

WEREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
Mon 13 January 2025 at 6.45 pm
In the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall, Wereham

Attendance:

Cllr Sandra Calvert (Chair) (SC)
Cllr Jo Wellington-Bruce (JWB)
Cllr Stephen Bradsell (SB)
Cllr Jonathan Marsh (JM)
Helen Richardson Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person

Also in attendance:

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

Cllr Jacki Hitching, Vice Chair and Parish Councillor of Wereham Parish Council - A Minutes
Silence was held in memory of Jacki who sadly passed away in December. In terms of her role as a Councillor for Wereham it is noted with great admiration that she had served for the past 10 years, joining in May 2015. She will be missed for her vast knowledge of the village having lived here all her life. She was passionate about the village and knew a wealth of things. It was a sad occasion and wish her family well, at this dreadful news.

01/25 Note Openness and Transparency Notice and To Consider and Accept apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Gail Koopowitz (personal) and Cllr Annie Dowe (AD).

Cllr Martin Storey – Norfolk County Council Councillor

- Wished all members happy and healthy new year.
- He shared that it was sad to hear of Cllr Jacki Hitchin's passing, she gave a lot to Wereham in her time as Councillor.
- Devolution has been a major issue for Norfolk's local government. About 60% of the country is already in devolution. The NCC worked on this project for 2-3 years, nearing a £20m per year deal over 6 years for Norfolk. Each Unitary authority would need 500k people. An EGM was held last week as the Government wanted a response by 10th January. This would place the County in a better deals list, with a letter from Jim McMann MP to Districts and Counties in the next two weeks. He voted on a resolution with limited information, explaining the government's intent to decentralise power. The majority approved, he abstained, feeling uncertain due to lack of detail. This vote was not on devolution itself but on the next step towards it. The recommendation was to join the devolution priority list and postpone the 2025 elections, with 52 in favour, 7 against, and 1 abstention. NCC Elections – The elections for this year had been decided due to Devolution to be delayed. It was unclear when the postponement of the elections. It was understood that they would need an act of parliament to delay elections, and that is why a decision had been needed by 10th January.
- NCC was set to receive for £56m for highway maintenance for potholes, drainage, etc. 5,300 potholes were fixed in April last year.
- NCC Gritters were covering 2.2k miles across the county excluding main roads A47.
- NCC Budget meeting was being held in February, all the consultations received had been sifted with the relevant committees.
- There was a full report on the NCC website if more information was needed.

Cllr Sue Lintern – Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Councillor

- Devolution has been a major issue for Norfolk's local government. About 60% of the country is already in devolution. The NCC worked on this project for 2-3 years, nearing a £20m per year deal over 6 years for Norfolk. The Labour Government, favoring devolution, halted it in May, aiming to establish governance to prevent such stops. Each Unitary authority would have 500k people. An

EGM was held last week as the Government wanted a response by 10th January. This would place the County in a better deals list, with a letter from Jim Mann MP to Districts and Counties in two weeks. He voted on a resolution with limited information, explaining the government's intent to decentralize power. The majority approved, he abstained, feeling uncertain. This vote was not on devolution itself but on the next step towards it. The recommendation was to join the devolution priority list and postpone the 2025 elections, with 52 in favour, 7 against, and 1 abstention. Sue shared that the WPC has one second home in the village that has the 100% council tax now for Wereham that was part of the precept calculation.

- Borough Council has invited business owners to a drop in event for network and information on grants etc 4th February. More information can be found on the website.
- Consultation out on Making Solar Panels on roofs mandatory.

The Parish Council felt that it was surprising that the Government could change things so quickly.

02/25 Declarations of Interest

To note declarations of interest on agenda items and dispensation requests.

There was nothing to declare.

03/25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on 10th November 2024 and note the Matters Arising Report.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on 10th November 2024 are approved as a true record. (Proposed: JWB; Seconded SB, all were in favour)

Matters Arising Report – January 2025 was noted:

NCC confirmed for parish partnership fund 2024/25 – Work scheduled to the pond footpath is to be completed by 31 March 2025.

Parish Partnership Fund 2025/26 – The Clerk applied to NCC after the November meeting for a fixed speed sign. The result is due towards end of March 2025.

Marking of the playing field access – The PC's legal advice was pending.

Highways Matters – Following a site meeting with Andy Wallace, Highways Manager in September between the Clerk, The Chair and Cllr Stephen Bradsell, the Clerk emailed of the items discussed on 25 September and would be keeping up to date until items on the list were resolved. It was noted that this may take some time. It included improving lighting/reflectors on A134; reinstatement of bollards; footpaths notably The Row and A134 near farm; Parish Partnership Funds this year and next. The Clerk will continue to update with Highways on these matters raised.

Online Meeting Consultation (Govt) – The Clerk responded to the consultation on behalf of the PC on 20 November.

Playing Field – The Clerk emailed the VH to explain the reasons why it cannot permit vehicles on the playing field.

Grounds Maintenance 2025 – The Clerk advised the current contractor their performance had been confirmed as satisfactory to continue to third and final year of contract.

Waylands Estate Planning Application – The Clerk returned objectional comment as not a consultee regarding this application following the November meeting.

Bus Stops – The Clerk emailed NCC re Queens Close and Flegg Green Bus Stops shortly after the November meeting. Nothing has been received to date.

Common Jubilee Tree – Was re-staked by Cllr Stephen Bradsell.

Churchyard Tree Application – The Clerk submitted the application on 03.01.25 to the Borough Council.

Planning Decisions (no consultation required)

24/00187/TREECA Wereham Compass Rose School Lane Wereham King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9AW - Removal of Large leylandii about 30 to 40 feet tall at the end of garden. It is getting too large to maintain and is encroaching on neighbour's boundary. Tree Application - No objection 12 November 2024 Delegated Decision

24/02033/PACU3 Wereham Notification for Prior Approval for change of use of agricultural barn to 4no. dwellings (Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q) Barn at E568308 N301300 Stoke Road Wereham Norfolk.

04/25 Norfolk County Council Subsidised Trees

The Parish Council agreed to defer to the Autumn application round for subsidised trees.

05/25 Garden of Remembrance – Wereham Cemetery

To approve improvements and costs associated with the improvements to the Garden of Remembrance area in the Wereham Cemetery.

RESOLVED: That the quote of £495 be approved. (Proposed JWB; Seconded JM, all were in favour)

06/25 Wereham Cemetery Memorial Inspection

To approve an inspection and associated costs of the memorials in the Wereham Cemetery.

RESOLVED: That the quote for the £740 be approved for the inspection. (Proposed: SB; Seconded JWB, all were in favour)

07/25 Church Yard Trees

To approve a quote for work to trees in the churchyard and application to the CIL fund in January.

RESOLVED: That the quotes for work to trees in the Churchyard totalling £2050 be approved for application to the CIL fund. (Proposed: JWB; Seconded JM, all were in favour)

08/25 Second Defibrillator

The Parish Council revisited the discussions around whether to fund a second defibrillator in the village after receiving more information. The current defibrillator was eight years old and in four years' time this would need replacing. The Council felt that it was important to maintain the current one and look at this later and budget for this replacement rather than purchase a second.

09/25 Speed Management Sign

Council agreed to wait until March when funding results will be known for the fixed speed sign.

10/25 Donation to Cats Protection Charity– In Memory of the Late Cllr Jacki Hitching

The Parish Council felt that donations could be made individually to this Charity. The Parish Council agreed that a memorial plaque could be arranged in wood and placed in the village for Cllr Jacki Hitching together with a plant or tree. The Clerk agreed to explore possible locations for further discussion.

11/25 Change to Banking Signing Authority

To approve a Councillor to be a Signing Authority for the Parish Council Banking approvals.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Sandra Calvert be approved as a banking signatory. (Proposed: JM; Seconded JWB, all were in favour)

12/25 Action Sheet 2024/25

The action sheet was noted.

13/25 Parish Budget and Precept 2025/26

To approve budget and precept for 2025/26. The Council felt that that it needed to plan for increases against its running costs, a precept of £19,032 an increase of 2% compared to the previous years precept, (representing approximately an additional £2.50 per household per year) be approved. It was noted that the council tax had been frozen for the last three years.

RESOLVED: The Budget 2025/26 as presented was approved. That a precept of £19,032.00 be approved for 2025/26. (Proposed: JWB; Seconded JM, all were in favour)

14/25 Payments to Date

Payee	Service	Exc VAT	VAT	Inc VAT
Parish Clerk	Wages, Expenses and Mileage (Nov and Dec)	691.68	0.00	691.68
Parish Clerk	PAYE (Nov and Dec)	157.80	0.00	157.80
Wereham Village Hall	Hall Hire - January	20.75	0.00	20.75
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charge (Nov, Dec)	12.00	0.00	12.00
SLCC	Annual Membership	110.00	0.00	110.00
Npower	Streetlighting Electric October 2024	48.33	2.42	50.75
Npower	Streetlighting Electric November 2024	55.00	2.75	57.75
Community Heartbeat Trust	Cellular Phone	60.00	12.00	72.00
SJA Pest Control	Mole Control Oct - Dec 2024	60.81	0.00	60.81

RESOLVED: That payments as presented be approved. (Proposed: SC; Seconded SB, all were in favour)

15/25 Register of Decisions Made of Email

To ratify the decisions made on email between meetings:

- Approval to send previous objection to the Class Q Application Holme Oak to the BCKLWN Planning Officer and other letters of objection. 04.12.24

It had since been approved.

RESOLVED: That the register of decision as presented on the agenda be approved.
(Proposed: JWB; Seconded JM, all were in favour)

16/25 Councillors' Concerns and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- [A134 Bollards – This was questioned, however subsequently installed the following day]
- The Clerk agreed arrange for work to a low hanging branch in the cemetery to be actioned in the same work undertaking in the Churchyard.

17/25 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting – Monday, 10 March 2025 at 645 pm in the Community Room, Wereham Village Hall was noted.

8 pm closed meeting.