

The **ANNUAL OPEN MEETING** of Wistow Parish Council took place on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall, Manor Street, Wistow, Cambs.

**01**            **Present:**

**01.01**        Cllr. C Leaton (Chair), Cllr. N Simms, Cllr. G Smith and Cllr. N. Twigden.

**02**            **In Attendance**

Mr. M. Woolhouse – Clerk to the Council

**02.01**        3 members of the public were present

**03**            **Apologies for Absence**

**03.01**        Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. C. Bradford.

**04**            **Approval of minutes of Annual Open Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**04.01**        **It was resolved unanimously that the minutes be and are approved and that they be signed by the Chairman.**

**05**            **Chairman's report**

**05.01**        The Chairman reported that it had been good to see the village getting back to normal and being the other side of the pandemic at last.

We saw changes for everyone with the Platinum Jubilee and subsequent death of the late Queen and, following her death, the subsequent Coronation of King Charles 3. The village commemorated the Jubilee and Coronation by planting trees.

The newly formed Flood Group, along with Cllr Geoff Smith, are making great strides forward with plans to improve in how the village copes with flooding and planning for such events together with village volunteers.

We still wait for our approved highways plan regarding speed restrictions to be put in place, thank you to Cllr Nick Simms for all his hard work getting this approved.

The Playing Field continues to be maintained with money spent on new matting for the swings and the programme for maintenance continues.

The 2022 adolescent issues which caused destructive problems needing the involvement of the police were resolved and our quiet village life has returned, we hope this continues.

We have several Social Media platforms in place to try and reach as many villagers as possible when spreading the word for events or to highlight or warn of such items as scams and village issues.

Ray Jackson and his team continue to do an excellent job with village maintenance, a big thank you to Ray as his hard work certainly shows in the Playing Field and Church Yard.

The village looks forward to planned summer events as arranged by the Village Hall Committee.

We are now a complete council with the addition of Nick Twigden and Geoff Smith. Finally a huge thank you to all Councillors who give up their time to attend meetings and everything in between as a volunteer. Well done and thank you to Martin as Clerk who coordinates us all.

## 06

### Finance

#### 06.01

The Clerk reported on the finances of the Council which were managed throughout the year with total income of £20193 and total expenses of £14434, resulting in a surplus of £5759.

The total balance in the bank accounts was £26824, of which £20000 was held in the interest bearing deposit account.

### Income

Principal contributors to the funding the council's work were

- Precept of £15,000 has not changed for the previous 3 years and equates to c£65 per house in the parish.
- VAT refund of £2576 included £2005 of VAT incurred when the street lighting was renewed in 2021
- Allotment income was £1255 which rose by inflation in autumn 2022
- Our new bank, Unity Trust Bank, paid £193 interest on the deposit account, an increase of £178 over 2021/2 and was due to the increase in interest rates.

### Expenditure

Principal expenditure items were

- Grass cutting and handyman services provided by Ray Jackson. The time and money spent has been reflected in the neat and tidy verges and playing field.
- The Clerk's employment costs were £3488 (net of PAYE) or gross costs of £4360.
- The council made a grant of £1000 to the reconstituted village hall committee to assist in the hall's meeting running costs as it tries to rebuild its business following the pandemic.
- Wistow is a small parish with limited sources of revenue and therefore is exploring grants which may be available for it to help fund facilities and actions beneficial for the community.

**07**      Playground

**07.01**      In Cllr. Bradford's absence the Clerk reported that the playpark is in good order, Ray Jackson is doing a great job in keeping the grass tidy with weekly cuts at present as it's growing so quickly.

The council information board just inside the gate is fading and looking tired, a new one should be installed.

The entrance gate could do with re-staining as it also is looking tired, Mr. Williams, VHC, offered to undertake the work without charge before the forthcoming village festival.

There is an under 13 girls football match planned for 24<sup>th</sup> June, the goal nets are in good order and the pitch will be marked out by others nearer the time. Ray Jackson will plan his grass cutting accordingly.

The annual inspection by Wicksteed is due.

The equipment is in good order but not getting any younger and starting to look tired, it might be worth looking into any available grants for new and different equipment.

Straggling hedge branches will require tidying whilst not disturbing nesting birds.

The Jubilee cherry blossom has taken well and is looking good, in a few years we will be able to remove the tree guard and use it for the recently planted Oak as it matures and out grows its current guard.

**08**      Highways

**08.01**      Cllr. Simms reported that the Local Highways Initiative application had been approved by CCC with installation anticipated for this year. The application covered the introduction of speed signage at the entrances to the village.

The reinstatement of the road surface outside Bance Court was expected in June.

Mr Benson queried measures to reduce speeding through the village and Cllr. Simms explained that the Local Highways Initiative was intended to slow traffic by introducing 40mph buffer zones prior to 30mph zones. Mr Benson felt that more measures would be needed to slow traffic on Mill Road. Options were discussed and it was agreed to hold a public meeting to establish residents views and identify potential solutions. Cllr Simms felt that farmers should be included to understand their traffic problems and concerns. Cllr. Simms added that another issue was potholes and encouraged everyone to use CCC Highways tool to report potholes and sufficient complaints may provoke action.

**2023-4**

**09**            Countryside

**09.01**        In Councillor Gregory's absence the Clerk gave following report.

Litter

A selection of discarded materials including farm waste, fertiliser bags and pesticide containers and general litter, were collected throughout the year from the footpaths that lead out of Wistow and brought back to the village for disposal.

Footpaths

The four main footpaths have been well used and kept generally clean and neat.

The Raveley Bends have been mainly clear of litter this year.

Cllrs. Gregory and Harris joined the Meeting

**10**            Village Hall

**10.01**        In Cllr. Bradford's absence the Clerk reported that

The new committee is trying to encourage more use of the hall to increase income.

It awaits more info from CCC about the gateway unit for the water level monitoring to table it's installation within the VH.

Insurance is in place for the planned festival on the playpark.

Mr. Williams asked if disabled parking bays could be installed outside the village hall and Cllr. Simms responded that it had been investigated and CCC felt that one space was feasible. However, white lines could be installed outside drop kerbs only.

**11**            Litter

**11.01**        Cllr. Leaton reported that there was no great litter problem in Wistow and some residents regularly undertook rubbish removal as well Council run mass clean ups.

**12**            **Any Other Business and closure**

**12.01**        There was no any other business and the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm