

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 7.30pm

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**Present:** M Housden (Chairman) K Mackender (Vice-Chairman), S Wilkin

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)

**Clerk confirmed that the forms for Declarations of Acceptance of Office as Councillors had been completed by L Holdaway, M Housden, K Mackender and S Wilkin, and witnessed by the Clerk/Proper Officer prior to commencement of the meeting.**

The opening of the meeting was delayed a little to allow for forms to be completed and the arrival of K Mackender who was late due to train delays from work, and to ensure the meeting was quorate (Min 3 Councillors)

Meeting commenced at 7.45pm

**23/073 Election of Chairman**

Mr M Housden: Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin and there being no other nominations unanimously resolved.

M Housden thanked the members and it was noted that others should be taking on the role of Chairman another year.

**23/074 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct**

Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct form completed and signed by M Housden and witnessed by the Clerk.

**23/075 Apologies for absence**

Apologies received and accepted from L Holdaway (work commitments). J Lucas had sent apologies for absence earlier in the day but had not completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Councillor and got witnessed by the Proper Officer prior to this meeting.

**23/076 To welcome new Council and note result of recent Elections**

Chairman congratulated the Councillors and thanked them for coming forward to serve on the Council again. Clerk would now issue the notice to fill vacancies by co-option.

**23/077 Declarations of Interest**

Chairman reminded Councillors that they were required to review their Registrations of Interests regularly and notify any changes to ECDC Monitoring Officer via the Clerk within 28 days of any change.

*All*

All those present had completed the Declaration of Interest forms prior to commencement of the meeting for forwarding to the ECDC Monitoring Officer. Details would be published on the ECDC website.

- 23/077 **Declarations of Interest** (cont)  
 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
- 23/078 **Dispensations:**  
 To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil
- 23/079 **Election of Vice-Chairman**  
Mr K Mackender: Proposed M Housden, seconded S Wilkin, and there being no other nominations unanimously resolved.
- 23/080 **Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct**  
 Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct form completed and signed by K Mackender and witnessed by the Clerk.
- 23/081 **Reports from District and County Councillors**  
 The County and District Councillors had advised that they were attending the start of another parish council meeting within their constituencies and so had asked for their agenda item to be moved a little further down the agenda. This was agreed.
- 23/082 **Public Participation**  
 There were no members of the public present.
- 23/083 **Election of Representatives**  
 With the absence of half of the Council Members, the Chairman proposed that this item be deferred to the June meeting when more people would be present to discuss which of the roles they would undertake for the ensuing year. This included the appointment of a Trustee for the Village Hall Committee. This was agreed. All Cllrs
- 23/084 **To fix Chairman's Allowance (LGA 1972 S.15(5))**  
**Resolved** that the Chairman's Allowance for 2023/24 be set at £50.00.  
 Proposed S Wilkin, seconded K Mackender
- 23/085 **Minutes**  
 Minutes of the meeting of 12 April 2023, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date signed by the Chairman as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded Chairman.
- 23/086 **Matters Arising**  
 23/068 2023 *Best Kept Garden* – nothing further to report. Notices had gone up and people would contact J Bibby to enter. Results after judging in June now awaited. Clerk
- 23/063 *Planning Applications – 23/00174/LBC and 23/00121/FUL Yew Tree House, 2 Silver Street, conversion of outbuilding to studio ancillary to main dwelling.* Clerk reported that a letter from ECDC dated 3 May 2023 had been received after publication of the agenda and outside the timeframe for an amended agenda to be published. She had forwarded

23/086 **Matters Arising** (cont)

003/.....

to Councillors. This gave notice of an amendment for altered door and window openings together with details of materials. These details were for information only and no response was required so she had not sought an extension in order to convene a special meeting. Noted.

23/069a) *Verge on West side of Headleys Lane* – to be further discussed under agenda item 23/092 Highways

23/069b) *Droves – Bury Road* – no further information regarding Management Plan received.

