

Wareside Parish Council

Minutes of Wareside Parish Council Meeting
Monday 12th May 2025 held outside the Village Hall at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Nicola Gildersleve (NG), Cllr Paul Goodman (PG) (Chairman), Cllr Kim Nicholson (KN), Cllr Kerry Raworth (KR) and Cllr Mike Ryan (MR).

Others: Rebecca Burdick (Clerk) (RB)

Members of the public: None.

The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.00pm.

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence

Cllr Bob Kerr (BK) and Cllr Stuart Richards (SR)

2. Declarations of interest and dispensations

- a) To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda (including non-pecuniary).
None.
- b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests.
None.
- c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.
None.

3. To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public

None.

4. To discuss Community Governance Review (CGR) consultation response

As agreed at the last PC meeting RB organised a meeting with Ware Town Council (WTC) on 9th May, this was held in the council chamber at the Priory. PG, NG and MR were able to attend from the PC. The PC requested a similar number of Councillors attend from WTC to allow for a fair discussion, the Clerk agreed and noted that Martin Butcher (Mayor), Andrew Zsibrita, Barney Bryant and Kirsty Taylor Moran would be in attendance along with himself. However when Wareside Councillors arrived there eight representatives from WTC present. PG gave the following update from the meeting:

Councillors outlined the PC position to WTC and proposed that it is looking for some form of financial compensation in order to support their proposed boundary change - this would be both for the loss of precept from the 17 existing houses which would no longer be part of Wareside following their proposed boundary change and for the loss of precept from the new houses which are to be built as part of the Ware2 development. The PC would also welcome their support and assistance dealing with issues such as the bus service, roads and broadband and mobile signals. It was noted that Wareside PC's current precept is modest (particularly compared to WTCs) and it was explained that recent and current projects and administrative costs make full use of all funds and in order to achieve more, councillors work on projects themselves and that we also rely on the generosity of parishioners. WTC were surprised at what the PC managed to achieve with such a small budget.

WTC asked what the PC would propose to do with more money and several examples were mentioned including the improvement of biodiversity at existing open spaces along with the proposed purchase and management of the school playing field and the upgrade of the street lights. Councillors added that the PC would like to go back to being able to offer grants to local groups - something WTC focus on in their current plans. It was agreed that grants are an excellent way to foster a sense of community spirit and it is unfortunately something the PC can't do at present because it doesn't have the funds. It was also pointed out by Councillors that the projects the PC could undertake with more funds would be of benefit not just to existing Wareside residents but also to Ware and Ware 2 residents. And also noted that facilities and services Wareside can provide are complementary to those provided by Ware, effectively the benefits of both country and town environments. Our open spaces and the countryside environments provided by LOH and our orchard are not available in Ware, these arguments appeared to have impact.

Councillors proposed that WTC assign to Wareside PC a small proportion of the precept from the new houses on Wareside land when they are built. There was some discussion about this, with WTCs concern being around legality of such an arrangement and the suggestion that Ware residents might not like their precept being used outside of the town. The WTC clerk said that he could see no reason why, in principle this arrangement would not be lawful but he would like time to explore further. The possibility of a grant given to us instead was raised by WTC.

WTC stated that they needed the income from the new houses to provide additional services, our Councillors however noted that if the boundary change does not go ahead they will lose all of the money from the new houses. There is therefore a clear advantage to them in agreeing to split it with us now in return for our support to secure the boundary change.

It was agreed that both Wareside PC and WTC request an extension to the consultation until the end of the month to allow further discussion. WTC's clerk will email EHDC on Monday.

In summary PG, MR and NG believe this is worth pursuing, this is a one off opportunity with a strong logic behind moving the boundary but as EHDC are currently proposing it should stay as it is there is a discussion to be had with WTC to see if an agreement can be made so that Wareside PC support WTC's proposed boundary change. It should be noted that after the meeting with WTC it became clear that the 17 houses currently in Wareside (which would become part of Ware if the boundary changed) council tax will go up because of the larger amount charged by Ware and they suggested that the PC should notify them of this. One way of alleviating the issue could be to ask WTC to make a minor amendment to the boundary change proposal. It currently excludes Fanhams Hall and if moved slightly it would exclude more of these 17 houses and reduce the number of properties affected. Consideration should be given to WTCs suggestion of a grant. It had been what the PC originally discussed and has some advantages, for example the money could be available immediately meaning and would not require a formal legal agreement with potential to have to enforce it in the future.

