Draft until signed

  WETHERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

 **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 27th March 2023**

Present: Cllr Duncan Perry, Cllr Andy Lewis, Cllr Richard Thurman, Cllr Stephanie Hensley

 Christine Mason (Clerk), District Cllr Rachel Eburne, County Cllr Andrew Stringer and two members of the public

2023/113 **Apologies for absence**

Cllr Stacey Lascelles, Cllr Keith Welham

2023/114 **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

2023/115 **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting**

 The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Monday 23rd January 2023 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

2023/116 **District Councillor Rachel Eburne’s report**

Report was previously circulated, and contents noted. Key issues included

 MSDC will not be raising council tax in 2023-2024. Agreed, £2 million of this is allocated towards energy efficiency measures, in hand by Autumn. A question was raised in respect of the 7% increase in council house weekly rents – just over £6 for social rents and £9 for affordable rents plus a 10% increase in garage rents. The increases are in line with inflation of 10%.

2023/117 **County Councillors Andrew Stringer’s report**

 Report was previously circulated, and contents noted. Main points included

 new contract awarded for highway repairs to M Group Services, commencing on 1st October 2023. Reassurance has been given by Suffolk Highways that mistakes made with the previous contractor Kier will not be repeated. Owing to road closures, planning conditions for HGVs have been relaxed, however, when works have been completed compliance will be reinstated. Councillors raised issues relating to large tractors/trailers using the quarry; owing to a road closure in Haughley, trucks are coming down Rectory Hill/Kates Lane; HGVs going towards the chicken factory are turning left on themselves and decimating grass and causing spillages; substantial increase in volume of traffic going through Wetherden overnight due to road works on the A14, data from the SID to be downloaded this month for any significant changes, statistics to be forwarded to Cllr Stringer; lack of a wheel cleaning system at Agmax is causing copious amount of debris/dirt being left on the road, to report a breach, Cllr Stringer to forward the relevant email address, if popossible photos to be included.

2023/118 **Public Participation**

Confusing diversion signage at junction 47a, due to two-way traffic, Stowmarket Road is approximately a metre wider than two years ago, Roger Tombs offered to take responsibility for removing any excess books from the phone box, stats from SID to be downloaded end of March, as a result of a spate of vandalism, the ANPR due to be in Wetherden in April has been cancelled.

2023/119 **Clerk’s report**

 No further matters to report.

2023/120 **Finance**

a)The finance report for the month ending 28th February 2023 was agreed. Payments as per the schedule were approved.

 Litter picker 38.00

 Vertas 274.14

 MSDC 312.40

 E-on 50.06

 Clerk’s salary 420.20

 Litter picker 99.75

 ICO 40.00

 A Lewis battery 77.05

 reimbursement

 Clerk’s salary 420.20

 Clerk’s expenses 216.10

 b) The quotation received from Park Fencing for £6,218.40 including vat, to take down and replace approximately 90 metres of 1.05m high picket fence and two gates at the playing field and to take down and replace with 29 metres of 1.05 high picket fence at the bottom end of the play area was approved.

2023/121 **Audit**

 a) Trevor Brown was appointed as the internal auditor for the year ending March 31st 2023.

 b) The risk Assessment and management (financial) document and the effectiveness of the system of internal control were approved.

2023/122 **To receive any planning applications validated since the last meeting**

DC/23/00673 Proposal: Household application – Installation of 4 solar panels on outbuilding, Weavers House, Church Street, Wetherden.

 No objections.

2023/123 **Asset register**

 a) The current asset register to be updated to include new play equipment, fencing, new litter bin, speed activated device. Insurance company to be advised.

 b) No changes to be made to the asset management list.

2023/124 **Rotten bridge and handrail update**

The rotten handrail in question has been removed. Together with a price for levelling and widening the footbridge, including two handrails, a second quotation for digging out the entire ditch has been requested.

2023/125 **New play equipment update**

Comments have been both positive and negative but overall, the new playground equipment has been well received. A possible future project may be the installation of adult equipment.

2023/126 **Quiet Lanes update**

Apart from picking up the signs and fixing to each post, all paperwork has been completed and signed off.

2023/127 **Zero carbon by 2050**

Despite other local villages having EVC points installed at their village hall, the VHMC are still not interested, Cllr Eburne to make contact with the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. In relation to having solar panels on the roof of the hall, Cllr Eburne to send details of a supplier and available funding to Cllr Hensley. As an investment working towards Zero Carbon by 2050, the PC would consider assisting with costs.

2023/128 **To consider common/playing field/projects and concerns**

A wish to buy the right of access back from the Parish Council has been received from the resident whose house/gate is located behind the track at the rear of the play park. Cllr Perry to speak to the previous Parish Council Chairman concerning the history of ownership. A solicitor will need to be involved with costs met by the householder.

 **Tennis Courts - Report from Chairman Graham Hughes**

 With little response to a request for new committee members, the tennis club may possibly close. Issues raised included lack of support from local residents with more users coming from outside the village, total membership only twenty families, nets need replacing but on hold for the present time. With the ethos to maintain this asset, Cllr Perry to make contact with the contractor who previously power washed the moss from the tennis courts. Cllr Hensley offered to post details of the tennis club on Haughley, Elmswell and Wetherden websites. It was further suggested a local tennis coach could be asked to provide tennis lessons – to be followed up.

2023/129 **Correspondence**

A request for a second team to play on the top pitch has been received from Stowmarket United FC - no decision as yet. Cllr Perry has been asked to bring all parties to the table for a discussion on the mess left at the club house by the senior players after matches – under consideration.

2023/130 **Urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the council**

None.

2023/131 **Date of next meeting**

Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Parish Council Meeting.

 Agreed as22nd May 2023 at 7.00pm.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.