

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 10 June 2026 at 7.35pm in the Village Hall, Witcham.

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

In attendance Parish Clerk/RFO
District Councillor M Inskip
County and District Councillor L Dupré

26/084 **Apologies for absence** – G Byrne (personal), J Lucas (personal)

26/085 **To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on any items on the agenda**
Pecuniary interests - none
Personal interests - none
Prejudicial interests - none

26/086 **Dispensations**
To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

26/087 **Reports from District and County Councillors**
Monthly reports for April, previously circulated, were noted. Chairman opened meeting for the County and District Councillors to speak.

District Councillor asked if there was any feedback on the new waste bin collections. In general, appeared to be going well but concern kerbside food caddy light in weight and blows into the highway. Witcham collection day had moved to a Tuesday. (Clerk to inform Truelink for the purpose of putting out bins at cemetery and bags from litter bins at recreation ground).

Clerk

Chairman proposed moving to **agenda item 26/095c) – LHI application 40mph speed limit for Mepal to Witcham road**. This was unanimously agreed.

The CCC draft feasibility report recommended 50mph and spoke of complying with guidelines. This did not meet the objectives of the project to adequately improve safety which would also give the opportunity to re-open path to connect Mepal and Witcham and initiate enforcement, as per Community Actions in the Neighbourhood Plan. Various options were explored. The County Councillor offered to support the Parish Council's views and would await further details.

7.50pm County and District Councillors were thanked and they left the meeting. The business of the agenda resumed.

Further discussion ensued. Council needed to review guidance referred to in the feasibility report and prepare response objecting to proposal of 50mph in the report as it does not allow the Parish Council to achieve many of the points raised in the Neighbourhood Plan/Community Actions, nor does it address safety concerns. Clerk offered to book in an extra-ordinary meeting to approve response.

26/087 **Reports from District and County Councillors (cont)**

Resolved to authorise response to be prepared by G Byrne and Chairman, and sent by Clerk, subject to circulation to all councillors (Clerk to alert Councillors that email ready). In the meantime Clerk to write to Project Manager advising that timeframe of 19 June for response was too difficult and required extension. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin.
K Mackender wanted to know why it was ok to improve speed limit to 50mph when if a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle at 50mph the risk of death is 70%. At 40mph it drops significantly to 30-50%. He also wanted to know if the feasibility study personnel had visited the site and invited the project manager to join him for a run along this road.

GB/
Chair/
Clerk

Resolved to update County Councillor regarding acceptance of the offer of letter of support for 40mph. Proposed Chairman, seconded S Wilkin.

Clerk

Resolved the G Byrne should represent the Parish Council at the presentation on 3 July 2026.

GB

26/088 **Public Participation** There were no members of the public present.

26/089 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 13 May 2026 deferred as meeting would be inquorate with 2 abstaining as they had not been present on 13 May.

26/090 **Matters Arising**

There were none.

26/091 **Finance and Administration Matters**

Chairman proposed to move item a) towards the end of this agenda item and start with b).

- b) **Clerk's Report – CIL** ECDC had advised that CIL monies could be diverted from Cemetery project to other projects subject to recording an explanation on the CIL annual financial report before submitting to ECDC at the end of the calendar year. With regard to undertaking project to further increase play facilities, ECDC recommended getting a play audit done and applying for funding under the CIL Inclusive Plan and Open Spaces Fund (10% match funding required, capital funding towards projects that ensure playgrounds are accessible to children of all abilities).

Resolved to arrange for PIPA to undertake a play audit. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

- c) **Annual Village Inspection Report** Chairman reported on findings. **Resolved** to accept the report and Clerk to contact ECDC regarding new contact labels for dog bins, including bin numbers. The QR code does not work. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin.
Chairman also reported that the new street light column at The Orchards had been installed but the light fitting was still outstanding.

Clerk

Chairman proposed moving back to item a) and this was agreed.

- a) **Receipts and payments schedule** for June had been previously circulated. Documents had been checked by K Mackender. **Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments for June. Cheques to be released. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.
d) **Approval of new mileage rates** **Resolved** to approve adoption of the new HMRC mileage rates for business mileage, 55p per mile. [GOV.UK Mileage Allowance Payments](https://www.gov.uk/mileage-allowance-payments) Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway.

Clerk

26/091 **Finance and Administration Matters (cont)**

- e) **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 items 26/091f)) to 26/091h), namely Village Hall Deed of Right of Way & Car Park, RSPB Lease, and ECDC correspondence, 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 by all.

Meeting closed to the public. There were no members of the public present.

- f) **Deed of Right of Way and Parking for Village Hall.** Draft documents had been received.

Clerk

Resolved that subject to typos being corrected, it was agreed all looked in order to proceed and get copy to sign. Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway.

- g) **RSPB Lease.** Clerk had contacted RSPB representative who in turn had asked their solicitors to expedite urgently to bring lease to conclusion. Clerk was still awaiting the document to sign. Back-rent to be calculated.

- h) **ECDC correspondence**

Clerk

Resolved that Clerk to respond as per discussion. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender.

Chairman re-opened meeting to the public. There were no members of the public present.

26/092 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) Weekly inspections of play equipment and recreation ground had been completed by the Chairman. Draft signage for fitness and large swing area examined.

Resolved that the Clerk make arrangements to get quote and order signs as discussed. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin.

Clerk

- b) Scouts application use of recreation ground AGM and Fun Afternoon 28 June 2026.

Resolved to approve use of recreation ground by 1st Sutton Scouts for their Fun Afternoon. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded K Mackender.

Clerk

26/093 **Witcham Neighbourhood Plan**

Updates on Neighbourhood Plan and Community Actions noted. Chairman reported on the 'Discovery Walk' meeting with Cambs County Council Communities Service – Strategy and Partnerships representatives and members of the Witcham Conservation Group. They had discussed what village groups and what activities were going on in the village together with the Community Actions in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Youth & Community Coordinator would contact local schools to get information on numbers and ages of children in the village and youth club provision in nearby villages to assist helping to plan what could be done for Witcham. They had discussed building a website (possibly a 6th form centre project) to help the conservation group raise their profile and help with funding. Police and Police Cadets could undertake speed-check sessions which could be useful in helping gathering data.

Resolved that in future, any planning application that appears to be contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan, Clerk to engage with external advisors as appropriate. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender.

26/094 **Planning Matters**

ECDC decisions noted:

26/00194/FUL The Bungalow, Hive Road. Single storey side extensions and installation of rooflights and PV panels – Approved.

26/095 Highways and Streetlighting

- a) Items reported to Highways Authority. Clerk had reported items discussed at previous meeting and these were in the process of being actioned by the relevant authority. Noted a water leak in Silver Street had been repaired. The footpath in Martins Lane where water pipe repairs had been made had cracked – Chairman to report to Anglian Water.
- b) Monthly speed data reports had been circulated by the Chairman and was noted. Speedwatch sessions: Report from G Byrne received and noted.
- c) LHI application – Mepal-Witcham road (see item following County and District Councillors reports (26/087).

26/096 Correspondence

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

East Cambs Parish and Community forum 26.5.26 community transport and health

Zurich – Martyns Law

CAPALC Employment law, SIA pilot assessment and inspection, bulletins, Code of Conduct training, Environmental matters survey.

NALC CE bulletins and events

ECDC agendas and minutes, Council and planning, operational services; press releases, grants

ACRE Staying Connected – bulletins and various events & Shape future rural communities.

CCC road closures, roadworks and events bulletin 1-15 July 2026

ECDC Involving young people: Exploring the possibilities for Parish Councils 14th July 12pm to 1pm or 10th September 7pm to 8pm

ACRE Rural Housing Week Events

Little Downham Parish Council seeking advice on how Witcham set about making Neighbourhood Plan. Chairman offered to attend one of their meetings or speak by phone.

S Wilkin reported that at a recent village hall meeting, the Events Committee Chairman had asked if the Parish Council would permit erection of an advert for the 2026 Peashooting Championships (11.7.26) on the recreation ground. Clerk advised that this had not been presented prior to the meeting for inclusion on the agenda published last week. (Standing Orders).

Chairman asked the meeting if they would move back to 26/092 – Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters. This was unanimously agreed.

M Housden declared an interest as a member of the Events Committee.

Resolved that the Clerk be instructed to advise that in principle the Council agreed to the Events Committee posting up a banner similar in size and fixings to that approved on CCC highway at The Toll, subject to receipt of a risk assessment, methodology statement and confirmation of public liability insurance etc. Proposed by K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway. (3 for, M Housden (abstained))

26/097 Date of next meeting: 8 July 2026

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	VAT claim 2025/6	1105.72		1105.72
Payments:	002266 Truelink grass & grounds Apr	380.04	76.00	456.04
	Truelink grass & grounds May	380.04	76.00	456.04
	002267/8BACS Salary expenses June	958.06		958.06
	002269 LGS Services (internal audit)	120.00	24.00	144.00
	Direct fee Lloyds	7.25		7.25
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails debited 20.5.26	33.81	6.76	40.57

Signed..... Dated