

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 14
March 2022

These minutes comprise 6 pages

Present: Cllrs F Platten, (Chair), R Stevens, C Purbrook, C Ferdinando, M Walsh
D/Cllr C Cane; C/Cllr A Sharp (from 8 pm); Mr M Beaver, Anglesey Abbey

141/21 Chair's Welcome: Cllr Platten welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular, Mr Martin Beaver, the recently appointed General Manager of Anglesey Abbey who she invited to address the meeting before its formal proceedings.

Mr Beaver explained that the National Trust's financial year commenced on 1 March and this year has a normal operating budget, in contrast to the two previous years, when emergency measures meant that a number of staff were made redundant and planned projects were put on hold. A rapid recovery in visitor numbers has meant that funding has been made available for a couple of projects including renovating the play equipment on Hoe Fen. Nevertheless, there is still a backlog of maintenance and other projects.

The target visitor numbers for Anglesey Abbey are 190,000 per year but prior to lockdown the annual numbers were approaching 400,000. Mr Beaver highlighted the key challenges that this presents as being "tea and toilets", not to mention car parking. He outlined some of the options being considered to meet the challenges: the first would be to remodel and extend the current Visitor Centre, while an alternative would be to develop a second outlet on Hoe Fen. The problem with the latter is that there are currently no mains services to that part of the estate. Other possibilities include an outlet on the Orchard area or a "grab and go" outlet at the house.

The Trust has prepared a Conservation Management Plan, the first draft of which runs to 196 pages. Anglesey Abbey has been designated one of the Trust's 28 "Treasure Houses" on account of its special collections. This status will bring a focus on bringing more of these items out of secure storage and onto display.

There has been a rapid recovery in visitor numbers which has allowed important maintenance work to be carried out on the Mill, which he hopes will be able to resume proper milling of grain in the near future. Cllr Stevens pointed out that this year will mark the 40th anniversary of the project to bring the Mill back into working order. Work has also started on a programme of repointing on the house: £45,000 has so far been committed towards a total project cost of £360,000.

Mr Beaver is working to maximise the opening of the house, having now taken on a new full time member of staff to support this. The constraints arise from the numbers of volunteers available and the requirements of the evacuation procedure.

Outside, the Emperor and Warrior's Walk will have to remain closed for much of the season following storm damage to trees.

Mr Beaver said that he was committed to maintaining close contact with the Parish Council as there is important information to share. His intention would be to involve stakeholders at the early stage of planning projects so that their views can be taken into account. Cllr Platten thanked him for

coming to the meeting and reiterated that he would be welcome to come as and when there are matters of mutual interest to discuss.

142/21 Apologies: Cllr R Small: D/Cllr J Trapp

143/21 Declarations of interest: None

144/21 Meeting 14 February 2022

Minutes: These were approved unanimously.

145/21 Clerk's Report: The Clerk drew attention to late items in respect of finance: the Fassage Hall Management Committee have identified the bench they would like ordered with funds donated by the Half Marathon Group. An amount of £546.99 has been added to the items for approval. Similarly, a bill has arrived from Wave for Cemetery water covering the last two quarters totalling £40.21

The Clerk advised that he had been contacted by the Clerk to the John Salisbury Charity nominating Corinne Arnold to the Board of the Charity. The Parish Council unanimously approved this nomination

146/21 Finance:

The following items of expenditure were approved:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£405.30	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
J E Giles	2021-21 Pay Award back pay 1.75%	£85.11	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£173.39	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Freethought	M365 February	£42.17+VAT	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
CAPALC	Annual Subscription & DPO	£399.92	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Truelink	Hedge cutting – Play Area	£190+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
EnTC Ltd	Tennis Club – Court maintenance	£720.00+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Lode Star	Donation	£200.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s137
Glasdon	Bench for Recreation Ground	£546.99+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Wave	Cemetery Water	£40.21	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

147/21 Planning:

No items had been received for consultation

It was noted that the reserved matters application, 21/01524/RMA site south of 60 Longmeadow, had been approved by ECDC. The concern raised by the Parish Council regarding the boundary had been addressed.

A reply to a resident from Planning Enforcement in ECDC had been passed to the Council. The site concerned is Land to the rear of Riverside, Lode Fen CB25 9HD. The letter indicated that the development in question does require planning permission but did not indicate that the developer would be advised of this. The Council determined that the Planning Officer should be asked to confirm that the developer would be advised to apply for planning permission

ACTION: The Clerk

Cllr Cane indicated that she would pursue this with Planning as well

148/21 District Council Report: Following on from the previous item, D/Cllr Cane advised that the Audit Committee of the District Council has determined that the internal audit programme for the coming year will include a review of Enforcement services. This would include a questionnaire to Parish Councils to capture their experience of the process.

D/Cllr Cane noted with satisfaction, that bringing the Anglesey Mill back into working order means that there will be 3 working mills within her ward. She reminded members that the new waste collection pattern will commence from 28 March. It emerged that residents of Fen Road and Fen Drove have not received the leaflets so she will take this up with the relevant team to clarify the situation.

In response to a question from Cllr Stevens, she confirmed that the Heritage Property List is the responsibility of the District Council, it is being coordinated by the County so initial enquiries should be directed there.

149/21 County Council Report: C/Cllr Sharp said that forthcoming full Council meeting on 15 March will consider a motion on congestion charging. The Highways and Transport Committee is discussing the possible creation of 20 mph zones. The Committee will consider a further paper at its July meeting when it envisages that a scheme similar to, but separate from the Local Highways Initiative, would be set up whereby Parish Councils could apply for funding to establish such a zone. If agreed, the scheme would commence from the financial year 2023-24. Referring to more immediate local highways issues, he indicated that Highways Officers are only sanctioning emergency work until the end of this financial year.

Cllr Stevens drew attention to the dangerous pothole on Shrub Corner that has been reported 5 times in recent days without response so far.

150/21 Environmental and Open Space Matters:

- i) **Update on appointment of new contractor for grasscutting and grounds maintenance:** The Clerk reported that he had managed to identify two contractors who were interested in tendering and will approach two more. In the interim, he is awaiting a response from a contractor to undertake mowing pending the appointment of the new contractor
- ii) **Councillors nominated to recommend the selection of the new Contractor:** The Council confirmed the nomination of Cllrs Small, Ferdinando and Walsh to form the working group with the Clerk
- iii) **Update on quotation for painting road markings on the Cemetery road:** The Clerk advised the Council of the quotation received so far. There was concern at the high price and Cllr Stevens offered to repaint the "Stop" marking and thick white line. He also agreed to speak with the resident about the possibility of installing a further 5 mph sign, nearer to the beginning of the road as entered from Station Road instead of painting a 5 mph roundel on the on the road surface. The Council gratefully accepted this offer
- iv) **Update on Swift Tower construction progress and proposal of application to LLVT to fund the material costs of an art installation to accompany the Tower on Passage Green:** In a written submission, Cllr Small set out the plan to install the tower, provisionally on the weekend of 30 April, together with budget showing how the funding from FCC would be applied to this element of the overall project. Cllr Stevens raised a question about the proximity of the tower to overhead cables. Cllr Small sought approval for the art installation and application to LLVT for the cost of materials both of which were approved by the Council
- v) **Disposal and replacement of fallen tree on the allotments:** Cllr Small's report explained that the tree had fallen in the recent storms. Noting that children play in the area, and

that it could collapse further, Cllr Stevens has cut the tree so that it is lying on the ground. Council members determined that, rather than having the tree chipped, the trunk and main branches should be cut into equal lengths and stacked at a suitable location on the Fassage Green to encourage insects. A budget of £50 was agreed to cover the cost of a replacement tree and stake

- vi) **Remedial actions in the Car Park:** Cllr Small's report advised that a quotation of £163.10+VAT had been received for a sign measuring 915mm x 610mm. He queried whether a smaller sign would be more appropriate. The Council agreed that a sign measuring 610mm x 305mm should be obtained with shortened wording as follows: "Welcome to the Fassage Car Park, managed by Lode Parish Council. Please respect other users. The Car Park closes at 9pm except for users of the Fassage Hall. Overnight parking is not permitted."
The Council decided not to proceed with the purchase of a moveable barrier at this stage
- vii) **Council comments on CWWTPRP Phase 3 Consultation:** The discussion on this centred on the opportunity to improve connections to local footpaths, cycle and bridle ways. It was noted that there appears to be no body that would take overall responsibility for this across parishes, especially as Lode falls outside the Greater Cambridge Partnership area. It was suggested that the old railway track could be route to link up with Chisholm trail – this would work as a bridleway but would only be suitable for cycles if it was laid to tarmac. This is unlikely to be supported by landowners who would have to give permission.
ACTION: Cllr Purbrook agreed to draft a response from the Council to be confirmed at the April meeting
- viii) **Cutting back the hedge at the rear of the Cemetery to facilitate vehicles using the proper location for turning rather than using the grass:** The Council agreed with the proposal from Cllr Stevens to cut back the beech hedge on the right hand side to prevent damage to the grass when vehicles are turning round

151/21 Community Matters: Engagement with Community Leadership Course: The Council decided that this matter should be deferred to the next meeting

152/21 Committee Matters:

- i) **Effective working together:** Cllr Small's report proposed the setting up of a one-off informal meeting to discuss the process for communication, tracking actions etc. This was agreed
ACTION: Cllr Small to set up Teams Call
- ii) **Jubilee Working Group:** Council members thanked Cllr Platten for the work done on this by the group to date and for the exciting programme proposed
- iii) **Fassage Hall Management Committee:** Cllr Platten explained that she had obtained prices from Meads for bases for the storage shed and the new seat. These would cost £750 and £450 respectively. FHMC will decide whether they wish to commit funds for this purpose

153/21 Highways Matters:

- i) **Feedback from Highways Improvement Panel:** Cllrs Platten and Stevens had undertaken to present the Council's Application to the panel. There were multiple problems before the event in that they had not been sent the link for the meeting and it was difficult to get hold of Highways staff in the previous week – essential as the meeting was on the Monday morning. It then proved impossible to get a stable connection for the Teams meeting and Cllr Stevens asked them to consider the 500 word precis which had been

prepared in case of such an eventuality. Concern was expressed that, having been previously advised that a site meeting would take place prior to Christmas, no further communication had been received until the arrangements for the Panel meeting had been notified at the last minute. Instead of a site meeting, the Highways Officer had prepared a desktop evaluation.

ACTION: The Clerk to advise C/Cllr Sharp of the difficulties encountered with the process

154/21 Communications: Cllr Purbrook agreed to write the Lode Star article for April

155/21 Correspondence: A late item of correspondence had been received questioning the removal of the brambles close to the Fassage Hall because they provide a haven for wildlife. It was noted that they have been cut back rather than removed as they would spread further if not kept in check. Cllr Platten said that she would seek advice from Tom Fradd at Anglesey Abbey about how best to manage them

Items for April Agenda:

- Council comments on CWWTPRP Phase 3 Consultation (due 27 April)
- Engagement with Community Leadership Course

Date of next meeting: Monday 11 April 7.30 pm in the Fassage Hall

Cllrs Charlotte Cane and John Trapp

Report to Parish Councils March 2022

The only meeting in the last month was Full Council in which the following decisions were made:

- A motion was passed unanimously thanking residents in East Cambs for their exemplary behaviour during the lockdown periods, during which very few Fixed Penalty Notices were given to our residents for breaching Covid Lockdown rules and volunteers helped those in need. We also thanked health professionals and all those in public office and leadership positions who worked hard to lead by example. The administration deleted the section which would have shared the severe disappointment of many East Cambs residents that this leadership and responsibility had not been demonstrated by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson
- The budget for 2022/23 was passed, with a Council Tax freeze, recognising the challenges many residents are facing in the cost of living. We supported an amendment to devolve the Rural Services Delivery Grant of £169,000 to Parish Councils and allocate £10,000 to investigate Civil Parking Enforcement options, to address the problems caused by illegal parking around the district. This would be funded by joining the Combined Authority's Community Led Housing Support - [Community Led Housing | CPCA | The Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk), saving the costs of providing it in-house and drawing on the extensive experience of ACRE in community engagement and cutting the £25,000 proposed increase to the Council's PR budget. This amendment was defeated.
- The budget established a £2m Growth & Infrastructure Fund, using money refunded from Cambridgeshire Horizons.
- There were various changes to the Constitution, most of which were proposed by the officers after extensive consultation with all members and with all-party support. The administration also changed the rules on Public and Members questions, so that rather than being an opportunity to hold the administration to account, any member can be questioned. As the public questions and answers are limited to 15 minutes, we are concerned that this will reduce the opportunity for scrutiny of the administration. These changes were not consulted on and did not have cross-party support.
- At this meeting, the questions from the public revolved around actions to address the Climate Emergency. One asked about the provision of electric vehicle charging points and highlighted how few points there were in East Cambs and that many of those had not been working for several months. Another asked for the Council to bring pressure on the Local Authority Pension scheme to disinvest from fossil fuels.
- March is a busy month, with meetings of the Planning, Licensing, Audit, Operational Services and Finance & Assets Committees.
- Our bin days change at the end of this month to make the routes more efficient and save 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. From 28 March our collection days will be:

Monday - Bottisham, Brinkley, Lode, Long Meadow and Westley Waterless.

Tuesday - Reach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior.