

## Witchford Parish Council

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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 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, Mr I Brand,

**Apologies:** Mrs D Field, Mr G Barber, Mrs L Langley, Mr W Hunt

**In attendance:** Mrs P Wilson, Mr G Wilson

- 248 There were no declarations of interest.
- 249 The **minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010 were taken as read, approved and were signed by the Chairman
- 250 Mr Alan Roffey, the **Speedwatch** Co-coordinator for the west area of East Cambridgeshire attended and explained some of the background of the scheme. He hopes to increase the number of volunteers in the village and will write to the Witchfordian regarding this.
- 251 Mrs Viv Merryweather of Cambridgeshire County Council attended and explained progress recently made with Witchford **Youth** Club. She explained arrangements for the Youth Café and presented an end of term report from September to December 2009.

### **Report from District Councillors**

- 252 Councillor Pauline Wilson had attended the recent Neighbourhood Panel. Unfortunately Witchford had not been represented at this meeting. She reported on her recent attendance of the East Cambridgeshire Community Services meeting and reported, with regret, budget cuts discussed at this meeting.
- 253 Councillor Gareth Wilson reported on his recent attendance at the Policy and Resources meeting and referred to savings which East Cambridgeshire District Council need to make during the year. He explained that he had been told that £517,000 savings would be made in staff costs but that no information had been provided on this to Councillors; he thought it likely that Building Control would transfer to Huntingdon. He spoke of proposed savings by stopping the provision of market stalls for the weekend markets which he felt was short sighted – he thought that expanding the market would bring in more revenue. He felt that current discussions and decisions within East Cambridgeshire District Council were an undemocratic shambles.
- 254 Councillor Allen reported on the ongoing financial problems within East Cambridgeshire District Council and stated that East Cambridgeshire District Council would be stopping doorstep plastic recycling collections in an effort to save money. He was concerned that he had attended a meeting at which staff cuts were discussed and the Unison representative had had to speak in the public question time slot to ask questions regarding possible redundancies. He explained his belief that East Cambridgeshire District Council had relied on continued growth development to fund over-ambitious schemes and had spent more than £500,000 on consultations and preparatory work for the proposed new leisure centre which he believed they are now unlikely to have the funds to develop. Councillor Allen reported on a recent Area Joint Committee he had attended where almost every basic transport issue was deferred because of the County Council's budgetary constraints; Councillor Allen

- wondered if this could be linked to the extra costs being incurred in the Guided Bus Project.
- 255 Perretts Amusements had written requesting the use of the common again for a traditional **fair**. Wide consultation had taken place before their last visit and no complaints had been received from residents following their visit. It was agreed that they could pull onto the common on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, build up and then open on Friday 20<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, leaving on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.
- 256 An anonymous letter had been received regarding vehicles driving on and parking on land in **Manor Close**. The Parish Council's policy is not to respond to anonymous letters but since this ongoing matter is the responsibility of East Cambridgeshire District Council, the clerk has forwarded the letter to them for attention.
- 257 The County Council's **street lighting** maintenance and energy charges for 2009/2010 were noted and agreed and an invoice should shortly be received for £1299.51. The annual maintenance charge for 2010 to 2011 will be £18.93 per lamp and the County estimate the street lighting energy charge for this period at £586.71.
- 258 Ely **Tourist** Information Centre are launching a new version of their website and the clerk will update the entry for Witchford.
- 259 A request was noted from East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding taking part in "Discovering Places" which relates to the Cultural Olympiad and relates to the built and natural environment and landscape through a series of events. It was hoped that it might be possible to speak with Mr Barry Aldridge regarding linking a walk to a visit to his museum on the airfield.

### Planning

- 260 09/00960/FUL – two storey side extension and single storey front porch extension – **33 Victoria Green**- no objection.
- 261 10/00005/FUL – siting of a mobile home – second field west of pony lodge **Grunty Fen** Road – no objection.
- 262 Queries had been received regarding two planning issues and District Councillor Allen was asked to take up these matters with the District Council. The first related to ensuring that building works at 29 Main Street were taking place according to the approved plans and the second related to once again checking that the café at the Sedgeway Equestrian Centre was operating according to any necessary planning consents.
- 263 A report was noted from the Chairman of the **Village Hall** Project Steering Group explaining the work carried out so far. The group asked for time to be made available to enable it to present a full report to the Parish Council with adequate time available for discussion. A letter from Smiths Gore was also noted which confirms the view of the Church Commissioners that they will not grant a further lease on land in the area of playing fields as they believe the intensification of recreational use could be detrimental to their long term objectives. It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council would take place to discuss the village hall project on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 7.30 p.m. in St Andrew's Hall.
- 264 Councillor Allen had met the Head Teacher of Rackham School regarding the Parish Council's recent approach to the County Council regarding a dedicated **bus bay** in the area of the school. The clerk and a representative of the Police subsequently met with the Head and a joint letter was sent to the County Council regarding the marking out of a bus bay. The County have now responded stating that a legal Traffic Regulation Order would be necessary before these road markings could be made and that this would incur considerable cost for which they do not have any budget. The County Council state that they believe the best answer to this problem would be for the buses

- to park away from the school. It was agreed that information on this matter be passed to County Councillor Hunt with a request that he takes the matter up with County Council officers.
- 265 Notes of the **allotments** working party meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010 were noted and signed by the Chairman. The group is currently attempting to find suitable land in the village. The next meeting will be on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010.
- 266 The clerk was asked to contact the Highways Department of the County Council regarding cutting of brambles in the safeway between Common Road and byway 10.
- 267 Reports have again been received regarding 4-wheel vehicles driving in **Sandpit Lane**. The Chairman has contacted the County Council requesting the erection of a sign saying "no through route". This has also been requested in the forms relating to the Parish Path Partnership which have recently been submitted.
- 268 It was reported that there is a considerable amount of **litter** on the approaches to the village: in Grunty Fen Road, in Ely Road and in the old road near Boundary Farm. The clerk was instructed to contact East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding this.
- 269 It was reported that there are still concrete blocks etc in the **telephone box** and the clerk will again report this to BT.
- 270 Information was noted that it may be possible that East Cambridgeshire District Council may be intending to sell the **car park** at Victoria Green. The clerk was instructed to contact the District Council stating that the Parish Council's noticeboard and interpretation board are in this area and also that the whole car park area was provided under Section 106 arrangements for open space following building in the area.
- 271 It was agreed that £215 be given to the **Youth Club** for the purchase of a television for use in the youth café. The youth club would be responsible for checking whether or not a television would be necessary and also for insuring the equipment.
- 272 Councillor Jellicoe stated that the County Council are proceeding with the 30 m reduction in the size of the **household waste recycling centre** and also the access road although this will need to be approved by the Planning Authority. It was noted that their Director of Minerals and Waste had stated that there were no further waste or recycling processes envisaged in the foreseeable future at the Stirling Way site and that the footprint of the site has been amended.
- 273 It was noted that improvements to the pavement near the junction of **Grunty Fen Road** and **Main Street** were not possible because of the gradient in the drives of some properties. It was agreed that Councillor Allen would discuss this with Highways and then speak informally with residents.
- 274 Complaints had again been received because of lack of **gritting** of the road through the village. The County Council policy states that they are not able to guarantee that roads of this type will be treated. The Chairman spoke to Highways Department who advised him that salt supplies from this area had been diverted to other areas of the country.
- 275 Parish Councillors will be attending **training** on the local government Code of Conduct on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010.
- 276 The clerk had been speaking with St Mary's surgery regarding the possibility of patients being able to collect prescriptions in the village. However, this is at an early stage and may not be possible.

277 It was proposed by Councillor Palmer, seconded by Councillor King that the bank reconciliation and the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.

278 The next Parish Council meeting will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010.

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

***All Parish Council meetings are open to the public.***

Signed: ..... Chairman

Date: .....