

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 7th JANUARY 2021 AT 6.30 PM**

All Parish Council meetings will be held virtually via Zoom until further notice, in accordance with Government Regulations.

PRESENT Cllr J Milne (Acting Chair), Cllr Miss T Ball, Cllr D Cross, Cllr Miss S Dobinson, Cllr R Grainger, Cllr A Parker, Cllr L Wright, and Mrs M Meede (Clerk).

Plus: Cty Cllr Mrs Timms, Borough Cllrs D Poole, A Bearn and Mrs S Bragg, Mr T Willis (NDP) and 7 members of the public.

After members of the public and Councillors had been given the opportunity to raise any issues, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and the Parish Council meeting commenced at 7.15pm.

Due to Cllr Harvey-Smith and Cllr Fewkes not being present at the meeting, Councillors agreed that Cllr Milne would act as Chair for this meeting.

162. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The apologies of Cllr T Harvey-Smith and Cllr G Fewkes were approved (technology problems).

163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (existence and nature) for items on the Agenda

Cllr Cross declared a personal interest in agenda item 171) Planning. The Chairman advised that Councillors could declare an interest later in the meeting should this become apparent for any agenda item.

164. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors had been given the opportunity to review the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd December 2020 and the notes and recommendations from the Finance Working Group meeting held on 10th December 2020 prior to the Parish Council meeting.

Following a brief discussion Cllr Wright proposed approving the minutes and the Finance Working Group notes and recommendations, which was seconded by Cllr Milne and the motion was passed.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd December 2020, having been approved for adoption by those who had been present at the meeting, to be signed by the Parish Council Chairman. The notes and recommendations of the Finance meeting held 10th December 2020 be approved.

165. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

Mr T Willis from the NDP was invited to speak by the Chair. Mr Willis said that the project was coming to its final stages. He noted the resignation of the NDP Secretary (Mrs Waddilove) and thanks were given for all her work and dedication over the last few years. Mr Willis also confirmed he was happy for the NDP to return as a main Parish Council agenda item, before going through the highlight report, which is available for viewing on the village NDP website (www.wolstoneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) or from the Parish Council Clerk. It was explained that they are working on the latest draft of the plan and it should be ready to come to the Parish Council for review this year.

Thanks were given to Mr Willis and all NDP volunteers for their time and dedication to the plan, and all Councillors agreed that thanks should be recorded and passed onto the NDP Working Group members.

166. ALLOTMENT LAND

Cllr Miss Dobinson explained that she was now the Chair of the new Allotment Working Group, who had agreed that the groups Terms of Reference should be 'to facilitate the positive development of the allotment land within Wolston, and then give advice to the Parish Council as appropriate'. They will liaise and work with the Allotment Associations Committee.

- a) *To discuss and make any decisions as appropriate in relation to the correspondence received about the proposed appeal against the refusal of planning permission:* Cllr Miss Dobinson explained that the Working Group had met to discuss the letter, and following advice from RBC Planning Officers and a Consultant from DLP Planning, they had established there was no action for the Parish Council to take at this current time. She explained that once the Parish Council has been informed about the consultation period for the appeal from RBC, the Parish Council can then decide if and how they should respond – and she assured Councillors that the Allotment Working Group would keep everyone up to date if and as the situation changes. Cllr Miss Dobinson advised that she was liaising with the Chair of the Allotments Association, and was trying to engage and ensure effective communication with the

Allotments Association and its members, who she appreciated had concerns due to the ongoing uncertainty.

