Parish Council of Waresley-cum-Tetworth

Draft Minutes of Meeting Thursday 25 November 2021, 8pm, at Waresley Village Hall

Present: Councillors Richard Jerman (Chair), Eleanor Jack (vice-chair), John Archer, Jonathan Lawton, & Malcolm Gordon.

In attendance: County Councillor Stephen Ferguson, Saul & Su Jeavons

Minutes: Rod Kerr (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: District Councillor Richard West.

Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests. None

To approve minutes of parish council meeting of 2 September 2021: The minutes had been circulated to the councillors and were approved & signed as a true & correct record by chairman Richard Jerman.

Matters arising from those minutes not on the agenda:

There has been no further news on the East West Rail since the last meeting but there could be uncertainty over the future of this project following the cancellation of the HS2 extension recently.

The A428 – this is at the DCO stage in the consultations with the final decision expected in February 2022.

The Wildlife Trust has made a note on their website asking members not to park along Vicarage Road when visiting the Wood and that the pub forecourt & Gransden Lane car park can be used. A sign has been put on the noticeboard advising parking is permitted on the forecourt.

Peter Gaskin at the county council advised that road planings are to be placed along Green Lane. He also said nothing can be done about the muddy footpath by Waresley Wood until a new officer is appointed to our area – Zaria Bettles has now left her role. County councillor Ferguson agreed to chase this up & enquire.

Defibrillator & CPR training was held at the cricket pavilion on 22 September with Simon Messer. It was well attended and it is hoped another session can be arranged next year. The registration of the defibrillator has been confirmed and all emergency services are aware of its location.

Open Forum: Saul & Su Jeavons introduced themselves – they have recently moved into the village.

Report from County Councillor Stephen Ferguson: Councillor Ferguson reported on the Ox-Cam Arc, the replacement for the local highways officer (still awaited – there are 611 unresolved issues t be dealt with) and flooding issues in the area. He urged all councils to consider any watercourses, gullies & streams that may need clearing out – the one of main concern near Waresley is at the bottom of Waresley Road

RT 3/2/22

Consultations and Procedures:

a) **Oxford – Cambridge Arc:** The parish council sent a response to the consultation prepared by Councillor Jack – this was also copied to people on the village email list and others. It stated that we considered this to be an artificial construct which bore no relation to reality – it is undesirable to string out development along the route – especially in the countryside in Bedfordshire adjacent to St Neots. A copy of this will be forwarded to Councillor Ferguson. (Appendix A)

b) **London Luton Airport & NATS Consultation:** The CAA has now approved the proposed new stack and this will come into effect from February 2022. Councillor Archer noted that the new chairman of the Little Gransden Airfield Committee is an experienced pilot and had the opinion that modern passenger aircraft are unlikely to want to use a stack system – nowadays they tend to slow down earlier if there is congestion so that arrivals can be staggered.

c) **HDC Landscape & Townscape Supplementary Planning Document:** This consultation is regarding a document that provides guidance on consideration of landscape and townscape character issues during preparation of a planning application. It is also intended to support the preparation of neighbourhood plans through provision of information on landscape and townscape characteristics and questions to ask that may guide assessment of other villages and their surrounding landscape. This is a 600 page document with a deadline of 10 December. Councillor Jack will have a look and suggest any comments if appropriate. Councillor Jerman suggested that documents should be broken down into more understandable sections, especially with such tight deadlines.

d) **Greater Cambridge Local Plan:** Although this concerns Cambridge & South Cambs, it does affect Waresley as it borders onto the parish and concerns public transport issues. The deadline for the consultation is 13 December & the Councillors will review it. The newly introduced Ting bus service for West Huntingdonshire was discussed. It operates like an Uber service and costs just £2 per journey. Councillor Ferguson has used it and says it works well. It was wondered why it could not be extended to Waresley, Abbotsley & the Gransdens as this would solve many of the public transport issues in this area. Councillor Lawton will write to the Mayor of Cambs & Peterborough, Nik Johnson to ask for the service to be extended.

RS 3/2/22

Update on Planning Application for Land behind the Village Hall: There was an alteration to the plan in July 2021 and the Parish Council is concerned that it was not notified. This has been raised with the planning department and Councillor Richard West. It was said by the planning department that the alterations were minor and no further consultation was required – the Parish Council disagreed. There are also ongoing concerns that it has taken over 17 months to determine this application & 5 different planning officers have been appointed over this time. The Parish Council feel aggrieved that they had not been asked to comment on the revised plans and agreed to write to the planning department again to express their opposition to these plans in any form.

Traffic in the Village

a) **Interactive Sign:** Councillor Gordon has been looking into the cost of a new interactive sign. Various options were considered but the cost would be in the region £2700 plus fittings and he could not recommend this due to the cost. An alternative could be speed camera signs which cost £40 each and could act as a deterrent.
Councillor Ferguson noted that St Neots has purchased four mobile speed cameras which can also be used to log average speeds which can help with building a case for further traffic calming measures. Councillor Archer believed that mobile speed cameras had to be moved every two weeks. It was suggested we could buy one jointly with another parish.
It was agreed that Councillor Archer would find out about the two week time limit and we would then discuss it with our new Highway officer, when appointed. It was also agreed that Councillors Archer & Gordon would liaise regarding the purchase of the speed camera signs after checking with Highways if they can be attached to the existing speed limit sign posts.
The Clerk will contact Eltisley PC to ask for their experience of interactive speed signs.

b) **Purchase of Mirror & Post for Junction of B1040 & Manor Farm Road:** The cost of an aluminium mirror would be £480 plus a pole and installation. It was wondered if permission was needed to cut back the surrounding branches – it was not thought they were thick enough but this will be checked. It was agreed that Councillors Jerman & Archer would arrange a site meeting to agree the best position for the mirror, check the branches & ensure we had permission from the landowners.

Strategic Cycle Link – Bedford to Cambridge: Gamlingay Parish Council contacted Councillor Jack to ask if we would support a cycle link – they are in contact with Potton Town Council and want to consider extending it to the Gransdens via Waresley. It is early stages and would be an expensive project involving widening some parts of the road. It was agreed to support the project, Councillor Jack will respond to Gamlingay Parish Council while Councillor Lawton will write to Major Nik Johnson about it.

RJ 3/2/22

Litter Pick: This will be discussed at the next meeting and arranged for early Spring 2022.

Planters – Update: Councillor Gordon recapped the recent history of the planters – four had been generously donated by Waresley Park Garden Centre, along with soil and plant, and placed at the entrances to the Village. The two on the northern entrance were stolen soon afterwards. Stephen Scurfield kindly arranged for two larger barrel tubs to replace them with firmer bases for all four. The Garden Centre assisted with some more soil and plants. Stephanie Gordon purchased some more plants. Charles Mear used his tractor to move the tubs in place. It was agreed they all look better and thanks were recorded to all those mentioned who have helped and donated, in addition to the volunteers on the rota who have maintained them. It was suggested the grass by the tubs near the Garden Centre be kept well strimmed to improve visibility.

Jubilee Light Repairs – Update: Memorial Makeovers told the clerk that they would not be able commence work on the repairs to the lamp until early next year due to the volume of work & supply issues. They were asked if a date could be given and if there was anything that could be done in the meantime to protect the stone & lettering from further damage over the winter. A response is awaited and the Clerk will chase this up.

Finance:

Discussion to set Precept for 2022/23: The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet showing the expected incoming & outgoings for 2022/23. On top of the normal annual expenses of approximately £3000, an additional £1000 must be factored in to cover the expenses that would be incurred if a contested election was held. Also to be considered would be a donation to Waresley Village Hall (possibly £500) and a contribution towards the cost if our Highways Initiative bid was approved (possibly £700). It was agreed by 4 votes to 1 to increase the precept to be requested by £200 to £5500.

Audit update: The Clerk will be seeing the Internal Auditor on Wednesday 1 December to finalise the outstanding audits.

Payments Approved:

a) E-On Electricity charge – quarter to 30/09/21 - £105,68
b) Mrs S Gordon, supplies for new planters - £35.50

Retrospective approval for the following was given:

c) Clerk Salary - £180.00
d) PAYE - £45.00
e) Website Domain Renewal (paid for by Clerk) - £30.00
f) K&M Lighting – annual contract £294.38

RJ 3/2/22

Waresley Twinning – Update: It was agreed that the concept of twinning was now considered outdated and we will not be taking this any further at this stage.

AOB: Abbotsley Parish Council suggested that a dog waste bin be placed by the footpath between Waresley & Abbotsley and the costs & emptying be shared by the two parishes. Volunteers empty the bins in Abbotsley. The councillors decided this was a good idea but thought it might be seen to be strange if Waresley financed just one bin in the parish which was a considerable distance from the main part of the village. It was agreed the council would only go ahead with this project if there was a call from dog owners in the village for bins in other parts of the village and enough volunteers to empty them on a regular basis.

Councillor Gordon reported that the timer on the streetlight outside 32 Vicarage Road was behaving erratically. Councillor Jerman will send a map to Councillor Gordon to identify the number of the light in question – when this is established, the clerk will contact K&M Lighting and request them to come and look at it.

The deadline for copy to Roundabout magazine for the next issue is 10 December – the clerk will ensure a report is sent before this date.

The Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen is to be celebrated over a long weekend from 2 to 5 June 2022. Each of the four villages in the Benefice will be co-ordinating events culminating in street parties on Sunday 5 June. The Waresley contribution the celebrations will be an inter-village cricket tournament on Friday 3 June. There will be a 5-6 k walk organised around the wood on 6 February to mark accession day. These events are being overseen by the vicar and benefice.

It was agreed that there would be a 2 week SLA to circulate the draft minutes and that Councillors would be given a reasonable deadline to comment and edit to enable their timely publication on line.

Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 3 February 2022 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

The chairman thanked all for their participation and the meeting was declared closed at 9.50pm.

RJ 3/2/22

Appendix A:

Please find below my parish council's response to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Consultation

Our consensus is that the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is an artificial construct, which bears no relation to reality. We can see no reason why there should be development all along the route between the two university cities, nor in fact is there a demand for rapid road connection between them. We feel that development should be confined to a sensible commuting distance around each university centre and that it is undesirable to string out a ribbon development all along the route.

Furthermore, there is a danger that this project could be used by some district councils to fulfil their planning obligations, without the responsibility of providing any infrastructure. There are specific examples of this very close to home. Central Bedfordshire have proposed a development of 10000 houses at Tempsford, a quiet rural area on the site of a historic WW2 airfield. This would conveniently help Central Beds in its housing quota, but all the infrastructure would have to come from St Neots, and of course that is in a different county. It would also lead to massively increased traffic on the beleaguered A1 and A428.

There is a similar issue at Wyboston – part of Bedford Borough Council – but also bordering on St Neots.

We are concerned that our parish council received no official notification of the consultation. We also note that the survey response format makes it very difficult to convey our views.

Eleanor Jack

Vice-chair, Waresley-cum-Tetworth Parish Council

AJ 3/2/22