

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Council meeting 5 May 2020

Clerk's update

Council business:

- This meeting is not badged as the annual meeting of the parish council since the Coronavirus Regulations laid down earlier this month removes the previous obligation on parish councils to hold this in May. As a consequence appointments of the Chair (and committees) will remain as they are until an annual meeting is held.
- Members will have seen a Notice of Vacancy of office has been published following the resignation of Alan Shipp as a Councillor. It will not be known until after 18th May whether or not the vacancy can move to co-option or not. If ten electors ask the Returning Officer to hold an election then the process will remain in abeyance until May 2021 (assuming Govt legislation does not change).
- If no (or fewer than 10) electors so demand then the next option open would be to co-opt to the position. A draft co-option policy has been circulated. If a policy can be adopted at the meeting then it will set the framework against which Council can consider its next steps once the outcome of the Notice of Vacancy is known.

Day to day operations - Apart from me, the remainder of the WPC staff have been working from home for the time being. The reasons why have been documented and as things change constantly I will keep in touch with each of them and update the Employment Panel.

Grounds:

- Contractor cuts had already been put in place at the cemetery as an interim solution until an assistant groundsperson is recruited. Urban and Civic have been supporting the village community cope with lockdown in a number of ways and this includes organising cuts of the Green and the Gault by their grounds operative. They will be there w/c 2 May. The Recreation Ground is getting a bit longer now and I will be looking to see what I can get done about that. The playgrounds are out of bounds for the time being. The bowls club have been keeping their playing area maintained.
- Sadly there has been a break-in over in the grounds store. The building has been secured and follow up action in hand.
- The Parish Office roof was repaired earlier this month. A great deal of moss was removed which revealed a number of broken tiles which were repaired, some of which were the cause of the water staining we had noticed on the office ceiling.

Recreation Ground Car Park - The car park project is starting imminently. Neighbours in the vicinity have been alerted. The cycle racks will be relocated in the vicinity where they will be more prominent and will also stop causing potential damage to the Tillage hall through water run-off.

Cycle parking - Waterbeach Cycle Campaign were successful in obtaining a zero carbon grant funding for cycle parking racks in the village. They have a number of locations in mind and used the most recent Beach News to survey residents on their preferences. Some of the sites are on Parish Council land including spots outside the One Stop and opposite the Post office. I have now had a positive response from NALC that concludes that in its view the legislation around Village Greens is not compromised by the placing of the racks in these instances.

Bowls Pavilion – we were asked to supply a bat survey to inform the planning application for a replacement pavilion. The survey took place last week and evidence of a bat roost was found. It is believed to be a single bat, probably a pipistrelle bat. Material has been sent off for analysis to confirm species and we this will inform a Natural England low impact bat roost licence application to enable the roost to be removed.

Cancelled events - This year's Day at the Beach has been cancelled. The grant request agreed under resolution 19/227 is therefore void. The organisers are considering whether to run a different sort of event in the autumn and will make a fresh grant application if they need to. The organisers of the Waterbeach Dog Show have also confirmed the event planned for 29 June is cancelled.

I was also approached by a Sony music who are exploring potential venues in the county to organise large scale music events in June 2021. The capacity numbers were between 8,000 – 15,000 so I explained that the Parish did not have anything suitable to offer.

Playgrounds – these remain closed. The contractor selected to replace the fence and gate at Chittering is on lockdown so that work is on hold. Meanwhile the annual RoSPA inspection reports have come in. We are putting together a report pulling together remedial actions we need to put in place and will be circulating this shortly.

Finance issues

- Precept – normally parishes receive half of their precept funding April and the second half in October. Due to the Covid 19 crisis SCDC are this year releasing 25% of the precept to parishes in April, with a second 25% to come in July.
- Annual accounts – legislation has been put in place removing the requirement for a common period for the exercise of public rights and extending the deadline by which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with any certificate or opinion issued by the local auditor must be published from 30 September 2020 to 30 November 2020. As a first step the 2019-2020 accounts are being readied for presentation at a future meeting. Prior to this a meeting of the Finance committee will be organised once the various items of paperwork are available.
- Waterbeach Mutual Aid – two requests for funding have been submitted and approved so far. I have established some groundrules with the group co-ordinators going forwards.

Traffic and transport issues

- This year's Local Highways Funding Initiative is open now. Due to the current situation, where parishes may have difficulties providing the evidence to back up their cases, there is no set closing date and submissions will be accepted at any time. The recent Highways Committee drew up a short list. This will be a separate agenda item for discussion at a future Council meeting but so that Councillors can start thinking about this now.
- A10 traffic surveys – it has been discovered that the traffic counts on the A10 have been organised by Urban and Civic's traffic consultant and are focusing on vehicle speed not volumes. The teams at CCC have already commented that they are not ordering any such survey work at present due to the unrepresentative nature of the current conditions on the roads.
- There has been no news yet on when the bus bay markings will be applied.