

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 11 May 2015

These minutes comprise 5 pages.

Present: Cllrs C Rickard (Chairman), P Dean, P Lane, J McNeely, E Mitchell, F Platten and A Rolland.

Apologies: Mrs A Crack (National Trust)

Cllr Rickard opened the meeting by welcoming Cllrs McNeely and Rolland onto the Council. He said that it was pleasing to see that, by the election of two younger Councillors, the average age of the group had been lowered significantly.

Election of Officers

As this was the Annual meeting, the election of office bearers then took place. Cllr Rickard was elected as Chairman unanimously with Cllr Dean being reaffirmed as Vice Chairman (proposed Cllr Platten and seconded Cllr Lane). Cllr Rickard reported that he would only serve as Chairman for one further year as he feels that two years is the most suitable period of office. In the discussion which followed it was agreed that a four year (maximum) period should be retained in the Standing Orders because both the Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected into office for one year only and then (if prepared to stand) can be re-elected at the next Annual meeting.. The only proviso in the Standing Orders is that the period of office cannot extend beyond four years unless there are exceptional circumstances prevailing.

33/15 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 April 2015 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Declaration of Interest

- (a) **Prejudicial** – there were none
- (b) **Other** – there were none

33/15 Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that:-

- He had received an acknowledgement from the Highways Department regarding his report that the trees bordering the B1102 were encroaching onto the carriageway.
- He had contacted both Mrs Sale and Mr Jaggard about the High Street bench and recommended that they work together to rectify the broken slats.
- The spraying of the weeds on the recreation ground had been delayed as Andrew Hall, Truelink, feared that the spray would damage the grass which was dry following a lengthy period without significant rain.

34/15 C/Council Report

In the absence of C/Cllr Shuter there was nothing to report.

35/15 District Council

The Clerk reported that:-

- he had received an email from D/Cllr Campbell introducing both himself and D/Cllr David Chaplin as newly elected councillors for ECDC.
- He had also supplied information about the PC meetings with a request that a written report be provided if neither councillor could attend.

Mr Stevens in his final report as District Councillor said that:-

- The full Council had approved the list of projects for CIL funding, one of them being the Lode to Quay cycle way. Funding is not guaranteed for any of the projects but inclusion on the list is a very favourable sign.
- Central Government is to make extra funds available to District Councils to encourage greater recycling of waste materials.

- After many years of debate, the whole of the Local Plan had finally been approved.

He had been advised by Highways that they were awaiting further information regarding the signing of Church Walk as they were under the mistaken impression that the PC had it in hand. As Highways had assumed responsibility for progressing this matter the Clerk was instructed to contact them to clarify the situation.

36/15 Parish Council Reports

Finance

The Clerk reported that he had set the external audit process in train. The annual return is required by Monday 8 June.

Invoices

The Council agreed that the following payments could be made electronically.

Last month's payments were checked and signed off.

Clerk	Salary	295.61	Local Govt Act 1972 s112
Clerk	PAYE	73.90	Local Govt Act 1972 s112
Clerk	Stationery (Toner Cartridge/Envelopes)	62.48	Local Govt Act 1972 s112
Green Energy	Passage Hall Electricity	197.75	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 and 10
Truelink	Grass Cutting	405.90	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 and 10
Lode Star	Grant.	200.00	Section 137

Receipts in April included allotment rents £310.00, VAT refund £1292.77, Precept £7000.00, Council Tax grant £162.00, NT water payment £31.30, and interments £160.00.

Planning

The following applications were discussed

Mr Cater & Ms Jay 11 Station Road	15/00428/FUL Extension of existing property. Comment by their agent: "The site is within the development envelope and the Conservation Area so we have been mindful of the associated policies when arriving at the design. The Planning Officer has confirmed his support".	The PC had no comments on this proposal.
Mr & Mrs A Taylor 34 Mill Road	15/00439/FUL Two-storey rear extension to provide double bedroom with en suite facility on footprint of existing conservatory.	The PC had no comments on this proposal
James MacSwiney Saddleduck Farm	Equestrian Development. Mr MacSwiney is preparing a planning application and asked if he could give a presentation to the PC	See comment below

Cllr Rickard reported that he had replied to Mr MacSwiney thanking him for giving advance notice of his application but advising him that a presentation is not necessary at this stage. Following his application to ECDC, through the normal procedure, the PC can then decide whether it will be constructive to hear from Mr MacSwiney.

In respect of Lode Social Club, Cllr Rickard reported that Mr Peters had advised him that the Clerk's report in the May issue of the Lode Star magazine was inaccurate. No change of use application had been submitted or withdrawn but Mr Peters was committed to creating a pub/restaurant and would go through the proper process in due course. Cllr Rickard advised Mr Peters to use the Lode Star to correct any misconceptions.

However, Mr Stevens (in his former role as District Councillor) reported that, in the planning committee meeting on 1st April 2015, in answer to a question, Mr Daines-Smith (Mr Peters' agent) had confirmed that the building would continue to be used as a social club for members.

Both Mr Stevens and Cllr Mitchell confirmed that the Lode Star was available for Mr Peters to correct any misunderstandings about the future use of the social club.

Allotments

The Clerk reported that all the rents had been paid, £196.00 being banked and a late payment of £8.00 in cash credited to petty cash.

Cemetery

The Clerk reported that:-

- Due to a mower breakdown and the relocation of the caretaker to Burwell the grass was badly overgrown. He was pleased to report that a new caretaker, Mr Jaggard, had been appointed and one cut had already been carried out. The maintenance work will continue when Mr Jaggard returns from holiday.
- He had received a letter from Mrs Firebrace (nee Weir) who following her relocation to Portugal, had decided that she no longer had a need for the cemetery plot she had purchased earlier. During the discussion of this item three possible responses were identified. Following a vote it was agreed that the Clerk should write thanking her for the information and to ask what she would wish to be the fate of her £30.00 payment.

Cllr Rickard reported that he had asked the Clerk to provide information about the number of vacant plots and to give an estimate of how long before they would all have been purchased. He reported that, at the present rate of take up, the cemetery would last a further 64 years.

Fassage Hall

Cllr Lane reported that a number of electrical items, including the wiring of the defibrillator cabinet and the alterations to the internal lights were still outstanding but Mr Lamb was progressing these.

Footpaths

Cllr Rickard reported that, based on a useful survey carried out by Mr Platten, it was evident that a number of farmers had failed to reinstate the footpaths which crossed their fields. As this was a regular annual occurrence he had approached the Footpaths' Officer for advice. She reported that she faced the same problem and recommended that the best solution is to report the failure to comply on the County's Rights of Way site. Mr Platten offered to take this on board.

Cllr Rickard reported that building rubble had been dumped and then levelled on the first part of Harvey's Drove in an attempt to improve the surface for vehicles and walkers. This work was carried out without obtaining the appropriate prior approvals through the County Council. The County's Footpaths officer had visited the site and had explained the correct procedures to those involved. In fact, the surface of the drove had been improved by the work but further work is to be carried out to level off the surface and remove any large debris.

Street Lighting

Cllrs Mitchell and Lane had looked into the street lighting issues and reported that some parts of the village are darker after the removal of lamp posts. Millards Lane has the longest darker area and Fairhaven Close is similar, but in neither case was it thought to be unsafe for residents.

In the discussion of this item it was revealed that the Balfour Beatty plans had identified a loss of 16 lights in Lode and Longmeadow, not 13 as stated by the BB representative, but there was no guarantee associated with either number.

Under the circumstances it was agreed that no action should be taken by the Parish Council to get any lamp reinstated, accepting that some residents would not be entirely satisfied with this decision.

Play Area

Cllr Platten reported that she had received the RoSPA report on the condition of the Play Area and that only one item, the basketball upright, carried a medium risk.

After discussion it was agreed that Cllr Platten should investigate the cost of making the basketball upright and backboard safe for use.

37/15 Parish Reports

Anglesey Abbey The Clerk reported that Ms Crack had returned from maternity leave and was updating herself on what had taken place at the Abbey during her absence. He had asked her to supply a written report if she was unable to attend meetings.

Sports Club

Cllr Lane reported that, as the football club has only one team this season, fewer matches will be played in Lode. Mr Lamb is seeking an alternative team without a home ground which he can invite to play in Lode. In discussion of this item the following points were made:-

- Consideration should be given to the introduction of village football and cricket matches to encourage a greater community spirit.
- Mr Cassidy identified that, following the closure of the Social Club, there were a number of redundant trophies available. One of these was a cup presented to the winners of a cricket match played between Fen Ditton and Lode. It was agreed that Cllr Mitchell should investigate ways of resurrecting this event.

Cycle Way

Cllr Platten reported that:-

- The question of solar lighting along the cycle path had been raised and it was estimated to cost £8000 to £10000 for the full length. However, it had been suggested that the small spinney was the only area in which lighting would be required.
- A further meeting had been held with the Garrow Estates to resolve land purchase issues.
- The latest proposal for the cycle path was to locate it on the field side of the hedge. This would increase land purchase costs but would lower construction costs.

In answer to a question it was agreed that the ring-fenced Parish Plan fund should be maintained for the cycle path as it would provide a suitable home for any funds Cllr Platten might generate in the future.

Wicken Fen

Cllr Mitchell reported she had been unable to attend the recent liaison meeting. The only item of direct interest to Lode residents had been the suggestion that the old railway line be turned into a bridleway.

Crossroads

It was noted that the Highways Department has carried out a repair of the damaged carriageway at the crossroads bus stop and installed bollards to prevent further damage. The report led to a lively discussion about the size and appearance of the bollards with opposing views being taken on their appearance.

Minutes/Lode Star Report

In the light of the fact that the village now has an excellent web site which will report all Parish matters, including PC minutes and Lode Star reports, Cllr Rickard urged all present to read the minutes and other reports very carefully before publication to make sure that they are accurate.

Portfolios The following Parish Council responsibilities were agreed

Finance	Cllr Rickard, Cllr Dean, Cllr McNeely
Planning	Cllr Rickard, Cllr Dean, Cllr Rolland' Cllr Platten
Allotments	The Clerk
Cemetery	Cllr Mitchell
Fassage Hall	Cllr Lane
Footpaths	Cllr Rickard
Lighting	Cllr Rickard
Seats	Cllr Lane
Shelters	Cllr Lane
Signs	Cllr Mitchell

Bins	Cllr Mitchell
Play Area	Cllr McNeely, Cllr Rolland
Lode Star/Web Site	Cllr Mitchell
NT Liaison	Cllr Platten, Cllr Mitchell

Other appointments

Neighbourhood Watch	M Lord
Lode Local Charity	Cllr Dean, Clerk
John Salisbury Charity	Cllr Dean, Cllr Lane, The Clerk
Internal Audit	Mr T Cassidy

38/15 There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 9.15pm.

Date of Next Council Meeting – Monday 8 June 2015. It should be noted this will be preceded by the Fassage Hall AGM which will start at 7pm.

..... **Signed by the Chairman Cllr C Rickard**

These minutes comprise 5 pages