

WITCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL
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Witchford Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs A Hodges, 88 West Fen Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3AA
Telephone 01353 664427

**Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th July 2016 at 7.30 pm
in St. Andrews Hall.**

Present: Mr H Palmer (in the Chair), Mr I Allen, Mr I Brand (from 7.50pm), Mr R Braund, Mr G Jellicoe, Mr A Shaw, Mrs R Westwell,
In attendance: County Councillor Mr W Hunt, Mr Andrew Philips East Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Department

Public Session

Three members of the public were present. Questions were asked about the recent discussions at the Neighbourhood Plan Committee over parcels of land submitted for possible development in the village, in particular land to the south of Ward Way. The Parish Council explained that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee is open to any member of the public to attend and that a number of residents have been to the Committee meetings to express their views. The Neighbourhood Plan Committee and the Parish Council have taken these views into consideration. The recent discussions over land for development are in response to East Cambridgeshire District Council's consultations over its draft Local Plan.

Before the meeting started the Parish Council remembered Mr Terry King who served on the Parish Council until 2014 and was instrumental in the production of the Witchford Walks leaflet. The Parish Council sent flowers to Mr King's funeral on 30th June and sends its condolences to Mr King's family.

- 16/69 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from District Councillors Mr S Cheetham, Mr M Hugo and Mr S Smith.
- 16/70 The following declarations of interest were made:
Personal – Mr Richard Braund 16/81 and 16/92
Prejudicial – Mr Ian Allen 16/90 (The Warren only), Mr Howard Palmer 16/92
- 16/71 The Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 1st June 2016, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 16/72 The Parish Council agreed to co-opt Mrs Rosemary Lacey as a Parish Councillor. Mrs Lacey signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took her place in the meeting. Mrs Lacey agreed to stand as Parish Council representative on the Witchford Playing Fields Association.
- 16/73 Mr Andrew Phillips, East Cambridgeshire District Council Senior Planning Officer, gave a presentation to the Parish Council on planning issues at the District Council, including the Local Plan Call for Sites and 5-year housing supply. Mr Phillips advised that village development envelopes currently do not apply, so the presumption will be that planning permission will be granted when an application is made (subject to the National Planning Policy Framework). The aim in the Local Plan is to allocate enough land to ensure a rolling 5-year housing supply for the whole life of the Local Plan; however, the additional 4200 houses that need to be found across the district must be available to be built in the next five years. The District Council will determine the placing of development based on an assessment of sustainability.

Mr Phillips addressed questions from the Parish Council. He will check what is the deadline for a possible second Call for Sites. The decision on which of the four options for locating the new housing set out in the Local Plan will be made by District Councillors, but

the key criterion would be sustainability. It is likely that most villages will have some growth. Mr Phillips stated that if a significant number of houses are built in Witchford over the first five years of the new Local Plan, then this would give planners a better argument for resisting more housing in Witchford later in the life of the Plan.

The Parish Council expressed its unhappiness with the wording of the District Council's Form E, for parish councils to respond to the Call for Sites consultation. The form asks parish councils to rank sites even if it does not support development on them. The Parish Council felt that this does not make it clear enough that parish councils are opposed to development on those sites.

The Chairman thanked Mr Phillips for attending the meeting.

16/74 **Information from District and County Councillors**

County Councillor Mr W Hunt reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission is looking again at County Council ward boundaries. The unofficial footpath between the Angel Drove car park to Ely Station behind the old Strikes site will close while work to extend the car park takes place. Work is progressing on the Ely Southern Bypass, re-opening Soham Station and moving Cambridgeshire Archives to Ely. The Cambridge North railway station should be open by December 2017. At the Full Council on 10th May Cllr Bailey raised the need for improvements to the A10 and the possible dualling of this road is now being considered for future development. The East Anglia Devolution proposal was passed at the Full Council on 28th June; this will also involve an Elected Mayor. Under the proposal £70,000,000 will be provided for affordable houses in Cambridge, £100,000,000 for affordable houses in Cambridgeshire and £20,000,000 per year for 30 years for infrastructure.

The County Council has raised the option of leaving Shire Hall. There will be an open day at the Witchford Highways depot on Monday 25th July. Cllr Hunt will keep fighting for the Ely Zipper and a 40mph speed limit between Wilburton and Haddenham.

District Councillor Mr S Cheetham sent a written report on behalf of the Ward District Councillors. Land has been acquired at Angel Drove Ely that will provide approximately one hundred additional car parking spaces subject to planning agreement. At the 22nd June 2016 Commercial Services Committee it was agreed to procure a licence to secure coach parking at Lancaster Way, to secure coach parking if the Barton Road development planning application was approved. At the 28th June 2016 Special Full Council Meeting the East Anglia devolution proposal was agreed and it was noted that the proposal recognised a number of East Cambs 'key' infrastructure projects such as the Soham Railway Station, Ely North Junction, A10 upgrades and Ely Southern By Pass.

Cllr Cheetham has reported back in writing to the Parish Council on two questions raised at the 1st June 2016 meeting. The underpass at the East Cambs Leisure Centre/Cinema Complex is part of phase one which is the cinema complex for which Turnstone (the property developers) have now gained planning permission. Following the last site meeting with Carters (the contractors), they are looking to complete by spring 2017 and weather permitting to complete underpass before the winter 2016. Work on the Leisure Centre has not started as yet, only the archaeological dig where nothing has been found as yet). Work could start on site as early as September 2016.

The current position on the project progress for the Ely Southern Bypass is: start of tender process early 2015, start of preparation works Spring 2015, appointing contractor to committee 14th July 2016, detailed design works August 2016 - December 2016, earliest possible start of construction December 2016/January 2017, earliest possible completion late 2017.

Cllr Hunt responded to a question from the Parish Council on the District Council's possible suggestion of a park and ride service from the new leisure centre to Ely centre, stating that the finances for this had not been agreed yet.

Committees

- 16/75 Cllr Allen, Chairman of Neighbourhood Plan Committee, gave a report. The Neighbourhood Plan Committee met on 7th and 15th June 2016. Sub-groups to look at particular topics (currently - housing, education, employment and CIL) were established. A stall at the Rackham School Funday elicited comments from the public
- 16/76 The Parish Council agreed its formal response to East Cambridgeshire District Council emerging Local Plan Call for Sites data for Witchford. In doing so, the Parish Council took into account the recommendations from the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. Following discussion it was agreed that sites 34/07 and 34/01 should remain ranked joint 4th, that the response to 34/08 (land off Meadow Close) should be amended to add a reference to concerns about sewerage, and that the Parish Council would not object to development site 10/01 at Lancaster Way Business Park but would object to sites 10/02, 10/03 and 10/04.

The formal responses by Witchford Parish Council are as follows:

34/01 Land South of Sutton Road Witchford

Witchford Parish Council objects to the inclusion of this site. Witchford Parish Council has consulted residents and is aware of a strongly-felt desire to retain open areas along the south of Main Street and Sutton Road to provide a 'window' out to the open countryside surrounding Witchford, without which the village will lose some of its sense of place and character as a rural community. The Parish Council is disappointed that none of this site has been offered for CLD.

This site contravenes Policy LP28 'Landscape and Townscape Character' in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan which clearly states:

Development proposals must demonstrate that their location, scale, form and design will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect and where possible enhance:

- *The settlement edge, space between settlements, and their wider landscape setting;*
- *Key views into and out of settlements and of distinctive buildings and features;*

34/02 Land West of Mills Lane Witchford

Witchford Parish Council considers that this site is potentially viable for development. The Parish Council does not support the designation of this site for retail purposes, but does support housing and 30% CLD on this site, including allowing the CLD to incorporate some small-scale employment opportunities, subject to further consultation.

The Parish Council notes that access along Mills Lane is currently restricted to public use on foot (public footpath) and those with a private right of vehicular access only. Were this site to be developed vehicular access issues would have to be addressed.

There would need to be sympathetic landscaping on site to mitigate the visual impact of development on views of the village from the wider countryside, to be in place before development works took place.

34/03 Land South of Witchford village to the north side of the Grunty Fen Catchwater Drain

Witchford Parish Council **objects** to the inclusion of this site, which is out of keeping with the scale of the existing village, is incommensurate with the rural character of this location and would be unacceptable development in open countryside.

This proposed development directly contravenes Policy LP28 'Landscape and Townscape Character' in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan which clearly states:

Development proposals must demonstrate that their location, scale, form and design will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect and where possible enhance:

- *The pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features, such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls;*
- *Visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features;*
- *The settlement edge, space between settlements, and their wider landscape setting;*
- *Key views into and out of settlements and of distinctive buildings and features;*
- *The tranquil nature and nocturnal character of rural areas, free from light pollution.*

This proposed development is in contravention of LP31 Development in the Countryside in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan, as it does not fit into any of the groups of development that might potentially be considered as acceptable under that policy.

The proposed development abuts the closed Grunty Fen landfill site and may contravene policy LP26 'Pollution and land contamination' in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan

34/04 Land adjacent to Mills Barn Mills Lane Witchford

Witchford Parish Council considers that this site is potentially viable for development. The Parish Council supports this land being used partly for CLD.

The Parish Council notes that access along Mills Lane is currently restricted to public use on foot (public footpath) and those with a private right of vehicular access only. Were this site to be developed vehicular access issues would have to be addressed.

34/05 Marroway Lane Witchford

Witchford Parish Council considers that this site is potentially viable for development. However, the Parish Council considers that 30% of this site should be available for CLD.

The Parish Council would wish to see the existing permissive footpath along the southern edge of the site retained.

There would need to be sympathetic landscaping on site to mitigate the visual, noise and air quality impacts of the A142 adjacent to the site. Landscaping should be in place before any construction works commence.

Should this site be developed, the Parish Council requests that open space should be provided contiguous with the existing open space at Field End/Orton Drive and with the planned open space on the Bovis Homes site north of Field End, to provide a larger aggregated open space for the community.

34/06 Land South of Main Street Witchford

The western part of site (i.e. to west of public footpath No1). Witchford Parish Council objects to the inclusion of this site. The Parish Council has consulted residents and is aware of a strongly-felt desire to retain open areas along the south of Main Street and Sutton Road to provide a 'window' out to the open countryside surrounding Witchford, without which the village will lose its sense of place and character as a rural community. This particular field is an important area for the village community. Previous planning applications for development on this field have been refused by both the planning authority and by Planning Inspectors on appeal for this reason. Public footpaths through this field link with Mills Lane and directly into the Millennium Wood and to the new Community Orchard, forming short circular walks suitable for most walkers and contributing directly to the health and well-being of residents. Witchford Parish Council has submitted this field (and the adjacent Millennium Wood) as Local Green Space because of its critical

importance as access to greenspace for the community (thus the development of this land would contravene LP29 Local Green Spaces of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan).

The designation of this land would directly contravene Policy LP28 'Landscape and Townscape Character' in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan which clearly states:

Development proposals must demonstrate that their location, scale, form and design will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect and where possible enhance:

- *The pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features, such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls;*
- *Visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features;*
- *The settlement edge, space between settlements, and their wider landscape setting;*
- *Key views into and out of settlements and of distinctive buildings and features;*
- *The tranquil nature and nocturnal character of rural areas, free from light pollution.*

East of public footpath No1. Witchford Parish Council feels this land should be free from designation for housing as it is the only piece of land where the existing primary school could expand into and this remains to be determined by the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan process.

34/07 Land South of Main Street Witchford, to the west of West End

Witchford Parish Council objects to the inclusion of this site. This land has been submitted by Witchford Parish Council for registration as Local Green Space (thus the development of this land would contravene LP29 Local Green Spaces of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan). The three large ash trees on the boundary of this site have TPOs in place.

Witchford Parish Council has consulted residents and is aware of a strongly-felt desire to retain open areas along the south of Main Street and Sutton Road to provide a 'window' out to the open countryside surrounding Witchford, without which the village will lose some of its sense of place and character as a rural community. Planning permission for this site has previously been refused for this reason. The designation of this land would directly contravene Policy LP28 'Landscape and Townscape Character' in the East

Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan which clearly states:
Development proposals must demonstrate that their location, scale, form and design will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect and where possible enhance:

- *The pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features, such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls;*
- *Visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features;*
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- *Key views into and out of settlements and of distinctive buildings and features;*
- *The tranquil nature and nocturnal character of rural areas, free from light pollution.*

34/08 Land off Meadow Close Witchford

Witchford Parish Council does not consider that this site is suitable for development, for the following reasons:

1. There are considerable access issues which appear to be irresolvable. Vehicular access for the proposed number of houses through Meadow would greatly exacerbate existing problems. Access at Broadway would require crossing registered common land. There are already constant problems with minor accidents at Manor Road, where there are also significant traffic issues particularly at peak school times.

2. The Parish Council wishes to see 30% of the site made available for CLD
3. The housing density is too great for this site
4. There are significant concerns about the threat of flooding and exacerbation of existing drainage and sewerage problems at Broadway, and about the impact on the historic pond at Sandpit Drive.
5. The development could detrimentally impact on the much valued local green space at Sandpit Drive. Despite maintaining its objection to this site, should development proceed the Parish Council would require there to be a substantial and sensitively designed landscape buffer between the development site and existing housing on Broadway and between the development site and Sandpit Drive. The focus of housing should be towards the north and west of the site.

10/02 10/03 10/04 Land at Lancaster Way Ely

Witchford Parish Council is concerned about the visual impact of the proposed level of development at this site (all of 10/02 – 10/04). The proposed development is entirely out of scale, and will dominate and radically alter the character of the surrounding landscape. Witchford Parish Council therefore objects to the designation of these sites for development.

This proposed development directly contravenes Policy LP28 'Landscape and Townscape Character' in the East Cambridgeshire District Council Preliminary Draft Local Plan which clearly states:

Development proposals must demonstrate that their location, scale, form and design will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect and where possible enhance:

- The pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features, such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls;
- Visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features;
- The settlement edge, space between settlements, and their wider landscape setting;
- Key views into and out of settlements and of distinctive buildings and features;
- The tranquil nature and nocturnal character of rural areas, free from light pollution.

Witchford Parish Council is of the view that this development threatens the sky-line of this approach to Ely and views across from the south and west, it encroaches upon the space between Ely and Witchford threatening the distinctiveness of Witchford, it affects key views both to Ely and from the A142 looking south-east towards the Newmarket hills skyline, and will have a deleterious effect on the nocturnal character of this area.

The Parish Council agreed to rank the sites as follows:

Ranking	Location
1	34/04 off Mills Lane
2	34/05 north of Marroway Lane
3	34/02 south and west of Mills Lane
Joint 4th	34/07 land south of Sutton Road
Joint 4th	34/01 land south of Sutton Road
6th	34/08 land between Broadway and Meadow Close
7th	34/06 land south of Main Street ('horsefield')
8th	34/03 land south of Mills Lane

16/77 Cllr Braund and Allen gave a verbal report on the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan Seminar held on 2nd June 2016, that they had attended on behalf of the Parish Council. The Call for Sites process, CIL 123 List and the draft Local Plan were discussed.

16/78 Cllr Braund, Chairman of Traffic Management Committee, gave a report. The Traffic Management Committee met on 15th June 2016. Cllr Braund and Jellicoe met the County Council Highways Officer on 16th June to discuss the new 40mph at Ely Road and Grunty

Fen Road (the 2016-17 Local Highways Initiative scheme). The Committee is focusing on recommendations for the 2017-18 Local Highways Initiative bid and then on developing ideas for tackling traffic problems throughout the village. Cllr Richard Braund will attend the Highways Open Day on 25th July on behalf of the Parish Council. The next Traffic Management meeting is on 26th July 2016.

Community

16/79 Play areas:

i) monthly play area inspections:

Both Parish Council owned play areas have been inspected weekly. Bedwell Hey Lane –Parish Council has purchased new swing seats Common Road – the Parish Council will be replacing this equipment

ii) The Parish Council considered the notes from Play Areas Working Party held on 9th June 2016, which looked at quotations submitted from play area providers for the replacement play equipment at the Common Road play area. Further quotations are being sought as the first round of proposals were not challenging enough for the age groups of children who use this play area. The Working Party will look at these on 7th July.

16/80 The Parish Council agreed to make a grant of £3000 to the Witchford Playing Fields Association under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972. This comprises £2500 in the 2016-17 budget and £500 that the Parish Council agreed to vire from the School Crossings Patrol Support provision that has not been used this year.

16/81 The Parish Council agreed to make a grant of £300 to Witchford Brownies under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

16/82 Witchford Village College:

i) The Village College Liaison meeting was deferred until next term.

ii) The Parish Council will contact East Cambridgeshire District Council to see if they are able to empty the waste bin at Orton Drive in its new location; if not, this will be revisited.

16/83 Cllr Palmer and Cllr Westwell gave a verbal report on their meeting with Priors Field Surgery in Sutton on 13th June 2016. Government policy is to encourage GP surgeries to become larger, so it is understood that any doctors looking to open a small surgery in Witchford would not receive payment from the NHS. The Parish Council agreed to write to NHS England to express its concerns about this.

16/84 Cllr Palmer gave a verbal report on the East Cambridgeshire District Council Parish Conference which he and Cllr Braund attended on 15th June 2016. The conference focussed on emergency planning. The Parish Council will complete the form giving basic data for Witchford and submit this to the District Council as requested.

16/85 Communications:

i) Cllr Shaw updated the Parish Council on the Parish Council website. A Google Group has been set up to share information on the Neighbourhood Plan.

ii) The Parish Council discussed its communications options. There is currently a Parish Council Facebook page and the Witchford Online website where Parish Council documents including Agendas and Minutes are published. These are also published on the parish noticeboard outside the Post Office. The Parish Council will contact the Witchfordian to see what is happening regarding publishing the Minutes for delivery to household in the village.

16/86 The Parish Council noted an email from East Cambridgeshire District Council regarding a request from a resident for a trim trail at Victoria Green. Victoria Green is the responsibility of the District Council. The Parish Council will request clarification from the District Council to ensure that they would pay for installation and maintenance of this facility if it were to go ahead.

- 16/87 The Parish Council agreed to contact the village archivist to see if he wishes to join the Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network.

Open Spaces

- 16/88 The Parish Council agreed to purchase replacement trees for the Community Orchard, at a maximum cost of £40.00.

Personnel

- 16/89 The Parish Council noted the NJC pay award 2016-17 and approved amendments to the bank standing orders for staff salaries as appropriate.

Planning

- 16/90 16/00672/FUL
Single storey rear extension and 2 storey side extension including car port revised from approved applications 14/01114.FUL & 15/00280/FUL increase eaves and ridge height.
6 The Warren
No objections
- 16/91 16/00643/FUL
Construction of an open wooden framed carport of no more than 2.5m in height with a corrugated plastic roof to the front of house (Retrospective)
15 Broadway
No objections
- 16/92 The Parish Council approved a letter to the Planning Authority setting out its concerns about the planning process at Alderforth House 20 Main Street.
- 16/93 The Parish Council agreed to write to a property in Manor Close regarding vehicular access over the Common to the rear.
- 16/94 The Parish Council noted a letter from the Bedwell Park Residents Association regarding development at The Drove and a reply from Tingdene Parks Ltd. The Parish Council will reply recommending that the Residents' Association contact the ward District Councillor directly. The Parish Council also agreed to raise the Resident's Association's concerns with the District Councillor.

- 16/95 **Correspondence and actions:**

i) The Parish Council noted the activity log for June 2016

- 16/96 **Councillor reports:**

Grasscutting

Grass cutting by the Parish Council's contractor is continuing. Cllr Jellicoe continues to undertake grass cutting on village paths on a voluntary basis.

Streetlights

The replacement streetlights are due to have electricity connected during the week beginning 25th July.

Open Spaces

The Church Warden has cut grass along Old Scenes Drove for grave digger access to the Churchyard.

Community

Stagecoach has advised that the 16:45 bus service between Cambridge and Chatteris will operate up to 15 minutes later and additionally serve Waterbeach.

A new litter bin has been placed at the Manor Road pond with thanks to Mr Jellicoe, Mr Hook and Mr Till.

Vegetation overhanging the cyclepath towards Meadowlands has been cut back with thanks to Mr Jellicoe, Mr Hook and Mr Till.

The Parish Council will chase various fly-tipping and waste collection reports that have not been dealt with.

East Cambridgeshire District Council will be asked if they can help with the vegetation growing over the pavement at Field End.

Parking problems at Manor Court Road will be added to the Traffic Management Committee agenda.

The Parish Council will contact Cambridgeshire County Council Highways about problems at Broadway.

Wood

Nothing to report.

- 16/97 **Finance:** It was agreed that the bank reconciliation as at 26th May 2016, the clerk's timesheet and monthly expenses and the quarterly budget review 1st April – 30th June 2016 be noted and the cheques on the schedule of cheques be approved.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.30 p.m. Date of next Parish Council meeting Wednesday 3rd August 2015

Signed: Chairman

Date: