

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 11 January 2023 at 7.34pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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

In attendance Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)

23/001 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from K Mackender (train delays).
Apologies also received from County and District Councillor L Dupré (illness) and District Councillor M Inskip (illness)

23/002 **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 – M Housden Planning Item 23/008: Kings Development, The Slade (An item of note – Discharge of Conditions by ECDC)

23/003 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

23/004 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

23/005 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 12 October 2022 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 L Holdaway, seconded Chairman.

Minutes of the Meeting of 9 November 2022 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 J Bibby, seconded S Wilkin.

Minutes of the additional Meeting of 7 December 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 L Holdaway, seconded Bibby.

23/006 **Matters Arising**

22/198, 22/179, 22/163, 22/130, 22/115c) *Recreation Ground* - information still awaited from Witcham Cricket Club. Further information would be available after their AGM later this month but it seemed likely there would be no teams for the 2023 season.

22/198, 22/179, 22/171 *Streetlights and Highways*: Laurel bush in front of dog bin at Headleys Lane and spheres not yet removed.

22/198, 22/182 *Annual Village Inspection*: Work by ECDC on bins was thought to be outstanding and would probably be delayed until better weather.
Dog bin signs to be checked if replaced yet.

22/198 *RSPB lease* – no progress to report

23/006 Matters Arising

22.205, 22/198, 22/185, *Play and Outdoor Fitness Refurbishment Project*.
 Result on application to Amey Community Fund administered by
 Cambridgeshire Community Fund was awaited. Some of the support letters in.
 22/198, 22/190 *Streetlights and Highways*: Lamp opposite 14 Westway Place
 now replaced. Old bracket/leaning pole still not removed.
 22/198, 22/191 *Correspondence*: Homelessness Survey – Clerk had made nil
 return in respect of rough sleepers seen in village for night of 17/18 November.

JL

23/007 Reports from District and County Councillors

The reports for December and January had been previously circulated. Noted
 that District Councillors were following up antisocial behaviour on the Elean
 Business Park, notably the nights of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the
 weekend of 6-8 January.

23/008 Planning Applications and Tree Works:

Planning Applications – Items for noting only:

22/00090/DISB Kings of Witcham, The Slade To discharge Condition 10
 (Boundary Treatments) and 20 (Refuse & Recycling Scheme) of decision
 22/00090/VAR dated 20/04/2022 for Variation of conditions 1 (approved plans
) and 3 (External Materials) of previously approved 17/00689/FUL for
 Demolition of existing motor vehicle garage and construction of 6No four bed
 dwellings, 2No 3 bed dwellings, garaging, access road and associated works –
 for information.

Location for bin storage/collection points and boundary/fencing noted

ECDC decisions:

22/00600/FUL 15 Martins Lane, Witcham Proposed driveway – approved.

22/01222/TPO The Bury Meadows, Bury Road, Witcham A1 Various – Clear
 back the emerging surface vegetation 1m either side of the current clear
 usable surface, (2m currently). This vegetation is primarily bramble and young
 blackthorn suckers. In order to enable safe use of the route by horse-riders
 any encroaching vegetation/branches within this clearance width will be cut
 back to a height of 4m – approved.

Clerk reported on concerns expressed by one of the landowners fronting the
 drove who had also advised that they had arrangements in hand to undertake
 works in accordance with the Management Plan for the area in the coming
 weeks. The landowner had advised that the County Council should not be
 undertaking the work on this part of the droves. No further information had
 been received, nor exact dates when work would commence and by whom.

23/009 Neighbourhood Plan

Further Terms of Reference templates and questionnaires for the survey had
 been circulated to Councillors by the Working Party for comment. The Council
 had previously approved the ACRE template but the Working Party had
 thought that something simpler would suffice and had sought templates from
 the Consultant. Chairman said he would speak to the Working Party to explain
 further and that Council content with ACRE template as approved earlier.
 Clerk had also offered to speak to Working Party Chairman. Agreement on
 Terms of Reference covering operating and responsibility parameters were
 now urgently required to be in place. Submission to be requested for approval
 by Parish Council again at February meeting.

Regarding survey questions – Parish Council sought inclusion of questions
 about cemetery and burials and Clerk to advise Working Group accordingly.
 Working Party to submit draft survey questionnaire to Council in due course.

Clerk

23/009 **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Locality grant application for £3475 for works to 31.3.23 had been submitted and a response offer had been received, which would now be accepted by Clerk for Parish Council, including 'Requirement From'. The Working Party now needed to attend the first meeting with AECOM for Design Codes Technical Support to discuss aims/aspirations for the neighbourhood development plan and consider specific issues that need addressing through the Design Codes.

The breakdown of the Consultants fees of £13,315.50 plus £955 materials had been circulated and were accepted.

Clerk advised that ECDC had confirmed acceptance of the Designated Neighbourhood Area.

There were no members of the public present for exclusion (Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960) for the following item:

23/010 **2023/25 Grass Cutting Contract**

Clerk had circulated summary of tender received. Noted despite having posted up an Invite to Tender notice on village noticeboard and website, and having contacted previous tenderers only one response had been received by the date of closure for receipt of tenders.

There was discussion about any requirement for additional cuts for any cricket matches that might take place in the summer, together with costs for sweeping if the grass got long with only 13 cuts between March and end of September. Confirmation awaited as to whether or not Witcham Cricket Club would have a team and noted that an Ely team had asked if they might use the facilities for some of their matches.

Resolved to accept the tender from Truelink. This was not disproportionate to past costs and there had been only one tender received despite having contacted 4 contractors. £3,938 as per itemised tender, plus any additional cuts/sweeping at recreation ground if required. Effective 1 March 2023 to 28 February 2025. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway and agreed unanimously.

Clerk

Clerk to check with contractor about notice required for any extra cuts to facilitate any cricket matches.

Clerk

23/011 **Finance & Admin**

- a) The January 2023 schedule had been circulated. Documentation had been checked by J Bibby and S Wilkin.

Resolved to approve the receipts and payments for January 2023 and release cheques. (Listed at foot of Minutes).

Proposed J Bibby, seconded S Wilkin

Clerk

- b) 2023/24 Budget and Precept

Clerk presented amended draft and notes for discussion. Noted that due to uncertainty of grant system for Neighbourhood Plan Project and period of time to complete, and agreed that any shortfall would be taken from the Council's general reserves. Confirmation still awaited about grant system post-April 2023 but in any case if there was no further availability of grants the Council intended that the project would end at the end of the first stage, 31.3.23.

Budget: Payments £17,460 (plus any play and neighbourhood plan expenditure), Receipts £1,197 (plus any play and neighbourhood plan grants). Precept £16,500 to allow some contingency.

23/011 **Finance & Admin**

Resolved to accept the budget and set the Precept at £16,500 for 2023/24. Proposed J Lucas, seconded J Bibby. Clerk to submit form to ECDC.

Clerk

- c) Clerk had circulated savings accounts interest rates. Clerk advised regarding current monies held, together with interest rate, and drew attention to needing to ensure adequate cashflow for neighbourhood plan and play projects in addition to normal expenditure items. It was understood Wicksteed were aware that the play project was dependent on grants and that payments would need to meet requirements of working within grant system.

Resolved to invest £25,000 in Fixed Rate Deposit 6 months and £15,000 in 95 day notice account. Clerk to make necessary arrangements with bank and signatories. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway.

Clerk

To be kept under review in current economic climate

- d) Cambridgeshire Pension Funding Strategy Statement with valuation and contribution rates for 2023-25 and Cessation Policy had been previously circulated.

Resolved to accept the proposed contribution rates 2023-25. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

- e) Headstone Inspections

Clerk had circulated details of companies offering service, as per November Clerk's Report. Families would be notified of any headstones requiring stabilisation work or headstone laid down if family refused or could not be traced.

Resolved to contact R S Memorials to undertake inspection, approx. £150. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman

Clerk

23/012 **Recreation Ground**

Chairman reported the new tree had been planted on the bund. More soil could be added later as it settles. There was nothing to report on the usual weekly inspections of recreation ground and play equipment.

23/013 **Consultations**

ECDC Licensing Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (CCTV)

Details previously circulated. Councillors thought CCTV in Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles was a good idea and noted the questionnaire was for individuals to complete. Councillors undertook to do this as individuals.

All

23/014 **MVAS – Speed Cameras**

- a) The Chairman had circulated the latest speed data for Nov/Dec. Great concern at recordings of 50 and 60mph in Martins Lane-The Slade. The reports were being circulated to the village Speedwatch Watch Co-ordinator.

- b) Clerk reported that having placed notice on village noticeboard no one had contacted her about volunteering for speedwatch checks. Notice was going forward for next edition of What's On which would ensure details reached each house. Copy was also on the Council's website since New Year.

Clerk

23/015 **Street Lights and Highways**

No items were reported for bringing to the attention of the Highways Authority. J Lucas to check if new lights at Westway Place were now working. .

JL

23/016 **Correspondence**

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

Cambridgeshire Constabulary East Cambs Community Meetings for 2023/24, next ones 4 April and 4 July.

All

ECDC Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme – may be of interest to residents to check heat escape from their homes. Notice to be put up to gauge interest

Clerk

CCC Cost of Living Events Ely Library 25.1.23 – details posted on noticeboards

CCC Community and Public Transport information sheet – posted on website

CCC Traffic Management Centre (TMC) Incident Report and access to one.network and Councillor training available

Anglian Water – new reservoirs in the East of England – update on consultation process www.anglianwater.co.uk/new-reservoirs

Ouse Washes Newsletter, noted main works on Middle Level Barrier Bank now completed and in future other maintenance works would be being carried out, including the flood storage reservoir between Welney and Mepal following hot dry weather (for noticeboards)

Parish & Community Forum/Cost of Living Event - 25th January 2023, Ely Library and Virtual Festival January 2023 – health, and a Good Mood Cafe opening at Littleport – information placed on noticeboards

CAPALC Special Meeting scheduled for 25 January 2023 (zoom)

Chairman

Waterbeach Recycling Public Visits. J Lucas said she would like to attend and would get further information and pass out to others interested in attending.

JL

NALC Bulletins, CEO reports, newsletters and Legal updates including arrangements for 2023 Parish Councillor Elections and Councillors taking office Tuesday 9th May 2023 (8th being Public Holiday)

23/017 **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 8 February 2023.

Items to include content for Annual Report (submissions), Newsletter (submissions), Best Kept Garden classes and arrangements (Councillors to forward ideas for agenda).

Review Actions – omitted. Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	-			
Payments	002032 Reimbursement What's On editor Nov and Dec printing costs £33.75+£29.25	63.00		63.00
	002033 Clerks salary (Jan)	379.09		379.09
	002034 LGPS	135.40		135.40
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails	31.50	6.30	37.80
	D/D Ionos	42.01	8.40	50.41
	002035 Npower streetlight energy (5) including energy bill relief scheme (-£11.04)	18.33	0.92	19.25
	002036 BTS grasscutting cricket area	375.00	75.00	450.00
	002037 Truelink	62.40	12.48	74.88
	002038 East of England Ambulance (First Responders s137)	50.00		50.00

Signed..... Dated