

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, WOLSTON, ON THURSDAY 7th OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.15PM**

PRESENT Cllr T Harvey-Smith (Chair), Cllr G Fewkes (Vice-Chair), Cllr Miss T Ball, Cllr D Cross, Cllr R Grainger, Cllr J Milne, Cllr A Parker, Cllr Mrs M White, Cllr L Wright and Mrs M Meede (Clerk).

Plus: Borough Cllr Poole and 12 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 8.00pm.

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The apologies of Cllr Miss S Dobinson for personal reasons were accepted.

The apologies of Cty Cllr Mrs H Timms, Borough Cllrs Bearne and Willis and Mrs Malyon (NDP) were noted.

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

Cllr Wright declared a personal interest in agenda item 101. Cllr Fewkes declared a personal interest in agenda item 96. Cllr Miss Ball declared a personal interest in agenda items 101 and 96. The Chairman advised that Councillors could declare an interest later in the meeting should this become apparent for any agenda item.

88. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors had been given the opportunity to review the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 2nd September 2021 prior to this meeting, and any changes requested by Councillors prior to the meeting had been seen by all Councillors. Following a brief discussion the Chairman proposed approving the minutes which was seconded by Cllr Fewkes and the motion was passed. Cllr Wright and Cllr Miss Ball did not approve the minutes as although they agreed the minutes were a factual representation of the meeting, they didn't agree with some things that were said at the meeting.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd September 2021, having been approved for adoption by those who had been present at the meeting, be signed by the Chairman.

89. ALLOTMENT LAND UPDATE

The Chairman advised that the Allotment Working Group (AWG) had no up-to-date report as the situation was continually changing and advice had been received from the Parish Council Solicitor. Cllr Miss Ball read out a report that had been pre-prepared by Cllr Miss Dobinson, the Allotment Working Group lead, but confirmed the situation had changed since the report was received.

Cllrs were reminded that at the September Parish Council meeting, the AWG agreed to discuss issues relating to the allotment land, review advice and recommendations from the Parish Council Solicitor, review Parish Council actions taken or to be taken and agree any next steps, particularly in relation to the lease, Notice to vacate, toxic waste and any assistance that could be given to the Allotments Association and plot holders.

The AWG had met on Friday 24th September to consider all these issues.

Lease: the final version of the draft Lease has not yet been agreed, but more importantly and more urgently neither has the draft Agreement for Lease, Surrender and Works. The Parish Council solicitor has been focusing his negotiations on crucial outstanding issues for the surrender of the current lease, interim arrangements and the future lease

Notice to Vacate: the Parish Council solicitor had suggested the Notice to Vacate (issued 9th August 2021) was invalid and advised the Parish Council to seek another view from Counsel, and Councillors agreed. Counsel's opinion was that the Notice was invalid and did not comply with the provisions of the Allotments Act 1922, which accords with the opinion the Parish Council's solicitor previously expressed. The Parish Council solicitor has been liaising with the landowners' solicitor on this, and it is hoped it will put the Parish Council and the WBAGA in a stronger negotiating position.

The landowners have now issued a Notice to Vacate in 12 months' time with no commitment to anything the Parish Council have been negotiating or even any obligation to provide a future lease.

Toxic waste: The AWG had discussed the historic illegal tipping of potentially lethal substances close to the south side of the allotments and the Parish Council solicitor has asked for more information on this. Unfortunately as the tipping was illegal, there is no written evidence of the tipping of such substances. The Environment Agency have confirmed that the presence of certain vegetation such as water cress and of wildlife (such as fish), would suggest the water in the brook is currently not contaminated. The AWG have approached

Coventry University about conducting some research before, during and after the planning development to see if any evidence of contamination emerges.

The AWG also affirmed the Parish Council's decision to help plot holders to move equipment, including greenhouses and plants etc when requested.

There had been a query from residents about whether they can keep their own current storage on the new plots, and the AWG agreed to look into this query.

90. FINANCE

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

a) *To approve accounts for payment in September 2021.*

Date issued	To whom payable	For what purpose	Cheque number	Gross amount
02/09/21	Moule & Co	Land agent fees (August)	106226	£965.88
03/09/21	Mrs A J Gregory	NDP website	106227	£108.00
03/09/21	Lakeside	August grass cutting	106228	£960.00
03/09/21	Mr T Ramsay	PAT - Parish Office	106229	£165.00
03/09/21	Mrs M Meede	Zoom subscription	106230	£14.39
13/09/21	EON	Streetlights Electric	106231	£1,965.46
13/09/21	EON	Streetlights Maintenance contract	106232	£702.66
13/09/21	Banner Advantage (Staples)	Stationery	106233	£129.18
16/09/21	Shell Energy Retail Ltd	Phone/Broadband	106234	£34.80
16/09/21	Parish Council Employees	Staff Salaries (including WBBJBC)	106235-6	£1,319.75
16/09/21	HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE	106237	£213.63
16/09/21	WCC Pension Fund	LGPS	106238	£357.39
16/09/21	Banner Advantage (Staples)	Ink	106239	£40.19
21/09/21	Rotherham & Co Ltd	Barrister/Counsel Advice	106240	£1,800.00
30/09/21	Rugby Pest Control	Mole Control	106241	£72.00
30/09/21	Information Commissioner	Data Protection Fees	106242	£40.00
30/09/21	Water Plus	Water Supply	106243	£25.84
30/09/21	PCC St Margarets Wolston	NDP Room Hire	106244	£18.00
30/09/21	Banner Advantage (Staples)	Box Files	106245	£19.19
				£8,951.36

Following a discussion, Cllr Fewkes proposed approving the accounts for payment, which was seconded by Cllr Milne and agreed unanimously.

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

b) *To note payments received in September 2021:*

There were no payments received to note.

91. PLANNING

There were no planning matters to discuss.

92. PROGRESS REPORT

A discussion took place about the length of time it can take for WCC to action faults reported to them. RBC and WCC have advised in the past that they prioritise all reports and it was noted that when serious issues are reported they can be resolved within 24 hours – and sometimes on the same day.

The Clerk agreed to chase up the annual play inspection report, and to ask Rugby First if they can do some patrols around the play areas due to anti-social behaviour.

93. CORRESPONDENCE

Councillors had been given the opportunity to review the correspondence list prior to the Parish Council meeting, and receive details of correspondence they were interested in. The Clerk confirmed that RBC had been informed a resident had identified possible Newts on the allotment land, and WCC (Ecology) were also aware.

94. WOLSTON CHRISTMAS

The Christmas tree has been reserved and the Clerk advised it would cost in the region of £960 including VAT for the tree and installation. Cllr Wright proposed supporting this expenditure, which was seconded by Cllr Milne and agreed unanimously.

Cllr Miss Ball is looking into the road closure and Wolston Events will be liaising with residents to look at the possibility of a Christmas competition where residents decorate their windows.

RESOLVED: For the Christmas tree to be ordered.

Signed.....

95. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A discussion took place about Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Miss Ball is looking into the road closure, and Councillors discussed who would lay the wreaths. The Clerk confirmed that £500 was in the budget as a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for the wreaths, and Cllr Wright proposed that the full £500 be donated for the wreaths, which was seconded by Cllr Cross and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For the Clerk to order the wreaths and send a £500 donation to the RBL Poppy Appeal.

96. WOLSTON VILLAGE BOUNDARY CHANGE

Cllr Grainger raised concerns about the land to the west of the Priory (that backs onto Hawthorne Close, Meadow Road and Abbots Walk). The area is classed as a Scheduled Monument and Historic England have been very clear they would not support any development on this location. Councillors agreed the area was inappropriate for development, and it was felt that the Parish Council should try to increase the level of protection on the area. Cllr Grainger proposed contacting RBC to request that this area be moved out of the village boundary and back into Greenbelt at their next review and update of the Local Plan (so classing the land as designated Greenbelt rather than as a Local Green Space). This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wright and the motion was passed.

RESOLVED: For RBC to be contacted to request this area of land be moved out of the Wolston village boundary at their next review.

97. PARISH COUNCIL EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Cllr Wright suggested that there should be a more formal maintenance programme for Parish Council owned equipment and street furniture. A discussion took place and it was recognised that there is a maintenance budget and certain Parish Council equipment (such as the mowers) are serviced and maintained regularly, but there should also be a renewals programme for when may equipment need replacing. It was suggested that a new audit of all equipment and assets could be carried out when the new Public Works Lead is appointed, and a programme could be started. Play areas were also discussed, including work required at William Cree Close.

98. RECOGNITION OF CHELSIE GILES

Councillors discussed how Wolston can give recognition to Chelsie Giles, a 2021 Olympic bronze medallist who has a strong connection to Wolston. Cllr Miss Ball advised she had asked the family for suggestions and is awaiting their feedback.

Ideas including the 'Freedom of Wolston', a silver salver, clock or jewellery box were discussed. Councillors then agreed that Cllr Miss Ball should continue to liaise with the Chelsie and her family so that whatever was decided would be something meaningful and personal.

99. DELEGATES REPORTS

- a) Road Safety Group – Cllr Miss Ball confirmed she is currently analysing information received from speaking to residents, and an update should be available at the next Parish Council meeting.
- b) Parish Council Newsletter – Cllr Miss Ball advised this is ongoing.
- c) Streetlights – Cllr Grainger had provided a report for all Councillors prior to the meeting, and confirmed that the contract had now been awarded. The first loan re-payment will have to be made 6 months after completion of the project, and it is a 5 year interest free loan. The new lights (Parish Council managed) will be on all night, but will dim to 50% light between midnight and 5am. It was also confirmed that the electric feeder pillars in the centre of the village will be inspected and repaired as necessary.
- d) Policies and Procedures – The Policies and Procedures Working Group have now met and agreed to prioritise Standing Orders, but they will also be working on the Financial Regulations and updating other policies and procedures as necessary. A discussion took place about the Code of Conduct, and once adopted by RBC the Parish Council will review the document again.

100. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Parish Council was invited to Resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information.

Reason for Exclusion – The exclusion is on the grounds that items of business to be discussed are likely to include discussions about a lease, items of a commercially sensitive nature, staffing and legal advice.

RESOLVED: For members of the public still present to leave the meeting for the next agenda item.

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if there were any representations from anyone present at the meeting.

A resident asked for it to be noted that the Allotments Association have never been in financial difficulty, and that the reason the Parish Council were asked to take over the lease in 1991 was because the Trustees had changed Land Agents (to Godfrey-Payton) who were more aggressive, and so the Allotments Association had requested the support of the Parish Council.

A discussion took place about the allotment land, and concerns were raised about the fact plot holders had received information from the Allotments Association via email, although not all members have email. Concerns were also raised about the validity of the Notice to Vacate and a discussion took place about some of the legal complications around the lease, Notice to Vacate and the Agreement for Surrender. It was explained that complexities around the 1991 lease make the transfer difficult. The Statement of Common Ground was then discussed, and the fact the advice of the Parish Council solicitor needs to be followed. Concerns about the access point for developers onto the allotment land were discussed, and it was noted that the 'Design and Access Statement' states that Stretton Road would provide access for the Southern part of the site only. A resident then advised that representatives from Spitfire Housing had been on site and had been talking to plot holders. Cllr Grainger advised this should be raised as a point of concern with Rosconn as this should not be happening and they should not be on site without permission. Cllr Grainger was aware that Spitfire had been on site for a meeting with representatives of the Allotments Association a month ago. Nick Carr from Rosconn and Cllr Grainger also attended to represent the Wilcox Trust and Wolston Parish Council respectively. Cllr Grainger confirmed that he had had no input, had not taken part in the meeting and was an observer only. Following a discussion about affordable housing, Borough Cllr Poole confirmed that RBC would dictate affordable housing levels required on any new development.

It was noted that there was no NDP Highlight report this month, and the work is ongoing. Cllrs were sent a copy of the latest draft NDP document and had been asked to get any comments or queries to the Clerk. All questions and comments have been forwarded to the NDP Working Group. Councillors had no further comments to make at this meeting.

Borough Cllr Poole reported that fly tipping was on the increase in the Borough, and that covert cameras were now in operation. He also advised that the Head of Environment at RBC had met with Borough Cllrs at the historic landfill off Stretton Lane, and confirmed they had no record or recollection of the allotments being on a tip site. He said the Head of Environment had mentioned that there will be a source of the waste and somewhere for it to go, so he felt if there was a problem signs would have been noticed by now. However, residents responded that if the waste was in metal drums and buried quite deep the problems may not have surfaced yet – and they had concerns about the potential disturbance from any development. Surveys were then discussed and the need for bore holes to be made in the land. Cllr Poole advised that these should be checked during any development and digging would have to stop if anything was found. Cllr Grainger advised that Councillors had received a copy of the geotechnical survey results and findings just prior to the Parish Council meeting. He had queries over the number and frequency of the bore holes, and the fact the majority were on the North side, but summarised that the report indicates that there was no evidence of any contamination above background levels, including cyanide. Residents said the contamination was one of their biggest concerns, and Environment Agency and the MP for Rugby are now involved. Residents asked that the Parish Council keep plot holders up to date and share information when available.

Cllr Wright then drew attention to the fact gas monitoring (and emissions) used to take place on this site, Cllr Poole advised he was unaware of this.

Cllr Poole advised that changes had been made in relation to road closures which may affect Wolston Remembrance Day and the Christmas light switch on. Cllr Miss Ball confirmed she is arranging the road closures and will look into this matter.

Ongoing problems with possible drug dealings near the Church were discussed, Cllr Poole agreed to take the matter up with the Police and requested that information be sent to him. He also advised that people should continue to report directly to the Police.

As there were no further comments or questions, the Chairman declared the public forum part of the meeting closed at 8:05pm.