

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 8
July 2019

These minutes comprise 5 pages

Present: Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), F Platten, R Small, I Faulkner; D/Cllr J Trapp, Mr M Platten (LLVT), Mr M Lord (Neighbourhood Watch)

73/19 Questions from the public: none

74/19 Apologies: Cllrs T Fitzgerald, T Crickmar; Ms P Ingham-Watts (National Trust)

75/19 Declarations of interest (prejudicial/other): None

76/19 Minutes of previous meeting (3 June 2019): signed as a correct record

77/19 Matters arising:

- **Items in Cemetery hedge:** Cllrs Stevens and Platten will remove the items during next week and store them in the locked shed
- **Cricket net:** This has now been fixed
- **Path from Lode Mill to the Tennis Court:** Cllr Stevens reported that the National Trust has now cleared the path and he has thanked Ms Ingham-Watts for giving it prompt attention. He has also alerted the Trust to the land at the rear of the properties at the bottom of Mill Road on the other side from the allotments which is no longer being maintained
- **Fassage Green Purchase:** The Clerk confirmed that the Solicitor had been notified of the conclusion that the boundary with the diocesan land goes up to the ditch but does not include the ditch itself. This is accepted by all parties
- **Fairhaven Close trees:** Cllr Faulkner said that he had reported the problem with the trees to ECDC whose Tree Officer had visited and advised that the trees in question were the responsibility of the County Council. A County Council employee subsequently visited and trimmed a tree on one side but couldn't do anything with the others because of parked cars. His general advice was that the problem was not sufficiently severe to warrant further action on the part of the County Council
- **39 Longmeadow:** The Clerk reported that there is still no further report from the Conservation Officer on the ECDC Planning Website

78/19 County Council Report: none

79/19 District Council Report: Cllr Trapp reported as follows:

The ruling group at the Council called an Extraordinary meeting of the Council and passed a motion to rescind the motion calling for more affordable housing on the MOD site. This was a very unusual move, which many of us still consider to have been unconstitutional because the motion to rescind was tabled just days before the meeting, rather than sent out with the Agenda and papers. Sadly, it means that there will be just 15 affordable houses from the 92 and none of these will be for rent. It's a missed opportunity to deliver much needed affordable housing for rent. In an attempt to compromise, an amendment was tabled calling for 32 affordable houses, including 7 to rent. This would have required a grant from Mayor Palmer of just under £55,000 per dwelling – a level he has given to affordable housing in the town of March. Sadly, this amendment was defeated by 13 votes to 13 on the Council

Chairman's casting vote and the rescind motion was then passed 13 votes to 13, also on her casting vote. We had hoped that including more affordable housing in a scheme devised by ECDC would set an example to other property developers in the whole district, including here in Bottisham ward

The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council are now asking questions about the Local Plan following the withdrawal of the most recent draft

Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council is beginning the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan so that residents' views will have to be taken into account in the District Council's Local Plan. A Community Land Trust development is also being planned. Similar work is also underway in Reach on which Nick Acklam would be keen to share information

The Finance & Assets Committee met the day after this Extraordinary Council meeting. D/Cllr Charlotte Cane raised concerns about the finances of the Council's trading company – East Cambs Trading Company Limited (ECTC). This is the company which will be borrowing nearly £25m for the MOD site development. The accounts to March 2018 showed net liabilities of £711,139. The Company Directors stated that they were a 'Going Concern' because they are supported by the District Council. The concern is that if ECTC was to fail, East Cambs could lose the money it has lent the company and be open to other creditors pursuing the Council for repayment. The Committee unanimously agreed that they needed to see the accounts to 31 March 2019 at their next meeting in July and that they should receive Management Accounts at each meeting. The Committee also discussed the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (LCTR) which replaced Council Tax Benefit. The Benefit was paid for by central government but the LCTR has to be funded by the Council, with some grant from government. There is concern that as Universal Credit is rolled out locally, people will struggle to pay their Council Tax and we need to have a system in place which will make it easier for them to pay and therefore easier for the Council to collect. Fortunately, it seems that the agency for LCTR, Anglia Revenue Partnerships, is supportive of alleviating any possible hardship.

The Operational Services Committee met on 17 June. The main business was to review the performance of the waste collection and street cleansing services. Unfortunately, there are still no plans to supply black bins. This means we are all still using black bin bags at a time when everyone is calling for removing single use plastics.

80/19 Parish Reports:

- **Anglesey Abbey:** none
- **National Trust Liaison:** none
- **Cycle Paths:** D/Cllr Trapp reported that the path from Lode Crossroads to Longmeadow was getting overgrown. Cllr Platten agreed to report this to the County Council. Cllr Small said that further Greenways Consultation is pending to include improving safety for cyclists in Quy
- **Neighbourhood Watch:** Mr Lord drew attention to the rave which had been intended to take place on Oily Fen a couple of weeks ago. Some lessons can be learnt to take action earlier in future. He pointed out that a lorry with a large generator was parked outside the

church earlier in the day which in hindsight was suspicious. The gate giving vehicular access to the Fen was not locked. In the event the Police got to the scene just before the music started – had they been any later it might have been much more difficult to stop the event. Prevention of such events in future would be greatly assisted by close liaison between the National Trust and farmers etc to ensure that gates and barns are securely locked. Regarding the campsite at Oily Fen, the National Trust's intention is that this be used by people arriving on foot or by bike. Mr Lord suggested that set hours be designated for vehicular drop-off and Cllr Small advised that such rules already exist. Concern was raised that the bridge intended for pedestrian and cycle access was not safe. Mr Lord also suggested that the County Council be approached to ask whether it had been inspected and deemed fit for use, as well as encouraging the National Trust to put pressure on the County Council to replace it

- **Speedwatch:** Cllr Stevens reported that Cllr Fitzgerald has provided data from the indicator while it was located in Lode Road. It was explained that the indicator's ability to record speed from both sides refers not to both sides of the road but to the recording of a vehicle's speed as it approaches the indicator from one side and then its speed travelling away from it on the other side. Regarding the opportunity to make an application to the Local Highway Improvement Fund, Cllr Stevens suggested that rather than applying for a full new scheme, an application could be made for a grant to purchase a further indicator. No further infrastructure or planning should be required as the aim would be to maintain fuller coverage over the already authorised points where the indicator can be placed – he suggested that one indicator should always be in place on the B1102 alternating between the two locations available and the other in Lode Road. The Council agreed that an application should be made with the offer to contribute £600 towards the cost
- **Lode with Longmeadow Village Trust:** Charlie Platten advised that the Trustees had agreed the terms of the purchase of Fassage Green from the National Trust on the same basis as the Parish Council. He then raised the question of insurance: he said that the Trust had agreed to arrange insurance for the summer picnic event but asked about whether the Parish Council might consider taking this on in future, perhaps by arranging a policy for a range of local groups which could be cheaper than each arranging insurance individually. The Clerk said that he had given advice in January that the Council's policy only included cover for events that were "under the direct control" of the Council. When the issue was raised again recently, he sought advice from the Council's insurer who repeated that advice and said that they only covered Parish Councils and village halls. While it is possible for the Parish Council to decide to give financial support to such events, they cannot be insured through the Council unless it is under the Council's direct control. He said that events arranged by another body and passed over to the Council would be deemed to be the responsibility of that body. The concern is that insurers only investigate the detail of proposal forms if a claim is made and he is concerned to ensure that the Council and local residents do not find themselves uninsured in the event of a claim being made. Cllr Stevens pointed out that the Council's role was primarily to provide facilities; the Council is responsible in the event of a problem with the facility giving rise to a loss but the organisers still have to have cover in respect of all aspects of an event for which they are responsible
- **Tree Officer:** Cllr Small (for Liz King, Tree Officer) said that the recent day spent working on the Fassage Green site had been well-supported by National Trust volunteers but less so by people from the village. Looking forward, there needs to be a plan for managing the

mowings from the Fassage Green as if they are left on the ground they enrich the soil in a way that inhibits the development of a wild flower meadow which thrives on poor soil. He has done a first draft of a five year plan for development and management of the Fassage Green site which he said was to stimulate debate rather than being imposed. He also proposed the development of a Friends of Fassage Green Group. There was some discussion about how that might work and whether regular maintenance days should be arranged. Rather than draw conclusions at this stage, it was agreed that the intention of the draft was to initiate discussions so that a wider group could have input in the final plan

In addition to the two trees planted by Cllr Stevens as reported in the last minutes, he has also been working on removing ivy from some trees. Cllr Stevens noted that the Wicken Fen team have now cut the Oily Fen Footpath. It was suggested that Matthew Deacon from that team might be invited to address the Parish Council at a future meeting

Cllr Small reported that the Council has not yet received the grant agreed by LLVT for the additional trees for the orchard

81/19 Parish Council Reports:

- Purchase of Fassage Green:** The Clerk had circulated details of the proposed lease of the Fassage Green to the Parish Council from the LLVT and Parish Council as joint owners. The Solicitor has strongly advised that this should be agreed at the same as the purchase. There was agreement to the minor amendments to wording in the report. The question was raised as to what would happen if either went bankrupt. The Council was not able to finalise a view on whether there should be a break clause or clauses within the agreement and the Clerk agreed to seek further advice. This may necessitate the calling of a further meeting if the target of completing the purchase in July is to be met
- Vacancy on Parish Council:** The Clerk will reissue the advertisement. It was suggested that it may be worth having current members available to promote this vacancy at the picnic along with the information about the plans for Fassage Green
- Finance:** The following payments were agreed by the Parish Council:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£393.33	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
J E Giles	Additional work on Election	£183.55	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Admin	Postage (pd by deb cd)	£2.70	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£169.16	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
W Jaggard	Cemetery-Mower fuel	£6.40+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Mike Hatley	Mower repair	£38.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Truelink Ltd	Grasscutting	£385.23+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Truelink Ltd	Grasscutting	£489.31+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Online Playgrounds	Play area repairs	£9.60+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

Online Playgrounds	Play area repairs	£108.00+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Lionel Johnson	Internal Audit Fee	£120.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Ashtons Legal	Purchase of Fassage Green	£9627.74	Local Govt Act 1972 s124
Cambridgeshire County Council	Contribution to cost of Speed Indicator project	£1000.00	Highways Act 1980 s 247a
Wave	Cemetery Water	£2.71	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Swaffham Internal Drainage Board	Cemetery	£27.60	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Octopus Energy	Fassage Hall electricity (collected by DD)	£120.06+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

- **Planning:**
18/01619/FUL 15a Fairhaven Close: The Council noted the amendments to the parking arrangements set out in the revised application and were content that these would be scrutinised by Highways to ensure that they are safe and compliant
- **Parish Questionnaire:** The draft prepared by Cllr Crickmar had been circulated to Council members. In considering whether further questions might be added, Cllr Small suggested referring back to the last questionnaire so that that some raised there might be followed up. Cllr Faulkner proposed reformatting the questionnaire in conjunction with Cllr Crickmar and then emailing round to members for comment. These suggestions were agreed. It was further agreed that decisions about how the questionnaires might be collected would be made at the next meeting
- **Cemetery:** Cllr Faulkner had raised an issue about a relatively recent grave that is becoming quite overgrown. Cllr Stevens said that he had been in contact with relatives
- **Footpaths:** Cllr Stevens reported that a field where the footpath had been ploughed is owned by the Swaffham Bulbeck Relief in Need Charity. He has been in contact with them about ensuring that does not happen in future

82/19 Correspondence:

- **Letter from Mr Haynes regarding possible change of postal address:** Cllr Stevens advised that any such proposal would need to be addressed to the District Council. He further suggested that "Longmeadow" should be omitted from the proposed change as it is the name of a street only rather than designating a wider area, and the premises in question are actually on Swaffham Road
- **Request for funding from MAGPAS:** Cllr Platten proposed that £11 of unallocated funds raised at the recent jumble sale should be donated to MAGPAS. She will transfer the money in to the Parish Council account to enable this to happen
- **The Guildhall, Lode:** Cllr Faulkner advised that the building is not listed but is in the Conservation Area. There is concern that a significant piece of local heritage may be lost if steps are not taken to restore the building relatively soon. He will seek comments from the new Conservation Officer at ECDC

83/19 Date of next meeting: Monday 9 September, 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm