

**WITCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Clerk: Mrs A Hodges, 88 West Fen Road, Ely , CB6 3AA Telephone: 01353 664427  
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**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Witchford, held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>  
May 2011 at 7.30pm in St. Andrew's Hall, Witchford**

**Present:** Mr G Jellicoe (in the Chair), Mrs A Hodges (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), Mr I Allen, Mr W Hunt, Mr D Till, Mr R Braund , Mrs D Field, Mr J Hook, Mr A Howe, Mr D Taylor, Mr G Matthias, Ms P Potter, Mrs S Carter, Mr N Blencowe, Ms F Mowatt, Ms Y Thresh, Ms V Merryweather

**Apologies** – Mr G Wilson, Mrs P Wilson, Mr T King, Mrs R Braund, Mrs F Burns, Mrs S Vail, Mrs P Fisher

- 397 **Parish Council Chairman's report** - The Chairman reported on the year's events, including work on the Victoria Green parking area, the Household Waste Recycling Centre, the Neighbourhood Panel and the A142 cycleway proposal. The highlight of the year was the establishment of a new and successful allotment site at Manor Road. Mr Jellicoe in particular thanked Mr I Brand for his assistance with setting up this site. Mr Jellicoe paid tribute Mrs S Monteith, who retired as clerk in July. He then thanked the Parish Councillors for their hard work and all those who contributed their time and energy to the village community.
- 398 **Parish Council accounts** - The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer provided details of the receipts and payments account and balances for 2010/11.
- 399 **Reports were circulated by the following:**  
District Councillor Pauline Wilson
- 400 County Councillor Bill Hunt spoke regarding the main issues for Cambridgeshire County Council over the past year, alluding to the need to make deep budget cuts. Recent events of note include work starting on the Household Waste Recycling Centre, the provision of a double-decker bus on the X9 bus route, the Guided Busway being handed over to the County Council, the new bus stand at Rackham School, and the retention of library services at Ely and Haddenham. Cllr Hunt then looked forward to his key issues for the coming year.
- 401 District Councillor Ian Allen spoke regarding events within East Cambridgeshire District Council including the new constitutional arrangements for the District Council. His particular concerns have been cuts to bus services/Dial-a-Ride and the Victoria Green car parking area.
- 402 **Reports were presented by the following:**  
Nick Blencowe - Ely Soham Dial A Ride.  
ESDAR has received significant cuts to its funding, which may force it to review how the service is operated. A range of services is currently offered, from school trips, scheduled bus routes and excursions. A number of members in Witchford use the service on a weekly basis to go shopping. Members feedback is very positive with 97% of members rating the service as 8+ out of 10.

David Taylor – Witchford Village College  
2010 saw the best ever GSCE results for the College (83% 5 or more A-C grade), with good outcomes aswell for school leavers. The College is used for many community activities such as bridge, Jazzercise, and WADS. A 3G artificial sports pitch costing over £500,000 opened in September. This is used by a wide range of

groups both locally and from outside the area. The College has an extensive Adult Education programme offering courses for qualifications and leisure. Mr Taylor advised that he hoped to be able to re-open the College gym to the public if it was financially viable, and Mr Jellicoe asked if an article could be put in the Witchfordian if this happens.

Suzanne Carter – Rackham School

The school held a successful Family Learning Festival in October. Children have benefited this year from a wide range of activities to extend the curriculum, such as a visit from a Roman soldier, and extra-curricular activities such as after-school clubs, the Choral Outreach Project and a careers convention for Year 5. The Friends of Rackham School work hard to fundraise for the school.

John Hook – Woodland Group

Work in the Millenium Wood this year has included cleaning bat and bird boxes, mowing paths, repairing and reinstalling the bench, removing diseased alders, progressing the interpretation board. Following a spate of vandalism, the gate to the wood has been locked on weekend evenings.

Richard Braund – Open Spaces Group

Major projects for the year have included the creation of a wildflower meadow at Sandpit Lane, tree planting at the Old Rec (with Rackham School), way marking public bridleway No4, starting work on clearing the old pond at Manor Road, a guided walk at the village festival, and progressing the interpretation board with the

Woodland Group.

Penny Potter - Royal British Legion

The 2010 Poppy Appeal was Mrs Potter's first, and she would like to thank all the village residents and businesses who helped and donated. £1834.88 was raised. There will be an article in the Witchfordian to let people know when collectors will be coming round this year, 2011.

Andy Howe – Witchford Online

New features and links have been added to the website, such as links to neighbouring parishes' websites. Help in developing the website from interested residents would be welcome.

Andy Howe – Witchford Playing Fields Association

The Association has had to re-evaluate its short-term objectives for refurbishing the hall in light of the current economic conditions which mean that less grant-funding is available. New events and activities are taking place, such as a regular 'swap shop' and the hall continues to be well used for football, bowls and as a party venue.

Fiona Mowatt - Witchford Parish Allotments Group

The new allotment site at Manor Road has been successfully set up with a keen group of allotment holders having transformed a patch of mud into clearly marked individual plots. Drainage works have been carried out and a notice board erected. There is already a growing waiting list and this will be monitored. Social events may also be organised.

Yvonne Thresh - East Cambs Care and Repair

45 individuals in Witchford were helped this year, including 3 people for whom Care and Repair completed major building works. The handyperson service is also very popular, especially for plumbing but also for small jobs such as shelving. £100 donated by the Parish Council is held in the hardship fund.

Viv Merryweather - County Council Youth Services

The County Council Youth Service has had a 30% cut in staff and is now called the

Independent Youth Support Service. It focusses only on the most vulnerable young people between the age of 10-19, and can provide a general youth service only where paid for by a third party such as a parish council. Ms Merryweather reported on an assembly held at Witchford Village College to canvas the views of village young people on what kind of youth provision they would like. This will be discussed more fully at the Parish Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Dick Till – Witchford Scout Group  
Gold Highlights of the year include 3 members of the troop achieving their Chief Scout Award badges, working with the Open Spaces Group to survey the old pond at Manor Road, camping in the Millennium Wood and winning the Aquafest raft race. Mr Till thanked everyone who helps with the Scouts, Cubs or Beavers. There is currently a large waiting list due to a lack of leaders.

403 Written reports were received from the following:

Patricia Fisher Witchford WI  
Rosemary Braund - Brownies  
Felicity Burns 1<sup>st</sup> Witchford Guides  
Richard Tyler Emergency Co-ordinator

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.  
Copies of all reports can be obtained from the clerk.

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....