

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 8
March 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, C Purbrook, R Small, M Walsh;
C/Cllr M Shuter; D/Cllr J Trapp ; Ms P Ingham-Watts, National Trust

155/20 Items from the public: None

156/20 Apologies: Cllr T Crickmar

157/20 Declarations of interest: None

158/20 Minutes of meeting 8 February 2021: These were approved

159/20 Matters arising:

- **Parish Council Vacancy:** No further enquiries have been received
- **Speed Indicator:** Cllr Stevens had liaised with Martyn Lord over the set up of the new indicator. Mr Lord has already downloaded data from which indicates that the average speed in Lode Road has declined from 30 to 25 mph. 15% of vehicles were logged as travelling in excess of 30 mph. Cllr Stevens said the location for the indicator on the cemetery sign may be ineffective because of parked cars; he is exploring the possibility of locating it on the corner of Fairhaven Close on land owned by the District Council. The main location for speeding vehicles remains the B1102. Cllr Purbrook reiterated his offer of assistance with the indicator
- **FCC Application:** Cllr Small reported that the FCC portal shows the Parish Council's application as having been approved. He hopes to receive the formal notification shortly. It appears that the whole bid is agreed: work cannot begin until 3 May after which there is a year to complete the project. Cllr Small will arrange a meeting with LLVT to discuss implementation. Members of the Council expressed thanks to Cllr Small for the large amount of work associated with the bid
- **Replacement for Trees felled on the A1303:** Cllr Small reported that Liz King had been contacted by Chris Foyle offering 30 saplings rather than the 10 more mature trees whose variety and location had been carefully planned which he believes is an unsatisfactory alternative to the agreed plan. C/Cllr Shuter suggested that this may have happened because he had asked the officer to respond promptly to Swaffham Bulbeck who had asked him to ensure the trees were provided to be available for the best planting time which is imminent. Cllr Stevens said he had been approached by Dr Raby from Swaffham Bulbeck who is seeking agreement to plant some of their allocation on Forty Acre Drove which lies inside the Lode Parish boundary. The Clerk asked whether there was clear agreement on who would be responsible for them. He also pointed out that Highways had required that they would have to give permission for any trees being planted within the vicinity of the highway. Regarding the trees allocated to Lode, Cllr Small agreed to copy C/Cllr Shuter into correspondence with Mr Foyle indicating that Lode wishes to keep to its original plan and receive the ten more mature trees for the locations identified. Cllr Shuter will pursue with the Officer if necessary.

Cllr Stevens pointed out that the tree at Swan Corner had still not been pollarded as agreed with Highways. He said that some branches had been lopped from this and other roadside trees and was concerned that Highways might regard this as sufficient fulfilment of their agreement whereas significant reduction in the bulk of the tree is required to remove the risk of branches falling on the highway.

Cllr Small will forward the email correspondence received on this matter to Cllr Shuter

- **Fassage Green Maintenance Budget:** As agreed at the February meeting, Cllr Small had prepared a list of tools to be available for volunteers maintaining the Fassage Green the cost of which would be £487 excluding VAT. This was agreed by the Council
- **Dog Bins:** The three bins have now been delivered and have been installed by Cllr Stevens. He has also secured agreement from ECDC to empty them on their usual round. Cllr Platten said that she had positive feedback from a local resident following their installation

160/20 County Council Report: C/Cllr Shuter reported that the County has set the Council Tax for 2021-22 with an increase of 1.99% with an additional 1% for adult social care. The budget has allocated £4m specifically for footpaths and pavements. Cllr Stevens said that pavements in Lode had been marked up about a year ago but no work had subsequently been done. Cllr Shuter believes that they will be on the list and should be completed within a year.

Referring to Cllr Platten's letter about concerns arising from the Cambridge Eastern Access project, Cllr Shuter said that he had forwarded the letter to the Mayor of the Combined Authority, James Palmer. The latter had responded that the Greater Cambridge Partnership "is working strictly to its Greater Cambridge remit and ignoring potential impact outside South Cambridgeshire...Any decisions on traffic solutions for East Cambridge proposed by GCP must take into consideration the wider geographical area and short term interventions must not impinge on CAM (Cambridge Autonomous Metro)". Cllr Shuter stressed that it is vital to liaise closely with Mayor Palmer (and whoever is elected to that role in May).

Cllr Stevens noted that all 135 in Lode drains had been cleaned, and not just the 30 reported as faulty.

Cllr Shuter said that he was not standing at the May election having served on the County Council for 16 years. Cllr Stevens thanked him for all his support over that time and wished him well for the future

161/20 District Council Report: D/Cllr Trapp highlighted key issues from his report which is appended to these minutes. The District Council is not increasing Council this year as it is drawing on reserves but will need to in 2022-23. It anticipates a substantial deficit by 2023-24. He said there was cross party support for the Fen Biosphere application. This is a status conferred by UNESCO, and if successful would be the only lowland Biosphere in England, stretching from the B1102 to King's Lynn. It celebrates both the landscape attributes and humanity working together with nature. ECDC has had confirmation of its 7 year land supply – this means there is less opportunity for speculative development outside village boundaries.

C/Cllr Shuter and D/Cllr Trapp left the meeting

162/21 Parish Reports:

- **National Trust, Anglesey Abbey:** Ms Ingham-Watts said that the estate had recovered well from the floods experienced in the last few weeks – long-serving staff said they were the

worst since 2003. From having only one third of the estate accessible, it is now totally open. The estate has learnt from the experience as the problem was not, as first thought, caused by the river, but by high ground water levels. The plans for reopening the shop, restaurant and house will proceed in strict compliance with the government roadmap. In the meantime, staff are engaging with volunteers to prepare them for each stage of reopening. Ms Ingham-Watts advised that she will be covering the management of Wimpole as well from April to mid-June

- **A to B1102 Group:** It was confirmed that Cllr Platten’s letter had been forwarded by C/Cllr Ian Bates to Peter Blake of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Oliver Howarth who works for the Combined Authority (which has responsibility for bus services). They will be included in the circulation of any issues identified by the group

163/20 Parish Council Reports:

- **Finance:** The following payments were approved:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£405.30	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
J E Giles (pd by card)	Stationery	14.40	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£173.39	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£5.66+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Glasdon	3 Dog bins (already paid by card)	£664.23+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Zoom (pd by card)	Remote meeting software	£14.39	Local Govt Act 1972 s 111
Geoff Rank Mower Services	Repair to Mower	£132.33	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
CAPALC	Affiliation fee inc	£400.08	Local Govt Act 1972 s111

- **Footpaths:** Cllr Stevens reported that some footpaths crossing fields are too difficult to walk across at present due to deep harrowing although it is a requirement that they are accessible. He said that farmers often sow the whole field and subsequently spray the path so that it is visible. There has been a report of horses being taken onto the footpath near the Mill. It is forbidden for horses to be on these paths and on the old railway track
- **Covid 19 Working Group:** There was no report as Cllr Crickmar was not present but Cllr Walsh confirmed that the Food Bank was continuing to be used and is running smoothly
- **Amendment to Standing Orders:** The following motion was proposed by Cllr Stevens and seconded by Cllr Platten:
 - the current wording of the heading of paragraph 7, (“**All councillors shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.**”) shall be replaced with the words “**All councillors shall observe the East Cambridgeshire District Council Code of Conduct 2012 which has been adopted by the Council.**”
 - In the supplementary Standing Orders implemented to accommodate the Coronavirus Regulations 2020 to reflect best practice advice, the clauses requiring members of the public wishing to attend the meeting to contact the Clerk are to be deleted and replaced by: “The Zoom link for the meeting will be inserted onto the Agenda so that members of the public may attend the meeting.”

The motion was approved unanimously

- **Complaints Procedure:** It was proposed by Cllr Stevens and seconded by Cllr Purbrook that

the draft Complaints Procedure published with the agenda be adopted by the Parish Council. The motion was approved unanimously

- **Fassage Green Car Park:** Cllr Small noted that this was being used more by young people, some of whom are consuming takeaway food. He enquired about the feasibility of having a litter bin to encourage people to keep the area tidy. Cllr Stevens said it had been considered before. It was pointed out that some collections are undertaken with a smaller Transit based vehicle which should be able to gain access. Cllr Platten agreed to contact Darren Hughes and James Khan at the District Council to establish whether they could add this to their round
- **White Fen Drove:** Large lorries entering and leaving fields are damaging the road surface. Cllr Platten agreed to submit a Highways report

164/20 Date of next meeting: Monday 12 April at 7.30 pm

Meeting closed at 9.05 pm

District Councillors' Report for Parish Council Meetings in March

Council met on 23 February.

The Chairman announced the impending retirement of Dr Liz Robin, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Director of Health. On behalf of the Members and Officers of the Council, the Chairman thanked Dr Robin for all her pandemic-related work and wished her well for her forthcoming retirement.

Council approved a budget for 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy through to 2024/25. The Council Tax is frozen for 2021/22 but will rise by over 3.5% in 2022/23 and by the maximum amount allowed in the subsequent years. Despite these Council Tax rises, the Council is forecasting a budget shortfall of over £4 million from 2023/24. Charlotte and John supported an unsuccessful amendment which would have given financial support to local businesses recovering from Covid and carried out a consultation on leisure and recreation provision across the district as well as raising Council Tax more gradually and reducing the budget shortfall below £4 million.

The Chair of Finance & Assets acknowledged that the pre-planning application expenditure for the proposed cemetery at Mepal had risen from the £30,000 approved by Council on 31 July 2020 to over £91,000. He chose not to answer the query as to on what authority an overspend of 205 per cent on the additional £30,000 approved by Full Council had been incurred; who signed it off; and where that is evidenced.

There was cross-party support for a motion in support of the proposed Fens Biosphere. (Biosphere Reserve status is awarded by UNESCO to unique and valuable landscapes.)

The administration passed a motion calling for the A1123 to be down graded to a B road. We did not support this motion because evidence from across the country shows that changing from an A road to a B road does not lead to any reduction in traffic or speeds, but it does lead to a reduction in road maintenance funding from central government. In this case, we would lose £250,000 a year putting yet more pressure on a budget which is already struggling to fund adequate road maintenance.

It was confirmed that the Council has a 7 year land supply and therefore our development envelopes in the Local Plan 2015 should be respected.

The administration refused to carry out a full review into how the Council lost email access for 3 days during February. They also refused to review the Disaster Recovery plan or the risk register, despite the Council having been without email for 3 business days and without Councillors being informed or without an automatic message being set up to let email senders know that their email could not be delivered. We hope that no emails from you went missing at this time. If you sent an email in February to which we haven't replied, please re-send.