

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 13th February 2023 at Guyhirn Community Room on the Playing Field

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 | CCC Councillor: S Count

Members of the public: 5

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

- A parishioner from Guyhirn objected to planning application F/YR23/0047/F based on it being a back land development, access issues, overlooking and the impact to neighbouring properties.
- A second parishioner from Guyhirn raised objections to the same planning application and reiterated similar concerns and considerations.
- The Co-Ordinator for Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speedwatch reported that the team had operated sessions in Guyhirn, Murrow & Parson Drove at morning school run times, with one to be held in WSM the following week. The group is still being supported by Fenland Police by them attending road side sessions.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Received and accepted from CCC Cllr S King

3. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - None

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

Item 12.1 (a) Cllr Knight declared a personal interest in this item and will be leaving the room for the discussion and vote.

5. TO SIGN AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING dated 9th January 2023. 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).

The Clerk reported

- Murrow Playing Field – Murrow Street Pride had sprayed bright paint around any offending dog mess prior to FDC coming to clear the field at a quoted cost of £30, which will be paid by Murrow Playing Field Association (MPFA). A meeting was held between FDC, Cllr Fryett and the Chairman of MPFA to discuss placement of bins and future collection, which should help keep the field cleaner in the future.
- Closure of WSM Churchyard – FDC Officers had attended to assess the condition of the Churchyard, where concerns were raised regarding the wall. A subsequent quote had been shared with WSM Parish Council outlining the potential cost of repair could reach £25,000.
- Street Name Plates – A list has been compiled thanks to Councillors Knight & Fryett informing the clerk of some that were damaged or missing. This will be forwarded to FDC Assets & Projects team.
- Guyhirn MVAS – It had been reported to the Clerk that the tamtorque tool to open the brackets (that allow the movement of the MVAS between locations) had been misplaced, so she had added two (to make sure a spare is always held with the clerk) at a cost of £20 (Exc VAT) each to the current order in place with Swarco for the WSM MVAS/SID due to be delivered in February.

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

Cllr Booth reported

- Following FDC Planning Enforcement investigation into the footpaths to the entrance of Sayers Crescent, WSM (Sayers Field Development), they were happy that all planning conditions had been met. Following this, he had been to the site, taken photos and reported the footpath onto the CCC reporting tool as needing repair due to being a noticeable trip hazard.
- The Parliamentary order has been made for the boundary review changes.
- A Full Council meeting will be held at FDC next week where the Council Tax will be set, and based on discussions held at the Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting that he attended, the District Council portion of the Council Tax was to be frozen at 0%.
- He was still working on outstanding Clarion Issues.

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Cllr Bligh reported

- Following a FDC Environmental Health investigation into generators being used at a WSM business, measures had been put in place at the business to lower noise levels and a noise box had been installed at a property to log any further issues.
- This would be her final year as a District Councillor and she will not be re-standing in the May elections and that she was proud of all her achievements during her eight years.

Cllr Count reported

- March town centre was undergoing major redevelopment
- He had tried to resolve a local issue regarding Road Closed signs causing confusion within the parish.
- The CCC portion of the Council Tax was due to rise 4.99% which would see an approx. £79 a year increase to a Band D property.
- There were planned cuts to Mental Health Support, Safe Guarding, Highways Maintenance & Winter Gritting.
- A new weed killing policy was to be piloted in Cambridge City, which included a reduction in cyclical spraying and that only weeds considered to be a trip hazard will be investigated for removal.
- There remains a staffing crisis within Highways and Children's & Adult Services.

Cllr King sent his apologies for the meeting and circulated his report via email, where he was awaiting costs on many issues.

The Chairman expressed frustration over the lack of accountability at Highways regarding the recent 'Road Closed' chaos. Firstly, the incorrect placement and then the lack of information on the signs on High Road between Tholomas Drove and Guyhirn found HGVs down single-track droves looking for short cuts to get to the A47. During the same period an advertised road closure on Barton Road (which is the arterial route for the village traffic to get into Wisbech) was open on the days it had been advertised as closed and then subsequently closed on days that had not been advertised, this again caused chaos within the villages and single-track droves.

Cllr Booth surmised that as hired traffic management companies work separately to the team on site doing the maintenance, this can be when errors in signage and closures occur.

Cllr Booth also recommended that 'Road Closed' is not good enough when the closure is 5/6 miles away, with many roads off before the actual closure, the signs need to state where the closure is.

Cllr Knight expressed deep concern that CCC has cut the budget for Mental Health, with this being one of the biggest issues of our time. He expressed frustration at the 'Road Closed' chaos, and that going in to town, where the bins are over flowing, the streets look a mess, the Christmas tree and lights are still up, all give a terrible impression to visitors.

Cllr Britain queried when the west end of Cants Drove was to be refurbished. Cllr Count to follow up.

8. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

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

8.2. Planning applications for discussion:

(a)	F/YR23/0021/O	Erect up to 4no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) involving demolition of existing dwelling at Shandon High Road Wisbech St Mary Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4RA The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL, based on the site being situated in Flood Zone 3 and therefore would be subjected to sequential testing, and the fact that this would be backfill in a ribbon development. The Parish Council note that this is an outline application and that any designs are purely indicative, however should the LPA be minded to approve then only bungalows should be sited due to the proximity of houses overshadowing bungalows.
(b)	F/YR23/0029/F	Erect a single-storey side extension, and a 2.4m high front boundary wall and 1.1m high railings to existing dwelling, involving the demolition of existing fence at Hollycroft House 180 Front Road Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4HU The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.
(c)	F/YR23/0030/LB	Internal and external works to a listed building involving the erection of a single-storey side extension, and a 2.4m high front boundary wall and 1.1m high railings to existing dwelling, involving the demolition of existing fence at Hollycroft House 180 Front Road Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4HU The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.
(d)	F/YR23/0038/F	Formation of a new access at access To Plot 3 And Plot 4 Fern House Gull Road Guyhirn Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.

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(e)	F/YR23/0047/F	Erect 4x dwellings and garages (comprising 1x 5-bed and 3x 4-bed) at Land South East of The Chase Gull Road Guyhirn Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL, based on loss of residential amenities to neighbours, access concerns, loss of privacy, backfill and the development not being in keeping with the area
(f)	F/YR23/0078/F	Erect a single-storey extension to rear and side, and a porch to front of existing dwelling, involving the demolition of existing conservatory and porch at 4 Inhams Close Murrow Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4HS The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL.

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

(a) Clarke Telecom - Proposed upgrade to existing radio base station installation at Bridge Garage, Guyhirn – Consultation response by 16th February 2023. Councillors recommended replying to the consultation to express the support of the Parish Council.

(b) CCC Planning - Proposed updates to local validation list requirements – Consultation response by 16th March 2023. - **Noted**

(c) Wisbech St Mary Street Pride – Seeking permission for placing a noticeboard onto the side of Parish Council Bus Shelter. Councillors approved the request.

10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

10.1. Street Lighting

Cllr Fryett reported faults to Streetlights 134 & 135 on Front Road, Murrow. The Clerk advised that these will be repaired shortly as they had already been logged with Wisbech Electrical.

10.2. Highways

(a) 20mph LHI Scheme – Back Road, Murrow – Update

The Clerk reported that a draft version of the resident survey had been submitted to Parson Drove Parish Council (PDPC), which had an 'any other comments' box to express potential further options including previous suggestions of blocking the road halfway and utilising a one-way system with Front Road. Once agreement had been received from PDPC the survey can be printed and delivered.

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

Cllr Booth requested that the Parish Council ask Highways to investigate repairing the footpaths at Sayers Crescent junction on Church Road, WSM.

Cllr Fryett reported that Passing Place signs are missing on Back Road, Murrow

Cllr Weldon stated that the signage on the A47 previously reported still hadn't been replaced.

Cllr Britain reported that speeding has increased on Gull Road following its resurfacing.

The Chairman reported that many agricultural vehicles, some of which could be from the Murrow AD Plant were responsible for speeding and asked the Clerk to write a letter to the company requesting that their vehicles respect the speed limits. – The Clerk to follow up.

Cllr Fryett mentioned the missing 30mph post/sign opposite the shop on Front Road, Murrow, the Chairman stated that this was on Cllr Kings CCC report as awaiting costs.

