

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 November 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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

In attendance Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)
 Cllr M Bradley (ECDC)
 Cllr L Dupré (CCC)
 9 Members of the Public (Public Participation)
 9 Members of public stayed for the meeting until the end of 16/198 Planning Application (16/01291/FUL)

16/194 **Public Participation**

Action

Chairman welcomed the members of the public and proposed taking item 16/194 Public Participation first. Agreed.

9 Members of the public were present for item 16/198 Planning Application at rear of 9 High Street, including 3 representing the application and their agent from EcoHaus.

K Mackender declared a prejudicial interest and asked to make comments.

Chairman invited applicant to speak. The applicant advised that she and her husband very much wanted to return to the village, together with their children, and take the opportunity to build an eco-house on part of her parents land at the rear of 9 High Street. She circulated a copy of proposed plans to Councillors and explained that the proposed new eco-house would be part of a small cluster of existing homes in the proposed area. It was designed to be in-keeping with surrounding buildings, would be screened by hedges and trees and not impose on the rest of the village. The eco-house was a 'quick build' unit which would help towards having minimum impact during the building phase.

The Chairman invited the remaining members of the public to speak: There were objections to development on this piece of land as it was being built outside the development area and by a green drove. There were issues regarding access of a public right of way (byway); concern it would set a precedent for access off the droves and larger developments; increased traffic on poor road structure at Headleys Lane and Back Lane; overlook existing homes in the area; loss of green areas and threat to established wildlife. K Mackendar said that whilst he wholeheartedly welcomed new families to the village he felt that the proposed site was not suitable and that the already identified infill sites in the village should be utilised. He added that the Parish Council had undertaken a survey of the village for the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Village Visions, and there had been very strong feelings expressed by residents that this area of the village should not be put forward for development but be protected for the future.

There being no further comments or questions the Chairman thanked the applicants and members of the public, and closed the public session.

16/191 **Apologies for Absence** were accepted from Mrs J Bibby who expected to be late due to family commitment. Apologies also received from District Councillor A Bailey

16/192 **Declaration of Interest:**

The following declarations of interests were made:

Pecuniary interests - none

Personal interests - none

Prejudicial interests – K Mackender – Agenda Item 16/198 Planning Application
 16/01291/FUL

16/193 **Dispensations:**

To note Dispensations: Nil

16/195 **Minutes of the meeting** of 12 October 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 Herbert, seconded L Elbourne and unanimously resolved.

16/196 **Matters Arising**

There were none

Chairman proposed moving to Item 16/198 Planning, which was agreed.

16/198 **PLANNING**

K Mackender having declared a prejudicial interest left the room at 7.51pm

16/01291/FUL site to North East of 9 High Street, 2-storey, low energy sustainable home
Resolved that the Parish Council had the following concerns and sought outright refusal of permission: access is over a green drove - Back Lane is a public right of way and not metalled highway; close to conservation area and would have impact on natural environment, the biodiversity of the drove and adjoining lands which are a rich habitat for a number of wildlife and plant species; sets a precedent for future planning applications; loss of privacy and overshadowing for neighbours. Proposed by J Lucas, seconded by M Housden.

Clerk

K Mackender was called back into the meeting at 8.02pm. All members of the public left the meeting

16/01267/FUL Rear 12A Martins Lane, construction 4-bed, 2-storey detached dwelling – amendment to materials and window arrangements.

Resolved that the Parish Council had no further comment to make and that the original objections still stood. Proposed L Elbourne, seconded M Housden.

Clerk

16/01370/FUL Windrush Cottage, 22 High Street, enlarge existing sun room/study to form orangery with lantern light, replace study window, front door and side elevation door.

Resolved that the Council had no concerns on this application. Proposed by J Lucas, seconded J Herbert.

Clerk

Felling of Trees in Conservation Area at Witcham House, Headleys Lane – Sycamore, 3 Yews and 3 Horse Chestnuts - noted

16/197 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

Reports from County and District Councillors had been previously circulated.

County Councillor L Dupré gave a report on a meeting with the highways department in respect of withdrawal of gritting the roads into Witcham (and other neighbouring villages off the A142 in her Ward). As a result of budget cuts winter gritting of roads had been reduced by 30%. Councillors asked what could be done to get the route re-instated. Councillor Dupré advised that a change could only be brought about by a decision by County Councillors at a Council meeting.

Agreed Clerk should write to the Chief Executive of the County Council and Graham Hughes, the Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to express concerns and request Witcham be put back on the gritting route, and to seek support from other local Councils similarly affected.

Clerk

District Councillor M Bradley updated his report advising that a recycling survey was being conducted. He was working with Ely and Littleport Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency regarding silting of the Hundred Foot river as flooding was a concern for landowners.

16/197 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL (cont)**

District Councillor M Bradley reported that further information about the new Local Plan had been released, including maps. Land at The Slade, Witcham, as previously identified had been included in the Local Plan for development and there was a shortage of sites for homes in the East Cambridgeshire District. He was requested to enquire if the conservation area for Witcham could be extended and to arrange to call in to the Planning Committee the applications referenced 16/01291/FUL and 16/01267/FUL. Proposed J Lucas, seconded M Housden and unanimously resolved.

*MB/
ECDC*

District Councillor M Bradley advised that the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document had been published for adoption on 16 November. District Councillors from across the county were due to take their final votes on whether to complete the process for a devolution deal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough next week.

District Councillor M Bradley left the meeting at 8.43pm

16/199 **WINTER GRITTING ROUTES**

Councillors were shocked and alarmed to have received notification from the County Council on 14 October revealing that the roads into the village, both The Slade (from The Toll) and Mepal/Witcham Road, had been excluded on the gritting schedule this winter. Following exhaustive cuts made by the County Council's Full Council in Spring as part of the business plan, gritting routes across the county had been cut by a third. Only A and B strategic roads and those linked to modes of transport, eg rail, would be gritted. School bus routes were no longer necessarily included. The main road through the village had always been gritted on the precautionary route and Councillors were concerned that it would be extremely dangerous for residents and others driving through the village especially when black ice formed. On winding, dimly lit roads it may not be evident to drivers that the roads are in a treacherous state. There were concerns for passing pedestrians and children. There was also concern that if there was an accident on the A142, diverting through Witcham and around Coveney/Wardy Hill would not be a safe option.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/wintergritting

Resolved that Clerk should include a notice in What's On and the website warning people to be wary when using B and C roads in Witcham and other villages and surrounding areas. The Clerk would also write to the County Council expressing the Council's concerns and to nearby villages which had been taken off the grit route. Proposed K Mackender, seconded M Housden.

Clerk

16/200 **RECREATION GROUND**

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

Clerk confirmed the contractor would be removing the dead cotoneaster tree shortly and undertaking final grass cut and autumn tidy up

L Elbourne reported that she was waiting for the hard-standing area to be laid and she would put the bench into safe storage in the meantime.

16/201 **WEBSITE MANAGEMENT**

J Herbert reported on her meetings and discussions regarding transfer of management of the www.Witcham.org website. Clerk confirmed the domain was in the name of the Parish Council and that the Parish Council paid fees. Councillors confirmed that they wanted the website to remain a community website and include a list of contacts for services and events taking place in the village.

Resolved that the Council approved I Hazlewood taking over looking after the website from J Wells on a voluntary basis with costs for domain and hosting etc to remain as existing; and that J Herbert would set up a working party of volunteers including I Hazelwood and herself to steer and review the website, and to report back to the Council.

JH

16/202 **COMMUNITY POLICE**

Noted that the September Crime map recorded two incidents for Witcham: Theft at Silver Street and antisocial behaviour at the recreation ground.

16/203 **REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

Hearts of the Fen Conference – J Lucas apologised that she had been unable to attend this

16/204 **STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

Noted that the potholes at The Orchards and been dealt with.

16/205 **CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

- ECDC Code of Conduct Complaints Procedures – Agreed okay, no comments to make *Clerk*
- ECDC Polling Districts, polling places and polling stations – no comments to make – facilities at the Witcham Village Hall were quite adequate *Clerk*
- CCC Enforcement Plan for Planning, Minerals and waste development – no comment *Clerk*
- CPALC New National Improvement Strategy for Town and Parish Councils – no comment *Clerk*

16/206 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The following were received and noted
 CAPALC AGM 15.12.16 – Chairman would attend *MH*
 Chairman's invitation to Civic Service 27 November 2016 – Clerk to forward apologies
 Coveney Habitat Creation Scheme Local Liaison Group
 RSPB Lease – Copy of signed document and payment of 2016 rent awaited
 DIS Extra 893
 CCC Community Gritting Scheme
 Cambridgeshire Energy Switch

16/207 **FINANCE**

Chairman proposed taking 2017/18 Budget and Precept first and this was agreed.

Precept and Budget report received and discussed. Further information awaited regarding repairs/new village sign. Item to be reviewed again at next meeting.

The following receipts and payments had been checked by Chairman
 Proposed by L Elbourne, seconded by M Housden and unanimously resolved to approve the following:

			£	£	£
Receipts	Nil				
Payments	001601	CAPALC training day	30.00		30.00
	001602	Clerks salary (Nov)	221.95		221.95
	001603	CCC LGSS (Nov)	109.55		109.55
	001604	JP Wells Reimbursement Whats On	11.10		11.10
	001605	Truelink – September	228.00	45.60	
		October	253.00	50.60	577.20

16/208 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

There was discussion about changing the evening for future Parish Council meetings as the current booking in the main hall made it very noisy and difficult to conduct a meeting. However, there was no other evening in the week for Councillors without other commitments. It was therefore decided to continue with the second Wednesday in the month. It was noted the current hall booking was due to end in the Spring.

The next meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 14 December at 7.30 pm.

Any business, including receipts and payments, to be considered at Parish Council meeting *All*
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

Signed Dated