

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 14 June 2023 at 7.33pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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

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

Clerk had confirmed that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Councillor form had been completed by J Lucas and witnessed by Clerk/Proper Officer. Also that forms for Registration of Interests and the Election Expense forms had been submitted to ECDC and acknowledged for all Councillors.

23/095 **Apologies for absence**  
None

23/096 **To receive any declarations of interest in any items on the agenda**  
i) Pecuniary interests - None  
ii) Personal interests – None  
iii) Prejudicial interests (and to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation) – None (noted ECDC decision in respect of Witcham House was on agenda for information only) (L Holdaway)

23/097 **Dispensations**  
To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

23/098 **Reports from District and County Councillors**  
The District and County Councillors gave their reports copies, of which had been recently circulated. Noted the strawburner was shortly due its annual clean and notices had been posted on social media to forewarn residents that there would be some noise and it would be a daytime rather than night activity.  
The next 'Meet your Councillor' session had been re-scheduled to 10 July 2023 at 7.30pm in the Community Room on the Sutton School site, and as usual open for all residents within their constituency.  
7.50pm Chairman thanked both of them for their reports and for attending, and they left shortly afterwards

23/099 **Public Participation**  
There were no members of the public present.

23/100 **Minutes**  
Minutes of the Meeting of 10 May 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 M Housden, seconded S Wilkin

23/101 **Matters Arising**  
23/086, 23/068 – *Best Kept Garden* Councillors were disappointed to learn of the lack of interest shown, especially since 3 new categories had been added to try to engage with more residents. It had been advertised on website, noticeboards and newsletters since early Spring. This year's competition would therefore be cancelled. Councillors to review and think about changing the name of the

- 23/101 **Matters Arising** (cont)  
 event in an attempt to improve resident participation. Clerk to put cancellation notice up. *Clerk*  
*23/086 23/092, 23/069a) – Verge on West side of Headleys Lane* Response from Planning Enforcement Officer reiterating that as advised in 2021 the Tree Officer was satisfied that no hedging above and beyond that approved had been removed. The site had also recently been revisited. Also that although ECDC had asked the developer to plant a new hedge they now claimed it was an informal request and therefore could not take enforcement action to secure planting. This was not what the Parish Council understood from documents available at the time of consent.  
 Chairman proposed and L Holdaway seconded that Clerk should write to Leader of the Council (copied to our District Council representatives) to flag the Parish Council's concerns that Conditions of Consent were being breached and that the District Council was not following up enforcement procedures on a number of issues. Agreed by all. *Clerk*  
*23/089b) updates from Village Hall* – Chairman had spoken to Chair regarding risk assessments at recreation ground.  
*23/076 Councillor Vacancy* - Clerk confirmed notice of vacancy for Co-option had been published with a closing date timed to allow applications to be considered at the July meeting. *Clerk*
- 23/102 **Election of Representatives to Committees/Working Groups/Parties and External Bodies:** *Clerk*  
 Village Hall Committee (Trustee) – S Wilkin  
 Burial Board – All Councillors  
 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – M Housden, K Mackender  
 CCC Public Rights of Way Liaison – J Lucas and S Wilkin  
 EPR Power Station Community Liaison Forum – None  
 East Cambs Parish Forum - None  
 CAPALC – M Housden, K Mackender  
 Play & Fitness Project Working Party L Holdaway, M Housden, K Mackender  
 Play Areas/Recreation Ground, including Weekly Inspections – M Housden  
 Speed Recording Equipment (MVAS) – M Housden  
 Planning Applications – L Holdaway (to monitor and report at Council meetings)  
 Designated Councillor - Safeguarding (Adults & Children) – L Holdaway  
 Finance (check monthly receipts and payments for Council meetings) Monthly rotation of councillors  
 Policy Development/Reviews – L Holdaway  
 Neighbourhood Watch Village Co-ordinator – J Lucas  
 The above were nominated and then appointed en-bloc. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin
- 23/103 **Neighbourhood Plan**  
 a) Minutes of 23 May 2023 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, circulated 28 May 2023 by the group, were received and accepted. Survey reviewed. **Resolved** that the Clerk inform the Consultant and the Group Lead that the Council was agreeable with the content and would be guided by the Consultant in respect of the standard acceptable format regarding gender, and that the business items were to be omitted. Proposed K Mackender seconded J Lucas. *Clerk*  
 J Lucas expressed concern that this was lingering into being delivered during the holiday season which had now started. Originally the Council had said this should be completed by early Spring to ensure a good level of response.  
 b) The plan of activities/aims with timescales for next 12 months had not been received from the Lead of the Group but at the moment as there had been no confirmation regarding availability of the rest of the grant to finish the project, this information was not yet required. *WNPG*

23/103 **Neighbourhood Plan (cont)**

- c) The monthly summary of the Working Group's activities during April and May, with aims for June had not been received. Chairman reported that a coffee morning giving residents the opportunity to talk to the members of the NPWG and catch up with progress had been advertised and took place on 10 June. This public engagement event had been well supported by the members of the NPWG but only half a dozen residents had attended.
- d) Neighbourhood Plan Grant Scheme for 2023/4, administered by Locality. Confirmation that the Government would continue the scheme into the current financial year had still not been released.  
Design Code – Chairman reported that AECOM had forwarded the first report, 85 pages, to be considered by the NPWG at the June meeting. Parish Councillors were asked to review the document to feedback at the July Council meeting.
- e) Clerk advised that an item about the Neighbourhood Plan project had been uploaded on the Council's website. It set out what the project is about and how it will proceed, together with links to sites for further information.  
Dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website page. The tab that had been previously set up was not live for Clerk to upload documents and news items. The developer had advised that it would cost £735 plus VAT for them to proceed with providing this separate page for publication of Neighbourhood Plan items. (The initial setup for the whole website had been £570). It was noted that no provision for this had been made in the budget, and it was unclear about availability of future grants to cover this additional expense.  
**Resolved** that the Council would not proceed with setting up a separate page for Neighbourhood Plan project and that news, documents/reports would be added under the News and Events tabs already set up for the Parish Council. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded S Wilkin.

WNPG

All  
Cllrs23/104 **Planning Applications**

The following item was noted:

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

The following ECDC decisions were noted

22/00578/FUL Witcham House Headleys Lane Construction of detached garage, conversion of existing garages with room above and an orangery - approved

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

23/00121/FUL Yew Tree House 2 Silver Street Conversion of outbuilding to studio annex ancillary to main dwelling – approved

23/00362/VAR 8 The Slade To vary condition 1 (approved plans) and Condition 3 (materials) of previously approved 21/01571/FUL construction of a single storey front porch and single storey rear extension - change of colour for proposed render – approved

23/00480/TRE 24 High Street T1 Prunus - Crown reduction of 3.5 meters - approved

23/105 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) **Annual Play Inspection Report, May 2023**, previously circulated to all Councillors. Chairman reported that he had carried out work in respect of items identified – tidied the fence on the north side, taped slots for peg and missing cap. All other items would be resolved as part of the new play equipment under the play project.

23/105 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters (cont)**

- b) **Weekly inspections** of recreation ground and play equipment had been completed by the Chairman. He had changed the position of the goalposts. The grass had been ok for the recent cricket matches. Some low branches on Martins Lane side of the recreation ground, 2<sup>nd</sup> tree from entrance to village hall needed a little trimming to get good access for grasscutting - Clerk to raise this with the grass contractor. The boundary hedge on the northern side of the village hall roadway, near benches, needed cutting back and Chairman said he would raise with the neighbour. *Clerk*
- c) **Annual Village Inspection**  
Clerk instructed to forward forms to Councillors to undertake the annual check of the Council's assets:  
Chairman – recreation ground, bus shelter, noticeboard and bins *Chair*  
J Lucas – cemetery plus dog bin at Westway Place, *JL*  
L Holdaway dog bins and street lights at Headleys Lane. *LH*  
Reports to be submitted to July meeting.
- d) **Play and Fitness Project Working Party** – Offer letter for signature by Clerk and Chairman from Cambs Community Fund – Thalia grant (formerly Amey) awaited. Clerk to contact them again as Wicksteed were awaiting acceptance of their quote and the order, having extended the period several times. Further work on obtaining funding for second phase deferred to July meeting pending confirmation of size of grant being offered under the Thalia grant. *LH/KM*  
*/Chair*
- e) **Request from William Kent (Memorials) Ltd for new headstone** received.  
**Resolved** to approve. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman. *Clerk*  
**Interment at Cemetery (pre-purchased plot)** on 13 June noted.  
Payment received and added to the June Receipts and Payments schedule.  
Clerk also reported that the contractor would carry out an inspection during July of headstones, as discussed earlier in the year. A notice had been prepared for the website, and noticeboards at the Cemetery and crossroads advising that the inspection would be taking place and any found not to meet the guidelines for stability would be laid down. The Council would try to contact families so that they might get repairs done by NAMM registered stonemasons. The Council would not be meeting the costs of repairs as this was the responsibility of the holders of the Rights and their heirs and successors. *Clerk*

23/106 **Highways and Street Lighting Matters**

- a) Items for the attention of the Highways Authority: Headleys Lane - laurel shrub and spheres had not yet been removed. Clerk instructed to update CCC Highways. *Clerk*  
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>
- b) Latest speed data had been previously circulated and it was noted that the equipment had recorded a speed of 70mph early in the morning passing the recreation ground headed in the direction of Witcham Toll. Chairman said that he had been contacted by some of the volunteers who indicated they were willing to carry out speed checks as soon as possible. Following recent notices for more volunteers the Clerk reported she had received no more names. Clerk to follow up with the co-ordinator urgently. *Clerk*

23/107 **Finance and General Administration**

- a) **Internal Auditor's report** had been previously circulated.  
**Resolved** to confirm the Internal Auditor's report had been received and considered, and the recommendation regarding para 7.4 of Financial Regulations observed. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded J Lucas. *Clerk*
- b) **AGAR 2022/23 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**  
 AGAR Section 1 had been previously circulated together with NALC Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide. The Statement form was reviewed and completed in the meeting.  
**Resolved** that the AGAR 2022/23 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement as completed in the meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin
- c) **AGAR 2022/23 Section 2 – Statement of Accounts**  
 AGAR Section 2 had been previously circulated. Details confirmed.  
**Resolved** that the AGAR 2022/23 Section 2 – Statement of Accounts be approved, and signed by the Chairman. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin.  
 Clerk confirmed the Notice for Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Accounts would be posted 15 June for period 19 June to 28 July. The documents to go to the external auditor would be despatched for intermediate audit as required. *Clerk*
- d) **Appointment of LGS as Internal Auditor for 2023/24**  
**Resolved** to re-appoint LGS as internal Auditor for 2023/24. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Lucas. *Clerk*
- e) **Receipts and payments**  
 June 2023 schedule had been circulated and documentation checked by K Mackender.  
**Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments listed on the June 2023 schedule and release cheques. (listed at foot of Minutes)  
 Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway. *Clerk*
- f) **2023/24 Budgets and Reserves:** Summary of year-end balances by budget heading and breakdown of reserves had been previously circulated, and this was reviewed in the meeting and adjustments made. Overspend on salaries, admin and S.142 - What's On printing, to be taken from General Reserves. Surplus on budgets for Grounds, grasscutting and cemetery, to be carried over to the respective 2023/24 budgets to smooth expected additional spending on these items this year. Surplus on street lighting and S137 to be transferred to General Reserves. Council's earmarked contribution towards Neighbourhood Plan, and the earmarked reserves for MVAS battery and maintenance, and website/IT training and upgrades to remain.  
**Resolved** to approve the budget adjustments and transfers for beginning of new financial year as discussed. Proposed J Lucas, seconded S Wilkin.  
 With regard to arrangements for repairs to bus shelter, it was agreed to defer for discussion at a later meeting. Noted £400 had been earmarked for this work for some time. *Clerk*
- g) **Exclusion of Press and Public**  
**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 special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda Items 23/107h) to 23/107k)) namely staff and contractual matters, 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. *All Cllrs*
- h) **Clerk's workload and annual leave.** Information provided and workload discussed.

23/107 **Finance and General Administration** (cont)

**Resolved** to increase Clerk's hours by an additional 23(max) per month as a temporary arrangement and to review in November. This increase reflected the additional demands on the Clerk's time and extra duties in carrying out the role which had expanded over the past year or so, in part brought about by the various ongoing projects. Additional costs would be taken from General Reserves at November review. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.

- i) Clerk had advised that she needed extra time to deal with archiving and website management/training. (This was covered in h) above). She suggested engaging a contractor to destroy no longer needed confidential waste.

**Resolved** to approve using Datashredders, expected costs £66 plus VAT. Proposed J Lucas, seconded L Holdaway.

- j) Renewal of Lease with RSPB for drove land at Ouse Washes – documents awaited from solicitors.

Clerk

- k) Car park. Information from Village Hall legal advisers considered. This confirmed what the Council already knew regarding the right of way down the roadway to the village hall but did not resolve their original request regarding the additional car parking spaces provided at the rear of 2/2a Martins Lane. Response discussed.

Clerk

**Resolved** that Clerk respond to Village Hall Chair as discussed. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Lucas.

Clerk

Chairman re-opened meeting to the public

23/108 **Consultation**

Sutton (East Cambridgeshire District) Neighbourhood Plan Review – pre-submission consultation (regulation 14)

**Resolved** that the Council had no comment to make on the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan Review. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Lucas.

Clerk

23/109 **Correspondence**

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

ECDC Invitation to an East Cambridgeshire Community Energy Event – Climate Action Network 15 June 2023

Single Issue Review of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – letter from Inspector

ECDC CIL Meaningful Proportion Transfers - 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 (emailed 17.5.23)

ECDC Mental Health webinars

ECDC Annual Meeting of Full Council 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Decision List

ECDC Litterbins around recreation ground – re-requested review

ECDC Planning Committee Minutes 26.4.23, including usefulness of Neighbourhood Plans

Greater Cambridge Partnership – Making Connections and National Bike Week

[www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc-2022](http://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc-2022)

ACRE Affordable Homes event 4 July 2023, zoom

CCC Parish & Community Forum + invitation to join in Healthier Futures bid, focussed on dementia, training Safeguarding Adults and Children

CCC Highway Events diary June

CCC Surface Dressing Programme

CCC CANFFUND NetZero funding and delivery

CCC 2023 Gripfibre Surface Treatment Programme

CCC TMC Incident Report

CCF Grants Bulletin

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough parks and open spaces notice

LGPS Employers' Newsletter

23/109 **Correspondence** (cont)  
 CAPALC Kings Coronation survey  
 NALC and CAPALC Newsletters, Events and Bulletins & Councillor Training – 15  
 July Sutton, 30 September Somersham

In addition the Clerk reported that SLCC was running a seminar to give update on  
 changes in Planning at £60 for members, by Zoom

**Resolved** that the Clerk should attend this meeting. Proposed Chairman,  
 seconded J Lucas. Noted Councillors were at work during the day and thus  
 unable to attend.

Clerk

23/110 **Date of next meeting:** 12 July 2023  
 Note any items for next agenda: Review Policies  
 Review Actions – omitted.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

### Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	CIL	4480.38		4480.38
	Co-Operative Funerals	115.00		115.00
Payments	002069 ECDC Election expenses	250.00		250.00
	002070 Truelink (May)	464.80	92.96 )	
	Truelink (April)	464.80	92.96 )	1115.52
	002071/3 Salary expenses	2357.63		2357.63
	002074 Wicksteed Annual Inspection	112.20	22.44	134.64
	002075 LGS Internal Audit	95.00	19.00	114.00
	d/d IONOS	29.06	5.81	34.87
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails			
	19.5.23	31.50	6.30	37.80

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