

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5th September, at 7.30 pm in St. Andrews Hall.

Present

Mr M Flack-Crane (in the chair)
Mr G Jellicoe
Mr I Allen
Mr B Colling
Mr N Cooper
Mr N Holdsworth
Mrs D Field
Mr J Carter
Mrs S Bromley-Allen
Mr C C' Cunha

Apologies: District Councillors G Wilson and P Wilson, County Councillor Hunt

- 112 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st August 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 113 In response to a query regarding the installation of large **please drive slowly** signs at both ends of the village, the County Council had responded that in Witchford there could be opportunities to enhance the gateway effect for traffic management reasons. They no longer have a discretionary budget for such things and would need to bid for specific funding and explained that Parish funding contributions would significantly increase chances of success. It was agreed that £2000 will be put into the next budget of the Parish Council for this purpose.
- 114 The County Council had advised that the cycle way **grass** is on their contractor's cutting programme.
- 115 Information from the District Council on Parish Remuneration Panel for Members' **Allowances** was noted. No Parishes had responded to consultation saying that they wanted to consider paying a parish basic allowance to Councillors, but some parishes replied that they wanted to be able to reimburse Councillors for travelling and subsistence when undertaking approved duties on behalf of the Parish. The Panel will commence its work in late August and East Cambridgeshire District Council will contact the Parish Council following publication of its report and recommendations.
- 116 Permission has been given by the District **Trees** Officer for work to be carried out on a horse chestnut tree at 4A Manor Court Road.
- 117 Councillor Holdsworth will attend the Annual General Meeting of Ely and District **Citizens Advice Bureau** on 14th September 2007 at 12.30 p.m.
- 118 Councillor Neil Cooper will attend the Ely Market Town **Transport Strategy** Meeting on 18th September 2007 at 6.00 p.m. at The Maltings. Councillor Allen will attend in his District Council role.
- 119 Information was noted from East Cambridgeshire District Council that following the adoption of the New Code of Conduct, members must complete a copy of the new Notification of Financial and Other **Interests** form by 28th September 2007.
- 120 **Report from District Councillor:** Councillor Allen gave some background of the recent decision by the District Council to change from the alternate weekly waste collection in Witchford and Bottisham and to revert to the previous collection regime with the addition of kerbside collection of some plastics. Some members were

concerned that this would lead to a reduction of recycling rates. East Cambridgeshire will be the only part of the County which does not have alternate week collections. Councillor Allen also explained the District Council's proposals for parking provision in Ely upon which consultation is currently taking place. He expressed the fear that changes to car parks in Ely could result in an increase in on-street parking. He advised that the District Council hope that parking will be decriminalized in this area within two years.

- 121 **County Councillor Hunt** had contacted the Parish Council to inform that he has arranged a meeting of the parishes he represents and officers of the County Council Highways Department at the Highways depot, Stirling Way at 7.00 p.m. on 17th October 2007. It was agreed that Councillor Allen and Councillor Cooper would attend this meeting.
- 122 **Planning**
07/00868/OUT – outline application for two new dwellings with access from Mills Lane – garden to 143 Main Street. Members discussed this application at length and were concerned that Mills Lane is a public footpath (not a byway). It was felt that long term users of this lane have a prescriptive right to drive along it but believed that this would not apply to new users. The Parish Council believes it owns Mills Lane and is in the process of attempting to register this. If planning permission were given then pedestrian access only along the footpath should be granted. The Parish Council requests that the Planning Officer consults with the County Council Rights of Way Officer regarding this application.
- 123 Members noted the external auditor's report on the annual return for the year ended 31st March 2007 which confirmed that the information contained was in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.
- 124 Following East Cambridgeshire District Council's adoption of the public open space in **Victoria Green** and work in the area upon which the Parish Council had not been consulted, a meeting has been held between the District Council and Parish Council regarding management issues. It has been agreed that the District Council will set up a small advisory group consisting of 3 local residents, District Councillor Allen, Parish Councillors Jellicoe and Field, Mr R Braund representing the Open Spaces Group and a Police Community Support Officer.
- 125 The **Play Equipment** steering group had hoped to arrange a exhibition for children at Rackham School to comment on various play equipment available. This has not proved possible and it is now hoped to arrange a similar exhibition at St Andrew's Hall.
- 126 Work on the **Parish Plan** is going according to schedule. The plan will be printed locally and will cost £567. It will be delivered with the Witchfordian but can be completed on line if preferred. Collectors will call at houses in the village to try and ensure a good return rate.
- 127 It was proposed by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor D'Cunha that a donation of £500 be made to the 1st Witchford **Scout** Group as a contribution towards the refurbishment of the toilet facilities in the Scout Hut. The 3rd October meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Scout Hut and will of course be open to the public as usual.
- 128 It was proposed by Councillor D'Cunha, seconded by Councillor Carter that a donation of £3000 be made to Witchford Playing Field Association as a contribution towards various items of work which needs to be carried out: new fencing, a fire alarm system, relamping of lights in the hall and new ceiling tiles to replace damaged ones. The donation will be made on condition that the **WPFA** provides a copy of its accounts to the Parish Council and advises the Parish Council of its long term strategy for development of the Club as a community resource.
- 129 The **budget** meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 24th October 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in St Andrew's Hall.

- 130 A quotation has now been received for additional street **lights** in the village. Outside 8 Marroway Lane £1146.55, outside 2 Marroway Lane £1146.55, to the side of 17 Marroway Lane £1664.21, opposite 2 Bedwell Hey Lane £1167.46 and near to Priors Close, Bedwell Hey Lane £2823.41. The The clerk will consult with residents regarding this and the matter will be on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Councillor Reports

- 131 **Street lights:** already reported.
- 132 **Play equipment:** already discussed.
- 133 **Grass cutting:** a meeting will be held at the Churchyard on 26th September 2007 at 4.00 p.m. with the Vicar, the grass cutting contractor, Councillors Brand and Jellicoe and the clerk.
- 134 **Open spaces:** the northern **rights of way** are still very badly rutted. Councillor Jellicoe, the P3 Coordinator, has met with the County Council. The County Council are discussing this with the Drainage Authority and investigating if a seasonal temporary restriction order could be put on the droves until the surface is stabilised. In the meantime, it is hoped that some of the surfaces can be disc harrowed.

The **safeway** commencing at Common Road alongside the A142 has still not been cut. Highways referred the matter to the Countryside Access Team but they state that the responsibility definitely lies with Highways. The clerk was instructed to contact Highways again regarding this.

Gary Westley of the County Council has stated that the countryside Access Team is unwilling for Sandpit Lane to be downgraded and the clerk was instructed to write to John Cooper to ascertain his reasons for recommending that the Parish Council's proposals cannot go forward. County Councillor Hunt to be sent a copy of the letter.

135 **Community**

The clerk has contacted Mr Richardson asking if it is possible to repair the concrete base for the bench near the allotments

A note is to be placed in the Witchfordian reminding residents that they should ensure that foliage on their property does not overhang the pavements causing an obstruction to other residents. A resident had complained regarding overhanging branches from a willow tree on the corner of Elm Close. It is thought that there is a tree preservation order on this tree and the clerk was instructed to contact the East Cambs. Trees Officer regarding this.

It was reported that two vehicles persistently park on the grass verge at Manor Road which obstructs the view of motorists and the clerk was instructed to contact East Cambridgeshire District Council about this.

Information had been received that EDF may be planning the recabing of overhead power wires in the not too distant future. When the Parish Council is advised of this work, a request will be made that thy be put underground.

Dates for the Witchford Festival next year – 27th June to 5th July 2008.

- 136 **Wood :** Nothing to report

- 137 **Youth** – The clerk has again 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. Mr Mick Oliver has asked to attend the Parish Council meeting on 3rd October 2007 and in the meantime the Responsible Financial Officer was instructed to withhold the cheque for the second instalment of the donation to the Youth Club which she would normally issue at the October meeting of the Parish Council.
- 138 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Holdsworth seconded by Councillor Allen that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.
- 139 Date of next meeting 3rd October 2007 in the Scout Hut. (Meeting to be attended by Mr Mick Oliver of the Youth Service).

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

Signed: Chairman

Date: