

**Estates Committee Minutes**

Of an ordinary meeting of the Estates Committee held on  
**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs J Barton, P Couzens, and J Norton,  
Lay Members, R Medley, R Merry and M Jolland

**Attending:** Clerk Hilary Workman

21.06.01 **Noted:**

Election of Chair: P Couzens, and Vice-Chair, John Barton.

21.06.02 **Noted:**

The meeting approved apologies for absence from Cllr K Merritt

21.06.03 **Noted:**

That when any Members' Declarations of Local Non-Pecuniary Interests and/or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in subsequent Agenda items were invited, there were none. There were no additions and/or deletions to the Council's Register of Interests.

**21.06.04 Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021, as tabled, be agreed as a true record.**

21.06.04 **Noted: (Open Session)** 19:32pm

That when Public comment or questions were invited on any Agenda items, there were none (no members of the public being present).

21.06.05 **Noted:**

The following correspondence received to this meeting not dealt with as an Agenda item or in the Clerk's report.

5.1 Valuation Office Agency – Wickhambrook Cemetery – return completed by clerk.

5.2 Local Resident(s):- query regarding bench sited at Coltsfoot Green  
The meeting asked the clerk to look at options for a replacement of the bench (there being concerns that possible further deterioration of the bench through weathering might present a longer term safety issue) which might be funded by the parish council and offer the family the opportunity to add a plaque.

21.06.06 **Noted:** Decisions of the Parish Council at its March and May meetings:

**March - Resolved:**

- 1. That Wickhambrook Parish Council confirm its aspiration to work with CAS and West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Planning Services to identify and bring forward a Rural Exception site if evidence of a housing need for such a site is identified from the Housing Needs Survey which it has commissioned; and**
- 2. That the parish clerk, in consultation with the Housing Needs Survey Working Group, be delegated authority to sign the agreement with Community Action Suffolk.**
- 3. Arrange a public meeting (when COVID regulations permit this) to present information to residents of the parish about Neighbourhood Planning, and authorise the cost of such a meeting, including hire of meeting room, refreshments, publicity and the time of a Neighbourhood Plan planning consultant, at a cost of not more than £500 from the Neighbourhood Plan Earmarked Reserves; and**

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Date:** 5/08/2021

4. In the event that residents of the parish agree at that meeting that they wish to establish a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, appoint two councillors to the steering group
5. To move the mobile phone plan to Three, to include Samsung Galaxy A12, unlimited calls & texts & 5GB data £15.83 plus VAT per month (plus any out of plan costs), plus a SIM only plan for unlimited calls & texts & 2gb data for existing handset at £2.50 plus VAT per month (plus any out of plan costs).
6. To adopt the draft reserves & internal control policies attached at Appendices A & B to [WPC.21.03.05](#) and make provision for any necessary actions arising from adoption of those policies.
7. To authorise the schedule of due payments arising on a regular basis, as identified in report [WPC.21.03.06](#) for the financial year 2021.22.
8. That this Council receives and approves the Risk Assessments (circulated & tabled as [WPC21.03.07](#)) as being a proper assessment of the risks facing the Council and that they demonstrate that appropriate management of those risks is in place and that the Chairman of this Meeting should sign the Financial Risk Assessment thereby tabled as properly reflecting the assessment of the Council's financial risk.
9. To authorise donations under S.137 to a maximum of £100 to the charitable organisations identified by Councillors from report [WPC21.03.09](#).

**May:**

1. To authorise the cost of a call out charge plus up to 2 hours work at a time when needed to resolve IT issues on the parish laptops, to a maximum of £125 plus VAT for the current financial year.
2. To authorise virement of funds in General Reserve to Earmarked Reserves equivalent to unspent funds in the 2020.21 financial year, as identified in Appendix A to report [WPC.21.05.05](#) in accordance with the Reserves policy.
3. The parish council authorise the cost of printing leaflets to promote the drop-in public meeting planned for July, at a cost of not more than £150.00.
4. Wickhambrook Parish Council authorise the following costs associated with Quiet Lanes:
5. Not more than £150.00 for the production of leaflets advising the proposed Quiet Lanes and date of public meeting
6. £50.00 per route to be designated as a quiet lane (maximum eight routes)

21.06.07

**Noted:**

The meeting received and discussed reports to this meeting from Portfolio Holders or other agencies, as summarised below.

- |     |  |                      |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| 7.1 | Parish Assets (defibrillator)<br>No issues identified  | <b>Cllr Couzens</b>  |
| 7.2 | Environment & Sustainability ( <i>circulated</i> )<br>Bulbs to be ordered and dates for litter picks set | <b>Mrs M Jolland</b> |
| 7.3 | Footpaths officer report ( <i>previously circulated</i> )<br>Who further advised that:                   | <b>Mr R. Medley</b>  |
- New plantings at Coltsfoot end of FP25 had been installed and looked good
  - It looked as though it would be difficult to make progress on the recording of Ancient Footpaths, which would need support of local landowners

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- Slow-ways – this was a national project trying to increase foot traffic get from one parish to another through the use of footpaths and bridleways.
- The meeting asked the clerk to follow up with SCC on the cutting of the hedge from Meeting green to Coltsfoot green, some parts of which had been cut, and others left.

