

## *Wickmere with Wolterton Parish Council*

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held in the Village Hall, Regent Street, Wickmere  
on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00 pm

### **Present:**

Parish Councillors: Lesley Ash (Chair) Richard Hembling Phillida Hurn  
Georgina Madeley

### **Also in attendance:**

County Councillor Saul Penfold  
Vicky Tovell, Clerk to the Council

### **AGENDA**

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – were received from District Councillor John Toye, Vanessa Tomczynska and Barry Markham.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – there were no interests declared.
3. **MINUTES** - the minutes of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were circulated, approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.
4. **ADJOURNMENT** - the meeting was adjourned to receive NNDC & NCC reports, comments from members of the public and those with a disclosable interest.

### **County Councillor Saul Penfold** arrived at item 11

Cllr Penfold reported that County Council is in budget-setting mode and is facing considerable financial pressure in meeting targets. Highways continues to strive to meet increasing demand for repairs. Change in central government has resulted in changes to devolution plans for the county, with devolution now likely to be granted to a larger combined area such as Norfolk and Suffolk, or the eastern region. Cllr Penfold reported that NNDC's Local Plan has also changed under the new government, with new housing targets dramatically increasing for the period 2025 to 2040. Initially, existing planning schemes will be uplifted. Some villages have been identified as Small Growth Villages to provide up to 40 new homes per village, but Wickmere is not on the current list.

Cllr Penfold said homelessness in the area is a real issue with many households reliant on temporary accommodation and urged the Parish Council and landowners to consider any land that might be suitable for development.

5. **CO-OPTION** – for the vacancy of parish councillor – none

6. **CLERK'S REPORT & MATTERS ARISING** - to receive information on matters arising from previous meeting and those not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda.
1. Parish Council Insurance Policy as Custodian Trustees of the VH – at September's meeting it had been *considered sensible* to insure the Village Hall under the Parish Council's insurance policy. However, the Trust Deed (4.2) states it is the responsibility of the Village Hall Management Committee to arrange Building and Contents cover. The assets for both the Parish Council and the Village Hall have been separately listed. VHMC Chair Richard Hembling reported cover for the Hall was in place with Zurich, along with Management Trustees Public Liability, Financial Liability, Personal Accident and Employers Liability cover.
  2. Progress on bank account adding clerk as an 'Authorised User'- Co-operative Bank experiencing delays in processing applications. It was decided if there is no progress by the end of November, a Signatory will contact them.
  3. Defibrillator support package with Community Heartbeat – replacement pads and electrodes, due on November 30<sup>th</sup> covered under the 4-year Support Package; started at point of purchase September 2022. Cllr Hembling would action. Community Heartbeat Trust would look at data and usage when expiry of Support Package is nearer, (2026), but suggest reviewing the need to re-instate.
  4. Rural Services Newsletter – clerk signed up for free subscription to the Rural Services Newsletter.
  5. Training – clerk would appreciate further training. Training budget is available for councillors.
  6. Pay rate increase by National Joint Council Local Gov Services is backdated to April 2024.
  7. There were no other matters arising.

## 7. FINANCE

1. **The bank reconciliation and Statement** was received, approved and signed. There was a balance of **£24,404.87** in the bank on 13 November 2024. Receipt of the second instalment of the precept of £1,750 was noted.
2. The payment of £373.18 to VHMC to complete grant payment for 2024-2025 was noted, after clarification of insurance policies.
3. To approve payments and sign cheques (see below).

## 8. BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2025-2026

1. The half year financial report and year end forecast was received and approved.
2. The draft budget was reviewed. It was noted £135 needed to be added to Expenses for the defib annual support package. Clerk's draft budget 2025-26 showed a draft precept of £6430. Clerk pointed out the forecast shortfall in the

draft budget for 25-26 was £2930, with £2200 of that total for the VHMC grant payment, leaving a further shortfall of £730. Clerk pointed out Government statistics showing the average Band D precept charged by Parish Councils for 24-25 was £85.89, an increase of 8.5% on the 2023-24 average. In view of this and rising general costs over recent years clerk recommended an increase in the precept.

3. **It was agreed**, in view of recent changes with the VHMC taking on utilities and costs for the Hall, and also the change in staffing, to keep the precept at £3,500 for 2025-26. The annual Taxbase for Wickmere 2025-2026 is 54.10 resulting in a parish council tax charge of £64.70 per Resident (Band D equivalent).

## 9. VILLAGE HALL

1. To hear any reports and updates from the VHMC – the VHMC to provide the clerk with the date of the AGM.
2. To refer any relevant matters to the VHMC – the Churches Fire and Security account would be transferred before the next annual inspection in July 2025.

## 10. HIGHWAYS

1. The following TROs were noted:
  - i. NTRO8558 for BT Pole Testing work causing road closure in Wickmere as of 10.10.2024
  - ii. NTRO8567 for BT pole testing works in Aldborough and Thurgarton causing diversions as of 25.10.2024
  - iii. NTRO8809 Emergency road closure Goose Green due to burst water main as of 25.10.2024.
2. Further Highway matters – council discussed the need to formalise vehicle passing places on the Alborough Road.

## 11. PLANNING – to consider and review applications and decisions.

1. Planning Applications – reference applications received between meetings, it was noted a quorum of three councillor responses are required for the clerk to use delegated authority and respond to planning matters.
2. Planning decisions from NNDC were noted as follows:
 

**RV/24/1510 Stable House**, Wolterton Park: Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of listed building consent LA/18/0345 (Internal and external works associated with conversion of stable block to form 5 dwellings for holiday letting and events/function facility) for addition of new dormer windows to match with existing and previously approved dormers: **Approved 25/09/24**

**RV/24/1509 Stable House**, Wolterton Park Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission PF/18/0344 (Conversion and external alterations to stable block to form 5 dwellings for holiday letting and events/function facility) for addition of new dormer windows to match with existing and previously approved dormers: **Approved 25/09/24**

- 12. CORRESPONDENCE – to review correspondence received:**
- **The Herbert Protocol** – email circulated reference scheme that supports vulnerable members of the community with Alzheimers. **It was agreed** to note the programme for any future concerns.
  - **Flagship Victory – Biodiversity plan** – email circulated reference verges being turned to wildflower meadow. John Toye was thanked for his investigations into this. Flagship Victory’s Bio-Diversity Plan for creating meadow says verges cut in August and cut and sown in October. Councillors report this has not occurred. **It was agreed** to contact Dan Sallis, Biodiversity and Land Manager, to clarify.
  - **Winter Hot-spot grants** – email circulated reference the potential of grant funding to support a scheme. **It was agreed** not to pursue this due to lack of demand and volunteer support.
- 13. TO NOTE LATE CORRESPONDENCE AND REFER TO NEXT MEETING**  
– Councillor John Toye had asked Councillors to respond to the Planning Consultation (See item 4). **Council agreed** to review the Consultation documents.
- 14. EMPLOYMENT**– the meeting was closed to members of the public to discuss staffing matters. Clerk’s salary SCP 5 which was £12.21/hr increased to £12.85hr as of April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.
- 15. NEXT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING** – The next ordinary meeting would be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Note the change of date.
- 16. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING** - There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm

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### Receipts & Payments

Date	Payee	Description	Receipt	Payment	Balance
<b>BACS, DD, SO or Transfer</b>					
<b>15-10-24</b>	<b>Bank Statement</b>	<b>96</b>			<b>27,299.38</b>
18-09-24	Churches Fire & Security	VH Fire Safety Inspection & Service		52.20	
19-09-24	WVHMC	VH Grant 24-25		1589.37	

26-09-24	Anglian Water	VH Water Final payment		17.56	
30-09-24	NNDC	Precept	1750.00		
8-10-24	V Tovell	Salary and Expenses		699.12	
8-10-24	V Tovell	WIX.com website premium plan & domain for 3 years		286.26	
					<b>26,404.87</b>
<b>For Approval</b>					
13-11-24	Steve Jackman	Website Redevelopment and training plus 1 yr support		235.00	
13-11-24	Community Heartbeat Trust	Defib Annual Support Cost		162.00	
13-11-24	R Calvert	Training for Clerk on budget		50.00	
13-11-24	VHMC	Outstanding payment of grant		373.18	
13-11-24	V Tovell	Salary and Expenses		660.40	

