



# Lode Parish Council

Lode Parish Clerk, 3 Feast Close, Fordham, Ely, Cambs, CB7 5PH

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*Chairman:* Cllr Rob Small *Vice Chairman:* Cllr Fran Platten *Parish Clerk:* Su Field

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## MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Venue:** Fassage Hall

**Present:** Cllr R Small – Chairman  
Cllr F Platten – Vice Chairman  
Cllr C Ferdinando  
D/Cllr J Trapp [apologues for March meeting]  
CCllr A Sharp

**Also present:** Su Field, Clerk

**Members of public:** 2

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr M Walsh – Accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Participation

Kevin Tookey, Anglesey Abbey representative (Garden and Outdoors Manager). Chairman expressed the wish to develop further relations between National Trust and the Parish Council.

5. Co-Option of Parish Councillor

Following advertisement of one of the vacancies on the Parish Council, Mrs Rima Page had expressed her wish to be co-opted onto the Parish Council.

The Clerk provided her with an acceptance of office form for signature and a blank copy of the Register of Members Interests for completion and return to the Monitoring Officer at ECDC.

6. Approval of Minutes

Confirmed as a correct record.

7. Finance Matters

a) The Chairman was provided with invoices in relation to each of the items listed below. These items were agreed for payment and initialled accordingly.

The Chairman was also provided with the most up to date bank statement from Barclays bank for perusal and was initialled accordingly.

All payments and receipts were now correctly input into the Scribe accountancy software package and the Clerk furnished the Chairman with the bank reconciliation printouts from July 2022 to January 2023 for signature.

S Field	Salary/PAYE & Home Working Allowance	£473.42	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
S Field	Salary back pay from 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2022 (10 weeks) £1 per hour, 7 hrs p/w as per NALC salary award [dependent on agreement as per item 7(e) on this agenda]	£70.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
S Field	Purchase of ink for printer [dependent on agreement as per item 7(f) on this agenda]	£26.29	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Freethought	CyberSecurity Essentials inc AV (inv 1538)	£9.60 (inc VAT)	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Freethought	CyberSecurity Essentials inc AV (inv 1420 – missed invoice)	£9.60 (inc VAT)	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Cambs ACRE	Membership fee (2023)	£60.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
SLCC	Membership fee for Clerk (2023)	£120.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
F Platten	Bolts for new village sign (reimbursement)	£7.58	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
W Jaggard	Cemetery Works for January 2023	£183.78	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
R Small	Replacement fruit trees for allotment boundaries	£99 (inc VAT)	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

b) Further to the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Cllrs had been asked to consider moving some general reserve into earmarked reserve allocations. Following discussion it was agreed that the following would be illustrated in the accounts under individual earmarked reserves headings:

Contingency for tree works	£ 4,000
King Charles III Coronation	£ 500
Playground upgrades/enhancements	£ 8,000
Contingency Fund for Locum services	£ 5,500
Allotments Contingency	£ 2,500
Cemetery	£ 6,500
Noticeboard	£ 1,000
Bus Shelters	£ 2,000
<b>Total to be earmarked</b>	<b>£30,000</b>

c) The transfer of the bank account from Barclays to Unity Trust bank could now be progressed as all relevant signatories had passed their relevant personal information to the Clerk. This will now be progressed and a further update provided at the meeting scheduled to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

d) Freeserve (the company who provide the Council with software support) have requested that their monthly invoices be paid via Direct Debit. Following discussion it was AGREED that this arrangement be put in place when transfer to Unity Bank has taken place.

e) As outlined by the Clerk at a previous meeting, there had been a pay award agreed by NALC which raised the hourly rate of the clerk's salary from £13.75 to £14.75 per hour. The Clerk requested payment of the backdated pay award from the commencement of her employment (1<sup>st</sup> December 2022) to date totalling 10 weeks at £1 per hour equating to £70. Following discussion it was AGREED that this sum was due and will be paid as illustrated in the table above.

f) The Clerk has had to purchase additional ink cartridges to enable printing of parish documents and submitted evidence of the amount paid. The Clerk requested that this item be reimbursed. After discussion it was AGREED that this sum be reimbursed and is illustrated in the table above.

#### 8. Planning Matters

a) Planning Appeal – 22/00531/FUL – Frolic Farm, Lode Fen. Appeal commenced 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – written representations (if any) requested. Deadline 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

It was RESOLVED to resubmit previous comments.

b) 23/00060/FUL – Montrose Farm, 21 Millards Lane – proposed erection 1No detached bungalow, new access, car parking and associated works.

It was RESOLVED to review the application via the online portal after this meeting because floor plan and elevations were not available at the meeting. Any comments will be agreed out of meeting and sent to ECDC. If plans/elevations are not available on the portal, the Clerk is instructed to contact ECDC to request the plans before any comment is submitted.

c) 23/00107/FUL – Gallys Farm, Lug Fen Droveaway – proposed cart lodge and domestic storage.

It was RESOLVED to comment as follows:

If the Planning Officer is minded to approve this application, the Parish Council feel that this application is unduly large for the intended use and should be considered by the Planning Committee as the Parish Council are concerned that this application may be a precursor to development outside the planning envelope.

#### 9. County Council Matters

Cllr A Sharp – Jonathan Clark is prepared to come out and have a look at the footpath around the Passage Field, also prepared to come and look at issues with the large willow tree situated at Swan Corner to endeavour to find a solution. It will be endeavoured to arrange this meeting for 21<sup>st</sup> February.

Lode Fen Road – will be discussed at a meeting scheduled to take place at CCC on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The issue is available funding.

New consultation launched concerning Newmarket Road – relocation of the Park and Ride site, increasing width of cycle lanes etc.

Budgets – CCC resolved to increase C/Tax portion 4.4%.

Combined Authority – increase of £12 per band D property the revenue from which will be combined with the funding already received to improve bus services.

#### 10. District Council Matters

Below is the report received from the District Councillors for information.

## **District Council Report to Parish Councils February 2023**

*The Operational Services Committee and the Licensing Committee meetings scheduled for January were cancelled. This meant that the Q3 Waste Performance and the Budget Monitoring reports, amongst other things, will be delayed until the next meeting on 27 March.*

*Finance & Assets Committee did meet as scheduled and recommended a budget to Council. The budget draws £2.5m from the savings reserve, in order to avoid increasing Council Tax in each of 2023/24 and 2024/25. It estimates that in 2025/26 the final £2.1m will be drawn from the savings reserve, leaving that reserve at £nil with a further budget shortfall of £2.6m to find from savings/increased income. This shortfall is estimated to rise to £4.9m in 2026/27. This is over half of what is currently raised through Council Tax or more than one third of current net expenditure, so there will be some challenging decisions in future years. The Budget will be the main agenda item at Full Council on 21 February.*

*Audit Committee also met. Unfortunately, it has been set up with very limited powers – for example we cannot question relevant managers at the Committee, despite this being recommended practice, and indeed normal practice. Instead we must submit questions before the meeting, and these are frequently not fully answered and follow up questions are often not answered at the meeting, since the relevant manager is not there. The problems went even further at January’s meeting where no answers were given to my questions around IT, where many audit actions remain outstanding, some for almost a year after they should have been completed. Instead, the Committee was given a statement to explain the staffing issues which had caused the delays and promised a fuller report at our meeting in March.*

*We also reviewed the risk register where the risk of ECSS failing to deliver on its business plan and expected levels of performance was assessed as ‘unlikely’. I questioned this, in the light of recent problems, and was told ‘The residual likelihood score reflects the implementation of the Improvement Plan in 2022/23 and will be monitored by the Director, Operations’. I remain concerned about ECSS’ ability to deliver on its business plan, given the costs of bringing in contractors for missed deliveries. And its ability to deliver the contracted service levels, as the most recent update confirmed that it is still not delivering contracted levels of street cleaning. If the risk were assessed as high then senior management would be receiving and reviewing regular reports, instead of relying on the Director, Operations.*

*The Greater Cambridge Partnership is consulting on the proposed design for walking, cycling and public transport improvements on Newmarket Road and the selection of a preferred site for the relocated Park & Ride. There will be an online event on **Wednesday 8 February** 6.00-7.30pm and two public drop-in events on **15 February** 5.30pm-7.30pm, Christ the Redeemer Church, Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8RS and **1 March** 6pm-8pm, East Barnwell Community Centre, Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8RS. The AtoB1102 Group are working up a proposed response in significant detail.*

### **Answers to a query raised by Bottisham Parish Council in January:**

*48 residents have been assisted by the Community Bus in the last 12 months  
1,131 residents have attended community advice drop-ins in the last 12 months  
976 residents have attended housing advice drop-ins in the last 12 months*

11. Council Administration Matters

a) The Clerk and Vice Chairman had attended a virtual Scribe demonstration of their Cemetery and Allotment packages. The packages appear to fulfil the PC's requirements but Scribe are awaiting an update on the mapping system and the Clerk therefore recommends that any decision about purchasing the software be left until the update had been rolled out.

The fees payable for the installation and supporting the software is as follows:

Burial Software

Setup Fee £119

Annual Fee £240

Allotment Software

Setup Fee £119

Annual Fee £276

If, in due course, the PC wish to purchase these packages at the same time there will only be one set up fee charged and annual charge would be as follows:

Year 1 £635

Year 2 onwards £516

Clerk to circulate the proposal received from Scribe to Cllrs.

Further Scribe training sessions to be booked but the system is proving useful and straightforward to use.

b) Due to the the Easter Bank Holiday the meetings currently scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> April and the additional Bank Holiday for King Charles III coronation, 8<sup>th</sup> May, the dates of the Parish Council meetings scheduled for those dates require rescheduling. It was also brought to the attention of the PC that because it is an election year the Annual Meeting must also be held within 14 days of the election (4<sup>th</sup> May). The Clerk suggested that the dates be changed to:

Easter 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

May 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 commencing at 6.30pm for the Annual Meeting to be immediately followed by the Parish Council meeting commencing at 7.30pm

Following discussion it was AGREED to those noted above.

The Clerk has purchased two 2 drawer filing cabinets to house the PC papers but this expenditure will not be charged to the Parish Council and will remain the property of the Clerk.

12. Environmental and Open Space Matters

a) Meeting with Allotment Tenants re water management matters – a meeting will be arranged in due course. Clerk to investigate who are the tenants, who has paid etc.

c) Review of urgent items contained within Tree Report

The Clerk had received a quotation from Eastern Tree Surgery in respect of the items contained within the tree report in the sum of £1,368 (inc VAT). The Clerk requested confirmation from the PC to accept the quote and request works to commence. It was AGREED to order the works. The Chairman would like to meet with the company prior to the work taking place to ensure that the correct apple tree has been identified.

13. Community Matters

a) Meeting to be arranged with Fassage Hall Committee – this will be arranged in due course.

b) Future upkeep of Parish Council owned bus shelters  
Put on agenda for March.

c) Coronation of King Charles III event – A request had been received from the Fete Committee in respect of celebrations to be organised within the village for the coronation and a request of the Public Liability Insurance cover in place. The Clerk confirmed that PL cover was in place to cover the event.

d) The village noticeboard is in a state of disrepair and a decision is required as to whether it be renovated or replaced. This will be put on the agenda for March.

14. Correspondence (for information only)

The Clerk has forwarded all Weekly Planning Lists from ECDC via email as received. No other communications received.

15. Communications

A lead councillor needed to be identified to compile the monthly article for the Lode Star for the remainder of 2023. Cllr Small volunteered to take on this role for this month and the task will be rotated around all the Parish Councillors.

16. Items for next agenda

Burial Pack – agreement for adoption

20mph speed limit consultation

Willow Tree at Swan Corner - quotations

Next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 commencing at 7.30pm at Passage Hall.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_