- 7.4 Tree Warden's report (*previously circulated*) **Mr R. Medley**  
7.5 Youth Facilities (*previously circulated*) **Mr R Merry**  
7.5.1 Main Playground  
7.5.2 Teen Project and Games Area  
7.5.3 Zip Wire  
7.5.4 Bury Road Playground (*circulated*) **Mr K Grimes**

Who further advised that:

- The play area was being used extensively. There were still issues with respect to regular emptying of the bin within the play area.
- The posts in games area which had been reported by WSC as low risk were rotting out faster than anticipated. Some panels had had to be brought down, and were currently screwed to the boarding to prevent them being used for play. The clerk reported that she had sought quotes for repair/replacement, which would be reported to the next full meeting of the parish council.
- There were no issues identified for the skate park and zip wire.

- 7.6 Six Acres **Cllr K Merritt**  
7.7 Cemetery and Churchyard Safety Reports **Cllr J Norton**  
The new memorial bench had been installed and looked good.  
7.8 Village Greens Report **Cllr J Norton**

Genesis green – the meeting confirmed that the small island green was not part of the parish estate, and therefore it was not included in the grounds contract.

21.06.08 **Noted:** Clerk's report

8.1 That following stormy weather, some of the boarding surrounding the Games Area has had to be taken down. Quotes had been requested for repair/refurbishment replacement options but had not yet been received.

8.2 An update on current Estates Issues (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.21.06.01**)

- 8.2.1 **Proposal**  
**To authorise the cost of digging back soil and supplying 900 x 600mm slab laid on edge with cement backing to help support the bank on Culvert at Coltsfoot Green at not more than £105 plus VAT.**

The proposal at 8.2.1 above was withdrawn and the meeting asked the clerk to investigate alternative options to supporting the bank on the culvert at Coltsfoot Green.

- 8.2.1 **Resolved:**  
**To authorise the cost of lifting tree crowns 43, 44, 45 & 46 to 20ft (approx.) and reduction of height by 15 % (approx.), and reduction of Tree 42 by 15% at a cost of not more than £250.00.**

**21.06.09 Noted:**

The meeting considered quotes submitted in respect of new railings at the Memorial entrance to the cemetery previously circulated as **WPC.EC.21.06.02** and

**9.1 Resolved:**

**That the Estates Committee authorise the commissioning of new railings to the Memorial entrance to the Cemetery as submitted in WPC.EC.21.06.02, at a cost of £1003.76.**

**21.06.10 Noted:**

The meeting considered a proposal for the fabrication of a metal "willow heart" previously circulated as **WPC.EC.21.06.03**) and

**10.1 Resolved:**

**That the Estates Committee authorise the commissioning of a metal "Willow Heart" as submitted in WPC.EC.21.06.03, at a cost of not more than £350.00.**

**21.06.11 Noted:**

The meeting considered an update and feedback on the new grounds contract, (previously circulated as **WPC.EC.21.06.04**), summarised below:

- In addition to some comments received from residents, Councillors and Lay Members of the Estates Committee were concerned that the cuts completed so far by the new grounds contractor were not of the standard they had come to expect from the parish council's previous contractor.
- Whilst a parish council was not obliged to opt for the cheapest quote, it should look to achieve value for money and there had been a substantial difference in the quotes submitted to the parish council.
- It was acknowledged that
  - The former contractor had not undertaken any cuts in the latter part of March, and that this, combined with a later start date in April (arising from clarification of the contract details prior to signing), had meant that there was already substantial growth across all greens.
  - The contract had been agreed based on the information available to the clerk in respect of frequency of cutting, where arisings should be lifted etc, and that there were some gaps in knowledge of the historic contract.
  - It had been a particularly wet and warm spring, and this had resulted in substantial growth of green matter across the parish.
  - The clerk was working closely with the contractor to flex the frequency of cuts in the early part of the year to achieve the best results, and all areas would be cut twice monthly over the next six weeks (to end of July).
- The meeting agreed that the clerk would continue to monitor the quality and frequency of cuts and report back to the Estates Committee at its next meeting in August, when any adjustments to the contract (in terms of frequency, collections of arisings etc) could be considered.

**21.06.12 Noted:**

That when any other Council business for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda was invited, there was none.

**21.06.13 Noted:**

That the scheduled date for the next meeting was Thursday 5th August in the Dulcie Smith Room, Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre.

**21.06.14 Noted:**

Close of meeting. 8:20pm

**Signed:** Paul Couzens

**Date:** 5/08/2021