

BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the Meeting of Burwell Parish Council held at Gardiner Memorial Hall, High Street, Burwell CB25 0HD at 7.30p.m. on Tuesday 9th January 2024.

Present: Liz Swift (Chair), Lea Dodds, Michael Geary, Clive Leach, Helen McMenamin-Smith, Charles Milner, Jim Perry, Michael Swift, Geraldine Tate, and Brenda Wilson.

Also present: District Councillor David Brown, Nicola Hallows (Wild Burwell) and one member of the public.

FC/090124/1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Ian Woodroffe, Paul Webb, Jenny Moss, Chris O'Neill, Linda Kitching, Sara Phipps, and District Councillor Lavinia Edwards.

FC/090124/2 Declarations of any interests known to Councillors

There were no declarations.

FC/090124/3 Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2023 were approved and signed as a true record. Proposed by Michael Swift and seconded by Jim Perry.

FC/090124/4.1 Public Forum

Steve Clarke raised concern for those using the footpaths and cycling along Silver Street and North Street. He suggested that Silver Street and North Street should be subject to a one-way System and that HGV's should be banned from the smaller section of Silver Street from Toyse Lane on to North Street. Mr Clarke had produced a PDF diagram of how the one way system could work. This will be forwarded to all Councillors. Liz Swift informed Mr Clarke that the Council's Safety Working Group could discuss his suggestion when they next meet, however, it is the Highways Department who would have to implement such changes and it would be a very long-winded affair. Lea Dodds explained that the option of a one-way system had been mentioned by the Safety Group previously. Also, that Sustran had carried out a feasibility study for the village to create safer cycling routes and this had included a one-way system in the village. The report is now available in the public domain. Jim Perry spoke of how a one-way system had been considered 5 or 6 times during the 30 years he had been on the Council and that the proposal had always been turned down as one-way systems tend to lead to faster traffic speeds. Helen McMenamin-Smith reminded Council of the number of children that use this route to walk to school. Liz Swift reported that over the last couple of years the Council's Safety Campaign had consisted of educating drivers on the need to slow down and to get more people to walk. Implementing a one-way system would have significant cost implications.

Steve Clarke left the meeting.

Nicola Hallows from Wild Burwell informed the Council that Wild Burwell was disappointed not to have been included in the discussion for the 2024 grass cutting season. They would also like to know exactly why Willingham and Soham were unhappy with the way that the County Council had cut their verges. She continued to explain that Wild Burwell felt that the suggested dates for the verges to be cut were not in line with the Plant Life Guidance. The first cut should be carried out before the start of April and then no further cuts until August, followed by a couple of further cuts after that. This would result in 4 cuts, not the 6 cuts suggested by the Assets and Environment Group. She continued by informing those present that wildflowers and wildlife are still continuing to decline. Lea Dodds asked if the Plant Life Guidance is still the same as she had circulated last year. Nicola Hallows confirmed that it was. Following a question from Jim Perry, Nicola Hallows confirmed that the recent Tree Nursery Tree Day, where trees from the nursery had been given to residents wishing to plant Trees on their property, had been very successful.

FC/090124/ 5 County and District Reports

The Council noted a written report from District Councillor David Brown.

County Councillor Lorna Dupré had kindly forwarded the Council a copy of her latest County Council Report in the absence of any correspondence or update from County Councillor Joshua Schumann. The Clerk was asked to thank Councillor Dupré for the report.

FC/090124/6.1 Planning Applications to be considered

The following planning applications were considered:

23/01390/FUL Woodrobin 2A Mandeville

Demolition of conservatory and construction of a garden room extension.

No objection but ask that the new construction is built with climate change in mind.

23/01347/FUL 5 Westhorpe

Single storey rear extension.

No objections but ask that the new construction is built with climate change in mind.

FC/090124/6.2 Planning Decisions from District Council

The following decisions were noted:

23/00987/FUL 70 Toyse Lane – Withdrawn

Single storey extensions with internal and associated works.

23/01135/FUL 66 North Street – Approved

Proposed dropped kerb to create new access with associated works

23/01037/TDC 4 Hythe Lane – Approved

Construction of 2no.detached houses, with demolition of existing house and garage.

23/00872/FUL 16 Murton Close – Approved

Replace riverbank supports, add galvanized steel shuttering, clad in composite decking (walnut) and add decked area at ground level, new hedge to be planted and 4ft fence and gate around top deck area – Retrospective.

23/01111/FUL 2 Church Lane – Approved

Single storey rear extension and associated works.

FC/090124/6.2 Approved Tree Works

The following decision was noted:

23/01246/TRE 12 The Causeway

T1 Magnolia – Remove. The tree works are proposed to stop the influence of the tree on the soil below building foundation level and provide long term stability.

