

Wacton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Wacton Village Hall.

At 6.00pm on 2nd April 2025

**Present: - Chair: Gary Mulhall. Councilors:, Freddie Bone,
Kim Prentice, Kat Ireson**

Parish Clerk: Alan Arber

6 members of Public and District Councillor Kim Carsok

1. Public Participation

A parishioner commented that she was worried about the battery plant and that the whole issue will affect the whole village especially if there is a fire and will devalue the value of peoples houses and traffic movements and the un-sightly nature of the batteries. There were worries that people will not look at this till it is too late. It was also a concern that information on the internet is difficult to ascertain this information.

The chair commented that we are in discussion with Gt Moulton Parish Council and Aslacton Parish Council on the issues.

Another parishioner commented that she is having a visit from the company on the 15th of April to ascertain the area better and investigate local wildlife. The parishioners are taking legal advice, and they are in contact with South Norfolk District Council to do the inspections on the wildlife.

Question was raised on the footpath the parishioners own.

One of the main concerns are the traffic movements.

It was also noted we have bats in the local area.

2. To consider any apologies for absence

Pete Fraser gave his apologies and all agreed to accept

3. To receive any disclosures of interest.

None

4. To approve the minutes from the meeting held on 4th February 2025

Proposed: Gary Mulhall Seconded: Freddie Boone

5. To consider matters arising from the last minutes (for information only).

None

6. To receive a report from the County councillor.

There is considerable concern across my division regarding the East Pye Solar proposal and the alarming increase in battery storage proposals that threaten to encircle Wacton.

I would be very happy to attend a joint meeting between Wacton and Great Moulton Councils to demonstrate my support.

I have raised concerns through Cabinet about the impact on Norfolk Fire Service of the battery storage if issues should arise.

There are many community walks being organised across land included in the East Pye proposal to demonstrate the impact it will have.

Our local fire service is retained not full time.

Devolution proposals are currently subject to government consultation which ends next month. Local government reform is also progressing with interim submissions from District and County authorities.

Final detailed submissions need to be formulated by Sept and there is considerable evidence that needs to be provided at that point to justify any proposals and demonstrate how they meet the criteria set out by government.

7. To receive a report from the district councillors.

Kim attended the consultation with PR agency in the consultation. The good news it is a south Norfolk planning decision not government application.

It was recommended to complain directly to the planning application with the more objections the better. In the local areas all the county and district councillors would attend the joint meeting, and all would not be supporting the application

Diss swimming pool is moving forward with heat pumps but there are still a few issues, and the snags are being done with numbers up and lots of other family-oriented areas to be defined

Community awards are open so if the council know any people that are suitable for an award with all people submitted would get a thank you letter.

Grants are in place and Kim has her members ward grant of £1000

CAF is mid-June with £150,000 to support local projects

Green grants are in place with a pot of £50,000

Devolution is starting but there are some positives and many negatives with a new major and 4 others with voting rights with no voting rights on district which is disappointing. It was felt that better strategic planning is needed.

Local government reorganisation is also being planned with many ways to move forward with lots of proposals such as either 2 unitary or 3 unitary councils. It would mean there would be around 5000,000 in each unitary.

It depends on what comes forward but as yet not a lot is known so more information to follow.

8. To receive a report from the Village Hall committee.

No Report

9. To consider planning applications.

- East Pye Solar and Scoping documents comments

The documents showing our response have been submitted to East Pye Solar as requested at the last meeting.

- New Battery storage plant at Gt Moulton and the setting up of a joint meeting between both councils

The chair commented that Wacton Parish Council have received no information on this from the company involved and the clerk has emailed the company asking for information and to request their

attendance at a joint meeting at Wacton Village Hall to discuss a joint response to the issue. The date agreed was Friday 25th April starting at 6pm. Wacton Village Hall committee have kindly informed the clerk that there will be no charge for this meeting due to its importance to both council's parishioners and the local area.

10. To discuss the community payback details and agree the actions for the team
The clerk has spoken to the team, and they will commence working in the parish around the end of April once the list of works has been drawn up and submitted to the payback team.

11. Governance

No Governance this month except the clerk has been working on the year end so it can be taken to the Internal Auditor asap.

12. Correspondence: -

Many email/Phone calls from residents on Battery storage plant

BHF grant for new defib for the church turned down.

Agar Received

Agar to be completed in this meeting

Clerk attended NPTS spring seminar

Clerk attended SLCC AGM

Clerk attended devolution meeting

Pension year end submitted

Grant applied for to undertake work in the woodland project

New grant details received from SNDC which the clerk is looking into

Email from Great Moulton PC regarding Battery plant and the boards that were at the meeting

Meeting dates submitted to the village hall for booking in

Email to village hall on the possibility to use the village hall for a joint meeting with Gt Moulton PC on the issue of the battery storage plant

Email to company on why we have received no information on the battery storage plant

Email from parishioner on his points on the scoping document for the battery storage plant

Emails and meeting held with Community Payback Team to arrange when they will start work in the parish

Playground annual inspection undertaken

Playground inspection repairs noted plus other actions on swings that are unsafe

Noticeboard installed in better location

Alison Thomas Report received

Emails with Gt Moulton clerk received on battery storage plant

Land sale of the track completed

PAT testing in Parish Office completed

VE Day grant notification received

13. To note receipts for March

None

14. Authorization of payments

April Payments

- To approve payment of Clerks Salary and expenses for March £643.55
- To approve payment to Norfolk Pension Scheme for Clerks Pension March £215.75
- To approve payment to HMRC for Tax and NI March £155.89
- To approve payment to NPTS for annual subscription £228.04
- To approve payment to Wacton Village Hall for office and meeting room use £500.00
- To approve payment to ICO for Annual Subscription £47.00
- To approve payment to Play Inspection company for annual playground inspection £108.30
- To approve payment to Unity trust for bank charges £6.00
- Payment to Lloyds for monthly credit card charge March £3.00
- To approve payment to O2 for clerk's mobile March £12.47
- To approve payment to BT for Broadband for defib March £35.84
- To approve any payments on Credit Card for March
To approve payment to Premier Supplies for wood for planter on Credit Card £168.34
- Laptop Charger £12.48
- Cash Bags £8.49
- To note the financial Position of The Parish Council
The parish council started the month off with a balance of £9958.98 and after today's payments of £2145.15 the balance on the account is £7813.83 with our first precept payment due at the end of April.
The clerk also reported that he has a VAT refund of £105.62 to do at the end of April.

Proposed: Kat Ireson

Seconded: Kim Prentice

- To agree any Payments are the agenda is posted
None

14.1 To approve the certificate of Exemption for the AGAR 2024-2025

The clerk reported that due to the council not spending or receiving over £25,000 they are allowed to certificate themselves for external audit and as such has completed the certificate of Exemption to be approved by all councillors

Proposed: Freddie Boone

Seconded: Gray Mulhall

14.2 To agree and approve the Section 1 of the AGAR Annual Governance Statements

The clerk took the council through the Annual Governance statements, and all agreed they were acceptable, and all ticked as required in the

correct boxes

Proposed: Freddie Boone

Seconded: Kat Ireson

14.3 To agree and approve Section 2 of the AGAR Accounting Statements

The clerk took the council through the Accounting Statements and all councillors agreed they were correct and thanked the clerk for his diligent work on the year end and the AGAR

Proposed: Kat Ireson

Seconded: Kim Prentice

- To receive the Internal control report
Chairman Gary Mulhall had undertaken the Internal control and found the clerk to work in a diligent and excellent way and thanked him for his work each month.
- To agree the updated Asset Register
The clerk has updated the asset Register

Proposed; Kim Prentice

Seconded: Freddie Boone

15. Report on any ongoing matters:

- The woodland project and Bridge in the Copse repair.
This will be undertaken by the Community Payback Team
- Councillor and Clerk Training
SLCC AGM attended, NPTS spring seminar attended, and Devolution seminar attended
- Benches
To be looked at once the new precept is received
- Book Exchange
Really looking great and widely used.
New shelving to be installed
Bus stops being put in with new waiting areas.
The new planter in remembrance of Barry Duffin will be installed soon.
- Biodiversity
A lady requested that we stop strimming in Blacks Meadow and allow the edges to grow to improve the biodiversity
Proposed; Gary Mulhall **Seconded; Kat Ireson**
Clerk will contact contractor to inform him of this request asap. Using no mow in black's meadow.
Can they trim the hedge instead of Blacks meadow.
- Damaged Play Equipment and annual play inspection report
Annual Play inspection report received after the inspection was undertaken and the older swings are now out of action till the repairs or new wood is sourced. The trim trail was also noted as a minor repair which we will get the community payback to undertake.
The gates have all been damaged and rotted need repairing.
- Purchase of New wooden Bench for play area
To be purchased once new precept is in place

Rotted bench has been cut out and new bench will be built. All agreed

- Purchase of local variety of trees

Best time to purchase these is September and this will be done then and hope we can get grant funding

1.8 Matters raised by councillors and members of the public. (For information only).

Willow trimmed by a parishioner's land and it was also commented that the horse chestnut on the land needs to be removed and replaced. All agreed to this action.

New bridge on a footpath has been replaced and is very nice and allows better access.

Community awards with the chair being nominated for his work in the village

Baby swings removed and gates gone.

Tree at play area is our property and is dead and needs removing. The fence is not good and needs replacing when funds allow.

Issue with the well and has a deep overflow and the water runs out causing a mess on the green. It was felt we could build an overflow with a gravel, so the water takes its natural course.

FP37, where it joins Sallow Lane before the hall the sign is broken and needs reporting by the footpath warden

Defib course on the agenda for next month.

19. To receive details of the Parish Speed Watch group, plus Volunteers that are needed and SAM data download.

The clerk has changed the batteries on the SAM 2 machine, but the phone died, and he could not undertake the download. This will be done next week, and the SAM 2 machine moved the other end of the village.

20. To discuss the need for new parish councillors

A new councillor had asked to come on the council, and it was found that he has not lived in the village long enough and does not meet the criteria at present and should do in December 2025 when we hope he will still be interested. It was suggested he works for the council on the battery plant reporting to the council

21. Items for the next agenda.

Defib Training

Internal audit report

Community payback

Meeting closed at 7.15pm

Dates of next meeting:

Annual meeting of the Parish 7th May 6pm to 6.30pm

Annual Parish Council meeting 7th May 6.30pm

