

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 April 2007 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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**Present:** D A Bamforth (Chairman), D J Saberton, D K Saberton

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)  
2 members of the public

Two members of the public attended the public question time period at 7.15 pm to raise concern at the County Council's management of the droves (Public Rights of Ways – Byways). It had been understood the County Council intended to improve the droves by clearing back vegetation to make passable for walkers and horses. In the event the vegetation including mature trees had been 'bulldozed' to give a width of up to 40 – 50 feet. This is alarming since it has destroyed wildlife habitat and fauna, and opened up the droves for the abuse of fly-tipping, illegal caravan parking, and an attraction for pleasure seeking 4-wheel drivers who are apt to create even more damage to surfaces rendering it useless for walkers and horses. In addition exposed roots and stumps have been left causing a trip hazard.

Photographic evidence was presented and members of the public confirmed that letters had been written to Councils, MP, and a number of other interested environmental bodies to stop further 'destruction' of these public rights of way.

Noted that the system of locked gates to restrict access by vehicles to owners/tenants had not yet been implemented and that with the now very exposed droves it was important for the County Council to implement this system in order to offer protection from abuse.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending to explain their concerns and they then left the meeting.

Full Council business commenced at 7.45 pm.

518. **Apologies for Absence** were received from A White (at another meeting) and P Chambers, M Wilkin and C Watson.

Action

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Mr Don Saberton back who had missed several meetings due to ill-health.

519. **Declaration of Interest:** There were none

520. **Minutes of the meetings** of 13 March 2007, 20 March 2007 and 2 April 2007 had been circulated, and were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr David Saberton, seconded by Mr D A Bamforth and agreed unanimously.

521. **Matters Arising**

*490 Seepage of water, Westway Place/Silver Street and Affordable Housing*  
To be brought forward at future meeting.

Clerk

*497 Quality Parish Council Status:* Clerk was delighted to announce that the application had been successful and further details would be issued in due course. Chairman thanked Clerk for her work in putting together the portfolio and application

522. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

There were no planning applications for consideration.

To note ECDC decisions:

07/00083/FUL 1 Market Way. Carport to side of property. Approved  
06/01362/FUL White Horse PH. Erection of new dwelling. Refused

**523. RECREATION GROUND AND VILLAGE HALL FACILITIES**

a) Report of Public Meeting of 2 April 2007 to discuss obtaining land at rear of 2 Martins Lane and releasing 10' strip beside village hall drive to safe-guard future sustainability of Witcham Village Hall received.

b) Letter from Moore Stephens received 14 April, advising that a parishioner had contacted them in respect of this transaction, was discussed. Chairman and Clerk to finalise the response which justifies the need for acquisition of this land at this time and to emphasises that the Council has no intention of contravening any regulations, nor acting unlawfully.

*Clerk/  
Chairman*

The Chairman reported that the Council's solicitors had been contacted by telephone to discuss the proposals and preparation of documents should the Auditors agree the proposals would be lawful.

The consent to change use of garden to car park, granted December 2004, made provision for boundaries and ECDC had confirmed that they would need details of the builders' fencing to his property around rear and side of 2 and 2A Martins Lane to ensure covers requirements for arrangements for boundaries of carpark. As discussed at March meetings the builder had agreed to undertake hardstanding for carpark free of charge subject to Council covering cost of materials (max £500). Proposal confirmed by Chairman, seconded by Mr David Saberton and agreed unanimously.

Negotiations and progression of proposals to be continued and reported back to next meeting as discussed above. Proposed Chairman, seconded Mr David Saberton and agreed unanimously.

*Clerk/  
Chairman*

c) Cricket nets had been erected and Chairman had received one complaint regarding positioning. He had referred the matter to be dealt with by the Cricket Club direct.

Noted that use of the recreation ground by the Mepal and Witcham Football team had been successful and Clerk instructed to write to the club to ask if they would like to use for some of the matches again next year.

*Clerk*

d) Mr David Saberton reported that there were no issues to report regarding play equipment inspections. RoSPA report awaited.

**524. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

Mr David Saberton reported that the new Groundsman had commenced grasscutting. He had arranged for repairs to some equipment and will see how it goes but may need to purchase a small mower – Chairman to investigate trade in. To be kept under review for next meeting. Purchase of new goggles proposed by Mr David Saberton, seconded by Chairman and agreed unanimously. No other new safety equipment required at present.

*DJS*

**525. PARISH PATHS**

Outcome of grant application awaited.

**526. PARISH PLAN**

Chairman reported that results of survey had been pulled together and new Parish Plan was to be presented to the parish at the Annual Parish Meeting on 24 April 2007. Clerk to arrange for distribution of flyer to each house with weekly free newspaper.

*Clerk*

**527. CEMETERY**

a) Consent for erection of new headstone for Tom and Jane King approved.

*Clerk*

b) Clerk to contact surveyor to check progress on completion of plan so consecration can be completed urgently.

*Clerk*

**528. CHURCH – NEW HEATING SYSTEM AND HOT WATER FACILITIES**

Clerk reported that the Church Treasurer was delighted with the support offered and further progress will be reported in due course.

**529. COMMUNITY POLICE**

Nothing to report.

**530. 2007 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

Parish – 3 nominations only. Will need to co-opt 3 more.

District and County nominations noted - election 3 May 2007.

Alan White and Brenda Daters were not offering themselves for re-election and the Chairman proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to them expressing the Council's appreciation of all the work and support they had given over the years. Alan had served many terms as District Councillor.

**531. REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

There were none.

**532. STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

a) Condition of droves – Bury Road. Council considered evidence of work carried out by County Council contractors and were alarmed by the severity. Chairman proposed meeting with County Council Head of Public Rights of Way and Karen Whymark and invite adjoining landowners/tenants, week commencing 30 April. To be reviewed May Council meeting.  
Clerk to ask County Council to repair the patch in The Slade where a vehicle caught fire last summer.

*Clerk*

Clerk to contact District Council to ensure green areas at Westway Place and The Orchards will be cut this year.

*Clerk*

b) Clerk awaiting further details from County Council regarding replacement of the cracked column and non-functioning lamp at Headleys Way/Market Way. Quotations being sought for an early replacement.

*Clerk*

c) Damaged grass island at The Orchards had been reported to East Cambs Service Centre, providers of recycling collection, who requested more information for their insurance company. Co-operation of residents may be required to ensure vehicles are off-road so that large vehicles can get round the island on collection days.

*Clerk*

**533. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following were received:

Allianz & Cornhill Insurance renewal received – review for equipment and fidelity Guarantee

*Clerk*

NALC training bursary successful, £48.75. Clerk recommended Councillor training courses, especially for new Councillors in May.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan – timetable changes noted

ECDC 'New Arrivals' booklet

ECDC Standards Committee – application for dispensation by a Parish Council - circulated

ECDC Planning – site visit protocol - circulated

ECDC Revised Local Development Framework – new timetable noted

Standards Committee – Code of Conduct – to be circulated

DCA Memorial Safety

**534. PUBLICATIONS CIRCULATED**

ACRE Community Action

Hereward Housing – Outlook East

535. **FINANCE**

a) & b) Clerk had produced the last quarter accounts and prepared year-end accounts for 2006/7 which had been previously circulated. These were examined and agreed. Total income including £2250 grant for Parish Plan and £470 grant for Parish Paths was £13541. Total expenditure was £8277. Balance carried forward at 1 April 2006 was £21172. Balance at 1 April 2007 was £26436 and this included £1900 for production of Parish Plan and over £400 for Parish Paths Scheme. Reserves are being accrued to fund Village Hall facilities and cemetery.

The Annual Return was completed and the Chairman proposed approval of the accounts. Seconded Mr David Saberton and agreed unanimously. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations the accounts will be available for public inspection between 1 and 28 June 2007 and a summary will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 24 April.

Clerk

The following Receipts and Payments were presented, checked and approved:

		£	£	£
Receipts	RSPB 2006/7 and 2007/8	1300.00		1300.00
	ACRE Fens LeAP Leader - Parish Plan Grant			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> instalment	750.00		750.00
	NALC Training Grant - Clerk	48.75		48.75
	Ely Funeral Service Headstone King	50.00		50.00
Payments:	000821 Focus Group – Parish Plan			
	(from grants)			
	(to be held until Plan approved)	1925.00	336.87	2261.87
	000823 J Lucas Delivery Mar newsletter	6.00		6.00
	000824 Mepal Stores Ltd What's On April S142	14.00	2.45	16.45
	d/d Talk Talk (March)	1.98	.34	2.32

Clerk to be remunerated for additional hours worked over previous year and noted that funding was available to help with costs towards extra work incurred in producing portfolio for Quality Parish Council Status.

536. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 24 April 2007 at 7.30 pm.

Annual General Meeting -Tuesday 8 May 2007. Commencing at 7.15 pm for monthly check of payments and receipts and 'open to the public' time. Business to commence at 7.30 pm.

***Any business and payments, to be considered at Parish Council meeting must be delivered To the Clerk for inclusion on the agenda at least 6 clear days prior to the meeting.***

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.55 pm

Signed .....

Dated .....