**Minutes of the Meeting of Wilburton Annual Parish Meeting**

**Wednesday 19th May 2021 7.30pm**

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**Meeting Held at St Peter’s Hall, Wilburton (main hall)**

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

There were 29 attendees at the meeting, including all 5 serving Parish Councillors.

It was chaired by Anthea Dodson, Chairperson of Wilburton Parish Council.

Also in attendance were the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk to the Council.

Apologies were received from Cllr Lisa Stubbs, Barbara Yarrow, – Nigel Pymont (Wilburton Beer Festival chairperson) and Tom Walker (Wilburton Cricket Club Captain)

1. Chairpersons Report

A report was given by chair of the Wilburton Parish Council Cllr Dodson

*I am writing this report to cover 2 years as we were unable to hold an Annual Parish Meeting due to Covid. As a Parish Council, we have met via Zoom when we were allowed to and now we will have to meet in person with the doors open and socially distanced until the Government moves forward to relax the restrictions. We have found that more people have come to the meetings whilst they have been on line and are aware that, if it was to continue, we may have more people interested in becoming a councillor but legally we cannot continue on line. We have done all we could to assist anyone in the village in need and acknowledge that many people in the village have gone above and beyond to support their neighbours during this difficult time. We are certainly lucky to live here.*

*Firstly, can I formally thank Councillor Paul Massey for chairing the Parish Council so well for the first year of this two year period. He put in a lot of work for the Parish including the work on the lease for the recreation field and we owe him a lot for the time that he was a parish councillor.*

*Also, I need to formally recognise the work that Councillor Geoff Parish did for the parish prior to his death last year. He was a sound businessman who was always willing to do whatever he could to help.*

*During this period of time, we have achieved many things even though there are so few of us.*

*Allotments, Sandpit and Community Orchard. The Council have established the boundaries to the two pieces of land and fenced them off to ensure that the public are only on our land. Following on from this we have cleared the allotment site, fenced an area for allotments to stop the rabbits getting in, provided ample water for the people renting the allotments, provided a car park area, been awarded over 200 saplings from the Woodland Trust, planted up a fruit orchard, raspberry canes, gooseberry bushes, strawberry plants. Provided a mown path through the grasses for people to walk along and children to play in. Provided 2 allotments for the children at the school to grow vegetables and learn in. The Sandpit area is being kept clear and a further 120 saplings were planted there courtesy of the Woodland Trust. The next stage is the work with the Life on the Old West project where they are planning to put in a pond and create a wildlife area and also we intend to put two benches up there - one at the allotments and one at the Sandpits. This is a wonderful place to visit and the views are amazing - we are hoping the parishioners will make full use of these two plots of land. I must at this point commend to you Councillor Steve Morgan who has done tremendous work on these two pieces of land and also our assistant clerk, Kara Atkinson who has worked on the grants for the saplings and the Life on the Old West project.*

*We have put in the new Speed sign along Stretham Road which has helped us with our LHI Bid to reduce the speed along this piece of road which I will speak about later. This sign has to have the batteries changed and the data downloaded every two weeks. Councillor Harvey Upton has taken on this task willingly and is ably assisted by Councillor Jan Aniskowicz. The device is being moved round the village when it has been reprogrammed to monitor 30mph instead of 40mph with the next place being on Station Road. All of this work has been possible due to the help we have received from Community Road Watch Scheme. When the training sessions were all cancelled, they gave us all the support we needed. We will have it confirmed in June that we have succeeded in getting the speed reduced along Stretham Road from 40mph to 30mph which is a tremendous achievement! Thank you to Councillor Garnham and Councillor Upton along with Kara in supplying lots of information to the Highways engineer and the police officer and to Councillor Hunt for supporting our application at the LHI bids. This will be a real benefit to the people who live along that stretch of the road, most importantly the benefit will be felt by the children who run a rat race to cross that road. Along with this work, we have paid for a feasibility study to put a path along the south side of this road. There is a long stretch where there is no path and therefore causing more people to cross the road from their homes , not able to walk into the village first. We should have that this month.*

*Councillor Rod Garnham has taken on the chair of the Recreation Improvement Group, which is a working group of the Parish Council, and the decision was made that we would progress with the complete new pavilion rather than the small pavilion or phase 1, as there are so many clubs using the field and they are increasing all the time. We allocated additional time for Kara to work on this project to ensure it maintained momentum and was completed as soon as possible. The Pell Estate have now requested a drawing of what this will look like from the Old Berristead before agreeing to this being done and, following delays due to some personal problems at the architects, that should be ready later this week. There is a hold on the new lease until the Estate have agreed to the complete pavilion. We have traded in the container on the field for a newer larger one and that should be in place in the very near future. The play equipment was refurbished last summer and the roof of the storeshed and toilets was renewed to ensure it is watertight until the new pavilion is built.*

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*The playpark in the Berristead is very well used, particularly by the school children to let off steam after a day at school!! and the green space beside it is used a lot for kicking a football around.*

*Prior to Covid, the hall was in use virtually every day and we were really pleased with the uptake in*

*bookings, however, now we are back to advertising and promoting the hall to new users once the*

*restrictions ease further. The Theatre Group are hoping to put on a Pantomime this year which everyone is looking forward to.*

*The cottage flats have been occupied since they were first ready to be let with only one month between tenants on the top floor flat.*

*The Cemetery path has been very poor for several years and we have had a concrete path put in to replace it. This is built to withstand any diggers that need to access the graves as well as provide a better path for those visiting the graves of loved ones. We are looking at how we can improve the area further as well. The cemetery bookings are now being undertaken by our Assistant Clerk, as per the legal requirement and she has been on a course which has updated her knowledge with all the current regulations. We have also consistently looked at planning applications covering our parish and have assessed them within the planning constraints.*

*During the last year a group of ladies came to us and asked if they could convert the telephone box to a library/exchange and we allocated some money to them for this work. We also obtained a grant from Anglian Water to do this work. As the work progressed we realised we would need a refurbished door and Jonathan Everitt was given the work to replace the wood and restore the door into a useable one. The work is now complete and the box is now being monitored by local people to keep it tidy. Our thanks in particular go to David and Caroline Gould who have worked tirelessly at this project.*

*As I complete this report I wish to thank my fellow councillors for the work they have put in for the village, along with Rixon for keeping us in order, along with ensuring all the regular work of the council is done and Kara, who has taken on the work with enthusiasm. I look forward to working with you all for another year.*

1. District and County Council Reports

A report was given by District Councillor Bill Hunt

*“After 16 years I stood down from my County Council role. Dan Schumann is now County Councillor for Wilburton. Myself and Lisa Stubbs remain as District Cllrs until at least 2023. Cambs County now has 28 Conservatives, 20 L/Dems, 9 Labour and x4 Independents. The later parties have formed a coalition, the Conservatives are no part of any committees. Concerns regarding the proposal for A1123/A1421 from A road to B may stall since no Lib Dem voted at County or District for it.*

*The combined authority now has a Labour Mayor - Nik Johnson: says he will stop Cambridge Metro and £100K homes. Mayor Johnson says the new University in Peterborough will be called James Palmer University. Future of A10 to be determined. Combined authority now split x4 and x4.*

*Cambridge and Peterborough have a Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner.*

*District will:*

*Continue with Free City Centre Car Parking. Try to keep Council Tax low: eighth year of no increase. I intend to press County to deliver A to B road at A1123. Return to ‘in person’ meetings, the 2nd of June Planning Committee meeting (which I chair) will be at The Hive. East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) will continue to act to support all within the District as long as Covid exists. +4 Car Parking Spaces at Newnham St and upgraded disabled parking. Plans for Mepal Crematorium continue. Ely Museum about to reopen £1.5 refurb. ECDC Helps a lot £1 per year rent and remain the structure. Zero carbon target at ECDC is 2040, all Council vehicles to move to renewable energy sources”*

