

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 10 March 2021 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

In attendance Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)
Cllr L Dupré (CCC and ECDC)
Cllr M Inskip (ECDC)

Chairman read the Zoom notice and it was confirmed all were zooming in a quiet private place and no one else was present; therefore no details of members of the public required recording. Noted that Zoom does collect some data of users – Zoom Policy/Notice. All present confirmed they were happy to proceed.

No members of public present

21/036 **Apologies for absence:** S Wilkin (IT difficulties, and noted that she was keeping in touch with Clerk and would attend once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, which was accepted and approved)

21/037 **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

21/038 **Dispensations:**
To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

21/039 **Public Participation**
There were no members of the public present although it appeared someone had attempted twice to join the meeting but not entered after having been admitted from the waiting room.
Chair proposed, and it was agreed, that this section of the meeting could be returned to later.
Subsequently during the meeting a message from the member of the public was received to advise they would attend a later meeting.

21/040 **Minutes**
Noted - an error in the attendance list to be corrected: namely J Lucas had given apologies and was therefore not present.

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record subject to amendment regarding J Lucas, and would be signed by the Chair, and the agenda of the same date would also be signed by the Chair as confirmation of the business transacted at the meeting. Proposed Chair, seconded J Bibby.

21/041 **Matters arising from previous minutes**

21/026 Grasscutting contract – start date for first cut awaited and would be subject to weather conditions.

21/024 Reports of District and County Councillors – ditch overfull at Westway Place – L Dupré confirmed tree roots were the problem but that it belonged to the farmer and in any case to cut out the roots to free the obstruction would destabilise the tree; it would continue to be managed locally by removal of debris that became trapped around the roots.

21/031 Planning – Enforcement procedures - response from ECDC regarding meeting had been circulated.

21/033 Correspondence – Mepal Crematorium survey - response from leader of ECDC had been circulated

21/042 **Reports from District and County Council representatives**

J Lucas asked about the District Council's stance on the Fens Biosphere Project (Cambridgeshire ACRE, Ref Minute 21/015, Conference).

M Inskip advised it was on the agenda for the next ECDC meeting and L Dupré suggested Parish Councils might like to write to ECDC to support the project if they desired. Deferred to agenda item 21/050.

21/043 **Recreation Ground**

- a) Monthly report on weekly inspections. Chairman reported that all was well, no green algae on safety surfacing and gaps had closed somewhat since dry summer. He had replaced the laminated signs and there was nothing further required in respect of compliance with Covid-19 restrictions. The football area was surprisingly less muddy than other years but that was probably a reflection on the fact that the size of groups of people playing was down to one or two players practising goal shooting.
- b) Tree planting programme for recreation ground. J Bibby had obtained some information and costs which was being circulated amongst councillors. She was arranging for a soil check to ensure there was nothing wrong with the soil to affect proposed new trees and it was noted there would be a small charge for this. Orders for new trees to be arranged for the July meeting.

21/044 **Planning Matters**

The following tree works were noted

- a) 21/00138/TRE 2A Martins Lane Witcham
T1 Cherry – raise crown to 3m from ground level, T2 Silver Birch – raise crown to 3m from ground level, prune to clear village hall light by 1 to 1.5m, T3 multi-stemmed Cherry – raise crown to 3m from ground level and reduce whole crown by up to 2m, T4 Silver Birch – raise crown to 3m from ground level. Noted.
- b) 19/01699/DISB Land North of 21 High Street Witcham
To discharge Conditions 6 (Landscaping), 7 (Boundary Hedge Protection Scheme), 8 (Foul and Surface Water Disposal Scheme) and 9 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) of decision dated 05/03/2020 for Residential development for two houses, garages and change of use of existing agricultural barn to residential dwelling.

Concerns expressed about ensuring discharge of consents was in-keeping with matters raised at planning application consent stage and subsequent enforcement, following experience of erection of dwelling on the front.

Clerk/
Chairman

8.07pm – 8.10pm Zoom break. M Housden, K Mackender, L Holdaway, J Bibby. J Lucas and Clerk returned to the meeting. No members of public present.

21/044 **Planning Matters (cont)**

Resolved that Council should write to ECDC. Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway.

Based on discussion and previous comments, Clerk to prepare draft letter for clearing with Councillors before final release.

Clerk

- c) 21/00129/TRE The Hall 5 High Street Witcham Ely Cambridgeshire (Various tree works, see previous meeting Minute 21/030) Approved by ECDC. Noted.
- d) Downham Ward Housing Needs Survey for householders. Councillors advised that the survey had now been delivered to householders.
- e) Supplementary Planning Document ECDC - Climate Change adopted 8.2.21 <http://www.eastcambbs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/supplementary-planning-documents>. Noted.

21/045 **Finance**

- a) Receipts and payments schedule for March 2021 had been circulated. Cheques and supporting documents had been checked by Chairman before the meeting (coronavirus protection measures were being complied with). Clerk confirmed the cheque for the donation towards the MVAS (being the balance of that raised in 2018 for the speed limit sign project on Mepal/Witcham Road and The Slade would be received shortly. Clerk to write letter of appreciation to fundraisers.

Arrangements to raise cheques to make payments for outstanding invoices to 31 March were required.

Resolved to approve the receipts and payments for March, including arrangements for payments to complete the financial year as per schedule. Proposed J Lucas, seconded J Bibby.

Clerk

Resolved to write letter of appreciation to fundraisers for MVAS. Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway.

Clerk

- b) Arrangements for year-end accounts. Clerk was awaiting instructions from external auditors and it was noted there had been no mention of extending usual deadlines. Completion of accounts required for reports for Annual Parish Meeting as usual.

Clerk

- c) 2020/21 Fixed Asset register - deferred to April meeting.

Clerk

- d) 2020/21 Risk Assessment Report – deferred to April meeting.

Clerk

- e) CAPALC renewal of 2021 membership subscription
Resolved to renew CAPALC membership subscription for 2021. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway

Clerk

- f) Registration of land with Land Registry
Resolved to submit first registration for Recreation Ground and Cemetery at £30 each. Proposed J Lucas, seconded K Mackender Chair, Clerk and Councillors thanked L Holdaway for her guidance in compiling documentation.

Clerk

- 21/045 **Finance (cont)**
Clerk also confirmed that insurance had been updated following latest acquisitions.
- 21/046 **Website**
There had been no further meetings of the working party and the Clerk confirmed she had forwarded information agreed at the last meeting to the designers and was awaiting a link so that all Councillors could see the amended site. Chair to get more photographs *Working Party*
- 21/047 **2021 Annual Parish Meeting – 28 April 2021**
Draft agenda discussed and items added. Items to include engagement with residents on tree replacement programme at recreation ground, next steps for getting play area upgraded. *Clerk*
Enquiries to be made to see if someone could attend to talk about the Fens Biosphere Project. *JL*
- 21/048 **Cemetery Management**
Clerk reported on recent interment.
- 21/049 **Community Police**
Clerk gave update and it was noted that there were no further new issues to address.
- 21/050 **Reports of meetings attended by Clerk and Councillors**
J Lucas had attended the Fens Biosphere Project Conference as previously raised under reports from County and District Councillors, Minute 21/042. Clerk to forward J Lucas's email of January 2021, containing details, to all Councillors again. This would be included on the April agenda for review and discussion about sending letter of support to the District Council. *Clerk and All Councillors*
- 21/051 **Correspondence**
The following were noted (all previously circulated)
Census Sunday 21st March 2021 – information to be sent by post by Office of National Statistics including how to do online.
E CDC Community Ears and Eyes workshops 9 March 2021.
NALC Building Back Resilient Communities 25 March 2021.
E CDC Local Engagement Event 3 March 2021: Strengthening communities team - workshops, events and websites information.
Cambridgeshire ACRE - Cambs Home Energy Support Service - Parish information event 10 March 2021.
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate Change – presentation of initial recommendations 15 March 2021.
NALC Star Council Awards.
NALC and CAPALC bulletins.
IHMC roadworks & events bulletin February/March.
PosAbility: Spring 2021 Newsletter.
IHMC February Incident Report.
Calor Gas Rural Community Fund – bids invited by 21 April 2021.
- 21/052 **Street Lights and Highways**
CCC road closures, improvement works – noted start date had been moved to 15 March 2021 for resurfacing works at The Orchards, Westway Place and Silver Street. Local signage at crossroads had been updated.
- 21/053 **Date of next meeting:** 14 April 2021
Best Kept Garden Competition 2021- to discuss deferment pending further advice on Covid restrictions
Review any actions – not done. The meeting closed at 8.50pm

March Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts	Ely Funeral Service Dignity	115.00		115.00
Payments				
	001901 Westcotec MVAS (speed signs)	3350.00	670.00	4020.00
	001902 Clerks salary (Mar)	239.16		239.16
	001903 LGPS (Mar)	85.42		85.42
	001904 Reimbursement expenses Clerk	182.64		182.64
	001905 Land Registry fees	30.00		30.00
	001906 Land Registry fees	30.00		30.00
	d/d ICO	40.00		40.00

Arrangements for payment of invoices to complete accounts to 31 March 2021 confirmed

Signed..... Dated