

WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Walpole Parish Council held via online video, on Thursday 14th of January 2021 at from 7.30pm.

Present :

Councillors – William Brooks, Heather Smith, Claire Robinson , Richard Green, Adrian Eveleigh, Richard Blunt, Andy Bliss.

Councillors - Julian Kirk and Sandra Squires (19.54)

Clerk – Caroline Boyden

One member of the Public

Welcome from Richard Green, Chairman to everyone.

1. Apologies – to accept apologies and reasons for absence:
Linda Matthews and David Lawty – family illness
Charlene Campion and Jade Roper – new councillor training
2. To remind all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct
The Chair reminded all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct.
3. Declarations of Interest of any items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations. None
4. Public Participation - to allow public participation (3 minutes allowed per speaker, up to a maximum of 15 minutes in total). None
5. Minutes – to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10th of December 2020, having been previously circulated were proposed as a being a true record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Brooks and seconded by Cllr Eveleigh. Unanimously agreed by those present at that meeting.
6. Matters Arising – to record matters arising from the last meeting:
 - 6.1 Willow Trees update – Cllr Squire and Cllr Blunt are discussing with Borough/County into ownership.
 - 6.2 Defibrillator update – the folder of information is now with Cllr Bliss. The box for the defibrillator is okay and will not require replacing. Cllr Bliss had spoken to Cllr Lawty regarding arranging for the electrics to be updated and a figure of £276 + VAT had been given. However, this was not an official letterhead quote and once the official version has been received it was agreed to go ahead as soon as possible.
7. To receive reports:
 - 7.1 Highways – Cllr Brooks advised that the 3 potholes in Church Road by the Townsend Estate entrance have been reported. Other potholes are on Gooses land, Market Lane and Marsh Road which require reporting- photographs and exact locations to be sent to the Clerk. The Clerk reported on the response received from the Rangers to the request for rod & flush of the drain that runs from the manhole cover within the Bus Stop on Wisbech

Signed :

Date :

Road into the adjacent dyke in one direction and across to Chalk Road Dyke.
The County Council have a scheme in place for some extra drainage in this location which is due to start in the next few weeks and all gullies and chambers would be cleaned then. This drainage scheme to be checked to ensure it includes the flooding outside Wash Dyke. Cllr Bliss raised the damaged lamp post by Anglian Water and Cllr Smith to check and advise the clerk. ACTION HS/CB

7.2 County and Borough Councillors Reports.

Cllr Blunt advised that all panel meetings are to cease in February to allow additional staff to help with the Covid work including claims on the government initiatives. Good news – the figures for our area are coming down – 317 with King’s Lynn at 471 also in decline. There is a 2-3 week lag on updates, but it is looking better and the r rate in East Anglia is now 1:1 – 1:3. Cllr Blunt stressed the importance of staying at home as much as possible and to only make essential journeys.

Cllr Squires discussed the following report:

Report 14th January 2021

National Lockdown: Stay at Home - Go to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for a full list of restrictions and when you can leave your home.

You should always stay local if leaving home - unless it’s necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you have any of the [coronavirus symptoms](#) you must self-isolate straightway and [get a test](#). You must continue to isolate if you test positive or are told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

You can be fined up to £10,000 if you do not isolate. [Get support to self-isolate](#).

The Government has also developed a [series of posters](#) to help display information about the national lockdown in England.

Norfolk Winter Covid Support Scheme – We continue to provide set up a special support scheme to help Norfolk residents get through winter. It's for anyone who is experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Further details are available [here](#).

Covid cases are rising rapidly in all areas of Norfolk, there is no room for complacency. Levels of infection are high everywhere, including in rural areas. With 1 in 3 people not having any symptoms, and numbers of covid patients in our hospitals rising daily, it is so important everyone sticks to the rules. You really can’t be too careful.

Since 1st July 2020 there have been 24, 142 cases in Norfolk. 7,889 of those occurred in the last 14 days. There are 771 people in hospital (up 23 from last week) and 43 patients in critical care (down 4) 55 further deaths have been recorded to 12th January 2021, taking the cumulative total to 755.

142 Open Outbreaks in care settings, 57 in businesses, 34 in education settings and 56 in health & emergency settings.

Bed occupancy, as a combined figure across the Norfolk Trusts is 91.3% as of Tuesday 12th January.

NCC have launched a new campaign encouraging people to Stay Home, Stay Local & Shop Safely.

Council Service Updates

Schools – closed except for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. Early Years Childcare remains open

Libraries & Mobile Libraries – closed

Recycling Centres – Open but with social distancing measures in place. Reuse shops are closed

Museums – closed

Registration Office – no marriage ceremonies taking places except exceptional circumstances, births can still be registered by appointment only, registration of deaths is being conducted remotely by telephone.

Carbon reduction plans unveiled - Wide-ranging plans to reduce the County Council’s carbon emissions from 11.6 million tonnes per year to zero by 2030 have been unveiled. Tree planting, support for green transport and the use of the Burlingham Estate to demonstrate environmental good practice are among the measures being taken by Norfolk County Council.

Last year, the Council adopted an environment policy. An update report to the Council’s Cabinet reveals a series of measures are underway, including:

Plans to plant one million trees over five years, working with partners, communities, and landowners. A £1.5m investment in active travel, including cycling and walking

Development of plans to demonstrate environmental best practice on the County Council’s Burlingham Estate

Work with Norwich City Council and UK Power Networks on on-street electric car charging points. Further work to install LED streetlights across Norfolk

The Council is also supporting development of a Norfolk and Suffolk 25-year Environment Plan to protect, conserve and enhance the region’s environment.

Holt Hall

On 11th January, a special council meeting was held to try to persuade the council not to close and dispose of Holt Hall. There is some discussion whether the idea to sell it, came before or after an approach by a party to purchase it. It is believed the party involved is Gresham’s School, although this cannot be confirmed. Holt Hall has been providing outdoor education for generations of Norfolk schoolchildren for the last 70 years.

The situation we are in today shows how important being outdoors and in nature is to our mental and physical health. Holt Hall has now been declared an asset of community value, so it cannot be sold until the Friends of Holt Hall have been given the opportunity to raise money to keep it.

Judicial Review

Following a change to care charges in July 2019, and the controversial introduction of the Minimum Income Guarantee which left many severely disabled people in Norfolk in

financial hardship, a Judicial Review in December decided that NCC had discriminated against those severely disabled people who were unable to work. As a result, a new charging policy is to be developed in conjunction with those who receive care, all extra charges introduced the former policy are to be repaid. I am pleased to know the claimant in the Judicial Review and to have been able to provide some small level of support. This decision affects severely disabled people right across Norfolk and in other councils around the Country. I am now in discussions with NCC over the refunds as the plan was to make payment back to care accounts, which to my mind is more of a credit note than a refund. Discussions are ongoing.

County Council Elections

With the country under lockdown and local elections due to take place in May, there have been lots of discussions over whether the election should be postponed. Currently there are no plans to postpone the election although both the LGA and Councils are requesting the Government delays until the Autumn.

There are several reasons for this, firstly for safety and the belief that holding an election could potentially put people at risk. There is guidance for how to run a polling station and the count during a pandemic, although none of it has taken into account that volunteers at polling stations are less likely to want to help out and that it would make the count longer and also more expensive for the Districts.

Also, under lockdown rules there are exemptions from the rules to go to vote and to hold a count, but there are none for campaigning and leafletting and we have been told we are not allowed to leave our houses for those activities. Which would make getting signatures on the form and getting to talk to our electorate, much more difficult.

The Independent Group members at NCC emailed our local MP's to express our concerns and to highlight to the Government that a decision on this should be made sooner rather than later. I personally emailed both James Wild and Elizabeth Truss last week and to date have received no response.

- 7.3 Play Area - It was decided to leave the Play Area open. It is currently flooded, and the dog mess issue continues with the gate being left open.
- 7.4 Community Centre– Cllr Lawty advised via the Clerk that he wanted to be removed as the Parish Council contact for the Community Centre and further investigation is required to see if Cllr Eveleigh can take over.
- 7.5 There was no update on the next Crier and the new editorial team are now in place. The Clerk advised that the website top 10 viewed pages were: Home: 129, Minutes 22, Planning: 54, Crier: 76, Agendas 27, Parish Council: 26, useful information 16, latest news; 48, Community Centre: 16, Useful Information 16. 477 views in total for December.
- 7.6 Cllr Eveleigh advised nothing to add from last month and still awaiting the new signage from NCC.
- 7.7 Community Fund Projects Working Group – Cllr Bliss advised that the concrete base for the new bench was in place and installation of the bench to follow when the weather improves.

- 7.8 Communications/Correspondence.
- a. The parishioner's email regarding the barriers/gates put on Fence Bank was discussed. Cllr Eveleigh had reported this to The Countryside Access Officer at NCC who advised that this was not registered as any sort of public highway, either road or public right of way. Thus, we have no jurisdiction over it and cannot protect it from such actions. The clerk to respond to the parishioner with this information. ACTION CB
 - b. Medworth Energy Letter- Cllr Green advised that all the landowners in the area had received this letter and no Parish Council land was in the highlighted area. Clerk to respond accordingly. ACTION CB
 - c. Folgate Lane – The parishioner letter regarding change of address to St. Peter had been updated by BCKLWN and denied as further investigations had taken place with Royal Mail. Clerk to advise the parishioner. ACTION CB
 - d. Market Lane Survey – an appeal has been requested as the changes to just 50mph are not acceptable to the Walpoles & Walpole Cross Keys. Cllr Squire is insisting on the appeal and we await a response from NCC.
 - e. The tree that requires cutting back as it is growing against the lamp post on Church/Chalk Road junction has received one quote from Chris Hennelly for £250. This was proposed by Cllr Eveleigh, seconded by Cllr Smith and all present were in favour. Clerk to contact Mr. Hennelly accordingly. ACTION CB
- 7.9 The clerk requested that a new internal auditor, recommended by NPTS, was engaged at a cost of £50, saving £30 on last year. This was proposed by Cllr Brooks, seconded by Cllr Green and agreed by all present.
8. Planning
- 8.1 The application for a proposed dwelling at Plumridge Nurseries had shown incorrect photographs and maps. The Clerk had contacted planning to request that this was sorted out and also for an extension on the comment date of today (14th January). Cllr Blunt requested copies of the emails from the clerk to planning and he will look into the application. ACTION CB
 - 8.2 An appeal has been raised for the retrospective application for the Erection of detached machine store (with storage above) and erection of external bar and associated change of use at Cedar View, Walnut Road – still awaiting a decision.
9. Finance
- 9.1 To approve the Financial Reports for December payments/receipts – proposed Cllr Eveleigh, seconded Cllr Smith and agreed by all present.
 - 9.2 To approve the bank reconciliation & statements for December – proposed Cllr Eveleigh, seconded by Cllr Brooks and agreed by all present.
 - 9.3 To approve the proposed payments to be made in January – proposed Cllr Eveleigh, seconded Cllr Bliss and agreed by all present.
Payments: Staff Costs £340.36, Borough for play area signage £38.40, Induction training £80.00, EE, Eon and K&M Lighting via direct debit.
 - 9.4 To approve the draft budget for 2021/22 – proposed Cllr Eveleigh, seconded Cllr Bliss and agreed by all present.
10. Items for next agenda – Market Lane Survey & Willow Trees.
11. The next meeting will be on Thursday 11th of February 2021 from 19.30 hrs via Zoom.

Meeting ended at 20.31pm