

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 22 April 2021 at 7.40 pm  
This was a remote\* meeting using the Zoom video conferencing platform system

\*The Coronavirus Act 2020 s.78 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, and Zoom Policy Notice.

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**Present:** M Housden (Chairman), J Bibby, L Holdaway, J Lucas

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)

Zoom notice – it was confirmed all were zooming in a quiet private place and no one else was present; therefore no details of members of the public required recording. Noted that Zoom does collect some data of users – Zoom Policy/Notice. All present confirmed they were happy to proceed.

Following the very sad news of the passing of Queen's husband and Consort, HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, on 9 April 2021, RIP,

the meeting had been moved from 14 April to 22 April 2021 to comply with excluding days of mourning in the calculation of the notice period (NALC advice)

No members of public present

21/054 **Apologies for absence:**

S Wilkin (IT difficulties. She was keeping in touch with Clerk and Councillors had previously agreed to her absence until Covid-19 restrictions had eased again when she would resume sharing facility with another).

K Mackender (previous commitments).

County and District Councillor L Dupré, and District Councillor M Inskip had sent apologies as it was the evening of the District Council's Annual Meeting.

21/055 **Declaration of Interests**

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

21/056 **Dispensations**

To note any new Dispensations granted: Nil

21/057 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present

21/058 **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2021, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and would be signed by the Chairman, and the agenda of the same date would also be signed by the Chairman as confirmation of the business transacted at the meeting. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Bibby

21/059 **Matters Arising from previous minutes**

21/026 *Grasscutting contract* – Two cuts had been made. L Holdaway reported that litter had not been picked up before mowing the village green/banks on the High Street side and a couple of cans had been shredded which she removed to make safe.

21/045 f) *Land Registry* - Clerk confirmed acknowledgement received but there would be delays with processing due to work volumes. Document for car park by Village Hall to be done once registration process completed and Ouse Washes Drovers to be reviewed shortly, (RSPB Lease expires 2023).

21/052 *Street Lights and Highways* - Resurfacing works at The Orchards, Westway Place and Silver Street now completed by machine, and hand-laying process to be undertaken next week to complete works at the roundabout at The Orchards, subject to weather.

21/060 **Reports from District and County Council Representatives**

The Reports had been previously circulated and were noted.  
7.50pm J Lucas left the screen

21/061 **Recreation Ground**

- a) Monthly report on weekly inspections from Chairman received. Noted the recreation ground grass had been cut and he understood cricket matches would be resuming shortly. No further action required under Covid-19 restrictions – the Council would continue to work within the confines of the current Government Covid-19 restrictions.  
Clerk advised the Annual Inspection of play equipment had been ordered.

Chairman

Clerk

7.51pm J Lucas returned

- b) Tree planting programme for recreation ground. The tree brochures had been circulated amongst Councillors and suggestions for varieties noted. This was an item on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting so as to get views from residents.

JB

At this point discussion was introduced about people putting messages on **Facebook** indicating expectation that Councillors were monitoring the site and picking up messages for taking action.

The Parish Council does not operate a Facebook page and will continue to use its official dedicated website and noticeboards at village crossroads for issuing information.

Agreed that once the new website was up the Council would publish a note to let people know that all comments and concerns from the public must be addressed to the Council as a body since Councillors were not permitted to act as individuals on behalf of the Council without mandate in a Council meeting for specific purposes. This would be included as an item for future Council newsletter so it would be delivered to each house.

The public must contact the Clerk, or if preferred, a Councillor,

who would refer the matter on to the Clerk for consideration of inclusion for future Council meeting agenda.

J Bibby would forward the soil analysis report, previously circulated, to tree suppliers for further advice on suitable species.

JB

## 21/062 Finance

- a) Receipts and payments for period 10 to 31 March (to complete year-end accounts as discussed at previous meeting - Minute 21/045).

**Resolved** to approve the Receipts and Payments for period 10 to 31 March 2021 as per list. Proposed Chairman, seconded L Holdaway

Clerk

- b) SLCC membership renewal

**Resolved** to approve renewal of SLCC membership at £95 for the year. Proposed Chairman, seconded J Lucas.

Clerk

- c) Receipts and payments schedule for April 2021 had been circulated. Cheques and supporting documents had been checked by Chairman before the meeting (coronavirus protection measures were being complied with).

**Resolved** to approve the receipts and payments for April and release cheques. Proposed J Lucas, seconded J Bibby.

Clerk

- d) 2020/21 Fixed Asset Register – previously circulated.

**Resolved** to approve the Fixed Asset Register. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman

Clerk

- e) 2020/21 Risk Assessment Report

The report, previously circulated was examined and confirmed. Clerk to progress new signs for play area. Noted bank accounts were easy access and agreed that with needing to get access to funds for play project etc, and the low interest rates anyway, none of the reserves needed to be transferred into a longer term savings account. Noted that operations would be kept under review to comply with Covid-19 restrictions and the special coronavirus legislation throughout the coming months – including the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Clerk

**Resolved** to approve 2020/21 Risk Assessment Report. Proposed L Holdaway, seconded Chairman

Clerk

- f) 2020/21 Year-end Accounts

Receipts and payments spreadsheet, reconciliations, and the summary of accounts had been previously circulated. Chairman had the original documents together with bank statements, signed by Clerk, which were also shared in the remote meeting, for signing off by the Chairman.

Total receipts for the year including £15,300 Precept - £19,571.60.

Total payments for the year - £18314.25. Balance to carry forward to 1 April 2021 - £46,827.84 including all earmarked reserves.

**Resolved** to approve the year-end accounts and confirmed the Chairman would sign documents as confirmation of the Council's approval. Proposed J Lucas, seconded J Bibby.

Chairman

The Clerk had also recently circulated the draft 2020/21 Annual Governance and Accounts Return (AGAR) together with explanation of variances and notes on reserves. She advised that as neither receipts nor payments exceeded the £25,000 threshold the Council qualified to claim for exemption from the limited assurance review of the External Auditor, subject to completing the Certificate of Exemption and complying with normal Internal Auditor and publication of details as normal. She confirmed this would be an item for the May agenda before the Internal Audit.

Clerk

21/062 **Finance** (cont)

- g) Arrangements for 2020/21 Internal and External Audits. Details of this year's procedures and deadlines had been previously circulated and it was noted the Internal Audit was being scheduled for 6 May 2021 (Fee £75).

*Clerk*21/063 **Planning Matters**

21/00138/TRE 2a Martins Lane (beside Village Hall roadway) T1 Cherry - Raise crown to 3m from ground level; T2 Silver Birch - Raise crown to 3m from ground level, prune to clear village; hall light by 1 to 1.5m; T3 Multi stemmed Cherry - Raise crown to 3m from ground level and reduce whole crown by up to 2m; T4 Silver Birch - Raise crown to 3m from ground level. ECDC Consent noted

21/064 **2021 Annual Parish Meeting – 28 April 2021**

The Annual Report and Accounts had been completed and had been circulated to Councillors with the rest of the meeting pack, which would be uploaded to the website to enable residents to join the meeting on Zoom.

There were a number of projects, eg play equipment, trees for the recreation ground, new website etc, on which the Council wanted to engage with the residents and a face to face special meeting was thought possibly the best solution once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

*Clerk*

**Resolved** to approve the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts for inclusion in the Annual Parish Meeting pack, which would be posted on the website to give people the opportunity to examine before joining the meeting on Zoom. Proposed J Lucas, seconded Chairman.

*Clerk*

Copy of the Annual Report and Accounts would be delivered to each household as normal.

*All*21/065 **Fens Biosphere Project**

Councillors had received the electronic link to look at the project and it was agreed to hold off writing letter of support to ECDC until after the presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting by Cambridgeshire ACRE. Item for June agenda.

*Clerk*21/066 **Website**

Clerk reported on progress and asked if any of the Councillors would attend training. It was felt it would be useful for all Councillors to attend so that there was back-up and also an awareness of the scope and future development of the website in years to come. New email addresses discussed and agreed.

*All*21/067 **Cemetery Management**

Clerk reported on the two latest interments.

Clerk to purchase paving slabs to mark next row for interment of ashes at Garden of Remembrance

*Clerk*

The cemetery gate hinge required repairs and this was in hand.

*JB*

Advice to be sought on lychgate posts.

21/068 **Best Kept Garden Competition 2021**

There was discussion on a competition for 2021, including the implications of Covid-19 and the Government's roadmap for easing restrictions over the coming months and a planned total lifting from 21 June. However this roadmap was subject to the virus being kept under control and subsequent

- 21/068 **Best Kept Garden Competition 2021** (cont)  
waves or difficulties could not be ruled out. There was also discussion on changing the timings of judging and the classes to be set up for awards. **Resolved** that reluctantly the Council would not proceed with arrangements for a 2021 competition. Proposed J Bibby, seconded J Lucas. *All*

It was felt the future shape of the competition should be included for discussion at a future public meeting to see what people in the village would like.

- 21/069 **Consultations**  
East Cambridgeshire Single Issue Review Consultation - Regulation 18 (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended))  
Details of the link to the ECDC website outlining the 6 proposals and the 5 questions to be answered had been circulated to Councillors. **Resolved** that the Council agreed in principle to the 6 proposals and agreed the plan period should remain 2011-2031. They had no comment to make on questions 3, 4, and 5. Proposed Chairman and agreed by all. *Clerk*

- 21/070 **Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs**  
Chairman reported on data being retrieved from the MVAS equipment at the 5 locations over the preceding month. The equipment was proving that a significant number of vehicles were speeding through the village and the volume of vehicles was high and quite surprising. Peak traffic 7-8am and large volume spread throughout much of the afternoons on weekdays. It had been quieter over Easter. He would continue to collect data and move the equipment over the coming weeks. It was hoped the information would be useful to engage with the Speedwatch Scheme and the Police. *Chairman*

- 21/071 **Community Police**  
Nil items reported.

- 21/072 **Reports of Meetings Attended by Clerk and Councillors**  
No one had attended meetings.

- 21/073 **Reports on Village Matters from Residents**  
Chairman reported on the following, which were noted:  
**The Slade** - blocked drains (vicinity of the village sign/former Kings site) had been reported as they were full of sand and grit. (CCC no longer carry out scheduled drain cleaning programme and only deal with on 'as needed' basis)  
**Silver Street/The Slade** - Boundary edge conifers had been cut back which improved visibility for vehicles pulling out of Silver Street. Vehicles parked close to Silver Street/The Slade junction were causing concerns as made hazardous situation for roadusers turning into Silver Street when traffic was coming down Silver Street to the junction.  
**High Street/Headleys Lane** – Chairman had been informed that following complaints by residents in respect of parking, litter, etc at the building site, a representative from ECDC had made 3 site visits. Following letter from Council the previous month the Clerk had been advised that any issues should be reported immediately as they occur and they would be looked into but the enforcement and planning officers would not automatically monitor this (or any other site) as a matter of course.  
**Litterpick** – some residents had been enquiring if a litterpick would soon be arranged. It was understood some residents were very kindly tidying on their

21/073 **Reports on Village Matters from Residents**

daily walks. It appeared some people from outside the village had organised a litterpick and had had bags dropped off at the bus shelter. The Clerk said she had not been advised about this. There was discussion about whether the Council should organise a litterpick during the National Litterpick campaign in a few weeks time but it was decided to wait until the usual co-ordinator was ready to take up again once Covid-19 concerns and restrictions were over.

**Motorbikes** on public paths and dog walking field. Members of the public sighting these events needed to take down the vehicle registration and report to relevant bodies immediately.

21/074 **Correspondence**

The following had been circulated and were noted.

Liaison Meeting Ely Power Station 15 April 2021 – no one had attended  
NALC and CAPALC bulletins and up-dates, including events

IHMC roadworks & events bulletins

CCC Bus Service Changes

CCC Family Learning Grants

CCC Road Safety Education Newsletter "Way to Go"

ECDC Election arrangements - County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Authority Mayor – 6 May 2021

ECDC Parish and Community Forum meetings

ECDC #StandFirm personal testimonies of local people who have been impacted by Covid-19

ECDC Cambridge University's New Ely Boathouse's Wider Community Benefit

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - Climate Commission Initial Recommendations for our Region

Transfer of public transport function to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Cambridge Children's Hospital Newsletter

Highways England - Go Left Breakdown Campaign 2021

ICO Newsletter

21/075 **Street Lights and Highways**

Noted that roadworks were scheduled to take place on 17-21 May 2021  
The Slade (cables)

21/076 **Date of next meeting**

In view of impending expiration, effective from 7 May 2021, of The Coronavirus Act 2020 s.78 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (giving the ability to meet remotely by electronic platform), and to comply with Covid-19 restrictions the Annual Meeting of the Council would be moved from the second Wednesday in the month to the **5 May 2021**.

Arrangements for **June** meeting to be reviewed pending advice regarding Covid-19 etc. Clerk was liaising with Village Hall for bookings of main hall. Currently maximum of 15 people permitted under Covid-19 restrictions. The evening of the meetings might need to be changed to accommodate when the main hall would be available. The Council would need to comply with the Village Hall's Covid-19 risk assessments and also review its own policies, risk assessments and procedures in the coming weeks.

Clerk

Review any actions – not done.

The meeting closed at 9.31pm

**March (Year-end) and April Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

		£	£	£
Receipts	Turner & Son Funeral Directors (interment)	145.00		145.00
	RSPB Rent 1.4.21-31.3.22	950.00		950.00
Payments	001909 Renewal SLCC membership	95.00		95.00
	001910 Renewal CAPALC membership & DP	301.01		301.01
	001911 Clerks salary (Apr)	239.36		239.36
	001912 LGPS	85.42		85.42
	001913 Cancelled			
	001914 E-on Energy streetlights 1.1.21-31.3.21	85.62	4.28	89.90
	001915 Truelink grounds maintenance	62.40	12.48	74.88
	d/d Ionos April	22.03	4.41	26.44
To confirm payments to 31.3.21				
	001907 HMRC	179.40		179.40
	001908 Truelink	112.20	22.44	134.64

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