

Welbourn Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting - Wednesday 11 May 2022 - 7.30 pm

Venue - Welbourn Village Hall

Present

Councillors

Mr. Robert Cross Chairman
Mr. Rod Storer
Mr. Stephen Short
Mr. Jake Beaty
Mr. Kevin Dowling
Ms Harriet Huntsman
Mr Chris Dixon

District Councillor

Ms Lucille Hagues

Others

3 Parishioners
Mr Jim Fieldhouse

Apologies Received

Mrs Maureen Lunn
Mrs Katie Stark
Mr Daniel Bancroft – Welbourn Parish RFO

01. Chair's Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

02. Acceptance of reasons for Absence

Cllr. Maureen Lunn and Cllr Katie Stark sent their apologies.
It was resolved to accept these apologies.

03. Declarations of interest.

No interests were declared

04. Guest Speaker - Rory Booth representing Plant for the Planet

The Chair welcomed Rory Booth and invited him to speak on wildflowers. Rory is a local farmer based in Leadenham. He said that 550 saplings had been planted by

Plant for the Planet since it had been established. 1 acre of trees has been planted in an arable field in Brant Broughton. In Welbourn, several groups of trees have been planted at various locations on the playing field and in a field adjoining the A607. Wildflowers have also been planted under trees located in one corner of the playing field.

The Plant for the Planet group intends to continue planting and maintaining trees and wildflower areas within the local Cliff villages where there are ongoing projects.

Future projects involve converting the parts of the Leadenham playing field from grazing to a community WildLife Meadow. Another 500 trees are to be planted in Wellingore next year.

Plant for the Planet aims to inspire local residents to become aware of the climate crisis and to join in the activities of the group.

There is a website with more information about the activities of Plant for the Planet and this can be found at this link:

<https://www.villagesplant.com/>

Rory closed his address and invited questions.

Councillor Robert Cross asked why hedges are only cut every 3 years. Not cutting hedges allows pigeons to breed excessively.

Rory replied that allowing hedges to grow allows them to become tight and enables other birds as well as pigeons to breed.

Councillor Cross asked whether Plant for the Planet would consider planting a wildflower meadow on Castle Hill and continue to maintain it.

Rory responded that wildflower meadows prefer non fertile land. Fertile land encourages too many weeds which overwhelm the wildflowers. He said there are many projects currently ongoing and in the pipeline. It would be difficult at the moment to commit to such a project but if asked the group would consider this. Councillor Storer thanked Rory for all the work Plant for the Planet had achieved.

Councillor Short asked whether the new saplings planted were protected by plastic guards and if so, who removes these

Rory said that it was necessary to provide these guards to enable the saplings to establish themselves. The guards would be removed by the group when they were no longer needed.

05. Review of the Year

Councillor Cross said that the preceding year had been affected severely by the Coronavirus lockdown. The parish council had actioned road repair requests and damaged drain repair requests. All the parish council responsibilities and expenditures have been carried out within the budget.

The Parish Council Clerk had resigned in September. Councillor Maureen Lunn had taken over the clerks responsibilities up to this point in time. Following the resignation of the Clerk, the Responsible Finance Officer duties had been carried out by Councillor Storer. Councillor Cross thanked Maureen for standing in as clerk during this period of time. He said that this had saved the parish council £6,000. There is an underspend within the budget of £10,000. Councillor Cross reminded those present that the guidelines suggest that the parish council only hold the equivalent of 1 years precept in reserve. The council is currently in excess of this amount. Therefore the Parish Council are considering the following items of expenditure to reduce the surplus:

- Installation of solar panels to reduce the weekly electricity bill
- Provide extra parking space
- Clear out the village pond and carry out work to improve its biodiversity. ● Repair to the Beehive Well down The Nookin. A quote for £4,800 has been received . Councillor Short stated that this quote was more expensive than a previous quote of £3,000. However he added that the higher quote was from a skilled stonemason who quoted for cutting out and replacing damaged stonework and using lime mortar as opposed to Portland cement mortar. He recommended that Councillor Katie Stark obtain further quotes.

06. Finance Report

Councillor Storer presented a pie chart prepared by Mr Daniel Bancroft, recently appointed Responsible Finance Officer. The following figures were presented to all present:

The annual expenditures for the year 2021 - 22 is as follows:

Allotments £0	Projects/ Grants £354.42
Legal fees £1227	Grass cutting (Church) £1080
General ground maintenance £505.69	Grass cutting (Village) £3000
Forge £138.33	Hire charges VH £74
Dog waste £524.50	Insurance £575.67
Donations £50	Admin costs £35
Fees and Subscriptions £846.10	Clerks Salary £2861.96
Footway lighting £1976.20	Telephone and Broadband £708.39

Total spend £13957.26

Councillor Storer explained that the biggest item of expenditure is salaries followed by grass cutting expenditure. He added that there was little the parish council could do to reduce salary expenditure but asked Councillors what their views were on reducing the grass cutting expenditure. Councillor Dowling stated that he thought the £4,000

expenditure was reasonable and that if the grass was not cut it would detract from the village appearance and this would lead to complaints.

Counsellor Cross said he would like to see the north bank of Castle Hill tidied up. However the parish council has been advised that whenever maintenance work is carried out on Castle Hill, then only hand tools are allowed to be used. This is to protect the wildlife living there. This constraint has been imposed by Historic England who are responsible for overseeing the care of Castle Hill.

07. Councillor Update

District Councillor Lucille Hague from North Kesteven District Council said that she had already forwarded her report to the acting parish clerk.

08. Parishioners Session

The chair asked whether there were any further questions. There were none and so the Chair closed the meeting.

Next Meeting – May 2023 - Annual Parish Meeting

Signed.....Chair, Welbourn Parish Council. Date.....Copies to: All Parish Councillors, County and District Councillors, Parish Council Website.

Future Parish Council Meetings:

8 th June 2022 13 th July 2022 August – no planned meeting 14 th September 2022	12 th October 2022 9 th November 2022 December 2022 – no planned meeting.
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