

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1st October 2008 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Hall

Present

Mr M Flack-Crane (in the chair)
Mr G Jellicoe
Mr I Allen
Mrs S Bromley-Allen
Mr A Shields
Mr N Cooper
Mr N Holdsworth
Mr B Colling

Apologies: Mr I Brand, Mrs D Field, County Councillor W Hunt

In Attendance: District Councillors P Wilson and G Wilson, Mr Andy Smith, Planning Enforcement Officer, East Cambridgeshire District Council

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, local residents addressed the meeting regarding planning enforcement issues.

- 149 Councillor Shields declared an interest in minute 164 as he is a Governor of Witchford Village College.
- 150 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd September 2008 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 151 Mr Andy Smith, the Planning **Enforcement** Officer of East Cambridgeshire District Council spoke regarding enforcement matters in general terms. He spoke particularly regarding general permitted development, material change of use and gates and boundaries. He took details of queries from some residents present regarding specific queries and undertook to get back to them with answers when he had been able to research the issues.
- Mr Smith left the meeting.
- 152 It was noted with regret that Parish Councillor Jimmy Carter had resigned because of pressure of other commitments. The Returning Officer has been informed and has now confirmed that the Parish Council may proceed **to fill the vacancy by co-option**. Accordingly a notice will be placed in the noticeboard asking for anybody interested to contact the clerk for further details and asking for completed applications by 24th October 2008. An announcement has also been sent to the Witchfordian regarding this.
- 153 An invitation from East Cambridgeshire Strategic Partnership to "The Role of Parish, Town and City Councils in Cambridgeshire Together and Local Strategic Partnership event" was noted.
- 154 A letter from Cambridgeshire ACRE was noted in which they state that Witchford has been identified by East Cambridgeshire District Council as a priority parish for a **housing needs survey**. This will involve them writing to all local residents and distributing a questionnaire for completion. The draft copy of the questionnaire will be sent to the Parish Council before it is distributed. Councillor Allen reported that he had been speaking with the Housing Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council who – contrary to the information given by Hereward –

was of the view that a development is likely to go ahead on the site to the east of **Barton Close**.

- 155 A complaint was noted from a local resident regarding some articles published in the **Witchfordian**. The Parish Council welcomes the fact that this letter will be published in the **Witchfordian**. The Parish Council does not have any editorial control of the **Witchfordian**. The publication is not funded by the Parish Council and is a completely independent publication. The Parish Council makes a donation to the **Witchfordian** each year as a contribution towards the publication of the minutes and other Parish Council articles. Some members thought that if advertisers and those who deliver the magazine were not happy with the content, then they have the opportunity to withdraw their support.
- 156 A letter was noted from a local resident regarding **flooding** at the junction of Bedwell Hey Lane and Main Street. He explained that he believed that new drains put in recently in Bedwell Hey Lane were part of the problem as gulleys on the end of the lane cannot cope. It is believed that Highways connected a storm drain to a foul sewer and there is a real problem in this area. Anglian Water's contractors had been on site this week and had carried out work to rectify the problem. The clerk was instructed to write to Anglian Water stating that we understand that work was carried out to unblock a drain and to request confirmation that the rest of the survey was satisfactory, referring particularly to the incorrect connection of the storm drain to the foul drain. The clerk was also instructed to refer them to flooding at the right hand grassed area in Barton Close where they have previously carried out work.
- 157 A letter was noted from East Cambridgeshire Parish Council regarding parish precepts for the year ending 31st March 2010. This letter will be deferred to the **budget** meeting to be held on 22nd October 2008.
- 158 A letter was noted from East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding **Speedwatch** stating that responses from local Parish Councils had been positive, indicating their willingness to fund the equipment. They now wrote stating that before committing public money for the purchase of equipment, sponsorship of the equipment should be considered and asking that if anybody is interested in such sponsorship, then they should contact East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 159 A consultation paper on the making and enforcement of bylaws was noted.

Report from District Councillors:

- 160 Councillor Pauline Wilson spoke regarding the Neighbourhood Panel. She will attend the meeting of East Cambridge District Council's Community Services Committee on 2nd October 2008. This is the meeting at which the Parish Council's Grant application for the balance of money to fund the **play equipment in Bedwell Hey Lane** should be discussed. The matter has been missed off the agenda by East Cambridgeshire District Council officers but the clerk has been assured that it will be discussed at the meeting and a letter sent on 3rd October regarding this matter. If this letter is received, then the project can move forward as the East Cambridgeshire District Council part of the funding for the project is the only part which has been delayed.
- 161 Councillor Gareth Wilson spoke regarding the County Council's Minerals and Waste Plan and expressed his grave concern regarding the **increased traffic** which will result from work at Block Fen. He explained the East Cambridgeshire District Council's auditors had not been happy with the way in which they administered **Section 106** agreements and that changes would need to be made. This was welcomed by the Parish Council who for many years have complained that this system is neither transparent nor fair. He confirmed that allowances for District Councillors had been increased and that this matter would in future be decided by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 162 Councillor Allen had attended a meeting of the Masterplan working party where a presentation had been made by business consultants. He explained that the Environment and Transport Committee had agreed to make an annual delivery of

black and clear bags to households at a cost of an additional £30000 for delivery of the bags. He had suggested that 4 brown sacks be issued to householders at the same time but this had been rejected. He confirmed that he had recently received many **complaints regarding refuse collection** including the fact that at times all waste which has been sorted by households is thrown into the same truck and replacement bags are not being left. The clerk was instructed to write to the Chief Executive of East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding these problems.

- 163 Councillor Allen spoke regarding the proposed household waste recycling centre and stated that officers within East Cambridgeshire District Council did not appear to be aware that the siting of this on **Angel Drove** was the recommendation of Witchford Parish Council and that the County Council had undertaken to investigate this. It was agreed that Councillor Allen and Councillor Jellicoe would draft a letter to the Chief Executive of East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding this matter.
- 164 Councillor Shields, as a Governor of the College, declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item and took no part in the discussion. A letter had been received from the Principal of **Witchford Village College** in response to the Parish Council's letter, explaining his reasons for the closure of the fitness suite which he stated will not affect the provision of other sports facilities for community usage – community usage of their sports halls and tennis courts will continue as before. He states that the fitness suite was losing approximately £20000 a year and the Governors had decided that they could not allow this to continue. Councillors Pauline and Gareth Wilson had attended a meeting with the Principal and had viewed the facility. The Principal had told them that discussions were on-going with two people who may be able to run the facility as a private fitness suite which would enable the children to use the equipment at other times; this would only work on an appointment type basis so that not more than eight people could visit at any one time. Councillor Jellicoe had received a letter from users of the facility and he passed this to Councillor Pauline Wilson who undertook to discuss the matters raised in it with the Principal of the Village College and to report back to the Parish Council.

Planning:

- 165 08/00887/FUL – two storey extension to form additional bedroom and en-suite, cloakroom, utility room and garage – 6 Barton Close – no objection
- 166 A new consultation document had been received regarding the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Preferred Options 2 Consultation. Councillor Jellicoe had studied this on behalf of the Parish Council and the clerk was instructed to respond with the Parish Council's concerns that no reference is made to the Parish Council's previously expressed concerns regarding the impact of the proposed HWRC upon the landscape, the pleasing entrance to the village and the loss of prime agricultural land nor to feasibility studies for alternative sites. The Parish Council finds it disingenuous that the County is implementing its decision to proceed with the **HWRC** at Witchford whilst purporting to be in a consultation process and urges a thorough feasibility study of alternative locations.
- 167 It was noted that a further **public exhibition** is to be held by the County Council on 15th October 2008 at the WPGA hall from 2.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. and the Parish Council hopes that residents will attend and make their views known to the County.
- 168 It was proposed by Councillor Holdsworth, seconded by Councillor Cooper that the quotation from East Cambridgeshire District Council of £300 for cutting the **hedge** between Elm Close and Common Road.
- 169 It was agreed that an additional cut be made to the **Churchyard** during week commencing 22nd September (because of the urgent nature of this, it had been discussed between the clerk and Councillor Brand and permission given prior to the meeting). Two further cuts were authorised, should these be necessary.

