

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8 October 2025 at 7.32pm in the Village Hall, Witcham.

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**Present:** M Housden (Chairman) K Mackender (Vice-Chairman) G Byrne, S Wilkin.

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

25/148 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies received and accepted from L Holdaway (Hols) and J Lucas (Hols).

25/149 **To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on any items on the agenda**

Pecuniary interests - none

Personal interests - none

Prejudicial interests - none

25/150 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

25/151 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

Monthly reports for October, previously circulated, were noted and updated by the County and District Councillors.

Of particular interest was the proposal from ECDC regarding Local Government reorganisation; ECDC now prefer Option B (East Cambs, Fenland, Huntingdon and Peterborough) instead of Option A which would have put East Cambs with South Cambs and Cambridge City.

Cambridgeshire County Council was building the business case for Option A and had launched a survey. It was hoped that more data would be available for the public soon, as there was currently insufficient information for members of the public to properly consider and respond to the surveys being put out. Latest details updated on the County Council and District Council websites. Noted that the Government would make the final choice on composition/boundaries for the proposed unitary authority arrangements.

Regarding items raised by the Parish Council with the County Councillor: Hedgerow Headleys Lane – L Dupré had taken up with ECDC and CCC Highways. ECDC had insisted it was a Highways not planning issue. Markings at Headleys Lane junction with High Street, and potholes at High Street had been put forward for works to be completed.

Parish Council asked if the MP would give endorsement to support speed reduction measures and reinstatement of footway on the Mepal to Witcham road. L Dupré would speak to the MP. G Byrne reported on the meeting held with the Police who supported the proposals. MVAS and survey data would be used to support the LHI application. The Police had reported no recorded accidents in recent times but it was known that horseriders had been struck by a car near the cemetery and this could be used as evidence. There had also been near-miss incidents.

District Councillor M Inskip gave an update on the Local Government Reorganisation and highlighted major points arising from the last full council meeting of the District Council. Noted that the Chief Executive was leaving and recruitment, inhouse, was underway.

8.05pm L Dupré left the meeting.

25/152 **Public Participation** There were no members of the public present.

25/153 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 10 September 2025 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date was signed by the Chairman as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting.  
Proposed Chairman, seconded S Wilkin.

25/154 **Matters Arising**

*25/140c Finance and Admin – Village Inspection* Dog fouling signs for recreation ground and labels for “bagged dog waste accepted in this bin” had been delivered to the Chairman. Noted that new labels had already been placed on the dog bins but they do not give the bin number only a QR code which would not be any good for those without a mobile phone. Clerk to follow up with ECDC. *Clerk*

*25/144 Highways* Repainting the white lines at the junction High Street and Headleys Lane was on order, as was repairs to potholes in High Street.

25/155 **Neighbourhood Plan – Clarification Note**

<https://eastcambs.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-guidance/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-10>

Correspondence from Neighbourhood Plan Examiner and Consultant had been received and circulated to all Parish Councillors and the members of the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Chairman advised that the Working Group had met the evening before and accepted the comments put forward by the Consultant. Chairman invited District Councillor Inskip to speak. There was discussion about the next stages and how to go about publicising notices for the referendum in due course. Clerk confirmed she would liaise with District Council to ensure content of any notices was in accordance with statutory requirements.

Meeting resumed.

**Resolved** that the Council approved the responses proposed by the Consultant and agreed he should pass back to ECDC. Clerk to highlight to Consultant that the County Council's comments regarding WHM13 (County Council comment) – a separate youth survey had been conducted. Proposed G Byrne, seconded K Mackender. *Clerk*

The Working Group members and the Consultant were to be thanked for their speedy response. *Clerk*

Clerk to clarify with Consultant regarding amending drafting errors as per ECDC letter 2 September. (reference Paras 3.3, 3.7, 8.3, and page 28 Community Action 2). *Clerk*

Chairman thanked M Inskip for his support in preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan, and he left the meeting.

25/156 **Finance and Administration Matters**

- a) **Receipts and payments schedule** for October had been previously circulated. Documents had been checked by G Byrne and K Mackender.

**Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments for October.  
Proposed S Wilkin, seconded G Byrne.

- b) **External Auditors Report.** Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The 2024/25 External Auditor Report (Limited Assurance Review) had been completed. The details had been circulated to Councillors. There were no actions to be taken. The Notice of Completion of Audit and AGAR s. 1, 2, & 3 had already been published on the village noticeboard and website to comply with 30 September 2025 deadline. Clerk was thanked for her work. *Clerk*

- c) **Reinvestment of maturing savings (earmarked reserves)**  
**Resolved** that Clerk to arrange to reinvest the maturing FTD for 11 months (currently 2.24%) Proposed Chairman, seconded G Byrne.

- 25/156 d) **2026/27 Budget and Precept.** Clerk asked for details of items and costs for any projects Councillors wanted to see done in the next year or so in order that she could prepare the draft for the November meeting.  
She was asked to include an element for repairs to path across recreation ground although a grant would also be required as this would be an expensive project. Monies also required for the speed reduction measures and reinstatement of footpath on the Mepal-Witcham road. She advised that some monies had already been set aside in reserves earlier in the year for these projects.
- e) **Exclusion of the Press and Public:** It is hereby 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 confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at agenda items 25/156f) – 25/156i), namely RSPB lease, deed of right of way & car park, quotes and staff, 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 Chair of meeting and agreed. *Clerk*
- There were no members of the public present.
- f) **RSPB Lease.** RSPB representative had confirmed he would like the lease to be done by November and would chase his legal team. *Clerk*
- g) **Deed of Right of Way and Parking for Village Hall,** circulated 29 September and again on 7 October, including advisory information from legal adviser. *Clerk*  
**Resolved** to agree the lease and recommendations, and await final document for November meeting. Proposed K Mackender, seconded M Housden.
- h) **Quotes for tree maintenance works at Recreation Ground**  
**Resolved** to accept the quote from Oakes and Watson £490 excl VAT. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman.
- i) **Clerk's hours**  
**Resolved** to pay for 15 hours of the additional hours worked since April this year. Proposed K Mackender, seconded G Byrne.

#### 25/157 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

Weekly inspections of play equipment and recreation ground had been completed by the Chairman. Nil to report.  
He advised that the Witcham Events Committee Chairman had enquired if they might place 16 wooden crosses at the corner of the village hall roadway on the garden there, and a Remembrance soldier, together with tying poppies on the trees around the edge of the recreation ground on High Street and Martins Lane. The Clerk had not received an enquiry/application from the Witcham Events Committee and therefore this was not on the agenda.  
**Resolved** that although this was not an agenda item, the idea was generally acceptable and the Witcham Events Committee should make a formal application setting out full details to the Council urgently for the November meeting. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded G Byrne. *Clerk*

#### 25/158 **MVAS, Speed Watch and Speed Reduction Measures Mepal-Witcham**

- a) **Monthly speed data reports**, previously circulated, were noted.
- b) **Local Highways Initiative Programme** – a report, including the meeting with the Police representative, regarding extending the 40mph speed limit on Mepal-Witcham road and reinstatement of footway on verge had been previously circulated. (See also Minute 25/151). G Byrne would work on finalising the LHI application once the forms became available on-line for including on November agenda, together with confirmation on the element to be contributed by the Parish Council. Clerk to update Mepal Parish Council. *Clerk*

**25/159 Planning Matters**

The following ECDC decision was noted:

25/00813/FUL 24 Westway Place, Replacement of 4No 7.5ft high x 6ft wide fence panels at the bottom of the back garden. Approved.

**25/160 Highways and Street Lighting**

- a) To note any items reported to Highways Authority.

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

Clerk had reported subsidence issues on the Causeway up to Earith Bridge as it was very dangerous for all users.

Chairman reported that a resident had contacted County Council to report a broken gate at Bury Road.

Also noted that Balfour Beatty had completed switching over all the street lights owned by CCC to the LED system.

- b) TTRO Intended – to close Headleys Lane from Back Lane to Market Way for gully investigations and any works, expected 10-12 November 2025, was noted.

**25/161 Anglian Water – Low Water Pressure**

The response from Anglian Water regarding periods of low water pressure in the village was discussed.

**Resolved** that the Clerk should forward details of the streets affected together with known dates. A note to go in next newsletter urging people to report problems as and when they occur so that Anglian Water can investigate. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

*Clerk*

**25/162 Correspondence**

C Cane MP – Local Government Reorganisation.

Royal British Legion Remembrance Service 16 Nov at 15.45hrs, All Saints Church, Huntingdon.

CCC TMC Incident Report.

Pension Employer's Forum event Girton College.

ECDC Youth Fusion – report of summer events.

ECDC 17.9.25 Children's Society Prevention Programme event.

ECDC agendas, decision lists/minutes, Planning, Operational Services, Finance & Assets,

East Cambs Parish & Community Forum updates. Next meeting 17.9.25.

CAPALC Bulletins.

Cambs ACRE Newsletters.

NALC Newsletters, Events and Bulletins.

CCAN Newsletter.

**25/163 Date of next meeting: 12 November 2025**

Items for next agenda – Appoint volunteer(s) from the Parish Council to join the Witcham Conservation Group.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm.

**Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

		£	£	£
Receipts:	Precept	9500.00		9500.00
	Openreach wayleave	26.25		26.25
Payments:	002225/BACS Salary Expenses Oct	675.88		675.88
	002226 Cottenham Computers renewal fee	62.46	12.49	74.95
	002227 TEEC Hosting and .gov annual fees	186.00	37.20	223.20

## Payments continued

002228	RH & PJ Connolly – repairs	1420.00	-	1420.00
002229	PKF Littlejohn LLP External Audit fees	315.00	63.00	378.00
002230	Truelink Sept	372.00	74.40	446.40
002231	Reimburse Clerk's expenses	84.85		84.85
b/c	Lloyds (Jul/Aug) debited 19.9.25	5.25		5.25
c/p	MS online services – 7 licences emails			
	Sept/Oct debited 20.9.25	32.20	6.44	38.64

Signed..... Dated .....