

Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Assembly Meeting held at Wisbech St. Mary Community Centre (Sidings Room) on Monday 9th May 2022 at 7pm.

1. Present:

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

FDC Councillors: G Booth & S Bligh

Clerk to the Council: Sarah Bligh

Members of the public: 2

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

2. Apologies: Nil

3. Minutes of the Parish Assembly Meeting of 17th May 2021 held at Wisbech St. Mary Community Centre were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Chairman's Annual Report:

The Chairman opened his report by recognising how busy the past year had been for the Parish Council. The WSM Pond rejuvenation project allowed the area to thrive as an asset to the village and he gave thanks to Cllrs Knight & Humphrey for all their hard work; as well as Anglian Water for their financial contribution. The Guyhirn pond had two of the Willow Trees felled and others trimmed; opening up the area, which now also looks fantastic.

The Chairman acknowledged other projects which included 14 new low maintenance benches, 10 new waste bins and a new bus shelter and defibrillator at Tholomas Drove.

The Platinum Jubilee – Queens Green Canopy project saw trees planted in every village with tree guards and a plaque to commemorate the date.

The Chairman reported that all the Parish streetlights have now been upgraded to LED and will soon be renumbered to include the Parish Councils details for fault reporting.

The Chairman made mention to the recent signing of the Military Covenant and welcomed Mr Steve Wellon OBE as our community champion.

The Chairman expressed his personal concern regarding the imminent boundary review and encouraged Councillors and Parishioners to write in and express their views and concerns to try and stop the community being split.

The Chairman reflected on the sad passing during the year of the previous Parish Clerk Geoffrey Wilkinson, past Chairman of the Parish Council John Parrin, and most recently Ex Councillor John Fish.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to his Vice-Chairman Councillor John Humphrey for all his support, Councillor Peter Davies, who after 43 dedicated years to the Parish Council recently retired, and the Clerk Sarah Bligh for her hard work keeping the Parish Council running smoothly.

5. John Bends Charity Accounts:

The Clerk referred to the accounts to the year-end 5th April 2022 as circulated. Income was £11998.74 and expenditure was £15193.00, total cash balance at the Year End was £3394.43.

Cllr Allen reported that the charity had undertaken lots of drainage work to their land to make sure it was in good heart and was able to achieve a decent rent. This resulted in the hand out to applicants being slightly less but he was hopeful that this will build up again.

6. Poors Allotment Charity Accounts:

The Clerk referred to the accounts to the year-end 5th April 2022 as circulated. Income was £14530.60 and expenditure was £11603.40, total cash balance at the Year End was £12866.82.

Cllr Allen reported that the charity had helped all nine applicants with education grants.

7. Francis Hardy Charity Accounts:

The Clerk referred to the accounts to the year-end 5th April 2022 as circulated. Income was £4960.24 and expenditure was £3700.00, total cash balance at the Year End was £38,486.88.

Cllr Allen explained that the cash balance is high due to the charity not being able to find a suitable piece of land to invest in and this money is unable to be used to give out. Cllr Allen also reported that the schools in the Parish benefited from a larger award this year from the Charity.

8. Guyhirn Playing Field Association Accounts:

The Clerk referred to the accounts to the year-end 31st March 2022 as circulated. Income was £12898.16 and expenditure was £12355.39, total cash balance at the Year End was £9954.84.

The Chairman thanked the Guyhirn Playing Field Association for presenting their accounts and was happy with the explanation of the current cash balance.

9. Parish Affairs:

A Parishioner of Murrow thanked the Parish Council for their support of the voluntary groups that she works with, thanks was also given to the Clerk for her quick and efficient responses.

As Murrow Street Pride Chairman, she reported that it had been a good year for the group, having recruited more volunteers. The group enjoyed many positive comments on the planter displays throughout the year and continues to work on projects with Murrow Pre School and Murrow Primary Academy. There had been a fantastic response to the Platinum Jubilee Celebration with tickets booked from residents living in every road in the main settlement of Murrow.

As Co-Ordinator of the Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speedwatch (CSW), she reported that resuming CSW had been successful but the group had lost many volunteers following the COVID suspension. The group will be actively looking to recruit more volunteers and offer the training required. Even with less volunteers the group has successfully managed to complete as many road side sessions as it did pre COVID but data is showing an increase in speeding.

As a volunteer of the COVID support group 'Helping Hands' co-ordinated by Councillor Gavin Booth; she gave praise to him regarding how well the service was run. What initially was thought to be a scheme that would run for a few weeks lasted 17 months; which included both week day and week end deliveries of medications and food parcels. She reflected on the challenges she faced being the middle man between the patient and the pharmacy, which sometimes resulted in frightening and unsavoury incidents, but regardless of those moments she was proud that no-one in the parish was let down.

With no further matters arising the Chairman declared the Parish Assembly Meeting closed at 7:15pm

Signed: Cllr. D Wheeler, Chairman