

Wacton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Wacton Village Hall.

At 6.00pm on Wednesday 6th December 2023.

**Present: - Chairman: Gary Mulhall. Councillors: Pete Fraser, Kat Ireson. Felicity Perry
Parish Clerk: Alan Arber**

3 members of the public were also present.

1. Public participation.

Ditch at village hall needs looking at and the clerk commented that the environment agency who look after the ditch has been informed.

2. To consider apologies for absence.

No accept.

3. To receive any disclosures of interest.

Gary Mulhall for payment in item 12

4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st November 2023

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Felicity Perry

Seconded: Pete Fraser

5. To consider matters arising from the last minute (for information only).

None reported.

6. To receive a report from the County Councillor.

County Councillor Alison Thomas - No report

7. To receive a report from the District Councillor.

Kim Carosk sent the following report.

Diss swimming pool closure has been scheduled for late Feb to Nov. Investigations have revealed gnarly problems under the pool and asbestos, we wouldn't have lasted the previously stated 5 years without refurbishment (it's crumbling fast). There has been good take up from swim school participants on the option to take a class at Wymondham during the closure. The refurbishment will include solar panels, air source heat pumps, shallowing, new tiles, new changing rooms, new viewing area with improved vending and full redecoration.

The Mobile Help Hub van has been delivered. The team is working on a few test events in the short term and a full schedule to start in the spring. Parishes are welcome to make suggestions for outing opportunities which will benefit residents.

NEW Clean Up & Bloom Grant £300 for any parish; very simple application form. Can be used for plants, wildflower seeds, litter picking equipment and Anglia in Bloom participation fee if they want to enter. The parish can pass the money on to a nature/gardening-focused community group.

Council reached a decision choosing a preferred bid for the sale of South Norfolk House in Long Stratton. It was also agreed to support Long Stratton TC with feasibility work regarding community provision in the town.

As always please don't hesitate to pass on my details to any councillors or residents who would like to raise any issues with me.

8. To receive the Footpath Wardens report.

We do not have a Footpath Warden, so no report was forthcoming.

9. To receive a report from the Village Hall Management moving forward.

A meeting will take place at the chairman's home where the new trustees will be installed to the village hall committee at a formal meeting.

10. To consider Planning applications.

No Planning applications received.

11. Correspondence.

Gov.uk email scheme order placed.

Precept paperwork received.

Insurance forms submitted and response received.

New SAM 2 Quote received for Insurance claim.

Insurance company sent their findings and their offer but due to the cost of the SAM 2 machine going up since the claim submitted this has been returned to the insurers to see if they will pay the extra

Request from Social club for help with Childrens Xmas Party

Clerks Appraisal forms sent to councillors.

Request to councillors to upgrade the parish printer.

Defib Pads Ordered.

Bleed Kit Ordered.

Email to say Bartrums will start Blacks meadow in December.

NPTS Training emails and clerks networking booked for Dec.

New BT migration undertaken as Plusnet stopping their business service.

Pride in Place in bloom and clean it grant applied for

Email regarding the work the young parishioner has done on litter picking in the parish.

Emails sent to Plusnet on lack of broadband service.
Quotes being obtained for play area grant application.
Thanks to Kat laid Remembrance wreath in November.

12. Authorisation of Payments.

1. **Receipts**
No receipts received.
2. **Finance**

- To approve payment of Clerks Salary and expenses for November £853.94
- To approve payment to Norfolk Pension Scheme for Clerks Pension Nov £296.47
- Payment to Mulbee Solutions for woodland project work in Nov £120.00
- To approve payment to O2 for clerk's mobile November £11.89
- To approve payment to Plusnet for Broadband for defib November £32.28

Proposed Pete Fraser Seconded Kat Ireson

Update on the council Finances

The Parish council is in good health and at the start of November the councils balance was £20,818.39. After the payments from this meeting the councils balance is £19,493.81 So we are in good health.

The clerk has reclaimed £449.83 in VAT.

To approve the appointment of Sonya Blythe as Internal Auditor for 2023-2024

The clerk commented that he had spoken to Sonya again about Sonya undertaking our internal audit for 2023-2024 and Sonya had agreed to do this at a flat rate of £120.

All agreed to accept.

Proposed Gary Mulhall Seconded Felicity Perry

To receive the 9-month v Expenditure report

The clerk provided a 9-month budget v Expenditure report for the councillors and was thanked for his work on this.

To receive the clerks appraisal and note actions required.

The chairman and vice-chairman had undertaken the clerks appraisal and are pleased to report the clerk has performed very well this year in his role and despite some issues at meetings that have caused the clerk issues, they would like to report that the clerk is a valuable member of the council and goes over and above in his role and have agreed to sanction a pay rise from SCP 23 to SCP 24 at a rate of £17.16 from April 2024.

Proposed: Felicity Perry Seconded: Pete Fraser

13. Report on ongoing matters.

- **Woodland Project**
This is coming along and lots of interactions with Long Stratton School children enjoying helping, although due to the poor weather they have cancelled all trips until the new year.
Skinny Dead Trees cut the as worry is they could come down if the wind gets up.
The bridge continues to rot away so it was agreed that it needs looking at asap.
If it gets worse we may have to close it off.
- **Councillor and Clerk Training**
Clerk will attend Clerks networking on 13th December 2023
- **To discuss the Book Exchange project**
The chairman has looked at this to begin work but found that the whole roof is rotten to the core. It has been removed completely and rebuild has been delayed until January due to the bad weather. It will then been named as ‘The Swap Stop’ once completed.
- **New Benches**
This has been deferred until the weather spring.
- **The Parish Partnership**
The scheme will not be utilized this year.
- **Councillors Page on the website**
The clerk commented that he would like to get a page on the website detailing the councillors and some information about each one. He asked all councillors to submit a few lines to him and a picture for the website so he could undertake this.
- **Gov.uk Email Addresses for councillors.**
The clerk has sent the order through for this and should be done very quickly once all in place at a reduced cost of £180 per year giving all councillors Gov.uk email addresses plus the council too making them look more professional and less likely to be defrauded.
- **Sam 2 Insurance claim**
The clerk reported this is moving forward and we await the final claim amount from the insurers as the new SAM 2 has gone up since the claim was submitted and the insurance company are looking at this increase to decide if they will pay the extra rate.

14. **To receive details of Parish Speed Watch.**

Nothing from Speed Watch and new volunteers are needed as the volunteers need to reregister in the new year with the prospect of the volunteers dropping out. Three locations are used for the scheme. It is hoped to do a couple in December.

15. **To discuss the need for New Parish Councillors.**

We need new councillors desperately and will look for these asap. Two volunteers may be interested in the coming months.

16. **Public Participation**

It was proposed to give £100 to the Children’s Christmas party. Everyone agreed to this to be done.

17. Items for the next Agenda

Precept request

Sam 2 Insurance claim

Governance

Bridge at Woodland Project

Finalizing the budget

The meeting ended at 6.26 pm.

Next Parish Council Meetings 3rd January 6pm 2023