

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2009 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Church

Present: Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair), Mr I Allen, Mrs D Field, Mrs L Langley, Mr H Palmer, Mrs S Bromley-Allen, Mr G Barber, Mr I Brand

Apology: Mr A Shields, Mrs P Wilson,

In attendance: Mr G Wilson, Mr W Hunt

- 139 There were declarations of personal interest in minute number 147 by the Chairman, Councillors Field and Allen and the clerk who are members of the Open Spaces Group and of a prejudicial interest in minute number 148 by Councillor Palmer.
- 140 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd September 2009 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman.
- 141 Councillors Flack-Crane and Colling have resigned from the Parish Council. The Parish Council expressed its thanks to both of them for their service - Malcolm Flack-Crane recently served as Chairman for three years. The closing date for applications for co-option to one vacancy is 21st October 2009 and notice of the second vacancy is still at the stage of advertisement.

Report from District Councillors

- 142 Councillor Gareth Wilson spoke about a recent East Cambridgeshire Planning Committee at which it was agreed that the District would object to the County's planning application for mobile plant consisting of a crusher, screener and asphalt recycler on the Highways Department site. He spoke of the financial problems which are likely to affect the District Council but mentioned that members allowances had recently been increased by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 143 Councillor Allen stated that as District Councillor he had requested that the planning application for land to the south of Ward Way be called in and decided by a full East Cambridgeshire Planning Committee. He explained that the Ely Masterplan is now open for consultation and he urged everybody to comment on this. Once again, he reiterated his view that it was necessary to read all the backing documents and spoke of the implications for traffic in the District. He expressed his view that East Cambridgeshire District Council should not carry out expensive projects such as the proposed sports centre in the current economic climate and feared that if car park charges are introduced, the revenue from these would be used in the general East Cambridgeshire District Council account.

Report from County Councillor

- 144 Councillor Hunt explained that he had objected to the County's application for the mobile crusher and has asked that this be deferred until the County's December development control committee. He explained that the County Council would have difficulty with finances in the next few years. He stated that the guided bus would be running this year. He felt that the Mereham proposals were almost at an end with the County Council stating that they were not worthy of consideration. He spoke regarding the Transport Innovation Fund under which central government provides the County with funds; the County had proposed that a railway station be built at Chesterton which would reduce congestion.

- 145 It was agreed that Councillor Allen on behalf of the Parish Council would arrange the firework event for the Village Festival to be held from 16th to 24th July 2010. The Parish Council will pay up to £700 for the fireworks.
- 146 A letter was noted from the District Council regarding invitations for applications for grants for biodiversity and conservation projects in East Cambridgeshire. The Open Spaces Group had been consulted on this and has proposed three projects. Option 1 is Sandpit Drove conservation area meadow creation; option 2 is pond on Manor Road/Byways 10 and 11 and option 3 is work on the Old Recreation Ground (the Parish Council own this land but it would be subject to a suitable agreement with the local resident who has herbage rights on the land). It was thought that on-going maintenance costs on these would be minimal and it was agreed that the Parish Council would put forward these three grant requests.
- 147 Victim Support had requested a donation to support their work. It was agreed that £100 be donated.
- 148 Comments were requested by the County Council to an order prohibiting traffic turning right from Witchford Road into Stirling Way. They state that the layout of the junction is due to be adjusted in order to better facilitate access to the new waste recycling centre. Councillor Palmer who had declared a prejudicial interest in this item, spoke of his anxieties regarding the safety of these proposals; he has no objection to the prohibiting of right turns but is concerned about the method of achieving this. Councillor Palmer left the room and took no part in discussions. It was agreed that the Parish Council supports in principle the prohibition of right turns in this location. However they prefer that any change of road alignment is to the south rather than to the north and would take exception if development went any further than shown in the drawings. They are concerned about possible safety implications because of the drop from the footpath and if it is decided to proceed then they consider there must be a pedestrian barrier.
- 149 It was agreed that Councillor Bromley-Allen would represent the Parish Council at the AGM of the Ely and District Citizens' Advice Bureau.
- 150 A letter was noted from the Youth Club asking for £158 to buy some musical equipment for the group. It was agreed that this money could be vired from the money set aside for Youth Club transport costs.
- 151 **Planning**
- Ely Masterplan – draft for consultation. It was agreed that a working party would meet to discuss and report on this matter: Councillors Jellicoe, Langley, Barber and Field. The first meeting would be on 15th October 2009 and the second on 22nd October 2009.
- 152 09/00640/FUL – change of use from agricultural land to equestrian/agricultural land, construction of 5 no stables, tack room and hay store and ménage – land south of 41 Ward Way. A design and access statement and a letter of objection from local residents had been circulated with the agenda. The applicants spoke in support of their application and one local resident spoke against. Councillor Allen has requested that the application be discussed by the Planning Committee of the District Council and has requested that they should clarify their policy regarding change of use from agricultural to equestrian. The Parish Council agreed the following comments to the District Council: the site is outside the development envelope; no external lighting is shown on the plans and the Parish Council would wish to be consulted if any were proposed; there is no objection in principle to horses on the site but the buildings should be in a less intrusive position; any approval should clearly be for personal and not commercial use; means of access to the site to be clarified. Mills Lane is not a public right of way for vehicles, it is a footpath. The Chairman stated that it is possible that this access can be used only for those with a prescriptive right for agricultural use or where a licence has been granted.

Councillor Langley left the meeting.

- 153 09/00677/OUT – outline application for a detached 2 storey dwelling – land adjacent to 17 Common Road. No objection in principle but the access as shown crosses high-ways land and also common land which may require a licence from the Parish Council. It was agreed to write to the applicant pointing out that the Parish Council could require a fee for the crossing of the common land and that she would be advised to take legal advice on this matter.
- 154 09/00714/FUL – construction of new artificial grass sports pitch with perimeter ball-stop fencing and floodlights and pedestrian pathway – Witchford Village College. Outside development envelope; the Parish Council has concerns regarding the impact of lighting on wildlife in the area of Sandpit Lane and requests an environmental impact statement. Ask for confirmation that residents of Cathedral View Park and other local residents been invited to comment.
- 155 Copies of the Parish Council expense form were circulated for use as appropriate.
- 156 The clerk reported on the possible provision of additional allotments in the village. It was agreed to put a note in the Witchfordian asking for residents to express their interest. It was further agreed to set up a working party to progress this matter consisting of Councillors Brand, Field and Palmer. The clerk will also ask if any member of the public would wish to be co-opted onto this working party.
- 157 The revised Equal Opportunities Policy was adopted.
- 158 The notes of the woodland group meeting held on 22nd September 2009 were noted and approved.
- 159 The notes of the personnel working party held on 9th September 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman. It was resolved that if necessary, with effect from 5th October 2009 because of the change of refuse collection to Monday, one of the handy-woman's hours will be paid at time and a half to compensate her for working at an un-social hour if it becomes necessary for her to work on Sundays.
- 160 It was noted that the Alderforth open space area is now closed.
- 161 It was noted that a considerable amount of flytipping of garden waste is taking place in byway 2 – between Manor Court Road and the Common. The clerk was asked to put a note in the Witchfordian about this.
- 162 Councillor Jellicoe reported that the Witchford north Catchwater drove has been levelled and grading with road planings has started.
- 163 It was noted that following work on ditches, slub has been deposited on the drove at Granny's End.
- 164 It was reported that an overhanging branch from a eucalyptus tree is causing a hazard to pedestrians on the link between Meadow Close and Manor Court Road. The clerk was instructed to write to the occupants.
- 165 It was reported that two horse chestnut trees on the open space in Elm Close are causing concern and the clerk was instructed to contact the East Cambridgeshire District Council tree warden regarding this. The parish tree warden would be kept informed.
- 166 It was proposed by Councillor Barber, seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen that the bank reconciliation and the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.
- 167 The next Parish Council meeting will be on 4th November 2009.
Budget meeting: 21st October 2009.

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: