

## Witchford Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 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 Holdsworth  
Mr B Colling  
Mr I Brand  
Mrs D Field  
Mr A Cardwell

**Apology:** Mr N Cooper

**In Attendance:** District Councillor G Wilson, County Councillor W Hunt, District Councillor P Wilson, Mrs S Bowd, Responsible Financial Officer for item 215 only.

A member of the public addressed the Council prior to the start of the meeting regarding his objections to the proposed Household Waste Recycling Centre

- 214 Councillor Shields declared a non-prejudicial interest in minute 225. Councillor Bromley-Allen declared a non-prejudicial interest in minutes 219 and 221.
- 215 Discussion took place on the draft **budget** which had been discussed at the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008. It was agreed that the play equipment reserve of £3000 should be amended to be a "paths project" reserve with a view to building up a fund to improve the path in **Grunty Fen Road** towards the junction with Main Street. It was further agreed that a meeting be arranged in the new year with other local parishes who contribute to the funding of the youth club. It was resolved that the precept be set at £42,100 for the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 compared with the precept for the current year of £42,500.
- 216 **Report from County Councillor:** Councillor Hunt circulated some information regarding his objections to the current **Mereham** proposals and invited parish councillors and members of the public to write to the Secretary of State with their objections. He stated that he believed the proposed **household waste recycling centre** should be in Angel Drove but he had a "gut feeling" that it would be on the site at the entrance to Witchford and stated that if it were to be sited here, then it should be a "showpiece" site. He described the continued increase in heavy goods **traffic** projected for the area. He stated that the **park and ride** facility at Milton is now open. (Councillor Hunt left the meeting).
- 217 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 218 A consultation document **Communities in Control** from the Department for Communities and Local Government was noted. Also information on the same subject from East Cambridgeshire District Council was noted.

- 219 The Ely and District **Citizens' Advice Bureau** had requested a donation. It was agreed that £200 be given
- 220 Comments from a local resident were noted regarding his view that the Parish Council should not provide financial support for the **Witchfordian**. It was reiterated that the **Witchfordian** is an 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 information and the Parish Council believes this is a cost effective way of communicating with residents of the village.
- 221 An invitation was received to the Ely and Soham **Dial-A-Ride's** Annual General Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Mrs Bromley-Allen will be attending this meeting as a Trustee and the clerk will represent the Parish Council.
- 222 The **Parish Path Partnership** application for 2009/2010 has been received and needs to be completed and returned by 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009. It was agreed that Councillor Jellicoe and the clerk will complete these papers on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 223 A letter was noted from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding planned improvements to the **byway network**. Some paths have been damaged in recent years as a result of encroachment by adjacent hedges and inappropriate use of motor vehicles. The byway from Long Causeway along the Catchwater Drain to Common Farm will be improved by the addition of extra road plainings and then the route will be kept permanently open to all user groups. It is intended to apply Traffic Regulation Orders to footpaths as follows: New Drove/Old Fen Drove, Grannys End Road/Old Fen Balk Road and Marroway Lane. These orders will prohibit motor vehicles (private rights will not be affected) during the winter months when ground conditions mean that significant damage is caused to the surface. To ensure that these conditions are complied with, gates will shortly be installed; these will be locked when the Orders are in force and opened at other times. New gates incorporate a gap to allow pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists unrestricted access all year. New Drove/Old Fen Drove will be widened by removing encroaching scrub to reclaim the full width of 10-12 m. The hedgerows and ditches along the edge of the byway must then be regularly maintained by the relevant landowner to stop further encroachment in accordance with the Single Farm Payment scheme and 1980 Highways Act.
- 224 It was agreed that Councillors Jellicoe and Allen would attend a meeting with representatives of the City of Ely Council and the County Council to discuss problems currently being experienced with the **roundabouts** on the A142 and A142/A10. Parish Councillors believe that without action the situation will deteriorate badly with the projected increases in traffic caused by mineral extraction at Block Fen, the Grovemere expansion and the possible siting of the proposed household waste recycling plant.
- 225 The 1<sup>st</sup> Witchford **Scout** Group had written requesting a donation to their funds towards cladding the hut. It was agreed that £500 be paid. It was noted that because of the present low payment they receive for the waste paper they collect, they may have a shortfall in their receipts this year and it was agreed that if this should prove to be the case, they provide details of this to the Parish Council, at which time a further donation would be considered. Parish Councillors commended Scouts for the work they put into raising funds

#### **Information from District Councillors**

- 226 Councillor Allen reported that **traffic** counts appeared to be being carried out on the A142. He reported on the Environment and Transport meeting of the District Council where problems had arisen with residents following the refusal of the Council to grant them parking permits. He reported that the District Council had received an amber performance indicator for its handling of waste recycling.

- 227 Councillor Pauline Wilson explained a meeting of a Leisure facilities working party which was discussing the provision of **leisure** facilities in the Ely area. A budget of £1.2 million had been in place for this but the meeting was told that this was likely to increase to £16 million. A consultation at a cost of £4000 had been approved for the study of the development of an all weather running track. Councillor Wilson explained that the Community Services Committee was facing reductions in the grants it would be able to give to organisations.
- 228 Councillor Gareth Wilson gave details of the Planning Committee which had met earlier in the day. He also highlighted projected problems with traffic as set out in minute 224. East Cambridgeshire District Council is a consultee on the planned extension to the Mepal Gravel Extraction area and he believed that they should request a condition requiring lorries to follow major routes. Witchford Parish Council has already written to the District Council requesting this action. Councillor Wilson believed that the best solution would be a bypass around Sutton but thought it was extremely unlikely that this would happen.

#### **Planning:**

- 229 08/010045/FUL – residential development of 5 affordable houses and associated external works, garages to north of **7 Manor Court Road**. A local resident spoke regarding this matter expressing concern about the layout of the pavement. It was agreed that in principle the Parish Council supported the application but would welcome use of the existing access road as per the existing orientation, which could free up space on the site for an additional property.
- 230 East Cambridgeshire Submission Core Strategy and Proposals Map – site allocation and boundary change representations (reg 32) consultation. During the last round of **Local Development Framework** public consultations, a number of representations were made by third parties who sought the inclusion of additional, alternative or amended sites for development or proposed changes to boundaries. A six week consultation is taking place on this which will end on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009. It was agreed that a small working group of Councillors Flack-Crane, Jellicoe, Allen and Holdsworth would be set up to make comments on behalf of the Parish Council. It was agreed that Mr Jimmy Carter would be co-opted to this group in view of his professional expertise.
- 231 E/03009/08/CC – East Cambridgeshire Local **Recycling Centre** (Witchford) and associated works. Land off Stirling Way, Witchford Road, Ely. Two exhibitions will be held by the County regarding their proposals – one in Witchford Village Hall between 5.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008. Anybody is entitled to comment on the application. Concerns were again expressed at the procedures the County have adopted with this application. It was felt that a proper site selection process did not take place at the appropriate time. It was agreed that a small working group of Councillors Flack-Crane, Jellicoe, Allen and Holdsworth would be set up to make comments on behalf of the Parish Council. It was agreed that Mr Jimmy Carter would be co-opted to this group in view of his professional expertise.
- 232 Some discussion took place on a gate being installed on **Old Scenes** where a gate was in place some time ago. Grovemere rent the herbage on this area from the Parish Council. It was believed that it would be a sensible plan to regulate access although of course all local landowners would be able to gain access – a kissing gate would also be installed. Mr David Brand of Grovemere had agreed to contribute to the cost of the gates and the Parish Council would arrange installation. Those requiring access would be able to have a key to the gate. It was agreed that the clerk should contact Mr Brand accepting his offer and asking him to liaise with Councillor Allen regarding this matter.
- 233 Dates for Parish Council meetings in 2009 were approved. Meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m. and are open to the public.

- 234 All faulty **street lights** have been reported. It seems to be much darker in the area around 23 Main Street and it is thought that a street light – possibly on a pole - may have been removed when the electric overhead wires were replaced. The clerk will check with the County Council regarding this.
- 235 Work on the new play area in **Bedwell Hey Lane** should start on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and it is hoped it will be completed by Christmas.
- 236 It was reported that **Greys Coaches** have been seen driving through the village which is against the conditions of the planning consent for their depot. The clerk will check with the Enforcement Officer.
- 237 It was noted that **white lines** have been repainted in the village. Some members felt that it is preferable not to have central white lines in roads as this has been proved to be an effective way of reducing vehicle speed. The clerk will contact the County Council regarding their thoughts on allowing the central white lines to fade.
- 238 It was reported that some people are picking up **dog waste** in plastic bags and hanging this on shrubs in the area of Sparrowhawk Way in Sandpit Lane. Signs will be produced asking people to stop this practice. If it continues then thought will be given to installing an additional dog bin as near as possible to the area but it is not possible to site a dog bin near to the problem as it could not be emptied by the contractors who need road access.
- 239 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Holdsworth, seconded by Councillor Colling that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.
- 240 Date of next meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
***All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.***

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

Signed: ..... Chairman

Date: .....