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1. Reports from Village Organisations
   1. Wilburton Beer Festival (WBF): a summary from Chairperson Nigel Pymont was given (read out by the Assistant Clerk)

*“Due to ongoing uncertainty regarding Covid 19, the WBF committee have voted not to hold an event this year. Depending on Covid restrictions/future pandemics/other unforeseen circumstances it is the intention that the committee will organise a festival on the weekend of 17th-19th June 2022. It is hoped that the event would be held and organised in a similar manner to previous years. Due to the pandemic, we have not had a full WBF committee meeting to discuss options for next year, it is possible there will be minor changes and improvements to how things are run, leading to a safe and successful festival for all.”*

* 1. Wilburton Cricket Club: a summary from Club Captain Tom Walker was given (read out by the Assistant Clerk)

*“Wilburton Cricket Club have started the 2021 season strongly, league positions are good and we have been able to field three adult sides, U14 and U11 colts’ teams as well as a good number of younger players joining training sessions. There are in excess of 50 club members, showing the strength and success of the clubs history and the potential for the future for cricket in Wilburton. The cricket club would like to thank the Council for their support and assistance in keeping the pitch fit for play, including aeration and regular grass cutting.”*

1. Any other business/questions from the floor
   1. Steven Smith

Acknowledged and thanked Councillors for the many successes the Parish Council have achieved over the past year. Mr Smith stated it was unfortunate that some actions, such as the Council supporting the SWCLT Camps Field Development did not reflect the wider feelings of the village, including not supporting the results of the village survey which did not support the development of Camps Field. Mr Smith stated that there is a clear conflict of interest when SWCLT trustees are also able to serve as Parish Councillors. The decision to not minute the comments made by Parishioners in Council meetings, as part of the Public participation has resulted in no opportunity for constructive debate or the ability for the resolution of points raised (by Parishioners) to be made. Financial items cannot be challenged: there has been considerably spend at the allotments and sandpits for the benefit of only a few. RIG has stalled, communication and minutes are poor, there is not enough detail for those that haven’t attended the meeting. All of this added together undermines democracy and transparency. The only course of action is to propose a vote of no confidence of the Parish Council.

A vote was taken, District Cllr Bill Hunt verified the count: 18 voted for, 2 against and 1 abstained

Wording for the Parish Poll was confirmed as:

Following the results of the Camps Field Community Survey 2020 and subsequent decision by Wilburton Parish Council to support the Camps Field planning application do you have confidence that the current Wilburton Parish Council acts in a way that is democratic, accountable and transparent? Response option: yes/no

* 1. Phil Warren - no question raised.
  2. Tim Hughes

Why was there no mention of the Camps Field Development in either the chairs or District Councillors report?

Cllr Hunt responded: As chair of the planning committee, it would not be right for me to make a comment

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Chair responded: Other than what I said in my report about planning, I did not think there was anything relevant to the Parish at this moment.

* 1. Nick M

Have you ever wondered why people are not coming forward to be a Councillor?

Chair responded: There has not been an election in over 30 years, we have advertised and no one has come forward.

The chair continued: we stick to the rules, the Parish Council does not have to respond to public participation, I try hard to answer any questions raised during public participation within the meeting

* 1. Member of the public:

Those against the development are – put effort into it but you do have to listen to what the parishioners say. We are in this position because the main body of the people have not been listened to – the survey results demonstrated that the majority of people

Chair responded: I do listen. People come to me, individuals in the Parish approach me and ask me for help.

* 1. Mark Duckworth

The lack of transparency displayed by Councillors, including poor communication is questionable, as individuals much of your work for the Parish is commendable but the lack of the democratic process being followed cannot go unnoticed.

Meeting closed at 8.26pm