between Mill Road and Station Avenue.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th February 2023	7:00pm	New Community Room – Guyhirn
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DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2022/23

Monday 13th March 2023	7:00pm	The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove
Monday 3rd April 2023	7:00pm	Murrow Village Hall
Monday 15th May 2023	7:00pm	WSM Community Centre – Sidings Room

Meeting closed at 8:45pm

..... Date:

Chairman
Cllr David Wheeler