11. FINANCE MATTERS

11.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2022/23 to date. The bank reconciliation of 2nd February 2023 balanced at £100,675.35 which was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Barry Britain. The Clerk drew attention to the income of £2,356.40 which was in settlement of the insurance claim following the damage of the Streetlight by the CCC Library Bus on Chapelfield Road, Guyhirn.

11.2. Direct Debits – To review the use of a variable direct debit to pay Nest Pensions (Bi-Annual Review) – Approved unanimously.

11.3. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

Item	Description	Total Amount	Power	
(a)	Clerk January Salary	£1344.51	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(b)	Clerk HMRC Tax and NI	£286.85	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(c)	Clerk Monthly Expenses (January)	£125.13	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(d)	Nest Pensions – January (Direct Debit)	£93.78	LG Act 1972 S112	Agreed
(e)	Npower Lighting January Energy	£445.36	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed

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(f)	Tamar IT – Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit)	£13.54	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(g)	Electrical Testing Ltd – Selwyn Corner Replacement	£2997.24	Parish Councils Act 1957 S3	Agreed
(h)	Thorney Toll Village Hall – December Hire	£60.00	LG Act 1972 S134	Agreed
(i)	Murrow Village Hall – January Hire	£45.00	LG Act 1972 S134	Agreed
(j)	Brown & Co – Land on A47 Valuation	£210.02	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(k)	SLCC – Minute Taking Book	£19.75	LG Act 1972 S111	Agreed
(l)	SWARCO – Battery & Accessories for Guyhirn MVAS	£444.00	Highways Act 1980	Agreed
(m)	Shelley Signs – Information Boards Balance	£4952.40	LG Act 1972 S144	Agreed

The Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of January totalling £11,037.58. The invoices and schedule of payments to be made were checked and signed off by the Chairman and Cllr Knight.

The Clerk requested that a further invoice of £136.80 (Inc £22.80 VAT) from A Deptford for the replacement pads to the WSM defibrillator be approved for payment due to time constraints and she would detail this on the March agenda for ratification. This was approved by Councillors unanimously.

11.4. Grant Applications - **Nil**

12. PARISH PROPERTY

12.1. Maintenance

(a) To open and consider Parish Handyman applications.

The Clerk opened the sealed envelope and placed the three applications in front of the Chairman who read them aloud detailing their names, experience and quotes for both the normal and emergency hourly rates. Following announcement of the applicants Cllr Mann declared a personal interest and will not be voting Cllr Knight also left the room during consideration and voting.

Following discussion, it was agreed to offer Mr Stephen Knight the role of Parish Handyman with the hourly rates of £25 Normal Rate & £30 Emergency Rate. The offer of the role would be subject to producing adequate public liability insurance which would need to include 'breaking ground'. The Clerk to contact all candidates with the outcome and produce the job specification/contract for Mr Knight.

(b) Stagecoach Bus Stop Signage – Pole placement.

The Clerk reported that she would be having a Teams meeting the following day with CCC Highways Projects Officer and asked the Council for permission to include the placement of four poles into the current PFHI. These would be to hold the Bus Stop signage already provided by Stagecoach due to no other posts or poles being available in the correct location. This was unanimously agreed by Councillors.

12.2. Bus Shelters

Cllr Knight requested an update regarding the back panel to the Gull Road, Guyhirn bus shelter, the Clerk reported that she had recently chased this matter up and was advised that it had been delayed but should be with Paul Tibbs for fitting, later in the week.

12.3. Planters – **No items of discussion**

12.4. Defibrillators

(a) For Councillors to note usage of pads at WSM defibrillator and the purchasing of replacements. - **Noted**

13. GOVERNANCE REVIEW & ADOPTION

(a) Standing Orders

(b) Financial Regulations

(c) Risk Assessment Policy

(d) Health & Safety Policy

(e) Publication Scheme

(f) Complaints Policy

Cllr Booth proposed that all the policies be approved and adopted en bloc, this was seconded by Cllr Allen.

14. GUYHIRN CAR PARK EXTENSION

For Councillors to receive a report from the working group.