Cllr Wright proposed that the Parish Council withdraw support for the planning application R19/1411 and he asked for a recorded vote, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Miss Ball. Cllr Cross said that the decision taken previously by the Parish Council was based on a number of factors including information gathered from the School and the positives that the development would bring, including the benefits to the Allotments Association and residents who would welcome the development. Cllr Grainger stated that the Housing Needs Survey sent to every dwelling in the village highlighted the need for the provision of affordable housing. Cllr Wright highlighted the fact the majority of letters sent to the Planning Officer about the development were in opposition to the proposed development, and he felt the Parish Council should represent these residents. Cllr Miss Dobinson stated that a formal notice of appeal or the consultation period had not been received as yet from RBC, and the Clerk noted that the agenda item was for Councillors to discuss the letter received about the possible appeal. The Chair agreed that a vote should not be taken if an item is not on the agenda, and without the usual Chair or Vice-Chair present he would feel uncomfortable progressing with a proposal that would not be valid. Other Councillors agreed and the Clerk confirmed a vote could not be taken if a proposal did not fall within an agenda item.

Cllr Miss Ball queried whether a referendum could be taken to establish the views of all residents, and she said she would put this to the NDP, and it may fit within a Housing questionnaire that is due to be sent to all residents in Wolston Parish.

Cllr Grainger proposed that a separate meeting be held in relation to the allotment land where Councillors could discuss options in greater depth, and a letter be sent to the Planning Inspectorate to confirm that the Parish Council has an interest in the land, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Cross. Cllr Wright felt this would be a sensible idea and withdrew his previous proposal. All Councillors were in support of the proposal put forward by Cllr Grainger with the exception of Cllr Miss Ball who abstained.

RESOLVED: For a separate meeting to be held to discuss the allotment land and the position of the Parish Council and for a letter to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate confirming the Parish Council has an interest in the land and the appeal.

b) To receive an update from the Allotment Working Group and discuss the instructions to be given to Moule and Co (Land Agents) in relation to the allotment land.

Cllr Miss Dobinson reported that the Allotment Working Group had met, and that a letter was being drafted to instruct Moule and Co to work on behalf of the Parish Council in relation to:

- i) An offer to purchase the allotment land, or at least part of it.
- ii) To negotiate a better lease if a new lease is not an option, as the Allotment Working Group have identified a number of contradictory and ambiguous sections within the lease, and feel that the notice period and rental terms could be more beneficial.
- iii) To negotiate a new lease if possible (this may depend on the outcome of the appeal) for the whole of the allotment land, or at least part of the land. This again would include terms such as length of lease and rent.

It was confirmed that the Clerk will instruct Moule and Co to handle all the negotiations and liaise directly with Godfrey-Payton.

167. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021-22

The Chair confirmed that Councillors reviewed the current budget and made a new budget for the 2021-22 financial year as part of the Financial Working Group meeting held on 10th December 2020. Councillors had also agreed to set the precept at 0% increase for residents, which would result in a reduction of Precept for the Parish Council – but Councillors felt they should absorb this and that it was important to support residents in any way they could. Cllr Wright proposed that the draft budget and Precept agreed for 2021-22 be endorsed, which was seconded by Cllr Grainger and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For the 2021-22 budget to be endorsed, and for the Precept to be set at £95,860.

168. FINANCE

Councillors reviewed and discussed the accounts for payment and considered payments received.

a) To approve accounts for payment in December 2020.

Date issued	To whom payable	For what purpose	Cheque number	Gross amount
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Signed.....

01/12/20	Rugby Pest Control	Mole Control - Nov	106028	£72.00
01/12/20	Mrs M Meede	Lights for Village Trees and Zoom subscription	106029	£513.08
01/12/20	Staples	PPE and Stationery	106030	£244.48
14/12/20	EON	Electric Supply - Pavilion	106031	£9.07
14/12/20	Rugby Pest Control	Mole Control - December	106032	£72.00
	Cheque Cancelled		106033	£0.00
14/12/20	Staples	Disinfectant	106034	£3.30
14/12/20	Fosse Security	Annual Alarm Check - Pavilion	106035	£71.50
14/12/20	Shell Energy	Telephone/Broadband	106036	£27.98
14/12/20	Britannic Security	CCTV Maintenance Charge	106037	£36.00
14/12/20	PC Employees (x3)	Staff Salaries	106038-40	£2,259.92
14/12/20	HMRC	PAYE	106041	£284.66
14/12/20	WCC Pension Fund	LGPS	106042	£280.33
14/12/20	Mr J Halford	Cherry Picker Hire	106043	£246.75
14/12/20	Mr P Owen	Spray Paint, Oil	106044	£54.62
15/12/20	Wolston Baptist Church	Office Rent Q4	106045	£700.00
15/12/20	D Daly	Bench Base - Playing Field	106046	£280.00
				£5,155.69

Following a discussion Cllr Parker proposed approving the accounts for payment, which was seconded by Cllr Cross and the motion was passed.

RESOLVED: The accounts, as listed above, be approved.

b) *To note payments received in December 2020 and the latest bank reconciliation:*

Date received	From whom	For what purpose ?	Gross
02/12/2020	HSBC	Credit for error in December 2019	£18.00
04/12/2020	HSBC	Business Account Interest	£1.27
			£19.27

The payments as listed above were noted, along with the latest bank reconciliation.

c) *Grant application forms* – This item was deferred to the next Parish Council meeting.

d) *Grant request from the Village Hall* – Following a discussion, Cllr Grainger proposed the budgeted grant/rent of £1500 be awarded to the Village Hall. This was seconded by Cllr Wright and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For a grant/rent of £1500 be awarded to the Brandon and Wolston Village Hall.

e) *Online Banking for the Parish Council* – A discussion took place about the possibility of moving the Parish Council bank accounts from HSBC to Unity Trust Bank. Unity Trust Bank have a specific online banking system developed with the help of Town and Parish Councils to allow online banking whilst following the protocol and governance required by the Parish Council. It was noted that WALC and NALC also use Unity Trust Bank and the online banking, whilst costing £6 per month, is worth it in terms of efficiency and moving to a paperless system. Cllr Grainger felt this would be a good opportunity to also update the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to include online banking and other issues the Policies and Procedures Working Group were looking at. Cllr Miss Dobinson proposed that the Policies and Procedures Working Group work with the Clerk to look at moving the Parish Council bank accounts by the new financial year, and updating the relevant policies/documents as necessary. This was seconded by Cllr Grainger and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For the Policies and Procedures Working Group to work with the Clerk to move the Parish Councils bank accounts from HSBC to Unity Trust Bank, and update the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as required.

169. PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Cllr Miss Ball proposed that the Parish Council produce and send out a quarterly newsletter to all properties within the Parish of Wolston. The costs should be around £200 per quarter which include printing and delivery, and Cllr Miss Ball agreed to co-ordinate and produce the newsletter – in conjunction with the Chair, Clerk and all other Councillors for articles. Cllr Miss Dobinson agreed that this would be a good way of increasing communication with residents, and a good way of sharing what the Parish Council do. A discussion took place, and it was felt the newsletter would work alongside the website, Avon Grapevine, articles in the local

Newspaper and proposed Parish Council Facebook Page. It was agreed that the Chairman, Cllr Miss Ball, Cllr Grainger and the Clerk would work together to ensure the communications were consistent across all media. There were some concerns about duplicating information, but Cllr Miss Dobinson seconded the proposal including associated costs, and it was felt that the newsletter could be trialled to see what the response from residents would be. Cllr Parker abstained from the vote but all other Councillors were in support and the motion was passed. Cllr Miss Ball agreed to get a sample of what the newsletter could look like to Councillors by the next Parish Council meeting.

RESOLVED: For the Parish Council to produce a quarterly newsletter co-ordinated by Cllr Miss Ball.

170. OPEN SPACES MAINTENANCE ON NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Cllr Wright had read that WCC have stated they will be taking over the maintenance of open spaces should the Parish and Borough Councils feel unable to do so, and Cllr Wright felt the Parish Council should support this initiative. All Councillors agreed in principle.

Cllr Parker said that homeowners would be aware of the maintenance charges when they purchased their homes, and the fact the open spaces would be managed by a Management Company – but that the Management Companies can put up their charges.

Cllr Grainger felt that developers don't always set aside enough funding to make it financially viable for Parish Councils to take over responsibility for maintaining open spaces on new housing developments. In order for Parish Councils to consider taking over the open spaces they need to know they will be given adequate efficient funding to ensure they can maintain the areas to a high standard.

Cllr Wright agreed, and explained this is why the Parish Council had not taken over the green spaces on the Bluemels Estate or Bloor Homes, and agreed if it was funded appropriately by the developers Councillors would be happy for the Parish Council to take on the maintenance of the areas.

Cllr Grainger proposed that the Clerk should advise Cty Cllr Mrs Timms that the Parish Council support the initiative by WCC in principle, but would like to know exactly what WCC are planning and what they are able to deliver.

RESOLVED: For Cty Cllr Mrs Timms to be advised that the Parish Council support the initiative in principle, and to request additional information.

171. PLANNING

- a) *R20/0995 – Prior approval for the change of use from B1 office to a state-funded school at The Hall, Priory Hill, Wolston. CV8 3FZ.*

Councillors discussed the application and Cllr Grainger proposed supporting the application, which was seconded by Cllr Wright and agreed unanimously. Councillors then discussed access to The Hall and felt that this should be highlighted to the Planning Officer, along with a request for public transport (i.e. bus stop) to be considered at the location.

RESOLVED: For the Parish Council to support this application.

- b) *R20/0461 – Two storey side and rear extension at 70 Meadow Road*

Cllr Cross had declared a personal interest in this agenda item. This item had been discussed at the last Parish Council meeting, and Councillors had not supported the application for reasons of privacy issues, the fact the plans and documents were significantly outdated and incorrect, and due to concerns about the visibility splay on the road junction. Cllr Cross raised concerns that the planning application had been approved without the concerns being taken into account. The Parish Council, as a Statutory Consultee, had responded to the application but the RBC planning portal stated no responses had been received in relation to this application. Cllr Cross and the Clerk had both tried to make contact with the Planning Officer to discuss these issues, but there had been no response. Borough Cllr Poole had agreed to make contact on their behalf and escalate the matter further if required. It was agreed that the Clerk will liaise with the Planning Department and Cllr Poole about the concerns, and the fact no acknowledgement has been received.

- c) *R20/0965 Single storey extension at Barn 1, Priory Farm, Wolston. CV8 3FX*

Cllr Grainger was concerned about the lack of consultation in relation to this application. He noted that the developer appeared to have carried out work on the property with no planning permission, and felt that rather than 'barn conversions' they were re-builds and had a different look and feel – which take away the character of the building. Cllr Miss Ball also had concerns about the footprint of the development, which was no longer the size of the original footprint and appeared to have moved further into the garden area. It was also noted that a parking space had appeared to have been removed (which led to questions about compliance with the Local Plan), and there was a total reconfiguration of the building leading to concerns about the integrity of the

building. Further comments from Councillors included the possible light pollution from the rooflights which may impact other residents, and it was suggested that the Planning Officer should be asked to meet with a couple of Councillors on site to discuss the concerns further. It was stressed that the development had outline consent only and no formal planning permission, and the developers appeared not to have followed or adhered to the conditions previously set by the Planning Officer. Due to these concerns, Cllr Grainger proposed that the Parish Council should not support the application, which was seconded by Cllr Milne and all Councillors were in agreement.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council does not give their support to this application, and for the Clerk to highlight the reasons and concerns with the Planning Officer and Borough Cllr Poole, who can escalate the concerns as required.

172. PROGRESS REPORT

The Chair reminded Councillors that this item should be for information only, and queries should be raised with the Clerk via the Parish Council meeting, or via email to all Councillors.

The need for additional flail hedge cutting to take place behind the new fencing on Dyers Lane playing fields was discussed, and a quote of £380 had been received. Councillors agreed the Clerk could use her delegated powers to authorise this work to take place.

As agreed at the last Parish Council meeting, details of the proposed new bench for Dyers Lane playing fields had been emailed to Councillors, and Councillors agreed to get a 2m bench delivered and installed for £671.51 including VAT.

The Clerk agreed to speak to the Benn Partnership to establish how many Wolston residents took up the offer of free Christmas meals for the elderly/vulnerable.

173. CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence list was noted. Councillors who wanted additional information on items on the list had requested and received this from the Clerk prior to the meeting.

174. DELEGATES REPORTS

- a) Community Speed Watch (CSW) – Cllr Grainger advised Councillors that progress had been made with the Police in relation to the CSW, and along with Brandon and Bretford Parish Council, it is hoped that the CSW will be revamped over the next few months.

175. INFORMATION FOR UPLOADING TO THE VILLAGE WEBSITE

Cllr Grainger appreciates Councillors providing him with information and articles for the website as soon as they are available – rather than waiting for the Parish Council meetings.

- Waste and recycling facilities at Rugby and Kenilworth.
- Covid-19 tests can be booked through Eventbrite.
- Parish Council Precept 2021-22 (remaining at 0% for residents).
- Links to report concerns to WCC including flooding, footpaths/public rights of way, trees, potholes etc.

176. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Streetlights (new lights and grants) - Endorse grant application form.

A discussion took place about the order of items on the agenda, and Cllr Milne felt that statutory items should be given greater importance on the agenda. Cllr Miss Dobinson had suggested the change to give items that required more discussion at the beginning of the meeting, and those items for information only nearer the end. Councillors agreed to try the new format for a while.

177. DATE OF NEXT MEETING/S

The Chairman confirmed that the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday 4th February 2021 via zoom.

As there were no further items on the Agenda the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:45 pm.

Signed:..... Chairman

Date:

**Notes on the Public Forum and Parish Matters held during the
Parish Council Meeting on 7th January 2021.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited representations from all who were present.

A resident asked about the Allotment Land appeal, and was advised that the item was due to be discussed in the main Parish Council meeting.

A question was asked about the Youth Project and if the Leaders were still being paid. It was confirmed that the Youth Project Leaders resigned due to the current pandemic and the Youth Project is currently closed.

Cllr Cross raised the fact the planning application for 70 Meadow Road had been approved, but he had concerns about the lack of response to queries from the Planning Officer. Borough Cllr Poole confirmed he would be happy to raise the concerns with the Head of Service.

Borough Cllr Bearne advised that the Lateral Flow Covid-19 testing centre had been opened in Rugby, and tests could be booked via the Eventbrite website.

A resident raised a query about the Village Hall risk assessment which said the Village Hall had to remain shut when the area was in tier 4. It was confirmed that the risk assessment had been requested by the Village Hall Committee, and the Parish Council had been asked to endorse their decision. The risk assessment had been completed by an HSE Consultant, and Councillors has agreed to endorse the recommendation and advice from the specialist. It was agreed that communication between the Committee and hirers of the hall could be increased, especially during the pandemic and as regulations changed. It was also agreed that the Committee would be asked to share their risk assessment with groups who hire the hall.

Cllr Wright requested that his thanks to the Borough and Cty Councillor be recorded, for speaking in opposition to the allotment land application.

Cty Cllr Mrs Timms advised that the waste and recycling centres at Rugby and Warwickshire are still open, and she also reported that she is trying to arrange a meeting with the new Operations Manager at Smith's Quarry.

A discussion took place about the hedge by the Library, as a number of Councillors felt that the hedge should be significantly reduced for safety reasons. Cty Cllr Mrs Timms said it would be trimmed, but would not be removed or reduced in size too much as she said it was important for the environment and birds nesting.

As there were no further questions, the Chairman closed the public forum part of the meeting and all Councillors agreed to start the Parish Council meeting at 7:15pm.

Note: Cty Cllr Mrs H Timms and Borough Councillors Poole, Bearne and Mrs S Bragg and Mr T Willis (NDP) gave their apologies and left the meeting at this point.