

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 14 December 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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**Present:** M Housden (Chairman), K Mackender (Vice Chairman), L Elbourne, J Bibby, J Herbert, J Lucas

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)  
Cllr L Duprè (CCC)  
8 Members of the Public (Public Participation)  
8 Members of public stayed for part of the meeting (7.30pm to 8.40pm, 6 left at 8.33pm see below)

- Action
- 16/209 **Apologies for Absence** were received from District Councillors A Bailey and M Bradley. Noted that J Herbert would be arriving a little late.
- 16/210 **Declaration of Interest:**  
The following declarations of interests were made:  
Pecuniary interests - none  
Personal interests - none  
Prejudicial interests:  
Mr K Mackender Item 16/216: 16/01567/FUL (neighbour consultee)  
Mrs J Bibby Item 16/216: 16/01538/FUL (neighbour consultee)
- 16/211 **Dispensations:**  
To note Dispensations: Nil
- 16/212 **Public Participation:** Chairman invited members of the public to speak for 15 minutes and proposed taking Item 16/216 Planning Application 16/01567/FUL Pond Farm development before Item 16/213 and this was agreed.  
A member of the public asked for clarification on Minute 16/197 regarding the request for District Councillor Bradley to enquire about extending the conservation area for Witcham as it would have a major impact on the village. The member of the public was advised that this was being investigated in the context of enforcing the planning development boundaries for the village in the older part of the village. District Councillor Bradley had provided information on websites and the process, which could be considered by the Parish Council.  
A member of the public asked if the Parish Council had to make a decision on its response tonight – some residents may not be aware of the amendments to the application for Pond Farm so the Parish Council would not be able to take any of these comments into consideration when it responded to East Cambs District Council.  
7.48pm J Herbert arrived.  
A member of the public questioned whether it was necessary to build 5 houses on this site when 10 were planned for the Kings site in The Slade and development across the district was being focused on towns and larger settlements.  
Members of the public set out their concerns about the development: overdevelopment at this peaceful end of the village, plot 5 was outside the development envelope, inadequate and safe access and parking facilities, protecting old wall around part of site, inadequate infrastructure and exacerbation of water and sewage problems, potential to set a precedent for further areas off Back Lane (currently grass and paddocks) to be developed for housing.  
A member of the public enquired if a new survey had been carried out in view of there being a newt habitat close by.  
A member of the public raised concerns about the silver silos that had been erected on the Elean Business Park and asked what was in the silos. There had been some noise nuisance from the strawburner. She was concerned that industrial development on the Elean Business Park was getting closer to Witcham.

16/212 **Public Participation (cont)**

K Mackender having declared a prejudicial interest left the meeting and the public participation session was closed.

Chairman moved to agenda item 16/216

16/216 **PLANNING**

16/01567/FUL Pond Farm 21 High Street Residential development for 3 houses plus garages and change of use of existing agricultural barn along with new vehicular accesses to 21 High Street and plot 2

The application was reviewed together with written and verbal comments from members of the public.

**Resolved** that the Council objected to the application and requested ECDC refuse planning consent. The District Councillors to be asked to have the application called in. The Council supported resident's concerns and objected on the following grounds:

- Loss of amenity for neighbouring properties – the proposed development overlooks and overshadows, loss of privacy.
- Highway Issues: Access off Headley s Lane for plots 3, 4 and 5 – this is a narrow single track lane. Proposals will give rise to problems with traffic generation, vehicular access and highway safety. The entrance for Plot 1 and 2 (in High Street) is inadequate for housing.
- Ancient wall running between 19 and 21 High Street - the demolition of part, and reduction of another part. This ancient wall around the site, should be preserved and maintained. (Council thought this would be protected as in Conservation Area?) In any case the access for plots 1 and 2 is too near the junction with Headleys Lane and is used as a turning area. A blind corner.
- Unacceptable loss and effect on trees and wildlife. We note known Great Crested Newt habitat nearby.
- The proposals represent overdevelopment of plot, there is insufficient infrastructure for 5 houses here, with water and sewage already existing problems (water pipes bursting and low pressure issues and sewage floods gardens at The Slade as the system leaves the village for the pumping station).
- Layout and density of building design: Too many houses proposed for this site. Object to plots 4 and 5. Note access off Headleys Lane and Plot 5 is outside the approved village envelope and contradicts and undermines the Parish's wishes in the Local Plan/Village Vision (infill only/no large developments). Object to small house on front as again overdevelopment at this corner and should stay a garden/orchard to preserve the rural and farming heritage in this section of the village. The footprint of the old barn proposed for conversion is now far exceeded by the proposed design and again not in-keeping with the existing streetscene and rural heritage of the area.
- There may be archeological interest in this area of the village.

This proposed development is unnecessary and untenable, and part of which is backland development. The proposals do not reflect the long established pattern of development in this quarter of the village; the site will be cramped and at odds with the existing street scene. Proposed M Housden, seconded L Elbourne and agreed unanimously.

*Clerk*

K Mackender rejoined the meeting at 8.33pm  
6 Members of the public left the meeting.

Chairman proposed moving to item 16/215 to receive report form County Councillor L Dupré and this was agreed.

16/215 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

Reports from County and District Councillors had been previously circulated. County Councillor L Dupré advised that the County Council had reversed the decision to reduce the gritting routes and that Witcham would be back on the precautionary gritting route and the criteria etc was all being reviewed.

16/215 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (cont)**

2 remaining members of the public left the meeting at 8.40pm

County Councillor L Dupré was on the group developing activities and programmes for physical activities and healthy weight, and gave an update regarding transport and the bringing together of rail transport with road transport.

16/213 **Minutes of the meeting** of 9 November 2016 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 J Lucas seconded M Housden and unanimously resolved.

16/214 **Matters Arising** There was none

16/216 **PLANNING (cont)**

J Bibby had declared a prejudicial interest and left the debate for the following item (she had made no comment under the public participation session):

16/01538/FUL Amberlea Kennels and Cattery, Ely Road, Sutton. Proposed demolition of part and extension to existing building to provide a new and permanent reception, office and sales area and an additional bedroom within the domestic accommodation

**Resolved** that the Council had no concerns on this application. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded M Housden

*Clerk*

J Bibby re-joined the meeting

The following ECDC decisions were noted

16/01202/FUL Witcham Lodge Headleys Lane Proposed sun-lounge and works to boundary wall (amended design) Approved

16/01267/FUL rear 12A Martins Lane Construction of 4-bed, 2-storey detached dwelling - Refused

16/217 **WINTER GRITTING ROUTES**

The news from the County Councillor that the County Council had overturned its decision on reducing the precautionary gritting route was noted.

16/218 **COMPLAINTS**

Complaint and suggestions for dealing with dog fouling received and noted.

Complaint regarding silos on Elean Business Park discussed. Clerk to write to ECDC to enquire about the consent and what is in the silos. *Clerk*

16/219 **RSPB OUSE WASHES LEASE**

Clerk gave an update on progress with lease for letting the Ouse Wash droves to the RSPB for a further 6 years.

**Resolved** that the revised document be approved and signed off by the Chairman and Clerk. Proposed M Housden, seconded K Mackender. *Clerk*

16/220 **RECREATION GROUND**

Chairman reported that there was nothing to report on the weekly inspections of the play equipment and recreation ground.

16/221 **VILLAGE SIGN**

Details on options and recommendations from contractors had been previously circulated. It appeared the old village sign, which had been in place since the 1970s was irreparable but

16/221 **VILLAGE SIGN (cont)**

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Councillors wanted to see samples of the contractors' works before making a decision on the type of materials to opt for. Proposed costs were noted for the forthcoming budget/Precept and Clerk reported that grant monies may be available.

**Resolved** to leave the noticeboard as it was and review quotes and options in January.  
Proposed K Mackender and seconded J Lucas.

16/222 **Finance**

### **2017/18 Budget and setting of Precept**

Clerk had previously circulated summary following consideration of financial reports and draft budget/precept at previous meetings. Councillors reviewed and discussed the information and options.

**Resolved** to approve the expenditure budget of £13,035 and to set the Precept at £13,100.  
Proposed J Lucas, seconded M Housden.

*Clerk*

It was noted that this was an increase of £200 for the year representing a 1.56% rise. Income for the year was predicted to be £14,120 giving a balance of £1,085 to earmark for projects such as new village sign, cemetery, play area refurbishment etc.

### **November/December Receipts and Payments**

The December schedule of payments had been previously circulated. The receipts and payments as listed on the schedule at the end of these Minutes had been checked by J Lucas.

Proposed by J Lucas, seconded K Mackender and unanimously resolved to approve the said receipts and payments listed at the end of the Minutes:

*Clerk*

Clerk requested approval for the following:

Late invoices FJ Wells 1&1 internet (reimbursement) and JP Wells December What's On. She also requested approval to re-issue payment to JP Wells of £11.10 to replace cheque number 1565 (April) which had been lost and remained unrepresented to the bank.

**Resolved** to approve payment of cheques 001612 JP Wells £22.20 (reissued payment and Dec/Jan edition What's On) and 001613 JF Wells £31.43 (1&1).  
Proposed J Lucas, seconded K Mackender

*Clerk*

Renewal of membership to Cambridgeshire ACRE

**Resolved** approve renewal of membership to ACRE at £45.00 plus VAT.  
Proposed J Lucas, seconded K Mackender

*Clerk*

### **1&1 Internet services**

Clerk advised that now Mr Wells was giving up looking after the website, arrangements would need to be made for payment to come direct from the Parish Council in preference to reimbursing the volunteer that would take over. This had been paid by card on-line in the past but the Parish Council did not have this facility to continue with this arrangement. Cheques were not accepted.

**Resolved** that the Clerk should set up a direct debit for charges for 1&1 Internet services forthwith. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded J Bibby.

*Clerk*

16/222 **Purchase of computer and printer**

Clerk gave an up-date on quotes having spoken to the company at Milton. Quotes considered and discussed. Much of the cost could be met by savings on bundle of new toners for old printer and underspend on the administrative budget. As recorded in earlier meetings replacements were necessary due to age of existing equipment and being unable to obtain support to maintain the existing old software. The old equipment was not up to spec to support new versions of software and this replacement was now urgent.

**Resolved** that the Council approves the expenditure to purchase Lenovo laptop computer with Windows 10, HP laser printer/scanner/copier, latest MS Office and transfer/set up fee at a cost of approximately £629 plus VAT Proposed by Chairman and agreed unanimously

Clerk

16/223 **REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Volunteer Litter Picking Policy had been previously circulated and were discussed.

**Resolved** to amend necessity to request tenders for expenditure of £50,000 and above in the Financial Regulations. Proposed K Mackender, seconded M Housden

**Resolved** to re-adopt the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations subject to amendment for tenders. Proposed by L Elbourne, seconded by M Housden.

**Resolved** to re-adopt the existing Code of Conduct. Proposed M Housden, seconded L Elbourne.

**Resolved** to re-adopt the existing Litter Picking Policy and procedures. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded J Herbert

Clerk confirmed she had received feedback from the LGPS regarding Pensions Discretionary Policy which had been acceptable subject to one additional item to be added. This item was deferred to the next meeting. L Elbourne to lead on reviewing next tranche of policies with a view to presenting for review and approval in the next couple of months.

Clerk  
LE16/224 **WEBSITE MANAGEMENT**

J Herbert advised that review and re-launching the website was ongoing and that the volunteer website administrator would attend the next meeting to discuss proposals with the Council.

JH

16/225 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The following had been received and circulated, and were noted:

East Cambs Parish Conference - The Beeches Community Centre, Isleham on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sustainability and Transformation Programme – Fit for the Future (health care) (CAPALC) <http://www.fitforfuture.org.uk>

CCC HGV Covenants

Invite to Tourism workshops – Ouse Washes landscape 6 and 13 December and 16 January 2017 J Herbert had booked a place

CCC Bus service changes No 115 (Addenbrookes Hospital)

NALC newsletter and DIS 896

CCC Transforming Lives

Cambs Community Funding press release [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/careandsupport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/careandsupport)

Hunts forum Funding Alert

Traffic Management for Community Events

UK Power Networks Priority Services Register

16/226 **STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

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There were no items reported.

16/227 **COMMUNITY POLICE**

Concerns were expressed regarding car racing on Friday and Saturday nights at the Elean Business Park which was noisy for residents. Clerk to report to the Police

Clerk

16/228 **CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER**

Newsletter reviewed and item added regarding up-date that Witcham was back on the precautionary gritting route. Clerk to print off on colour paper as colour toners had run out and it would cost at least £80 to have copied at the printers. Councillors to circulate over the coming All days.

16/229 **REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

Clerk reported on her attendance at the Cambridgeshire Parish Council Conference 2016 'Stronger Together' held at St Ives on 18 November which had seen the launch of the County Council's £1m Innovation Fund. Post Conference Report from the organisers had been circulated.

16/230 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 7.30 pm.

**ITEMS for next agenda:** Cemetery – identifying land  
Parking problems The Orchards etc  
Review Policies

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 and 5*)

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.35pm and invited Councillors to stay on for a beverage and mince pie which had been kindly provided by L Elbourne and Clerk

**Receipts and Payments Schedule approved at Minute 16/222**

		£	£	£
Receipts	UKPN lease (recreation ground)	60.67		60.67
Payments	d/d Talk Talk Aug-Oct	3.11		3.11
	001606 Truelink Nov & removal tree	348.00	69.60	417.60
	001607 Clerks salary (Dec)	222.15		222.15
	001608 CCC LGSS (Dec)	109.55		109.55
	001609 HMRC (Post Office) (Oct-Dec)	166.40		166.40
	001610 Witcham Cricket Club	450.00		450.00
	001611 Cambridgeshire ACRE	45.00	9.00	54.00
	001612 JP Wells Reimburse (Dec/Jan edition), & replacement for chq 1565	22.20		22.20
	001613 FJ Wells Reimburse 1&1 Internet	31.43		31.43

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