Cllr Fryett reported that work on site had started and was coming along well. He requested confirmation on

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where the wooden edge poles were coming from? The Chairman, Cllr Humphrey and Cllr Weldon all confirmed that they had some that could be provided for the project. Cllr Fryett also requested confirmation whether a bund would be required as well as the poles, and it was decided that as people walk between the poles and to stop any potential issues with mowing that bunds would only be placed next to the dyke edge at the sides. Cllr Booth recommended adding reflective tape to the poles. Cllr Fryett reported that road planings are becoming very difficult to get hold of, so this might be an issue at a later stage of the project. Cllr Fryett further reported that Warden & Son Ltd have now submitted a quote for the swinging height barrier which was considerably cheaper than any of the three the clerk had managed to get. It would be handmade locally at a cost of £1725.00 (Exc VAT).

The Chairman recommended a solar powered light be placed in the location of the height barrier, and was it possible to create an attachment to the gate post for it as it was being handmade?

Cllr Booth questioned whether the metalwork would be galvanised? Cllr Fryett confirmed that it would not be and it will be hand painted in yellow not powder coated.

Cllr Fryett had spoken to Ex-Cllr Peter Davies who believed the current gate was purchased by Guyhirn Football Club and asked whether they could take it back to be used nearer the football field if the Parish Council was going to replace it.

Following further discussion, it was agreed to obtain a quote for a handmade 5m wide gate, allowing the football club to re-use the current one. It was also agreed that the height barrier would be sufficient at 5m width too.

The Parish Council resolved that Cllr Fryett could have delegated authority to agree to the gate quote (in conjunction with the Chairman and Clerk) up to a maximum of £2000 to stop time delays caused by bringing it back to Council.

15. KING CHARLES III CORONATION

For Councillors to receive any updates regarding commemorative coins and presentation assemblies.

The Clerk reported that the stickers that say 'Presented by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council' have arrived and they will be attached to the cases that hold the commemorative coin, which should arrive early in April.

16. POLICE MATTERS

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

The Clerk circulated the Crime Statistics Report from the month of December 2022, with Wisbech St. Mary & Murrow having the most reported crime in the Parish.

17. THORNEY TOLL VILLAGE HALL

For Councillors to receive any updates.

Cllr Weldon reported that the recent social media post looking to recruit new volunteers for the hall didn't receive a single response. However, the hall currently supports a new monthly Church group and weekly dance & judo clubs.

Cllr Booth recommended that Cllr Weldon invites representatives of the current user groups to come onto the management committee.

Cllr Weldon requested assistance with putting wi-fi into the hall to help it become more user friendly. The Chairman recommended the hall apply to Wrydecroft Windfarm, but the hall must be mindful of the ongoing running costs and whether the rent accrued from hiring the hall would justify the extra cost of the wi-fi.

The Chairman then suggested the possibility of buying a dongle or a router that works off 4G. Cllr Knight recommended looking into all options as it may attract more users to the hall, which can only be a positive move. Cllr Humphrey suggested the hall apply to the Parish Council for a grant for the installation of the wi-fi.

The Chairman summarised that a basic understanding of the trust deed and the area of benefit had been explained by a Charity Law Solicitor and should the Parish Council need more of a detailed answer in the future a meeting with her could be arranged.

The Clerk reported that the hall and land are not registered with the land registry, so for the Parish Council to become custodian trustees, this would need to be done as a first registration, which would also need a

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valuation of the hall and land to be undertaken.

The Parish Council agreed for the Clerk to instruct the solicitor to do the land registration on behalf of the Parish Council and the Clerk then invoicing Thorney Toll Village Hall for reimbursement at a later date.

18. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

To consider any items for a future meeting agenda.

Cllr Booth – Costings for the PFHI

Cllr Britain – Queried the building of a triple garage on Gull Road without planning permission, Cllr Booth stated that this could have been built under permitted development.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

(a) Monday 13th March 2023 7:00pm The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove

(b) For Councillors to note change of April meeting date to Monday 17th April 2023, which will include Parish Assembly - **Noted**

DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2022/23

Monday 17th April 2023 7:00pm Guyhirn Community Room

Monday 15th May 2023 7:00pm WSM Community Centre – Sidings Room

Meeting closed at 8:50pm

..... Date:

Chairman

Cllr David Wheeler