

Witchford Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs S M Monteith, 174 Main Street, Witchford Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2HT
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th July 2010 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Hall

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

Apologies: Mrs L Langley, Mr H Palmer, Mr I Brand, District Councillor P Wilson

In attendance: Mr G Wilson, Mr W Hunt

- 61 Mrs D Field declared a pecuniary interest in item 81 and Mr G Barber, Mrs D Field and Mrs S Bromley-Allen declared personal interests in item 79
- 62 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd June 2010 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman.
- 63 **Report from County Councillor:** Councillor Hunt reported on various budget issues within the County Council and stated that it was unlikely that the proposed Chesterton station would be built although there would be no certainties until the Government spending review in October. He gave an update on the lack of progress with the guided busway. He stated his support for Neighbourhood Panels. He continues to work with stakeholders on the household waste recycling centre liaison committee.

Report from District Councillors:

- 64 Councillor P Wilson had provided a written report. She had attended a Community Service meeting where there had been a presentation about the proposed Leisure Facility – she did not believe that the swimming pool is much bigger than exists at the moment. She reported on a research project which had been held and at which the majority of local residents spoken to had said that they did not want the proposed leisure facility “out of town”.
- 65 Councillor G Wilson spoke of cuts taking place by East Cambridgeshire District Council – he believed there would be major changes to the CCTV system. He was concerned that there are now just two members of the executive team. He stated that the Policy and Resources Committee had no funding in place for the proposed leisure centre although fees etc to date total approximately £500,000.
- 65 Councillor Ian Allen explained that housing targets have now been removed by the Government so any proposed housing growth in Ely is the choice of the local authority – East Cambridgeshire District Council – and not imposed by central Government. Councillor Allen explained that work is taking place within the District Council regarding the possible introduction of car parking charges with a timetable to introduce these probably before the local elections in May 2011. He stated that the District and County Councils are working together on the introduction of civil parking enforcement which will enforce all off and on street car parking. He stated that there is unlikely to be any consultation on the introduction of car parking charges. He said that there are likely to be changes to the waste collections in the District within the next 18 months. There will be 6 carton banks in the District at some time in the future but in the meantime, these should go in black waste bags. He was concerned about the possible introduction of a cabinet style administration at the District Council as he believed that this would potentially be more expensive. Councillor Allen stated that the current management of the Paradise Centre had stated that they do not want to move from their premises and have a 76 year lease although recent documents from the District Council state that this land is available for redevelopment.

- 66 A letter was noted from **Stagecoach** admitting that there had been some operational issues although they state that the situation is now much improved and should shortly improve even further.
- 67 A letter was noted regarding the **droves** meeting held by the County Council which the Chairman attended in May.
- 68 An e-mail was noted from a local resident requesting that a bin be place near the bench on **Victoria Green**. This has been arranged with East Cambridgeshire District Council who own the area and is now in place. Apparently people sitting on the bench are still putting their rubbish in the pond rather than in the new bin.
- 69 It was noted that the County Council at the present time are unable to place **TROs** on byways 7 and 11.
- 70 A letter was noted from Witchford Rackham **Pre-School** asking for a donation towards their rent. It was agreed that £720 be given to them.
- 71 A letter was noted from the County Council regarding a meeting to be held on 14th July concerning their current economic situation and the impact on the **youth service**. The clerk will ask Mrs Langley if she is able to attend.
- 72 The Chairman reported on his attendance at a meeting to discuss the East Cambridgeshire **Local Development Framework**. It was agreed that he, Councillor Allen and Councillor King would meet to discuss the Parish Council's response to the Ely Area Action Plan Options Paper and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document Option Paper.
- 73 A letter was noted from the County Council regarding budget reductions involving the **mobile library** service.

Planning

- 74 10/00483/FUL – change of use of barn to create temporary stabling for horses – **Common Farm** – no objection.
- 75 10/00493/FUL – single storey extension to front, new boundary wall with railings and gates – **8 Common Road** - a copy of a letter of objection from a local resident was read at the meeting. The Parish Council has concerns regarding the height of the wall and feels that the height of the fence should be reduced or a visibility splay should be put in space – or both of these options - to allow visibility at the junction with Common Road of the byway across the common.
- 76 10/00502/FUL – two storey extension to form cloakroom, bathroom and en suite – **160 Main Street** – no objection.
- 77 The Parish Council's bids under the **Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements** 2011-12 bidding round were agreed as: (1) improve the pavement from the junction of Grunty Fen Road with Main Street for about 100 m on the western side to improve pedestrian safety and (2) improvements to cycle way from Wentworth to Witcham Toll. Councillor Allen pointed out that East Cambridgeshire District Council have unilaterally withdrawn from the Jointly Funded Scheme.
- 78 Advertisements had been placed to recruit a **Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer**. Seventeen people expressed interest and eleven returned applications. A shortlist was drawn up and interviews were held by the Personnel Working Party. The Chairman gave a verbal report on the procedure and recommended their choice of candidate. It was agreed that the post be offered to Mrs Alysoun Hodges at NJC SCP 22 with effect from 1st August 2010.

- 78 The Chairman is trying to arrange a meeting between the owner of the preferred piece of land on which the Parish Council hoped to provide additional **allotments**. Any such meeting would be attended also by Councillors Brand and Palmer. Councillor Brand is pursuing enquiries regarding the second choice piece of land.
- 79 A verbal update was given by Councillor Barber on the **hall** project. Two meetings of the new committee have now been held.
- 80 A request had been received from East Cambridgeshire District Council for the production of a draft **emergency plan**. It was agreed that the Chairman and Councillor Langley would meet to discuss this.
- 81 Councillor Field declared a pecuniary interest in this matter as the owner of the land involved and took no part in the discussions. A meeting had been held with the **Woodland** Trust on the site of the proposed new woodland project. It was agreed that the Parish Council would apply to the District Council for a grant to cover the costs of this project. Further decisions would be made once the result of this application was known.
- 82 Councillor Barber will survey **street lights** in October. The fault light outside the Baptist Church will again be reported.
- 83 A fault on the play equipment in **Victoria Green** has been reported to East Cambridgeshire District Council who are responsible for this site.
- 84 A complaint had been received regarding grass cutting in **Sandpit Lane**. The complainant felt that the contractor had cut the area when wild flowers were in flower. It was noted that three cuts per year are carried out in this area – including one full width cut. It was thought that this full width cut may have been carried out slightly earlier than usual this year. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Open Spaces Group for their comments.
- 85 It was agreed to contact the County Council to see if a new **gate** could be provided (pedestrian kissing gate) to replace a dilapidated gate from Main Street into footpath 6. The Open Spaces Group will be able to install the gate.
- 86 It was noted that a chain fence has been installed at byway 11 – “**the plantation**”. A letter had been sent to the occupier of 20 Manor Road in March 2009 about the planting of a laurel hedge here and the hedge had been removed. It was agreed to apply to the Land Registry for confirmation of ownership of the land.
- 87 The Chairman confirmed that there are no longer any **stiles** in Witchford as the last two have recently been removed.
- 88 Councillor Allen confirmed that the **fireworks** for the Village Festival have now arrived.
- 89 It was noted that the plastic banks in **Manor Court Road** should be emptied twice a week and this does not seem to be happening. The situation will be monitored.
- 90 Sanctuary Hereward have indicated that they are not proceeding with their development plans for the site of the garages in **Manor Court Road**. The clerk was instructed to contact them to request some maintenance on the site.
- 91 A complaint was noted regarding litter in **Bedwell Hey Lane**. It was confirmed that Mrs Bland visits this area once a week as part of her coverage of the whole village. It was noted with regret that the leaving of litter seemed to be an increasing problem all over the village.

- 92 A large number of empty alcohol bottles and cans have been left in the **Millennium wood**. Small fires have been lit with branches from trees pulled off and sawn off and burnt. A large pile of hay which had been cut in the recent meadow mow had been set on fire and the Fire Service had to put this out. The memorial seat has been dragged from its base and damaged. Anecdotal information suggests that youngsters from this village are responsible for these acts. The Police have been informed and have confirmed that they will attend the area more often. If anybody has information as to who is responsible, then perhaps they will contact the clerk or the Police in confidence.
- 93 **Scouts** have requested to use the wood for an overnight event on 16th July. This was agreed. Scouts were thanked for their work in providing the bbq for the meadow mow which recently took place.
- 94 It was agreed that **litter** will be the Parish's priority for the next Neighbourhood Panel.
- 95 The inside bend seems to have collapsed in **Manor Road**. It is thought this is because of the laying of a telephone cable which seems to have weakened the road. This will be reported to Highways.
- 96 Moore Stephens the external **auditors** confirmed that the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern
- 97 The bank reconciliation and the cheques on the schedule of cheques were approved.
- 98 The clerk was **thanked** for her service to the Parish Council.
- 99 The next Parish Council meeting will be on – Wednesday 4th August 2010.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

Signed: Chairman

Date: