

**Lode Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 9**  
**December 2019**

These minutes comprise 3 pages

**Present:** Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), F Platten, I Faulkner, T Crickmar; D/Cllr J Trapp, Ms P Ingham-Watts (National Trust), Mr S Isaacson, Mr J Larmour and one member of the public

**116/19 Items from the public:** Mr Isaacson addressed the Council on the matter of planning application 19/01597/OUT regarding land NE of 83 Longmeadow, Lode. He expressed concern regarding the proximity of the proposed development to a scheduled ancient monument. He considers the outline plan to be an “over-development” of the site which is not in keeping with the character of Longmeadow. He pointed out that the proposed access road to the rear parking is 6m wide, which is wider than Longmeadow itself; this leads him to question whether the proposal is a precursor to further development applications in the future. He bought his property in 2007 and was assured at that time that no further development was planned.

Mr Larmour echoed these concerns. He observed that the rear parking element of the proposal was without precedent in Longmeadow, changing the character of the village as well as potentially setting a precedent leading to future applications for further development by extending the proposed rear access road. He highlighted that the site was not identified within the existing local plan nor was it proposed when a new draft was being considered and is therefore outside the development envelope

**117/19 Apologies:** Cllrs R Small, T Fitzgerald

**118/19 Declarations of interest:** none

**119/19 Matters arising:**

- **Fassage recreation ground assessment of trees:** Cllr Stevens confirmed that no significant issue had been identified with any tree
- **Cycle Way maintenance:** The Clerk confirmed that there had been no further information from C/Cllr Shuter
- **Footpath around recreation ground:** Cllr Stevens confirmed that he had given C/Cllr Shuter the numbers of the relevant paths needing repair to enable him to identify them precisely in discussion with officers. Regarding the possibility of CIL funding for extending the path around the other side of the ground, it emerged that one of the criteria for such schemes when promoted by the District Council may be that they should be for schemes costing upwards of £50,000 which far exceeds the estimated cost. D/Cllr Trapp undertook to check this
- **Hedge trimming of the Fassage Recreation Ground footpath:** The Clerk explained that the day he spoke with Mr Hall of Truelink, he actually had staff working in the village so undertook this job for £95 – less than it would have been had a separate visit been required
- **Play area matting:** Cllr Stevens confirmed that all the major cracks had been filled
- **Ashtons Legal Invoice:** Lionel Johnson (Chair LLVT) confirmed to the Clerk that he has had no further response from Ashtons regarding the request for more detail about the final account
- **Shrub Corner drainage problem:** This had been notified to Highways by the Clerk and confirmation was given that the matter would be urgently listed. Cllr Stevens reported that three drains had been cleared
- **Swan Corner willow tree:** There has been no further response from CCC or C/Cllr Shuter who agreed to follow up this issue (including the ownership of the land) with officers
- **Grant for trees from LLVT:** Cllr Crickmar indicated that LLVT was ready to pay the grant but was awaiting details of the cost from Cllr Small

**120/19 County Council Report:** none

**121/19 District Council Report:** D/Cllr Trapp reported that the District Council's accounts were still not signed off. This was due to delays by the external accountants rather than by the Council

**122/19 Parish Reports:**

- **National Trust:** Ms Ingham-Watts thanked Cllr Stevens for advising her of the approval of tree works by ECDC relating to trees on National Trust land. She confirmed that the Trust was aware and that the appropriate agreement had been given by the Trust to the application being made. She thanked residents of the village for their support through the Winter Lights season which is an important element of the Anglesey Abbey budget. There has been good liaison with local residents and generally few problems. She advised that there had been more noise affecting residents of Mill Rd during the second week which was due to a change of wind direction. There had been some traffic congestion between 6 and 6.30pm on one day but, generally, the professional management of car parking had kept these issues to a minimum

**123/19 Parish Council Reports:**

- **Planning**

**19/01579/OUT Land to NE of 83 Longmeadow:** It was commented that there are around 55 houses in Longmeadow so the addition of 6 more would represent an increase of 11%. It was noted that no application had been made in respect of this site in either 2015 or 2018 when the Local Plan was being reviewed and that it is therefore outside the agreed development envelope for Longmeadow. The Council noted comments made about the capacity of the sewage system to cope with an additional six households and suggested that the Planning Officer should raise the problem with reduced water pressure already being experienced by local residents with Anglian Water while considering this application. The District Council should require an assessment of the impact of any development on the Roman settlement remains which are included on the National Heritage List for England. The Parish Council confirmed that the application should be considered by the Planning Committee as it does not fall within the development envelope

**19/01621/VAR Gally's Farm, Lug Fen Drove:** The Parish Council had no comments on this application

- **Budget & Precept Request for 2020-21:** The Clerk explained the basis on which the budget had been drafted. It was designed to ensure that the Council could maintain its current responsibilities to maintain local amenities but makes no provision for future projects. Cllr Stevens reported that the lack of new development means that the Council is unlikely to receive any CIL money during the next financial year. He also pointed out that the Council has taken on additional responsibility for items that may need repair at some time in the future including the speed indicator and the path from the cemetery to the Fassage Hall which were included within the purchase of Fassage Green. Regarding the management of unforeseen repairs and maintenance, the Clerk proposed designating £5,000 of the reserves available for this purpose. While, for example, we are not currently aware of any work needed to keep trees safe on the Fassage Recreation Ground, if such a need arose the cost might well be substantial and such a designated reserve could safely be drawn down without risk to the Council's normal activities. The auditor routinely questions reserves which exceed one year's normal operating cost but accepts this when there is a clear designation – this applied to last year when the money designated for the purchase of Fassage Green caused the Council to exceed the normal reserve level. The budget draft proposes the replacement of the undesignated reserve over a period of three years. In order to eliminate the deficit of around £800 in the draft budget, Cllr Stevens suggested considering increasing the precept request to £16,500. This would represent a cost of £45.12 per household which would still be among the lowest precepts levied by any parish in East Cambridgeshire. It was agreed to

hold further discussion on this at the January meeting to include issues arising from the Parish Questionnaire; the precept request can be notified to ECDC immediately after

- **Finance:** The following payments were approved by the Council:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£393.33	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£169.16	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£6.10+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Truelink Ltd	Hedge trimming	£656.60+ VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Burwell Print (per Cllr Crickmar)	Printing village questionnaire	£44.50+VAT	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
En-tout-cas*	Tennis Court	£5645+VAT	Local Gov't (Misc Prov'ns) Act 1976 s 6
En-tout-cas+	Tennis Court – Deep cleaning of court	£1500+VAT	Local Gov't (Misc Prov'ns) Act 1976 s 6
Octopus Energy	Fassage Hall electricity (collected by DD)	£161.90+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Cambs ACRE	Membership renewal	£57	Local Govt Act 1972 s111

\*Approval is given for this item to be paid following receipt of the grants made by ECDC towards the cost of renewing the fencing to the tennis court. If this is delayed, approval is given for the payment to be made after consultation by the Clerk with the Chair

- **Parish Questionnaire:** Cllr Crickmar has prepared a preliminary analysis of the findings from the questionnaire and circulated the link to Councillors with the aim of having a fuller discussion at the January meeting. So far there have been 21 responses in hard copy and 65 online. She still has between 10 and 15 households to visit. Cllr Stevens agreed to include a paragraph in the Lode Star report offering those who have not yet returned a questionnaire the opportunity to deliver them to the address of any of the Council members. Early indications include a 75% level of satisfaction with the Parish Council, support for evening and Sunday bus services at 43% and 30% respectively, and 37% saying that a Village Floral Project could improve the appearance of the village. Regarding initiatives with which residents might become involved, the strongest support was 42% for litter picking. Cllr Crickmar will develop an analysis of the free comments made on the questionnaire dividing them between activities which are proposed for the Parish Council to undertake and those where the PC might be involved in influencing other bodies
- **Parish Councillor Vacancy:** Cllr Stevens reported that two expressions of interest have been received and, as of this evening, one application from a resident of the village who attended today's meeting. The appointment to the vacancy will be made at the January meeting
- **Local Highways Improvement Initiative:** Following receipt of the Feasibility study estimated cost, the Council agreed to increase the value of its contribution to £1013 (20% of the estimated total cost) and committed to sending two delegates to the panel meeting at Witchford on Tuesday 14 January
- **Fassage Recreation Ground - Removal of hawthorn and blackthorn bushes adjacent to the football pitch:** The Clerk has asked Truelink to quote for this work. Once this information is available, the Council can consider whether to accept the quotation or ask the Fassage Green Working party to add this to its list of tasks
- **Local Electricity Bill:** This item is deferred to the January agenda. The Clerk has written to the organiser of the Campaign for advice on how to take this forward following the General Election as the Bill in its previous form will have been dropped when the election was called

**124/19 Correspondence:** The items forwarded by the Clerk were noted

**125/19 Date of next meeting:** Monday 13 January 2020 at 7.30pm in the Fassage Hall. The Clerk requested that any items for the agenda be notified to him no later than Friday 3 January

**126/19 Dates for meetings for the remainder of 2020 were agreed as follows:** 10 February, 9

March, 13 April, 11 May, 15 June, 13 July, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November, 14 December

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm