

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 8
February 2021

These minutes comprise 5 pages

Note: This meeting was held remotely under the provisions of **THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020**

Present: Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), F Platten, T Crickmar, C Purbrook, R Small;
C/Cllr M Shuter; D/Cllr J Trapp

144/20 Items from the public: None

145/20 Apologies: Cllr M Walsh; Ms P Ingham-Watts, National Trust

146/20 Declarations of interest: None

147/20 Minutes of meeting 11 January 2021: These were approved

148/20 Matters arising:

- **Parish Council Vacancy:** No further enquiries have been received. Cllr Stevens had drawn attention to the vacancy in Lode Star
- **Speed Indicator:** The Clerk reported that the Indicator had been delivered last week. Cllr Stevens said that Mr Fitzgerald wouldn't have the laptop needed to set it up until the end of the month but suggested there was an alternative option of downloading an App with a QR code not possible for him as he doesn't possess the necessary technology. Cllr Purbrook agreed to do the set up
- **Flood Working Group:** This item refers to the request for information on local issues by the County Working Group. Cllr Stevens reported that there are 130 roadside gullies within the parish; 30 of the drains are blocked which he has logged on the fault reporting system. He suggested that more regular maintenance of these drains might reduce flooding. C/Cllr Shuter thanked him for the reports and said that these drains would be prioritised for attention to assess whether regular maintenance was the solution. He said that most of the flooding in the locality arises from water running off farmland or poorly maintained ditches rather than rivers bursting their banks. Part of the Working Group's task is to understand where water drains to; Cllr Stevens believes that Lode's road water gets pumped to Bottisham from the station located by the path to the Cemetery. Another task for the Working Group is to ascertain who is responsible for particular parts of the system: bodies involved here are the County and District Councils, the Swaffham Drainage Board, Anglian Water, landowners etc
- **Diversion of Footpath 9:** Following receipt of the Parish Council's reaffirmation of its objection to the proposed diversion, the County's officer has advised that the issue of whether the Diversion should be permitted has been referred to the Planning Inspectorate
- **FCC Application to develop the Fassage Green & Recreation Ground:** Cllr Small reported that a few queries had been raised with the application prior to its formal consideration. The decision on which applicants are successful is due to be made on 3 March and we hope to hear the result shortly afterwards

149/20 County Council Report: C/Cllr Shuter reported that the Recycling Centres remain open by appointment and are very busy. The County Council will be making its decision on Council Tax for 2021-22 tomorrow which he believes will involve an increase of around 3%. More vaccination centres are now opening in Cambridgeshire. He said that numbers of cases remain relatively low in East Cambridgeshire with the majority of cases being the Kent variant. Questioned about the recent hike in cases reported in the Bottisham Ward he commented that this possibly reflects an ongoing

outbreak at the Village College though he stressed he had not been given any precise information to confirm this.

Cllr Stevens advised that the tree which Highways had promised to replace the Silver Maple at the entrance to Northfields had still not arrived neither had the promised work at Swan Corner been done. Cllr Small said that these items were scheduled for this week, weather permitting. He mentioned that the replacement trees for those felled on the A1303 were on the agenda later as the officer who had been arranging for their order and delivery is now asking the Parish to take on the task and invoice for them following receipt. C/Cllr Shuter suggested that the issue be referred back to him if the solution sought by the Parish Council, after its discussion of the item later on the agenda, could not be achieved.

Cllr Platten asked about the County Council's representation on the Cambridge Eastern Access Partnership given that the East Cambridgeshire area is substantially affected but has no seat at the table. It was clarified that C/Cllr Roger Hickford is the County's representative with C/Cllr Ian Bates (who is also chair of Highways) as substitute.

150/20 District Council Report: D/Cllr Trapp highlighted issues around the future of Newmarket CAB, a forecast £4m deficit for the District Council in 2 years time and a further meeting of Finance Committee to consider the budget for the East Cambs Trading Company later this month. He also referred to the ongoing exploration of parking enforcement in the District. His report is appended in full at the end of these minutes.

He also made reference to a plan for a development of 8,500 dwellings at Six Mile Bottom. As this will have a significant impact on the surrounding area he will report further once he has more information about the plan

151/20 Parish Reports

National Trust: Ms Ingham-Watts (Manager, Anglesey Abbey) sent the following report:

- "Current snow and flooding conditions onsite mean that we are closed at present. We haven't experienced water levels like these since 2003. We are working very closely with the Environment Agency on river levels and management on the stretch that runs through our land. Should anyone have any concerns or queries about this I highly recommend they contact me or Tom Fradd our Gardens and Outdoors Manager.
- In terms of visitors our numbers when open in January were very low and steady throughout lockdown.
- Planning for a phased reopening from end of March / beginning of April – opening will be entirely in-line with government guidelines. Will be over a year since the House and Mill closed to the public and can't wait to share them with our supporters once more.
- As an organisation we will form a response to the WWTP (Waste Water Treatment Plant) planning application period following the announcement of the selection of Site 3.
- Finally to let you know that from Monday of last week the East of England merged with the Midlands to form one larger region. Paul Forecast is now the Regional Director of the Midlands and East of England Region. This should have no impact on the parish, but thought you may wish to know."

Cllr Stevens said that much of the Anglesey land was in Flood Zone 3 and Cllr Small showed a map indicating the extent of the estate which is at risk.

A to B1102 Report: Cllr Platten highlighted key points from the report she had circulated. Although there were concerns shared by the representatives from the various villages in relation to the sparsity of the bus service and the inadequacy of the Greenways proposals for the area, Quy had particular worries about the impact of the new Water Treatment development on traffic through

Quy and shares with Lode concern about the access to the Lode/Quy Cycle path at both ends. Cllr Platten stated that it is essential to lobby the County Council about the impact of the Cambridge Eastern Access Partnership's plans on this part of East Cambridgeshire. It was agreed that this would be by ensuring the County representatives on the Partnership are advised of the concerns with a copy to C/Cllr Shuter.

Cllr Small suggested that if the decision is now taken in respect of the Water Treatment plant location, attention now needs to be given to focusing on securing a share of the infrastructure funding that should become available as the scheme is developed.

152/20 Parish Council Reports:

Finance: The following payments were approved:

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| J E Giles | Salary & PAYE | £405.30 | Local Govt Act 1972 s111 |
| W Jaggard | Cemetery | £173.39 | Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10 |
| Zoom (pd by card) | Remote meeting software | £14.39 | Local Govt Act 1972 s 111 |

Planning: The Clerk advised that no applications had been referred for consultation to the Parish Council by ECDC during the month. Cllr Stevens proposed and the Council agreed that all Lode applications published on the East Cambs Planning website in the period from the last month's agenda dispatch until the date of the current month's agenda dispatch should be listed on the Parish Council agenda, including any where no specific invitation to comment had been received. He pointed out that the Parish Council is entitled to comment in the same way as a member of the public, though any comments which are not relevant planning considerations cannot be taken into account by the Planning Officers. He also confirmed that the Parish Council is entitled to make neighbours aware of the applications even if they have not been specifically invited to comment.

Trees: Cllr Small reported on recent correspondence with Liz King, Tree Officer, from Cambridgeshire County Council. CCC are having difficulty in ordering the trees from Barchams and proposed that the Parish Council purchase them directly and then invoice the County. The indicative budget is £3,500. Cllr Small expressed concern that a considerable amount of volunteer time has already been spent on this matter without result, including identifying tree types and sites etc. He suggested that one option might be for the trees to be planted by the National Trust on publicly accessible land within the parish.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the officer and request that the money be paid as grant to the Parish Council in this financial year with a condition that the money be spent by the end of the financial year 2021-22 given the difficulty in sourcing and arranging planting of the required mature trees in the time remaining before the end of March.

The trees ordered to replace the felled Silver Maple are due to arrive this week. Cllr Small proposed marking the locations where they are to be planted with sticks. Regarding those to be planted within the Play Area, it was pointed out that they would need substantial staking to ensure they could survive contact with footballs and children whilst they were getting established.

Fassage Green: Cllr Platten proposed that the Blackthorn at the edge of the Recreation Ground be removed as soon as possible. Cllr Small explained that the conditions of the FCC Grant, which included this item, require that work is not commenced before the beginning of the financial year in April. We would be able to remove them earlier if we are not awarded the grant.

Cllr Small referred to the amount £1000 in the current year's budget for the maintenance of Passage Green. He will present to the March meeting a list of tools which would be used by volunteers to include hay rakes and tree loppers and could be purchased from this budget. The other important maintenance item is servicing of the scythe mower. Cllr Platten agreed to seek a second quotation from Gardenworks for the removal of the blackthorn in case this is able to be done before the end of March and to forward details of a tradesman in Burwell for servicing the mower.

Dog Fouling: Cllr Crickmar had raised this issue following concerns from local residents. Cllr Stevens suggested that the Council purchase 3 additional dog bins which could be placed on existing poles in Lode Road, Station Road and Longmeadow. The cost would be £220 per bin. This proposal was agreed by the Council. The Clerk will contact the District Council to ensure that they will add these bins to their round and proceed with the order.

Covid-19 Working Group: Cllr Crickmar reported that the Food Bank being maintained by Cllr Walsh is being used more during this lockdown. Currently there are sufficient funds to keep it replenished through both regular and one off donations. Cllr Crickmar applied for and has been awarded a Community Grant of £500 from ECDC which she plans to use on a project for teenagers, open gardens and well-being as the current restrictions begin to be lifted.

153/20 Correspondence: The Council noted the correspondence listed. Cllr Stevens reported that his enquiry of the Historic Railways Estate about whether it owned Swan Corner had received a negative reply so we are no nearer establishing who does own it.

154/20 Date of next meeting: Monday 8 March at 7.30 pm (online)

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

Appendix

District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils February 2021

January's Planning and Licensing Committees were cancelled.

Operational Services Committee received various update reports and service reviews. They renewed the grant to Citizens Advice West Suffolk for one year only. The paper presented to the Committee recommended that "Once the pandemic and its associated restrictions ease, the Council's Housing and Community Advice service will seek to create a housing and advice hub in the Newmarket area."

John and Charlotte are concerned about this because many people are more comfortable going to Citizens' Advice than they are going to the Council, because they see Citizens' Advice as

independent. This could be further exacerbated if Operational Services accepts the recommendation to join the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme under which the Council's housing staff would support the Police by sharing intelligence, data and information with them. People who are unsure of their rights, eg about part-time or voluntary work and benefits, might be wary of seeking advice from staff who could be passing on information to the police and other 'accredited organisations'. Finance & Assets Committee had too much business to cover in one meeting, so the agenda was split into two meetings, with the second to be held on 4 March. Unfortunately, the Chair decided to postpone the chance for members to consider the East Cambs Trading Company budget for 2021/22 to the March meeting. We therefore do not yet know the financial plans for this multi-million-pound subsidiary.

The Committee received various update reports and service reviews. They considered a paper on On-street parking enforcement. The administration is unwilling to implement a civil parking regime, even though this is the route most Councils have successfully followed, claiming wrongly that it would require them to charge for car parks. Instead, they are proposing to ask the Chief Constable to empower volunteers to issue Fixed Penalty Parking Notices. It is not clear how this will work, or even if it would work, but if it can be made to work Parish Councils could consider seeking volunteers to assist with the scheme in their villages. The paper covering this also called for ECDC to join the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, which would accredit some Council staff and some of East Cambs Street Scene staff to support the Police and take enforcement action. John and Charlotte felt this was ill thought through and had not been sufficiently consulted on within the community. We also felt that as it covered Community Safety it was beyond the remit of the Finance & Assets Committee and should be referred to Full Council or Operational Services Committee. After considerable procedural muddle, the Chair called a break in the meeting while he consulted with officers and it was finally agreed that the CSAS initiative should be referred to the Operational Services Committee. There could be advantages to the CSAS scheme, but it could fundamentally change the relationship of residents with Council staff if those staff are taking enforcement action on behalf of the Police. There needs to be wide discussion of what powers the Council will take and how it will manage the staff who are using those powers on behalf of the police. As noted above, it could have significant implications for the housing team who currently support people with advice on debt management, employment, housing provision and relationship tensions. Will people still be willing to consult them if they know they are also sharing information with the police and could take direct enforcement action? For example, will a beggar talk to them and maybe be helped into housing and employment or will they run away for fear of being given a fine?

The Committee approved the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document. This did not go as far as many respondents hoped, as it cannot go beyond the provisions in the Local Plan. But it does contain some useful guidance. We were disappointed that several large housing developers had sought extremely hard to water down the proposals.

The Chair decided not to ask the Committee to make any recommendations to Council about the budget for 2021/22. However, the papers did show that on current plans by 2023/24 the Council will have a budget shortfall of £4.6 million on a total net expenditure of £12 million. The Finance Manager "strongly recommended that early consideration is made as to how savings in future years will be achieved."

The Committee approved the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

There will be a Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Full Council meeting in February. The Full Council meeting will approve the budget for 2021/22, without any recommendation from Finance & Assets Committee and without the Finance & Assets Committee having reviewed the budget for East Cambs Trading Company for 2021/22.