

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Wall Parish Council held on Thursday 25th May 2023 at 7.00pm

Present	<p>Cllrs: Mark Wood, Chair (MW),, Elisa Wyrley-Birch (EWB) Stephen Blake (SB), Gina Scott-Middleton (GSM), Nick Morphet (County Councillor) (NM) Clerk: Alix Pearson (AP).</p> <p>Parishioner Mel Bramley attended as an observer.</p>
Minute Number	Description
2545	1. Apologies for absence: There were no apologies for absence
2546	2. Approval of Minutes The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.
2547	3. Election of Representatives Chair - Mark Wood - 1st - JL 2nd SB Vice-Chair - Elisa Wyrley-Birch - 1st JL 2nd MW Village Hall Rep - Steve Blake 1st MW - 2nd - JL Events Rep - John Lamb 1st MW 2nd EWB
2548	4. Wall Parish Council Annual Report 2022/23 Introduction 2022/23 has been an eventful year for Wall Parish Council, with progress being made across a number of areas. Councillor Mark Wood was installed as Leader and Alix Pearson took up post as the new clerk in June 2022. The council has operated with one vacant councillor post for all of this year and efforts will made to fill the vacant post as soon as possible in 23/24. The relaxation of Covid safety measures allowed the parish to return to a fuller programme of activities with a small fete and Platinum Jubilee celebrations, as well as the return of coffee mornings, lunch club and Old Year's Night. During June, the village became a location for the TV Vera team, with the resulting show being screened as the S12 finale. The parish marked the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II with 96 rings of the church bell. Winter brought with it a small flock of native starlings which were joined by a large number of immigrant birds in January, making Wall village a centre of ornithological attention, with coverage of the starling murmuration reaching national news outlets. The usual Parish matters have continued to arise, with all councillors, including the County Councillor devoting time and attention to smoothing and improving parish life.

Planning

There have been a number of planning applications for consideration, many relatively minor and quickly dealt with, to some ambitious projects relating to larger properties in the parish. There has been a partial resolution to the case of unlawful development of the land at Black Pasture. NCC refused the retrospective planning application and has issued two enforcement notices for part of the unlawful works - the fence and the toilet block. There is still an outstanding enforcement notice for the earthworks and there is also an unresolved appeal against the entrance. Councillor Morphet has been very actively involved in this case. The variation application made by the developer of the chalets and house on the allotment site was made and received approval. The application to convert one of the remaining barns on the green into holiday accommodation for disabled people has been approved. Village residents continue to take an active interest in planning activity.

Greens and Trees

JR Harding has undertaken all the tree works recommended by the tree survey report and councillors will monitor tree condition with annual inspections. A number of planning applications have been received for tree removal/reduction works in the conservation area. The impact of Storm Arwen on the trees in the parish is ongoing and concerns have been raised about large trees in the vicinity of properties. The stalled wildflower project and the ongoing species rich grassland project have merged objectives and volunteer activity continues in site clearance and climate resistant species research. Chris Mowatt has been recontracted for grass cutting services and the Parish Council remains satisfied with the service provided. A long and wet winter has had an impact on the ability of some of the central greens to withstand vehicle traffic and the Parish Council is monitoring the situation as warmer, drier weather - hopefully - arrives.

Finance

The Parish budget is finely balanced and as ever, has little in the way of reserves. Some small savings have been made by changing website provider and using a free gmail address for the clerk. The clerk's salary is now fixed and not subject to inflationary increases. The mowing contractor has kept his fees at 2022 rates and through these small economies, we have been able to keep the 23/24 precept at the 2022/23 rate of £8744. ITV paid £500 for the use of the greens, which is sitting in reserves awaiting a suitable project.

Traffic Matters

Once again, Councillor Morphet has been actively involved in the case of speeding traffic on the A6079 through the village. Two speed surveys have been conducted by NCC Highways Department with the resulting speed average of 35.2mph which is sufficiently in excess of the 30mph speed limit to merit action. A speed calming feasibility options report has been prepared by NCC Highways Department and some action may be seen in the next financial year.

An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to stop open water swimmers parking on the footway and verge in Low Brunton, causing traffic safety issues, is being considered by NCC.

New footpath signs and stiles have been installed across Planetrees and the Old Lane and despite having been cleared and jetted after considerable pressure from all Councillors, the culvert on the Old Lane remains very vulnerable to damage by careless driving of over sized vehicles.

In closing this report, whilst there is some relief that the storm season has almost passed without any of the damage and drama caused by storms Arwen and Barr, Parish Councillors still need to agree and adopt an appropriate Emergency Plan with NCC.

Having pushed the boat out with a large Jubilee celebration, the Coronation celebration planned for Sunday 7th May is more modest but not less looked forward to.

2549

5. Any Other Business

Jane Michie was sworn in as the 6th and final member of the council.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm