

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

Present: M Housden (Chairman), L Holdaway, K Mackender, S Wilkin

In attendance Parish Clerk/RFO
District Councillor M Inskip

24/121 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from J Lucas, G Byrne (personal commitments), and the County and District Councillor L Dupré who was ill.

24/122 **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

24/123 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

24/124 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

Apologies had been received advising that the County and District Council monthly reports had not been prepared. District Councillor M Inskip said that with the General Election there had been a lot going on but he would give a verbal report:

The Operational Services Committee had agreed changes to Planning Pre-application advice fees and charges; implementation 1 July 2024. It was hoped that more people would use this service, which would help ensure the passage for a planning application would then be more straight forward. Household waste, go ahead given for making arrangements to cancel the black bag system and switch to a fortnightly bin system, much like the existing green and blue bin arrangement. There would also be a separate caddy/bin for food waste, which would be collected weekly for aerobic digestion.

Chairman gave update from L Dupré confirming that the verge between Witcham and Mepal would be cut back to help walkers. It was noted the street sign had gone up at the King's site in The Slade and the grass cut. However, the verge had not yet been made good. The hedge on Headleys Lane, opposite the Pond Farm development, was to be cut back and Councillor Dupré was awaiting further feedback regarding encroachments and obstructions, including planting of hedge on highway land. Further details for Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks to meet new local Highways Officer would follow.

7.40pm Chairman closed the open session for Councillor's reports. He thanked Councillor Inskip, who then left the meeting.

24/125 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

24/126 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 12 June 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 Chairman, seconded S Wilkin.

24/127 **Matters Arising**

Minute 24/115 East Cambridgeshire Buildings of Local Interest Register
Regarding the Parish Council's question to the Conservation Officer at East Cambs about whether or not the old barn (thought to be 1830s), at the rear of High Street (back of old Coach House), had been found and considered for inclusion on the Register; a response had been received advising that he had no information on the Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List and that this would have to go through as a third party nomination by the Council to the project website direct. Councillors confirmed that the barn should be put forward for listing by the Parish Council.

Cemetery Drainage – Clerk had chased for update on when drainage system in highway verge would be investigated. A response from CCC Principal Officer Flood Risk was noted.

24/128 **Empty Sanctuary Housing Homes and Garages**

Report received from Chairman and article in Fenscene was noted. In the hands of the District Council, no further action required by Parish Council.

24/129 **Planning Applications**

The following ECDC Decision was noted:
24/00253/FUL High Point, Hive Road Conversion and extension of single storey dwelling to create one and half storey dwelling - Approved

24/130 **Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) Minutes of the June meeting, plus revised copy of Community Action Plan, had been circulated by the Group and were noted. Chairman said work was going on to try to set up volunteer community conservation group and history section of old village appraisal was being updated for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) Clerk had circulated details for the Locality grant including revised split in Consultant's work with recommendation that stages 4 and 5 be applied for now and the final stage applied for later in the year.

Resolved that the Parish Council should submit the application for the Locality grant as drafted and discussed. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin.
(Copy to be sent to the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group).

Clerk

Locality had requested completion of a survey following the Group's receipt of the Technical Support package 'Design Including Design Codes,' which had now completed by a representative of the Working Group (MH)

24/131 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) **Weekly inspections** of play equipment and recreation ground had been completed by the Chairman and he advised there were no issues to raise except that the sign on the young children's play area fence had come unstuck and fallen down again. Matter to be raised with supplier. He had done some weeding on the new garden bed at the bottom of the driveway and reported that long grass had been left

24/131 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters (cont)**

around base of trees on the recreation ground which looked somewhat unsightly.

- b) **Repairs and redecoration of bus shelter** reviewed. Quotes received September 2023 to be updated and considered at next meeting.
- c) **New signage - entrance to village hall roadway.** A draft proposal and estimate of costs was presented and discussed. White signboard, 3mm ali printed and gloss laminate, with village crest and text for direction to recreation ground and village hall, mounted on existing structure. Separate double-sided sign for erection by new garden bed for directions to Village Hall. Chairman advised that Village Hall had agreed to pay for signage. After some discussion, Clerk instructed to obtain further quotes as discussed for next meeting and check status regarding conservation area requirements.

Clerk

24/132 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters**

- a) **Items reported to Highways Authority - None**

Correspondence from the Coveney/Wardy Hill/Way Head Tree Warden regarding planting of Oak trees, specifically 2 on the north side of Jerusalem Drove close to junction with The Green and adjacent to the south-east corner of the Ouse Washes Habitat Creation Scheme at Byall Fen had been previously circulated. Noted no cost to the Council and falls near boundary of village.

Resolved that the Council had no objection to the planting of two Oak trees as detailed in the email of 19 June. Also happy to talk to Tree Officer in the future about other schemes. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

Clerk

- b) **Abandonment of vehicle at Westway Place**

Chairman had been approached by 4 villagers regarding this apparent abandonment, which had been going on since February. It had been reported to ECDC and an initial check on DVLC revealed it was untaxed but was then subsequently taxed from June 2024. The vehicle had now gone.

24/133 **Speedwatch and MVAS Monitoring**

Update from village Speedwatch Co-ordinator received and noted. First session had taken place on 27 June at Martins Lane. These would now be regular events through the village.

Confirmation was received regarding indemnity for volunteers undertaking the sessions and the Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Speedwatch Guidance and Code of Conduct, including training and risk assessments undertaken by the scheme, had been circulated and were noted.

The MVAS speed data for June had been circulated by the Chairman and was noted.

24/134 **Finance and Administration Matters**

- a) Approve receipts and payments for July 2024 (previously circulated) Documentation had been checked by Chairman.
Resolved to approve the receipts and payments schedule for June, and to release cheques. Including arrangements for payments for August. Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin.

Clerk

Invoices for reimbursement for printing of recent editions of "What's On" had been chased but not yet received.

24/134 **Finance and Administration Matters**

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 24/134b) and 24/134c) 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.

b) **Approval of RSPB Lease**

Clerk was still awaiting receipt of draft with amendments to Clause 8 as discussed at last meeting.

c) **Deed of Public Right of Way and Parking**

Clerk had received confirmation from Village Hall Committee that they would accept the Fixed Fee quote from Ward Gethin Archer.

Resolved that the Clerk should now proceed with the necessary arrangements to instruct Ward Gethin Archer and get the process underway, under the terms discussed and agreed at earlier meetings. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded L Holdaway.

Clerk

24/135 **Correspondence**

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

ECDC Meeting agendas and minutes and Planning decisions, press releases, grant information and Youth Fusion Days.

Cambs ACRE Staying in Touch newsletter.

Cambs ACRE Rural Housing Mythbuster tour 11 July 2024.

NALC Bulletins, Newsletters and Events.

CAPALC Briefing Note – Financial Services Compensation Scheme and Bulletins – Clerk had contacted Lloyds and received confirmation that small parish councils, although listed as Local Authorities, were not exempt from the provisions of the FSCS £85,000 compensation scheme.

Additional correspondence received and circulated prior to meeting:

Cambs Pension Fund Admin Strategy – no comment.

TMC Accident Report June 2024.

Also noted that broadband pole had been erected at The Orchards, but not on the roundabout.

A resident’s enquiry about extending carpark at Westway Place by laying aggregate on green land had been referred back to enquirer as matter for District Council (as owners of green land) and Sanctuary (owners of carpark).

24/136 **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 11 September 2024

Items to be included:

CCC Community Energy Action Plan (circulated 9.7.24) for comments, due 16 Sept.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	NIL			
Payments	002158 Npower	35.38	1.77	37.15
	002159/60 Salary Expenses	536.66	-	536.66
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails	34.30	6.86	41.16
	002161 Truelink	392.40	78.48	470.88

Signed..... Dated