

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT WOLSTON LEISURE AND COMMUNITY CENTRE ON THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021 AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT** Cllr G Fewkes (Chair), Cllr Miss Ball, Cllr D Cross, Cllr Miss S Dobinson, Cllr R Grainger, Cllr J Milne, Cllr A Parker, and Cllr L Wright.

Plus 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 7:35pm.

It was explained to Councillors that all of the allotment documents were not yet ready for signing as they still required some minor amendments and clarifications before the Parish Council solicitor could support the Parish Council signing the documents. Cllr Wright proposed cancelling this meeting and inviting the Parish Council solicitor to the next Parish Council meeting, so that the solicitor could answer any questions. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Miss Ball. It was also explained that there was a need to discuss the budget and Precept at this meeting, and Cllr Parker proposed dealing with agenda items up to and including 153, and that Mr Dumbleton be invited to the next Parish Council meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Miss Dobinson who requested that agenda item 155c) also be discussed. This was agreed by all Councillors and Cllr Wright withdrew his proposal to defer the meeting.

**150. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The apologies of Cllr T Harvey-Smith and Mrs M Meede (Clerk) for health reasons were accepted.

A proposal was made by Cllr Milne and seconded by Cllr Cross for Cllr Miss Dobinson to take the minutes for this meeting. This was agreed unanimously.

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

No Declarations of Interest for any items on the agenda were given. The Chairman advised that Councillors could declare an interest later in the meeting should this become apparent for any agenda item.

**152. BUDGET REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2022-2023**

Prior to the meeting, Councillors had all been given a copy of the 2021-22 budget and expenditure to date, which showed the percentage of each budget line item that had been spent to the end of October 2021 and the amount remaining for each line item after expenditure to date. Councillors had also been given some suggested figures for the 2022-23 budget based on information provided to the Clerk as requested, along with information about estimated income and how the budget could affect the 2022-23 Precept demand. The changes to the proposed 2022-23 budget included projects/events, and areas where some Councillors felt the budget should be increased/decreased – and reasons had been given by the Councillors. A discussion took place, and other areas where the budget could be amended were raised. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Wright that the budget be amended and agreed via email, and endorsed at the next Parish Council meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED: For the suggested changes to the 2022-23 budget to be made and sent electronically to Councillors so it could be agreed via email for endorsement at the next Parish Council meeting – along with the Precept.**

A brief discussion took place about the Precept. Cllr Milne felt that there was no need to increase the Precept. Cllr Wright suggested there should be an increase. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next Parish Council meeting once the budget had been amended.

**153. PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE WINDOW**

Cllr Grainger reported that the window in the Parish Office was in a poor condition and letting in the cold and rain, which was adversely affecting Parish Council equipment (including causing damp) and also an unpleasant working environment for the Clerk and any Councillors working in the office. The Baptist Church had written to the Parish Council explaining that they had received a quote for £460 to provide and install a secondary glazing to the window (which is removable if required), and the Baptist Church requested a contribution from the Parish Council for this work. Following a brief discussion, Cllr Grainger proposed paying half of the quote, which was seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED: For the Parish Council to pay 50% of the quote for repairs to the Parish Office window.**

**154. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

As previously discussed at the start of the meetings, the legal documents were not ready to be signed, and so Cllr Miss Dobinson suggested the public be allowed to remain for the rest of the meeting, which Councillors agreed to.

**155. ALLOTMENT LAND**

As previously agreed, agenda items 155 a), b) & d) will be included in the agenda for the next WPC meeting.

c) Correspondence - Cllr Miss Dobinson reported that in recent months the Parish Council have received emails and letters from a few concerned residents / plot holders. Responses have been given to all emails and letters, and the Parish Council have complied with all requests except providing copies of all emails relating to allotments, due to sheer volume (thousands) and the fact (that for many of the emails) there is legal privilege. A discussion took place and Cllr Miss Dobinson explained that offers have been made to meet residents via Zoom or face to face to try to understand the complaints and concerns better in order to work out the best way to deal with them, as well as to narrow down or identify the specific emails required/requested by residents. Cllr Miss Dobinson then confirmed that the Parish Council have checked with RBC and WALC who agree we have been trying to resolve these inhouse. If the residents / plot holders are not happy with the process, they can report to RBC Monitoring Dept.

Cllr Wright repeated his request for the Parish Council solicitor to be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council. It was agreed that the solicitor would need a list of questions before the meeting so he could be prepared.

Councillors also recognised that it is expected that the allotment legal documents will be ready for approval and signing in the very near future as the Parish Council solicitor continues to seek final confirmation of the outstanding queries from the other solicitors.

Cllr Grainger proposed that an extraordinary meeting be held next Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December to approve the legal documents detailed in agenda item 155 and also the budget and Precept if ready. This was seconded by Cllr Miss Dobinson and agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED: For an Extraordinary meeting to be called on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 to discuss/agree the allotment documents and 2022-23 budget/Precept, and for the Parish Council solicitor to be invited to this meeting.**

**RESOLVED: For Councillors to submit any questions they have for the Parish Council solicitor by midday on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021.**

**156. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman confirmed that an Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 at Wolston Leisure and Community Centre at 7pm.

As there were no further items on the Agenda the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:00 pm.

Signed:..... Chairman Date: .....

**Notes on the Public Forum and Parish Matters held during the  
Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.**

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

A member of the public noted that several recent posts on social media referring to the allotments appeared to be either deliberate disinformation or untruths, and that this had and was causing some concern, distress and confusion among some plotters.

There was a discussion about the proposed new management building on the refurbished allotment site and the concern that the costs to manage and maintain the building would not be within the financial ability of the Allotments Association and thereby fall onto the Parish Council, thus potentially increasing the precept. It was noted that construction and delivery of the building is part of the S.106 obligations relating to the grant of planning permission and that responsibility to deliver the new building was not related to the Surrender and new Lease. As such it was felt that any discussion regarding an obligation to deliver the new building could reasonably be reviewed by the S.106 'interested parties' (RBC, the Landlord and Developer) at a later date and it was generally agreed that the building is a valid topic for separate discussion in the New Year. To support this it was explained that the Phase 1 work (reconfiguring of south side allotments) has to be complete before 1<sup>st</sup> house is occupied, thus allowing time for changes to the Phase 2 requirements (including the management building) before 30<sup>th</sup> house is occupied – which will probably be around 18 months or more after completion of the Phase 1 works.

As there were no further comments or questions, the Chairman declared the public forum part of the meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Signed.....