

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13 September 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

Present: M Housden (Chairman), K Mackender (Vice Chairman), L Elbourne, J Herbert, J Bibby (from Minute 17/148 [excluding Minute 17/151])

In attendance Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)

4 Members of the Public (Public Participation)
3 Members of public stayed for part of the meeting

Action

17/144 **Apologies for Absence** were accepted from J Lucas (holidays). J Bibby had sent apologies that she would be late due to family commitment. Apologies also received from County Councillor L Dupré and District Councillors A Bailey and M Bradley

17/145 **Declaration of Interest:**
The following declarations of interests were made:
Pecuniary interests - none
Personal interests - none
Prejudicial interests – Mr K Mackender Item 17/151 9 High Street (Neighbour)

17/146 **Dispensations:**

To note Dispensations: Nil

Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed 4 members of the public to speak. K Mackender also wished to speak under the Public Participation section.

17/147 **Public Participation:** 3 members of the public and K Mackender voiced concerns regarding the proposed development at 9 High Street. This application had been refused earlier in the year as a full application on the grounds that the site was unsuitable but a new application had been submitted, as an outline application, for the same site - off the public right of way – Back Lane drove, rear of 9 High Street. Residents had also submitted letter of objection to the Planning Authority as clearly the circumstances, ie the issues with the site, remained unchanged.

Members of the public voiced concerns regarding development on land south west of 1 Market Way, being outside the village development envelope and with poor access due to the narrowness of Headleys Lane and that any development within the village should be considered as a holistic view of the whole village.

1 member of the public voiced concerns regarding proposed development on land south of High Point. It was also noted the application form was incorrect in terms of boxes ticked suggested the new property would be connected to the main sewer and drainage which were not available. It also suggested there were no trees or hedges on site but in fact there was, and part would be felled to make the access.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 7.50pm

Chairman closed the meeting to the public at 7.50pm

Chair proposed moving to item 17/151 – Planning applications and this was agreed.

K Mackender declared a prejudicial interest in 9 High Street and left the meeting at 7.50pm

17/01547/OUT Land northern boundary of 9 High Street Outline planning low energy sustainable home

The Council reviewed comments received in the public participation section of the meeting and the letters of objection lodged with the Planning Authority.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 8.00pm

RESOLVED that the Parish Council sought outright refusal of permission and that the Clerk submit the following comments based on previous refusal conditions and community concerns: Proposed L Elbourne, seconded J Herbert and agreed unanimously.

This site for development was refused (16/01291/FUL refers) in early 2017. The reasons for refusal by the Planning Authority clearly stated that it was an unsuitable area for development:

“In terms of its siting outside of the settlement envelope of the village, scale and design, the proposal would comprise an incongruous and isolated form of development within a location that would be visually discordant with and cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the rural landscape contrary to the requirements of Policy ENV1 and ENV2 of East Cambs Local Plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of promoting sustainable development in rural areas and enhancement of the built environment.”

“The location of residential development within this rural location outside of the settlement envelope of the village would result in an unwelcome intrusion of the built form into an open landscape that would be unsustainable by having a demonstrable and significant detriment upon the openness of this part of the village fringe resulting in an erosion of the views available from both the Public Rights of Way that pass close to the site and local properties. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the requirements of Policy ENV1 of East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 in maintaining both landscape and settlement character.”

“The proposal was considered to be unsustainable and applicant informed of concerns regarding location and visual impact”

Specifically, the Parish Council could see no changes in circumstance to warrant consideration of a further application for this site. The Parish Council’s original comments for the full application and the Planning Authority’s reasons for refusal remained unchanged. To recap the Parish Council and community concerns focused on the following facts:

- a) Access is over a green drove – Back Lane (a mixture of grass drove/compacted soil/fine rubble) – being a Public Right of Way enjoyed by walkers and horseriders, which the County Council protects by way of a gated/closed scheme during late Autumn to early Spring – not a metalled highway.
- b) Close to conservation area and would impact on the natural environment, the biodiversity of the drove and adjoining lands which are a rich habitat for a number of wildlife and plant species, and historically and characteristically grazing areas on the fringe of the village at the back of High Street.
- c) Local people are fearful that this swathe of land running at the back of High Street and adjacent Back Lane, see Local Plan maps, would be seen by other developers as opportunistic and then a significant characteristic of this

characteristic of this historic, beautiful and tranquil village would be lost forever.

- d) Clearly there would be a loss of privacy and overshadowing for neighbours and a loss of amenity (visual, traffic and structures) for walkers and riders.

For all the above reasons the Parish Council did not understand why a further application was being considered by the Planning Authority again. The Parish Council noted from the application form that pre-application advice had been sought and there was a recommendation that future design should follow style similar to an agricultural barn conversion appearance.

Clerk

The Parish Council had received correspondence from residents (believed to have been submitted to ECDC direct) and at the September Council meeting members of the public attended to voice strong objection to these latest proposals. The Parish Council supported its community with these concerns and asked the Planning Authority to refuse this and any other application due to the inappropriateness of this site as described above.

The Parish Council requested that this application be called in by the District Councillor for determination by the Planning Committee.

MB/AB

Mr K Mackender returned to the meeting at 8.05pm

17/01404/OUT land southwest 1 Market Way proposed bungalow, garaging, parking turning and associated site works

The Council noted receipt of the visual impact assessment and noted that no response was required. Original comments still stood.

Clerk

17/01361/FUL High Point Hive Road construction of 4bed, 2storey detached dwelling - reduced scale of dwelling.

Resolved that other than incorrect information given in sections 11 and 15 of the application form, namely there was no sewerage/drainage system to connect to and trees/hedging would be removed (at least for access), the revised plans for reduction in scale of dwelling had no effect on the Council's original comments. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded M Housden and unanimously agreed.

Clerk

Remaining 2 members of the public left the meeting

The following ECDC decisions were noted:

17/01009/FUL adj Witcham House, stable block, haystore, wash down area and menage - approved

17/00899/LBC Windrush Cottage 22 High Street - approved

17/00900/FUL Windrush Cottage 22 High Street – approved

17/01268/TRE Hill House 1 Matins Lane Fell Horse Chestnut – approved

J Bibby arrived at 8.20pm

- 17/148 **Minutes of the meeting** of 12 July 2017 had been circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, and agenda of same date signed by Chairman as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded M Housden and unanimously resolved.

Clerk apologised that Minutes of 23 August 2017 in respect of planning applications and approval of payment of cheques had been omitted from the agenda. These had been circulated on 29 August and would be included for approval at the next meeting.

- 17/149 **Matters Arising**

There were none.

- 17/150 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

Reports from County and District Councillors, previously circulated, were noted.

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17/151 **FINANCE**

Receipts and Payments

The September receipts and payments had been checked by L Elbourne and confirmed as correct.

Invoice for J Wells for reimbursement of copying for What's On, £10.80, received at meeting and manually added to schedule.

Clerk advised that she had taken the old minutes to the Brignells Bookbinders for binding before going into the County Council Archives, and was awaiting a firm price. A cheque would need to be raised before the bound minutes could be collected. *Clerk*

Clerk advised that the external auditor's (PKF) invoice had been received but she was querying this as it was significantly more than in previous years. *Clerk*

Resolved to approve the receipts and payments as listed at the end of these Minutes, and that cheques be raised in between meetings for Brignells and PKF if necessary and reported at next meeting. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded K Mackender *Clerk*

Quarterly Accounts and Reconciliations to 30 June 2017 and review of budgets
(previously circulated)

Clerk confirmed expenditure was on target and that the half yearly accounts to 30 September would be prepared for the October meeting ready for consideration of 2018/19 Budgets and Precept preparation. *Clerk*

Resolved to approve the quarterly accounts and reconciliations to 30 June 2017, and the budget report was noted. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded K Mackender

Items for 2018/19 Budget and Precept

Clerk requested that Councillors give consideration for proposed expenditure/projects for inclusion in preparation of 2018/19 Budget and Precept for discussion at the next meeting. *All Cllrs*

Audit of 2016/17 Accounts

Clerk advised that the external audit had been completed and it was noted that the past practice of including the RSPB rent in the financial year for which it was due should be revised to be recorded in the actual year that the monies were received at the bank. ie Monies due on 1 April each year but normally paid into bank by direct debit on about 30/31 March should appear in the accounts for the financial year ending 31 March, rather than shown on the bank reconciliation sheet as an adjustment. This was noted, together with the amendment to the figures in Section 2 of the Annual Return, lifting the figures at Box 3 (receipts) to £18,546 and Boxes 7 and 8 (balances) to £37,193. This adjustment would be reflected in next year's Annual Return. *Clerk*

Re-appointment of Internal Auditor

Resolved that Mr M Williamson be re-appointed Internal Auditor for 2017/18. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded J Herbert *Clerk*

Review of Financial Regulations (Draft template previously circulated for comment)

Clerk drew attention to the following items and sought Council advice on content to cover Witcham Parish Council: Sections 4.1, 4.4, 5.6, 5.10, 7.4, 8.3. It was noted that under 11.1.c and 11.1.f there were changes in procedures for tendering. It was also noted that under section 6 there was provision in the NALC template for electronic banking and cards, and it was agreed to leave this in so that if in the future it was thought appropriate to switch banking arrangements the Council would be covered.

17/151 **FINANCE** (cont)

300/.....

Resolved that the Clerk make changes to the template as discussed and re-issue to Councillors as soon as possible for presentation at the next meeting for adoption. Proposed by L Elbourne, seconded by K Mackender. *Clerk/ All Cllrs*

17/153 **RECREATION GROUND**

Chairman reported that there was nothing to report on the weekly inspections of the play equipment and recreation ground. He had repaired two benches on the recreation ground and stained the benches as required. K Mackender thanked the Chairman for his work, seconded by J Herbert.

Grasscutting

Councillors were happy with recent cuts and Chairman advised that he had received compliments over the summer regarding the cemetery. Recent weather conditions had meant that the grass was rather long on the last cut but this was a seasonal problem and the Council was satisfied. The hedge at the cemetery had also recently been cut again.

Unauthorised access/use of recreation ground

Resident's concerns regarding use of recreation ground were discussed and Clerk had circulated advice from ECDC. Options for controlling access were considered. It was agreed not to erect barriers and to work with ECDC and CCC who had offered their support as and when required.

Tree Works

Clerk had met with the tree surgeon for follow-up work following tree survey in 2015 and his subsequent works. Clerk had previously circulated report of recommended works and his quote of £335 plus VAT was considered.

Resolved that the Council accept the quote as detailed in the report of £335 plus VAT from Haine Trees. Proposed J Bibby, seconded M Housden. *Clerk*

17/154 **CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

The following items were noted and there were no comments to be made from the Council

ECDC Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (closing date 27.9.17)
(circulated 6.8.17)

CCC Children's Centre Services (closing date 22.9.17) (circulated 27.7.17)

ECDC Draft Rural Settlement List Business Rates Rural Rate Relief (circulated 8.9.17)

17/155 **RED TELEPHONE KIOSK**

L Elbourne verbally reported on findings in respect of working with Community Heartbeat to install defibrillator in the disused telephone kiosk in High Street and advised that she had found a volunteer to paint it both inside and out but as a volunteer he had no public liability insurance. Clerk confirmed that the Council's insurance normally covered activities carried out by volunteers but that a risk assessment would be required since the old red paint could contain lead. Clerk had quotes for re-painting the kiosk but these were not considered in the light that a volunteer had been found. Clerk asked for details about future maintenance and liability of the equipment and it was noted that an electricity supply was required for the defibrillator cabinet.

Resolved that

- a) L Elbourne should proceed with investigations to work with Community Heartbeat for the installation of a defibrillator in the disused telephone kiosk in High Street which would be at no cost to the Council
- b) liaise with volunteer regarding painting the telephone kiosk inside and out
- c) Clerk to work with ECDC regarding change of use of the telephone box
- d) note to go in What's On.

Proposed Chairman, seconded J Herbert.

*LE/
Clerk*

17/155 **RED TELEPHONE KIOSK (cont)**

Clerk to write to nearby neighbours to advise of the proposals.

301/....

Clerk

17/156 **PERIODIC WATER MAIN BURSTS AT THE SLADE**

There had been two further water main bursts in The Slade. The first had been fixed on Saturday and another had occurred on Sunday. Over the last few years there has been a number of sporadic water main bursts and it was felt Anglian Water needed to replace the main.

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Anglian Water to advise that due to the number of water main bursts over a number of years, the Council requested that these old mains be replaced in The Slade as it was having an adverse effect for residents and businesses in the village. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Bibby.

Clerk

17/157 **SPEED REDUCTION MEASURES**

There being no further information available, this item was deferred.

17/158 **AUTUMN LITTERPICK**

Clerk reported that the litterpick co-ordinator was proposing to hold a village litterpick in October.

Resolved that the Council was very pleased to support this event and thanked the co-ordinator.

Clerk

17/159 **WITCHAM WEBSITE**

J Herbert advised that she had no further information to report at the moment.

JH

17/160 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The following were received and noted

East Cambs Conference 10 October 2017, 12pm onwards, Littleport Leisure Centre
CCC Future of Libraries – workshops
CCC Energy Switch
CCC Bus Changes
CCC Cambridgeshire Innovate and Cultivate (Cambs ACRE)
A Cambridgeshire Scrapbook – M Petty
CCC Roadworks Newsletters
Ouse Washes Newsletter
ICO Newsletter

17/161 **COMMUNITY POLICE**

It was noted that there had been car/motorbike activities on the Elean Business Park and agreed Clerk should check with District Councillor A Bailey for an up-date on progress with antisocial behaviour deterrents at this site. J Bibby reported seeing heaps/mounds of soil on site now. It was also reported that there had been break-ins in several nearby villages.

Clerk

17/162 **STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

CCC Community Gritting Scheme 2017/18 details received and noted.

Chair reported that the boarding in front of the light near entrance to Village Hall drive had come loose again; this had been attended to by Balfour Beatty in the past because it had not been reinstalled when the lights were replaced.

Clerk

302/.....

17/163 **REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

There were no reports received

17/164 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 7.30 pm. L Elbourne gave apologies.

Any business, including receipts and payments, to be considered at Parish Council meeting must be delivered to the Clerk at least 7 clear days prior to the meeting. (*Standing Orders 4 All and 5*)

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.25pm

September Schedule of Receipts and Payments

			£	£	£
Receipts	Nil				
Payments	001658	Truelink August	303.00	60.60	363.60
	001659	Clerks Sept salary	224.46)		
		& expenses Apr-Aug	114.05)		338.51
	001660	CCC LGSS Sept	115.44		115.44
	001661	HMRC	168.20		168.20
	001662	PKF External Auditor (to be confirmed)	200.00	40.00	240.00
	001663	Brignells Bookbinders (to be confirmed)			
	d/d	Lloyds Fees	12.50		12.50
	d/d/	Talk Talk	0.45		0.45

Signed Dated