

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, MAIN STREET, WOLSTON
THURSDAY 2nd March 2023 AT 7:15PM**

	<p>PRESENT: WPC: Cllr Dobinson (Chair), Cllr Wright, Cllr Rainey, Cllr Ramsay, Cllr Ball, Cllr Grainger (meeting notes) RBC: Cllr Poole, Cllr T Willis WCC: Cllr. H Timms RBC: Aftab Razzaq, Sarah Chapman WALC: Ja'Neen Day Plus 15 members of the public.</p>
	<p>Meeting commenced at 7.15 pm with the public forum. Opened by Chair who welcomed all, and thanked attendees. Parish Council meeting commenced at 7.40 pm</p>
213	Apologies and acceptance of reasons for absence – To receive apologies.
	<p>Cllr Ward: conflicting event Clerk: Dawn George - sickness Apologies and reasons accepted.</p>
214	Declarations of Interest (existence and nature) on items on the agenda – Councillors to declare any personal and/or pecuniary interests on items on the agenda.
	<p>Cllr. Rainey: NDP Cllr. Ball: Fake Facebook account Cllr. Wright: Requested explanation of why Cllrs received late information and guidance from RBC. Cllr. Dobinson advised that representatives from RBC and the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils are present in the public.</p>
215	Minutes of the Parish Council
a	To review and, if appropriate, approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd February 2023.
	<p>Proposal that approval of February minutes be deferred.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr Rainey Support 5, Against 1 Resolved: To defer approval of February minutes to a later date.</p>
b	Addendum to the WPC Minutes of 5th January 2023. (Cllr. Dobinson)
	<p>Cllr. Dobinson proposed an addendum to reflect changes to the Public Forum section of the February minutes.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr Dobinson Seconded: Cllr Grainger Support 2, Against 3, Abstain 1. Resolved: Addendum to the January rejected.</p>
	<p>Proposal: That the portion of the January minutes relating to the Public Forum be redacted. Proposed: Cllr Dobinson Seconded: Cllr Grainger Support 5, Against 1 Resolved: That the Public Forum portion of the January minutes, not being a formal part of the minutes of Wolston PC, be withdrawn.</p>
216	Casual Vacancy Co-Option – to discuss and consider co-option of prospective councillors, to receive any expressions of interest, and, if necessary, vote and co-opt councillors (Cllr. Dobinson)
	<p>Cllr. Wright queried casual co-option. Guidance provided by RBC SC is that the wording of an agenda item may be altered, if Councillors agree. RBC (SC) also confirmed that as soon as a motion has been passed to</p>

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	<p>co-opt a Councillor, and the relevant Declaration of Acceptance of Office form has been signed, the co-opted Councillor has immediate voting rights.</p> <p>Cllr Dobinson proposed that the agenda item be amended to allow invitations for all current vacancies to be filled by co-option.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Grainger Unanimous Resolved: That the agenda item be amended to allow all current vacancies to be filled by co-option.</p>
	<p>Cllr. Dobinson invited expressions of interest from members of the public to be co-opted as Councillors for Wolston Parish Council. The following residents volunteered:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Toni Shirley Jain Galliford (written expression of interest previously received) Cllr. T Willis</p> <p>All three applicants provided a short overview of why they wished to be considered for co-option as a Parish Councillor for Wolston. The Chair invited Councillors to vote for each candidate in turn, by a show of hands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr. T Willis Unanimous. Cllr Willis signed the Acceptance of Office declaration. • Toni Shirley Unanimous. Toni Shirley signed the Acceptance of Office declaration. <p>(Cllr. Rainey left the room)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jain Galliford 7 support, 1 absent. Jain Galliford signed the Acceptance of Office declaration. <p>(Cllr. Rainey returned to the room) Cllr. Rainey made short statement of the importance of work that councillors undertake.</p>
217	Finance
a	To endorse accounts paid from 1st October 2022 to 28th February 2023
	All Councillors had received copies of the statement of payments made prior to the meeting.
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Wright Seconded: Cllr. Grainger Support 6, Abstain 3 Resolved: Accounts paid were endorsed</p>
b	To endorse payments received from 1st October 2022 to 28th February 2023
	All Councillors had received copies of the statement of payments received prior to the meeting.
	Noted
c	To endorse bank reconciliation to 12th February 2023
	Query re AGAR, challenge re Cllr. Grainger signing as Acting Clerk. Ja'Neen Day advised that the signature by Cllr. Grainger was not 100% correct but fully acceptable because of the urgent need to submit the AGAR.
	Cllrs. Ramsay and Wright raised query re AGAR. Ja'Neen Day advised that as this was not an item on the current agenda this should be submitted as an agenda item for the next meeting.
	No motion was proposed.
218	Budget 2023-24 – To receive and approve the budget for 2023-24 and make any decisions accordingly.
	To approve the Budget and any adjustments to reserves for 2023-2024
	<p>A copy of the budget for 2023 – 2024 was unavailable, but had previously been reviewed by Councillors. [Queries were raised with regard to the letter of audit received from the internal auditor. Councillors were reminded that the internal audit and AGAR is not on the agenda for this meeting, and if there were any concerns the Clerk should be requested to add to the agenda for the next meeting.]</p> <p>Cllr. Ball advised that no changes had been made to the budget proposals previously reviewed by Councillors, but there was a lack of clarity regarding how to handle reserves.</p> <p>Proposal that the previously circulated main budget be approved, excluding allocation of reserves</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Wright Resolved: That the main budget be approved, excluding allocation of reserves</p>

