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**The Minutes of the Meeting of Walsoken Parish Council held in
Walsoken Village Hall, Walsoken on Tuesday 1st September 2015 at 7pm**

PRESENT

Councillors Fred Leach (Chair), John Woolley (Vice Chair), Andy Houghton, Allan Landall, Clive Bettinson and Jo Woolley (arrived 7.10pm).

Borough Cllr Roy Groom.

84. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair welcomed Barry Sisson who was interested in becoming a councillor. Mr Sisson gave a brief summary of his background and interests. He had moved to Walsoken in 2001 and been in the Civil Service since 1984, now working part-time. He had moved around the country with his job but now intended to stay in Walsoken.

Chair thanked him for this information and offered him the opportunity to stay through the meeting and ask any questions.

85. APOLOGIES AND REASONS

Cllr Jenny Snow – holiday, Cllr Lisa Wiffen – NSPCC meeting, Borough Cllr Brian Long – holiday, County Cllr. Harry Humphrey – Borough Council meeting. David Goate, a Walsoken resident, had expressed an interest in becoming a councillor but had been called away on business. He would be attending the October meeting.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Landall declared an interest in the churchyard items.

87. NOTIFICATION OF MATTERS TO BE PUT ON THE AGENDA UNDER 'AOB'

Cllr Houghton had an item under Correspondence.

88. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 7th JULY 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2015 had been circulated. Cllr Houghton proposed they be accepted as a true copy, seconded Cllr Bettinson unanimously agreed.

89. MATTERS ARISING

a) Broadend Road junction – the reply from Catherine Brookes of Highways England had been circulated advising that extension of the white lining was to be undertaken and that they were aware of the ditch and trees at the design stage, which is why they placed the vehicle activated signs in their current locations. Catherine confirmed that they do not propose to relocate the signs at this time. They will continue to monitor the performance of the whole scheme through post construction audits, the next one will be completed once 12 months post construction data is available.

It was confirmed that the white lines had now been extended but were still not satisfactory.

It was noted that an accident had occurred at the junction in the last couple of weeks.

Catherine Brookes had confirmed she could attend the proposed public meeting with Elizabeth Truss on either October 2nd or November 13th 2015 and the Clerk was waiting for Elizabeth Truss to confirm if she is available on these dates.

b) Parish Council website – a suggestion about giving details of how to apply to become a councillor was put on hold.

c) Highway items – Clerk had received confirmation that the Parish Rangers had been able to complete hedge cutting in Sparrowgate Road; filled potholes in Blackbear Lane; trimmed grass in Burrett Road and on the Public Right of Way near Manor House Road.

They had not responded to the request to deal with the obscured speed signs at the junction of Burrett/Burrettgate and Sparrowgate Roads.

It was noted that the footpath between Church Road and Sylvden Drive was sometimes blocked by an overgrown elderberry bush but it was decided to leave this for the time being. There is an Anglia Water main sewer drain running through this pathway.

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d) Co-option – Chair asked that councillors let the Clerk know if they are aware of any reason that Mr Sisson is not suitable. Clerk will advise Mr Sisson of the outcome of the Council's decision and also let him know the eligibility criteria.

e) Church tree survey – Chair reminded the Council that it was responsible for the maintenance of the closed churchyard but not the insurance. In accordance with the church insurer's requirements, Cllr Landall had asked for a basic Health and Safety check of the 48 trees in the closed churchyard, which was completed by the Landscape Group. The comprehensive survey numbered the trees, summarised the work required and classified them in terms of safety from 0 to 15.

It had recommended that 2 trees should be felled (number 43 an ash and number 47 a yew), but no reason given. Cllr Landall informed the Council that a church member was willing to deal with these 2 trees plus remove branches on tree number 30 (a sycamore).

Clerk read a letter from Mr. South expressing concern about a beech tree adjacent to their property. Chair acknowledged the report but as this was the property of the church it was the church's decision as to who they shared the information with. Cllr Landall advised that he had already phoned Mrs South and told her the recommendation was that one of the branches needs removing from the beech tree.

It was decided to contact 2 or 3 tree surgeons and it was agreed to share the information on the survey with them and ask for individual quotes for the suggested work, with the beech tree requiring urgent action.

Cllr Bettinson will ask Landscape Group if they are able to undertake the work. He also advised that he was aware that they no longer had the contract with Fenland District Council and also their offices had burnt down last night.

Cllr Jo Woolley will let the Clerk have a contact number of someone she knows who could do the work.

Cllr Landall advised that about 6 years ago the Church had some dead wood removed from the row of lime trees, costing £250 per tree. At the time, the church wasn't aware that the Parish Council was responsible for the trees and it had money available to undertake the work.

f) Highways Partnership scheme – it was decided that as the street lights and tree work were priorities, this scheme would not be taken up this year.

