

Wacton Parish Council

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

At 6.00pm on 8th January 2025.

Present: - Chair: Gary Mulhall. Councillors: Pete Fraser, Freddie Bone, Kat Ireson.

Kim Prentice

Parish Clerk: Alan Arber

One members of the public were also present.

1. Public Participation

A parishioner commented that she was asked to attend via regarding East Pye Solar and the group called Block East Pye. A question was asked that it would go on the agenda for the Feb meeting. The chair commented that he is aware that this will be decided at government level and the possibility of installing a battery plant had been presented to the village in Wacton Village Hall, and this was not a great presentation. There is a worry due to the extra traffic and the proposed loss of local bridleways and footpaths along with the damage to the green agenda of the local area. All the files and research are on the Facebook site for Block East Pye Solar are on the site. It was agreed this would be come and agenda item.

2. To consider any apologies for absence

None Reported

3. To receive any disclosures of interest.

Gary Mulhall for a payment for attending training in item 13.

4. To approve the minutes from the meeting held on 6th November 2024

The chair signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 6th November 2024

Proposed Gary Mulhall

Seconded Freddie Boone

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

No comments made.

6. To receive a report from the County councillor.

Alison Thomas sent the following report via email.

Council meets tomorrow to discuss and decide on devolution. We are being asked if we wish to put ourselves forward (along with Suffolk) for devolution with a mayor covering both counties. The letter from the minister makes clear that this is the direction he intends to go in and local government reorganisation (LGR) is expected to follow. If we do not proceed willingly there is every likelihood that it will happen anyway, but we have lessened our negotiating power to speak up for Norfolk residents. Tomorrow's decision centres around an expression of interest only and there would still need to be agreement to proceed later. This would follow a public consultation (by government) which could begin as early as month end. Any LGR

involving the districts and county becoming a unitary authorities would come later.

7. To receive a report from the district councillors.

Kim Carsok sent her apologies with nothing to report.

8. To receive a report from the Village Hall committee.

No report received.

9. To consider planning applications.

No planning applications received.

10. Governance

No Governance at this meeting

11. Correspondence: -

New email password sorted for Councillor Pete Fraser

Request from SNDC elections regarding home addresses for Cllr Boone and Prentice on their Register of interest's forms

Email from Payback team regarding working in the Woodland Project, Date of meeting to be arranged.

NPTS and NALC training emails received.

VAT refund submitted.

Emails regarding land sale submitted and received.

Pride in place grant pictures submitted and all approved and council thanked for their work on this.

Emails regarding Defib application and the possibility of siting at the church sent to the chair.

Notification that Defib battery is still not functioning correctly, and Cllr P Fraser has contacted the company on this issue.

Precept Request and Tax base paperwork received.

Precept request paperwork completed and needed to be checked by all councillors before submission.

East Pye solar meeting information received from Hempnall PC

Key code changed for access to village hall.

Parish online grant of £100 noted and will be taken off our subscriptions.

Devolution paper information received.

Clerks Appraisal undertaken by Chair and Cllr Ireson

Budget information worked on, and precept request agreed later in the meeting.

Ranger's workbook information received of works conducted.

Wacton Social club Grant paid to social club of £100.

Practitioners conference booked for the clerk to attend.

12. To note receipts for October/November and December

13. Authorization of payments

December Payments

- To approve payment of Clerks Salary and expenses for November £809.62
- To approve payment to Norfolk Pension Scheme for Clerks Pension
November £277.13
- To approve payment to HMRC for Tax and NI November £106.40

- To approve payment to Excite Solutions for Grass Cutting October £915.60
- To approve payment to Gary Mulhall for attending training £29.70
- To approve payment to Parish Online for mapping software annual subscription GRANT ADDED NO PAYMENT REQUIRED £0
- To approve payment to Unity trust for bank charges £12.00
- Payment to Lloyds for monthly credit card charge November £3.00
- To approve payment to O2 for clerk's mobile October £12.47
- To approve payment to BT for Broadband for defib November £32.53
- To approve any payments on Credit Card for November
Borns timber for post £20.28
- **To note the financial Position of The Parish Council**
The council started the month with £15,602.80 in the account and after today's payments of £2218.73 were taken it left a balance of £13384.07.
The chair signed the bank statement as a true record of these payment and the account status.

January Payments

- To approve payment of Clerks Salary and expenses for December £660.15
- To approve payment to Norfolk Pension Scheme for Clerks Pension
December £215.75
- To approve payment to HMRC for Tax and NI December £107.15
- To approve payment to 02 for clerk's mobile for December £12.47
- To approve payment to BT for Broadband for Defib for December £32.53
- To approve monthly credit card charge to Lloyds £3.00
- To approve any payments made on credit card £0.00
- To approve the payment to Unity Trust for monthly bank charges £6.00
- **To note the financial Position of The Parish Council**
The council started the month with a balance of £13,384.07 and after today's payments of £1037.05 the balance in the account was £12,347.02.
Proposed Pete Fraser Seconded Kim Prentice

The clerk also reported that he had submitted a VAT reclaim of £174.97 which we should get refunded soon.

- **To discuss the Budget and agree precept Request for 2025-2026**
The council had held a budget meeting, and it was agreed to ask for a 20% precept rise to allow the dwindling funds to be instated to a better level.
The Precept Request was **£22,804.00** meaning a band d charge of £165.00 with a weekly charge of £3.17 which is an increase per week from last year of 51p per week which the council feel is acceptable as they had not raised the precept for the last 4 years.
All councillors were asked to check their precept request form and agree it is

correct and gave the clerk the instructions to submit this asap.

Proposed Pete Fraser

Seconded Freddie Boone

- **To agree any Payments are the agenda is posted.**
No payments after the agenda had been posted.
- **To approve the clerks Appraisal and note the actions moving forward.**
The Chair and Cllr Ireson undertook the clerk's appraisal, and it was agreed that he was doing an excellent job and as such a rise of one SCP point to SCP25 at a rate of £18.26 from April 1st.

Proposed Freddie Boone

Seconded Pete Fraser

14. Report on any ongoing matters:

- **The woodland project and Bridge in the Copse repair.**
The clerk reported that he had received correspondence from Community payback about doing the work to repair the bridge in the woodland project and he will be holding a meeting with them on Tuesday 14th January along with the chair at 10am to ascertain what is required and when they will start.
- **Councillor and Clerk Training**
The clerk commented that he had booked himself on the upcoming practitioner's conference and requested the council assist him with the cost along with his other council with a £200 payment. The council agreed to pay this for the clerk.
- **Benches**
Deferred
- **Book Exchange**
New planting bed to be installed asap in Barry Duffin memory. New bookshelves are needed and could be a job for the pay back team.
- **Biodiversity**
Deferred to April 2025
- **Damaged Play Equipment**
There are a few small grants available for this and the council agreed these should be looked at moving forward.
- **Purchase of New wooden Bench for play area**
It was discussed what type of bench we purchase if the chair makes a basic one with no back. This could also be installed by the community payback team during their visits.
- **Purchase of local variety of trees**
To be purchased asap and these could be planted by the community payback team. Pear, cherry, and plum trees are the best.
- **Land Sale**
The good news is it is almost completed.

- **Meeting dates regarding the clerk's holiday**

The clerk will be away on leave from 10th Feb to 10th March 2025 and it was agreed that the March meeting will not be held due to this as it will mean two meetings in 3 weeks which is not acceptable so the March meeting will not be held.

18. Matters raised by councillors and members of the public. (For information only).

A councillor reported that Buttles Lane is an unmaintained highway and is still overgrown and needs dealing with asap and reported this earlier in the year with the rangers clearing a small area but it is still not great but Kim had also done some work on this and Highways are going to be booked at date to undertake the work.

RB24 Earthenware Lane is okay until it goes into the twenty metres of bridleway is not in a great position and needs reporting. Kim will report this asap.

Wacton Village sign on Stratton Road has been taken and a check is needed with highways along with the sign name for buttles lane is also missing.

Earthenware Lane also needs a new sign too.

19. To receive details of the Parish Speed Watch group, plus Volunteers that are needed and SAM data download.

The clerk had downloaded the SAM 2 machine, and the figures were very encouraging with a maximum speed being recorded on 10th October at 17.05 with a speed of 55mph. The number of vehicles going through the village one way was around 555 per day with the AM peak being 8am and the PM peak being 4pm. The average speed of most of the vehicles is 32.4 mph which is encouraging and shows that the SAM 2 machine is working well. The clerk will move it to the other end of the village next week to get the figures from there over the next three months.

20. To discuss the need for new parish councillors

No comments on this

21. Items for the next agenda.

East Pye Solar

Footpath Warden Report

Dates of next meeting:

Parish Council meeting 5th February 2025 7pm