

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th April 2010 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Hall

Present: Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair), Mr I Allen, Mr H Palmer, Mrs S Bromley-Allen, Mr T King, Mr G Matthias, Mrs D Field, Mr G Barber, Mr A Shields, Mr I Brand

Apologies: Mr G Wilson, Mrs P Wilson

In attendance: Mr W Hunt

Not present: Mrs L Langley

- 312 Mr G Barber declared a prejudicial interest minute 317. Mr G Barber, Mrs S Bromley Allen and Mrs S Field declared personal interests in item 324.
- 313 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd March 2010 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman with the amendment of 16 Barton Close to 15 Barton Close in minute 297.
- 314 A letter was noted from the County Council confirming that they do not intend to carry forward their plans for centres for mass **vaccination** against swine flu at this time.
- 315 East Cambridgeshire District Council has responded to the Parish Council's concerns regarding vehicles parking on the grass area in **Manor Close**. They state that they have put up signs clearly stating that parking is not allowed and have also in the past sent out letters to residents asking them not to park on the grass. They state that will ask their Parks and Gardens Team to assess the condition of the grass at a later date.
- 316 East Cambridgeshire District Council had responded to the Parish Council's objections regarding the proposed sale by them of the area of land used as a car park at the entrance to **Victoria Green**. They state that their Asset Management Committee resolved to sell the land on 28th April 2009. They state that Mr Wan has confirmed that he is happy for the Parish Council's noticeboard and interpretation board to remain in place. They state that in addition to the covenant requiring the purchaser to use the area only as a car park, a further covenant will be inserted concerning the maintenance of the land to ensure that the District Council can at any time enforce this if the area were to fall into disrepair. They state that following the Parish Council's earlier objections, the purchaser had asked the District Council to offer the front piece (where the noticeboards) are to the Parish Council but the clerk had pointed out to them in a telephone conversation that it was unlikely that the Parish Council would consider buying something which they considered already belonged to the village. They state that they have assurances from the purchasers that they intend that public access to the car park will remain as at present although they may consider inserting security gates at the front of the car park to prevent overnight parking and offer some additional security to their premises. Councillor Allen has taken original drawings of the area into the Chief Executive of the District Council – these clearly show the whole of the Victoria Green open space provision under the section 106 agreement. The actual area of the car park in question was later shown as "parking for village amenities" and was intended to replace parking in the area lost because of development. The clerk was instructed to again write to the District Council objecting to this sale; challenging the fact that the land can be sold, bearing in mind the history of its acquisition; complaining that no consultation took place with the Parish Council; stating that the Parish Council does not believe that their Asset Management Committee was aware of the full facts when making their decision; asking that the matter be referred back to this committee with a full report; and asking for confirmation that they do not intend to sell any more of this land, the whole of which was acquired under section 106 agreements for the benefit of the village.

- 317 it was resolved to donate £100 to **Care and Repair** East Cambridgeshire Ltd. (Councillor Barber declared a prejudicial interest in this item and took no part in the discussion).
- 318 **Report from County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt reported on progress repairing pot-holes in the area. He gave an update on progress with the guided busway which he hoped would be opened in the summer. He spoke of the withdrawal of the Transport Innovation Fund and a new fund from the Government, The Urban Challenge Fund, to which the County Council have put in a bid to include a new railway station at Chester-ton. He spoke of the proposed new secondary school in Littleport and the County's new social care plans which he supported. He expressed his concern regarding the road infrastructure around Ely and reiterated his view that the infrastructure should come before housing growth. The County Council had expressed concern at the cost of road improvements. Without new jobs, he believes Ely will become more of a dormitory with subsequent, increasing use of the A10. He spoke of the upgrading of the Felixstowe to the Midlands railway line which he believes will lead to extensive closures of the Ely level crossing. He confirmed that he is now the Chairman of the Liaison Committee of the household waste recycling centre.
- 319 **Report from District Councillor** – Councillor Allen explained that it seemed likely that the District Council was intending to change to a Cabinet rather than Committee constitution which he believed was not in the best interests of local democracy. He confirmed that an officer of the County Council had stated that there would be no possibility of funding for a southern bypass in Ely for at least ten years and he believed that East Cambridgeshire District Council should now be looking for alternative solutions to the traffic problems in the area.

Planning

- 320 09/00829/FUL – two storey extension, demolishing the current garage, building a dining room at the rear with two bedrooms and a shower room above – **15 Barton Close**. No objection but draw attention to the fact that the eaves will overhang the boundary.
- 321 10/000195/FUL – single storey extension to the side of the existing dwelling – **37 Common Road**. Concerns regarding tree preservation order on willow tree – believe TPO exists – request Trees Officer visits the site. Ask planners to check if proposals would mean that property is then increased by more than 25% of original.
- 322 10/00199/FUL – construction of general purpose building – **Common Farm** – no objection.
- 323 Councillor Jellicoe hopes shortly to be able to arrange a meeting with the landowner of the preferred site for the proposed new **allotments**. Councillors Jellicoe, Brand and Palmer have been delegated to represent the Parish Council when this meeting is arranged.
- 324 Councillors Barber, Bromley-Allen and Field declared personal interests in this item being Parish Council representatives on the **WPFA**. Two letters from the Witchford Playing Fields Association were noted. The first states that at their meeting on 1st March 2010 they decided to pursue the transfer of assets to the Parish Council and they confirmed their intention to consult with the Charities Commission. The second letter invites Parish Councillors to an open meeting for the village to discuss the matter on 26th May 2010.
- 325 Councillor Jellicoe advised that the **village walks** leaflets would shortly be printed.

- 326 Councillor Allen reported on the meeting on 18th March involving Witchford, Wentworth, Witcham, Mepal, Sutton Parish Councils, the County Council and Sustrans (a sustainable transport charity) to discuss the possible extension of the **cycle way** from Mepal to Witchford. Notes of the meeting had been previously circulated in which it was stated that the County Council had said that cost would be £500k per km. The Parish Council felt that this figure needed to be checked. The matter will be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Panel meeting.
- 327 A meeting has now taken place with the County Council who have agreed that it will be possible to create a “bus stand” for the downloading and collection of children at **Rackham School**. This should avoid the requirements of a Traffic Regulation Order and should reduce the projected cost to around £500 which will include road marking and signage. The Parish Council agreed that it would pay up to £300 towards this project which it believes will greatly improve safety in the area.
- 328 The Parish Tree Warden had attended a meeting with the District Council regarding the new project to create permanent **woodlands** across the district and his report was circulated prior to the meeting. Two possible areas of land have been identified to the District Council. A letter was noted from the District Council saying that they require confirmation of the Parish Council’s wish to participate in the project by 27th May 2010. The matter was referred to the Woodland Sub-Committee of the Parish Council for discussion with a request for a report back to the 4th May meeting of the Parish Council.
- 329 It was noted with regret that the present Head of Rackham School will be retiring at the end of this school year.
- 330 Faulty street lights have been reported.
- 331 The swings at the Bedwell Hey play park have now been repaired.
- 332 Open Spaces: Councillor Jellicoe has made the first cut to footpath 10 – Manor Road to the bypass. It was reported that a new walkway has been created in the Broadway/Sandpit Lane. A new seat has been installed in the Old Recreation Ground. The County Council has arranged compost to be levelled over road planings on byway 10.
- 333 A galvanized gate and posts will be ordered from Pecks for the Grunty Fen entrance to the **Old Recreation Ground**.
- 334 Councillor Bromley-Allen has once again planted flowers in the **village sign**.
- 335 Despite repeated contact regarding **litter** on all approaches to the village and in and around the ditch in Manor Road, the District Council has not responded to requests for this to be removed. This matter will be brought up as the Parish Council’s priority at the next Neighbourhood Panel which will be attended by Councillors Jellicoe and Palmer on 19th April 2010 in Witcham Village Hall starting at 7.00 p.m.
- 336 Councillors Jellicoe, Allen and Palmer have responded on behalf of the Parish Council to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough **Minerals and Waste Plan** putting forward objections to a change proposed to permit “stable, non reactive hazardous waste” to be dealt with. They have also objected to proposals for Block Fen on the grounds that lorry traffic is not precluded from using other roads and requesting a new dedicated route.
- 337 The Household Waste Liaison group meeting has been postponed because the County are awaiting the creation of new drawings showing the 30’ reduction in size.
- 338 The bank reconciliation was noted, the report from the Responsible Financial Officer regarding unspent revenue provision of £962.60 (street lighting energy and maintenance costs) was approved and the cheques on the schedule of cheques was approved.

- 339 The Annual Parish Meeting will be on 21st April 2010.
The next Parish Council meeting will be on - **Tuesday**, 4th May 2010.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

Signed: Chairman

Date: