

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Special Meeting** held on 7th October 2024 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

IN ATTENDANCE

Staff – R Edwards, A Batterbee and D Warwick

PRESENT WERE

Cllr R Dykstra

Cllr D England

Cllr L Gifford

Cllr J Land

Cllr J Parker (Vice Chair)

Cllr P Potts

Cllr C Sproats

Cllr S Withams (Chair)

Cllr S Wilcox

Cllr G Willis

Cllr A Wyatt

Mrs J Drummond – Senior Clerk

Mrs E Coverdale – Clerk

Mrs L Moore – Assistant Clerk

This meeting was closed under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1(2).

A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.

Meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m

SP 16/24 WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting.

SP 17/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were unanimously accepted from;

Cllr M Collins - Personal

Cllr D Fabb – Holiday

Apologies were not received, and not accepted from;

Cllr A Ntuk

SP 18/24 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Chair Withams declared a pecuniary interest in the meeting due to being on the Committee for the Day Centre, a user group of the Parish Centre.

Vice Chair Parker declared a pecuniary interest in the meeting due to being a representative for the Council on the Day Centre Committee, a user group of the Parish Centre.

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Cllr Wyatt declared a pecuniary interest in the meeting due to being a member of the Women's Institute, a user group of the Parish Centre.

Due to the issue pertaining to the Parish Centre and not directly about the user groups it was deemed appropriate that the members could both speak and vote on the issue of the Parish Centre closure.

SP 19/24 SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

Members were provided with a report outlining all areas of agenda discussions.

- a) Fire Safety Inspection– Members were provided with a digital copy of the Fire Safety Report following a visit to the Parish Centre by the Chief Fire Officer of Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service. The inspection report stated that; *“The current fire safety measures within the existing parish centre are suitable for the amount of relevant persons intending to use the premises, the risk of fire within the premises, and the suitable means to escape from the premises.”*
- b) Electrical Safety Report
Members were advised that it had been difficult to gain quotes or a safety report from electricians due to the extensive works that were required and the issue that the centre was set for demolition. One electrician who had completed works in the building previously had advised that it would be £250 for him to conduct an assessment of the buildings electrics to issue a safety certificate, but it would fail due to known issues relating to an outdated circuit board. The expected works to bring inline with safety regulations would be in the region of £1000+VAT and that is without finding any additional faults.
- c) Insurance
Following the review of the Council's insurance documents, members were informed that while there is no specific requirement for the Council to conduct regular safety checks or certifications, the Council does have a duty to ensure the building is properly maintained as part of the policy. It can be argued that maintaining an up-to-date safety certificate is an essential aspect of this responsibility. Additionally, it was noted that if the building is unoccupied for more than 30 days, the Council is required to notify the insurers, which could incur further costs.
- d) Additional Maintenance Concerns
 - The heating system is outdated and requires a new meter, as the current one is not functioning properly, leading to high predicted usage bills.
 - The floor polisher has failed PAT testing and needs to be replaced.
 - While most electrical sockets are functioning correctly, there are ongoing issues with the water boiler, as the pilot light keeps going out and requires replacement parts.
 - There are also persistent problems with leaking toilets that need to be addressed.

SP 20/24 EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

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Cllr Wilcox informed members that on 3rd October, she, the Clerk, and R. Edwards met for a discussion regarding the future of the Parish Centre. During the meeting, R. Edwards was formally advised that her position as Parish Centre Cleaner was at risk of redundancy, and a consultation period had commenced. Furthermore, R. Edwards had been invited to attend this evening's Special Meeting to discuss the Parish Centre's future. A follow up meeting had been set for 10th October to discuss actions moving forward after tonight's decision. Members were reminded that all information shared at this stage remains confidential and should not be disclosed.

SP 21/24 PARISH CENTRE INCOME

Members were provided with two options;

- Option 1 Centre Closes 31st December 2024 (Appendix 1)

Members were presented with a forecast of the expected expenditure and income if the centre remains open. The predicted income, inclusive of VAT, is £2,339.50, while forecasted expenses—including the cleaner's salary, electricity, gas, and repairs—amount to £6,815.39, resulting in a net loss of £4,475.89.

Additional considerations include the costs associated with redundancy pay and the notice period. There are also practical issues to address, such as ensuring handymen have access to toilets, water, electricity, and gas, as well as determining where to store council property and equipment during the demolition phase.

- Option 2 – Immediate Closure

The projected income is £3,620.50 (inclusive of VAT), while the estimated expenditure stands at £2,354.39 (refer to Appendix 2).

Additional cost implications to consider include redundancy pay and the notice period for the cleaner. Practical issues also need to be addressed, such as ensuring handymen have access to toilets, water, electricity, and gas, as well as determining where council property and equipment will be stored during the demolition process.

During the discussion of the implications of options 1 & 2; several concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on regular groups with existing bookings, particularly their ability to continue providing essential services to the community, such as those for young people and vulnerable individuals. Questions were also raised about the council's potential liability should any incidents occur while users were in the hall.

The fairness of providing users with limited notice was debated, with some considering whether safety concerns would take precedence. Additionally, there was discussion about whether these disruptions might affect the likelihood of these groups returning to the centre in the future.

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On the other hand, the benefits for the building project were also highlighted, as moving forward would help keep the work on schedule and improve access to the site, enabling timely completion.

SP 22/24 DECISION

Following discussions of the above agenda items Members voted on the whether or not to close the current Parish Centre earlier than scheduled in the building project.

It was proposed by Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr England and therefore **RESOLVED** with a majority vote (1 abstention) by all members present for the Parish Centre to permanently close from midnight, 11th October 2024 for any purpose.

SP 23/24 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION FOR MEETINGS

The Clerk informed members that approval had been received from the Library to hold meetings there at a cost of £8.75 per hour. Members unanimously agreed that this was a suitable, local, and accessible location for future meetings.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** for the Clerks to further investigate this possibility.

SP 24/24 STORAGE

The Asst. Clerk presented members with details for a local storage option: £156.00 per month for a 20ft container to store the contents of the Parish Centre, with a minimum rental contract of three months.

Other members suggested alternative solutions, including;

- Cllr England offering two containers on his land at £125 per month each.
- Potential renting Housing Association garages.
- Re-engaging with Cambridgeshire County Council to explore access to the Youthie building.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** for the Clerks to instruct the handymen to remove the contents of the building ready for removal.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 8.03 p.m.

Chairman.

Date

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Appendix 1

Forecast Expenditure

	Forecast Income	VAT	Total Forecast Income minus VAT	Forecast Expenditure	Cleaner Salary *	Electricity **	Gas **	Repairs	
October	£ 899.50	£ 179.90	£ 719.60		£ 340.00	£ 277.08	£ 543.64	£ 2,000.00	
November	£ 852.50	£ 170.50	£ 682.00		£ 340.00	£ 277.08	£1,210.25	0	
December	£ 587.50	£ 117.50	£ 470.00		£ 340.00	£ 277.08	£1,210.25	0	
	£ 2,339.50	£ 467.90	£ 1,871.60		£1,020.00	£ 831.24	£2,964.15	£ 2,000.00	£6,815.39
								Less Income	-£4,475.89

Other considerations

Cleaner will still require redundancy pay, unpaid holiday and potentially 1 month notice if immediate closure.

*Salary figures are based on an average from April-September 2024

**Utilities figures based on the same period last year + 10%

***This is only an estimate of costs for electric safety test and circuit board

Appendix 2

	Total	Net
01/04/24 - 24/09/24		
Income	£ 3,620.50	£ 2,974.52
01/04/24 - 24/09/24		
Expenditure	-£ 2,354.39	-£ 1,310.05
Difference	£ 1,266.11	£ 1,664.47