Cllr Houghton reported that there is a section of footpath which is very uneven and unsafe near the bus stop at the top of Burrett Gardens, Clerk to report to the County Council.

g) Community Speedwatch – Chair reported that he had attended the recent SNAP meeting where councils had expressed their disappointment with the scheme saying it was pointless because the Police have no powers to do anything following the results.

Clerk reported that 3 people had contacted her following the newspaper article but a minimum of 6 was needed.

After discussion, it was decided to go no further with this scheme and advise the 3 people accordingly.

h) Street light conversion to LED – Clerk read out Westcotec's reply to the Council's queries – a light on a wooden pole could be removed for £50; a lamp column would cost £580 to have the electric disconnected and column removed; the quote would be the same if half the lights were converted this year but next year would depend on the lantern price; in ten years' time it wouldn't be anticipated that there would be too many problems with the lights but by then prices would be lower as LED lights would be the norm.

Clerk advised the Council that the Budget showed an anticipated balance of just over £24,000 as at March 2016.

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A discussion took place and Cllr Bettinson put forward the proposal that 32 street lights (excluding the churchyard light) be converted to 16 LED at the Westcotec quote of £10,032.32 + VAT, which includes removing brackets from 4 lights and fitting them with galvanised sleeves, seconded by Cllr Jo Woolley, all in favour. It was also agreed to have Smart Switches fitted to each light at a cost of £15 per light, total £480, but ask how much it would be to change the timing in the future. It was decided to hold off requesting the work pending a survey of the lights in the village to assess whether any can be removed using the survey produced by Cllr Houghton. Cllr Houghton, Cllr John Woolley and Clerk to conduct the assessment.

i) Electricity supply to street lights – to be held over pending conversion to LED.

j) Maintenance contract for street lights – to be held over pending conversion to LED.

k) Flytipping on allotments – Cllr Bettinson advised that he will look at the allotments once the beans have been combined. It was agreed that he could hire a skip if necessary to take away the rubbish and the Council will pay. If he can clear it himself he will do so with Cllr Leach.

l) Village Hall Representative – Cllr Landall apologised but stated he would have to resign as representative because the committee only meet on Tuesdays and he's unable to attend due to work commitments. No other volunteers came forward so this position will be held over.

90. PLANNING

a) The Planning Report having been circulated, was read out by Clerk and noted.

15/01182/F – after discussion it was decided to recommend decline of this application as it is in a residential area in a cul-de-sac and there could be problems with parking.

15/01311/O – after discussion it was decided to defer this application to the Borough Council as it's outside the village area and is close to a drain.

Clerk to ask why the Council wasn't consulted on the non-material amendment to 14/00922/F.

91. HIGHWAYS

Nothing further to report.

92. STREET LIGHTING

Nothing further to report.

93. ALLOTMENTS

Nothing further to report.

94. CHURCHYARD AND WAR MEMORIAL

Closed churchyard - Cllr Landall reported that he had been researching the closed churchyard through the Diocesan Secretary at Ely, who had advised that the churchyard was closed by Order in (Privy) Council on 3rd May 1882 and a second Order dated 14th February 1883. These were published in the London Gazette at the time and a copy dated May 9 1882 had been obtained. Cllr Landall informed the Parish Council that under Section 18 of the Burial Act the maintenance could at that time be taken over by the Burial Board or churchwardens. In 1883 the Walsoken Burial Board was established and they took charge of the maintenance of the closed churchyard. The Burial Board no longer exists and Peter Wadlow is carrying out further research.

95. FINANCE

a) Payments for approval – the payments on the attached schedule had been circulated. Cllr Houghton proposed the payments be accepted Cllr Landall seconded, all in favour.

96. SNAP FEEDBACK

Cllr Leach had attended and given a report on Community Speedwatch earlier in the meeting (89.g). Amongst the priorities were parking in Weeting, fly grazing issues and 7.5 ton weight limit on lorries.

There was dissatisfaction expressed with the lack of regularity of meetings, which now covered a larger area.

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97.CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Houghton had received a letter from the Borough Council regarding past odours in the village advising that, due to a new computer system, if you wish for your complaint to remain open and continue to receive updates you had to advise them of contact details. Clerk advised that she had received a letter and registered the Parish Council details.

There was concern expressed that this could mean that if correspondents didn't reply, their complaints may not be registered on the new system. Clerk to reply requesting that the case should remain open.

It was noted that there hadn't been as bad a problem this year.

98. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

99.AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None except for items carried forward from this meeting.

Next meeting is on Tuesday 20th October 2015 at 7pm at Walsoken Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Annette Williams, Clerk

Chair..... Date.....2015