

WEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Draft (until approved at the next full council meeting)
Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
Monday 21 May 2024 at 6.30 pm
In the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall, Wereham

Attendance:

Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce (Chair – Item 37/24-40/24)
Cllr Sandra Calvert (Vice Chair – Item 37/24-40/24 and Chair Items 40/24 - 54/24)
Cllr Jacki Hitching (Vice Chair – Item 40/24 – 54/24)
Cllr Annie Bruce
Cllr Stephen Bradsell
Helen Richardson Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:

Residents of Wereham - Public – 0
Cllr Martin Storey, Norfolk County Councillor, NCC
Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor, BCKLWN

37/24 To Note Openness and Transparency Notice

The Chair read the notice and it was noted.

38/24 To Consider and Accept apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllr Jonathan Marsh and Cllr Gail Koopowitz (both personal reasons).

39/24 To Note Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items and Dispensation Requests

There were none.

40/24 Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson – Chairperson to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chairperson

RESOLVED: That Cllr Sandra Calvert be nominated and approved as Chair. (All were in favour)

RESOLVED: That Cllr Jacki Hitching be nominated and approved as Vice Chair (All were in favour)

The Chair of the Council wished for Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce's statement made at the Annual Parish Meeting the same evening also included in those minutes were also copied to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council's minutes for completeness:

I wanted to use this year's chairman's speech to mark my exit. I was elected onto the PC in May 2010 & have been chair since May 2012. A lot has happened in those 14 years both in the village & for me personally which is why I've decided to stand down as chair tonight & will not stand again at the next elections. It's someone else's turn now.

Over my time on the PC I've worked with many different councillors that have come & gone. All have brought their own experience, skill set & enthusiasm to their post. All have been dedicated to serving this wonderful village with no personal gain. Just a sense of community spirit.

It's a thankless task. Barely do you get recognition for the good that you achieve only criticism. Remember we have to make decisions for all & not the individual so of course it's not always popular.

I've seen grit bins installed for the winter months; dog waste bins added to all the most used routes. Safety railings & a crossing installed at the Church Rd/The Row end of the A134 along with the SAM2 speed camera.

The ponds been dredged, the beach area overhauled, a lifesaving buoy installed. We've sadly lost the willow trees but replaced them with other species that should be easier to maintain. We changed our disused telephone box into a defibrillator unit & offered training sessions for all villagers in our old village hall. The village sign had a major refurbishment last year & will look fantastic for many years to come.

We helped support the village hall through their various grant stages, financially with the support of the whole village as well as professionally whenever needed.

The play area has been refurbished & new items added to help keep it current & used.

In the last year alone we've finally made the cemetery entrance safer & tidier. The new garden space will soon be opening on the play area thanks to Gail & her team.

With such a strong team around me this control freak finally feels like the village is in safe hands to continue without me at the helm. Like any responsible chair I'm standing down now but remaining in the background until the next election to help & support my successor. Anyone who knows me will know that's going to be an uncomfortable seat for me but I appreciate it's the right thing to do.

I wish my successor all the very best & encourage the whole team to get behind them & support one another. I'd also ask our parishioners to be kind especially on social media. Let them have a chance to settle in.

Many thanks for allowing me to serve in this role for so long. I've enjoyed my time in post.

The Parish Council wished to thank Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce for her time served as a Chair on the Parish Council for a number of years and were pleased that she was able to continue on the Council serving as a Councillor for the remaining of her term of office over the next three years, particularly as her wealth of knowledge was something that could not be taken for granted.

41/24 To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on 11 March 2024 and To Note the Matters Arising Report

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 11 March 2024 ordinary meeting be approved as a correct record. (Proposed Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce, seconded Cllr Annie Bruce, all were in favour).

42/24 The Following Items Relate to Annual Meeting Year End Actions:

- a. To Approve Review of Financial Regulations
- b. To Approve Review of Standing Orders
- c. To Approve Review of the Financial Risk Management Scheme 2024/25
- d. To Approve Review of the Assets, Register as at 31.03.24
- e. To Approve Annual Insurance Renewal 2024/25
- f. To Approve Annual Accountability, Return and Governance Statement 2023/24 - Annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24 Section 1
- g. To Approve Rest of Annual Accountability, Return and Governance Statement 2023/24 - Section 2

RESOLVED: That Annual End of Year Actions detailed on the agenda at item 42/24 a – e be approved (Proposed Cllr Jacki Hitching, seconded Cllr Stephen Bradsell, all were in favour).

RESOLVED: That the Annual Accountability Return and Governance Statement 2023/24 – Section 1 be approved (Proposed Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce, seconded Cllr Annie Bruce, all were in favour).

RESOLVED: That the Annual Accountability Return and Governance Statement 2023/24 – Section 2 be approved (Proposed Cllr Jacki Hitching, seconded Cllr Annie Bruce, all were in favour).

43/24 To Approve Any Action in relation to the Bi-Monthly Health and Safety and Play Area Inspection

The Clerk had carried out the bi-monthly inspection, the following was highlighted for discussion:

- **Joy Riding** – A resident reported this occurring on the playing field on 17 May. The Village Hall had confirmed there had been no sighting on their CCTV. It was agreed that the Clerk contact the resident back to advise that the PC have no specific powers to deal with the act directly and to report it to the Police when it is taking place and update the Parish Council should it occur again.
- **The Row Hedge** – The Clerk agreed to write to the homeowner to ask that they cut vision splays into their hedge as visibility was poor, and to ensure that the hedge is fully cut outside bird nesting seasons routinely in the year.
- **Dog Bins and Pond Ground Maintenance** - The Clerk agreed to seek quotes for trimming around dog bins and tidying of the pond from the grounds maintenance contractor.
- **Painting** - The Clerk agreed to apply to the Community Payback Team for painting identified in the village, toilet facilities would be required.
- **Speed Management Sign A134** - The Clerk agreed to contact NCC Highways to find out whether they could install a fixed speed sign at the scrap yard end like the garage end, in place of the speed sign regime. This may be a potential parish partnership fund project.

44/24 To Approve Any Cost or Action in Relation to the Biodiversity Project on the Playing Field

There was £532 left of the £5k funding for the biodiversity garden.

The Chair joined the Parish Council to thank Cllr Gail Koopowitz, her husband and all the volunteers who have done a terrific job on all aspects of the garden from funding to see the garden come to fruition. Well done to all involved.

RESOLVED: That rest of the funds be approved for spend to purchase plants and seeds for autumn planting of the meadow next year. That Volunteers have approval of the PC to continue to maintain the garden on their behalf. That any requirement for funds for the garden be noted during the PC's budgeting process each autumn for the following year in advance and not between meetings. (Proposed Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce, seconded Cllr Jacki Hitching, all were in favour).

45/24 To Approve Submission of Grant Funding Bid to BCKLWN CIL for the Restoration of the Spring Monument on the Wereham Pond

It was agreed to defer to the July meeting. Further costs would be sort for the railings.

46/24 To Approve Purchase of Litter Bin(s), Emptying costs, Installation and Location

That this item be deferred to a meeting where all Councillors were present.

47/24 To Approve Any Action in relation to the Annual Play Area Inspection

The annual inspection was noted. The Clerk had emailed Wickstead to request a quote to loosen the swing chains as detailed in their report. All other items were noted for monitoring.

48/24 To Consider New Approval of Request to Use the Playing Field

The Clerk agreed to contact the Village Hall to ask them to be mindful when there are events with excess of 120 guests present regarding parking, nuisance to neighbouring properties and the open space of the field.

RESOLVED: That the application to use the playing field by placing furniture and food vans on it specifically for an event at the Village Hall is declined. The field was for recreation as a public open space, no littering or driving was allowed on the field.

49/24 To Approve Location of the Portrait of the King on Behalf of Wereham Village

The Parish Council noted that responses on social media from residents regarding the placement of the King's portrait was unanimous to be displayed in their village hall. And that the Parish Council will update the Village as a result of this public response.

50/24 To Consider of D Day Event on 6 June 2023 and Event Funding Policy Statement

The Parish Council agreed for the Clerk to draw up an Event Funding Policy Statement to advise that the Parish Council does not spend precept funds on village events. The Clerk agreed to update the Village Hall following their enquiry based on this.

51/24 To Approve Decisions Made on Email

- Reimbursement of Payments Made to Purchase Items agreed for the Biodiversity Project.
- Payment of Contractor in Regard to Agreed Biodiversity Project and Dog Waste Bin.
- Final Response to the Planning Inspectorate as agreed at the March Meeting Holme Oak.

RESOLVED: That decisions made on email as detailed on the agenda be approved. (Proposed Cllr Annie Bruce, seconded Cllr Jacki Hitching, all were in favour).

52/24 To Approve Payments to date.

