

## WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 December 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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**Present:** D A Bamforth (Chairman), D J Saberton (Vice Chairman), A Berry, J Bibby, M Housden, K Mackender

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)  
 Cllr T Goodge (ECDC)  
 Cllr P Read (CCC)  
 10 Members of the Public (Public Participation)  
 (2 Members stayed for the meeting)

### PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE – RE-ACCREDITATION QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL STATUS

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Mr Stephen Wilkinson, Chairman Quality Parish Council Status Panel, and Mrs Diane Bailey, Project Officer. The Clerk was thanked for her additional work in preparing the portfolio to achieve re-accreditation for a further 4 years and the Certificate was presented to the Chairman by Mr Wilkinson. Mr J Wells kindly took photographs.

Mr Wilkinson and Mrs Bailey left the meeting and Council business commenced

Action

11/212 **Apologies for Absence:** Nil

11/213 **Declaration of Interest:** Nil

11/214 **Public Participation:**

#### **ECDC Village Visions Consultation: New Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire**

The Chairman opened the session and explained how ECDC had contacted the Parish Council to engage in a consultation process earlier in the year, and that the first general questionnaire (50 copies) had been circulated for consultation during June/July with a note published in the monthly parish magazine, What's On, drawing attention to the review and urging parishioners to engage and not allow the village to sleep walk into something they didn't want. ECDC had reported only 8 responses received of which 4 were against and 4 supported some small-scale housing growth on the edge of the village (up to 10 dwellings for a mix of general market and affordable housing over the next 20 years. This would be in addition to any existing infill sites within the development envelope which had previously been identified for development in the future). Following the results of the first questionnaire a follow-up questionnaire had been prepared and distributed to every house in the parish and a note in the Council's November newsletter. (At each stage the questionnaires were also available to everyone on the ECDC website).

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak.

Summary of issues:

Questionnaire biased, content unacceptable, invalid, suggests decision been made, should be discarded and process started again. Could have been better delivery arrangements.  
 Quotes from the Village Appraisal undertaken 1999 - 'no desire for future development'.  
 Concern loss of areas of countryside (unnecessary when already places to develop).  
 Concern lack of facilities to support further growth, ie no school, poor public transport.  
 No perceived need for smaller, less expensive homes (these are not selling in nearby village).  
 Concerned may set precedent which will lead to further larger scale development.  
 Some Parishioners present had written to ECDC voicing concerns but to-date no acknowledgement.

**11/214 Public Participation:****ECDC Village Visions Consultation: New Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire (cont)**

In support - planners looking for opportunities to grow, infill in the village, a mess in the past so considered development and keep in stop-lines makes sense. Estimated 18 homes been built in last 20 years, similar number for next 20 years would help sustain the village

Mr Berry thanked members of the public for their attendance. 8 left the meeting.

11/215 **Minutes of the meeting** of 8 November 2011 had been circulated, and were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs J Bibby, seconded by Mr D Saberton and agreed unanimously.

**11/216 Matters Arising**

Nil other than those items on the agenda

**11/217 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

County Councillor P Read gave report including up-date on new minor works scheme.

Councillor T Goodge gave an up-date on activities at District Council including proposals for the Ely Car Parking scheme. Mr Berry asked if the District Council had taken into account the free parking that would be available on the Sainsbury car park from next Spring. Councillor Goodge and Read confirmed this would have been factored in.

Councillor Read had asked Alan Dover of ECDC Planning to visit the development at Westway Place for review since the plans had been misleading. He also explained the District Council's position on the 2.5% offer by Government (Eric Pickles) for Councils which did not implement a tax rise next year.

**11/218 ECDC VILLAGE VISIONS CONSULTATION**

Noted that the members of the public present earlier were angered by questionnaire as well as any proposals for potential future development in the parish. Mr Berry pointed out that the questionnaires had not been hand delivered as previously discussed. Mr Mackender said the 50/50 support/against growth (out of 8 respondents) had been raised at meeting with ECDC as being pointless but still went on the questionnaire and that the questionnaire should be re-done.

Chairman proposed he contact ECDC to request new unbiased questionnaire for examination by working party including 2 representatives from the public present earlier in the evening and 2 parish councillors. Proposed Chairman, seconded Mr Mackender and agreed by all. Mr Berry and Mr Mackender undertook to serve on the working party and to deliver the new questionnaires by hand. *AB/KM*

**11/219 VILLAGE HALL DEVELOPMENT**

Chairman opened meeting to allow Mr George, Village Hall co-ordinator, to report. The plans were viewed by Councillors and it was noted the plans had been submitted to ECDC on 25 November (as re-submission under original application made in December last year). Concerned that there was nothing on the website that the plans were being processed. Mr Goodge to make enquiries with planning department.

**11/220 GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME**

Article had been placed in December edition of What's On and Council's newsletter. Chairman and Clerk reported nil response.

**11/221 PROPOSED A142 CYCLEWAY**

Mr Berry and Chairman had attended the meeting of the A142 Parishes Cycleway Group on 16 November. Notes circulated to Councillors by email 30.11.11. Mr Berry advised that the group wanted to establish itself as a recognised body representing the participating councils to local authorities including, Neighbourhood Panels. Site visit planned. *AB*

**11/221 PROPOSED A142 CYCLEWAY (cont)**

Chairman reported that Big Society Funding was working for ACRE on Heritage Lottery – Ouse Washes, Gateway to the Fens. Parishes in the Ouse Wash area between Downham Market and Needingsworth were invited to submit ideas for project funding. Chairman suggested cycleway, guided walk leaflets, maintenance of droves. Mr Berry also suggested grey water system for village hall and ground reservoir for cricket club sprinklers. Chairman undertook to pursue with Big Society Funding.

*Chairman*

The Council recognises the A142 Cycleway Working Party as a free-standing body, authorised by each participating Parish Council to act on behalf of the A142 Parishes group according to an agreed remit, to promote the cycleway to local authorities and other relevant organisations. Proposed Mr A Berry, seconded Mr K Mackender and agreed unanimously. The remit includes research of technical construction and maintenance issues, overcome technical obstacles where reasonably practicable, liaison with landowners, utilities and Highways Authority, investigate funding options, plan manage and oversee construction works in liaison with the Highway Authority and other bodies as necessary (no construction works to commence without advising participating Parish Councils). The Working Party has no budget of its own – matters of expenditure must be referred to the participating Parish Councils.

**11/222 PLANNING**

The following ECDC decisions were noted

11/00894/FUL 18 High Street, 4kWp fixed ground –mounted photovoltaic array to south property within garden curtilage. Approved

11/00851/FUL 11 Martins Lane, Single-storey rear extension and replacement garage. Approved.

**11/223 ACRE – HERITAGE LOTTERY OUSE WASHES – GATEWAY TO THE FENS**

Details circulated to Councillors by email 30.11.11.  
(See item 11/221 above)

**11/224 COMMUNITY CARTS – YOUTH WORK**

Clerk sought consent to sign Service Level Agreement (circulated to Councillors 26.10.11). Mr M Housden proposed, Mrs J Bibby seconded and it was agreed unanimously for Clerk to sign off and despatch to Charlotte Wenn, Community Carts.

*Clerk***11/225 RECREATION GROUND**

Mr Saberton reported he had made enquiries about honeycomb matting for gateways into play area. Clerk had spoken to ECDC who recommended Playscape or Wicksteed but others available. They had found system to be successful when used at some of their sites. Some patches (around cricket net) to be re-seeded in Spring, including the dipped areas over the land drain pipes. Wear and dips appearing where goal posts placed even though being rotated. Mr Saberton advised there were no other issues to report on the weekly play equipment inspections.

*DJS*

Local children taking padded mats on to recreation ground for jumping by rails and hedge on High Street and bus shelter. Chairman to issue note to go in What's On. Proposed Chairman and agreed unanimously.

*Chairman***11/226 CEMETERY**

Clerk reported on purchase of two plots. Approved.

*Clerk***11/227 COMMUNITY POLICE**

Clerk to write to PC Humble to thank him and wish him well in his retirement. No parish matters to forward to Police.

*Clerk*

Dog Fouling – Note to go in Christmas/New Year newsletter.

*Chairman*

**11/228 REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

Nil to report

**11/229 STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

Balfour Beatty, street light maintenance contractors, to be informed of requests to mount items on street lighting units as checks on equipment are required

Noted that repairs to Hive Road had commenced.

**11/230 CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

Proposals for Ely Car Parking. No response for Clerk to make on behalf of Council. Individuals may make their own return of questionnaires, available from Clerk or ECDC website.

*All*

**11/231 DIARY DATES**

Neighbourhood Panel Meeting 23 January 2012, Little Thetford Village Hall. Chairman to attend. *Chairman*

**11/232 FINANCE****Review of Budget and Setting of 2012/13 Precept**

Chairman presented the summary sheet which the Clerk had circulated following the last meeting.

Considerations for Precept were presented by Clerk, ie set aside funds for cemetery extension, Village Hall development, recreation ground replacement of equipment/surfacing, Youth Club holiday sessions, cemetery maintenance, localism, community leaflet, initiatives to promote Council and engage with parishioners. Mr Berry also suggested engaging with neighbouring villages/forming partnerships to share costs eg joint newsletter.

Mr Mackender proposed freezing the Precept at £10600 and this would include allocating £1500 towards the Village Hall development project for match funding. Seconded Mr M Housden and agreed unanimously.

*Clerk*

The following Receipts and Payments were presented, checked and approved.

			£	£	£
Receipts		Cemetery plot	107.00		107.00
Payments	001121	Reimbursement DABamforth			
		RBL Poppy wreath	25.00		25.00
	001122	Clerks salary Dec	205.00		205.00
	001123	Reimbursement FJ Wells qly internet website fee	25.16		25.16
	001124	Reimbursement J Phillips Copying			
		What's On Apr – Oct	76.80		76.80
	001125	Post Office Ltd HMRC	153.60		153.60
	001126	Groundsman salary	72.00		72.00
	001127	E Lucas	16.00		16.00

**11/233 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 January 2012, commencing at 7.30 pm

***Any business and payments, to be considered at Parish Council meeting must be delivered to the Clerk for inclusion on the agenda at least 6 clear days prior to the meeting excluding weekends and public holidays***

*All*

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm

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