

## Witchford Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007, at 7.30 pm in St. Andrews Hall.**

#### **Present**

Mr M Flack-Crane (in the chair)  
Mr I Allen  
Mr B Colling  
Mr G Jellicoe  
Mrs T Harding  
Mrs S Bromley-Allen  
Mr I Brand

**Apologies:** Mr N Holdsworth, Mr G Barber, Mr J Carter, District Councillor P Wilson

**In attendance:** District Councillors G Wilson and County Councillor W Hunt

Prior to the start of the meeting a local resident addressed the meeting regarding vehicles parking on the grass open space in Elm Close. At the present time the ownership of this land is not clear. However, the Parish Council will investigate the possibility of registering this with the Land Registry.

- 346 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 347 **Report by County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt spoke regarding a meeting he had recently attended with Dial-a-Ride. He explained that there are plans to rebuild secondary schools in the County – using public and private money. A £700,000,000, 28 years, contract has been awarded to Donarbon for recycling and he explained that Waterbeach will be the focus of their operation. The timing of the County Council waste planning programme has slipped. He was concerned that the Grunty Fen tip is due to close in 2009 and about a possible increase in HGV traffic in this area. Work on the guided bus has started and it is hoped that this will be running by 2009. The County Council will be conducting a major review of street lighting and he hopes that Parish Councils will be consulted. Planning consent has been given to the relocation of the Cowley Road park and ride to Butts Lane. Some discussion took place on the end-product from the Donarbon process. In answer to a question, Councillor Hunt explained that the product is useless but harmless and reduces the bulk of waste material to 15% of its previous volume.
- 348 **Report by District Councillor** – Councillor Wilson explained that the Planning Committee of East Cambridgeshire District Council had given consent for an industrial site of 4.7 h of agricultural land at Wellington Way. Witchford Parish Council had not been consulted in this matter. Councillor Allen has expressed the view of the Parish Council that this site should have been considered as part of the LDF process.
- 349 Information was noted on the site visit protocol for the planning committee of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 350 Information was noted on the East Cambridgeshire District Council's Standard Committee dispensation system for Parish Councillors.
- 351 The Audit Commission had confirmed the appointment of Moore Stephens as auditor to the Parish Council for the financial year 2006/2007. The Responsible Financial Officer has now received the audit paperwork from Moore Stephens. Members were reminded that the Parish Council also has an internal auditor – East Cambridgeshire District Council – who audit according to a plan provided by the Audit Commission.

- 352 Two officers from East Cambridgeshire District Council will attend the Parish Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007 to discuss replacement of play equipment on the Bedwell Hey Lane playpark.
- 353 The Parish Council noted a letter from Mrs Robinson regarding the Parish Council's intention to attempt to register Mills lane with the Land Registry and asking the intentions of the Parish Council in this matter. The letter confirmed that she and her sister have a joint interest in the land running parallel to this lane and that there are two access from it into their property; one is at the bottom near the balancing pond and the other is between the boundary of the Amos' garden and the old orchard garden which used to belong to Victoria House. The Parish Council will respond answering the queries raised in the letter.
- 354 The District Council had confirmed that under the Environment and Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2006 it is an offence to dump rubbish on land which is private, unless this land is a registered tip. East Cambridgeshire District Council have inspected Mills Lane at the request of the Parish Council and have confirmed that they will be taking action regarding the rubbish dumped there.
- 355 A letter was noted from a local resident regarding the speed reducing road-narrowing measures at Field End. The resident believes that warning signs should be provided in this area, especially for the hours of darkness. The Parish Council agreed with this and the clerk will contact the Highways Department of the County Council regarding this matter.
- 356 **Planning** the planning notes circulated with the agenda were noted. It was noted that East Cambridgeshire District Council had confirmed that the timetable for the LDF had been delayed by about 11 months.
- 06/01422/FUL – construction of four general industrial/warehouse buildings with associated parking and servicing area. Land south west of Wellington Road, Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely. This was discussed at a planning sub-committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007. Parish Councillors had concerns regarding: agricultural land being used for this purpose; the setting of a precedent in pre-empting the LDF and impact on landscape This matter was to be discussed by the Planning Committee of East Cambridgeshire District Council on 4<sup>th</sup> April and Councillor Allen was authorised to speak on behalf of the Parish Council..
- 357 Councillor Jellicoe advised that three stiles will be replaced with gates: from the Old Recreation Ground onto Grunty Fen Road, from the Old Recreation ground into the footpath leading to Long Meadow and from Old Scenes Drive into Long Meadow. The gates will be provided by the County Council and installed by the Open Spaces Group. It was proposed by Councillor Bromley-Allen, seconded by Councillor Colling that cement and other material costing around £50 can be purchased to install the gates.
- 358 Councillor Jellicoe confirmed that negotiations have gone to the County Council for final approval regarding a permissive path agreement made with Mrs Dianne Field for a path alongside the eastern edge of the field ref 282 on Cambs map XXV.16 & XXIX.4, which is beside the Grunty Fen Road. The clerk was instructed to write to Mrs Field thanking her for willingness to enter this agreement which will permit walkers a safe circular walk.
- 359 Discussion took place on footpath 6 and the fact that a house was built some years ago on this footpath. Diversion of the footpath would cost around £1000. Parish Councillors felt that there could be some benefit to the village in diverting the path so that an additional entrance into the Millennium wood could be achieved. It was felt that a Working Party should be set up, possibly including a representative of the Open Spaces group, to discuss this matter and that bearing in mind elections taking place on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the matter should be deferred until the meeting due to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