PG advised that next steps would be to continue discussions with WTC by sending an email to them confirming terms of the PC proposal. The proposals could be:

- A formal agreement splitting the precept from Ware 2 - the split to be 12.5% to the PC of what they receive.

or

- WTC give the PC a grant of £50,000 to help buy the playing field.

In either case WTC would agree to cooperate with the PC with regard to improvements to bus service, roads and communications. We could also mention moving their proposed boundary to exclude some of the 17 homes currently there.

KR and KN thanked MR, PG and NG for meeting with WTC for what appeared to be a constructive meeting. KR and KN stated they thought that the percentage split of the precept and the grant should be more. They also suggested another proposal could be that both a percentage and grant could be given, both lower than they would be alone. NG noted she also had thought of a new suggestion that WTC could adjust their current requested boundary change so that it excludes 200 of the new properties to be built on land currently within Wareside, these properties would therefore stay in Wareside and the PC would still get the precept from them. Councillors agreed this was another good suggestion.

It was unanimously agreed that discussions should continue with WTC and that draft terms of the PC proposal should be written by PG, to include all of the above suggestions. This will be shared via email.

It was also unanimously agreed that the houses currently in Wareside that would be affected by the proposed boundary change should be written to by the PC informing them. MR to draft a letter and send to the PC via email. RB to then print and MR will deliver them.

5. Finance

a) To approve signing of orders for payment online via BACS

Payee	Work done/goods received	Amount
Community Heartbeat	Defibrillator, cabinet purchase and installation	£2250.00
Community Heartbeat	Annual support plan - defibrillator at Village Hall	£162.00
Community Heartbeat	Annual support plan - defibrillator in telephone box	£162.00

6. Urgent matters not included on this agenda (for full discussion on the next agenda)

None.

Meeting finished at 7.45pm

Next meeting 22nd May 2025 at 19.30

Signed:

Date:

Chair Cllr Paul Goodman

Appendix

CGR 2025 - Wareside Parish Council Consultation Response

This submission is in response to Ware Town Council's request that the Review move the boundary between Ware and Wareside so that the whole of WARE 2 as defined in the The East Herts District Plan 2018 becomes part of Ware.

A significant proportion of the new homes forming the Ware 2 development will be built on land currently within the parish of Wareside.

We understand that under the proposal put forward by Ware Town Council, all of these new houses plus a number of existing properties within Wareside parish would become part of Ware Town.

In common with many local councils, Wareside Parish Council is struggling to meet its ongoing day to day costs from its precept which is its only source of current income. Additional projects are increasingly at risk. Two issues facing us at present provide useful examples. The cost of supplying a new defibrillator will have to be met out of dwindling reserves. The Council is expected to pay the cost of running out of date inefficient street lighting which it cannot afford to upgrade.

We simply cannot afford to lose the precept from the existing properties which would become part of Ware Town. Furthermore, some of the additional precept from the new properties would have allowed us to improve services to parishioners either through the increased income itself or by allowing us to access borrowed money for capital projects - an option not currently available to us. These improved services would have gone some way towards offsetting the detriments many parishioners feel we face as a result of the Ware 2 development.

For example, we recently lost our village school partly as a result of the proposed provision of new schools within Ware 2. Once the new development proceeds there will inevitably be an increase in traffic through the parish leading to further detriment to the existing inhabitants. The development will result in the loss of much loved countryside within the parish.

Looked at from a different perspective, many of the existing dwellings in the parish do not have access to proper high speed broadband and the mobile signal in much of the parish is poor. A more regular bus service would be appreciated particularly by residents without access to a car. These services will no doubt be provided to new residents of Ware 2. Were the new houses to be built within Wareside, the Council would have had greater influence to explore with developers and providers the possibility of securing upgrades to the services to existing dwellings as part of the project.

Our objections to the Ware Town proposal could be met to an extent if a mechanism could be found through which some of the lost precept could be made available to Wareside Parish

Council. Assistance from Ware Town Council in securing better services for existing Wareside residents would also help to offset the loss of influence which would result from their proposal. We would welcome the opportunity to explore these suggestions further with them and with EHDC.

Finally, if the boundary is moved we assume that the recent decision to ward Wareside parish will be reversed. The decision to ward was based on the presumption that new homes from the Ware 2 development would be built in Wareside parish. In the absence of these new homes, warding is unnecessary.