

## Minutes of Wappenham Parish Council Meeting held on 13th February 2025 in The Village Hall Wappenham

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Present: Chairman P Featherstone, Councillors M Stewart, S Thompson, H Wickham, I Atkins, Mark Wilkinson, Emma Reynolds Parish Clerk.

### 1. Receive Apologies and Approve the Reasons for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor D Bambridge

### 2. To invite Declarations of Interest

None

### 3. To approve for signature by the chair the accuracy of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting here held on 19th December 24 [here](#)

Action No.	Description	Action
February 002	Closed Churchyard	Float is sufficient
February 003	Litter picking	29th March 2025. To be done in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy.
February 004	To consider issues related to highways, footpaths and street areas	PF to log various issues with Fix my Street Tree stump on highway out of the village - Completed
		Deep puddles near Bungalows on High Street. Chairman to investigate - Completed
		Loose chunks of gravel near on High Street. Chairman to investigate - Completed
		High Street ditch gets a residue of a pond, drains not able to drain through. Councillor Atkins waiting for rainy day to dig out ditch.

### 4. To Receive Reports from The Chairman

Just a brief update on activity since our last meeting

- Support of our new Clerk Emma Reynolds who is settling in well.
  - Particular discussions around her support network and the Society of Local Council Clerks (see Agenda)
- Save Towcester Now
  - Discussion with STN and assurance around the ring-fencing of donations and the return of unspent donations
  - Confirmation discussion with Cllr Atkins on the above matter
  - Confirmation of £1000 donation sent to STN
  - Receipt for this donation (see Agenda)
- Conversation with a number of other local PC's on STN donations. Some verbal and some with a written response (see Agenda)
- Discussion with STN Treasurer on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb25 – they have reached their original target of fund raising. However, the Planning Inspectorate have extended the number of days they appeal will be heard over (I guess it is a more complicated appeal than originally thought) so the STN costs have risen and their Planning Consultant and KC have to be employed for an extra day each. When I spoke they are about £2k short but small donations are still arriving into their fund.
- Discussions with Nigel Woolcott around the role of a Parish Councillor as he enquired as to filling the vacant position (see Agenda).

- Email correspondence with the WCC to ensure everything was OK and to refer an offer of help from Paul Elcoat to the WCC if they needed advice before any major tree works.
- WIZ articles on gravel and food caddy liners

## 5. To Approve Finance

5.1 Cash in the bank as of 13/02/25 £5048.41 [Here](#)

The balances were reviewed and agreed

5.2 Receipt for £1000 for Save Towcester Now - needs to be signed [here](#)

Signed by Chairman. Logged

5.3 Confirmation for Precept from WNC [here](#)

Notification given to councillors and logged.

## 6. Invoices for payment

Item no.	Payment to	Description	NET	VAT / TAX	Total
6.1	Save Towcester Now	Retrospective approval of the donation to STN	1000.00		1000.00
6.2	SLCC	12mth Subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks (£5 + £80)	£85		£85

The invoices were agreed to be paid. It was agreed the Parish Clerk should subscribe to the Society of Local Council Clerks.

## 7. Specific Items for discussion

### 7.1 Ward Councillor Bambridge February update

#### A43 roundabout

I am not sure how affected you are by the new roundabout being built on the A43, where the Towcester Relief Road will eventually directly link the A43 to the A5.

The delays and consequential sat nav re-routing is putting a lot more traffic on to the Towcester to Helmdon Road with an increase in speeding by frustrated drivers. In particular it is causing peak time congestion in Silverstone Village, whichever way you drive through it.

The completion date is currently put at March next year. This does seem an incredibly long time but pressure is being put on National Highways (NH) to get the work done faster by increasing working days and hours. However, that ultimately lies in the hands of Persimmon, who are building the houses and who are paying a NH-approved contractor to build the road.

#### Devolution

Last month I spoke about devolution and the government proposal to form a new region called South Midlands. WNC along with North Northamptonshire, agreed to put an expression of interest to join with Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes to form the new authority. However, Luton and Milton Keynes had other ideas and the long and the short of it is that as a result, South Midlands has not been chosen for the Government's Devolution Priority Programme at this stage and that its residents will not yet benefit from the powers and funding that it would have brought.

However WNC will continue to work with Government and its partners towards devolution in the future and discussions will commence shortly on how a devolution deal can be secured with the full support of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments (MHCLG) in those discussions.

**Dermot Bambridge 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

## 7.2 The St Marys the Virgin Closed Churchyard

- **Finance plan** - agreed
- **Forthcoming Treeworks** - Paul Elcoat - Paul Elcoat has offered to take a look at the spec for cutting the trees down in the graveyard and the method statement in regards to H and S. [here](#). Paul F and Phil T to walk around the graveyard to discuss trees. Date TBC.

## 7.3 Litter Picking The Great British Spring Clean returns!

This year, the 10th Great British Spring Clean will take place from 21 March - 6 April. Wappenham will join in and do a litter pick on 29th March 2025. PC to notify.

## 7.4 Update on Village Hall

Gable end pulling away from roof. Been surveyed. Awaiting final report and quotation then will go to funding. In principle the church are happy with a 25 year lease on the village hall.

## 7.5 Update on Vacant Councillor Role

After an introduction and brief discussion Nigel Woolcott was formally co-opted onto the council. His acceptance was signed and PC to send to West Northants Council.

## 7.6 Planning

- Planning application reference WNS/2021/1819/EIA at Land North Of The Bell Plantation, Watling Street, Towcester  
Planning Doc arrived 31/1/25 [Here](#)  
No further update.
- Planning consultation/Information for application reference WNS/2021/2168/MAO at Land adjoining Bell Plantation Watling Street Towcester NN12 6GX
- Application No. 2025/0393/FULL Proposal Replacement of garage with new garage & hobby space Location Garage site opposite Brookside, High Street, Wappenham [Here](#)  
**The Parish council is minded to support the application however have the following comments to make. The application is to replace the current double garage with a build of approximately the same size but on different part of the plot. The application is for a single garage, the building includes a kitchenette and WC on the ground floor and hobby space on the first floor. It is not much of a stretch to visualise the new property as a standalone small dwelling. If WNC were minded to approve the application then the Parish Council would want to see all permitted development rights removed from the site and if there are additional conditions that can be applied to ensure the new development does not become a source of income as a rented out residential property or dwelling then we would support these constraints.**
- Request for advice - 22 Helmdon Rd.  
PC emailed with advice on who to contact to fix broken window after burglary.

## 7.7 Constitution for Save Towcester Now Appeal [here](#)

## 7.8 Northants Calc recommended that Parish Clerk join the Society of Local Council Clerks

(SLCC). SLCC is the professional body for local council clerks and senior council employees in England and Wales. They ensure that our members are equipped with the necessary knowledge, training and skills to thrive within their role and best support their council and community. [Here](#). Other PC's in Facebook group have advised ER to join.

Joining Fee £5 and yearly membership £80. Reasons to join. [Here](#)

This was agreed. PC to action.

**7.9 Update on Immediate Justice.** [Here](#) If you have any suggestions of areas, or what work could be implemented, please get in touch with either the office, or the team:  
[immediatejusticeteam@northants.police.uk](mailto:immediatejusticeteam@northants.police.uk)

**7.10 Beat Bus activity** for Feb 25 [here](#)

**8. To consider issues related to highways, footpaths and street areas.**

Cllr H Wickham suggested three areas of issue. See Item 3.

**9. Parishioners' correspondence**

Paul Elcoat to help in relation to tree management in graveyard. Agreed.

**10. General Correspondence Review**

West Northamptonshire Council's new SMS / text messaging reminder service will help residents manage their overdue payments to the council.

This service is an additional step in the Council's payment reminder process and complements the traditional reminder letters, which will continue to be sent if payments remain outstanding. The text/SMS reminders are designed to make it easier for residents to stay on top of their payments in a secure, straightforward way.

No further action.

**10.2 Annual WNC Parish Conference**

This will be on June 12<sup>th</sup> from approximately 10 till 2.30, venue to be confirmed.

**10.3 Save Towcester Campaign**

Andy Tennet Clerk - Tiffeld Parish Council emailed to ask if the Parish Council took legal advice and what conditions were suggested for Save Towcester Campaign. Paul F answered. [Here](#)

**10.4** From Sheena Warren **Let's Shine Festival** is happening between 30th May - 8th June

**11. To receive items for the next meeting**

Nothing to report

**12. Councillors' Comments**

Nothing to report.

**13. Any other business**

Councillor Ian Atkins suggested a blue plaque for Gilbert Scott. Discussion on which dwelling would be suitable or village hall.

Huge thanks to Mr and Mrs A Robbins for donating Wappenham Parish Records from 1894 and the satchel that held them.

20.50 closed meeting

Signed *Emma Reynolds*  
Wappenham Parish Clerk

Posted 1/3/2025

Dates for next meetings

10th April 2025
15th May 2025
29th May 2025 (Annual VM)
10th July 2025
11th September 2025
13th November 2025

Council year [here](#) Policy Review [here](#)

**Minute 23/2025**

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