

WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Walpole Parish Council held in the Parish Hall, on Thursday 3rd March 2022, from 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors – Richard Green (RG), Heather Smith (HS), Richard Blunt 7.15pm (RB), William Brooks (WB), Charles Boston (CBN), Andy Bliss (AB), Adrian Eveleigh (AE), Charlene Campion (CC), David Lawty (DL)
Jane Brooks (Minute Taker)

Three members of the Public and Kevin Parr +1 in connection with Battery storage.

As the meeting was about to start DL asked if the meeting was being recorded, as agreed at previous meeting. RG stated that unfortunately as the clerk was not at the meeting, they were unable to record it as the clerk normally records it on her laptop. DL was not happy regarding this and stated that RG should have made provision and arranged a laptop. After a brief heated discussion regarding this AB agreed to record the meeting on his phone.

1. Welcome from Chairman to everyone.

Public Participation – to allow public participation (3 minutes per speaker, up to a maximum of 15 minutes in total).

- a) Ref No 21/01803/FM Kevin Parr talked about and explained about the proposed battery storage development down West Drove North. Access to the site would be via the A47 and no other way was to be used. It would be connected to the pylon via a 132 connector. CC asked about the amount of traffic that this would cause and the amount of road damage that could happen KP said the units would come in on low loaders and light good vehicles. DL asked if there would be any monetary benefit to the village regarding this – KP said he would look into the possibility. WB asked about the cabling from the transformer to the pylon, this is now going underground from the transformer to the Pylon and the depth of the cabling would be done to the H&S requirements regarding the installation. CBN was concerned about the roads getting damaged etc and was informed that the roads would be repaired as necessary and extra hedging as per the original field boundary.

There will be fire equipment installed.

b) A MOP was concerned about the meeting dates not being advertised on time and he was assured they were. He also commented on the proposed speed restrictions ongoing on Market Lane and the cost of these. This was still ongoing, and surveys had been done by the Highways Dept.

2. Apologies – to accept apologies and reasons for absence: Julian Kirk, JK (Borough Meeting), Caroline Boyden (CB) family illness.

3. To remind all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct:
The Chair reminded all councillors of their duty to abide by the Code of Conduct.

4. Declarations of Interest of any items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations: RG anything re Solar Farms.

5. Approval of the Parish Council Meeting Minutes of 3rd February 2022 were proposed by HS, seconded by WB and all were in favour, with one abstention as not a previous meeting.

6. Matters Arising

6.1 – WB reported on the Neighbourhood Planning training that he had undertaken. The training stated that a steering group would be needed to take this on. The chair of the steering group cannot be a member of the PC. There is funding of £10,000 available, but any if not used within a certain time (12 months) it needs to be repaid and then can be reapplied for. CC said other people need to be involved apart from the Parish Council but doubted any would come forward. RB suggested councillors look at some neighbourhood plans that had been done (Sedgeford or South Wootton) to see what is involved. It was agreed to put an advert in the crier to see if anybody is interested in being involved in preparing one. CC said she would put it on the Facebook page as well.

6.2 – Already discussed.

6.3 St Andrews Church Wall – DL stated that the cost was a lot and would use half of the Councils reserve. He asked if there was an original contract as to who owns the wall. It was pointed out that once a church closes the responsibilities of the grounds etc become the responsibility of the Parish Council. DL asked if grants could be obtained. RG said the council will still waiting to hear back for Ely Diocese.

7. To receive reports:

7.1 Concerns were again raised on the amount of pot holes in the village. CC said she would take some photos and send to the highways and also pictures of the ones filled in today as not up to standard.

7.2 RB said the Borough Council was concerned regarding Ukraine and was looking into how they could help. The Borough Council Budget had also now been agreed.

7.3 Clerk Report – this was read out by RG. HS, CC and CBN agreed to monitor the play area. CB will draw up a check list regarding this.

Regarding the new homes on Church Road and photos required regarding the path not being done and the entrances not finished, J Brooks agreed to take photos and send them to the Clerk so she can raise the point with the authorities.

7.4 Community Centre Report - DL had resigned as Council Rep on the Community Centre. A brief discussion took place and as there was nobody able to commit and volunteer for this, it was agreed that the Community Centre let the Parish Council have minutes of the meetings held until a rep is found.

7.5 Village Crier. – The next edition was in the process of being prepared.

7.6 – Nothing to report

7.7 The Christmas Tree in the Swingfield was still alive.

7.8 – SAM 2 this was still on Mill Road and was due to be downloaded within the next couple of days.

7.9 Communications/Correspondence

RG reported that one of the new gateways to the village on Mill Road had been vandalised and the sign ripped off. RG also stated that a Parishioner had found the sign and had kindly repaired it and has made the gates good again. CC had a box of chocolates we could give him, and AB agreed to deliver these. It was also agreed that the Clerk should write a letter of thanks to him. (Mr M Neal, Greenacres, Bustards Lane, Walpole St Peter)

It was agreed for J Raby to undertake the internal audit again.

Clerk Vacancy – RG explained the position and regrettably had accepted CB's resignation as Clerk, although she is happy to continue with the finance. There had been one applicant so far. DL stated there was no closing date on the advert and that there should be. RG had also sent the advert details to the clerk at Walsoken. It was agreed to resubmit the advert with a closing date of 11th March and the interviews to be held on Thursday 24th March at 7.00 in the Parish Hall.

CC stated that she knows of a lady who is interested in the Councillor vacancy. RG asked her to apply in the normal way.

8. Planning – DL asked why the plans were not being projected as they normally are. RG pointed out again that this was due to the clerk being absent. DL raised his voice stating this was not good enough and this should have been sorted and that clerks can be sourced to cover meetings in an emergency. RG again pointed out why the plans could not be projected tonight. AB asked if DL had looked at the plans on the BC Website in advance of the meeting like other Councillors had done, knowing that the Clerk was not going to be at the meeting. DL replied no as they should be projected. A very heated discussion entailed with accusations and threats of reporting everybody by DL to the Council. Again, RG asked if the planning applications can be discussed as most councillors had looked at the plans on the BC Website and DL again strongly objected saying they could not go ahead.

The meeting was then suspended at this point.

9. Payments - After a short period of time RG asked Councillors to reconvene to consider the payments item on the agenda so people could get paid.

9.1 The February payments were approved, proposed by CBN, seconded by WB and all were in favour.

9.2 Approve bank reconciliations and statements for February 22. Proposed by WB, seconded by HS.

9.3 Approval of payments for March. Proposed AB, Seconded CC and agreed by all presents. Payments may be received after the meeting and will be recorded retrospectively at the following meeting.

The meeting was closed at 21.10 hours.

Date of next meeting, subject to new clerks (if one appointed) availability –
7th April 7.00pm in Parish Hall.