

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WALSOKEN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 7 PM ON TUESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2021 AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
WALSOKEN

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

- 1. Public Participation:** Two members of the public were in attendance to raise concerns regarding the land adjacent to Topeka as current actions are in breach of the covenants attached to the land and being carried out without planning authority or any other consent. Cllr Kirk was also concerned about this although Cllr Woolley had discussed the matter with Cllr Dawson earlier and he did not believe there was cause for concern. The owner of the land has been tried for planning but has always been refused. The land has not been in use for 7 years. There is concern that he is trying to set up a travellers site. A water supply has been connected and the land has been cleared and gates erected. The deeds require a close boarded fence around the property with no access but this is no longer the case. It was agreed that both Cllr Kirk and Walsoken PC would contact enforcement at the Borough Council and bring the matter to their attention as breach of regulations. Complainant to email details to the Clerk and Cllr Kirk. **Action Point: Clerk to write to the Borough Council (Stuart Ashworth).**
- 2. Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from County Councillor C Dawson (Prior commitments); Borough Cllr R Blunt; Cllr J Snow (holiday); Cllr A Landall (Holiday)
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** None declared
- 4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held 5th October 2021:** The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr Luff, seconded by Cllr Sisson and unanimously approved. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.
- 5. Matters Arising:**
 - a) Chapnall Road Bus Shelter – The Clerk confirmed that the bus shelter is complete. We are aware that there is a mistake on the sign which reads “Walksoken” instead of “Walsoken” and this has been reported to Westcotec who have ordered a replacement. The invoice has been received and is included on the payments list but will not be settled until the sign is correct. Cllr Leach thought that a solar light had been included but this is not the case. The clerk has obtained a quote from Westcotec to have one fitted which is £1200 + VAT. The Council chose not to go ahead with this at this stage as the shelter is clear and there is ample street lighting in the area. The Clerk will request funding payments from CIL, NCC and Cllrs Dawson & Kirk as agreed.
 - b) Incinerator Update – Nothing new to report since the last meeting. Item will remain on the agenda.
 - c) Response from Wisbech Town Council re safety on Kirkgate St. - The clerk read a response from Wisbech Town Council confirming they have previously considered the issue and did not pursue it.
 - d) Damage to Churchyard trees – The Clerk read the response from Simon Bell at FDC confirming that they believed insufficient protection had been placed around the tree and that this may have resulted in the damage. They did not accept responsibility and made recommendations for future protection.
 - e) Church Wall – The council now has two quotes for the wall, the second being higher than the first. Cllr Leach had invited all Councillors to look at the wall to see if they considered repair was required. It is not considered that there is any danger of collapse and the repair would be aesthetic only. The occupant of the nearby property has not written formally to the Council about the matter. In view of the cost, the Council decided not to carry out the work at this time and to review in 12 months.
- 6. Planning:** The clerk reported on the planning information which has been circulated and was noted. There is one outstanding consultation matter for the Council to consider which is 21/01704/FM which is a retrospective application by Fountain Fresh. Cllr Woolley met with Cllr Dawson and discussed it. Cllr Kirk reported that the Borough Council is likely to support it as this is an up and coming business needing to expand quickly. There is one online objection relating to roads and traffic but nothing has been received by the Parish Council. The Council felt unanimously that there may be a lot of information behind this information which the Parish Council is unaware of and that the recommendation should be to defer to the Borough Council.

7. Finance:

- a) The schedule of payments as attached to the original minutes has been circulated. Cllr Jo Woolley proposed the payments be accepted and Cllr Harwin seconded. All in agreement.
- b) The Clerk presented the first draft of the 2022/23 Budget which was discussed in some detail. The Budget will be updated for the January meeting when it will be considered again for acceptance at that meeting. The draft includes calculations for 3 alternatives of precept (3%, 5% or 10%). Cllr Leach suggested 3% but Cllr Kirk reported that all of his Councils are putting in for a 5% precept so it was agreed that this would be best for Walsoken Parish Council as well.
- c) The Council has received a CIL payment of £2454.89 which must be spent within 5 years of receipt or CIL can request for it to be returned. There are specific things the money can be spent on as outlined in the funding confirmation. Suggestions were invited and made for a bus shelter on Burrett Rd although this would mean moving the current bus stop or upgrading the basketball area. To be discussed again at future meetings. **Action Point: Clerk to contact Andrew Wallace and Jason Morse to look at possible bus shelter locations on Burrett Road.**
- d) The clerk put forward a proposal for a new laptop as the current one is over 10 years old and is not working efficiently and is very outdated. 3 quotes were provided. The quote from Cloudy IT was dismissed as being excessive and requiring ongoing costs which were not considered necessary. Likewise the quote from Currys PC World was dismissed because the laptop in question is not currently available and they do not offer support or data transfer. It was agreed to go ahead and use Tamar IT as a local firm because they could provide the data transfer etc. The proposal to purchase was accepted but the Clerk was asked to obtain an updated quote to include Windows 11 and a separate USB keyboard. The budget for the updated quote was agreed at £750 with Cllrs Luff and Houghton to consider the updated details before ordering. **Action Point: Clerk to obtain updated quote and order the laptop once approved by Cllrs Luff & Houghton**
- e) E.On Price Changes – the cost of the electricity supply from E.On has increased commencing 01.12.21. the current price is 25.40p per kWh and will increase to 33.80p per kWh. The Clerk has been unable to obtain any more prices as many suppliers will not operate unmetered supplies. Cllr Kirk recommended asking NALC for details of who is prepared to supply. **Action Point: Clerk to contact NALC**

8. Highway Matters:

The clerk reported on current outstanding highways matters as contained in the report as circulated and this was noted. A number of matters were reported including a road collapse at Biggs Lane outside Lakeside and a sofa dumped at Blackbear Lane. **Action Point: Clerk to report. Exact location and details of Bucks Holt problem (What three words) to be supplied for problem there.**

- a) Parish Partnership Bids were discussed, nothing previously having been proposed. The proposed bus shelter was considered but there is insufficient time in which to make an application as the closing date is 10th December 2021. No application will be made on this occasion.
- b) Discussions took place regarding speed monitoring with a view to trying to carry some out to report to the police although it was acknowledged that the police aren't keen to assist. Static speed signs can have registration numbers displayed as well as speed which may be an additional deterrent if drivers think their vehicle is being recorded. **Action point: Clerk to look and see what speeding deterrent equipment Westcotec can supply and the associated cost.**
- c) National Highways Strategy – **Action Point: Cllr Leach will check the position and the emails received.**
- d) Update on passing space – The Clerk contacted Andrew Wallace at NCC on 01.11.21 and he advised that he met with the designer 3 weeks prior and she is finalising the paperwork. He will advise as soon as he has a date for the work.

9. Street Lighting: Nothing to report.

10. Allotments and Rent Review: The Clerk reported that the tenant has paid the rent for October 21 to October 22 and an invoice has been received from NCC for the rent period April to October 2021. No update on potential rent review.

11. Churchyard Matters:

- a) Cllr Leach suggested a Sorbus Hupehensis to replace the tree that died and has obtained 3 quotes. The first was from Rachel's Plants for a 45L pot 10-12cm girth approx 2-4m tall for £105+VAT. Barcham can do a similar tree for £119+VAT or Simpsons for £90+VAT but this would be a smaller tree. The Council agreed to order the tree from Rachel's plants. **Action Point: Cllr Leach will order tree and arrange planting.**

12. Correspondence:

The Clerk read an email regarding the possibility of having a clothing bank which would raise funds but it was not considered there was anywhere suitable to locate it. Cllr John Woolley will take the letter to the Village Hall meeting and suggest they could have one.

13. Any Other Matters including urgent matters arising:

- a) The dates for the 2022 meetings including AGM and Annual Assembly were circulated before the meeting and were agreed at the meeting.
- b) Cllr Leach proposed gifting each litter picker a £10 voucher for Christmas in recognition and thanks for their work. This was agreed. Action Point: Cllr Leach to purchase and distribute vouchers.
- c) There are some black bin bags dumped in the roadside in Blackbear Lane. The Clerk will report these with the sofa.

14. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

- a) Opening of the Bus Shelter. Linda of Linda's Hair is to be invited to officially open the bus shelter as she kindly hosts the defibrillator.
- b) Update on individual emails for Councillors so these can be displayed on the website as a method of contact.

Cllr Leach thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9pm.
The next meeting will be on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 7pm at All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated.....2022