

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WALSOKEN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 7 PM ON TUESDAY 18th JANUARY 2022 AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
WALSOKEN

In Attendance: Councillors F Leach (Chairman); John Woolley (Vice Chairman); A Houghton;
C Bettinson; J Harwin; B Sisson; C Luff; A Landall; J Snow; County Councillor C Dawson; County and Borough Councillor
J Kirk (From 7.55 pm) ; Clerk to the Council C Lilley.

1. **Public Participation:** None present
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Jo Woolley (illness) ; Cllr Richard Blunt. Cllr Blunt reminded us that although he cannot attend the meeting he is still available for any advice or assistance the Council may require.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** None declared
4. **Approval of Minutes of Meeting held 23rd November 2021:** The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr Sisson, seconded by Cllr John Woolley and unanimously approved. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) Chapnall Road Bus Shelter – The Clerk confirmed that the sign for the bus shelter has been replaced with the correct spelling of Walsoken and the invoice has been paid in full. Funds have been received from CIL and Norfolk CC which included the contributions from Cllr Dawson and Cllr Kirk. This item can be closed and will not appear on the agenda further. The clerk also updated the council on the opening of the bus shelter at this stage in the meeting and it was agreed to email Linda of VIP Hair and ask her for a date in early March on a Saturday afternoon. The clerk will then contact local papers and invite them to attend. If they do not we will submit our own photograph and piece for publication.
 - b) Incinerator Update – Cllr Dawson reported that there has still been no planning application submitted. A local meeting was held last week and it was suggested that there should have a pre prepared position even though they are consultees only. As and when an application is made the County Council will make a statement but it is not known what their position is. Cllr Dawson does not think the proposed location is suitable because the infrastructure is not there. He has suggested mothballed power station at Sutton Bridge and there has been some interest in that. It is on the radar. It is already there and connected to the grid and there is an annual cost to retain that connection to the current owners and approaching them might be a consideration.
 - c) Update on proposal to consider replacement bus shelter on Burrett Road. The Council discussed the possibility of erecting bus shelter in new location. Andy Wallace has inspected the site and made a recommendation for the new shelter to be erected on an existing slab on Burret Road. Cllr Leach made a further suggestion which would involve keeping the shelter where it is and removing the grass either side and levelling the pavement. Andy Wallace has previously agreed that this pavement needs levelling in any event. Cllr Leach suggested Councillors look at the site and consider it ahead of the next meeting. The proposal will be put on March agenda. **Action Point: Clerk to email the Councillors the photo of the proposed site received from Andy Wallace.**
 - d) Update on replacement laptop. The replacement laptop with separate keyboard has been purchased and is in use. The Clerk asked for consent to buy a mouse which in hindsight should have been purchased at the time as it falls within the agreed spending for the laptop. She has requested an ergonomic wireless mouse on offer from Amazon at £15.99 and the Council approved this purchase.
 - e) The clerk reported by email that having contacted other Councils it seems that all use E.On for their unmetered supply and that no one has been able to find any alternative as most won't take it on. The other clerks also suggested that now is not the best time to be moving given that many providers have been faced with financial difficulties and E.On is a large supplier so less likely to have the same outcome. The clerk asked the Councillors to note that our E.On supplier has now become N.Power Business Solutions but this has no impact on the service. The rates increased from 1st December 2021.
 - f) Update on replacement tree – Cllr Leach has purchased and planted the replacement trees as agreed at the last meeting. Cllr John Woolley has put on a strimmer guard to protect. Note: These trees are in the cemetery, not the churchyard and fall within the control of Fenland District Council and not the church.

- g) Update on Gifts – Cllr Leach purchased a £10 Boots gift voucher for each litter picker, 6 in all, as agreed and distributed them personally before Christmas. All the litter pickers appreciated them. The recipients are Mr & Mrs Harwin, Chris & Maria, Sarah Brooks and Diana.
- h) Email addresses for Councillors; Cllr Houghton confirmed that Outlook or Gmail can be set up as an extension of clerk.walsoken email. Clerk will email out and ask Councillors to confirm if they want a dedicated council email or if they are happy for their usual email to be added to the website. Cllr Houghton will then set up those required and they will have their own password to access. **Action Point: Clerk to email Councillors following which Cllr Houghton will set up the required email addresses.**

6. Planning: The clerk reported on the planning information which has been circulated and was noted. There are two outstanding consultation matters for the Council to consider which are 21/02397/F and 21/02377/F. Discussion followed and the Council agreed that

21/02397/f Both the applicant and the agent have approached the Council seeking approval of this application. Council has always supported this application in the past. Cllr Leach noted that the area for the planning has shrunk but that we cannot see any reason not to suggest approval this time. Cllr Dawson advised that the Borough Council are very rigidly sticking to planning rules particularly in relation to keeping countryside and many agents are having trouble. This is an interesting and innovative proposal. The Parish Council will recommend approval

21/02377/f Cllr Leach reported the original planning application for the barn conversion was made and the Council was not consulted. This was to change the use of the barns to 2 dwellings. Although not consulted the Council agreed with this plan and would not have raised any objection to it. That application was permitted. The barns sit in front of an area with paddocks and stables and applicants have now asked to knock the barns down and erect 2 houses further out into the field which has prompted consultation this time around. Currently, if you travel along Burretgate Rd and Sparrowgate Road you cannot see either barn but if they are moved then if you travel on Burretgate you will definitely see the new houses, particularly plot one which is the larger. These are very big houses and they will overlook other properties and light will be changed. Although 2 storey they have rooms in the roof with velux windows so almost 3 storey. At least one is noted to have the living accommodation on the first floor further adding to the overlook. No neighbours have contacted us although it was agreed that this should not impact the Council's recommendation for refusal. Properties on Burretgate and Sparrowgate Road may be overlooked and sunlight would be restricted. The Council does not recommend approval despite having felt that the original conversion would have been agreed had there been a consultation but on this the Council has strong reservations.

7. Finance:

- a) The schedule of payments as attached to the original minutes has been circulated. Cllr Harwin proposed the payments be accepted and Cllr Luff seconded. All in agreement.
- b) The Clerk presented the updated draft of the 2022/23 Budget which was discussed in some detail. No further comments on the budget. Clerk went through the changes. Proposed Cllr Houghton and seconded by Cllr Snow. **Action Point: The Clerk will print budget to bring to next meeting for signature.**
- c) The application window for CIL Funding FY22_1 has opened and will be open until 01.02.22. Previous suggestions were made for a bus shelter on Burrett Rd (see above) and speed signs. Cllr Blunt reminded that there is no detriment to not putting in application until July as still funding available and the pot may have increased by then. CIL like match funding but sometimes you get 100%. If you can make a parish partnership app they might not pay as much. It was agreed that there would be no application for CIL until next window which is 01/07 to 01/08. Westcotec have quoted for SAM2 portable speed camera at £2800 plus VAT plus extras (see email from Westcotec) This item will be added to the next agenda to be discussed in detail and Westcotec will be invited to make a presentation. (Questions re the cameras - Do they have to be moved? Where would we put them, what is the work involved in moving them? How easy is it to download the data?) How much are the posts? Do they need insurance? Can they go on existing poles?) **Action Point: Clerk to contact Westcotec re giving a presentation.**
- d) Email from Norfolk Citizen Advice regarding donation. No one in favour

8. Highway Matters:

The clerk reported on current outstanding highways matters as contained in the report as circulated and this was noted.

- a) Update on passing space – The Clerk contacted Andrew Wallace at NCC again and he advised that work had been due to commence in January 2022 but that this has been delayed by COVID absences. It is hoped that the work will begin shortly.
- B) Cllr Woolley reported a pothole on Grassgate Lane at the back of Paragon garage. What three words:

9. **Street Lighting:** The clerk reported that a fault had been noted on the junction of Argyll Gardens and that this was reported on 23rd December. She was advised by Westcotec that it was fixed that day but then Cllr Houghton reported it after Christmas so this appears not to have been the case. It was re-reported on 7th January 2022 and no response has been received as yet. The clerk also advised that the contract with Westcotec expires in January 2022. **Action Point: The clerk will contact Westcotec re the contract.**

10. **Allotments and Rent Review:** The Clerk previously circulated an email from Cadent regarding work which is due to take place along the side of the allotment land. The Clerk confirmed that she has supplied Cadent with a contact telephone number for Mr Clifton as she does not have an email address for him and has offered the postal address if required. She has not received any further communication from Cadent. Cllr Leach does not believe that Cadent will require access from the plan that was sent.

11. **Churchyard Matters: Nothing to report**

12. **Correspondence:**
 - a) Cllr Sisson has received an email from Jonathon Peeling from Princes/CEVA with an offer to sent workers to assist with any organised litter pick as he would like the site to support the community. They can send 3 or 4 members of staff on a day or any other event they can assist with. He also mentioned that they have a defibrillator on site at the gate house and we struggled for a place. He offered for the parish at the top end to make use of that too. The Clerk will write to Mr Peeling and explain the casual approach to litter picking (often Fridays) and suggest he could send some men out. If we do get an organised event any time in the future would like to take them up on the offer. To what extent would they allow us to publicise the defib they have? **Action Point: Clerk to email Mr Peeling**
 - b) Cllr Luff emailed his resignation as he is moving in February and will be living 3.35 miles from the parish boundary. Cllr Leach gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Luff but asked him to reserve his resignation while the Clerk clarifies the exact position as he would be willing to stay on if this were possible. **Action Point: Clerk to investigate the procedure in this scenario**

13. **Any Other Matters including urgent matters arising:**
 - a) Update on Village Hall from Cllr John Woolley: Cllr Woolley attended the meeting on 24th November 2021 and supplied a written note attached to these minutes. The kitchen has been refurbished and the toilets are to be refurbished too and this will include a disabled toilet. Bookings are reported to be up and Hall charges are to increase from 1st April 2022 from £15 p/hour to £17.50 p/hour. The Committee agreed at the meeting that the hall will be redecorated next year (2022) and new LED lights will be fitted at the same time. Cllr Woolley took along the details re the Clothing Bank which was offered to the Parish Council but the Village Hall declined this as it was considered that the one in the One Stop Shop is sufficient for the village.
 - b) Opening of the Bus Shelter – This item was discussed under item 5a).
 - c) Proposed Cycle Route – An email was circulated last week regarding a proposed cycle route which the Council have been asked to support. The council are reluctant to support this as it is not considered to be viable. Parishoners benefit from free bus passes because the roads here are poor and they wouldn't be happy if this was withdrawn which might be the case if this goes ahead. The majority of the upgrade is on private land in any event. No clear indication what support they are seeking. It was agreed that WPC will not respond.
 - d) Clerk training – An email was forwarded to the Council regarding two different training events which the clerk would like to attend. They are Managing the Financial Year End at a cost of £44 and Understanding Council Finances at a cost of £36. Both will take place in March 2022. There are two CiLCA courses this year, one starting in March 2022 and the second starting in September 2022. The Clerk would like the Council to consider enrolling her for September although a decision is not yet required. The two finance courses were approved.

14. **Agenda Items for Next Meeting:** SAM2 sign (under highways)

Cllr Leach thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9pm.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 7pm at All Saints' Church, Walsoken. Meeting closed at 9.02pm

Signed.....(Chairman) Dated.....2022