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	5 support 4 abstain
219	<p>Grants – To receive, consider and if appropriate approve an application from the Spinney working group (Cllr. Dobinson)</p> <p>Grant application for £500 by Wolston Conservation Group (WCG). Cllr. Willis, as a member of the WCG, declared an interest in item 219 Query whether the WCG can be ejected from the Spinney by the landowners. To be verified with C Payne. Action: Clerk Query whether an application could be made for the Spinney to be an Asset of Community Value. To be an item for discussion at the next meeting.</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Ramsay Resolved: That a grant of £500 be awarded to the Wolston Conservation Group 5 support, 4 abstain</p>
220	<p>Delegates Reports – To receive updates from the following groups:</p> <p>Allotment Working Group update on R22/1360 Approval Relates to conditions regarding application R19/1411. Cllr. Dobinson advised that special precautions were in place to avoid disturbance to any hibernating hedgehogs. All matters appear to be outstanding and there was nothing substantive to report, however Cllr. Dobinson will continue close liaison with Spitfire to try to ensure that all work is completed to a good standard and in accordance with the permissions granted. Cllrs. raised concerns that the archaeological excavations appears to be very extensive - Cllr. Dobinson will follow up with Spitfire. Noted that Cllr. Wright wishes to be advised when work is to be undertaken on the drainage channels on the allotments site.</p> <p>Recreational Facilities Group Further to the play area inspections by Sovereign Cllr. Wright reported that some quotes have been received for repairs to the play surface at the William Cree Close play area. Cllr. Rainey identified that some of the problems with the play areas may be as a result of inadequate maintenance by WPC, and suggested that a regular maintenance schedule for the play areas be developed and implemented.</p> <p>HR Group Cllr. Ball advised that prospective youth leader had been interviewed. A query was raised regarding whether Wolston PC was legally able to employ youth workers and run a youth club and whether this would be covered by the existing PC insurance. Cllr. Dobinson agreed to investigate and report back. Cllr. Wright raised a query about whether WPC would be able to fund the running of a youth club. Cllr. Ball advised that appointment of youth workers was currently on hold pending clarification on these issues.</p> <p>Ja'Neen Day noted the very long agenda and the workload for Councillors, and recommended that WPC employ a locum Clerk to assist with work on some of the outstanding issues.</p> <p>Policy & Procedures Group No report, but work to update core documents identified as urgent.</p> <p>NDP Cllr. Rainey advised that the NDP Steering Group had met recently, and that the draft plan has returned from the proof reader/editor. Plans are being developed for communication with residents for the initial public consultation. The NDP Working Group have a vacancy for a volunteer Clerk/secretary.</p> <p>Communications Group Cllr. Ball recommended establishment of an email distribution service as a means of updating residents on current issues.</p>
221	<p>Progress reports/information (outstanding items of update for Parish Council and to make any decision accordingly:</p> <p>Wolston Community Benefit Fund Cllr. Grainger advised that he had checked recently with the Heart of England Community Foundation who advised that the £100,000 donation had been received from Spitfire Homes, and that the HoECF proposed to hold the first meeting of the 'Panel' shortly. Cllr. Rainey requested that information about the fund be made available.</p> <p>Manor Estate Garage sites Cllr. Willis advised that this site would be in Phase 2 of the borough wide garage sites development. No firm timeline was available.</p>

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	<p>Pavilion design and funding Cllr. Ball noted that some work had already been undertaken on a design for potential redevelopment of the pavilion that met the layout and space requirements of the Birmingham and District Football League. Cllr. Rainey undertook to follow up on the local needs with C Humphreys, with view to developing a project plan. Cllr. Grainger noted that the S.106 agreement for the allotments allocated a sum of £50,000 '... which shall be used to fund improvements to the Dyers Lane Recreational Ground ' so potentially some or all of this money could be used to support an upgrade to the pavilion.</p>
	<p>Scout lease Cllr. Grainger had discussed with Jake Huddleston reported problems relating to smoke, the scout hut lease and storage of equipment. Jake advised that the lease is still not signed by the Scouts Association and it is understood that it may now need amending. Group Scout Leader Andrew Bullock is away at the moment but this will be followed up with a site meeting after his return.</p>
	<p>Commemorative bench to be re-installed Cllr. Ball agreed to liaise with the residents providing the replacement bench, on the corner of Stretton Lane and Warwick Road.</p>
	<p>Salisbury Trust document Clerk has requested a copy of the trust document, but not yet received a response. Cllr. Dobinson to liaise with the Clerk to the G and L Salisbury's Homes Trust to enquire about the delay and whether there is a problem.</p>
	<p>Allotments tenancy/lease agreement Documents agreed but lease between the landowner and Wolston PC not yet in place pending completion of the allotments Phase 1 works. Noted that agreements between ploholders and Wolston PC will be by licence, not lease. Cllr. Ball drew attention to the need to establish a formal agreement between Wolston PC and WBAGA. Cllr. Rainey suggested that Cllr. Shirley be invited to join the Allotments Working Group.</p>
222	<p>Jubilee Tree – to consider replanting of Jubilee Tree and make any appropriate decisions (Cllr. Wright) Cllr. Wright expressed disappointment that the replacement Jubilee Tree would not be replaced by Warwickshire CC in the current year and that the tree be replaced by Wolston PC. However if we did this then the replacement would need to be 'like for like' with the original. Proposed that Wolston PC replace the Jubilee Tree with the same species (Lime) as the original.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Wright Seconded: Cllr. Rainey Unanimous Resolved: That Wolston PC replace the Jubilee Tree with the same species (Lime) as the original.</p>
223	<p>Grass cutting: to review the specification for the invitation to tender for the outsourced grass cutting and if appropriate approve to send out to prospective suppliers for tender (Cllr. Wright & Cllr. Ball) The specification for the proposed grass cutting contract has not yet been circulated for review and comment. Cllr. Wright noted that Wolston PC undertake fourteen cuts per annum of the grassed areas on behalf of RBC, versus the seven cuts that we receive reimbursement for from RBC. Cllr. Wright proposed that we reduce the number of contracted cuts in the growing season to ten, and ask the contractors to quote for one off additional cuts as required. For the playing fields it was proposed that we cut weekly during the growing season and then once every two weeks outside the main growing season, unless the weather is very dry and the grass does not need cutting, and ask the contractors to quote for one off additional cuts as required. Cllr. Ball advised that she has contacted RBC to request mapped details of the areas that need cutting on behalf of RBC/WCC. Cllr. Wright suggested that a maximum of a two year contract would be appropriate - a WPC estimated price for the proposed contract is not yet available, although it was anticipated that a two year contract would cost about £10K to £11k. Ja'neen Day (WALC) intervened and suggested that this item be deferred and advised 1) that a specification for the contract needed to be produced before quotes could be invited and 2) that development of a specification for a contract was the responsibility of the Clerk, not individual Councillors and 3) that Wolston PC should consider employing a locum Clerk to assist with tackling the backlog of work. Cllr. Rainey suggested due that to the urgency Wolston PC award a grass cutting contract ASAP, in order to allow a further 12 months to define the detail specifications.</p>

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	<p>Cllr. Grainger noted that the grass needs to be cut, irrespective of how this will be funded, and supported issue of an ITT for the grass cutting ASAP, the ITT to include details of the type of cut required for each grassed area.</p> <p>Proposal: That WPC prepare a specification for grass cutting within the village and issue an ITT, based on 10 cuts a year in the growing season for the main verge areas and weekly cuts for the playing fields, with request for cost of additional cuts as may be required</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Wright Seconded: Cllr. Rainey Unanimous</p> <p>Resolved: That WPC prepare a specification for grass cutting within the village and issue an ITT, based on 10 cuts a year in the growing season for the main verge areas and weekly cuts for the playing fields, with request for cost of any additional cuts as required.</p>
224	<p>Playground equipment: to consider and if appropriate approve the quote for Wetpour surfacing on the play area at William Cree Close (Cllr. Dobinson)</p>
	<p>Cllr. Dobinson outlined that a recent inspection by Sovereign indicated that extensive repair works were needed on the play areas, but after inspection and consideration Cllrs. had proposed that repairs to the Wetpour play surface was the most urgent. Cllr. Dobinson suggested that we make an early decision on this to enable the work to be done in the budget for the current year. Three quotes have been obtained, but Cllr. Rainey identified that the proposals submitted did not contain enough information on which to form an opinion or make a recommendation to proceed. Cllr. Wright raised queries about one of the quotes. Cllr Dobinson will liaise with Cllrs Wright and Rainey to assist in moving this forward to enable a decision to be made as soon as possible.</p> <p>Proposal: That a decision be deferred to allow further information and clarifications to be obtained, prior to making a decision.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Wright Seconded: Cllr Ramsay Unanimous</p> <p>Resolved: That a decision be deferred to allow further information and clarifications to be obtained, prior to making a decision.</p>
225	<p>Dyers Lane hedge: to consider quotes for planting ‘quicken’ to thicken the hedge and if appropriate select a supplier and approve the order (Cllr. Wright)</p>
	<p>Cllr. Wright reported that removing the ivy from the hedge has revealed that the hedge is rotten, and that the ivy appears to have killed the hedge. He proposed that established whips of hawthorn and hornbeam be purchased and planted to infill the hedge and this was supported. The amount being within the Clerk’s delegated authority no formal approval is required. Cllrs. endorsed this action.</p>
226	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p>
	<p>In accordance with Paragraph 1(2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Parish Council is invited to Resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following agenda 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 relate to personnel and staffing.</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Grainger No vote was taken.</p> <p>Resolved: That members of the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.</p>
227	<p>HR Matters – to discuss and make any decisions as appropriate. (Cllr. Dobinson)</p>
	<p>Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Willis Unanimous</p>

	Resolved: That WPC extend an invitation to the complainant to discuss and review the unresolved complaint with representatives of the Parish Council, potentially in conjunction with any action to be taken in respect of item 229.
228	Fake Facebook profile and posts: To review and if appropriate make any decisions to draw this to a close, including options for external investigation and make any decisions as appropriate.
	Proposed: Cllr. Dobinson Seconded: Cllr. Shirley 4 Support (Cllrs. Dobinson, Grainger, Shirley, Galliford), 3 Against (Cllrs. Ball, Ramsay, Wright), 2 Abstain (Cllrs. Rainey, Willis). Resolved: That Wolston PC takes no further action on matters relating to the fake Facebook profile and posts.
229	To discuss forensic finance investigation and make any appropriate decisions.
	Proposed: Cllr Dobinson Seconded: Cllrs Wright Support: (4) Cllrs. Dobinson, Grainger, Shirley, Galliford, Against (3) Cllrs Wright, Ramsay, Ball, Abstain: (2) Cllrs. Willis and Rainey Resolved: That Minute 22/233 has been reviewed and discussed by Wolston PC and that no further action is warranted.
230	To discuss and consider formally requesting details of the finances of the Party in the Park and make any appropriate decisions.
	<i>Chair advised that the meeting had now run to full time.</i> No proposal was made.
	<i>The meeting ran out of time</i> The meeting was closed by the Chair at 10.40 PM
231	Future Agenda Items Councillors are asked to use this opportunity to raise items for future agendas. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision-making.
232	Date of Next Meetings To confirm Thursday 6 th April 2023 for the next regular meeting of the Parish Council at the Village Hall at 7:15pm. If an interim meeting is required, an agenda will be sent to Councillors and be put on the website and in the Main Street noticeboard three clear days before the meeting is held.

Signed

Chair

Date

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	Public Forum
MoP	Query re Warm Spaces, availability of free refreshments
	Query re ownership of trailer
	Query re PiTP and Scout Lease
	Resident heard noises – Larchfields. Any explanation ?
	Entrance to allotments – lorries reversing into site
MoP	Hedge by library – habitat for birds
	Query re wildflower meadows. Item 221 refers
MoP	Query re health of Clerk
	Request for copy of presentation from police in February
	Enquired when details of WPC 2021-2022 accounts will be available
MoP	Allotments – query re access for persons of reduced mobility
DP	RBC Council Tax 2.99% £1.12 for Band D
TW	Town Centre £5M investment
<u>TW</u>	National Empty Homes Week – please advise RBC of any empty homes. Report via website or Borough Councillors
<u>TW</u>	Elections soon – photo ID will be needed.
HT	Wildflowers – if verge owned by WCC then there is existing policy and all details on WCC website. Permission probably needed.
Cllr. Ball	Statement: Harassment re road closures on FB. Road closed in normal manner. Successful evening. Reminder that apology issued on 6 th December.
Cllr. Rainey	Understanding that we are four Councillors short. In last seven months never had full Council. Need to look at PC mandate. Proposed that if ???
JG	Wildflowers seed beds need careful preparation
<u>TW</u>	Redevelopment of garage sites – in Phase 2.
Cllr. Wright	Local Government reorganisation – is that still active ?
Cllr. Grainger	MAC trucks passing through village centre

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