

Witchford Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4th November 2009 at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's Church

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

Apology: Mrs L Langley, Mr W Hunt

In attendance: Mr G Wilson, Mrs P Wilson, Mr A Howe (for item 171 only)

- 168 There were declarations of personal non prejudicial interest in minute number 177 by Councillor Bromley-Allen and in minute number 179 by Councillor Shields.
- 169 Mr Glenn Matthias was **co-opted** to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council and duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office. One vacancy remains which is currently being advertised.
- 170 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th October 2009 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman.
- 171 Mr Andy Howe outlined the recommendations that the **Facilities Audit** group were making to the Parish Council following the publication of the audit report by MUSE at the end of October 2009. The project was initiated in early 2009 as a development of the Parish Plan process. The recommendation of the Facilities Audit group was that the Parish Council adopts the focused approach as detailed in the report from page 108 onwards which points to a perceived need for improved facilities in Witchford, especially for young people. Focusing the available investment at the Village Hall was thought to give the best chance of obtaining additional grant funding. The clerk was instructed to write to MUSE thanking them for their work on the project and for the production of the excellent, comprehensive report. It was agreed that the next step was to set up a Steering Group to take the project forward – the group would consist of: Andy Howe, Richard Braund, Dianne Field, Graham Barber, Alan Shields and Shelagh Monteith – representatives of other organisations or those with specialised knowledge would be co-opted as appropriate.

Report from District Councillors

- 172 Councillor Gareth Wilson confirmed that East Cambridgeshire District Council had approved the Local Development Framework. He mentioned some staff changes within the finance department of the District Council which caused him concern. He explained that consultants had been appointed to look into finances at the District Council. He explained discussions which are ongoing regarding changes to the planning gain regulations.
- 173 Councillor Pauline Wilson also spoke of staff changes which are taking place within the District Council. She reported on the latest Neighbourhood Panel meeting at which she raised the question of the proposed crusher at the East Highways depot. She reported on the Community Services Committee and believed that the planning application for the proposed leisure centre would be submitted in Spring 2010.
- 174 Councillor Allen reported that there was likely to be a shortfall of £1.5m in the East Cambridgeshire District Council community infrastructure levy. He believed that additional housing planned in Ely will not provide enough money for the projects the District Council is planning such as the country park and leisure centre.

Report from County Councillor

- 175 Councillor Hunt had provided a written report in which he asked if any Parish Councillors would wish to attend a new household waste centre which has recently opened in St Neots. The Chairman agreed to attend on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 176 A letter was noted from Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board regarding the Environment Agency public consultation concerning future management of the Great Ouse Tidal River. It was agreed that the Parish Council would respond that any policies which would lead to increased flood risk to the level proposed in the future were totally unacceptable.
- 177 Councillor Bromley-Allen declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item. It was agreed that £350 would be donated to Ely-and Soham Dial-a-Ride.
- 178 It was agreed to donate £200 to Ely and District Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- 179 Councillor Shields declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item. A letter was noted from Transition, consultants working on behalf of Witchford Village College asking the Parish Council to provide a letter of support to the Village College relating to their application for a floodlit artificial grass pitch on the College Site. The clerk was instructed to write saying that the Parish Council would support affordable, additional facilities for residents of Witchford.
- 180 A letter was noted from Witchford Colts F.C. expressing their concern about a shortage of green field pitches in the local area. The clerk was instructed to respond saying that the Parish Council shares their concern and will ask the Facilities Audit Steering Group to discuss this matter.
- 181 The District Trees Officer has responded to the Parish Council's concerns regarding two diseased horse chestnuts in Elm Close. She recommends that one tree, although with some disease, does not have significant problems in terms of health and safety and she will revisit in 2010 to monitor the condition. She believes that the other tree is in a dangerous condition and recommends that this is felled. East Cambridgeshire District Council is likely to arrange this work shortly. In view of the fact that neither East Cambridgeshire District Council, nor the Parish Council own this land, some discussion has taken place regarding paying for the work and it is likely that East Cambridgeshire District Council will pay for this on this occasion without prejudice in view of the fact that Witchford Parish Council paid for work on a hedge in the area last year.
- 182 County Council proposals for work along Main Street/Grunty Fen Road were noted. Councillor Brand was totally against the proposals. The clerk was instructed to respond that the proposals do not fully address the issue of assisting pedestrians at this dangerous junction and the Parish Council believes that the road needs moving north to allow better visual splays. However, if the County decides to proceed, then the Parish Council has no objection. No Parish Council contribution is required for this work.
- 183 The County Council has deferred a decision regarding plans to undertake a limited amount of recycling of highway construction waste material at East Highways depot pending a demonstration of the equipment proposed. This will take place on 17th December 2009 at 10.00 a.m. at the Highways depot. It was agreed that the Chairman and Councillor Palmer would attend.
- 184 **Planning**
- Ely Masterplan – draft for consultation. Some work has been carried out on this consultation document and it was agreed that the working party would meet again on Thursday 12th November 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

- 185 Councillor Allen had received a complaint from a local resident regarding inconsiderate parking across a driveway at the beginning and end of the Rackham school day. The Parish Council felt that the parking situation outside Rackham School was becoming quite dangerous with the bus having to park on the zigzag lines. The Clerk was instructed to write to the County Council Traffic Engineer to suggest time-restricted changes to road markings in the area as an aid to safety with a dedicated bus stop and a single yellow line on the north side of the road, additional to the single yellow line on the south side.
- 186 The notes of the budget meeting held on 23rd October 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The budget and precept for the year from 1st April 2010 will be on the agenda for the December meeting of the Parish Council.
- 187 The three year grass cutting contract is due to expire shortly and the tender document for the new contract to run from April 2010 for three years was approved. It was agreed that an additional clause would be inserted regarding the need for provision of a risk assessment and method statement to cover the work being carried by the contractor. The clerk will now place an advertisement in the Ely Standard asking for expressions of interest.
- 188 The item regarding Mills Lane access was deferred to the December meeting of the Parish Council.
- 189 There were five street lights out of order – the clerk will report these. It was also reported that six street lights are out on the roundabout at the eastern end of the village – these will also be reported.
- 190 Councillor Allen requested that the Speed Watch team carry out another survey when possible. Councillor Field undertook to arrange this.
- 191 It was reported that numbers attending the Youth Café have increased considerably.
- 192 It was proposed by Councillor Barber, seconded by Councillor Shields that the bank reconciliation and the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.
- 193 The next Parish Council meeting will be on 2nd December 2009.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: