

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 8 February 2023 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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

*In attendance* Parish Clerk/RFO

In the absence of the Chairman, K Mackender, the Vice-Chairman took the Chair. The meeting started a little late due to an earlier meeting.

**23/018 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from M Housden (sickness) and J Lucas (sickness)  
Apologies were also received from County and District Councillor L Dupré and District Councillor M Inskip (illness)

**23/019 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 - none

**23/020 Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

**23/021 Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**23/022 Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting of 11 January 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Vice-Chairman in the absence of the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date was also signed as confirmation of the business transacted at that meeting. Proposed J Bibby, seconded L Holdaway.

**23/023 Matters Arising**

23/006, 22/198, 22/179, 22/163, 22/130, 22/115c) *Recreation Ground* - Noted  
Witcham Cricket Club hoped to play two or three mid-week matches in June plus a charity match. Risk assessment documents awaited together with firm dates. At the AGM, M Housden had confirmed Parish Council was taking on grasscutting at the recreation ground. Costs would be higher even based on 13 cuts, March – September, as per the cemetery and rest of village. Previously it had been cut weekly under arrangements by the Cricket Club. See Agenda item. 23/029  
23/009 *Neighbourhood Plan Working Party*. Terms of Reference (ACRE template) had been discussed at their January meeting. M Housden had forwarded a copy to Clerk who had provided some feedback. See agenda item 23/026.

**23/024 Reports from District and County Councillors**

The reports for February had been previously circulated and were noted.

**23/025 Planning Applications and Tree Works:**

23/00014/VAR Kings of Witcham, The Slade. To vary condition 1 (approved plans) of previously approved 19/00125/VAR to vary condition 1 (Approved Plans) of previously approved 17/00689/FUL for the demolition of existing motor vehicle garage and construction of 6No four bed dwellings, 2No 3 bed dwellings, garaging, access road and associated works. (corrections to original consent following build – blank window plot 2 and rendering plot 4)

**Resolved** the Council had no concerns to put forward.

Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin.

*Clerk*

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

**Resolved** to respond that the Council had concerns which could be addressed: If the planning authority was minded to consent to conversion of this Grade II listed building situated in the conservation area of the village, there should be a 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 L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender.

*Clerk*

The following ECDC decisions were noted:

22/00538/FUL Land West Of Hillcrest Mepal Road Installation of solar panels – approved. (noted the original proposal for inclusion of a wind turbine had been removed).

**23/026 Neighbourhood Plan**

Minutes of the working party's January meeting had been previously circulated. There were no listed resolutions for recommendations for approval by the Council. Working Party Terms of Reference, revised version circulated to Councillors 7 February 2023, was discussed.

**Resolved** that the Clerk confirm to the Working Party (hereafter to be called Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) that the Council adopted the Terms of Reference as per final copy issued to Councillors on 7 February.

Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Bibby.

*Clerk*

Clerk reported that there were discrepancies in the Minutes:

- a) the photo competition had not in fact been uploaded to the Council's website.

Noted that the Parish Council was unable to support distribution of prize money from the Precept (no powers) nor was such expenditure an eligible expense under the Locality Grant scheme.

*MH/  
WNPWG*

- b) any work undertaken by the Clerk could not be reclaimed under the grant system – salary costs had to be met solely by the Parish Council.

*MH/  
WNPWG*

The Locality Neighbourhood Planning newsletter had been circulated to councillors and the working group Chairman for group.

Clerk reported on the AECOM Design Code remote meeting with Chairman of WNPWG and Places4People Consultants. Noted AECOM would be submitting an application to Locality for a grant of up to £8000 to cover costs for providing assistance and support to the Working Group in producing the Design Code for inclusion in the proposed Witcham Neighbourhood Plan. Decision expected 2-3 weeks.

*Clerk*

Clerk asked if more Councillors could be available to attend the working group meetings to support M Housden. No one present available for the February meeting. She offered to attend meetings outside working hours if that would be helpful.

*All*

23/027 **Finance & Admin Matters**

- a) **Receipts and Payments** schedule February 2023 had been circulated. Late receipt of Truelink invoice added to schedule. Documentation had been checked by K Mackender.  
**Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments for February 2023 and release cheques. (Listed at foot of Minutes). Proposed J Bibby, seconded L Holdaway. *Clerk*
- b) **Quarterly reconciliations** and budget report previously circulated and bank statements presented at meeting. Receipts to date (including full Precept) £26091.62, Payments £13755.28. Balance £63474.41 including all earmarked reserves.  
**Resolved** to approve the Quarterly reconciliations to 31 December 2022. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender.  
**2023/4 Budget/Precept** final copy had been circulated to Councillors for future reference and Clerk confirmed the Precept request had been submitted to ECDC. *All*
- c) **2022/23 Fixed Asset Register**  
Resolved to approve the 2022/23 Fixed Asset Register as provided by Clerk Proposed K Mackender, seconded S Wilkin *Clerk*
- d) **2022/23 Risk Assessment Report**, previously circulated, was discussed. Insurance values to be reviewed for renewal in June.  
**Resolved** to approve the 2022/23 Risk Assessment Report. Proposed L Holdaway. seconded S Wilkin. *Clerk*
- e) **RSPB Lease**  
Clerk advised she was still awaiting progress from RSPB and had chased up for this meeting. *Clerk*
- f) **Renewal of ACRE membership**  
**Resolved** to renew ACRE membership at £60 pa. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded J Bibby. *Clerk*
- g) **Savings accounts.** Noted the Council had been advised it was not eligible to apply to open a 95 day account.  
**Resolved** to open 32 day account instead of the 95 day account for £15,000, to be reviewed monthly. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded K Mackender. *Clerk*
- h) **2022/23 Annual Report** content and design discussed. J Lucas had confirmed there was nothing further to report on Neighbourhood Watch and public rights of way and cycleways. Agreed Clerk should obtain estimates for producing copy of same quality as What's On. *Clerk*
- i) **Newsletter**, previously circulated. Additional information to be added for item on new play and fitness equipment. Copy to be distributed to households later this month. *All*
- j) **2023 Parish and District Council Elections**  
Notice to be posted 27 March. Nominations to ECDC by 4 April and Elections 4 May 2023. *Clerk*
- k) **Training.** Clerk gave a verbal report on CAPALC course she attended, Archiving and Retention of Documents, and reminded Councillors to ensure compliance with GDPR and data protection legislation requirements, including management of emails and hardcopy documents. *All*

23/028 **2023 Annual Parish Meeting – 26 April 2023**

Arrangements discussed and agreed to invite the local First Responders leader and Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Chairman to attend to give an update to residents. *Clerk*

23/029 **Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters**

- a) **Weekly inspections** of recreation ground and play equipment had been completed by the Chairman and he had advised there were no issues to raise.

- b) **Play and Fitness Project.** The application to the Amey Community Fund had not been successful. They had received requests for £800,000 for 14 projects and had only £100,000 available. They liked the project and suggested applying for a smaller sum by getting support for grants/fundraising elsewhere or phasing the project. Competition was always keen.

Clerk had circulated to Councillors for review, the details of grant schemes received from Grantscape (landfill) National Lottery, Sport England (crowdfunding), and ECDC. After discussion L Holdaway (working party member) offered to support Clerk to submit further details for new bid to Amey Community Fund, including giving split of costs between children's play equipment and the fitness/older children's equipment. Completion of the project was urgent for a number of reasons including loss of amenities for the local community at the Mepal Outdoor Centre and concerns that phasing the project would significantly increase costs.

*LH/  
Working  
Party*

**Resolved** a further amended application should be submitted by 1 March 2023 to Amey Community Fund, taking into account their feedback, and to explore Grantscape and other options further. Proposed J Bibby, seconded L Holdaway

*Clerk*

- c) **Grasscutting Contract** Clerk had spoken to contractor and advised that to maintain game quality condition for cricket, the recreation ground would need cutting weekly, eg 20 plus cuts during the season. The contractor proposed bringing the sports ground mowers on a separate day to the rest of the mowing scheduled for the village and cemetery, which would normally be a Thursday as part of the programme of sports field cutting carried out in other villages. He could make extra cuts as per the costs given in the quotation provided and it was noted this was £115 per cut or £220 per cut and sweep and disposal of cuttings. Noted that last year Ely City team had made a £100 donation towards cutting costs.

**Resolution** Clerk to inform Ely City team that grasscutting costs had increased now that Witcham Cricket Club was no longer helping and to maintain cuts to level for playing cricket was a significant financial burden for the Council. Proposed K Mackender, seconded J Bibby.

*Clerk*

- d) **Applications for use of recreation ground**  
**City of Ely Cricket Club 3<sup>rd</sup> X1 team** – 7 matches 20 May 2023 – 19 August 2023, 12noon to 7.30pm.

**Resolved** to give consent for the 7 matches subject to the donation they normally made adequately contributing to the additional grasscutting costs expected this year. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.

*Clerk*

**City of Ely Cricket Club 4<sup>th</sup> X1 team** – noted actual dates not given but between April and September subject to availability of hall for changing facilities and other summer events schedule on recreation ground.

*Clerk*

**Resolved** no objection in principle subject to availability of changing facilities, working around other events and arrangements for grasscutting. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.

**Witcham Cricket Club.** Charity match 25 June 2023.

**Resolved** to give consent for use of recreation ground on 25 June 2023 for Charity match subject to receipt of risk assessment. Proposed J Bibby, seconded S Wilkin.

*Clerk*

**23/029 Recreation Ground and Cemetery Matters (cont)**

Noted that the Witcham Cricket Club expected to be playing two or three mid-week matches in June for which dates not yet fixed so application not yet received but in principle this would be acceptable.

*Clerk*

e) **Village Hall Peashoot** in July. Application not yet received.

f) **Garden of Remembrance**, application for replacement marker by AG Carter Funeral Services/Ivett and Reed.

*Clerk*

**Resolved** to approve application for replacement marker as per application form. Proposed S Wilkin, seconded K Mackender

**23/030 Best Kept Garden Competition**

Arrangements for 2023 discussed.

**Resolved** to

- a) introduce three new classes – children, organic and small garden - and to purchase medium shields for each (same as those used for runners up in previous years;
- b) remove Best Overall category;
- c) contact lady who carried out judging in the 2019 competition to enquire if she would carry out this year's judging, in June.

Proposed S Wilkin, seconded L Holdaway.

*Clerk*

J Bibby said she was happy to volunteer to visit gardens with the judge and this kind offer was gratefully accepted by the remaining Councillors.

**23/031 Highways and Street Lighting Matters**

- a) Items to bring to attention of the Highways Authority – none received L Holdaway said she had been told the Public Rights of Way department's contractors had cut back at least some of Bury Road but none of the Councillors had yet been able to visit to confirm.
- b) Maintenance works on droves, including Bury Road/TPO area. Email from a landowner expressing concerns about CCC intentions to cut vegetation at Bury Road had been previously forwarded to Councillors. Noted the Management Plan for the area expired soon and arrangements for the future would need to be made. It was noted that not all landowners were regularly carrying out works on the areas for which they were responsible.

*All*

**Resolved** that landowner be informed that the Clerk had been proactive when contacted by the Rights of Way Department to immediately alert them to the existence of the Management Plan to protect and manage the trees and vegetation in the area. Proposed K Mackender, seconded L Holdaway.

*Clerk*

- c) The Chairman had circulated the latest speed data for January. No one had come forward to serve as member of Speedwatch team. Agreed to include on Annual Parish Meeting agenda to try to get support from parishioners to volunteer.

*Clerk***23/032 Correspondence**

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

Coronation Preparations CAPALC and ECDC

CAPALC Special General Meeting 25.1.23

NALC and CAPALC newsletters and events bulletins

Walking in Cambridgeshire

P&C Forum 25.1.23

East Cambs Community Safety Partnership (CSP) 13.3.23 Ely Cathedral 6.30-9pm

East Cambs Community Fund

23/033 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 item 23/034 namely Car Park Licence, 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 S Wilkin, seconded K Mackender. and agreed.

There were no members of the public present

23/034 **Village Hall Car Park Licence**

Comments from the Village Hall Committee had been circulated to Councillors and the Clerk and some Councillors had met the Chair of the Village Hall Committee earlier in the evening.

The Council would await further details from Village Hall before reviewing the situation further.

Chairman proposed re-opening the meeting and this was agreed.

23/035 **Date of next meeting:** 8 March 2023

Review Actions – omitted. Meeting closed at 9.50pm

**Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

|           |  | £       | £     | £       |
|-----------|--|---------|-------|---------|
| Receipts: | UKPN rent                                  | 3.23    |       | 3.23    |
|           | Locality Grant – Neighbourhood Plan        | 3475.00 |       | 3475.00 |
|           | ECDC CIL                                   | 4480.38 |       | 4480.38 |
| Payments  | 002039 Clerks salary (Feb)                 | 379.06  |       | 379.06  |
|           | 002040 LGPS                                | 135.40  |       | 135.40  |
|           | 002041 Cartridgesave                       | 189.44  | 37.89 | 227.33  |
|           | 002042 Cambridgeshire ACRE membership      |         |       | 60.00   |
|           | 002043 Truelink (Jan)                      | 62.40   | 12.48 | 74.88   |
|           | c/p MS online services – 7 licences emails | 31.50   | 6.30  | 37.80   |

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