

**Welton le Wold Parish Meeting – Meeting at
St. Martin’s Church at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 17th October 2019**

MINUTES

Present: Margaret Stubbs (Chairman), Peter J Taylor (Clerk), Amanda Vines (Treasurer), Christopher North, Andrew West, Richard Fryer, Lesley Smith, Jon Hammond, Stewart Burgess, Shawn Burgess, District Cllr Richard Fry.

1) Chairman’s Opening Remarks:

Margaret Stubbs opened the meeting at 7.40 p.m. and welcomed those present. She paid tribute to the late Pru Wormell who had been Parish Clerk and a stalwart of the village for many years but passed away last week at the age of 84.

2) Apologies for Absence: David Smith, Jim Cave, Margery Ward.

3) Minutes of last meeting on 11th April 2019: Jon Hammond proposed and Christopher North seconded that the Minutes were a true record, and the meeting unanimously approved them. The Chairman signed them.

4) Matters Arising not on this Agenda: Nil.

5) Councillors’ Reports: East Lindsey District Cllr. Richard Fry said that Rob Barlow is now in post as the new Chief Executive, and two new deputy directors have been appointed, along with several departmental heads. The new CE is now rebuilding his team of managers. A fiscal deficit of £1.6 million has been carried forward to 2020/2021. ELDC is selling its Skegness office and moving its headquarters from Tedder Hall, Manby, to Horncastle, where it will share the site of Boston College. A new building will be constructed, very environmentally-friendly, in sharp contrast to the ex-RAF Tedder Hall and the Skegness premises. 300 of its present 500 staff will then be working at Horncastle. Various other redundant assets will be divested, and the Council is aiming to eliminate its deficit within five years.

6) Clerk’s Report: The Clerk had nothing to report other than items to be discussed below.

7) Correspondence:

Mowing public rights of way:

On 1st October Lincolnshire County Council sent an email accompanied by a spreadsheet showing dates on which a contractor was expected to mow public paths in each civil parish. Paths in Welton le Wold were scheduled to be mown on 10th September, and the contractor claimed to have mown them on 11th September. LCC lack the resources to inspect remote paths, so invite parishes to make timely local inspections and report any missed, incomplete or poor standard of mowing. The Clerk had seen a blocked bridleway, and received two reports of an uncut footpath. The Clerk will request future dates of mowing in advance rather than in arrears.

Action: Clerk

- 8) **Treasurer's Report:** Amanda Vines explained a written report for the period 1st April 2019 to date. From an opening balance of £1,565.10 some routine items of expenditure were incurred, plus £55.00 for framing a second copy of the Chalk Stream Information poster. Proceeds of sale of the copies of the village history book were donated to cover £50 of this: other incomes comprised the Parish Precept or £570.00 and the value of a £50 gift card won by the Parish Clerk for completing a Northern Powergrid questionnaire. The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement were accepted with thanks.

It was agreed to pay "Welton le Wold Churchwardens" £10 for lighting and heating. The Clerk had no expenses to claim at this meeting.

Action: Treasurer

- 9) **Parish Precept for 2020-2021:** After some discussion a decision was deferred to later in the meeting. In view of expenditures approved under items 12 and 13, it was agreed to request £10 per band D dwelling as previously. Peter Taylor pointed out that, of 103 towns and parishes in East Lindsey that levy precepts, only five charge less than £10, whilst 97 charge more. 60 parishes levy no precept at all, and Cllr Fry confirmed the Clerk's opinion that most of those have no Parish Council or Parish Meeting.

10) **Neighbourhood Watch service:**

Operation Gunpowder – Combatting theft of electricity cables

The power cut to much of the village on 29/30th March was followed by another on 29th April. Both had been caused by theft of high voltage cables. Peter Taylor sought from the Neighbourhood Watch team a fast-track method to report any future such incidents to the police with the aim of catching the culprits red-handed. The response from PC Johnson of Lincolnshire police was negative. He then wrote to Rod Gardner, OBE, Head of Network Operations at Northern Powergrid, offering to do anything reasonable to help catch culprits red-handed. Mr Gardner telephoned to express agreement with those sentiments and forwarded the letter to Ian Holmes, Vulnerable Assets Manager for Northern Powergrid. Mr Holmes telephoned to say he was copying Peter's letter to Inspector Sarah Constantine of Lincolnshire Police at Horncastle, who telephoned on 21st May to advise that the theft of electricity cables is a priority for Lincolnshire police, and goes under the name of **Operation Gunpowder**.

The advice to residents who suffer a power cut is firstly to check that the outage is not confined to your own property, e.g. by checking your meter and looking for street lamps or lights at neighbouring homes. If the cut is more general, please report it to Northern Powergrid by dialling either the National Helpline 105 or Freephone 0800 375675.

If the outage is likely to be weather-related, i.e. lightning strike, gale blowing a tree down, or ice-accretion on cables, then just report it as a fault.

If there is no obvious natural cause, look out of the window to see whether anyone is interfering with cables near your home. If you see suspicious characters near cables, please dial 999, ask for Police and report a suspected crime in progress, which they should treat with some urgency. Mention "**Operation Gunpowder**".

If you don't see anyone acting suspiciously, you may dial 105 and tell the operator that there is a power cut with a history of cable theft in this area, and "**Operation Gunpowder**" applies. The police should come to investigate unless they are all dealing with more urgent crimes. It doesn't matter if more than one person makes these reports.

Margaret Stubbs said that replacement cables employ a much less valuable metal than the original copper, so the problem will diminish with time.

General:

The system of forwarding Lincolnshire Neighbourhood Alerts works well. One member household has left the village, and an incoming household is interested in joining.

11) **Dangerous trees:** Christopher North said that a contractor engaged by Simon Brook has begun work on some of his easternmost trees, beyond the area served by overhead fibre internet cables. Nothing has been heard from BT Open Reach, whose infrastructure is vulnerable to falling branches between St. Martin's Close and the northern end of Bunkers Lane. Tom and June Brooks had visited the horse chestnut tree opposite Lochnagar, where Peter Taylor had managed to remove one branch that had been hanging by a thread, whilst another remains. In his opinion it is not heavy enough to threaten life and limb, nor would it fall onto the road.

12) **Working Parties:** The Chalk Stream Working Parties have been successful, thanks to Christopher North and Margery Ward and their band of Welton Waders. The last session between Bunkers Lane and St. Martin's Close increased the flow and reduced the water level by about six inches. The next session is further west on Saturday 16th November, and Charles Dobson has already cut the adjacent hedge.

Peter Taylor had noticed an unidentified man and woman cleaning the inside of the bus shelter a few weeks ago. Thanks are due to those kind public-spirited people.

It was agreed to pay honoraria of £150 to Ian Ward in recognition of his extensive verge mowing this year, and £100 to Jennifer Brown for work on stream banks and verges.

Action: Treasurer

13) **New Website:** Andrew West explained his proposal to develop a website to provide information for residents and visitors (including virtual visitors), encompassing the chalk stream, Parish Meeting, Church, social and charitable events, and those connected to the Sites of Special Scientific Interest. He had already made a start, using a WordPress template, the most popular management system with 60 million sites worldwide. It can be found at <https://weltonlewold.com/>. The cost is around £40 per annum, and the meeting agreed to reimburse Andrew for his outlay and to pay the next year's charge.

Action: Treasurer and Andrew West

14) **Parish Meeting's shed, fund-raising equipment and trophy:** The purpose of this item was to explain or remind the Meeting of the existence of these items, which were acquired when the Meeting was able to raise its income by holding fund-raising events; the silver-plated trophy was awarded annually to the winner of a best-kept garden competition. The shed also contains a sectional pole, stand and ribbons used for maypole-dancing, steel-and-formica tables, wooden trestles and folding chairs, a large electric bingo machine, and 100 yellow plastic ducks used for racing. Under more recent laws the Parish Meeting is not allowed to raise money through events, nor can it obtain indemnity insurance for them. But the equipment can be loaned to individuals for a small charge to raise money for the Parish Meeting or other purposes. The bingo machine would need to be Portable Appliance Tested first.

15) **Any Other Business:** Stewart Burgess explained that the building of three detached houses with garages on his site by the bus shelter will proceed shortly. The delay was caused by family illness and bereavement. Full planning consent is expected in about two months, with no significant change from those already approved.

Andrew West raised the issue of the collapsed traditional semaphore sign at Boswell crossroads, which had an arm for Welton Le Wold. Andrew had reported the fault to the highways authority, which removed the pieces and marked the task as “complete”, in line with their current policy of not spending funds on signs that they consider inessential. Whilst there were road junction symbolic signs on the A631 for traffic coming from Louth and Market Rasen, there is now no sign to mark the junction itself. Peter Taylor agreed and pointed out that the junction is in a shallow dip on the A631, making its position inconspicuous until a driver is right upon it. Andrew said he would point out to the authority the inherent danger. Christopher North said that some people welcome the absence of a sign on the grounds that it reduces through traffic. Peter Taylor doubted that it makes much difference, as “rat-runners” already know of it, and many drivers use satnavs to determine the shortest route rather than signs and maps.

Jon Hammond and Amanda Vines both suggested from separate experiences that a “For Sale” sign near the bus stop at the junction between Dark Lane and the A157 impedes visibility towards Louth. Cllr Richard Fry confirmed that he had approached the highways authority about the perception that this junction is dangerous when drivers wish to emerge into fast-flowing traffic, with some overtaking one another there. The highways authority believes that signage and markings meet normal standards. The Clerk promised to inspect the “For Sale” sign and advise the Old Rectory estate manager of his opinion.

Action: Clerk

[Post-minute note: The clerk visited the site the next day and emailed photographs to the estate manager, and the sign was quickly moved.]

16) **Next Meeting:** Thursday 23rd April, 2020 was agreed, AGM at 7.30 p.m. in the church.

17) **The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.**