

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 4 February 2026 at 7.35pm in the Village Hall, Witcham.

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

In attendance Parish Clerk/RFO
County and District Councillor L Dupré
District Councillor M Inskip
3 representatives from the Village Hall Committee

26/019 **Apologies for absence** - None

26/020 **To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on any items on the agenda**

Pecuniary interests - none

Personal interests – M Housden 26/030 Witcham Events Committee Use of recreation ground.

Prejudicial interests – none

26/021 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

26/022 **Reports from District and County Councillors**

Monthly reports for February, previously circulated, were noted and meeting opened for County and District Councillors to speak.

Local Government Reorganisation. Noted that the Government had advised they would be considering options A B D and E. Public Consultation with statutory bodies and the public would commence 5 February 2026 for 7 weeks. Councillor L Dupré gave an update on the cessation of the holiday food vouchers for children and new Government proposals. She also gave a report on the Highways meeting, hosted by Sutton Parish Council and attended by representatives from nearby parish councils. Highway maintenance and issues with resourcing had been discussed with each parish expressing concerns about potholes and lack of timely repairs. It was intended to meet twice a year in future.

7.55pm The County and District Councillors were thanked and they left the meeting.

26/023 **Public Participation** There were no members of the public present.

26/024 **Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 14 January were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date was signed by the Chairman as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman.

26/025 **Matters Arising**

26/011 *Neighbourhood Plan*: Postcards received and would be distributed to each house by 10 February. The copies of the Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum) copy had been dropped off at the agreed locations for residents to view. Clerk advised that she needed to let ECDC know if any of the Councillors wanted to attend the count after the Poll on 12 February.
26/009b) *Local Highways Initiative Programme*. *Mepal – Witcham Road speed reduction measures*: Noted that from Feb-May prioritisation and feasibility studies would be carried out. Panel members meet June/July.

Cllrs

Clerk

26/025 **Matters Arising** (cont)

Report to Highways and Transport Committee Oct 2026. Mepal Parish Council had requested further information and agreed we should offer to visit them in the near future to give update.

Clerk/
GB

26/014c Additional streetlights to replace ones removed – There had been no further requests from residents following item in January newsletter. Clerk to proceed with requesting the light that had been removed by the rear of the garage at 8 The Orchards be replaced as agreed at previous meeting.

Clerk

26/026 **Finance and Administration Matters**

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 26/026a to 26/026c), namely Village Hall Deed of Right of Way & Car Park, and RSPB Lease, 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. The 3 representatives from the Witcham Village Hall Committee were invited to speak on the following item: Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

- a) **Deed of Right of Way and Parking for Village Hall.** Document discussed with representatives and amendments highlighted.

8.25pm the representatives from the Village Hall Committee left the meeting. Meeting resumed.

- b) **Deed of Right of Way and Parking for Village Hall.**

Resolved that the amendments be prepared as discussed and forwarded to the Village Hall representatives, and then onwards for respective solicitors. Proposed Chairman, seconded K Mackender.

LH

- c) **RSPB Lease.** Clerk advised that the revised document was with RSPB team and was expected back shortly for approval and signing.

8.27pm Chairman to re-open meeting to the public.

There were no members of the public present.

- d) **Receipts and payments schedule** for February had been previously circulated. Documents had been checked by G Byrne.

Resolved to approve the receipts and payments for February. Cheques to be released. Proposed G Byrne, seconded J Lucas.

Clerk

- e) **Annual Risk Assessment for 2025/6 and AGAR requirements.**

Annual Risk Assessment and the Fixed Asset List previously circulated were discussed. Requirements for compliance with Assertion 10 - Digital and Data Compliance, Website Accessibility and emails were discussed and documents, including Information and Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policies, Information and Technology Policy, Accessibility Policy previously circulated, were reviewed. Assertion 10 checklists deferred for completion at March meeting.

Resolved that in accordance with the Information and Technology Policy, authorisation is given for all councillors to use personal equipment (eg phones, tablets, computers) for Parish Council business. Councillors will ensure such equipment is secure and has up-to-date software, including anti-virus and internet security, and be protected by strong passwords (and not shared with others). All use will comply with the Council's Information and Technology Policy and the Information and Data Protection Policy, including the Privacy Policies. Councillors will always use the official council-provided email address for all Council business. Proposed G Byrne, seconded J Lucas.

Cllrs

- f) Annual Parish Meeting. Content of agenda discussed and agreed. Clerk to proceed with arrangements as usual.

Clerk

- 26/027 **Suggestion from resident regarding autumn event.** 171/.....
 Offer of land for firework display, details previously circulated.
Resolved to write to resident to advise that the Parish Council is not in a position to organise community events and would not be supportive of fireworks due to livestock in the surrounding area. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman. *Clerk*
- 26/028 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters** *Chairman*
 Weekly inspections of play equipment and recreation ground had been completed by the Chairman. Nil to report. G Byrne to undertake the weekly inspections for the next 3 weeks and Chairman to do handover instructions. *GB*
- 26/029 **Highways and Streetlighting**
 a) To note any items reported to Highways Authority. None
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>
 b) Report of meeting with Highways at The Glebe, Sutton, on 2 February 2026 regarding maintenance, attended by Chairman, had been circulated and was noted. Chairman confirmed that no dates had been given for when certain potholes would be repaired.
 c) Monthly speed data reports, previously circulated, were noted.
 d) Request for planting of trees and shrubs on Wardy Hill/Witcham boundary. previously circulated.
Resolved to thank the Tree Warden for the courtesy enquiry and to advise that whilst it falls within the boundary of Witcham parish, the land in question is not in the ownership of Witcham Parish Council so its consent is not relevant. Proposed K Mackender, seconded Chairman. *Clerk*
- 26/030 **Witcham Events Committee**
 a) To receive and consider application from Witcham Events Committee for use of recreation ground for Annual Easter Egg Hunt on 29 March 2026.
Resolved to consent to use of the above event on the recreation ground. Proposed J Lucas, seconded G Byrne. *Clerk*
 b) Installation of table-tennis table on recreation ground was expected for end of March ready for Easter. Noted that they were working with the County Council on the village name signs project. Using the telephone kiosk, High Street, for display of history of the World Peashooting Championships had been put on hold due to other heavy commitments.
- 26/031 **Correspondence**
 The following items of information/interest, and invitations to events had been circulated and unless recorded below as otherwise, were noted:
 CCC Local Dial a Ride and Community Transport Services and MIDAS (Minibus Driver Assessments and Training).
 ECDC Agendas and Minutes Audit, Planning, Finance, Operational Services Committees.
 ECDC Press releases Littleport Bank (listed), Wilburton Community Shop, Flytipping Wilburton, Public Spaces Protection Order – antisocial driving.
 NALC newsletters, bulletins and events.
 East Cambs Parish and Community Forum meetings.
 Cambs ACRE Staying In Touch Newsletter.
 Mereside Medical newsletter.
 East Cambs Community Forum.
 Additional items circulated:
 ECDC Parish Council Conference 12 Feb 2026 – no one available to attend.
 NALC Estates with Unadopted Amenities.
 SLCC Play Inspection Training opportunities.
 TMC Incident Report.
 CCC 20mph 2026/7.

26/032 **Date of next meeting:** 11 March 2026

Dates for meetings up to July 2027 were discussed and Clerk to publish and book village hall.

Meeting closed at 9.23pm.

Schedule of Receipts and Payments

		£	£	£
Receipts:	UK Power Networks	3.23		3.23
Payments:	002245 Truelink (Jan)	219.00	43.80	262.80
	002246/BACS Salary expenses Feb	568.87		568.87
	002247 Digital Creations	76.50		76.50
	b/c Lloyds (tba)	-		-
	c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails debited 18.1.26	32.20	6.44	38.64
	002248 Oakes & Watson	490.00	98.00	588.00

Signed..... Dated