

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8 July 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, and Zoom Policy Notice.

Present: M Housden (Chairman), K Mackender (Vice-Chairman), J Bibby, L Holdaway, J Lucas, S Wilkin

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

No members of public present

The Chair welcomed S Wilkin who had been unable to attend earlier Zoom meetings.

20/126 **Apologies** for absence were received from District and County Councillor L Dupre

20/127 **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

20/128 **Dispensations**
To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

20/129 **Public Participation**
No members of the public present

20/130 **Minutes**
Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2020 were confirmed as a true record and would be signed by the Chair. The agenda of the meeting of 10 June 2020 would also be signed by the Chair as confirmation of the business transacted at the meeting. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chair, and agreed.

Further **resolved** that the Chair would sign the minutes of the meetings held since Covid-19 restrictions had stopped face to face meetings. Namely 11 March 2020, 29 April 2020, 13 May 2020, 10 June 2020, as previously approved in earlier meetings, together with respective agendas, since there was not yet any indication of when face to face meetings would be able to re-commence. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.

Chairman

19.51pm K Mackender joined the meeting having experienced problems getting into the Zoom meeting.

20/131 **Matters arising from previous minutes**
20/116 *Village Hall:* Clerk had contacted Chair of Village Hall. Confirmed that L Holdaway would speak further with Chair of Village Hall regarding Licence *LH*

20/119 *Litter access to field off concrete roadway at The Slade:* Clerk had contacted the land agent as instructed.

20/123 *Street Lights and Highways – Old post and lamp bracket bottom car park Westway Place:* J Lucas confirmed the new light was working but the old one had not yet been removed. Clerk to chase up again. *Clerk*

20/124 *Public Rights of Way:* Bury Road TPO trees, landowner was pursuing County Council regarding inappropriate work to veteran tree. *Clerk*

20/132 **Reports from District and County Councillors**
The reports, previously circulated, were received and noted. District Councillor M Inskip confirmed coronavirus data was now coming through which would help manage local lockdowns in future. The District Council was opening its play areas and equipment. There had been an increase in cycling and walking, and it was hoped improvements could be made for broadband to enable more people to work from home if possible in the future. He gave an

20/132 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

update regarding District Council finances and the two companies of ECDC – refuse collection, and the markets/housebuilding. CLTs works had slowed due to difficulties with working with adequate social distancing. The proposed large development at Brick Lane was now under Mepal Parish; prior to the recent electoral boundaries being changed it had fallen in Sutton parish. He also reported on the Mepal Outdoor Centre. The Chair thanked him for the report.

20/133 **Planning Applications**

20/00702/FUL - 5 Silver Street Single storey flat roof rear extension following removal of existing single storey conservatory style room.

Resolved the Council had no concerns. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

Mepal Parish - 20/00630/FUM Site South And West Of The Bungalow Brick Lane Mepal Erection of 55 dwellings, new access, estate roads, driveways, parking areas, open space, external lighting, substation and associated infrastructure.

Resolved that the Council had great concern about this development. Whilst it is not in the Parish of Witcham it does have an impact on our community. The density of housing is far too great for this rural location, and will generate a significant number of vehicles, many of which will take the back road up to Witcham, as a shortcut (as is already the known case), through Witcham village, and on up to Witcham Toll. There is already extensive queuing at Witcham Toll as vehicles travel to Cambridge, Ely, A10 north and Newmarket areas. Witcham already experiences unacceptable levels of traffic, particularly at peak times, as people take the shortcut to Witcham Toll to avoid congestion at the Sutton roundabout on the A142, as Sutton vehicles and a great number from the west (Huntingdon/St Ives, Willingham and surrounding villages) join the A142. Increased traffic through Witcham will make problems at Witcham village crossroads as people leave High Street/Headleys Lane, Silver Street/Westway Place (where most of the housing in Witcham is located) causing more hazards for vehicles and pedestrians, particularly around the village bus stop and school bus stops (Children aged 4½ - 16) Unfortunately some of the vehicles taking the shortcut and coming through Witcham are also speeding and this again exacerbates our existing safety issues.

Visual impact – the proposed dwellings will have an adverse effect on this traditional rural village. The development is located at the one and only entrance point to the village and will totally change the character and current genuine rural feel of the village. It is bound on the west side by the A142 which is one of the busiest A roads in the county. The proposed new dwellings will be victim to noise and air pollution.

Vans not permitted on the estate – this will mean some residents will need to find on-street parking at other locations around the area causing congestion and potential hazards for other street users.

The proposed development is not in-keeping with the National Planning Policy Framework and several East Cambs Housing Policies. The existing infrastructure, services and facilities, including public transport do not lend themselves to supporting such a high number of dwellings of the proposed type.

Clerk

Proposed by K Mackender, seconded by J Bibby

20/00577/OUT 15 Martins Lane, further amendment to application, reference Minute 20/115 Outline planning application (all matters reserved except access) for the erection of one bungalow with a new access from Martins Lane. Amendment: involves alteration of the driveway following officer concerns and removal of reference to layout and scale of dwelling as these are not matters being considered as part of the outline application.

Resolved that the Council's previous comments on 11 June 2020, namely concerns regarding the proposed access, which is on a corner, and the additional vehicles that might be expected would be coming on and off the site very close to the bend still stood. In relation to the amendment the Council felt the plan was misleading as the dotted line of the road extending to the edge of the boundary with the arable land was incorrect in that access to the field was not in front of the buildings but came in on the other side of the field close to the boundary with the cemetery (north end). Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

Application to ECDC for Street Trading Licence for a mobile ice cream vendor for Haddenham, Little Thetford, Mepal, Stretham, Sutton, Wilburton, Witcham and Witchford; Monday to Sunday 12 noon until 7pm was noted. (comments required by 30.6.20 and ECDC unable to grant extension of time for Parish Council to comment)

20/133 **Planning Applications** (cont)

8.10pm The meeting adjourned for a few minutes as it was the end of the Zoom session and time for short VDU break.

8.15pm The meeting resumed with Chairman, J Bibby, L Holdaway, J. Lucas, K Mackender, S Wilkin, M Inskip and Clerk

19/01086/FUL - Planning Appeal Notification Oneway Headleys Lane, First floor extension above existing garage received.

Resolved that the Parish Council had had no objections to this application and members felt the refusal by ECDC was unfair and illogical taking into account the similarities in the village. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender

Clerk

The following ECDC decision was noted:

20/00558/FUL – The Chapel, 6 Silver Street Single storey side extension, alterations to front landscaping and dropped kerb - approved

20/134 **Finance**

a) Receipts and payments for July had been previously circulated. Cheques and supporting documents had been placed with J Bibby and Chairman for checking before the meeting (coronavirus protection measures were being complied with).

Resolved to approve the receipts and payments for July 2020 and consent given for Clerk to raise cheques and make payments for Eon Street lighting, £90.90, and those expected during August including grasscutting, kiosk, annual play inspection, internal auditor and admin expenditure. Proposed J Bibby and L Holdaway and agreed unanimously

Clerk

Resolved that approval be given for L Holdaway to attend 2 evening sessions in August for Councillor training. £75. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender

JH/
Clerk

b) Internal Auditor's Report

Resolved that the Internal Auditor's Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 be received and accepted, and the content noted. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Bibby and agreed unanimously.

Clerk

c) Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR) Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2020

AGAR Section 1, as previously circulated at previous meeting and completed was received. (Ref Minute 20/081 d)

Resolved that the AGAR 2020 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement as completed be approved and signed by the Chairman. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman and agreed unanimously.

Clerk

d) Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR) Section 2 – Statement of Accounts as previously circulated at meeting was received (Ref Minute 20/081 d)

Resolved that the AGAR 2020 Section 2 – Statement of Accounts be approved, and signed by the Chairman. Proposed L Holdaway and K Mackender

Clerk

e) Certificate of Exemption had been completed as discussed at previous meetings.

Resolved that the Council approve the Certificate of Exemption and that the Chairman should sign as required. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Bibby and agreed unanimously.

Clerk

It was confirmed that the Clerk/RFO and Chairman would arrange for the 'wet' signature on the AGAR documents as approved above to comply with coronavirus restrictions and advice of the External Auditor. The Minutes of Meetings back to March 2020 would be signed at the same time. (Minute 20/130).

Clerk/
Chairman20/135 **Covid-19 Arrangements**

a) Draft Risk Assessment for Covid-19 – return to work/meetings etc, including contractors. Following the last meeting the Chairman and Clerk had liaised and the revised document for the Council had then been circulated to Councillors for examination after the last meeting.

Resolved to adopt the Risk Assessment for Covid-19 – return to work/meetings etc. The grass contractors risk assessment and methods were noted. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

b) The draft Risk Assessment (Covid-19) for re-opening of the main infant play area equipment and the play equipment on the rest of the recreation ground for older children play areas had been previously circulated, together with suggested notice. These were discussed and subject to amendments/clarification agreed.

Noted there had been some complaints to Councillors about children (and adults) removing notices and tape etc and using equipment over recent weeks. (Only the infant

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20/135	<p>Covid-19 Arrangements area has a fence and people could climb over so padlock would not be deterrent. On occasions it was understood residents had reported to Police). Resolved to re-open the infant and older childrens' play equipment on Saturday 11 July 2020; to adopt drafted Risk Assessment as amended in the meeting; Chairman to arrange for laminated guidance signs to be erected as per his draft, in accordance with Government guidelines. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Lucas</p> <p>c) 2020 Annual Parish Meeting Following recent advice from NALC, arrangements for Zoom Annual Parish Meeting was discussed. Clerk had drafted agenda. Resolved to hold the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting in September by Zoom. Basic agenda as drafted to be adhered to. Clerk to liaise and set date. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway <i>(Subsequently confirmed for Wednesday 30 September 2020, 7.30pm by Zoom)</i></p> <p>d) Annual Report and Accounts 2020 Draft report with amendments previously circulated. Clerk advised there was still space to fill and agreed L Holdaway to provide item regarding play project. Resolved to approve circulation of Annual Report and Accounts Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway. Play Survey circulated. Resolved that proposed draft survey be circulated to householders with 2-3 weeks return date. Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin L Holdaway to finalise survey and provide item to go on website, What's On etc. . Copies available for multiple submissions by individuals rather than one per household so that all youngster/parents/carers could contribute.</p>	<p><i>Chairman Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk/ Cllrs</i></p> <p><i>LH</i></p> <p><i>Clerk Cllrs</i></p> <p><i>LH/Clerk</i></p>
20/136	<p>Recreation Ground and Play Equipment Chairman reported that he was still checking the play equipment even though sites officially closed. The cable on the swings to prevent use had been cut off and there had been some litter and empty cans which he had cleared up on his weekly inspection. He would get the notices regarding re-opening and conditions posted up for Saturday 11 July.</p>	<i>Chairman</i>
20/137	<p>Consultation Document East Cambs District Council Licensing Act 2003 Policy Review, amendments by ECDC previously circulated. Resolved that the Council had no comment to make. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman</p>	<i>Clerk</i>
20/138	<p>Policies Other than working on the Covid-19 related documents already discussed, the Clerk had advised that her hours had not permitted her to review any others and asked that this be deferred to the September meeting.</p> <p>8.55pm The meeting adjourned for a few minutes as it was the end of the Zoom session and time for short VDU break. 9.00pm The meeting resumed with Chairman, J Bibby, L Holdaway, J. Lucas, K Mackender, S Wilkin, and Clerk</p>	<i>Clerk</i>
20/139	<p>Correspondence to note: Mepal and Witcham Pre School correspondence. Clerk advised that since publishing the agenda she had received a letter from the Chair of Governors of the school enclosing a letter to Mepal Parish Council regarding request for contribution towards setting up/running the new Pre-School. This information had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and was discussed. Resolved that the Clerk should write for further details of what if anything it was asking of Witcham Parish Council, including how many Witcham children attend the Pre-school and the financial status; this would be reviewed at the next meeting. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded J Bibby.</p> <p>Historical Research Volunteers. Poster received from Access Field Officer, British Horse Society, who required volunteers to work recording legal rights, and to preserve and reinstate routes. Clerk confirmed she would put poster on noticeboard and website so that people could apply to volunteer under the scheme. Bearing in mind the good network of routes around Witcham the Council would like to receive feedback on the findings.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>LH</i></p>

- 20/139 **Correspondence** to note (cont)
 The following, all previously circulated, were noted.
 CAPALC and NALC Bulletins including Coronavirus webpage
 CCC/ECDC/Hubs – Coronavirus community updates
 CCC Think Communities Coordinator - Strengthening Communities Team Covid-19 Test and Trace, mental health etc
 COVID-19 Measures on one.network (formally roadworks.org)
 Police and Crime Commissioner’s office - Parish, Town and City Council update on arrangements for briefings
 CCC 2020 Surface Dressing Program
 CCC IHMC Roadworks and Events
 CAPALC Drop in sessions for Councillors and Clerks June/July
 ICO Newsletter
 CAPALC Councillor Training – 13 and 20 August 2020 LH
 CAPALC Seminar Opening Outdoor Facilities – play and outdoor gym - £75 14 July 2020.
 No one nominated as the Council had already researched and was opening 11 July.

LH

- 20/140 **Street Lights and Highways**
 No items reported other than Clerk still had risk assessment documents to finalise before submitting application for MVAS. Confirmed that K Mackender, a member of J Lucas family and M Housden would be responsible for erecting and moving the signs but that during the Covid-19 pandemic and Government restrictions, M Housden and a family member would undertake this task.

Chairman
KM, public

- 20/141 **Date of Next Meeting:** 9 September 2020

Review: Clerk noted kiosk was to be painted week commencing 13 July or 20 July 2020. Clerk to drop a line to residents who had offered to make a donation. Best Kept Garden shields and plates to be collected in by Councillors for next year.
 Village inspection by Chairman, J Lucas, K Mackender and Clerk booked for 18 July 2020 9.30am Village Hall
 Clerk to set up Annual Parish Meeting and finalise Annual Report and Accounts, whilst L Holdaway to finalise Play Survey to go out with the Report during August.
 L Holdaway was monitoring High Street development where topsoil had now been removed; check to ensure ECDC conditions completed.

Clerk
CllrsChairman
JL/KMClerk
LH
Cllrs

Cllrs

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.32pm

July Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts	HMRC VAT reclaimed	1030.88		1030.88
Payments	d/d IONOS website	15.00	3.00	18.00
	001861/2 Admin costs	316.62		316.62
	001863 Truelink Ltd	301.60	60.32	361.92
	001864 Eon street light energy Apr-Jun	86.57	4.33	90.90

Consent for payment of August invoices as Minute 20/134, all of which to be reported at September Council meeting.

Signed

Dated