

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1st August 2007, at 7.30 pm in St. Andrews Hall.

Present

Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair)
Mr I Allen
Mr B Colling
Mr I Brand
Mr N Cooper
Mr N Holdsworth
Mrs D Field

Apologies: Mr M Flack-Crane (holiday), Mr J Carter (holiday), Mrs S Bromley-Allen (sickness)

In attendance: District Councillors G Wilson and P Wilson, County Councillor Hunt

- 89 Councillor Allen declared a non pecuniary interest in minute 97 – planning application 07/00806/FUL – 6 The Warren.
- 90 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th July 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman.
- 91 A letter was noted from the **Village College** agreeing that when firework events are planned, they will take steps to notify villagers of this by placing an announcement in the Witchfordian.
- 92 Information was noted from East Cambridgeshire District Council that on 24th May 2007 the public open space in **Victoria Green** was transferred to them. It was agreed to contact the District Council to suggest a meeting to discuss issues concerning the area. Councillors Allen, Cooper, Holdsworth, Field and Jellicoe hope to attend this meeting. The Open Spaces Group will be kept informed.
- 93 **1st Witchford Scout Group** had written to the Parish Council thanking it for support in the past and asking for a donation towards their work in the future. They also invited the Parish Council to hold a meeting in the Scout Hut. The clerk was instructed to reply saying that the Parish Council does have a budget for a donation and asking them to identify a project which they would wish the Parish Council to fund. The Parish Council hopes to be able to arrange to hold its October meeting at the Scout Hut; the meeting will of course be open to the public as usual.
- 94 Information was noted from the County Council regarding changes to the timetable for preparation of the **minerals and waste plan** including an additional formal consultation stage in September/October 2008. The clerk was instructed to write to request that the Parish Council be kept informed of issues relating to our local area: Ely, Witchford, Grunty Fen, Mepal, HWRC and feasibility and sustainability appraisals.
- 95 **Report by County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt spoke encouraging support for local post offices. A Parish Councillor suggested that arranging business advice for post offices would be a worth while exercise for the County Council. Councillor Hunt explained County Council thinking behind the suggested Cambridge congestion charge which he believed could assist in obtaining Government funds which he would support being used to provide an Ely Southern bypass. Parish Councillors thought that if the congestion charge were introduced, this would impact on people living locally as often people move away from Cambridge as they cannot afford property there but still need to work in Cambridge. Parish Councillors believed that improvements to public transport from this area and to the A10 would be essential

before any congestion charge was introduced. Councillor Hunt spoke regarding the Mereham appeal which begins on 9th October 2007 at the Arkenstall Centre Haddenham. He stated that the District Council and County Council have formed an alliance to fight the project. He spoke forcefully about his opposition to the proposed Mereham development. Councillor Hunt will ensure that the Witchfordian is kept up to date with information about the appeal.

- 96 **Report by District Councillors** - Councillor Pauline Wilson explained that the Community Services Committee of the District Council has appointed a member to the East Cambridgeshire CCTV steering Group. Councillor Gareth Wilson explained that the District Council had agreed to support the maintenance of lodes in the southern part of the district and deplores any moves that might lead to these being lowered or turned into ditches. Councillor Wilson gave an update on the Planning Committee and explained the roles of the District, County Council and Government in transport infrastructure.

Councillor Allen spoke regarding a special meeting of the Environment and Transport Committee of the District Council which was held to decide whether to extend a trial of fortnightly bin collections across the district. The Council has declined to make its decision known and no report from the recent trials was placed before the committee. The District Council states that this is because negotiations with companies for the waste contract are ongoing but Councillor Allen stated that the decision should have been kept separate from the contract negotiations and should have been made public. Councillor Allen is also concerned that information on the East Cambridgeshire District Council website regarding future car parking provision is not accurate.

97 **Planning**

It was noted that the District Council is taking formal enforcement action regarding the erection of a fence at 39 Field End.

07/00769/FUL – 1st floor extension over existing single storey element of property – 3 The Warren – no objection.

07/00806/FUL – two storey side and single storey front and rear extensions – 6 The Warren – no objection.

Amendment 07/00712/FUL – two storey side extension – 135 Main Street – no objection.

- 98 A report was noted from the Vicar regarding the effect of leaving areas of grass uncut in **St Andrew's Churchyard** following the Environment Day which the Church held on 23rd June. The Church suggests "cutting the grass every third week and leaving the grass uncut on the south side of the church from mid April until the end of June and after that, cut as normal every third week. The grass at the bottom of the churchyard could be cut once in the early spring and then left until late June or early July when it could be cut once (may be by scythe) and then left to the last cut during the autumn." The Parish Council's grass cutting contractors have explained that an additional four cuts will be necessary to maintain the churchyard as the contract until the end of this grass cutting season. This would cost an additional £476. It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Field that the Parish Council agrees to pay for four additional cuts this year if this proves necessary and in the meantime to arrange a meeting between the contractors, the Church, Councillor Brand, Councillor Jellicoe and Councillor Field. The Open Spaces Group will also be invited to send a representative to the meeting.

- 99 It was proposed by Councillor Holdsworth, seconded by Councillor Cooper that East Cambridgeshire District Council be appointed internal **auditors** for the period 2007/08. Members discussed this matter and are happy with the excellent service provided by the District Council in the conduct of the internal audit.

- 100 A consultation document from the County Council was noted regarding a design guide for **streets and the public realm**. Councillor Cooper undertook to study this document and the matter will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Parish Council.

101 In the absence of the Chairman on holiday, the report on the **play equipment** steering group will be deferred until the next meeting.

102 An update was noted on the progress with the **parish plan**. Progress will be explained in the Witchfordian and the plan will be available on line as well as in paper form.

Councillor Reports

103 **Street lights:** nothing to report.

104 **Play equipment:** already discussed.

105 **Grass cutting:** already discussed.

106 **Open spaces:** the northern **rights of way** are still very badly rutted. Councillor Jellicoe, the P3 Coordinator, will meet with the County Council regarding this.

A response was received from the County Council regarding seasonal closures of routes in Witchford similar to those taking place in Haddenham and Wilburton. The County advise that funding for these closures is linked to the development of Northstowe and is not therefore available for Witchford. Councillors were very concerned about possible displacement of 4 x 4 vehicles from Haddenham and Wilburton to Witchford. Councillor Jellicoe will raise this matter at his **P3** meeting with the County.

107 **Community:** It was agreed that a public meeting will be held at 6.30 p.m. on 5th September 2007 in St Andrew's Hall to discuss the **Mereham appeal**, this must end by 7.30 p.m. when the Parish Council meeting will start.

The concrete base for the **bench** near the allotments is broken – the clerk was instructed to contact Alan Richardson regarding this.

The clerk was instructed to write to the County Council Highways Department regarding grass cutting along the **cycle way** from the roundabout into Witchford.

Following complaints from some local residents, it appears that **sewers** in some areas of the village have not been adopted by Anglian Water.

The clerk was asked to contact the County Highways Department regarding the possibility of large "**please drive slowly**" signs at the ends of the village.

108 **Wood :** Work took place last weekend.

109 **Youth** – The clerk has requested information from the Youth Club regarding changes to its structure. Information regarding funding has also been requested and a copy of the latest accounts. The Responsible Financial Officer has pointed out that sight of these accounts is necessary if money is to continue to be donated to the Youth Club.

110 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Holdsworth seconded by Councillor Field that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.

111 Date of next meeting: 5th September 2007 preceded by public meeting to discuss the Mereham appeal.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: