

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 Tuesday 2nd June 2009 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Church

Present: Mr G Jellicoe (in the chair), Mr M Flack-Crane, Mr I Allen, Mrs S Bromley-Allen, Mr B Colling, Mr I Brand, Mrs D Field,

Apologies: Mr A Shields, Mr G Wilson, Mrs P Wilson

In Attendance: County Councillor W Hunt

- 35 Mr H Palmer was **co-opted** to fill one of the vacancies on the Parish Council and duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office. The closing date for applications for co-option to the other vacancy is 20th June 2009 and notice of the third vacancy is still at the stage of advertisement.
- 36 Councillor Palmer declared an interest in minute numbers 40 and 41 and the clerk declared an interest in minute number 48.
- 37 The **minutes** of the Annual General Meeting and the Parish Council meeting held on 6th May 2009 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 38 **Report from County Councillor** – Councillor Hunt reported on the development control meeting he had attended at Shire Hall when the proposed 17 year extension to the **Grunty Fen landfill site** was discussed. He had suggested a three year extension at the end of which time a further extension could be discussed. He had stressed that road improvements would be necessary around the site. Mr Hunt explained that the decision had been deferred, partly he believed in view of the County Council elections due to take place this week. Councillor Hunt again explained that he was against the proposed congestion charge in Cambridge. In view of elections taking place this week, he hoped to return next month but he thanked the Parish Council for its consideration during his time as County Councillor for the area covering Witchford and this was reciprocated by the Parish Council.
- 39 It was agreed that a donation of £703 be made to Witchford Rackham **Pre-School** to cover their rent.
- 40 A letter was noted from Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum asking if the Parish Council would clarify the present position on the threat to the **Alderforth** public access area. The clerk was instructed to reply that the Parish Council shares their concern at the loss of the amenity and over a year ago had alerted the County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council to the fact that this popular facility was due to close in October 2009. It is believed that the County Council may have recently set up a working group looking into its possible preservation. Witchford Parish Council has been informed by the tenant of the land that neither he nor the landowners (The Church Commissioners) wish to extend the period of public access and intend that the land reverts to farmland in October 2009. Councillor Palmer declared a prejudicial interest in this item and the next and left the room during discussion of both items.

- 41 The clerk had recently had a meeting with East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding **section 106** monies during which the District raised the issue of Alderforth Farm and the possible rent or purchase of this. It is believed that they are no longer considering this matter. The Parish Council however agreed to put on record its view that that it would not be willing at this time for any of its Section 106 money to be used towards this project in view of the fact that the Parish Council believes that the area is a District asset rather than solely for the use of the people of Witchford and that the District Council should be notified of this. At the same time, the Parish Council confirmed that it would wish to be consulted by the District Council on any application for funds from the Parish Council's section 106 allocation.
- 42 A letter was noted from the Executive Director Development Services of East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding development in Witchford. He confirmed that they have now acquired the ransom strip to unlock the land **behind Barton Close** for development but that no decisions have yet been made. He states that he will present this asset management issue to their members for a decision and this is likely to take place at their Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd June 2009.
- 43 A local resident had asked for help in getting the **trees** along the main road side of the allotments trimmed. They have spoken to the landlords Smiths Gore with no response and they also had concerns regarding the power cables. The village tree warden has checked the trees and confirmed that these are sycamore trees. He states that they have been trimmed back on the road side to clear the power lines but that no work has been carried out on the allotment side. He believes that the lower branches overhanging the allotment area could be removed fairly easily and that the allotment tenants are within their rights to do this. Any work on trees which interfere with the power network is carried out by the National Grid is part of a planned programme.
- 44 Cambridgeshire ACRE have confirmed that the **housing needs survey** recently carried out in Witchford is now complete and it was agreed that the Rural Housing Enabler be invited, together with a representative of the Housing Association, to the Parish Council meeting on 1st July 2009 to present this report.
- 45 Confirmation from Perrett's Amusements of their public liability insurance and their risk assessment for the **fair** coming to the Common in August was noted. (The small fair will pull onto the Common earlier in the week and will be open on 21st, 22nd and 23rd August).
- 46 The County Council's **Parish Paths Partnership** Agreement for Witchford was noted. A sum of £300 has been received in respect of this agreement for 2009/2010.
- 47 **Planning**
- 09/00307/FUL – change of use of garden area to tennis court ancillary to the incidental enjoyment of the main dwelling house – **Needhams Farm Barn**. No objection, provided no floodlighting is used.
- 09/000380/FUL – second storey rear extension - **177 Main Street** – no objection. The clerk declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item and left the room during the discussion.
- Information from East Cambridgeshire District Council on the discontinuation of the delegated planning scheme review was noted.
- 48 The Chairman had, in a private capacity, visited the household waste recycling centre at Chittering and reported briefly on his visit. It was agreed that Mark Shelton of **Donarbor** would be invited to attend the Parish Council meeting on 2nd September 2009.
- 49 The **internal audit** report of Witchford Parish Council 2008/2009 produced by East Cambridgeshire District Council was noted. They had confirmed that there were no areas of concern.

- 50 A complaint had been received from a local resident regarding the rubbish dumped on private land in **Mills Lane**. This had been referred to the District Council two years ago with no real progress. The clerk met recently with the new Clean Neighbourhoods Officer of East Cambridgeshire District Council. He confirmed that it is an offence under the Environment and Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2006 to dump rubbish on land which is private unless this land is a registered tip and he is investigating this matter. He also undertook to have cleared the rubbish in the ditch at Manor Road.
- 51 **Report from District Councillor** - Councillor Allen reported on the meeting he attended to discuss the extension of the **Grunty Fen landfill** site for 17 years (see also minute 38). He had put forward objections to the length of this extension and highlighted the traffic problems in the area. He and Councillor Hunt were agreed that if the extension was likely to be approved, then a much improved road junction with the A10 was necessary with a roundabout if possible at Little Thetford – this could be funded by a section 106 agreement. The application had been deferred for further work to be carried out by officers on the highways impact of the proposal. The County had explained that if the site were not extended, then they would have to look at another site. He believed that County Highways should not cover the cost of maintaining Pools Road over a further seventeen years to enable a private company to make money from the site and believed that this should be regulated by means of a section 106 agreement.
- 52 Councillor Allen had recently met with the County Council regarding the road improvements they are intending to carry out at the junction of **Main Street and Grunty Fen Road** – these improvements are likely to cost the County £8000. The County had intended to drop the kerb on the eastern side but have now decided against this.
- 53 It was agreed that the Parish Council's bid for the **2010/11 jointly funded minor highways improvement** scheme would be: Grunty Fen Road Improvements – to improve the pavement from the junction with Main Street for about 100 m on the western side – to improve pedestrian safety at a very dangerous junction when walking down Grunty Fen Road to the permissive path. A second bid would also be made: extension of the cycleway from Wentworth to Witcham Toll.
- 54 **Training** opportunities through CPALC were noted and the clerk will make any appropriate bookings requested.
- 55 The Parish Council has submitted a grant application to East Cambridgeshire District Council for £3000 to fund a **facilities audit** and the brief prepared by the clerk was approved. If the grant is obtained, then a consultant will be chosen to carry out the audit. A small steering group will then take matter forward and it was agreed that this will be: Councillor Flack-Crane, Councillor Field, the clerk, Mr Andy Howe and Mr Richard Braund.
- 56 Councillor Field undertook to make enquiries regarding the cost of a **picnic table** and bench to be installed near the new playpark at the Playing fields site.
- 57 Concern was again expressed at traffic **speeding** through the village – this will be reported to the Police, to the Speedwatch volunteers and can be raised at the next Neighbourhood Panel meeting on 27th July at the Village Hall at 7.00 p.m..
- 58 Notification had been received from Carters (undertakers) of a field **funeral** to take place in Morning Meadow, Grunty Fen Road, CB6 2JF on 12th June 2009.
- 59 Concern had again been expressed at water leaking at **Barton Close**. This has previously been raised with Anglian Water who say that the water is not treated water and is probably the result of a broken land drain. The clerk was instructed to contact them again and to ask if this matter could be referred to the Environment Agency.

- 60 Councillor Flack-Crane and the clerk recently attended a meeting with the County Council organisers of the **Witchford Youth Club**. They now have flyers in the Post Office to advertise the club and are doing all that they can to raise awareness and increase attendance by youngsters. The club meets on Monday evenings in St Andrew's Hall. Anyone who would like further details can contact the Youth Club or the clerk.
- 61 The Chairman thanked **Councillor Flack-Crane** for chairing the Parish Council so effectively during the previous three years.
- 62 **Finance:** It was proposed by Councillor Brand, seconded by Councillor Bromley-Allen that the bank reconciliation and the cheques detailed on the cheque schedule be approved.
- 63 Date of next Parish Council meeting: Wednesday, 1st July 2009 in St Andrew's Hall at 7.30 p.m.
Neighbourhood Panel meeting – 27th July at 7.00 p.m. at Village Hall (Bedwell Hey Lane) – all welcome

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: