

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 13 May 2020 at 7.30 pm
This was a remote* meeting using the Zoom video conferencing platform system

*The Coronavirus Act 2020 s.78 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present: M Housden (Chairman), J Bibby, L Holdaway, J Lucas

In attendance Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)
Cllr M Inskip (ECDC)

Clerk asked all participants to confirm they were zooming in a quiet private place. If anyone else was present they were to make themselves known since as per the arrangement in a face to face meeting, details of attendees were required to be recorded. In particular items under Exemption to the Public and Press, the participating Councillors were responsible for ensuring total privacy. Councillors were also responsible for the safe disposal of any associated confidential material, hardcopy and electronic, immediately upon completion of use. Participants were reminded that Zoom does collect some data of users – see Zoom Policy/Notice and asked that everyone confirm that they were happy with this arrangement before proceeding. All confirmed by everyone.

No members of public present

20/088 **Apologies** for absence were received from S Wilkin (IT problems), K Mackender (family commitment) and County Councillor L Dupre (previously booked meeting)

20/089 **To receive any declarations of interest**

Councillors to declare any pecuniary interests in any items on the agenda - none

Councillors to declare any personal interests in any items on the agenda - none

Councillors to declare any prejudicial interests in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation - none

20/090 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

20/091 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present

20/092 **Annual Meetings**

It was noted that due to the coronavirus restrictions there would be no Annual Meeting of the Council this year. The election of Chair and Vice-Chair, and subsequent signing in the meeting of the Declaration of Acceptances and witnessed by Clerk, together with election of representatives for Committees, and Chairman's Allowance would remain status quo until May 2021.

20/093 **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 were confirmed as a true record subject to inserting missing text on first line on page 4 regarding Annual Parish Meeting cancellation:

“**Resolved** to cancel for this year (in accordance with provisions of Coronavirus Act 2020) Proposed”
J Bibby, seconded Chairman.

These minutes would be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting. The agenda of the meeting of 29 April 2020 would be signed at the next face to face meeting as confirmation of the business transacted at the meeting on the 29 April 2020. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas

- 20/094 **Matters arising from previous minutes** 076/....
 20/078, 20/055, 20/032, 20/019 *Mobile Flashing Speed Signs* Clerk confirmed clearance had been given by CCC Highways and Police Traffic Management adviser. She was contacting street lighting for consent to mount the brackets on the selected lamp posts. In view of the lapse in time she sought confirmation that the order could still be placed if there happened to be any slight increase in costs. It was agreed this would be acceptable subject to maximum 5% variance and in consultation with the Chairman and notification to Councillors. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas. Clerk
 20/078, 20/042 *Street Lights and Highways – Westway Place, bottom car park.* Unable to confirm that the old lamp had been removed and that the new light was working since the last meeting. Cllrs
 20/087, 20/062 *CIL: Witcham Toll* Date of re-scheduled meeting not yet known due to coronavirus restrictions. All
 20/081 f) *Renewal of insurance* arranged with Zurich and new documents awaited. Clerk
 20/081 d) *Year-end Accounts* Approval of Annual Governance and Accounts Report, together with Certificate of Exemption to be completed at June meeting. Wet signature required for these documents. Documents to be sent and received by External Auditor by 31 July 2020. Arrangements were being set up by Internal Auditor to undertake audit without breaching coronavirus restrictions. Clerk
- 20/095 **Reports from District and County Councillors**
 The reports, previously circulated, were received. District Councillor M Inskip gave a brief update regarding changes in respect of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Play areas were still closed but other restrictions were gradually being lifted including changes regarding open spaces.
- 20/096 **Planning Applications**
 20/00558/FUL The Chapel 6 Silver Street Single storey side extension, alterations to front landscaping and dropped kerb Clerk
Resolved that the Council had no concerns. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway.
 The following from ECDC were noted:
 19/01003/OUM 15 Martins Lane outline planning application (all matters reserved except access for the demolition of the existing bungalow (No 15) and associated outbuildings and the erection of 10 dwellings with a new access from Martins Lane and associated open space. Appeal Rejected by Planning Inspector.
- 20/097 **Parish Council Website**
 The Clerk gave apologies for the webmaster who had a work engagement. There was a brief discussion about reviewing the implementation of organisational emails for Councillors and the Clerk for Parish Council business. (CAPALC guidance previously circulated). Clerk to ask the webmaster to attend the June meeting for discussions about the website and email accounts. Clerk
- 20/098 **Annual Review of Policies**
 Clerk had previously circulated the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with recommendations and a risk assessment necessary due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions and the Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated Regulations. These principally covered removing the necessity for the May Annual Meeting of the Council (election Chairman, Vice-Chairman, representatives etc), and the Annual Parish Meeting (statutorily normally required to be held between 1 March and 1 June), arrangements for 'remote' meetings to avoid gatherings and alternative measures for signing cheques in meetings, together with provisions for extending and amending the annual audit procedures. Noted the Act made these provisions for temporary changes to the LGA 1972 until May 2021 only. Clerk
Resolved to adopt the temporarily revised Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and risk assessment. Proposed Chairman and seconded J Bibby. Signature by the Chairman to be arranged. The Zoom Meetings Privacy Notice, previously circulated together with Zoom CEO letter released by NALC and links to the Zoom website regarding privacy, were received.
Resolved to adopt the Zoom Meetings Privacy Notice. Proposed L Holdaway and seconded J Bibby. Clerk would review and bring to the meeting other policies as soon as time allowed. Clerk
- 20/099 **Finance**
 Receipts and payments schedule had been previously circulated. Cheques and supporting documents had been placed with the Chairman and J Bibby for checking before the meeting (coronavirus protection measures were being complied with). Clerk advised that earlier in the day the April invoice for Truelink had been received. This had been forwarded to Councillors with a request for it to be added to the list at this meeting and the cheque raised.

- 20/099 **Finance (cont)** 077/.....
Resolved to approve the receipts and payments for April 2020 as detailed on the schedule with the addition of Truelink April invoice. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas. Clerk
- 20/100 **Recreation Ground**
Chairman advised he had received reports that there had been occasion when adults with children were entering into the play areas on the recreation ground despite signs having been erected advising of closure. He had now roped off some pieces of equipment and erected further explicit signs advising people to keep off. No other issues arising from the weekly inspection.
Clerk advised that Wicksteed could come out to undertake the annual inspection and that the fee had increased to £60 plus VAT. Lead-in time 8-10 weeks. Agreed this should now be booked. Clerk
The deferred inspection of the village assets was discussed. Chairman advised he was making visual inspections of the seats and trees at the recreation ground and all was fine at present. There was discussion about carrying out an annual inspection and the difficulties imposed by coronavirus restrictions. It was hoped that with the recent easing of restrictions for people to work outside subject to the 2m apart rule, an inspection could be carried out during June. Further guidance regarding the easing of the Government imposed restrictions in this respect were awaited. Cllrs
8.09pm At this point the Zoom meeting was due to break and an adjournment for a short VDU break would be taken. Chairman thanked District Councillor M Inskip for attending.
8.15pm the meeting resumed with Chairman, J Bibby, L Holdaway, J Lucas and Clerk present.
- 20/101 **Correspondence**
The following were received and noted:
East Cambs Parish and Community Forum 15 May 2020
NALC Chief Executive Bulletins
ECDC/CCC hubs/NALC Coronavirus Covid-19 updates
Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils Communities updates
Correspondence received since publication of agenda - East Cambs Parish and Community Leader newsletter, and letterwriting project
- 20/102 **Street Lights and Highways**
No reports regarding maintenance issues for street lights and highways.
No further update available on condition of droves/Public Rights of Way following complaints made by the public to County Council, nor any news on how the extension to closure of the droves was going. Cllrs
- 20/103 **Community Police**
No reports received
- 20/104 **Reports of Meetings attended by Councillors**
No reports received
- 20/105 **Exclusions of Press and Public**
It is hereby resolved 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 Item 20/106 namely staff matters 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. It was confirmed that no members of the public were present.
- 20/106 **Staff Matters**
Clerk's workload over previous months discussed, particularly in the light of additional planning meetings that had been required and the impact of correspondence and work generated as a result of the coronavirus, together with general rise in email traffic, etc.
8.55pm At this point the Zoom meeting was due to break and an adjournment for a short VDU break would be taken.

9.03pm the meeting resumed with Chairman, J Bibby, L Holdaway, J Lucas and Clerk present.

Sharing of some aspects of workload with Councillors was discussed and agreed, including Chairman monitoring planning applications for reporting at meetings together with usual play area and recreation ground inspections; L Holdaway to sift and report on all coronavirus correspondence from all the various advisory parties and continue with new play equipment project investigations and setting up consultations etc; J Lucas to continue with public rights of way including reporting any concerns on the CCC website and reporting back to Council, J Bibby checking finance. Noted that Clerk was not receiving hardcopy planning applications and supporting reports from ECDC since onset of coronavirus. (She was concerned this would not be reinstated after coronavirus restrictions lifted, so all examinations would be required to be made via the on-line planning portal).

Resolved to approve payment for 34 additional hours to be paid in June salary to help mitigate additional hours actually worked in preceding months. Proposed J Bibby, seconded L Holdaway.

Clerk was thanked for all her work and it was confirmed the workload would be reviewed over coming months on a regular basis.

Noted that although the Clerk worked from home and meetings were being held on the Zoom video conferencing platform, the Council should carry out a risk assessment of its operational functions in respect of coronavirus implications and restrictions, and Government advice on return to work; eg future face to face meetings, management of play equipment and assets, third party meetings etc. She would sketch a draft and Chair would examine and build up to final draft to go before Council

Clerk

Chair

20/107 **Items for the next agenda and to note date of next meeting:** 10 June 2020

Urgent message received at 5.35pm from ECDC Housing and Community Advice Manager noted.

CCC Highways maintenance April to June postponed until next year noted.

The meeting closed at 9.13 pm

Review any actions – none other than as already discussed.

May Schedule of Receipts and Payments

			£	£	£
To confirm and approve the following:					
Payments	001851	Zurich insurance renewal	464.98		464.98
To approve the following:					
Receipts		Nil			
Payments	001852/3	Admin costs Clerks salary (May)	316.62		316.62
	001854	E-on street lighting energy Jan-Mar	86.57	4.33	90.90
	001855	Truelink	301.60	60.32	361.92