

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council held on Monday 13th March 2023 at The Chequers Public House, High Road, Tholomas Drove.

Attended by: Councillors D Wheeler (Chairman), M Knight MBE DL (Vice Chairman), 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: 2

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

- A representative of Wisbech St Mary Community Centre spoke in support of their grant application for funding towards a celebration of the Kings Coronation, this is planned for the bank holiday on Monday 8th May 2023 with an event similar to the Platinum Jubilee involving children's entertainers and bouncy castles which was supported well by local families.
- The Chairman of Murrow Street Pride (MSP) reported that due to purdah rules (and the fact she was affiliated with a political party), the group was unable to promote their Coronation Celebration under their MSP name, however the celebration will still go ahead. With regards to the funding, she very much hopes that her application will be supported but again due to purdah rules was unable to promote where the funding came from until after the elections.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Received and accepted from Cllr J Humphrey & CCC Cllr S King.

3. TO CONSIDER MEMBER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION - Nil

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

Item 11.4. (c) Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in this item due to being a committee member of Guyhirn Playing Field Association, he will remain in the room, but will not vote.

Item 14. 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 13th February 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.

The Chairman and Council agreed to move agenda item 11.4. Kings Coronation Grant Applications forward to allow the members of the public present to hear the discussions and outcomes earlier than planned.

11.4. Kings Coronation Grant Applications

LG Act 1972 S137

| Item | Organisation | Event | Date | Amount Requested |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| (a) | WSM & Guyhirn Church PCC | Community Hog Roast | 7 th May 2023 | £1200.00 |
| (b) | Murrow Street Pride | Community Afternoon Tea | 7 th May 2023 | £990.00 |
| (c) | Guyhirn Playing Field Association | Coronation Community Event | 8 th May 2023 | £1500.00 |
| (d) | WSM Community Centre | Community Afternoon Tea | 8 th May 2023 | £2050.00 |

Prior to discussion the Clerk requested that a further Kings Coronation Grant Application be considered on behalf of WSM Primary Academy for £600, which she had circulated to Councillors via email. The deadline for applications had been moved due to the changing of the April Parish Council meeting date, and therefore as not everyone was aware of these changes. In her opinion this application should be considered; even though it arrived too late for the agenda. This was agreed to by all Councillors.

The Clerk advised Councillors that only £3395.00 was remaining within the S137 budget for the current financial year and the grant applications totalled £6340.00 (should Councillors agree to all amounts). The shortfall of £2945.00 could be vired from unallocated cash reserves if Councillors agreed to that process. The other option would be to defer until the new financial year where £6000.00 had been budgeted but the Clerk drew attention to the fact that doing that it would use up the entire S137 budget for the year within the first month. Cllr Knight proposed the Council agree to go over the S137 budget in the current financial year by £2945.00 and vire the shortfall from unallocated cash reserves, this was seconded by Cllr Britain and unanimously agreed.

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Cllr Allen spoke as a representative of Guyhirn Playing Fields Association, if funding was successful, they planned to have a similar event to what was done for the Platinum Jubilee except that rather than free food, there would be a pizza van on site to purchase from. The school would be involved with events and they are hoping for a repeat of a very successful day.

Following further discussion Cllr Knight proposed that all grant applications be awarded the amounts requested, this was seconded by Cllr Booth and unanimously agreed.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (information only). The Clerk advised that she had contacted the Anaerobic Digester company in Cants Drove and asked that their vehicles respect their rural surroundings and speed limits.

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, where he was still awaiting updates and costs on many issues.
- Cllr Booth reported that following the FDC Full Council meeting on 20th February 2023; Councillors unanimously agreed a 2% reduction to the FDC portion of the 2023/24 Council Tax, he raised the point however that there still remains customer dissatisfaction with both customer service and planning, and that Fenland is still substantially higher than neighbouring authorities such as Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.
- Cllr Booth reported that a question had been raised by a Fenland Parish Clerk at the same FDC Full Council meeting regarding Parish Councils getting their fair amount of S106 money. The response from the FDC portfolio holder for planning was that Parish Councils should be informed of any outstanding amounts of S106 on a spreadsheet circulated to all Parish Councils, which Cllr Booth doesn't recall the last time this actually occurred.
- Cllr Booth also reported that he still hasn't received a response from CCC regarding the pavements to the entrance of Sayers Crescent, WSM that he added onto their highways fault reporting tool.
- Cllr Booth also continues to work on many Clarion issues.
- Cllr Bligh reported that the issue regarding a WSM company utilising a generator had now resolved amicably with both parties working with FDC Environmental Health.
- Cllr Bligh also reported that she had contacted the Chief Executive of FDC with help regarding the Planning Enforcement case (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 as this had been ongoing for over two years and no further updates had been forthcoming.

8. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

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

8.2. Planning applications for discussion:

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| (a) | F/YR23/0108/F | Erect a two-storey front and side extension to existing dwelling at Long Acre Gull Road Guyhirn Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4ER The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL. |
| (b) | F/YR23/0111/F | Erect 1 dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) and garage, involving demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings at Cosy Nook High Road Guyhirn Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4EQ The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL. |
| (c) | F/YR23/0122/F | Erect 2 dwellings (2-storey 3-bed) at Shangri La 93 Front Road Murrow Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL based on over development, lack of car parking space, being out of character and not in keeping with the area, overlooking by building a house between bungalows and loss of amenity to neighbours. |
| (d) | F/YR22/0493/O RECONSULTATION | Erection of up to 2 single-storey dwellings involving the demolition of existing outbuildings (outline application with all matters reserved) at Land North and East of Goosetree House Selwyn Corner Guyhirn Cambridgeshire The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL, based on overdevelopment of the site and the area of Selwyn Corner. The Council also noted their concerns regarding access. |
| (e) | F/YR23/0164/O | Erect up to 4 x dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access), involving demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings, and formation of new accesses at Mole End Gull Road Guyhirn Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 4ER The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL. Councillors also recommended flooding mitigation measures and request that the applicant/developer considers a voluntary payment towards the community of Guyhirn. |
| (f) | F/YR23/0180/RM | Reserved Matters application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline permission F/YR20/1177/O to erect 2 x dwellings (2-storey 4-bed) at Land South East of Corner Barn Mouth Lane Guyhirn Cambridgeshire |

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| | | The Parish Council recommended APPROVAL, but still stand by the comment made previously that they would prefer only one dwelling on the site. |
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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 the FDC Head of Planning had emailed stating that they are in the process of trying to establish the developer of each of the plots so they can serve a breach of condition notice.

9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – Nil

10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

10.1. Street Lighting

The Clerk reported that she was trying to organise a Streetlight inspection with Electrical Testing Ltd but hadn't received a response, she will follow up and send a request for information again.

10.2. Highways

(a) For Councillors to consider design changes to WSM LHI Scheme 2021/2022

The Clerk reported that there had been an issue flagged up by the safety audit regarding the position of one of the build outs conflicting with the bus stop and the design had been revised to allow for this. Cllr Booth stated that as this was the recommendation of the safety audit, the Parish Council should approve the revised drawings. This was agreed by the Council.

(b) For Councillors to consider indicative costs for Parish PFHI Schemes

The Clerk reported that the indicative costs for the PFHI Scheme had more than doubled since discussions first started; due to inflation and rising costs. The entire scheme including; to change Sandbank - WSM to 30mph with a 40mph buffer zone, to change a section of Murrow Bank from 40mph to 30mph, to change Tholomas Drove to areas of both 30mph & 40mph, to implement double yellow lines outside Murrow School and install four posts for the bus stop signage at Sandbank, WSM and Foleys Drove, Tholomas Drove would be £23,974.61 (Exc VAT). Cllr Booth expressed concern that speed limits and speeding are residents' main issues and as a proactive Council we should agree to the costs and maybe look to move money from other budgets or increase the precept slightly next year to help fund it, as in his opinion the scheme is unlikely to be completed and invoiced within the 2023/2024 financial year. Cllr Knight expressed his frustration at the rising figures and feels Highways have the Parish Council 'over a barrel' with the costs; but proposed that as a Parish Council that cares deeply about matters of safety there is no choice but to accept the estimate, with the proviso that a breakdown is provided for the Milestone works order which is £18,933.54 (Exc VAT) of the total amount, this was seconded by Cllr Booth and unanimously (albeit reluctantly) agreed to by Councillors.

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

Cllr Booth reported that the survey had been agreed to in principle by Parson Drove Parish Council, but had asked their clerk to recirculate it as not all Councillors had seen it, and will advise once fully approved for printing.

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

Cllr Fryett reported that both of the road name plates are now missing at the Plash Drove junction onto Murrow Bank. – The Clerk to report to FDC Assets & Projects team.

The Chairman reported issues causing flooding along Barton Road from Wisbech St Mary into Wisbech.

Cllr Mann reported a missing give way sign at the Mouth Lane junction, Guyhirn.

Cllr Fryett reported that the road surface was breaking up at the Plash Drove junction with High Road near the Chequers Public House. The Clerk to report these matters to the Local Highways Officer at CCC.

11. FINANCE MATTERS

11.1. To receive the Finance & Budget Report for 2022/23 to date. The bank reconciliation of 2nd March 2023 balanced at £75,335.97 which was agreed to and signed off by Cllr Barry Britain, the clerk drew attention to the three payments already made which were on the agenda to be ratified, the payment for Warden & Son was approved for early payment by the internal auditor due to the amount being detailed as an approved quote under item 13. of the 14th November 2022 meeting minutes and confirmed for early payment by Cllrs Knight, Booth & Fryett in the Chairmans absence. The Clerk also drew attention to the income of £250 which

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was the policy excess reimbursement following the insurance claim for the destroyed streetlight at Selwyn Corner, Guyhirn.

11.2. To approve payment of outstanding accounts:

| Item | Description | Total Amount | Power | |
|------|---|--------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| (a) | Clerk February 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 (February) | £63.95 | LG Act 1972 S112 | Agreed |
| (d) | Nest Pensions – February (Direct Debit) | £93.78 | LG Act 1972 S112 | Agreed |
| (e) | Npower Lighting February Energy | £387.13 | Parish Councils Act 1957 S3 | Agreed |
| (f) | Tamar IT – Microsoft 365 (Direct Debit) | £13.54 | LG Act 1972 S111 | Agreed |
| (g) | Shelter Solutions – Replacement Panel | £294.00 | LG (Misc Prov) Act 1953 S4 | Agreed |
| (h) | ACRE Membership Renewal | £60.00 | LG Act 1972 S143 | Agreed |
| (i) | Guyhirn Community Hall – February Hall Hire | £40.00 | LG Act 1972 S134 | Agreed |
| (j) | Paul Tibbs – Panel Fitting | £84.00 | LG (Misc Prov) Act 1953 S4 | Agreed |
| (k) | Wisbech Electrical Ltd – Street Light 134 | £404.33 | Parish Councils Act 1957 S3 | Agreed |
| (l) | Wisbech Electrical Ltd – Street Light 135 | £404.33 | Parish Councils Act 1957 S3 | Agreed |
| (m) | T A Blackamore – Grass Verge Contract | £3772.80 | Highways Act 1980 S96 | Agreed |
| (n) | T A Blackamore – General Maintenance Contract | £5212.20 | Open Spaces Act 1906 S15 | Agreed |
| (o) | Mark Fryett – Postmix Reimbursement | £49.50 | LG (Misc Prov) Act 1976 S19 | Agreed |

11.3. 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) | SLCC – Deferral Fee | £75.00 | LG Act 1972 S111 | Agreed |
| (b) | Andrew Deptford - Replacements for WSM Defib | £136.80 | Public Health Act 1936 S234 | Agreed |
| (c) | Warden & Son – Guyhirn Car Park Extension *** | £14340.00 | Road Traffic Reg Act 1984 S57 (1) (b) | Agreed |

*** Early payment approved by Internal auditor and three Councillors

The Council **resolved** to **authorise** the expenditure for the month of February and **ratified** the payments already made totalling £27,062.72. The invoices and schedule of payments were checked and signed off by the Chairman and Cllr Knight.

The Clerk requested that a further payment of £850.00 (Inc £130.00 VAT) to Metcalfe, Copeman & Pettefar Solicitors for the Thorney Toll Village Hall Title Deed registration be approved for payment due to time constraints and she would detail this on the April agenda for ratification. This was approved by Councillors unanimously.

12. PARISH PROPERTY

12.1. Maintenance

(a) For Councillors to note 4% price increase to the Grass Verges & General Maintenance 2023/2024 Contracted to T A Blackamore.

Councillors agreed unanimously to the 4% price increase and believed this to be very fair.

(b) RoSPA Inspections – For Councillors to consider booking pond inspections for 2023/2024

Councillors agreed to arrange RoSPA inspections of the two ponds with water in on a bi-annual basis. As it had been two years since the last inspection, the Clerk to book the inspections in.

(c) Fixed Asset Inspections – To arrange the annual fixed asset inspection date for 2023/2024.

Councillors agreed to move the fixed asset inspections into the next municipal year, for the new Chairman & Vice-Chairman to undertake with the Clerk post May 2023.

12.2. Bus Shelters

The Clerk reported that the powder coated metal sheet had now been fitted into the Gull Road shelter in Guyhirn replacing the smashed glass panel.

Cllr Fryett recommended that the Clerk contacts local companies for the metal sheets in future as they are simple enough to source locally and could be better value.

12.3. Planters – No items of discussion.

13. PARISH COUNCIL INVESTMENTS

(a) For Councillors to note details of the CCLA PSDF Investment Account

The Clerk expressed concern that Councillors were not fully aware of how the PSDF worked and wanted to make sure she undertook due diligence through confirmation from other Parish Councils and clarification to Councillors before any investments were made. The Clerk reported that principal investments were through banks and building societies, and there was a risk that the investments may go down as well as up. She had received positive confirmation from seven other Parish and Town Councils that currently use the CCLA PSDF and CAPALC had not heard of any issues with Parish Councils using this company and scheme for investments. This was understood and agreed by Councillors.

(b) For Councillors to consider the opening amount to be deposited into the CCLA PSDF

Cllr Booth proposed that the Parish Council only invest up to a maximum of £50,000. The Chairman agreed with the suggestion but was also amenable to this being increased in the future. Cllr Weldon seconded the proposal which was agreed to by Council.

(c) For Councillors to review and adopt amended Investment Policy

Cllr Booth recommended that the policy was amended by removing 'adhering to the Financial Services Compensation Scheme' and replacing it with 'regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority'.

The Chairman recommended that any mention to stocks and shares were removed from the policy as the CCLA PSDF was a scheme based upon the purchasing of shares.

The Clerk recommended taking a paragraph from St Neots Town Councils investment strategy as they use the CCLA PSDF and make mention to it as a specified investment within their policy.

The Clerk to amend and circulate to Councillors.

14. GUYHIRN CAR PARK EXTENSION

For Councillors to receive a report from the working group.

Cllr Fryett reported that the car park extension was now complete and looking fantastic, the height barrier had been made and was in the process of being powder coated. Following last month's discussion and the Councils agreement to provide a new gate, Cllr Fryett reported that he had agreed (in conjunction with the Chairman and Clerk) to a quote from Warden & Son for £775.00 (Exc VAT) to produce a replica gate at 5m wide with a stop post, which will be made and installed as soon as possible; this was unanimously agreed to and noted by Councillors.

Cllr Fryett queried whether the poles surrounding the car park needed wood across the top of them as there was still adequate room to get motor bikes through? And could also double up as extra seating.

Cllr Fryett also queried whether grass seed was required to be sown on the bunds? Cllr Britain suggested wild flower seed be used instead.

Cllr Fryett recommended purchasing two new combination locks for the height barrier and the new gate, this was agreed by Councillors.

Cllr Fryett also expressed concern regarding the agricultural access to the farming land behind the playground, and asked whether a letter could be sent to the farmer asking them to take care over the gravel, travelling as slow as possible and cleaning excessive mud from the tyres before travelling over it.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Fryett for all the hard work he had put into getting this project completed.

15. KING CHARLES III CORONATION

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

The Clerk advised that the coins were due to be delivered early in April and requested that individual Councillors liaise with their respective schools to arrange assemblies for the presentation of the coins.

16. POLICE MATTERS

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

The Clerk reported her attendance at the Police Forum on Friday 10th March 2023 via Microsoft Teams, where the main areas of crime included the theft of lead from Murrow Village Hall roof, Nitrous Oxide

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canisters littering rural areas and speeding. The Clerk also circulated the Crime Statistics Report from the month of January 2023, with Guyhirn having the most reported crime in the Parish.

17. THORNEY TOLL VILLAGE HALL

For Councillors to receive any updates.

The Clerk reported that Brown & Co had been instructed to value the land at a cost of £250 (Exc VAT & disbursements) and MCP Solicitors had been instructed to apply for first registration of the land with the Parish Council as custodian trustees. The Clerk will invoice Thorney Toll Village Hall for recovery of these costs once everything has been completed.

18. 2023/2024 MUNICIPAL YEAR PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSED DATES & LOCATIONS

The Clerk explained that the proposed dates had been produced assuming that Murrow Village Hall would be out of action following its lead theft but she had now been made aware that the management committee are happy that it is water tight and functional, with that in mind Councillors requested that the September 2023 & January 2024 were changed to be held at Murrow Village Hall, and the schedule of dates and times would be amended.

| 2023/2024 MUNICIPAL YEAR PARISH COUNCIL DATES & LOCATIONS | | |
|---|------|---|
| Proposed Date | Time | Proposed Location |
| Monday 12 th June 2023 | 7pm | The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove |
| Monday 10 th July 2023 | 7pm | Guyhirn Community Room |
| Monday 14 th August 2023 | 7pm | Thorney Toll Village Hall |
| Monday 11 th September 2023 | 7pm | WSM Community Centre Murrow Village Hall |
| Monday 9 th October 2023 | 7pm | The Chequers Public House – Tholomas Drove |
| Monday 13 th November 2023 | 7pm | Guyhirn Community Room |
| Monday 11 th December 2023 | 7pm | Thorney Toll Village Hall |
| Monday 15 th January 2024 | 7pm | WSM Community Centre Murrow Village Hall |
| Monday 12 th February 2024 | 7pm | Guyhirn Community Room |
| Monday 11 th March 2024 | 7pm | Thorney Toll Village Hall |
| Monday 15 th April 2024 | 7pm | Murrow Village Hall |
| Monday 13 th May 2024 | 7pm | WSM Community Centre – Sidings Room |

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

To consider any items for a future meeting agenda. – **No items of discussion**

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 17th April 2023 (Inc Parish Assembly) 7:00pm Guyhirn Community Room

DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2022/23

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

Meeting closed at 8:50pm

..... Date:

Chairman

Cllr David Wheeler