

WRETHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **Ordinary Monthly Parish Meeting of Wretham Parish Council** held on Thu 14th March 2024 at 7:00pm in Wretham Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Sharon Ford, (SF) – Vice Chair, Cllr Jon Ford (JF), Cllr Paul Barnard (PB), and Parish Clerk, Jules Challenor (JC)

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – Cllr L Soar, Chair Cllr H Smith, therefore Cllr S Ford chaired meeting.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Item 10.3 on the Agenda – Cllrs JF and SF unable to comment although nothing to discuss.
3. **DISPENSATIONS** – None
4. **MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Thu 8th February 24 were agreed by all and signed by the Vice-Chair. These will be available to view on the Parish Council website and noticeboards.
5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – The meeting was joined by Jordan and Clarisse Greenwood of Larkshall House. They had seen on the Agenda and previous minutes their planning application/appeal and they wanted to discuss item 10.2 on the Agenda and answer any questions Cllrs had to ask. They informed that the Planning Inspectorate had visited the site 2 weeks ago and still nothing heard. They do not understand the decision making and they are disappointed. It was reported that there are no complaints from neighbours. Previously, the Cllrs have no issue with the planning application, therefore Cllr JF suggested that if we are allowed to, as a council, we comment that we don't understand the decision making and there is no element of this proposal which we would object to and furthermore, we are disappointed that development of this site is not encouraged, please reconsider as favourably as possible. **Action: Clerk to investigate where we can comment.**

They stated that their ultimate goal is to have a farm shop and their ideas were discussed, they asked if the Cllrs would support. It was agreed, it can only be beneficial to the area, including recruitment and agreed that it would be fully supported.

It was also mentioned about the previous reporting of the untidiness of the site and the owners stated that they are working on this, they are living in a caravan because the house is currently uninhabitable. The site is basically a building site due to the renovation, however they have builders ready to go and as work progresses, the site will only improve. Cllr JF stated that it was appreciated they had attended the meeting and that the site had been cleaned up.

6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

6.1 District Councillors Report – Cllr Phil Cowen report as follows:-

At Council on 22nd Feb, the Budget for the year 2024-2025 was agreed, details can be found on the council's website.

The budget is balanced in the short and medium term and does include for an increase in the Band D rate of £4.95 taking the Breckland District Council Tax level for the year 2024-2025 to £113.58

Chairmans initials



Wretham Parish Council Meeting 14th Mar 24

pence or £2.18 per week. However the majority of Breckland residents in bands A-C, will pay between £1.45 and £1.94 per week for the services provided by Breckland as the District Council.

A review of our waste collection service was carried out and that has resulted in a change of collection days for some residents in the district and thus far the transition has been relatively smooth although there have been some isolated pockets where some bins were missed. Please see the website at <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/rubbish/bin-collection> to confirm the various bin collection dates for individual addresses.

Our Inspiring communities programme was agreed at Cabinet and Scrutiny where it was explained that this was an innovative programme that represented a significant step forward to accelerate positive health outcomes and to support some of the most vulnerable residents across Breckland Council's communities. Officers are working with multiple partners to offer solutions to tackle health inequalities within the district. This programme is a testament to the collective and collaborative commitment as Councillors to build a stronger more vibrant and healthier district and provide hope to residents to let them know that Breckland Council wanted to support its residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Some outcomes have been:

- Supported over 1000 survivors of Domestic Abuse
- Recruited and trained over 100 volunteers to act as Daisy Ambassadors
- Helped almost 2000 residents to access low-cost food
- Trained 300 Mental Health Champions
- Supported over 200 residents with welfare support calls
- Helped over 90 young people and their families to manage their mental health while awaiting professional help
- Enabled the opening of Rest in Thetford, now supported over 1750 residents
- Worked with Citizens Advice to deliver over £700,000 of income gain to residents per year
- Engaged with 260 households & preserved 3 lives through our Community Health Worker project

We were delighted to receive £20million funding over 10 years through the government's Long Term Plan for Towns' Programme ring fenced for Thetford. This is vital investment in response to Breckland's continued assertion that Thetford is one of the highest opportunity towns in the country, as well as one with significant needs and will enable Breckland working with partners to deliver substantial outcomes and benefits to the town. Moreover we anticipate that the ripple effect of this investment in Thetford will flow out to the rest of the District in both market towns and the rural communities.

- 6.2 County Councillors Report – Fabian Eagle attended the meeting. He discussed the recent Norfolk Rural Business Awards that he has put in place. Fabian would like to encourage businesses in our parish to enter. Everything is sponsored so not costing anything.

Action: Clerk to place poster on noticeboards

7. MATTERS ARISING

7.1 OUTSTANDING HIGHWAY MATTERS

ENQ-28545 hedge rows around the junction A1075 + Woodcock Road are all cut back.

Resident of Woodcock Road emailed Clerk, stating contractors left a mess and just pushed the cut pieces back into the hedge row. Clerk emailed contact Darren Walmsley, Highways Engineer, reply "to be honest the hedgerow is the responsibility of the landowner and not NCC. We do however on occasion cut hedges back but always without prejudice when it is more expedient to do this than to locate the owner. The cost of this can then be charged back to the landowner. Are you aware of who owns the land then we can attempt to contact them to resolve the issue."

It was agreed that the Clerk is to contact who owns the land (land registry) and who farms the land (Abreys). A contact name, Steve Tortice was given as first port of call. **Action: Clerk**

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Wretham Parish Council Meeting 14th Mar 24

ENQ-663793-G1B6Z3 (Croxtan Road) stating potholes resolved. Cllr JF and SF reported the potholes still not fixed satisfactorily and with all the rain unable to take photos (holes filled with water). **Action: Cllr SF to take photos once dry and email Clerk**

Roadsigns /chevrons by Denton / end of the camp – Action: **Cllr SF to take photos and email Clerk**

7.2 ANY OTHER MATTERS

Clerk received email about Low Road Illington, reported lots of potholes. Also Illington Road to Wretham couple of big potholes. Need photos and report. **Action: Clerk**

8. CORRESPONDENCE – All correspondence regularly sent electronically to all Councillors.

9. FINANCE

9.1 Monthly Financial Report. Prior to meeting, all invoices to be paid sent to Cllrs for approval along with financial report. Please see attached. As previously agreed, Clerk has purchased a new laptop and has transferred all files. The Clerk has also added MS Office ensuring all files are backed up via MS OneDrive. For speed, currently Clerks own licence has 5 users so have used one of those, however moving forward, ie beg next year, PC will need to buy licence for Parish Council, approx. £75. It was agreed that the Clerk is to wipe the old laptop and to be donated to Cllr JF school. Please note the laptop can only be used if plugged in and very slow so will need maintenance, ie new battery etc.

9.2 Appoint internal auditor for year-end 31st Mar 24 – Michael Corrie contacted and he would be happy to carry out the audit. He has asked that we review his recommendations from last year's audit. We have already updated the Asset List. The insurance is due for renewal and the Clerk will ensure the policy covers adequately. We still need to review the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Previous clerk would have done this in Feb 2023, but due to illness and temporary Clerk this was not carried out. **Action: Clerk to review.**

Also MC noted that we need to adopt measures to mitigate the risk of sudden or long-term absence of a Council member, ie what happened with Julian Gibson. The current Clerk is already compiling a manual (including passcodes etc) and is ensuring all files are backed up to MS OneDrive (cloud), which means all Parish Council files are stored securely.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

10.1 ENF/271/22/PAR – 4 Manor Cottages - Appeal ongoing & Breckland Council managing. Clerk liaised with Breckland and they checked their system and this enforcement appeal is still with the Planning Inspectorate for consideration; unfortunately there is no way of knowing how long a decision will take, but they will send a copy to the Parish Council when one is received.

10.2 3PL/2023/0815/HOU - Larkshall House Thetford Road - First floor extension over previously approved single storey extension – **REFUSAL** and an appeal started 14 Dec 23. **APP/F2605/D/23/3333579**

10.3 3PL/2023/1107/F - Sunnýtrees Hockham Road IP24 1SD - Tourism development to include erection of 2 holiday cabins, 5no caravan pitches, service block, stables, manege and paddocks for equestrian use – **Decision by 29 Jan 24 @ 8th Feb 24 still undecided.**

10.4 3PL/2024/0110/HOU – Laundry Cottage, Wretham Hall Estate – Replacement of substandard store and porch to provide Kitchen/Dining Room Front Entrance Hall Rear Porch Utility and WC – **Decision by 22 Apr 24** – No Comment by the Cllrs.

Chairmans initials

Wretham Parish Council Meeting 14th Mar 24

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 OCO Technology – Site visit to be in July 24.

11.2 Dementia Care Conference – both Cllrs HS and LS to attend working toward Dementia friendly village. Cllr JF asked if the Clerk could invite a Dementia friendly village speaker to attend our meeting to discuss further, hopefully at our next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

11.3 Litter Picking – Member of the village, their daughter is carrying out her Bronze DofE. As part of this she will be carrying out voluntary work of one hour per week. She has suggested she would like to do litter picking in the village. It was all agreed that Cllr HS has some littering picking kit and this could be used. The Clerk will ensure all safety measures are put in place.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

MEETING DATES 2024

The next meeting is to be held on Thu 11th April 24

Cllr SF asked if we would consider moving 9th May to 16th May 24. Clerk to check Village Hall diary and if all ok, date to be changed.

9th May (change 16th May), 13th Jun & 11th Jul 24, Aug (tba), 12th Sep, 10th Oct, 14th Nov, Dec 24 (tba).

MEETING DATES 2025

9th Jan, 13th Feb, 13th Mar, 10th Apr, 8th May, 12th Jun, 10 Jul 2025

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Wretham Parish Council Meeting 14th Mar 24