

Witchford Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs S M Monteith, 174 Main Street, Witchford Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2HT
Telephone 01353 665707
witchfordparishcouncil@eastcamb.gov.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5th December 2007 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Hall

Present

Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair)
Mr B Colling
Mrs S Bromley-Allen
Mr I Brand
Mr I Allen
Mrs D Field
Mr J Carter

Apologies: Mr M Flack-Crane, Mr N Holdsworth, Mr C D'Cunha, Mr N Cooper, County Councillor Hunt, District Councillors P Wilson

In Attendance: Mrs S Bowd, Responsible Financial Officer and District Councillor G Wilson

- 183 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th November 2007 and of the planning committee meeting held on 20th November 2007 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman.
- 184 Councillor Bromley-Allen declared a non-prejudicial interest in minute number 987/186.
- 185 The Responsible Financial Officer reported on the national 2.475% **pay** award for council staff with effect from 1.4.07.
- 186 A letter from **Dial-a-Ride** was noted asking for a donation. Councillor Bromley-Allen took no part in the discussion. Councillor Allen wondered at the levels of support from other parishes for this service and the clerk will ask for information about this. It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Carter that a donation of £350 be made.
- 187 A letter from the **St Andrew's Hall** Group was noted requesting a donation of £1000 towards updating and modernizing St Andrew's Hall. It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Colling that £420 be given for porch repairs. A further £580 will be given to pay for a hearing induction loop system subject to the provision of two quotes for this. The donation will need to be made in this financial year.
- 188 It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Colling that £200 be donated to the **Ely and District Citizens Advice Bureau**.
- 189 A letter from the Friends of Witchford **Rackham** was noted requesting a donation towards the replacement of the swimming pool at the school. It was proposed by Councillor Colling, seconded by Councillor Allen that £300 be donated in this financial year.
- 190 A report was noted from the Open Spaces Group requesting that the Parish Council purchase a power **scythe**. Three quotations had been received and it was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen a BSC Crusader 61L be purchased from Arthur Ibbett Ltd at a cost of £1145. The Open Spaces Group have had a demonstration of this machine and recommended purchase on the grounds of price and performance. At the same time a complete top knife assembly at a cost of £43 and a drive bracket at a cost of £14.60 will be purchased.

- 191 Discussion took place on the draft **budget** which had been the subject of a meeting held on 2nd October 2007. Views were put forward about the necessary percentage increase in the precept with Councillor Brand putting forward the view that the increase should be 4% to enable more funds to be available for community projects. It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Allen that the **precept** for the year 2008/2009 be set at £42,500 giving a 3% increase and taking the average band D equivalent to £51.84 from £50.77 last year.

Mrs Bowd then left the meeting.

- 192 A letter was noted from the County Council regarding **Manor Court Road** explaining that they believe that the site is not suitable for adoption by them. They have given Buckingham and Sparrow and East Cambridgeshire District Council a list of works required before the site would be suitable for adoption. Hereward Housing own the third area of the roadway. The clerk was instructed to contact the County Council again to enquire why no progress appears to have been made when the Parish Council was told in June 2006 that a meeting had been held with the various parties to agree what needed to be done to bring the road up to adoption standard; the site was surveyed and estimates prepared for the necessary work. The Parish Council was told that the matter had then been passed to the County Road Agreement Engineer.
- 193 A letter was noted from Witchford **Playing Field Association** thanking the Parish Council for the £3000 donation towards the new fencing and other improvements to their property.
- 194 A consultation document from the County Council regarding the introduction of the National Standard Planning Application form (**1APP**) was noted.
- 195 A letter was noted from the County Council regarding Ely **market town transport strategy** public consultation. Councillor Allen believed that one of these surveys was to be sent to each home in the area. Councillor Carter undertook to complete the survey on behalf of the Parish Council.

Reports from District Councillors

- 196 Councillor Wilson explained the background of the recent cuts in the East Cambridgeshire District Council funding provision to **ADEC**.
- 197 Councillor Wilson explained the progress of the **Mereham** Inquiry including the fact that the Inspector has required that proposals for the A10 be re-published as these have apparently changed during the course of the Inquiry.
- 198 Councillor Allen also reported on the **ADEC** matter. It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee explaining that this cut in funding impacts on Witchford where contributions towards arts projects (including the pantomime) have been received in the past and would be hoped for in the future.
- 199 Councillor Allen reported on regional discussions regarding provision for **traveller** and gypsy pitches. East Cambridgeshire District Council has now been advised that because of lack of provision by other districts, it will need to provide 65 extra pitches rather than the 35 extra pitches which it had broadly accepted. East Cambridgeshire District Council has written to say it will not provide more than 35 extra pitches as an increase would be of no benefit to either community.

200 Planning

The Parish Council's comments on the Local Development Framework core strategy amendment preferred options paper October 2007 were submitted within the necessary time frame.

07/01261/FUL – extension to the south side of the nave for small meetings, kitchenette and disabled toilet - **St Andrew's Church**. Councillor Allen was opposed to this extension which he believed was out of keeping with the existing Church. He believed that alternative provision of the necessary facilities would be possible, including extensions to the vicarage. Members expressed concern that it is potentially incongruous to build an extension on an ancient Church and the District Council will be asked to provide reassurance that the building will be appropriate.

07/01318/OUT – outline application for a single storey dwelling with garage – land to the rear of **14 Manor Close**. Members consider that the plans do not adequately show the site, they do not show adjacent existing properties and the outline of the building is not shown in relation to the plot. Therefore members are unable to comment on this application and are not content for determination to rest with the Planning Service.

07/01329/FUL – ground floor extension – **85 Main Street** – no objection.

07/01304/FUL – **202 Main Street** - construction of front boundary wall (part retrospective) – no objection.

- 201 The **Parish Remuneration Panel** report was considered. It was agreed that the Parish Council did not wish to pay their elected Councillors an allowance. It was agreed that elected or co-opted members could have travel and subsistence expenses reimbursed based on the existing East Cambridgeshire District Council agreement and rates (currently 40p per mile); any payment would be restricted to Parish Council duties conducted outside the immediate locality of the Parish. The clerk will publish a notice on the notice board summarizing the Parish Council's decision and stating that the Panel's report can be inspected by prior arrangement.
- 202 Councillor Carter was appointed as the Parish Council's representative on the West **Neighbourhood Panel** with Councillor Holdsworth acting as his deputy. There are ten villages in the patch and the first meeting will be on 28th January 2008 at The Glebe Sutton at 7.00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.
- 203 Councillor Jellicoe advised of the recent meeting of the **Victoria Green** advisory group. Some maintenance work will take place shortly and consultation will take place in the Witchfordian regarding possible installation and location of goalposts and improvements to the pond. Two benches will be installed and possibly new litter bins and dog waste bins. The Trees Officer is contacting local residents regarding the removal of the back row of trees close to houses on the south side of the site.
- 204 A consultation evening has been arranged for 23d January 2008 regarding the replacement of the play equipment at **Bedwell Hey playpark**. Councillor Flack-Crane has removed the damaged equipment. Some discussion took place as to whether or not the roundabout should be repaired and a price will be obtained for this. In the meantime, Councillor Allen will check the safety of the site following removal of the equipment.
- 205 Work on inputting responses to the **Parish Plan** is continuing. The Chairman of the Steering Group has reported directly to the Witchfordian on progress.
- 206 The notes of the **Woodland** group meeting held on 20th November 2007 were noted and approved.
- 207 The list of Parish Council **dates for 2008** was approved. **All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.**

Councillor Reports

- 208 **Street lights:** a faulty light opposite 23 Main Street was reported.
- 209 **Play equipment:** already discussed.

- 210 **Grass cutting:** nothing to report. Truelink had suggested that aeration of the playing fields would be useful but the Parish Council declined to fund this work.
- 211 **Open spaces:** work has started to cut the safeway on the A142 near Common Road.
- 212 **Community:** It was agreed to write to the County Council regarding the proposed household waste site to the east of the village pointing out that under the East Cambridgeshire local development framework proposals “area is not considered suitable for large scale employment expansion due to adverse visual impact and impact on character of nearby settlement”. The Parish Council has commented endorsing this view. In view of this, the clerk was instructed to write asking are the County revisiting possible locations for the proposed facility and are they still in discussion with the Church Commissioners regarding this land.
- 213 **Wood :** There is work session at the wood at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 9th December 2007. It has been reported that the occupiers of 123 Main Street have recently had some work done on trees on their property. In the course of this work their contractors appear to have been into the wood and cut down some trees/bushes. The clerk was instructed to write to them saying that if in future they need access onto the Parish Council land for work on trees on their property, then they should contact the clerk and advise the Parish Council of this.
- 214 **Youth:** Nothing to report.
- 215 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Brand seconded by Councillor Allen that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.
- 216 Date of next meeting 2nd January 2008 in St Andrew’s Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: