

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1st July 2009 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Church

Present: Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair), Mr M Flack-Crane, Mr I Allen, Mrs S Bromley-Allen, Mr B Colling, Mr I Brand, Mrs D Field, Mr A Shields, Mr H Palmer

In Attendance: County Councillor W Hunt, District Councillors G and P Wilson. Mr A Howe, Ms C Shilton of ACRE, Mr N Griffin of Cambridge Housing and Mr O Cook of East Cambridgeshire District Council

- 64 Mrs L Langley and Mr G Barber were **co-opted** to fill the vacancies on the Parish Council and duly signed the declarations of acceptance of office
- 65 Councillor Palmer declared an interest in minute number 80.
- 66 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd June 2009 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 67 Ms Shilton of ACRE presented the results of the recent **Housing Needs Survey** which ACRE carried out in Witchford. The aim of the survey was to determine the existing and future levels of affordable housing need in the village. Under a traditional points-based allocation system, the local council assesses an applicant's housing needs, determines their priority and makes an offer of appropriate accommodation to the household with the highest number of points. On rural exception sites, applicants must prove a local connection through family or work. Ms Shilton explained that the survey showed that there appear to be 23 households in need of affordable housing within the next two years. It is unlikely that the Housing Association would build that number of houses but would perhaps try to build 12 with the possibility of a second phase. At present, the Housing Association would intend that the houses be for rent and it was confirmed that the "right to buy" would not apply to any such houses. Parish Councillors stressed that people in need of accommodation must be proactive in ensuring they are on the housing register. The Housing Association will now investigate possible sites for development.
- 68 **Report from County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt reported on the development control meeting he had attended at Shire Hall when the proposed 17 year extension to the **Grunty Fen landfill site** was discussed. He had suggested a three year extension at the end of which time a further extension could be discussed. He had stressed that road improvements would be necessary around the site. (This meeting was deferred and will now take place on 9th July). He explained his work against the possible development of **Mereham**. He reported on a recent meeting he had attended regarding the Ely Masterplan when he called for a referendum on the matter. He again explained his opposition to the closing of **laybys** at Ely High Bridge and between Stuntney and Soham. He reported on the **Transport Innovation Fund** and stated that the Commission would be reporting back in July. Mr Hunt has called for a referendum on this matter. He explained that the **guided bus** project was making good progress.

69 **Report from District Councillors**

- Councillor Pauline Wilson explained current progress on the possible new **leisure** centre on the A10 near the Little Downham junction. She explained that £350000 had been allocated to architects' fees/consultants. The current management contract for the Paradise centre had been extended so that this will run until the completion of the proposed new facility.
- 70 Councillor Gareth Wilson spoke of the latest information on Section 106 monies. He stated that £350,000 had been allocated for drawings etc of the proposed **country park** in Ely. He expressed his concern at the current state of finances within East Cambridgeshire District Council and he stated that a **loss** of £500,000 had been made over the past year which the District Council will now have to take from reserves.
- 71 Councillor Allen reiterated his view that building the new **leisure facility** on the "wrong side" of the A10 was not a sensible proposition. He stated that a recent press story appeared which welcomed the decision to have 3000 new houses in Ely rather than the 5000 originally suggested. He believed that no decision has been made in this matter and that some members of the **Ely Masterplan** working party are still pushing for the additional 5000 houses. Councillor Allen again expressed his concern about **traffic congestion** in the area. He explained that at a recent Environment and Transport meeting it had emerged that East Cambridgeshire District Council were failing to meet national indicators on **landfill/recycling** targets and that there were likely to be financial penalties for this.
- 72 Mr Andy Howe explained progress with the **Parish Plan** and presented the Actions Progress Log for May 2009. Mr Howe will send an up-to-date report on this to the Witchfordian. The Chairman thanked Mr Howe and the Parish Plan team for their on-going work. Some discussion took place regarding **litter** in the village and the clerk was instructed to write to the Village College asking them to address this matter with their students.
- 73 A Steering Group has been set up to progress work on the **Facilities Audit**. Mr Howe has agreed to Chair this group. He explained that seven consultants had been approached regarding this work. Three had replied with their proposals. The Steering Group preferred the bid by Muse Developments and satisfactory references had been received. The cost of this work would be £3220 and Muse are able to start work in July. The work was funded by a grant of £3,000 from East Cambridgeshire District Council with the balance of up to £400 being paid by the Parish Council. It was resolved that Muse be appointed to carry out this work.
- 74 A letter was noted from the Chief Executive of East Cambridgeshire District Council confirming that the **section 106** allocation for Witchford is £54,500. This can be utilised for community and/or open space projects either as 100% funding or as match funding for externally grant aided projects. It is intended that the results of the facilities audit will inform the Parish Council's decisions in this matter.
- 75 Anglian Water had responded to the Parish Council's further enquiries regarding the water **leak in Barton Close**. They again say that there is no trace of chlorine in the water and no noise can be heard in any of their fittings although the chambers of the sluice valve and stop taps were full of water. This indicates to them that there is no problem with their pipes. They say that they still suspect that it is either a land drainage fault or natural spring water.

Planning

- 76 A note from the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer of the District Council regarding probity in planning was noted.

- 77 09/00374/FUL – two storey extension to side and rear – **1 Victoria Green**. Plus amended plans giving reduction in size of 1st floor of rear extension and removal of window in side elevation of side extension. A letter from neighbours was read to the meeting. No objection – noted comments from neighbours and that amendments appear to have addressed their concerns, even if not in total.
- 78 09/00432/FUL – two storey extension to side and rear and single story to rear – **29 Main Street** – revised description: two storey side and rear extensions, single storey to rear and detached garage. Concerns regarding: (a) Mature willow tree in garden, Parish Council would like confirmation that this will be retained. (b) Concerns that new work should cause minimum impact and that style and materials are appropriate. (c) Concerns regarding percentage increase in development – Parish Council would like confirmation that proposals do not infringe the “25%” rule.

Councillor Shield left the meeting.

- 79 09/00408/FUL – two storey rear extension – **48 Manor Court Road**. No objection.
- 80 Councillor Palmer declared an interest in this item and left the room during discussions. It was noted that the County Council Development Control meeting at which the proposed **Housing Waste Recycling Centre** and the extension of the life of the Grunty Fen **landfill site** will be discussed will be at 1.30 p.m. on 9th July 2009 at the Kreis Vierson Room at Shire Hall. Councillors Jellicoe and Allen will speak at the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council. The meeting is open to the public and some other Parish Councillors will attend.
- 81 It was agreed that Councillor Langley and Councillor Jellicoe will join the Parish Council **Youth Group** and that Councillor Barber will join Councillors Bromley-Allen and Field as the Parish Council’s representatives on the **Witchford Playing Field** Association.
- 82 A faulty street light was reported and this information will be passed to the County Council.
- 83 Glass bottles had been broken in the Common Road playpark. The glass has now been removed.
- 84 It was agreed that a **picnic bench** can be purchased for the Bedwell Hey playpark at a cost of £214 provided this is approved by the Witchford Playing Fields Association committee. Councillor Field will progress this matter.
- 85 The Chairman reported on a meeting he recently attended which was organised by the Countryside Access Team to introduce a new biodiversity scheme.
- 86 Information has been received that that fish have been dumped in the **pond** on Victoria Green and also a terrapin has been put in the pond in Sandpit Drove. It was stressed that this should not take place. A local resident has volunteered to write to the Witchfordian regarding this.
- 87 It was reported that the hedge at **New Drove** has been cut back to the wire fence. The clerk was instructed to check with the County Council that their enforcement action has now been completed.
- 88 A complaint was received about **dogs fouling** in Bedwell Hey Lane. It was thought that dogs belonging to visitors recently staying in caravans on the playing fields could be responsible. The WPPFA may be able to put a clause in letters sent confirming bookings, reminding people about dog waste.
- 89 The pavement outside **59 Main Street** has dropped and the clerk was instructed to contact the Highways Department regarding this.

- 90 The Meadow Mow in the **Millennium Wood** took place recently. The Parish Council thanks Tom Jellicoe and members of the Scout Group for their help.
- 91 The **Youth Club** will from September change its meeting night to Friday. A meeting will be held shortly to discuss a service level agreement for funding the Youth Club.
- 92 The Parish Council hoped that the **Speedwatch** team would shortly be able to carry out another check.
- 93 It was agreed that Councillor Allen would speak to Grovemere regarding the proposed gate for **Old Scenes**, particularly in the light of recent fly-tipping in the area.
- 94 It was proposed by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Flack-Crane that the bank reconciliation and budget review be noted and that the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.
- 95 The next Parish Council meeting will be on 5th August 2009.
Appraisals 9th September 2009.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: