

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 10
February 2020

These minutes comprise 5 pages

Present: Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), F Platten, I Faulkner, T Crickmar, R Small; D/Cllr J Trapp, Mr M Lord (Neighbourhood Watch), Mr C Rickard and one member of the public

12/20 Items from the public: Mr Rickard addressed the Parish Council on the matter of the Maple tree in Northfields felled by order of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). He asked the following questions: Why was the tree taken down? Who authorised it? Why was there no consultation with local residents and the Parish Council?

Cllr Stevens responded that the Parish Council's Tree Officer (Liz King) had been in contact with CCC. Cllr Small reported an update from Ms King who has lodged a request for information from the County Council regarding the procedures followed and the reasons for the urgent removal of the tree. Although she had not yet received a formal answer, she spoke with the Local Highways Officer, Bob Rossiter, "who confirmed verbally that the County Council fully intends to replace the tree and awaits guidance from the Parish as to what/how they would like the tree replaced and the loss compensated". Cllr Small added that Ms King had spoken with the Tree Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) who confirmed that the tree belonged to ECDC, stood on their land, and had been felled without the Council's knowledge or permission. Mr Rossiter had told Ms King that he had made the decision to fell the tree on the basis of a risk assessment that the roots were a trip hazard and that there was a potential risk to an electric cable.

Cllr Stevens reported that he had contacted ECDC on the day the contractors arrived to remove the tree but was unfortunately too late to prevent the tree being taken down. ECDC then raised the issue with CCC. Subsequently, he has been contacted by Steve Alexander of CCC Highways (the line manager for Mr Rossiter) who apologised for the way this matter had been handled; he acknowledged that serious mistakes had been made by not consulting before the action was taken and that the tree should not have been felled. Cllr Stevens said that he was keen to work with CCC to ensure that the full mass of the tree was replaced, which might represent a number of smaller trees. He referred to an article in Cambridge News last weekend which reported on what had happened and the responses of the County and District Councils.

Cllr Small said that Ms King had made recommendations for compensatory measures as follows:

- Replace the felled Silver Maple tree with a medium sized semi-mature tree on the same site – she proposed a native species tree with good foliage and interest e.g. Common Hawthorn, Whitebeam or Mountain Ash/Rowan. The new tree should be planted in a "tree pit" to avoid problems with old roots interfering with the growth of the replacement tree
- Undertake overdue and much needed work on the large Willow tree at Swan Corner as recommended by the ECDC Tree Officer last year. (It was pointed out that the quoted cost of pruning the tree is £1675 + VAT)
- Compensation for the loss of the Silver Maple tree. She proposed 2 replacement trees in the Community Orchard on Fassage Green, 3 replacement trees in the cemetery with further tree planting in White Fen Drove and Longmeadow

13/20 Apologies: C Purbrook, C/Cllr M Shuter, Ms P Ingham-Watts (National Trust)

14/20 Declarations of interest: None

15/20 Minutes of meeting 13 January 2020: These were approved by the Council and signed by the Chair

16/20 Matters arising:

- **Swan Corner:** We are still awaiting a response from Bob Rossiter (CCC Highways Officer) who C/Cllr Shuter asked to investigate the ownership of Swan Corner. It was agreed reference should be made to the requirement to make the Willow tree safe in a letter to CCC regarding the Silver Maple
- **Cycle Way maintenance:** It was noted that there had still been no response from C/Cllr Shuter's request to the Highways team to arrange for the proper maintenance of the verges behind the hedge which cannot be managed with the usual equipment operating from the road as it would damage the cycle way. It was noted that Mr Rickard had advised that the Parish Council had previously agreed to carry out the maintenance on behalf of CCC. Cllr Stevens responded that this could be done provided that there was appropriate funding transferred – it may be that this could be more cost effectively carried by the Parish Council by adding it to the maintenance carried by out by Truelink. He also pointed out that this part of the path actually falls within Bottisham Parish on land owned by the National Trust. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask Ms Ingham-Watts if the agreement between the Trust and CCC covers this issue
- **Eligibility for centrally held CIL:** It was confirmed that the addition of a further path to complete the perimeter around the Fassage Recreation Ground is not likely to meet the criteria for funding unless part of a larger scheme
- **Cemetery:** The Clerk reported that he had spoken with Will Jaggard regarding levelling the graves where subsidence has occurred
- **Local Highways Improvement Initiative:** Cllrs Stevens and Platten made a presentation to the panel on 14 January regarding the application for funding for a second speed indicator but have no indication of whether or not it is likely to be successful

17/20 County Council Report: The Clerk reported that he had just received an email from C/Cllr Shuter giving apologies for missing the meeting. He wrote: "I had hoped to be there to discuss the removal of the tree which should not have happened without consultation, we have however secured 5 replacements which highways will consult you on location!"

18/20 District Council Report: D/Cllr Trapp said that he and D/Cllr Cane are setting up consultation meetings in the Ward (in Swaffham Prior, Bottisham and Brinkley) to look at issues regarding Bus and Cycle ways. The dates and locations will be advertised in Lode Star. He has arranged that responses to their questionnaire can be dropped into the village store in Lode.

He said that the Operations Committee was withdrawing funding of £47,000 from Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire but the funding to Citizens Advice West Suffolk based in Newmarket, and therefore used more by local people, will continue. Due to concern about this decision it has been called in for consideration by the Full Council meeting.

Regarding initiatives to prevent climate change, he called for ideas from parishes. He pointed out that trees (with the exception of willows) are generally not the best solution for fen areas. Cllr Crickmar suggested that it would be valuable for District Councillors to be present at the Parish Council engagement event on 7 March

19/20 Parish Reports

- **Anglesey Abbey:** The Clerk said that Ms Ingham-Watts had sent apologies and gave the following brief report:
" We closed on Sunday for the storm but aside from deadwood branches we had limited impact on the estate with just 3 trees down, thankfully.

The winter walk is looking excellent at the moment and the maximum volume of snowdrops are out.

Archaeology starts on the south lawn in a month's time to explore the monastic history of the property."

It was reported that the path by the river going towards Quy from opposite the Mill has become very muddy and difficult to walk. Cllr Platten agreed to raise the issue with Ms Ingham-Watts

- **Fassage Hall & Recreation Ground:** Cllr Stevens advised the Council that the 10 year agreement with the Cricket Club giving them free use of the facilities expires this year. Care will be taken in setting the rate to be charged to ensure that costs are covered while not being so expensive as to inhibit their continued use of the ground. There was disappointment that the Cricket Club is not taking up its allotted place on the Fassage Hall Management Committee; it would also be desirable if the Club could operate in a way similar to the Tennis Club which takes full responsibility for its facilities and their running costs.

Cllr Stevens also advised that the proprietor of Little Legs Nursery is handing over to a new owner

- **Neighbourhood Watch:** Mr Lord said that there had been a number of break-ins to commercial premises. There is a lookout scheme whereby people spotting suspicious activity could alert neighbours. He said that work is underway to improve liaison between Countryside Watch and Neighbourhood Watch

20/20 Parish Council Reports:

- **Parish Council Chair:** The Clerk advised that Cllr Stevens will reach the end of the 4 year normal maximum term as Chair at the AGM in May. Standing Orders require that this can only be exceeded by a maximum of one further year in exceptional circumstances
- **Parish Council Casual Vacancy:** ECDC has confirmed that it has not been petitioned for an election and the Parish Council is therefore able to advertise the vacancy to be filled by co-option. The advertisement will be issued with a closing date of 2 March. In the event of there being more than one applicant, the statements made on the applications will be read to the Council who will then vote as many times as necessary with the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes being eliminated at each stage until there are only two remaining. The person receiving the highest number of votes will then be co-opted
- **Finance Approvals:** The following items were approved for payment:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£393.33	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£169.16	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

- **Fassage Green Management Plan:** Cllr Small outlined the content of the draft plan with proposed actions, both one-off and recurring, set out for the next five years. The plan includes site plans showing how the project will develop the Green over the period. It also includes a draft budget showing how costs would arise over the period and how they might be funded. He stressed that this document is not set in stone and is intended to be the basis for consultation and discussion. He proposed that the Working Group comprising Cllrs Crickmar, Platten, Purbrook and Small together with representation from the Lode with Longmeadow Village Trust (LLVT) meet at the end of February. The intention is that the proposals can be presented at the Engagement Event on 7 March so that local people can comment freely
- **Trees:** The main discussion focused around the lost Silver Maple in Northfields. After consideration of the options proposed by Liz King for a replacement tree in the same location, the one favoured was a Whitebeam planted in a tree pit to contain the roots. In line with Ms King's recommendations, the Parish Council confirmed that the package of

measures to be sought from CCC to compensate for the lost tree should further include: commissioning of tree surgery on Willow tree at Swan Corner as proposed by the ECDC Tree Officer last year, 3 Mountain Ash trees for the cemetery and replacement for trees taken down in Fairhaven Close. These measures should be undertaken in liaison with Liz King and Kevin Drain, Tree Officer for ECDC.

Cllr Small advised that one tree had fallen on the allotment at the rear of his property and needs to be removed. In addition, there is a holly tree which needs to be removed from near the shed as it is affecting the adjacent allotment.

Cllr Crickmar had asked that the Council consider the issue of recording and protecting trees within the village. The aim would be to ensure that important trees were covered by Tree Protection Orders. As this would be a huge task, Cllr Stevens suggested starting by identifying the 10-12 most significant trees and completing the Tree Inspection Form A in conjunction with Liz King. Cllr Crickmar proposed, and it was agreed, that information on trees in should be made available at the Engagement Event

- **Parish Engagement Event, 7 March:** Cllr Platten confirmed that the Fassage Hall is booked and agreed to place a sign advertising the event on the verge opposite the Church. Cllr Crickmar reported that the Community Champion from Tesco had agreed to pay for refreshments on the day. She will issue invitations to LLVT, D/Cllrs Cane & Trapp and Anglesey Abbey
- **Litter picking:** Cllr Platten suggested that the Council purchase some small litter pickers which are suitable for children – a number of children have come on litter picks and it would be good to encourage their involvement in this community activity. Consideration will be given to arranging a second litter pick in the autumn. There was discussion about the role of Councillors in relation to regular litter picking around the village. The prevailing view was that, while councillors may volunteer to undertake some litter picking, it is not appropriate that it is required as part of the role. If there are designated geographical areas for each Councillor, this could involve identifying and reporting where problems arise rather than them being expected to undertake the tasks themselves – though some might volunteer to do so
- **Offer to Parish & District Councils of first refusal on purchase of land south of 60 Longmeadow:** This is the site, owned by CCC, recently granted outline permission under reference 19/01470/OUT for the development of 4 dwellings. It does not include the area behind the site, the ownership of which would be retained by CCC. Cllr Small expressed the view that it was egregious of the County to be selling this land in light of the housing need that exists within the area. The Parish Council determined that, while it would not be in a position to purchase the land, it would write to the County Council offering to work together with it and local residents on developing the land not being offered for sale at the rear of the site as an amenity area (for example as woodland or as a play area) as no such facilities currently exist for residents of Longmeadow
- **Planning:** An application had been received under reference 20/00157/FUL in respect of Gally's Farm, Lode Fen, Lode. As this arrived after the agenda had been dispatched, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the designated planning officer to ask that the deadline for comment be extended to 10 March to allow for it to be discussed at the March meeting of the Parish Council

20/20 Correspondence:

- **ECDC Parish Conference:** Cllr Faulkner has reluctantly had to withdraw from attending this event
- **Correspondence regarding a possible Petanque pitch and its location:** The Council agreed that this would properly be a matter for the Engagement Event on 7 March
- **Email from Chris Foyle, CCC:** The email offered “interested parties” the opportunity to claim up to 15 trees each to offset the removal of trees from the A1303 road safety scheme. It was

agreed that the proposal needed to be considered further in consultation with Liz King. In the meantime a holding reply would be sent confirming the Parish Council's interest and seeking confirmation that the County Council would undertake the planting and future maintenance of these trees

- **Email from Fordham Parish Council:** The Council is seeking views on whether Lode Parish Council would wish to join with them in seeking a District Council-wide Public Space Protection Order to ensure dogs are kept on leads and to deal with anti-social behaviour. The Council considered that there is not a need within Lode and Longmeadow for such a measure at this time

20/21 Item for March agenda: Request from Swaffham Bulbeck PC for installation of a dog bin at the entrance to Red Tile Farm, as this lies within Lode Parish

20/22 Date of next meeting: 9 March 2020 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.50pm