

DRAFT

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 16 May 2006 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall Witcham.

Present: Mr D A Bamforth – Chairman
Mrs S J Bell – Clerk
15 members of the public
Mr Nick Ashby, Manager and Mr Ian Froggett, Environment Adviser – Strawburning Power Station

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Bailey (County Councillor), Mrs Sheila Saberton (Dominoes), Mr C Watson (Parish Councillor), Mr A White and Mr L Youngman

STRAWBURNING POWER PLANT – ELEAN BUSINESS PARK

The Chairman introduced Mr Ashby and Mr Froggett from the Strawburning Power Station. Mr Ashby explained that there had been a change in licensing for all power stations. An application to the Environment Agency had been submitted and there was no intention to change fuel, ie remain straw. The Chairman said he had been in touch with ECDC who had confirmed the application was for straw and possibly woodchip. Mr Froggett explained that the Environment Agency insisted on stringent standards and a need for 'Best Available Techniques' (BATs) to be demonstrated. Mr David Anslow questioned the economics of bringing straw to the power plant, especially when some journeys were over 100 miles by lorry. Mr Froggett assured the meeting that the cost to the environment of diesel lorries bringing straw to the plant was tiny compared to the energy the straw generated in electricity. He said he would consider an energy audit.

When asked about plant emissions, Mr Froggett advised that BATs had effected continual improvement and the Environment Agency was able to enter the plant and audit at any time but there had been no specific problem. The Chairman confirmed that the reports on air quality monitoring carried out over the first two years had seemed reasonable.

Mr Anslow spoke of the measures promised at the beginning of the project as per the leaflet published by EPR. Eg, tree planting, monitoring group. Mr Froggett said he would be happy to recommence the monitoring group and meet say on a 6 monthly basis, and to arrange to show groups of people around the plant. Environment Agency could be invited to attend to answer questions. Notice of visits to be published in "What's On".

The Chairman thanked Mr Ashby and Mr Froggett for attending the meeting and they then left.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10 May 2005 circulated. Confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed Mr P Chambers, seconded Mr David Saberton and agreed unanimously.

Matters Arising:

There were none.

2005/6 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2006 had been circulated and the Chairman gave a report. Balance carried forward to 1 April 2006 was £21,172.76

Mr Anslow noted the expenditure of £750 for tree work on the recreation ground which was a significant proportion of the precept and asked if this could have been done locally. Chairman advised that the Council was required to have this work completed by a professional tree surgeon.

2006/7 PRECEPT

Chairman reported that the precept had been set at £9000, having been held at £8540 for the previous two years.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman presented the Annual Report of the Parish Council. Copy attached.

The following issues arose from the report:

The Chairman asked if there would be any interest in asking someone from the Countryside Watch to come out to a public meeting and do some marking up. It appeared that people in the Countryside Watch scheme received a quicker response than those who call the police.

Mr Anslow enquired about support for the Woodland Burial application at Hive Road. The Chairman advised that further detail was awaited via ECDC.

Results of Best Kept Garden Competition 2005

Vegetables	Stan Saberton
Flower	Lawrence Constable and Diane Young
Overall	Mr & Mrs Richard Webster
Highly Commended	
	Flowers - Mr & Mrs Stan Phillips
	Large garden – Mr & Mrs David Anslow and Mr & Mrs Somerset Gibbs

The judges for last year, Mr & Mrs Les Setchell, had suggested a category for small garden for 2007

PARISH PLAN

Chairman explained the purpose and advantages of completing a Parish Plan and advised that the Council had received a grant of £1500 towards developing the plan. More people required to help so as to ensure it carries the voice of the village since it would be inappropriate for the Council to complete alone. A Chairman is required and a wide range of skills from others to complete the plan.

RECREATION GROUND AND DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT VILLAGE HALL FACILITIES

Registration of the recreation ground as a village green had been put on hold pending the outcome of a court case in the south. Meanwhile the strip of land adjacent the village hall was still on the market.

CEMETERY

The Council had been looking at ways to make more space at the cemetery, including extending the boundary. The layout had been reviewed and arrangements made for the Bishop of Ely to carry out consecration of land to the right of the footpath and more cremation plots had been set aside. An unconsecrated area will be left just inside the gate.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Dominoes: Mrs Sheila Saberton had sent in a report which the Chairman read to the meeting. The club meets the third Friday of the month and attendance had been good although new members were always welcome. Any money raised had been donated to charity.

Witcham Village Hall: The retiring Chairman, Tom Wood, had submitted a written report advising that a new Chairman, Mr Steve Bull, had been elected at the AGM on 8 May 2006. He thanked all those who had supported him during his six years of office and hoped Mr Bull would receive the same support.

Arrangements were in hand for the replacement of the asphalt roof over the bar area and above the entrance hall/toilet area. Mr Bamforth, Chairman of the meeting, proposed a letter be sent to Mr Wood to thank him for all his achievements over the past six years.

Witcham Cricket Club: Mr Nigel Pate reported that both teams had played well last season. The 1st team was in Division 1 and the 2nd in Division 4. New players always sought. He thanked Mr Don Saberton for his excellent work as Groundsman but other facilities were still poor. Mr Bamforth said he had been in touch with Fenners and was awaiting a return call regarding availability of grants for the cricket nets.

Witcham Bowls Club: No report received

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme: No report received.

Mother & Toddler Group: No report received.

Young Wives: No report received.

ANY OTHER PARISH BUSINESS

Report received that workman had been out to clean the drains at Westway Place/Martins Lane during the middle of the previous week; however, storms at the weekend had resulted in flooding again.

Request received for clearance of vegetation on the footpath between Witcham and Mepal. Chairman advised that the Parish Council had raised this with the County Council on previous occasions and been told the old tarmac path had deteriorated too far due to under utilisation.

The meeting closed at 8.30

Signed Dated.....