23/070 *ECDC Thermal Imaging Scheme* – A further notice had been put in “What’s On”. It was noted ECDC had halted the scheme over the summer as colder weather was required for communities to carry out the tests. They had confirmed that at present the scheme was for community groups rather than an individual and the interested Witcham resident had been updated. Agreed to defer to Autumn.

Clerk

23/087 **Annual Parish Meeting 2023**

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 26 April 2023 had been previously circulated and were accepted. Actions arising from the meeting were discussed.

**Resolved**

- a) Regarding reported illicit activities on northern edge of village, to advise through newsletters and What’s On that issues should be reported to Crimestoppers direct at time of activities seen so that Police can attend if possible or begin to collect data for future action.

Clerk

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-v3/report-antisocial-behaviour/>

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/rti/rti-beta-2.1/report-a-road-traffic-incident/>

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/> Tel [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111) (anonymous)

- b) To include note in What’s On to recruit volunteers for First Responders
- c) To contact Speedwatch Co-ordinator to seek update on when it would be likely that the training would be carried out and programme of speed checks would commence.

Clerk

Clerk

Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin

8.15pm County and District Councillors arrived  
Chairman moved back to agenda item 23/081

23/081 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

Chairman congratulated L Dupre and M Inskip on their re-election. L Dupre advised that the first full County Council meeting would take place next Tuesday. She outlined the problems for the County Council in respect of potholes and the generally extremely poor quality of road surfaces across the county. They had received £3.617m to help tackle road repairs and potholes but the problem across the whole country was great and required direct Government intervention. The seriously bad roads needed re-building which was likely to cost several million pounds

23/081 **Reports from District and County Councillors** (cont)

per kilometre and cause issues for the economy. There were now 5 dragon patchers working, up from 2.

M Inskip reported that the first full District Council meeting would take place on 25 May 2023.

8.25pm Chairman thanked L Dupre and M Inskip and they left the meeting.

23/088 **Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) Minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting of 25 April 2023 had been circulated to Councillors on 7 May 2023 by the Group.

**Resolved** to feed back to the Group that from the minutes it did not appear that the Council's request for the plan of activities/aims with timescales for next 12 months, and the monthly summary of the Groups activities completed and aims for the following month had been included on the agenda and discussed. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

Regarding the website, the Clerk advised that in the absence of a response for confirmed text from the Group for general introduction about Neighbourhood Plan she would now proceed.

Clerk

The Working Group's Lead had asked what arrangements could be made for holding funds the Group wanted to raise for the photograph competition they were running. Councillors felt that monies raised at Pea Shoot, Patsy's Pop Up Cafe etc would be cash and small sums, and therefore suggested the group could elect a member to hold for the short period required.

Clerk

Clerk had informed the Group that the Parish Council would fund the cost of the flyer, expected cost approx. £30, subject to it including details of the survey and next public meeting.

K Mackender would attend the next group meeting on 23 May with the M Housden.

MH/KM

- b) Plan of activities/aims with timescales for next 12 months as requested at previous meeting had not been received by Councillors.

Cllrs

- c) Monthly summary of the Working Group's activities completed for April and aims for May as requested at previous meeting had not been received by Councillors. Nor an indication of timescales for survey work.

Cllrs

- d) Report from Places4People (email 25.4.23) previously circulated for Councillors comments on survey arrangements.

**Resolved** that the Council were agreeable with the Consultant's comments and that regarding the Cemetery, the purpose was to find out what the community wanted with regard to burial facilities in the village now that the old Cemetery is full apart from Garden of Remembrance which is for interment of ashes only. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

Clerk

There appeared to be no further documentation for the Council to comment on or approve.

22/088 **Neighbourhood Plan (cont)**

Parish On-Line – as requested at previous meeting, Clerk had spoken to the local Parish Council and she reported on how they had dealt with engaging with the Consultant to use the package.

**Resolved** that the Clerk was to allow the Consultant to access Parish On-Line using ID and passwords provided at set up, which would then be changed at the end of the project. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman

Clerk

- e) Report on AECOM Design Code Support Team's visit to parish on 25 April 2023. It was noticed this was referenced in the Group's April Minutes. The Contents page had been now circulated to Councillors. Clerk to advise that the headings looked appropriate and that the Council looked forward to receiving the detail within each section.

Clerk

Clerk advised that the Design Code Team required maps (email of 3.5.23) and had suggested subscription to emapsite and the fee of £75 plus VAT would be paid for by AECOM.

**Resolved** that Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Lead be advised to accept the Design Code Team's suggestion and proceed as necessary. Proposed M Housden, seconded K Mackender.

Clerk

- f) Update on availability of further grant from Locality fund to enable continuation of work on Neighbourhood Plan. The Consultant had confirmed earlier in the day that there had still been no announcement from the Government via Locality that arrangements were in hand for the granting of monies for Neighbourhood Plans to be made.

All to monitor

23/089 **Finance and General Administration**

Exclusion of the Press and Public: It is hereby resolved that 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 23/089a) to 23/089e) namely staff and contractual/quotes items 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. Proposed Chairman and agreed.  
There were no members of the public present

- a) **Clerk's Hours** – the summary received for the previous meeting was discussed again.

**Resolved** to pay 76 hours for additional time worked Jan-March including 15.25 hours assigned to Neighbourhood Plan tasks during this period; 3 hours additional year end work, 4 hours play project, 4 hours producing Annual Report and 3 hours election work/deliveries. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman

Clerk

At future meetings the Councillors would monitor hours and look at ways of reducing Clerk's workload, and compare with other parishes regarding contracted hours and proportionality with the Precept at June meeting.

All Cllrs

23/089 **Finance and General Administration** (cont)b) **Updates from Village Hall**

Clerk confirmed receipt of copy of documents required for use of recreation ground for the Pea Shoot. Clerk to confirm to Village Hall Committee that as the event organiser they are required to undertake the Risk Assessments, as they have always done in the past. No further update on Car Park Licence.

Clerk

c) **Renewal of Lease with RSPB for drove land at Ouse Washes.**

It was noted that the document was still with both parties' solicitors and nothing further to discuss at present.

d) **Renewal of 3-year Street light maintenance contract**

Clerk outlined including cost and recommended renewal.

e) **Renewal insurance policy and review schedule and policy.**

Details noted.

Chairman re-opened meeting to public – there were none

f) **Renewal of 3 year street light maintenance contract**

**Resolved** to renew contract with K&M Lighting for 3 years at £44.10 per annum for the 5 lights. Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin.

Clerk

g) **Renewal of insurance policy**

**Resolved** to renew insurance policy with Zurich at £524.93. Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin

Clerk

h) **Policies**

**Resolved** to adopt the Investment Policy as previously circulated. Proposed K Mackender, seconded M Housden  
Clerk advised that under the Retention and Disposal Policy she needed time to go through more files to clear out items no longer required and this was noted, with Councillors confirming the need to reduce volumes as much as possible.

Clerk

i) **Receipts and Payments**

May 2023 schedule had been circulated. Documentation checked by Chairman before meeting.

**Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments listed on the May 2023 schedule and release cheques. (listed at foot of Minutes) Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender resolved

Clerk

j) **Savings Accounts**

Noted these products had now been confirmed by Lloyds as being set up.

k) **Receipts and Payments** (as i) above – duplicate)l) **2023/24 Budgets and reserves and discuss works required at bus shelter, together with any other projects for 2023**

Deferred to June meeting

All

23/090 **Planning Applications**

22/00578/FUL Witcham House Construction of double detached garage/horse box store, conversion of existing garages with room above and an orangery. Amendment for orangery

**Resolved** no concerns regarding reduced size. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender

Clerk

23/00480/TRE 24 High Street T1 Prunus - Crown reduction of 3.5 metres - noted

23/00174/LBC and 23/00121/FUL Yew Tree House – For information. (see Minute 23/086)

23/091 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery**

a) **Weekly inspections** of recreation ground and play equipment. Chairman reported that all was ok. Noted that Wicksteed would be undertaking the annual inspection on 11 May 2023. Clerk required copy of weekly inspections for Internal Auditor

MH

b) **Report from Working Party Representatives on Play and Fitness Equipment Project and Grant Applications.**

Clerk had circulated application form for next stage of grant to members of the working party, which had been drafted. Final information discussed and form completed.

**Resolved** that the Clerk should now submit the completed form. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

c) **New bench Jubilee Garden Area**

Noted that the new bench had been installed. Clerk to write to Village Hall Committee and the installer to express the Council's gratitude for providing the bench.

Clerk

d) **Recreation Ground 2023 Cricket Matches** Matches updates from Witcham and City of Ely 4<sup>th</sup> XI cricket team had confirmed dates for their matches. Clerk asked about managing any additional cuts to fit round matches now planned and Chairman confirmed that at present no extra cuts were required but it would be monitored.

All

23/092 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters**

a) Items to bring to attention of the Highways Authority  
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>

*Verge on West side of Headleys Lane* (Ref Minute 23/069a))

Clerk had reported responses from ECDC Planning and County Council Highways.

**Resolved** that ECDC be advised that on examination of the planning application drawings and the document relating to Hedge Protection for Development Works – method statement and protection zone, the Parish Council thinks the old hedge outside plot 3 was to have been retained and protected.

Clerk

Proposed Chairman, seconded S Wilkin.

Chairman said Anglian Water had attended a burst water main at The Slade over the last week and traffic lights removed today. Earlier in year they had been called to repair water leak at Headley's Lane.

23/092 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters** (cont)

- b) To receive latest speed data for April. Chairman had circulated details with notes to Councillors and the Speedwatch Co-ordinator prior to the meeting. Recent traffic lights in The Slade had reduced traffic flow significantly although there was still a recording of someone travelling through this section at 45mph.

**Useful websites for the public to report matters of concern:**

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-v3/report-antisocial-behaviour/>

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/rti/rti-beta-2.1/report-a-road-traffic-incident/>

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/> Tel [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111) (anonymous)

23/093 **Correspondence**

The following items of information/interest, and invitations to events had been circulated and unless recorded below as otherwise, were noted:

NALC Bulletins, Newsletters, Events etc  
 CCC Highways maintenance programmes  
 CCC RoadSafety Way2Go Spring 2023  
 Parish & Community Forum 17 May 2023 Soham  
 Arthur Rank Hospice – Arthurs Shed events – posted on noticeboard

23/094 Date of Next Meeting: **14 June 2023**

Review Actions – Not done

Note any items from Councillors for next agenda – none other than items raised in above Minutes.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10.07pm

**Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

|           |   | £       | £     | £       |
|-----------|---|---------|-------|---------|
| Receipts: | Precept   | 8250.00 |       | 8250.00 |
| Payments  | 002061 Truelink (March)                         | 80.00   | 16.00 | 96.00   |
|           | 002062 J&JA Construction (Install bench on pad) | 400.00  | 80.00 | 480.00  |
|           | 002063 Clerks salary May)                       | 379.06  |       | 379.06  |
|           | 002064 LGPS                                     | 130.38  |       | 130.38  |
|           | 002065 Ely Print Centre                         | 164.00  |       | 164.00  |
|           | 002066 K&M Lighting                             | 18.17   | 3.63  | 21.80   |
|           | 002067 TEEC                                     | 180.00  | 36.00 | 216.00  |
|           | 002068 Zurich Insurance annual premium          | 524.93  |       | 524.93  |
|           | d/d IONOS                                       | 29.06   | 5.81  | 34.87   |
|           | c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails      |         |       |         |
|           | 19.4.23   | 31.50   | 6.30  | 37.80   |

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