FC/090124/7 Finance

Consideration of payment of the following:

The following payments were approved. Proposed by Clive Leach and seconded by Geraldine Tate.

Payee	Description	Amount inc Vat
Martyn Wright	Mileage	£30.15
George Rowland	Mileage and expenses	£149.15
Debbie Cawley	Mileage	£36.90
Truelink	Grasscutting April	£1,107.18
Truelink	Grasscutting May	£1,107.18
Truelink	Grasscutting June	£2,026.92
Truelink	Grasscutting July	£1,107.18
Truelink	Grasscutting August and Hay cuts	£4,192.14
Truelink	Grasscutting September	£1,071.18
Truelink	Grasscutting October	£1,995.84
Colin Smith	Tree Stump Killer Spring Close	£48.00
ESPO	Stationery	£67.38
ESPO	Cleaning Supplies	£43.20

Simpsons	Plants - Community Garden	£315.22
Vision ICT	Website Hosting and Support	£210.00
Burwell Football Club	Return of Deposit MH	£50.00
A Saunders	Return of Deposit GMH	£50.00
J Prior	Return of Deposit MH	£50.00
S Martin	Return of Deposot GMH	£50.00
ICO	Annual Registration Fee	£35.00
WAVE	Allotments Water Bill	£274.63
WAVE	Cemetery Water Bill	£32.42
WAVE	Recreation Ground Water Bill	£98.32
WAVE	Jubilee Reading Room Water Bill	£39.65
WAVE	Gardiner Memorial Hall Water Bill	£72.21
Unity Trust	Bank Fees	£11.70
Salaries, Superannuation, Tax and NI		£9,855.16
		£24,126.71

FC/090124/8 Action Points Update - Updates to the following:

No	Action Point	Comments on Progress
1.	Section 106 Money	No further update
2.	Newmarket Road Bridge safety improvements Burwell to Exning Cycle Way	Waiting for the first house to be occupied on the Newmarket Road development for the Section 106 funding to be released.
3.	Newmarket Road proposed Sports Hub including 3G artificial pitch Sports Pavilion/Football Pitches Recreation Ground	A meeting is to be held next week with Craig Mulhall (Mulhall Leisure Consultancy).and a meeting of the full taskforce to be arranged for the end of January. Official offer letter from This Land still to be received
4.	Pauline's Swamp	Guttering has now been added to the barn. ECDC Enforcement Team has confirmed that as of the two units forming part of the planning application for the land between the housing development and Pauline's Swamp have been built, the developers can build the remainder of the units on site without the need to apply for further planning permission. It is not known if the site has been sold. The Trustees intend to continue applying pressure to ensure the treatment of the buffer zone is as planned. ECDC is not prepared to pursue any further with the issue with the removal of the hedge by the owner of 58 Swaffham Road. David Brown to speak with Simon Ellis the Planning Manager again. Jim Perry reported that he had been told by the contractors levelling the site that they were not allowed to touch areas beyond the fencing.
5.	Gardiner Memorial Hall Phase 2	A meeting to be held later in the week to look at the way forward with the Phase 2.
6.	Moveable Vehicle Activated Speed Signs	The signs are still at the Jubilee Reading Room waiting to go back to Westcotec. Jim Perry offered to take the signs.

FC/090124/9 Group Reports

Consideration of the notes from the Safety Group meeting held on 9th November 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2023 were noted.

Consideration of the notes and recommendations from Assets and Environment Group meeting held on 19th December 2023:

Council noted the minutes and considered the following recommendations:

- ***That the quotation from R Winkworth to install a new tap and pipework from the water meter at the Cemetery in the sum of £512.00 plus VAT is accepted.***
Proposed by Michael Swift, seconded by Liz Swift and approved by Council.
- ***The Assets and Environment Group recommends to the Full Council that the remit of the Spring Close Management Group is changed to include the management of Priory Meadow including the Community Orchard.***
Proposed by Liz Swift and seconded by Helen McMenamin-Smith and approved by the Council. Lea Dodds informed the Council that training courses are available for anyone interested in the maintenance requirements of a community orchard.
- ***The Group recommends to Full Council that the Clerk organises the annual PAT Testing with M Smith Electrical.***
It was agreed that the Clerk should organise the PAT Testing as this is a legal requirement.

FC/090124/10 Parish Reports

The Clerk gave the following report:

A plank on the Spring Close bridge had broken. This has now been repaired.

The emergency alarm in the disabled toilet at Mandeville Hall is not working. The Maintenance Officer is unable to repair, so Barnwell Electrical have been asked to come out and repair.

Several graves have sunk during the recent wet weather. The Maintenance Officer is topping the graves up but needs more topsoil. This has been ordered from Meads Construction.

Meads Construction has also been asked to collect a load of Clunch from the cemetery.

The Defibrillator battery and pads at the Jubilee Reading Room need to be replaced. Both have now been ordered from Community Heartbeat.

One of the gate posts at the allotment had broken. This had been repaired by the Maintenance Officer.

The Clerk then gave an update on the situation with ENGIE for the public toilet and the allotment's meter readings. ENGIE are due to send someone out to check why the meter at the allotments is not sending a remote reading. They are still dealing with the Open Reading Dispute. The account is on hold for a further 8 weeks. The account for the Public Toilet is also currently on hold. The Consumption Team has managed to update the opening read and are currently aligning the reads with the industry via a D86 flow. Once everything has been updated a rebill will be completed.

The Clerk informed the Council that a smart meter has now been installed at the Gardiner Memorial Hall and it should now be possible to apply for the Smart Energy Guarantee.

She then continued to explain that Sharmon and Grimwade had estimated an annual usage of 19830 KWH per year for the hall when discussions first took place regarding changing to the air source heat pump. The Clerk reported that the energy actually used between 7th November 2022 and the 7th November 2023 had actually been 14671 KWH, considerably less than that estimated by Sharman and Grimwade.

In response to a question raised at a previous meeting, she reported that she had looked at the terms and conditions for the contracts with ENGIE and had read that the company could block the transfer of the account to another company should a decision to leave be within the contract term. There was no mention of a get out fee.

FC/090124/11 Other County & District Matters: -

Council noted the following documents:

- Cambridgeshire County Council Temporary Traffic Order North Street 8.2.24 to 8.2.25 Works relating to Carriageway Pothole Repairs Innovation Trial
- East Cambs District Council – Street Numbering – Addition of property name 133 North Street.

FC/090124/12 Other Reports

Council noted the following reports:

- Summary of the Newmarket Road Sports Hub Taskforce Meeting held on 6th December 2023.

- Spring Close Management Group – Minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2023.

FC/090124/13 Other Matters

Grass Cutting Contract

The Clerk explained that as a result of the meeting on the 7th December 2023 to discuss the requirements for the grass cutting contract for next year, she had drawn up a cutting schedule for all areas in the village. She went through the document and explained all the different variances in the schedule for the different areas of grass. She followed on by giving a rough timeline for the tendering process to enable the contract to be awarded by the middle of March 2024.

Discussion then took place between the Councillors about the proposals within the schedule. Nicola Hallows was still present and Council members took the opportunity to ask for her/Wild Burwell's opinions on certain matters.

Michael Geary raised concern about the length of the periods between cuts and particularly how longer grass could potentially create increased fire risks.

Liz Swift said that the Council needs to be aware of all sides of the argument, the biodiversity, public feeling, weather implications and how the arisings are disposed of. When asked about fire risk, Nicola Hallows informed the group that she was not aware of many fires happening but did not have the scientific evidence to back this up without doing further research. Spring Close already has a fire gap in place along the edge of the field closest to the residential properties. Michael Geary suggested that hay cuts should be carried out in July, not August as suggested. It was noted that the Council would have the ability to amend the schedule by increasing or reducing the number of cuts if needed. Nicola Hallows suggested that the first cut could be brought forward to the beginning of April and then the next cut being at the end of July, this would give a longer window for the wildflowers to develop and seed. The consensus is that there is a need for residents to be educated on why the Council is reducing the number of cuts each year, although it is thought the younger generations are more in favour of the grass being cut less. Lea Dodds asked Nicola Hallows what she thought was the most important in terms of the Plant Life Cycle, cutting earlier or delaying cutting later in the year. She said that it very much depends on the species but in most cases getting the grass cut initially early in the year is beneficial and then the second cut could be carried out in mid-July although this would be very much dependent on the weather. As previously advised by those working for the National Trust at Wicken Fen and Kingfisher Nature Reserve it was agreed that the hay should continue to be cut in August.

Clive Leach proposed that the late cut suggested should be undertaken early April at the latest and the second cut made mid to late July depending on the weather. The remainder of the proposed schedule to remain the same. The proposal was seconded by Michael Swift and approved by Council.

The Council noted the success of 2023 Carols around the Tree and although some initially had felt that the concert should have continued to be held on Pound Hill, that moving to the Gardiner Memorial Hall had worked well. Liz Swift proposed, seconded by Geraldine Tate, that a donation of £100.00 should be made to Newmarket Town Band. The donation was approved by the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed

Dated: