

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 7.34pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

Present: M Housden (Chairman), G Byrne, L Holdaway, J Lucas, S Wilkin

In attendance Parish Clerk/RFO
County Councillor L Dupré
District Councillor M Inskip.

24/062 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from K Mackender (holiday).
7.35pm County Councillor L Dupré arrived, and apologised for being few minutes late having just come from a neighbouring parish council meeting.

24/063 **To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on any items on the agenda**

Pecuniary interests - none
Personal interests - none
Prejudicial interests (and to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation) - none

24/064 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

24/065 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

Monthly report for March had been previously circulated and noted. There were no questions.
Chairman opened meeting for the Councillors to give an update. County Councillor Dupré gave update on proposed Wisbech incinerator and the Development Corporation, *The Case for Cambridge Report* with plans for 150,000 more houses in and around Cambridge. The County was recruiting to fill 3 Highways Officers posts, including for East Cambs so she hoped there would be an improvement with keeping roads and paths maintained once there was someone out and about monitoring again. There was discussion about bus services and she explained how now the Mayor had powers for transportation the situation would improve.
Chairman closed the meeting and both Councillors were thanked and they left the meeting.

24/066 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

24/067 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 13 March 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date was also signed as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting: Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin. L Holdaway abstained as she had been absent from the meeting.

24/068 **Matters Arising** - none

24/069 **Planning Applications**

24/00253/FUL High Point, Hive Road Conversion and extension of single storey dwelling to create one and half storey dwelling.
Resolved that the Council had no concerns. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin.

24/069 **Planning Applications** (cont)

An amendment for **24/00129/FUL**, 8 The Slade had arrived on Tuesday – too late to include on this agenda. It updated the application considered at the previous meeting and related to: a) side elevation brought further into site; b) amended roof layout/style and c) amended materials. Comments required by 22 April 2024. Agreed that as the Council held no concerns on the original applications and that these were minor amendments it was not necessary to call an extra meeting as no response would be required.

24/070 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) **Weekly inspections** of play equipment and recreation ground had been carried out by Chairman and he advised that all was in order. The recent new pieces would be added to the checklist. Noted the grass around the village had been cut (cemetery not yet checked). The grasscutter had very kindly cut the grass in the play park and a strip along the path just before the opening of the play park and had been back to cut the recreation ground but not banks c28 March. The post-installation inspection of the new equipment had been done and the missing labels on some of the apparatus would soon be added. Copy would be forwarded to Play Working Party for any feedback to Wicksteed. *Clerk*
PWP
- b) **Applications for use of recreation ground:**
- a) 1st Sutton Scouts Group 12 May 2024 – application and supporting documents had not been received. Item deferred to next meeting.
- b) Witcham Annual Peashoot 13 July 2024: application and supporting documents previously circulated to Councillors, were examined and discussed. *Clerk*
Resolved to consent to recreation ground being used for the Annual World Peashooting Competition. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded G Byrne.
- c) City of Ely CC 3rd X1 Various Saturdays May-August 2024: application and supporting documents previously circulated to Councillors, were examined and discussed. *Clerk*
Resolved to consent to Cricket Team using the recreation ground for matches this season on 4 May, 11 May, 8 June, 15 June, 3 August, 31 August and possibly 18 May, all subject to the Club liaising with the usual Witcham Cricket Club member for preparation of the wicket square. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded M Housden. Clerk advised that City of Ely CC had offered a donation of £400 towards grasscutting at the recreation ground during the cricket season. Councillors confirmed this would be a welcome contribution to grasscutting costs.
- c) **Play Working Party** members were very pleased to report that the official opening of Phase 1 on 24 March had gone very well. There had been a lot of positive feedback and a large number of children from the village and further afield had attended this special occasion. L Holdaway reported that a visitor had suggested that in view of all the picnic tables available more litter bins should be installed. Agreed this should be outside play area and Clerk to forward brochure for examination and discussion at the next meeting. Clerk reported that the BACS payment of £1563 to unlock the grant from Grantscape for Phase 2 had been made and explained the process and timescale for release of the £14,000 grant. She advised she had written to the Thalia representatives to thank them for their support and for attending the event. Agreed photos could be sent off for inclusion in the Thalia in-house magazine as requested. She *Clerk*

- 24/070 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters (cont)**
 suggested further letters of thanks should be sent to people who had helped make the day a success. *Clerk*
Resolved that letters of thanks be sent to the resident who had performed the opening ceremony, the Chair of the Witcham Events Committee and the Leader of the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Group, and also to Wicksteed. Proposed L Holdaway and seconded S Wilkin. *Clerk*
 Clerk to issue the publicity notice for Phase 2 as previously discussed. *Clerk*
 Clerk to prepare and publish newsletter and to include items discussed. *Clerk*
 Clerk had issued report on play project budget and expenditure. The supplier for the new signs for play and fitness equipment areas had been unable to complete and so a new supplier had been contacted and quote was awaited. *Clerk*
Resolved to purchase these signs as soon as possible, within the pre-agreed budget. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded G Byrne. *Clerk*
 Delivery arrangements for new goals discussed, and disposal of old agreed. *Clerk*
 Clerk to ensure final documents from Wicksteed regarding warranty etc received. *Clerk*
- d) **Cemetery flooding and CCC works.** Noted that earlier in the week, the levels in the ditch had gone down somewhat and there was no further update about CCC undertaking investigation works in the highway verge. *Clerk*
- 24/071 **Neighbourhood Plan**
 Report from the Lead of the Working Group was received. The final copy of the Design Code had been circulated to Councillors. Noted the two booked March meetings had been cancelled. Chairman had informed the Lead of the Group that if the next meeting was to be 23 April he would be unable to attend, and he had contacted Councillors to see if someone could attend in his place. *Cllrs*
Resolved a copy of the survey results and Design Code should be posted on the Council's website. Proposed G Byrne, seconded L Holdaway. *Clerk*
 Noted Clerk had not yet received from the Group, the final electronic copy of the display boards used on 24 March which could then go on the website. *WNWG*
- Clerk had drafted a financial summary setting out the budget and expected expenditure and receipts to move the Neighbourhood Plan forward once the next Locality grant instalment £4892 (ie the remaining balance of the original £10,000) was received.
Resolved that Clerk should forward copy to the Group and Consultant, and to enquire how to get the additional grant that had been previously mentioned as a serious overspend could be seen from the forecast. Also to remind them that as previously, the next stage of grant funding needed to be received before the project could incur any further expense. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded G Byrne. *Clerk*
Clerk
- 24/072 **Reports of Meetings and Training attended by Councillors**
 G Byrne advised he had attended the New Councillor training session in March and it had been very informative and useful. It was thought that further notes from the trainer would be circulated soon. *Clerk*
- 24/073 **Best Kept Gardens**
 Chairman reported that the Witcham Events Committee was meeting Thursday night and he had broached the idea about community/open garden type events on their social media platform to see if there was any interest. G Byrne offered suggestions for other options to improve eco and wildlife around the village and it was agreed to include on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting to gather ideas from the community and see what support there was. *Clerk/*
APM

24/073 **Best Kept Gardens (cont)**

In the meantime Councillors confirmed there would be no visiting and judging of gardens in the village this year and that the Clerk should include a note in the Annual Report to that effect.

Clerk

24/074 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters**a) **Items reported to Highways Authority**

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>

None reported. Chairman advised that the gulleys in the village were being cleaned out now but the verge outside Kings Meadow had still not been tidied.

b) **Speedwatch sessions:** Chairman and G Byrne had been liaising regarding the equipment. G Byrne confirmed he would set up the training arrangements with the area co-ordinator. Names of volunteers to be forwarded to him by Clerk. Chairman gave name for another volunteer and Clerk to contact. Under the scheme, volunteers were required to sign an Indemnity form which was being organised for return to the area co-ordinator.

GB

Clerk

Clerk

GB

c) **Speed data** for March, had been circulated by the Chairman. Noted.d) **Lending out Litterpick Equipment.** Chairman said that the youngster no longer needed to borrow the Council's litterpick equipment.24/075 **Correspondence**

The following items of information/interest, and invitations to events had been circulated and unless recorded below as otherwise, were noted:

Elean Power Station bi-annual community liaison meeting Thursday 18 April, 1pm. G Byrne offered to attend. Clerk to inform the company.

GB

East Cambs Community Safety Partnership newsletter

NALC Bulletins and Events

CAPALC Bulletins and training opportunities for Councillors

Cambs ACRE newsletter

Cambs Constabulary - East Cambridgeshire Community Meetings 3 April, 3 July and 2 October 2024 – no one appointed to attend.

CCC Climate Change and Energy Services stakeholder engagement workshop on 24th April 2024, 19:00-22:00 at Ely Maltings – no one appointed to attend

CCC Parish & Community Forum agenda and post meeting notes - 20 March.

Next meeting 15 May 2024 at Burwell – no one appointed to attend.

CCC Parish & Community Forum Healthwatch Joint Strategic Needs

Assessment Community Survey

Cambridgeshire Libraries – Events Spring 2024

CCC Traffic Management Centre – Twitter reports (new source)

CCC Traffic Management Training Courses 2024

CCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy

ECDC Operational Services meetings & ECSS Business Plan

24/076 **Finance and Administration Matters**

a) Receipts and payments schedule April 2024 had been circulated. Documentation checked by Chairman.

Clerk reported that the VAT claim had been submitted for April 2023 to January 2024, total £9285.41.

Lloyds Notice savings account interest rate was dropping from 2.6% to 2.5% wef 12 April 2024

Payments for subscriptions to SLCC and CAPALC, and Parish On-line (Map facility for Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) were now due.

Resolved to renew subscription for SLCC £144 and CAPALC £336.67. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin

Clerk

24/076 **Finance and Administration Matters** (cont)

- Resolved** to renew subscription for Parish On-line (Geosphere) £54.00. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin *Clerk*
- Resolved** to approve the Receipts and Payments schedule for April and to release cheques. Proposed Chairman, seconded S Wilkin. *Clerk*
- b) **2024 Audit arrangements:** Clerk advised that the internal audit was booked for 10 May and the AGAR forms were to be returned to PKF by 1 July 2024. Year-end accounts and reconciliations to be presented at May meeting and final signing off of the AGAR forms and supporting documentation to be carried out at June meeting. *Clerk*
- c) **2023/24 Fixed Asset Register:** Work in progress. *Clerk*
- d) **2023/24 Risk Assessment Report:** Clerk had updated and circulated for Councillors to review earlier in the month. *Clerk*
- Resolved** to approve the Risk Assessment Report with no further amendments. Proposed J Lucas, seconded G Byrne.
- e) **2024 Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report.** Clerk gave update. Response regarding attendance by the Interim Planning Manager on matters relating to non-enforcement of planning conditions etc was discussed and agreed for Clerk to send off. The Clerk had partially drafted the Annual Report and the Chairman had submitted his report. J Lucas to forward Neighbourhood Watch report. Size and further content were discussed and agreed to get final approved copy printed in colour as last year, expected cost up to £200. *Clerk*
Clerk
JL
Clerk

Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda Items 24/076f) to 24/076g) listed below, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded from this meeting and they are herewith instructed to withdraw. Proposed by Chairman and agreed. There were no members of the public present.

- f) **RSPB Lease**
Clerk had now repeatedly chased up the Council's solicitors and RSPB contacts to move this to conclusion. Hold up was reported to be with RSPB legal team. Clerk instructed to contact RSPB again to advise that if the document was not ready for signing off at the next meeting the Council would have to reconsider its earlier decision to lease the land to RSPB. *Clerk*
- g) **Deed Public Right of Way and Parking**
The 3 quotes received were considered and it was noted that they were not Fixed Fee quotes as requested by Clerk and as set out in the letter of enquiry agreed in a previous meeting. Clerk instructed to refer back to the 3 companies and repeat request for a Fixed Fee quote, and to update the Chair of the Village Hall. *Clerk*

24/077 **Date of next meetings:**

8 May 2024

Annual Parish Meeting – 15 May 2024

Review Actions – omitted.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

	£	£	£
Receipts: RSPB Ouse Wash Drove rent 2024/5	1020.15		1020.15
Confirmation of payments made since last meeting, as agreed			
002130 Places4 People	1593.00	318.60	1911.60
BACS Grantscape Ph 2 TPC	1563.00		1563.00
Payments – April:			
002131 Truelink (Mar)	80.00	16.00	96.00
002132/3 Salary Expenses	536.66		536.66
002134 Npower Street lighting energy (5)	45.02	2.25	47.27
002135 SLCC Renewal membership	144.00		144.00
002136 CAPALC Renewal membership	336.67		336.67
002137 Neighbourhood Plan renewal Parish On-line Geosphere Ltd	45.00	9.00	54.00
002138 Reimbursements to What's On Editor			
Dec 33.27 plus VAT 1.20	34.47		
Feb 35.96 plus VAT 1.20	37.16		
Mar 33.27 plus VAT 1.20	34.47		106.10
<i>(Payment of April invoice outstanding £45.54 + VAT)</i>			
002139 CAPALC Councillor Training	75.00		75.00
c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails	34.30	6.86	41.16

Signed..... Dated