

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the Open Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 18 May 2015

These minutes comprise 7 pages including appended reports

Present Cllrs C Rickard (CR) (Chairman), E Mitchell (EM), F Platten (FP), J McNeely (JM) and the Clerk (ADT) together with Mr T Cassidy (TC), A Lamb (AL), M Lord (ML), I Middleton (IM), C Platten (CP), R Stephens (RS) and Mrs J Stephens.

Apologies Cllr P Dean, J Coxall (JC), J Kempster (JK), A Langran (ALa), J Sale (JS), and P Wells (PW). Written reports were submitted by this group (appended hereto).

Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th May 2014 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Chairman's Report (CR)

This has been my first year as chairman and it has been an interesting one.

I am particularly pleased that our efforts to secure a cycle path between Lode and Quy appear to have paid off. Funding is in place via a grant from central government to Cambs County Council. We also have the promise of some funds from East Cambs District Council. I am hopeful that the new cycle path will be completed within my second year of office. Many people have helped to promote the cycle path but I would particularly mention Fran Platten who has driven the initiative from the beginning.

The changes to the street lights in the village have caused some concerns about safety and security, and it is true that the removal of a number of lamp posts has created some darker areas. However, we believe that, on balance, the new lighting is an improvement, and there are no significant risks associated with the loss of lights.

The demise of the Lode Social Club was another cause for concern amongst some parishioners. But the members voted to sell the building to Richard Peters on the understanding that it would be converted to a pub/restaurant. Work is currently ongoing to achieve this aim.

The Passage Hall continues to provide the village with a valuable and well-used asset. The resident nursery school generates a steady income stream and is back to operating five days a week. Other social and business uses add to the funds. As a result the hall is financially secure and there is money to invest in items such as the defibrillator which has been recently installed.

We have lost two councillors this year but fortunately have gained two more. I would like to thank them all for their support and look forward to working with the new team in 2015/16. I would also like to thank the clerk for his diligence and patience. At the end of this year I will retire from the Parish Council after nine years of service. I believe that two years as chairman is enough and, in May 2016, it will be time for someone else to take over.

Treasurer's Report (ADT)

Parishioners can be confident that procedures are in place to ensure that the portion of the Council Tax (the Precept) which is paid into the current account by the District Council is well controlled. The calendar for the 2014/2015 financial year was as follows:-

Budget Development

- Early October - the budget for the new 2014/2015 financial year was developed and from this the required level of precept was calculated.
- Mid October - the financial information was emailed to members of the Finance sub-committee (Cllrs Rickard, Dean, Lane and Mr Cassidy as internal auditor) to prepare them for a meeting which was held in late October.
- Late October - at their meeting members of the sub-committee scrutinised the figures and where necessary made a number of changes. In all 8 sources of income were identified and 31 areas of expenditure considered and confirmed. This information was then consolidated onto a new spreadsheet and sent to the full Council for consideration at their November meeting. Following the meeting and the acceptance of precept requirement the information was forwarded to ECDC to allow its financial committee time to develop its budget. In January as no changes to the budget were identified the level of Precept was confirmed to ECDC.

Controls.

- In preparation for each meeting a list of all payments which need to be processed is prepared and sent to Councillors. During the meeting Councillors are given the opportunity to question any proposed payment. The majority of payments are made through the BACS system but if a cheque is required it will be signed by the two nominated Councillors.
- After the meeting any cheques are posted out and the remainder of bills paid through the web. For each web payment a cover sheet is printed out and these together with a print out of the current state of the current account are presented to Councillors at the following month's meeting.
- The internal auditor is charged with ensuring that the correct policy and procedures and documents are in place and closely followed.
- The external audit process for the 2014/2015 financial year has commenced. The Parish report is to be returned by 8 June. However, as the report cannot be signed off until the 8 June meeting an extension has been granted.

Accounts

At the beginning of the year the bank accounts stood at £12223.79 and when the year ended on 31 March 2015 they stood at £14815.47.

The Lode Local Charity continues to work well with grants being made to 79 pensioners in July, and 76 pensioners and 3 students who received educational grants in November.

Internal Audit (TC)

The position of Internal Auditor, independent of the Council, was introduced by the Government as an on-going requirement to ensure that local councils "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of their accounting records and control systems" and "to assist the council in fulfilling its responsibility for the protection and detection of fraud, error or mistakes". I have now undertaken the duties of Internal Auditor to Lode Parish Council for twelve years.

After helpful meetings with the Parish Clerk and the Finance Sub-Committee, I have inspected the documents provided, and obtained clarification of the various procedures undertaken within the Lode Parish Council to my satisfaction. I wish to report as follows.

1 Book-keeping System. The basic requirements relating to the keeping of the Day Book, which should contain details of all receipts and payment are satisfactory. Subsidiary records such as allotment rents, cemetery fees, and petty cash all support the Day Book. The Day Book and computer spreadsheets support the necessary Bank Reconciliation monitored by Finance Sub-Committee. A separate copy of all computer files is now kept on a routine basis for security and back-up purposes.

2. Financial Standing Orders and Payment Controls. The current Standing Orders include a Financial Procedures document and the role of the Finance Sub-Committee is clear. Purchasing procedures and payments are supported by the necessary paperwork. Quotations, cheque book stubs, payment receipts, invoices, etc. are all filed for checking. VAT is appropriately accounted for and recovered.

3. Risk Assessment and Asset Control. The Annual and on-going risk assessment achieved its objectives, and financial reserves and 'ring fenced' sums are clearly recorded. A regular review of assets, (mainly equipment), is undertaken as is the adequacy of insurance cover.

4. Budgetary, Income and Petty Cash Controls. The regular reporting of expenditure and any variances from the budget is under adequate control, with the involvement of Finance Sub-Committee. The Precept and Grant income has been properly and promptly received. Incidental expenses through the Petty Cash Book are recorded. All cheque payments are checked against invoices and initialled on the cheque book stubs.

5. Payroll Controls. A review of arrangements for payments to employees and contractors, particularly regarding administration and documentation in accordance with PAYE/NIC regulations, was carried out to my satisfaction.

6. Year End Procedures. From my review to date of the Local Councils' Governance and Accountability Guidance, plus the helpful clarifications and provision of documents by Parish Clerk, I feel that the Annual Return for Year Ending 31st March 2015 can be satisfactorily completed on behalf of Lode Parish Council and that I can complete Section 4 'Annual Internal Auditor's Report' to my satisfaction.

District Report

These are my last notes after eight years as a District Councillor, as I decided not to stand for re-election. I should like to thank everyone and give my best wishes for their future. Kevin Ellis has moved to Suffolk so could not stand again.

CRYSTAL STRUCTURES SITE, BOTTISHAM

The Council has now given full planning permission for this development.

There will be nine affordable homes for shared ownership or for rent for those with local connections, and fifteen homes for sale on the open market. There is also outline permission for 600 square metres of land for non-domestic institution or business employment use. This follows completion of a legal agreement for the provision of the affordable homes and off-site open space provision and maintenance. An Appeal against the refusal of a previous application has been withdrawn.

LOCAL PLAN

The Council has finally passed its Local Plan. This will be its new planning policy that will apply in East Cambridgeshire and guide planners and potential applicants.

RECYCLING

The District has received Government funding to encourage more recycling by giving prizes to households putting blue bin materials out for collection. 54 prizes ranging from £10 to £250 will be given each month. Parishes will be surveyed at least every five collections and at random. Households not putting recycling out will not be eligible and will receive a leaflet through the letterbox. There will also be checks for content. The scheme will run for two years but could continue, financed from credits for increased recycling from the Government. We have also been given a Golden Carton Award for our much improved recycling of cartons.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING

Following consultation with Parishes, the District Council has added several projects to the list of those it would help fund from levies on new developments throughout the District. Formerly the list only covered large projects in Ely, Littleport and Soham. Four projects have been added which includes the Lode-Quy Cycle Path, following a submission from Lode Parish Council. This project has been agreed by the County Council, financed from Government funds, but hopefully will stay on the District list should there be a problem with funds from this source.

LODE SOCIAL CLUB BUILDING

Following a visit in April, the Planning Committee met to determine the application for alterations and extensions to the building. Following a previous objection from County Highways on parking and traffic safety implications of more intensive staffing and use, the agent for the applicant had then formally stated that the premises would be run in a similar way as before. The agent and a neighbour spoke, and questions were put to them and the officer. The agent confirmed that the building would be used as a social club for members. The committee discussed parking and viability issues and I said that the club committee, its members and those responding to the application, had expected the premises to be used as a pub and restaurant. It was explained by the planning officer that if it were to be so, it would require another application. The committee approved the application for the alterations and extensions, subject to conditions covering the parking and manoeuvring layout, external venting (needing a further application), noise, hours, deliveries, collections and bin storage etc. Please note that, despite a report elsewhere, there has never been an application for a change of use of the premises, or mention of a pub or restaurant in the application. There was, however a separate application to determine its lawful use, which was established by the Council to be a Social Club.

Cllr Rickard thanked Mr Stephens for everything he had achieved on behalf of Lode with ECDC

Cricket Club (AL)

The club is passing through a transitional phase as a number of senior officials have, retired from the club. Probably the greatest loss was caused by the retirement of two coaches as this means that a colts' team cannot be supported leading to enthusiastic juniors being turned away. As players have either retired or moved on to teams playing in higher leagues this year Lode can only provide one team. For two reasons players are becoming more reluctant to turn out - a cricket match lasts several hours and there is competition from football, the season of which begins in August with training commencing in July. Mr Lamb is, however, determined to ensure the survival of Lode cricket.

Cycle Way (FP)

Things have moved on a lot since last year. We now have funding of £317,000 from the County Council and about £30,000 from East Cambs. The National Trust have offered Cambridge County Council a strip of land opposite Anglesey Abbey, all the way down on the other side of the hedge [about 1km] up to the woodland which is about half way

down to Quy. This will make the path just so much more attractive and cheaper to build. I think that the Lode liaison meetings have probably helped to find this wonderful solution, and our thanks go to Amanda Crack and Mark Bradshaw who have helped and encouraged us all the way with this path. However, CCC is negotiating this and they will be doing a planning application sometime, hopefully soon! Rohan Wilson [from Sustrans] is negotiating with the other land owners over the rest of the route, and he is being paid using the money we have raised over the last few years.

It is a complex task and not one that any of us can do. As you may remember we saved our money in a dedicated Sustrans account. My thanks go out to all the people who helped doing jumble sales, stalls, yarn storming at Anglesey Abbey and generally raising awareness of the need for the path. We have also been helped by Marshalls who paid for the feasibility study and then a topographic survey, and for Matthew Shuter and John Williams who supported us at the County Council, and Robert Stephens who was then our District Councillor. Finally I wish to thank the Parish Councillors who always supported the need for a path and gave practical help when ever it was needed and masses of encouragement. Thank you.

Fassage Hall (AL)

The Hall has experienced another good year with a steady income accruing. It is pleasing to note that income from regular bookings covers ongoing costs with income from the Montessori School being saved as surplus revenue. Income is such that it has been possible to fund the purchase of a defibrillator for general public use and to replace all the security locks within the building. It is disappointing to report that the signs for the defibrillator have been delayed. Regular maintenance and cleaning of the building is now possible with the employment of two employees. A sinking fund has been set up to cover any large future maintenance requirements. Regular use is being made of the online booking process which enables a paper trail to be maintained.

Footpaths (CR)

A number of farmers have failed to reinstate the footpaths which cross their fields. As this is a regular annual occurrence the Footpaths' Officer has been approached 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. It was noted that building rubble has 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 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.

Lode/NT Liaison Committee (FP)

This committee meets twice yearly in March and October to hear what is going on at Anglesey Abbey and for the Parish Council to report difficulties or problems that are voiced in the village. The meetings are always interesting and the latest one in March discussed parking in the Paddocks, the spraying of the Japanese knotweed just beyond

Harvey's Drove, the cycle path, visitor numbers, and changes at the Abbey. The minutes will in future be put on the website, but I do send them to the Lode Star, though they are sometimes a bit shorter!

Lode Social Club (CP)

Company Directors have sold the building at 45 Lode Road for development as a pub/restaurant and expect it to be opened as such this year. The proceeds of sale will go to form a charity for the benefit of Lode with Longmeadow to be called the Lode with Longmeadow Village Trust. The constitution will be voted on this year or early next after which the trustees may make awards to deserving causes in the village that support education and welfare and recreation. Villagers are welcome to apply for membership at £1 per annum in order to have a say in the development of the new charity.

In discussion of this item it was reported that, at the Planning Committee meeting, the agent for the owner had confirmed that the building would be run as a social club. The owner has subsequently stated that a pub/restaurant is expected to be opened this year.

Concern was expressed that the changes to the building do not fully comply with the requirements of the Disabilities Act. It was agreed that this is best left to the planners.

Lode Star (EM)

Lode Star continues to be delivered to every household in the village for 11 months of the year with a break being taken in August. As always particular thanks go to Susan Swannell for producing the magazine as she has done since 1976. As Editor I am always on the lookout for stories from the village and we have had several people writing about their interests which adds to the variety of the magazine. But it does rely on all the regular columns from the Church, Parish Council and clubs and associations. Thanks are also due to the band of deliverers who get the magazine on the doorstep on 1st of the month even when the Editor has gone down to the wire with going to press. The big event this year is finally getting a village website up and running thanks to Ian Middleton. This means every copy of Lode Star from October 2014 onwards will be online as a pdf. All web links in the text work and so extend the reach of the magazine articles. We also hope to make use of the photo gallery on the website to enhance Lode Star articles. But as always I end with a plea for more people to come forward and contribute to the magazine. Your neighbours ARE interested in what you do and enjoy!

And last but not least thank you to the Parish Council for the £200 annual grant.

Cllr Rickard thanked both Cllr Mitchell for her work on the Lode Star and Mr Middleton for producing a most professional website for the village.

Neighbourhood Watch (ML)

The scope of local village NHW circular email is growing with contact being made with neighbouring villages including Reach and Quy. As the area covered by the Lode area PCSO is large reaction to a Lode incident may come either from Histon or Sawston. PCSO time is taken up dealing with things such as inconsiderate parking by parents on the school run. We meet at least once a month with Maria Robinson our PCSO. The changes to street lighting are unlikely to have any impact on the incidence of burglary as those experienced in recent years have taken place during daylight hours.

A speed watch operation had been carried out and a number of speeding motorists were identified

Trees (CP)

The Tree Warden for the village is responsible for assisting with planting and planning to increase the number of trees and shrubs around the village, reporting on disease in trees, pointing to sources of further information where appropriate (e.g. planning issues)

The main areas of planting are White Fen Woodland (in conjunction with National Trust, ECDC and Woodland Trust); Allotment Orchard; Fassage Recreation Ground; B1102 hedging for screening. Volunteers always welcomed to help in any of these planting areas. Disease has not yet been found in any ash trees in the parish, but volunteers are needed to keep an eye on individual trees. Further information about any tree matter is available from the Tree Officer, ECDC.

Web Site (IM)

The web site went on line at the beginning of May. There has been a good take up with 40% of the band width being used at the time of the meeting mainly in the evening and at weekends. Extrapolation of this figure gives an anticipated maximum band width usage of 80%. If this usage goes over 100% then a considerably more expensive band width will need to be rented. A monthly report on the web site will be presented for the PC's regular meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 9.05pm.

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

Written reports submitted by those not attending

Lode Chapel (PW)

The Church continues to meet as RE:NEW at Bottisham Primary School every Sunday morning. There is also a traditional evening service at Lode Chapel on the second Sunday of each month, and the building is used regularly for church social events and meals.

A new full-time minister, Rev. Alan Brand, has been appointed and will take up his position as minister of RE:NEW from 1st September 2015.

The Chapel continues to be a well-used venue for various local community groups and activities, such as the Village Coffee Morning; the Lode Women's Institute; the Mothers' Union; Bottisham and Burwell Photographic Club; Little Lode Monkeys toddler group; and a twice-weekly Pilates class, as well as a number of committee meetings, training courses and a music workshop. It is also used regularly by various other Christian groups and churches around the area.

It is planned that during this year there will be repairs made to the windows, shutters, fascia and barge boards and the exterior re-painted.

It is our hope that Lode Chapel will continue to play an important role in the communal life of the village for many years to come.

Mothers' Union (ALa)

As a result of our Branch fundraising for Mothers' Union Projects throughout the year we made donations of £50 to Away From It All (Holiday scheme for those with special need), £55.50 to Overseas Fund, £25 to Parenting, and £25 to Special Relief Fund. Members also generously donated Christmas gift items to Cambridge Women's Refuge.

St James' Church (JS)

2014 was a busy year with many fundraising and social events. Through the villagers' support we managed to make a surplus of £1612.

Our vicar Rev'd Sue Giles has been busy organising Benefice events for children. Play and Praise runs for mums and toddlers on Fridays in the parish room at Lode church. A Gospel Choir Tuesdays after school at Swaffham Bulbeck and Families @ 5 on the 1st Sunday in the month at Swaffham Bulbeck.

There have been 2 baptisms, 3 weddings and 3 funerals during the year.

The church remains in a reasonably good state of repair. With a small congregation there are a lot of maintenance jobs that fall to a few people. New soakaways were dug for the Fairhaven chapel and some pointing up was done to the corner of the parish Room. We thank Peter Swannell for many years work of cutting the grass in the churchyard. This has now been taken over by Graham Cox.

We have been investigating the possibility of removing some pews from the back of the church to make a space for other activities including serving drinks at the end of benefice services. We have been informed that the pews in Lode church are not of any architectural significance so it would be possible to remove them. We would need to source funding for the work. We do hope to sell the pews.

Rev'd sue Giles has been running the 5 Parishes in the Benefice mostly on her own with very little help from any retired clergy. We had hoped that there would be more help forthcoming but this isn't the case. so in 2015 we have started holding 2 Benefice services a month (this is when all the 5 churches join together for a service at one of the churches). So far there has been positive feedback. We are very lucky that Sue tries to make sure that each village has a service each Sunday. Not many villages of our size have that luxury.

Tennis Club (JK)

The tennis club is still well supported although membership numbers are down slightly on last year. Total membership is currently estimated at: 41 member units (some adult, some couple and some family) - giving an estimated total membership of 81 (using an estimate of just 3 members for each family membership). The tennis coaching, which is partly subsidised for juniors by the club, is aimed primarily at youngsters and is currently in progress this year, with 12 juniors and 4 adults attending a course of 8 coaching sessions on Sunday afternoons. The club continues to hold well attended social events during the year, notably a safari dinner party in July 2014, an Open Day in August 2014, and a curry night in February 2015. The time is now approaching when a complete resurfacing of the court will be required. This is expected to cost in the region of £10,000 to £11,000, at which point the problems with the net

posts can be resolved. The club is hoping to obtain a S106 grant of £3,000 from ECDC, and is very grateful for the approval given by the Parish Council for this to be allocated to the tennis club. More details about the club can be found on its website at www.lodetennis.net.

Women's' Institute (JC)

Our membership over the past year has remained to 34 with good attendance at each meeting. We have been entertained and educated by our many excellent speakers on various subjects. Some brave members also joined in with a spot of Egyptian style Belly dancing after our speaker Sue Barker's demonstration. Several members knitted miniature jerseys in yellow, bright green and white for the yarn bombing in Cambridge for the Tour de France.

During the year members have attended both Group and Council Meetings, the latter had Bunny Campione from the TV Antiques Roadshow as its speaker. Also several members have attended cookery courses of Denman College.

In the spring we had a cake stall at the Village Fete and also provided filled rolls at the Lodestar Festival. We again this year acted as a Refreshments Station for the Oxfam walk providing them with bacon butties and a wide selection of delicious cakes.

On Thursday 24th July many members and friends enjoyed a lovely sunny day out, firstly stopping at Wroxham where there was time for a spot of shopping and to have lunch and then on to the lovely gardens at East Ruston.

The Christmas party was a lovely meal of meats and salads and was thoroughly enjoyed by all members. Father Christmas also made a flying visit before the end of the evening.

Many members have been on trips organised by the Federation to Waddesdon Manor; a walk around the village of Eltisley; Jordan's Mill and Kathy Brown's Gardens - the list could go on.

A good number of members turned out to receive the Centenary Baton as it visited Lode on its journey across the county. A photographic record was being kept by the Cambridge Federation of its visits to all our 69 WIs.

We again fielded two darts teams with mixed successes but great fun was had by all.

We delivered over fifty presents to the over 75s in the village and these always seem to be much appreciated.

Our new Programme for 2015-16 looks equally interesting as we look forward to our next year. 2015 is an important year in the WI as it is our 100th since the first WI was opened in Wales, in that place with the long name. To mark this centenary, first of all was the baton relay which began in Wales. Two members will have the privilege of going to a tea party in Buckingham Palace with the Duchess of Cornwall and two are attending the centenary Annual General Meeting in the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of HM The Queen, The Princess Royal and the Countess of Wessex. Other "special" events coming up are the London Welsh Rugby Club choir coming to West Road Concert Hall on Saturday 11 July at 7.30. From 24 May tickets for this event will be open to the general public and are obtainable from the Corn Exchange Box Office (01223 3 57851). On October 2nd we have Michael Portillo coming to spend an evening with us. An exciting year ahead for Lode WI.