

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th January 2010 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Hall

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

Apologies: Mr I Brand, Mrs P Wilson, Mr G Wilson

In attendance: Mr W Hunt

- 220 There were no declarations of interest.
- 221 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd December 2009 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman. An amendment was made to the venue to add the word "Hall" for Parish Council meetings held between and including 4th February 2009 and 4th November 2009.
- 222 The County is currently consulting on a draft advisory **freight map** – it was agreed that the Parish Council would recommend that the A1123 and A1421 should not be included as strategic routes.
- 223 The Head Teacher of Rackham School had responded to the Parish Council's recent approach to the County Council regarding a dedicated **bus bay** and single yellow line on the north side of the road in the area of the school explaining that he has also been discussing this matter with the County Council. It was agreed that Councillor Allen would arrange a meeting with Mr Wales to formulate a joint approach to the County Council on improving safety in the area of Rackham School.
- 224 A letter was noted from the **Witchford Schools Cluster** asking for a donation of £271 towards the cost of children from Rackham School attending a careers event with fourteen other schools at the City of Ely Community College. It was thought that a number of the 42 children in the appropriate age group at Rackham School were not from Witchford and that since this is a County Council initiative, the County Council should fund the event.
- 225 A letter was noted from the County Council asking if the Parish Council would wish to purchase **salt bins** for the area at a cost of £100 per bin. The salt bins would be provided on the basis that members of the public or local authority employees would spread the salt on a voluntary basis and that the County Council would not accept any liability for this activity. The clerk was instructed to remind the County Council that the responsibility for highways lies with them and that the Parish Council would only take part in such an initiative if the County Council agreed to indemnify them for any liability. The clerk was also instructed to pass onto the County complaints which have recently been received regarding the state of pavements because of the recent snow and ice.
- 226 East Cambridgeshire District Council is inviting Parish Councils and other landowners to express an interest in participating in a new project to create permanent **woodlands** across the district. To be considered for this programme, potential locations must be fully accessible to the public through the public rights of way or with long-term tenured permissive access for 80 or 100 years. The woodland would then be created by selling carbon sequestration rights (carbon credits) to local businesses and individuals. It was agreed to pass this letter to the Open Spaces Group and that the clerk would put a note in the Witchfordian regarding this.

- 227 East Cambridgeshire District Council intends to carry out **training** relating to the Parish Council Code of Conduct. The clerk will advise them of dates suitable for Parish Councillors.

Report from County Councillor

- 228 Councillor Hunt explained the current financial position of the County Council and said that consultants had been employed to telephone members of the public for in-depth interviews asking where they would like cash spent and where saved. It was hoped that this would inform the decision making processes of the County. He explained that the County is working hard to increase bus usage and that three new libraries have been opened. He stated that he continued to be against congestion charging in Cambridge and to any increase in HCV traffic through villages. He discussed progress with the Donarbon facility and agreed to bring some information regarding their operations to the April meeting of the Parish Council. In answer to a question he stated that he believed that education is necessary to increase recycling rates in East Cambridgeshire which is the worst performing District in the County. He confirmed his opposition to housing growth in the County without infrastructure with the possible exception of affordable housing. He answered questions regarding progress with the guided bus project and stated that £86 million was received from central Government for this and the cost was likely to be £119 million, leaving a shortfall of £33 million which it was hoped would eventually be funded by section 106 receipts from the building of Northstowe but in the meantime would need to be found by the County. He stated that the relationship between the contractor and the County Council was not ideal and that the County would not accept the handover until they were sure that everything was right: there was a snagging list but, as far as he was aware, nothing major to stop the hand-over shortly taking place.

Report from District Councillor

- 229 Councillor Allen reported on the ongoing financial problems within East Cambridgeshire District Council and stated that he had heard that it was possible that East Cambridgeshire District Council would be removing bottle banks and stopping doorstep plastic recycling collections in an effort to save money. He explained that an external financial consultant had been brought into the District Council and that the Chief Executive was now back at work following his period of illness. Councillor Allen was concerned that they appear to be going ahead with expensive projects such as the leisure centre and country park whilst at the same time attempting to make £2.5 million savings by the end of 2011. Councillor Allen was concerned that new planning guidance appears to refer to leisure centres and other facilities being kept in town centres whereas it is planned to move the proposed leisure centre to the Downham Road site, across the A10. He noted that a new retail furniture shop had opened on the Grove-mere Business Park in an area which as far as he was aware was not classed as a retail area.
- 230 The first meeting of the household waste recycling centre liaison group had taken place and Councillor Hunt had been appointed Chairman. Councillor Palmer explained that the County were considering reducing the size of the building by 30m and also reducing the size of the road outside the building. Parish Councillors were concerned that the length of stacking roads should not be reduced.

- 231 Councillor Jellicoe reported on a planning meeting he had attended at the County Council where permission was granted for the use of a crusher and other recycling plant on the Highways site at Stirling Way – one condition applied was that screening landscaping is provided to the western side of the depot. Their Director of Minerals and Waste had stated that there were no further waste or recycling processes envisaged in the foreseeable future at the Stirling Way site. In view of this, it was agreed that the Parish Council representatives on the HWRC liaison group ask the group to request amendment of the emerging Cambridge and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan Preferred Options, to show the footprint of the site shown in the plan as that of the recycling centre and highways depot only. The next meeting is on 25th January 2010.

Planning

- 232 09/000909/FUL – change of use of land from residential curtilage to extension of residential mobile home park with associated works to access road – White Cottage and Cathedral View Park Mobile Home Park, Manor Road. No objection in principle but plans do not show correct site boundaries and the matter of encroachment on the eastern boundary into the byway is still not resolved.
- 233 It was noted that the Core Strategy and Proposals Map parts of the Local Development Framework have been adopted by East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 234 Councillors Barber and Field reported that work continues on the Village Hall Project – a further meeting will be held in two weeks.
- 235 The East Cambridgeshire District Council Waste Contract Service Standards were noted. It was further noted that the contractors should leave boxes upside down to show they have been emptied and brown sacks should be placed underneath whereas bags are invariably left to be blown around. The clerk was instructed to report this to the District Council.
- 236 Notes of the Parish Council allotments working party were noted. The next meeting will be held on 27th January 2010.
- 237 The clerk was asked to book the following training: Councillor Langley “Councillor Professional Development Stage 1” on 21st April 2010; and three places on an allotments course on 6th March 2010.
- 238 Seven tenders were sent out for the grass cutting contract to run for three years from 1st April 2010. Two tenders were returned and opened by the Chairman and clerk on 5th January 2010. An analysis of these was circulated at the meeting. In view of the fact the Truelink bid was substantially cheaper and the company has worked well with the Parish Council for many years, it was proposed by Councillor Barber, seconded by Councillor Allen that the tender from Truelink be accepted.
- 239 Faulty street lights were reported and the clerk will contact the County regarding these.
- 240 The Chairman thanked Councillor King for providing a five mile route for a memorial walk on 29th December 2009 in memory of a local boy who died in an accident some months ago. He also thanked Councillor Field and the clerk for attending the walk.

- 241 Complaints have been received regarding householders allowing gravel from their property to encroach onto pavements causing hazard to pedestrians. Although the County Council Highways Department is responsible for pavements, the clerk was asked to write a note for the Witchfordian reminding householders of their responsibility. Various complaints have been received regarding snow and ice on pavements during the recent bad weather. It was again emphasised that the County Council is responsible for pavements and the concerns of residents have been passed onto them.
- 242 An oak tree was planted in the Millennium Wood in December to mark the 10th anniversary of the wood.
- 243 With the guidance of the Parish Tree Warden, some branches were pruned from a tree near the junction of Granta Close and Main Street to improve visibility.
- 244 The next Neighbourhood Panel meeting will be held on 25th January 2010 at Little Thetford at 7.00 p.m.
- 245 Overgrowth of the hedge to the north side of Field End was reported. This is the responsibility of East Cambridgeshire District Council and the clerk will once again report it to them.
- 246 It was proposed by Councillor Barber, seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen that the bank reconciliation, budget review and the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.
- 247 The next Parish Council meeting will be on 3rd February 2010.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

Signed: Chairman

Date: