

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 12
April 2021

These minutes comprise 6 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), T Crickmar, F Platten, C Purbrook, R Small, M Walsh;
D/Cllr J Trapp ; Ms P Ingham-Watts, National Trust

1/21 Items from the public: None

2/21 The Chair introduced a period of silence to remember the late Prince Philip

3/21 Apologies: None

4/21 Declarations of interest: None

5/22 Minutes of meeting 8 March 2021: These were approved

6/21 Matters arising:

- **Parish Council Vacancy:** No further enquiries have been received. There was discussion about how to raise more interest in the Council's work. It was suggested that a more personal account of one member's experience of being a Council Member in Lode Star could present the role in a more attractive but less formal way. Cllr Platten agreed to write an article
- **Replacement trees for those felled on the A1303:** Cllr Small had sent follow up emails on 11 March but has not received any further response. In the meantime, he has contacted Barchams who indicated that they will have the selected trees in stock but advise ordering quickly to secure them for delivery later in the year. In the circumstances, it was agreed that Cllr Small would send a further email to the officer who should by now have returned from leave indicating that the Parish Council will place the order (at a cost considerably below the budget indicated by the officer) provided the County Council will undertake to reimburse immediately the Parish Council is invoiced by Barchams. The email correspondence will be copied to C/Cllr Shuter
- **Litter Bin in Fassage Car Park:** It was agreed that Cllr Platten would advise Darren Hughes in ECDC that the Parish Council would like a bin to be provided as he has previously offered. It will be located at the entrance to Car Park near the sign where it is less likely to be hit by cars. In the meantime an old bin can be placed there to allow rubbish to be deposited. It was clarified that ECDC will include this bin on their collection round in future

7/21 District Council Report: The District Council Report had been circulated prior to the meeting but D/Cllr Trapp drew attention to key points within it. The Council has decided that the Mepal Leisure Centre should be demolished and Planning Application to that effect will be submitted to the Planning Committee. Cllr Trapp said that there are concerns about the long-term solvency of the Trading Company given the difficult circumstances of the past year. He referred to the Government's call for evidence on remote meetings noting that significantly more members of the public had attended meetings on Zoom than had attended physical meetings previously. Referring to the consultation by the District Council on holding a Single Issue Review of the Local Plan (the issue being Housing Supply), he said that the cost of preparing a completely new plan would be around

£1m and that this was not justified when the Government is reviewing the Planning regime in ways that could render the work obsolete.

Cllr Small asked D/Cllr to brief the Council at a future meeting on Neighbourhood Planning as a way for a Parish to exercise more control over local development.

D/Cllr Trapp advised that now the lockdown was being lifted, the Planning Team will recommence their enforcement action in respect of the Guildhall

7/22 Parish Reports:

- **Anglesey Abbey:** Ms Ingham-Watts said that the shop had reopened and outdoor refreshments are now available. She was delighted to bring staff back into work after their time on furlough. While other NT properties may have had larger numbers of visitors, the number of Easter Trails sold at Anglesey was the highest across the Trust. She feels that this reflects the appeal that Anglesey offers to families. She indicated that the Trust would be working with Anglian Water to mitigate the impact of the recent decision to relocate the Water Treatment Plant to Honey Hill. The Trust's representative for this will be Sarah Smith, General Manager at Wicken Fen.
Ms Ingham-Watts announced that she would be moving to Wimpole as General Manager on a permanent basis from the end of May but would ensure a full handover to her successor, including the importance of the liaison with the Parish Council. The Council expressed warm appreciation and gratitude for all she has done since coming to the Abbey. Sarah Smith will have oversight of the Abbey until a permanent replacement is recruited
- **A to B1102 Group:** Cllr Platten had sent round the latest briefing from the Group which was noted by the Council
- **Graffiti and damage to Fassage Hall facilities:** Cllr Stevens drew attention to damage that been caused to downpipes, probably through being hit with footballs. While this is difficult to prevent entirely, especially while the Fassage Hall is not being used in the evenings, replacing the nets for the small goalposts and moving the larger ones to make them more accessible for people wanting to play might discourage use of footballs in the immediate vicinity of the building. Although the graffiti damage had been reported to ECDC it was not clear whether this was something they undertake to deal with. It was felt that the damage to the bus shelter opposite the church may be difficult to remove as it is on brickwork. The Clerk will ascertain whether this is covered by ECDC. It was concluded that the damage to the bus shelter opposite Honey Court might be able to be alleviated by a solvent costing around £11. Cllr Walsh agreed to obtain the substance and test on a small area initially to see how effective it is
- **Close control of dogs:** Cllr Stevens reported that there was a dog which has been escaping regularly. There was discussion about what action could be taken which concluded that, if there were any subsequent issues, they should be reported to the Dog Warden at ECDC. Any instances of dog fouling or risks to the public arising from an animal "not under close control" should similarly be reported through the relevant area of the ECDC website. Animal welfare issues should be reported to the RSPCA

8/22 Parish Council Reports:

- **Finance:**

The following payments were agreed by the Council including a bill from EON received on the day of the meeting:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£405.30	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
J E Giles	Stationery (pd by card)	£2.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£173.39	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
W Jaggard	Key	£5.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
CW Kirk Lawnmowers	Scythe Mower service (pd by card)	£105.39+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Zoom (pd by card)	Remote meeting software	£14.39	Local Govt Act 1972 s 111
Wave	Cemetery Water	£27.07	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Forza Nets	Replacement nets for goals	£39.98	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
RoSPA Play Safety	Annual Inspections	£161.50+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
EON	Streetlight electricity	£92.79+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

- **FCC Grant:** The following resolutions relating to the FCC Grant were proposed by Cllr Purbrook, seconded by Cllr Small and agreed unanimously:
 - The bid from Wicksteed for the Zip-wire was selected from the 3 submitted
 - The decision on the contractor for the groundworks was delegated to the FCC Grant Working Group subject to the financial limit for this work within the grant application submitted by the Parish Council

Separately, it was agreed that the work to clear the blackthorn at the side of the recreation ground could proceed at the earliest opportunity and be paid for from the Passage Green and Recreation Ground maintenance budget. The contractor is Eastern Tree Surgery and the agreed cost is £650+VAT

It is anticipated that FCC will send the Funding Agreement once we have submitted all the information requested by them in their letter confirming the Grant Award. It was agreed that this would be signed off by Cllr Small. It was also agreed that FCC would be requested to pay the grant monies to the Council who would in turn be responsible for paying the contractors

- **Planning:** The following applications were considered:

21/00403/FUL Bulls Farm, Lode Fen CB25 9HE
Construction of Swift Tower

The Council considered the application and wished to express their support for the application based on the well-presented Design and Access Statement and the contribution of the scheme to nature conservation

21/00462/FUL 30 Station Rd, CB25 9HB
Single storey rear extension
No concerns were identified with this application

21/00486/FUL 14 Station Rd, CB25 9HB
Single storey side extension
No concerns were identified with this application

- **Speed indicator pole location:** Cllr Stevens explained that the previously agreed location for the indicator in Station Rd near to the Cemetery Road was not sufficiently visible and was not at a point where speeding vehicles were often observed. After consultation with two officers from ECDC and the closest neighbour, he confirmed that agreement had been given for the pole to be located on the triangle on the corner with Fairhaven Close. He has identified equipment for digging the hole which will need to be 2/3 feet deep so that the pole can be embedded in concrete
- **Tree work at Swan Corner:** Cllr Small reported that although he had received acknowledgement that the agreed work to pollard the Willow at this location had not been done as promised, no action has yet taken place to remedy this. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Steve Alexander given that correspondence with the responsible officer had not yielded the required result
- **Covid-19 Working Group:** Cllr Crickmar reported that the Easter Egg drop-off had gone well and been appreciated by the recipients. She has secured funding for Canoe Adventure Sessions in May for people aged 5-adult. She also proposed holding a Village Garage sale following lockdown as well as developing a "Seed Library" which could be located near the allotments.
Cllr Walsh confirmed that Food Bank is continuing to be used and that there are sufficient funds to keep it topped up. She is therefore maintaining it while it continues to be needed

9/22 Correspondence:

- Following discussion of the invitation to join the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Community Working Group (CWWTPRCWG!) it was agreed that Cllrs Purbrook and Platten would attend the remote meeting called for 21 April
- The only serious item arising from the RoSPA inspection of the Play Area and Exercise Equipment was the toddler swing. Cllr Platten agreed to liaise with Charlie Rickard about whether a contractor needs to be brought in for this work. She will look into obtaining the small parts identified as being needed. Cllr Stevens had already dealt with some small items where fixings had become loose
- Other items of correspondence were noted

10/22 Date of next meeting: Monday 10 May 7.30 pm. Venue to be confirmed

District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils April 2021

Finance and Assets Committee held 2 meetings in March, because there was too much business for one meeting. In an attempt to address this in the future, some responsibilities have been moved to the Operational Services Committee and a new Audit Committee has been set up, but that is not due to meet until July.

It was agreed that the buildings, including the tent, at the Mepal Outdoor Centre should be demolished. John and Charlotte, amongst others, were shocked that the buildings had been allowed to fall into such disrepair and that insurance money received had not been spent on repairing the buildings. There was no consideration given to alternative options other than to keep the buildings in their current, deteriorating, state. Nor was there any consideration of the impact of demolition on the wildlife at the site and how to mitigate disturbance. An application to demolish will now be made through the planning system.

It was unanimously agreed to carry over funds which would have gone to community sports centres in 2020-21 in order to provide financial assistance as they come out of Covid restrictions. It was also unanimously agreed to allocate CIL funding to improvements at the Gardiner Memorial Hall in Burwell.

The Business Plan for East Cambs Trading Ltd for 2021-22 was approved, despite several members expressing concern about some aspects. These concerns included that the plan shows a loss of £455k to add to the forecast loss for 2020-21 of £544k. Indeed, the company has reported losses in every year apart from 2018-19, when it reported a profit of £664k. It is forecasting a profit of £1.8m in 2022-23. The Balance Sheet and Cash Flow are Exempt items which cannot be publicly discussed. The published accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 showed the company had Net Liabilities of £572k, with the forecast deficits for 2020-21 and 2021-22 the Net Liabilities at 31 March 2022 would be £1.6m. The Cash at Bank at 31 March 2020 was £89k. On 31 March 2021 the company repaid £5.5m of loans to East Cambs DC but took out a further £4.9m in loans from East Cambs DC. East Cambs DC has no security against these loans, unlike the Combined Authority which has a charge against the company's assets for its loans to the company.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2021-22 was approved, subject to review by the newly established Audit Committee at its first meeting. The progress on the plan for 2020-21 was noted with some concern as several reviews have not yet been completed. We were assured that all reviews would be completed and reported to the first meeting of the Audit Committee. The Risk Register was also noted, again with concerns that it was not adequately identifying risks and detailing appropriate actions to reduce those risks.

Operational Services Committee approved the Business Plan for 2021-22 for East Cambs Street Scene. They approved a Youth Strategy and Action Plan. Ironically, given F&A's decision to demolish the structures at Mepal Outdoor Centre, a big concern which came from the Youth survey was space for recreation and outdoor activities.

The Council Meeting on 15 April was cancelled without consultation, due to a lack of business. But shortly after this, the Council's Annual Meeting planned for 20 May was moved to 22 April. Again, this was moved without consultation, in order to hold the Annual Meeting under the current rules

allowing on-line meetings. The government have refused all-party requests from the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils to extend the current arrangements beyond early May. Councils are therefore faced with bringing meetings forward or making arrangements to hold Covid safe meetings. East Cambs DC meetings have seen hundreds of people logging on during and after meetings to view on-line proceedings. This is much higher numbers than can attend meetings in person. Journeys to and from Ely for meetings have been cut, saving the Council money and saving environmental degradation. We are therefore pleased that the government is consulting on allowing on-line meetings and we hope they will reconsider. The consultation is now online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>.

Bin collections this week and after the two May Bank Holidays will be one day after the normal collection day.