

## Witchford Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 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 S Bromley-Allen  
Mr I Brand  
Mr N Cooper

**Apologies:** Councillor Carter (business), Councillor D'Cunha (sickness) and Councillor Holdsworth (family commitment), County Councillor W Hunt (other council commitment)

**In attendance:** District Councillors G Wilson and P Wilson

- 61 One nomination had been received for the vacancy in the office of Parish Councillor. Dianne Field was duly **co-opted** and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 62 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 63 A letter was noted from a local resident regarding the **permissive path** behind Granta Close. This letter will be acknowledged and a copy has been sent to the County Council for their attention. The meeting was reminded that Witchford Parish Council is a member of the Parish Paths Partnership with the County Council and Councillor Jellicoe is appointed as the Parish Paths Coordinator. At a recent seminar which Councillor Jellicoe attended, the County Council had suggested that permissive paths were useful tools to improve footpath amenities in villages. In this instance, the Parish Paths Coordinator helped to implement County Council policy and the wishes of the landowner. Parish Councillors are each asked to take a particular interest in various areas of the Parish Council's responsibilities and Councillor Jellicoe reports on the Open Spaces Group which is not a part of the Parish Council but which assists, amongst other things, in implementing work carried out under the Parish Path Partnership. Before the County Council will accept the signing off of the new Permissive Path, they will inspect and check the area.
- 64 Changes to the times of the **mobile library** routes from January 2008 were noted. These will be put in the noticeboard.
- 65 It was noted that the Area Manager (Maintenance East) of the **Highways** Department of the County Council will be moving to Girton for six months.
- 66 A letter from the Monitoring Officer was noted regarding the Registration and **Declaration of Interests**.
- 67 An invitation was noted to the **Youth Club** presentation evening in Sutton on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Councillor Allen hopes to attend this.
- 68 **Report by District Councillors** - Councillor Pauline Wilson explained that the working party for the proposed new leisure facility has been put on hold. Councillor Gareth Wilson reported on the auditor's report and new proposals for District Councillors' allowances. He gave details of revenue collection figures for last year. He explained that the appeal on the Mereham proposals will begin on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at the Arkenstall Centre and is likely to last for six weeks. Councillor Allen reported that since the change of political control at the District Council, all working

- parties/seminars have been cancelled for the time being. He explained that work was continuing to investigate the cost of the provision of brown sacks within the village and woven nylon re-usable bags were being investigated although he doubted that they would be suitable for food waste. Councillor Allen had attended a Strategic Development Committee meeting which had discussed speeding up the planning system for businesses in order to promote business within the District. Councillor Allen was concerned that this could reduce consultation.
- 69 **Report by County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt had provided a written report regarding encouraging support for local post offices and also concerning the Mereham appeal. He advised that congestion charging in Cambridge is currently being discussed at Shire Hall.
- 70 **Planning:** 07/00566/FUL - correction of site plan and inclusion of site levels, correction of an error on the original plans to omit glazing to stairwell originally shown on floor plans (no change to elevations) – land to rear of 86 Main Street – no objection
- 07/00712/FUL – two story side extension – 135 Main Street – no objection
- The response to the LDF consultation was submitted prior to the deadline. Also, objections were submitted to the District Council regarding the Church Commissioner’s proposals for development on the way into Witchford.
- 71 Discussion took place regarding proposals for the **Jointly Funded Minor Highways** Improvements 2008-09 bidding round which had been deferred from the previous meeting. The County Council had confirmed that it was not technically possible at the moment to construct a crossing in the area of the school. They did feel however that the proposal for a footpath (pavement) for the first 100 m of Grunty Fen Road on the western side had merit and also believed that it might be possible to improve the Grunty Fen/Main Street junction. It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen that this would be put forward as the Parish Council’s bid under the Jointly Funded Minor Highways scheme.
- 72 Discussion took place on the **New Code of Conduct** for Parish Councils. Following a proposal which was not seconded to write to the Government asking for an independent legal review, it was proposed by Councillor Allen and seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen that the Code be accepted with the inclusion of paragraph 12(2). Following a vote, it was resolved that: Witchford Parish Council adopts the Parish and Town Council’s Model Code of Conduct including paragraph 12(2) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. It was also resolved that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007, where a councillor with a prejudicial interest wishes to speak on an agenda item, then that interest and intention must be stated immediately after item 1 on the agenda. The public will be allowed a maximum of six speakers who may provide information for up to three minutes only and each person may only speak once. The Chairman will look to secure a balance of public speakers. The public participation is not to be a part of the debate but merely fact giving and answering questions in the same manner as the councillor with the prejudicial interest. It was agreed that this should be readdressed six months to a year after its introduction at which time, if appropriate, the Council’s standing orders could be amended. It was agreed to ask the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils to arrange notification of the Standards Board for England and the Monitoring Officer of the adoption of the code and to arrange an advertisement in an appropriate newspaper.
- 73 The Chairman advised that the first meeting of the Steering group to discuss replacement play equipment for the Bedwell Hey **playpark** had taken place. It was hoped to consult with children at Rackham School and with the Youth Club and that some information could be prepared for this by the early autumn.
- 74 Chairman reported that work is proceeding well on the **Parish Plan**.

- 75 A meeting has been held with the County Council to discuss **street light** provision and quotations have been requested for five new 35w CDM lights: Marroway Lane – outside no 8, opposite 20 and approx 30m from junction with Main Street; Bedwell Hey Lane, 30m from column no 4 on eastern side and opposite No 2 near playground sign. Once the quotation is received, then residents near to the proposed lights will be consulted.
- 76 Councillor Jellicoe reported on his recent meeting with the **Land Registry**. A notarised declaration is necessary for each parcel and the clerk will contact East Cambridgeshire District Council to see if they will act for the Parish Council in this matter. The Land Registry state that the cost of each declaration is £5 plus £2 per exhibit. The Land Registry charge is £30 per submission provided the land value is under £40,000. More work is necessary to demonstrate the ownership of Mills Lane. The piece of land in Elm Close may be subject to “bona vicantia” because when a landowner becomes bankrupt, land reverts to the Crown. It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Jellicoe that the Parish Council writes to the Treasury regarding this matter.
- 77 It was reported that some damage had been done to a hedge by a tractor delivering to the allotments in **Broadway**. It was confirmed that this is common land and vehicles should not be driven nor parked on it.
- 78 Information had been received by Councillor Allen regarding the County Council making **prohibition of driving orders** for byways open to all traffic in Haddenham and Wilburton. The proposed order would prohibit driving between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> June but envisaging some flexibility in the early summer depending upon weather and ground conditions. It was agreed that the clerk should write to the County Council to request similar schemes be put in place on Witchford BW10, Wentworth 3 and Wentworth 5 (Catchwater Drain, Marroway Drove, Granny’s End, Old Fen Baulk Road). The County Council advise that proposals for the redesignation of Sandpit Lane are currently with their legal department.
- 79 Complaints have been received regarding **motorbikes** riding between Meadow Close and Manor Court Road and Clover End and Field End. This will be reported to the Police. Sanctuary Housing (Hereward) will be contacted to see if they can improve the bollards between Meadow Close and Manor Court Road.

#### **Councillor Reports:**

- 80 **Street Lighting** – nothing to report
- 81 **Play equipment** – some remedial work is still necessary at Bedwell Park playpark and the Chairman undertook to deal with this.
- 82 **Grass cutting** – A request has been made from the Playing Field Association for the grass cutting on the playing fields to be extended to include a new piece of land which will make a pitch for a colt’s team. It was proposed by Councillor Bromley-Allen, seconded by Councillor Jellicoe that this be agreed at a cost of £25 for an initial cut and an additional £10 per month thereafter. It was agreed to contact Truelink to ask that one of the three annual cuts of Sandpit Lane be carried out as this is very overgrown. It was reported that the grass near the footpath from Witchford to Wentworth and, on the eastern side, from the roundabout into the village needed cutting and the clerk was instructed to contact the County Council regarding this.
- 83 **Open Spaces** – It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Brand that Councillor Jellicoe be reimbursed £114.23 for: expenses incurred in repairing the Parish Council’s grass cutter, for petrol needed for this and for travel to and from The Land Registry. A local resident had complained about playing children at the rear of Granta Close and concerning a dog being allowed to foul in a field in this area. It was agreed to investigate the provision of an additional dog bin at the bottom of Marroway Lane and the clerk will contact the Dog Warden regarding this. The clerk was instructed to contact the County Council to enquire as to progress with enforcement of the encroachment into New Drove.

84 **Community** – It was reported that a horsebox is regularly parked in a layby in Main Street near Dunhams Lane. The clerk will check with the Police if this is permitted. Complaints were received regarding fireworks at the Village College late at night recently. The clerk was instructed to write to the Village College asking that they inform villagers – through the Witchfordian – when fireworks are likely to be set off.

85 **Wood** – Meadow cut took place on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

86 **Youth** – Nothing to report.

87 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Allen seconded by Councillor Brand that the bank reconciliation, budget review and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.

88 Date of next meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

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