- 360 Councillor Jellicoe reported on his recent meeting on behalf of the Parish Council with Anglian Water and the District Council. Both agencies are working together to see how the problems with drainage in the village can be resolved.
- 361 The Chairman reported that work is proceeding well on the Parish Plan.
- Councillor Reports:**
- 362 **Street Lighting** – lights have been inspected
- 363 **Play equipment** – work necessary – Councillor Flack-Crane undertook to inspect the play equipment to see if contractors need to be instructed to carry out repairs.
- 364 **Grass cutting** – At the last meeting of the Parish Council members discussed a request by the Vicar that half of the new part of the churchyard should remain uncut prior to a meeting of the Diocesan Environment group in Witchford on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. A further request had been received that three experimental area in the Churchyard be left uncut for three months in order to see what grasses and wild flowers populate those areas. The clerk will contact the grass cutting contractor regarding this and advise the Church that if any additional cost is incurred in this matter, then this will be for the Church to pay. Once again, it was emphasised that the Parish Council asks that the views of the Diocesan Environment group be shared with the Parish Council.
- 365 **Open Spaces** – Councillor Jellicoe reported on discussions with Mrs Robinson regarding the possibility of a permissive path agreement from Marroway Lane towards Field End. A complaint had been received from local residents regarding the condition of the surface of Marroway Drove, the drove towards Coveney and Old Fen Balk Drove. The Parish Council felt that it could be possible to ask the County Council to put a temporary traffic restriction order on the area and Councillor Jellicoe will speak to the complainant.
- 366 **Community** – There is some fly tipping in Grunty Fen Road which will be reported to the District Council. The clerk was instructed to send a letter to Mr and Mrs Burton Palmer at the eastern end of the village to thank them for cutting the verges.
- 367 Discussion took place on several areas of the village which, whilst physically are apparently in Witchford, under Local Government boundaries, they are actually in other Parishes. It was confirmed that these matters are controlled by the Boundary Commission which last met two years ago and will not meet for a further six years. The Parish Council has already registered its interests in this matter with the District Council. It was agreed to ask the Parish Plan Steering Group if a question regarding this matter could be included in the questionnaire.
- 368 It was reported that the bin in Manor Court Road is not emptied frequently enough. Councillor Allen will check on this.
- 369 **Wood** – It was reported that some young people are spending time in the wood at night, making a noise and leaving empty alcohol bottles and cans. This will be reported to the Police..
- 370 **Youth** – Nothing to report.
- 371 **Finance:** It was proposed by Allen seconded by Councillor Brand that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved. Also that the clerk be authorised to purchase the seventh edition of Local Council Administration at a cost of around £60.
- 372 Date of Annual parish meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007.  
Date of Annual general meeting. Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Signed: ..... Chairman  
Date: .....