Payee	Service	Exc VAT	VAT	Inc VAT
Parish Clerk	Wages, Expenses and Mileage (March and April)	711.75	0.00	711.75
Parish Clerk	PAYE (March and April)	167.55	0.00	167.55
Wereham VH	Hire - March and May 2024	36.75	0.00	36.75
Community Heartbeat Trust	Annual Defib Assistance Fee Yr7 & 8	270.00	54.00	324.00
Npower	Streetlighting March 2024	51.39	2.57	53.96
Npower	Streetlighting April 2024	52.79	2.64	55.43
Npower	Streetlighting March 2024	47.63	2.38	50.01
Thomas B Bonnett	Padlock for Cemetery Gate	28.33	5.67	34.00
Norfolk Association of Local Councils	Annual Subscription Fee	205.58	0.00	205.58
SJA Pest Control	Mole Fee Jan - March 2024	60.81	0.00	60.81
HHA Ltd	Ground Maintenance	615.40	123.08	738.48
Internal Audit	Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00
St Margaret's Church PCC (Budget Approved)	Church Clock Service (Power to provide a public clock) (VAT not reclaimable)	420.00	0.00	420.00
BCKLWN	Dog Waste Bin Emptying	534.36	106.87	641.23
AM to PM Services	Biodiversity Garden Work - Gravel	95.00	0.00	95.00

RESOLVED: That payments as presented be approved. (Proposed Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce, seconded Cllr Jacki Hitching, all were in favour).

53/24 To Receive Councillors Concerns and Agenda Items for next meeting and Forward Work Programme

The Clerk advised that bollards missing on the A134 would be resolved by Highways asap. The Clerk agreed to report The Row drain for flushing and a pothole between the cemetery and Northfields.

Cllr Martin Storey, Norfolk County Councillor

- Congratulations to Cllr Sandra Calvert on appointment as Chair of Wereham Parish Council. Also a well done for carrying out the role as Chair over a number of years to Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce.
- Delivery of the devolution deal – voting on this at the July full council meeting and an ongoing situation. A large consultation took place in Norfolk.
- Affordable care for children and foster carers – Living housing programmes for adults. This was an issue for those who cannot afford this care. Adult social care and children social services was the largest budget at NCC.
- More LED Street lighting installations taking place to deliver carbon savings.
- Two Norfolk specialist schools have moved closer to being build. Schools were part of the local first inclusion programme and will include 270 new places, in Yarmouth and a leading school in Downham Market. Local first includes bringing in £100m new investment of NCC education system.
- Dog Mess and Dog bins – you can put dog mess in your black bins.
- He agreed to touch base with Andy Wallace, Highways on the work at the pond footpath.

Cllr Sue Lintern, Borough Councillor

Congratulations to Cllr Sandra Calvert election as Chair and well done to Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce for her time as Chair of the Wereham Parish Council. It's been a year since I was elected as your representative on the Borough Council, so this is a good time to reflect on what has been done on your behalf. After the election, our independent group joined forces with the Greens and Lib Dems, and formed an understanding with Labour members. Together, we laid out our goals for the year in a Corporate Plan, all available on the Borough website. Our first big challenge was addressing staff wages amidst rising living costs and recruitment issues, especially in departments like Planning and Enforcement. We managed to increase pay scales by 10%, which also helped cut down on agency costs. Despite financial strains, we maintained community support, allocating over £500k to various projects like community transport and festivals. We also faced unexpected costs due to bad weather, which delayed some of our plans. However, we're committed to our climate action agenda. Plus, new legislation allowed us to increase taxes on second homes, generating extra revenue for important projects. We've been preparing for changes in government procurement rules post-Brexit, and we've made strides in financial decision-making, like empowering the Kings Lynn Area Committee. Looking ahead, we're focused on prudent financial management and maintaining service levels, even as costs rise. We're advocating for fair funding from the government and striving for transparency in our accounts. Overall, it's been a busy year, but I believe we've made real progress in supporting all our communities. On a more local level, I was pleased to be able to support Wereham Village with part of my B.C. Community Grant and it is good to know that the new Computer Club is going well and making good progress. I have also been able to give support to the P.C. on planning matters, and, I have been able to bring to their notice several opportunities for making applications for grants. It will be a pleasure to continue to offer support whenever it is needed. I focussed part of my election campaign on the idea that as your representative with the responsibility to pass your wishes to the Borough Council, there needed to be adequate support and advice easily available. Happily, there is now a dedicated email at B.C. where advice and support can be requested. There have also been for parish councils and Chairs, 2 well attended face to face meetings with the Leader of the Council. Looking to the future, Forums are planned for Clerks and Chairs to meet the Monitoring Officer, and the matter of vexatious complainers is under scrutiny. I will continue to support the P.C. and the residents of Wereham to make sure the views and concerns of Wereham are heard. Thanks for your continued support!

The Parish Council thanked Sue and it was great that it had that support and help for funding and planning.

54/24 To Approve Date of Next Meeting – Monday 9 July 2024 at 6.30pm in the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall

Noted.