

# WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13 March 2007 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Witcham

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**Present:** D A Bamforth (Chairman), D J Saberton, M Wilkin

*In attendance* Mrs S J Bell (Clerk)  
Mr A White (ECDC)

Public question time opened at 7.15 pm – 1 member of the public Mrs A Saberton  
No members of public present during meeting.

Full Council business commenced at 7.35 pm

487. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Mr Don Saberton (ill-health) Action

488. **Declaration of Interest:** There were none

489. **Minutes of the meeting** of 13 February 2007 had been circulated, and were approved and signed.  
Proposed Mr David Saberton, seconded the Chairman and agreed unanimously.

490. **Matters Arising**

*468 Seepage of water, Westway Place/Silver Street and Affordable Housing*  
To be brought forward at future meeting.

Clerk

491. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

07/00231/FUL Amberlea Kennels and Cattery, Ely Road. Construction of staff facilities and reception building (modified – consent 04/01490/FUL) No objections.

Clerk

492. **CHURCH – NEW HEATING SYSTEM**

Further information received from Church Treasurer to support request for financial assistance to replace 40-50 year old heating system, including oil storage tank and mains water connection, together with installation of tap, sink and water heater. To ensure preservation of the fabric of the church, meet health and safety requirements, and open up and provide additional facilities for general use by villagers for musical and social events, fundraising functions etc.

Clerk reported that the Council's balance of funds at 31 March 2007 was expected to be approximately £24,000, and presented details of budget and headings. Reserves had been set aside for cemetery and village hall developments, general reserves and poll etc. Nearly £1000 was reserved under S137, of which approximately £350 was set aside for Council's application for speed reductions measures and cycleway between Witcham Toll and Wentworth under the Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements Scheme.

The Council was keen to support the community for the future sustainability of the Church.

Resolved that the Council in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which in the opinion of the Council is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure. To pledge with the intention of contributing £650 towards new heating system for Church and installation of tap, sink and water heater, subject to receipt of 3 quotes for work to be carried out. Proposed by Chairman seconded by Mr David Saberton and agreed unanimously.

493. **OUSE WASH DROVES**

Clerk confirmed up-dated lease signed, and rent for 2006 and 2007 expected shortly. Hall Ennion and Young invoice for professional fees £120 plus VAT approved.

494. **RECREATION GROUND AND VILLAGE HALL FACILITIES**

- a) Requests from village organisations for assistance to facilitate development of Village Hall to include changing room facilities and maximise carparking without any further encroachment on to recreation ground were received. (Old single changing cabin removed as dilapidated at time of refurbishment of play area and temporary cabin planning consent expiring). Existing cricket area only 45 yards in some places, recommended is 55 yards so certainly no space to extend the Village Hall forwards towards recreation ground.

The Village Appraisal of 2000 had identified a need for improvement and there had been calls from users for many years for changing rooms and improvements.

The Council acknowledged that the Village Hall is the main facility in the village, the hub of the community, and Witcham had suffered the loss of important services such as school, shop, post office and petrol filling station in the past. It is aware of the need to preserve and ensure sustainability of what facilities are left. The Village Hall is used almost daily, eg computer club, mother and toddler group, bowls, cricket club, bridge, young wives, meetings, dances, parties, events run by youth services, weekly post office, and in conjunction with recreation ground for activities such as annual pea shoot, garden fetes, games evenings etc.

- b&c) Chairman reported he had met with valuer and report awaited. Agreed to defer decision on builder's request for easement for electricity and sewer connections and to meet on 20 March, 7.30 in Village Hall. Chairman confirmed that whilst the Council would be required to grant the easement, the decision on permission to make the sewer connection rested with the Village Hall Committee. Builder to pay Council's legal costs. *Chairman  
All*
- d) Mr David Saberton to tighten bolts on multiplay equipment, otherwise nothing to report. The fence near the new pole beside infant area had been repaired. *DJS*
- e) Consent for RoSPA to carry out Annual Inspection of Equipment in April. Proposed Chairman and agreed unanimously. *Clerk*
- f) Cricket nets. Agreed to pass over the upkeep and maintenance of the nets to Witcham Cricket Club. Proposed Chairman, seconded Mr David Saberton. Agreed unanimously. *Clerk*
- g) Grasscutting at Recreation Ground 2007 season. Quotation from cricket club £375 accepted. Proposed Mr David Saberton, seconded Chairman and agreed unanimously. *Clerk*

495. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

Mr David Saberton reported that he hoped to start the Groundsman on his duties at the weekend. *DJS*

496. **CEMETERY**

Chairman reported that the new plan was awaited and consecration to be deferred until after May. *Chairman*

497. **QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL STATUS**

Portfolio presented to meeting, to be submitted to panel by 15 March. Draft Annual Report 2006/7 presented and to be considered at extra meeting on 20 March 2007. March Newsletter approved. *Clerk*

498. **PARISH PLAN**

Clerk reported that final document was being prepared. Invoices and finalisation of grants would have to be carried over into next financial year. *Clerk*

499. **PARISH PATHS (P3)**

Application submitted to carry out work on footpath 1. Clerk to contact landowner to discuss. *Clerk*

500. **ELECTIONS**

Details posted on noticeboards, newsletters and website. Notice of Election to be published 19 March and Nominations required by ECDC by 4 April. *Clerk*

**501. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMMUNITY LIFE AWARDS 2007**

Proposed not to participate in new scheme for Cambridgeshire Voluntary Awards, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Village of the Year nor Aspects of Community Life Awards by Chairman. Agreed unanimously.

**502. VICTIM SUPPORT**

Request for funds to support running costs, sustain and develop new services including domestic violence initiatives and work with young people to counter bullying was deferred.

**503. COMMUNITY POLICE**

Recent burglaries noted.

**504. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

NALC/DEFRA Consultation: The Commons Act 2006 Protection of Common Land in England - No comment  
 Postwatch/DTI Consultation – Post Office Closures - no comment  
 Communities and Local Government: Revised Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members – no comment

**505. REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

Mr David Saberton reported on meeting with public rights of way officer regarding flailing hedges and confirmed there was still work to be done for locked gates system for the droves.

**506. STREET LIGHTING AND HIGHWAYS**

Clerk had been informed by maintenance contractors that P4 at Headleys Lane/Market Way was obsolete and beyond repair. Replacement cost estimated at £1000. Chairman proposed light be replaced. Clerk to make enquiries and necessary arrangements. Seconded Mr M Wilkin.  
 Clerk to report light at crossroads/Silver Street not functioning.

*Clerk*

**507. CORRESPONDENCE**

The following were received:

Consent to request from family of Leslie Saberton who died suddenly to scatter some of his ashes on the cricket square as he was an active and stalwart member of the Witcham Cricket Club. Proposed Chairman, agreed unanimously.  
 Wildlife Trust Cambridge Green Belt Project – Biodiversity Partnership and Environment Agency – “willows” – for “What’s on”  
 Ely and Soham Dial-a-Ride AGM 21 March 2007 Witchford Village Hall, 11.30 am - noted  
 CCC Countryside Access Issues - noted  
 CCC Mobile library schedule of visits to Witcham, March and April – for publication  
 Publication Scheme – to note re-registration arrangements postponed, noted

Publications for circulation  
 Harvest  
 Local Government Review

**508. FINANCE**

External Auditors. Noted Audit Commission had extended 5 year application of Moore Stephens to include 2006/7. National competitive tendering to be arranged thereafter.

Chairman proposed approval for Clerk to attend VAT and Archiving/Freedom of Information Act training with CALC. Agreed unanimously.

Consent given for cheques to be raised out of meeting to complete payments on production of Parish Plan in order to meet target dates for grants.

508. **FINANCE** (cont)

The following Receipts and Payments were presented, checked and approved

			£	£	£
Receipts	NIL				
Payments	000810	Cancelled			
	000811	M Housden	30.00		30.00
	000812	Reimburse D Bamforth re:1&1 Website	4.68		4.68
	000813	Hall Ennion Young	120.00	21.00	141.00
	000814	CALC ABA	56.50		56.50
	000815	Witcham Village Hall hire	112.00		112.00
	000816	S J Bell Salary and expenses, post, stationery, copying	637.10		637.10
	000817	NALC Quality Parish Council Appln	29.38		29.38
	000818	Witcham VH Parish Plan Hire	140.00		140.00
	000819	Witcham Cricket Club- grasscutting recreation ground	300.00		300.00
	000820	CALC Training Courses	65.00		65.00
	d/d	Talk Talk	2.33	.40	2.73
	d/d	Data Protection renewal	35.00		35.00

509. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Tuesday 20 March 2007 (extra meeting)  
7.15pm (Open to public) 7.30 pm (Business)

Tuesday 17 April 2007  
7.15 pm (Open to Public, and check payments and receipts) 7.30 pm (Business)

Tuesday 24 April 2007 (Annual Parish Meeting)  
7.30 pm

All business to be considered must be delivered to the Clerk for inclusion on the agenda at least 6 clear days prior to the meeting.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.00 pm

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