

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 12 April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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

In attendance Parish Clerk/RFO
District Councillor M Inskip

Chairman proposed bringing forward items relating to Neighbourhood Plan, Finance and Admin to complete early as K Mackender needed to leave the meeting at about 8.30pm. This was agreed by all.

23/053 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from County and District Councillor L Dupré.

23/054 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
L Holdaway – Agenda Item 23/063 Planning – Witcham House
M Housden – Agenda item 23/063 Planning – 8 The Slade

23/055 Dispensations

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

23/056 Reports from District and County Councillors

The reports for April had been previously circulated and were noted.
J Lucas asked for more information about the document signed by the County Council regarding climate change. District Councillor M Inskip said he would forward to the Clerk for dissemination to members.
Chairman referred to the situation for patients at Priors Field Surgery and everyone was pleased to note that the arrangements made for Malling Health were working well. It was initially a 1 year contract but in any case arrangements were needed to get new premises as the old site was no longer adequate for the purpose.

23/057 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.
L Holdaway advised that the application before the Council for Witcham House took into account foundation treatment for the garage block – to ensure trees protected.

23/058 Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of 8 February 2023 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 J Bibby.

Minutes of the Meeting of 8 March 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 S Wilkin, seconded Chairman.

23/059 **Matters Arising**

It was noted that the litterpick organised by volunteers had taken place on 25 March 2023.

There were no other Matters Arising other than items appearing as Agenda Items.

The agenda was then re-ordered as follows:

23/061 **Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) Notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group's meetings on 28 March 2023 and 28 February 2023 (amended) had now been received and were noted.
- b) Survey discussed and comments from Consultant supported. Response for Working Group provided.
- c) AECOM Design Code Support Team to visit and survey parish. Noted dates were being discussed. Chairman and J Lucas advised they were not available to attend on this occasion.
- d) Clerk had made the subscription to Parish On-line for maps as previously agreed. This included PGSA* (OS) to give access to all information required, (emailed 27.3.23). The Licence had now been granted (emailed 12.4.23) and she sought instruction from the Council on how to manage sharing access to all these resources with the Working Group and the Consultant. District Councillor M Inskip joined the conversation and advised that Sutton Parish Council used Parish On-line for Council and Neighbourhood Plan work and he would ask Clerk to liaise with Witcham on practises. Noted OS spoke of Licensee (Parish Council) issuing a Standard Form Contractor Licence.

**Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA) application gives access to the Ordnance Survey PSGA Member Licence, the Royal Mail PAF Public Sector Licence and access to APGB group products and services.*

Clerk had previously circulated spreadsheet to Councillors, the Working Group Lead, and People4Places outlining receipts and payments and future commitments under the Neighbourhood Plan project. She had also circulated a copy of the Locality Year-End Return template for completion. **Resolved** to submit Locality Year-End Return to claim grant as per itemised on Consultant's estimate and drafted Locality application, as discussed. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman

- e) To note any feedback regarding Government continuing the Neighbourhood Plan Grant Scheme for 2023/4 to enable completion of Witcham Neighbourhood Plan – no further information confirming continuation of the scheme for 2023/24 had been published on the Locality website as at 12 April 2023.
- f) Councillors were informed that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group intended to run a Photograph Competition inviting residents to submit photos of areas of interest, views of village significance etc, some of which would be used to illustrate the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. The members of the Group were in the process of securing prizemoney and were now seeking Parish Council consent for payment of costs of printing flyers from the project funds held by the Parish Council. Clerk reported that in addition to using the flyer to promote the Photograph Competition, the Working Group had suggested including information about the survey coming out shortly. It could also be used to flag the next public meeting.

23/061	<p>Neighbourhood Plan (cont)</p> <p>Resolved that the Council would fund the cost of the flyer, approx. £30, subject to it including details of forthcoming release of survey and public meeting. Clerk to confirm to the Working Group that it would not fund prizemoney for the competition and to draw attention to the forecast overspend of budget as detailed in the spreadsheet for the project. Clerk to advise Working Group that Council needs a plan of activities/aims and timescales for the next 12 months and to receive a monthly summary of activities completed and aims for the following month, to be submitted to Councillors prior to each monthly Council meeting. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.</p>	264/.... Clerk/ MH
	<p>Chairman advised that unfortunately he would not be available to attend the April meeting of the Working Group and asked for another Councillor to step forward to support the Group in this next stage of the process. K Mackender and L Holdaway advised that they were not available.</p>	All
	District Councillor M Inskip left the meeting.	
23/064	<p>Finance and General Administration</p> <p>a) Reserves Policy, previously circulated, received and discussed, and minor amendment made. Resolved to adopt the amended Reserves Policy. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin Clerk suggested an Investment Policy briefly setting out how the Council would manage savings and this was agreed.</p>	Clerk
	9.10pm K Mackender left the meeting	
	<p>b) Renewal of SLCC membership Resolved to approve renewal of SLCC membership for 2023/24, £139.00. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman</p>	Clerk
	<p>c) Renewal of CAPALC membership Resolved to approve renewal of CAPALC membership for 2023/24 incl DPO, £320.71. Proposed J Bibby, seconded S Wilkin</p>	Clerk
	<p>d) April 2023 schedule had been circulated. Documentation had been checked by J Bibby. Resolved to approve the receipts and payments listed on the April 2023 schedule, and release cheques. (Listed at foot of Minutes) Proposed J Lucas, seconded J Bibby.</p>	Clerk
	<p>e) Year-end accounts, including budget review, draft AGAR Accounting Statements and associated year-end documents Copies of receipts and payments for the year with bank reconciliation to 31 March 2023, together with Summary had been prepared and previously circulated by the Clerk for Councillors to review for approval. Bank statements were presented and the documents checked in the meeting. Receipts, including £16,000 Precept, CIL monies and Locality grant totalled £30676.34, Payments £21,640.422. Balance at 31 March 2023 was £60,173.99 (including all earmarked reserves). Current JPAG Practitioners Guide had also been sent to Councillors. Resolved that the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023, together with reconciliations, bank statements and the Summary be approved. Proposed J Bibby, seconded J Lucas. Draft AGAR Accounting Statements presented, and variances between 2021/2 and 2022/3 were noted. Earmarked and general reserves were discussed. As a small council, normally 12-18 months Precept was held as general reserves as recommended since old District Audit</p>	

23/064 **Finance and General Administration (cont)**

Service days. However, current JPAG Practitioners Guide recommended 12 months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) for small councils as reflected in the Financial Reserves Policy adopted earlier in the meeting. This was to ensure adequate cashflow and cover in case of unexpected events.

L Holdaway noted that earmarked reserves for the cemetery were high and the Council had been unable to make any further progress with finding land. It was confirmed that questions about the desire for further cemetery facilities in the village had been addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey. Clerk advised that the earmarked reserve of £16639 was inadequate provision to purchase and prepare a cemetery including legal costs but it would start the process and a **loan** would be required.

Refurbishment of the bus shelter was discussed; £400 was in earmarked reserves for this but more would be required.

The sign at the entrance to the village hall roadway had also been discussed in the past as an item for renewal.

The Jubilee Garden required planting up.

Resolved that the Council, during the current financial year, will make arrangements to consider bus shelter refurbishment, sign replacement and further work, ie planting up, at Jubilee Garden after the Coronation seat is installed. CIL money (bus shelter) and general reserves (sign) to be used. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas.

*All*f) **2022/23 audit arrangements**

Clerk was making arrangements for the internal auditor to visit in late May or early June. The Council would be subject to an intermediate review by the external auditor.

*Clerk*g) **2022/23 Annual Report**

Final document completed and Clerk confirmed quote of £164.

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

Arrangements in hand and terms and conditions from HEY had been received and were being clarified. Agreed Clerk to sign on behalf of Council.

*Clerk*i) **Summary of Clerk's hours** for the year, including breakdown of time spent on Neighbourhood Plan and other extra work, was presented. Agreed to defer to next meeting to consider increasing total hours worked each month and settle payment for excess hours.23/060 **Priors Field Surgery – Serving Sutton and Surrounding Villages**

Letter setting out interim arrangements and that NHS working with local authorities to secure alternative site for future provision of GP services for local community had been previously circulated and was noted. Comments given earlier in the meeting from Councillor M Inskip also noted

23/062 **2023 Annual Parish Meeting**

Agenda presented and agreed. Clerk to remind Chairman of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to nominate a representative to attend as M Housden not available.

*Clerk
All*23/063 **Planning Applications**

23/00362/VAR 8 The Slade To vary condition 1 (approved plans) of previously approved 21/01571/FUL for the construction of a single storey front porch and single storey rear extension

Resolved the Parish Council had no concerns. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway

Clerk

22/00578/FUL Witcham House, Headleys Lane Construction of double detached garage/horse box store, conversion of existing garages with room above and an orangery - Amendments made to the garage

23/063 **Planning Applications** (cont)

Resolved that previously the only concerns had been about ensuring protection of trees as raised by the tree officer and it was now understood this had been resolved. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman.

Clerk

23/00174/LBC Yew Tree House, 2 Silver Street Conversion of outbuilding to studio ancillary to main dwelling

Resolved to submit comments made on 23/00121/FUL regarding condition restricting use of the building to personal use for residents of Yew Tree House main building, ie the converted building could not be sold off separately in the future. Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway

Clerk

23/00278/TRE 4 High Street T1 Silver Birch - Crown lift lowest 4 branches to raise the crown to approximately 4-5 metres. Tree in rear garden, can be viewed easily via side access/driveway. Noted ECDC had now given consent.

New ECDC Local Enforcement Plan received.

23/065 **2023 Elections**

Statement as to Persons Nominated to Witcham Parish Council and Notice of Declaration of Result of Poll – Uncontested received and noted.

L Holdaway

M Housden

J Lucas

K Mackender

S Wilkin

Julie Bibby was thanked for her service to the community as a Parish Councillor since December 2008 and as Parish Clerk from 1982 to 1991. She would be much missed and the Council gave their best wishes for the future.

Arrangements to be made for filling vacancy by co-option

Clerk

23/066 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) **Weekly inspections** of recreation ground and play equipment had been completed by the Chairman. He was arranging to re-position the football nets, otherwise nothing else to report. Clerk to arrange for Annual Inspection to take place in June or as soon as possible thereafter.
- b) **Installation of new bench** at recreation ground - King Charles III Coronation. J Bibby confirmed the bench had arrived and the contractor would install around the end of next week.
- c) **Play and Fitness Project Working Party** recommended waiting until the outcome of the current grant application before considering the next phase. Clerk had submitted the Part B form as required.
- d) **Cricket Matches** - City of Ely 3rd X1 team had pledged a donation of £400 towards grasscutting at the recreation ground for the 7 matches booked. Dates for possible matches for 4th X1 team had been submitted and a donation towards grasscutting would be made for these four matches too. Confirmation awaited. Witcham Cricket Club had advised they would be having mid-week matches on 7 June and 5 July plus the charity match on 25 June.

Clerk

Working party

Resolved that the Clerk arrange for match dates to be listed on "What's On". Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas

Clerk

Resolved to write to City of Ely Cricket team to thank them for the donation. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin

Clerk

23/067 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**e) **2023 Pea Shoot**

Application for use of the recreation ground on 8 July 2023 previously circulated.

Clerk

Resolved to approve use of recreation ground for the 2023 Pea Shoot subject to receipt of up-to-date evidence of public liability insurance.

f) **Request to use recreation ground for overnight camping by King's School Ely (Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme) received.**

Clerk

Resolved to advise the King's School that the recreation ground would not be available on the two Saturday evenings - camping was not permitted on the green at any time. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman.

g) **Grasscutting Contract**

Councillors reported that two cuts of the recreation ground had taken place and one cut last week of the cemetery and village areas.

Assessments regarding additional cuts once cricket started would be required and grasscutting contractor informed.

Cllrs

h) **Cemetery Matters**

Clerk advised that an application for a memorial stone was awaited.

23/067 **Consultations**

Anglian Water/Cambridge Water Company – New Fens Reservoir. The report following the first consultation had been published.

<https://www.fensreservoir.co.uk/documents/>

23/068 **2023 Best Kept Garden Competition - June**

A further notice should go in "What's On". Clerk confirmed notices had been posted at the noticeboards and on the website. J Bibby would make all final arrangements with the judge regarding gardens to visit and scoring criteria.

JB

23/069 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters**

a) Items to bring to attention of the Highways Authority.

Resolved that the Clerk to report to ECDC and CCC the damaged verge on west side of Headleys Lane, adjacent Pond Farm development, and seek confirmation of when the old hedge, which was originally to be retained, would be replaced. There looked to be encroachment of the verge. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded J Bibby.

Clerk

L Holdaway reported there had been a major water leak at Market Way/Headleys Lane.

b) Drovers – Bury Road. There was no other information to report.

c) Speed data for March had been circulated. Report of speeding vehicles approaching the crossroads noted, together with motor bike activity at Hive Road. No further details about training for Speedwatch volunteers, nor planned sessions.

d) The MVAS bracket on street lamp L5EKG had been moved to L4EKG in The Slade following consent to move after the recent installation of a wooden pole caused obstruction for L5EKG. MVAS equipment now monitoring traffic at this location.

22/070 **ECDC Thermal Imaging Scheme** (for residents to identify heat loss from homes)

Clerk advised that a resident had come forward expressing an interest in participating in the scheme.

Resolved that the Clerk contact ECDC to enquire what arrangement could be made since there had not been enough support to make it a community event. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman

Clerk

Clerk to keep resident informed.

Clerk

23/071 **Correspondence**

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

Cambridgeshire County Council East Cambs Parish & Community Forum notes and updates March 23

PECT Cambridgeshire Home Energy Support Service put on website

ECDC Press Releases – Replacement of old recycling vehicles with 10 new hydrotreated vegetable oil fuelled vehicles; installation of solar panels at eSpace; 28 new Community Orchards; install signage to celebrate medieval city;

Coronation poetry competition; Leader's letter to County Council regarding concern over roads.

ECDC Litter Picking Equipment

ECDC minutes Planning Committee and Operational Services Committee

N-power letter to Government – Business Energy Tracker 23.

NALC and CAPALC Newsletters, Events and Bulletins

Cambs ACRE – news and updates, and Cambridgeshire Home Energy Support Service (CHESS) Plus

Royal British Legion Tree Planting/Memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

CAPALC Councillor Training – 15 July Sutton, 30 September Somersham

Date of next meeting: 10 May 2023

Items for Next Agenda: Policies

Review Actions – omitted.

Meeting closed at 10.03pm

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	RSPB (Received March 23)	1020.15		1020.15
Payments	002055 npower	19.22	0.96	20.18
	002056 Clerks salary (Apr)	379.26		379.26
	002057 LGPS	130.38		130.38
	002058 Cartridgesave	48.38	9.68	58.06
	002059 CAPALC membership incl DPO	320.71		320.71
	002060 SLCC	139.00		139.00
	d/d IONOS (March)	22.03	4.41	26.44
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails	31.50	6.30	37.80
	Payments made to complete year-end transactions			
	002053 CAPALC Training	30.00		30.00
	Neighbourhood Plan Expenditure:			
	002054 Geosphere (maps)	45.00	9.00	54.00

Signed..... Dated