



# Lode Parish Council

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

[clerk@lode-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@lode-pc.gov.uk)

[www.lode.org.uk](http://www.lode.org.uk)

*Chairman:* Cllr Rob Small *Vice Chairman:* Cllr Christina Ferdinando *Parish Clerk:* Su Field

## MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023

**Time:** 7:15 pm [Meeting commenced at the end of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council]

**Venue:** Passage Hall

**Present:** Cllr R Small – Chairman  
Cllr F Platten  
Cllr C Ferdinando – Vice Chairman  
Cllr R Page  
DCllr J Trapp  
CCllr A Sharp (arrived at 8pm due to attendance at another Parish Council meeting)

Members of public: 2

### 23-24.16 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone in attendance.

### 23-24.17 Apologies for Absence

None.

### 23-24.18 Acceptance of Office Forms

All Members had been provided with Acceptance of Office Forms prior to the commencement of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (held at 7pm) and all were duly signed, witnessed by the Clerk. All Members had also been provided with new Register of Members' Interest forms with the instruction that these be returned to the Monitoring Officer at ECDC within 28 days of the date of this meeting. As this is an election year each Member was also provided with the Electoral Commission form for Election Expenses and whilst the Parish was uncontested it is a legal requirement that each Member completes this form and returns it to the Electoral Services Department at ECDC within 14 days of this meeting (1<sup>st</sup> June 2023).

### 23-24.19 Co-Option of Parish Councillor

Mrs L Wells, resident of the Parish, had applied to be co-opted as a Parish Councillor. Following discussion it was AGREED that Mrs Wells be co-opted and she was provided with the Acceptance of Office Form, which was duly signed, and the ECDC Register of Members' Interests which will be completed and returned to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

### 23-24.20 Declarations of Interest

None.

### 23-24.21 Public Participation

A resident of the Parish spoke, at length, concerning various items including 3 sets of dropped kerbs (the applications for which had been approved by the County Council over a year ago had not yet been installed), the current LHI scheme in respect of shared pedestrian/cycle ways between Lode, Long Meadow and Bottisham and the planned Greenways scheme being suggested by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (consultation on which had closed in April 2023 – results of such consultation awaited).

The Chairman updated the resident following a site meeting that had taken place with a County Council Officer in respect of the LHI scheme and the siting of appropriate, safe, dropped kerbs and the possibility of the installation of speed tables.

The resident requested that Lode PC liaise with Bottisham PC and it was agreed that contact would be made.

### 23-24.22

#### a) Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed accordingly.

#### b) Chair's Report

A successful volunteer event had taken place on the Green and it was hoped that further events could be arranged for items like litter picking etc.

There had been a very positive meeting with Allotment Holders and the outcome of that meeting will be discussed later on the agenda.

### 23-24.23 Finance Matters

a) The Clerk requested the Parish Council to consider and approve (or otherwise) the appointment of a new independent Internal Auditor. The Clerk had requested, via the Internal Auditor Forum for Parish Councils, expressions of interest and contact had been received from Ms J Simonds (PSLCC, CiLCA) who would be able to conduct the internal audit remotely (via Zoom) at a cost of £150. Following discussion it was AGREED that Ms J Simonds be appointed as Internal Auditor for the Parish Council for, in the first instance, the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

b) 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.

Prior to the Internal Audit having been performed and the AGAR completed the financial year 2022-23 cannot be closed on the Scribe Accounting Package so there was no bank reconciliation available for the meeting. Up to date bank reconciliation forms will be provided once the internal audit and AGAR have been agreed/completed.

S Field	Salary/PAYE & Home Working Allowance	£473.42	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery Maintenance for April – Inv 151	£192.68	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Resident	Reimbursement of Memorial Fee	£50.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Freethought	CyberSecurity Essentials – April/May 2023	£9.60	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Fassage Hall	Hall Hire – 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 – Inv 1076	£18.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Fassage Hall	Hall Hire – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Inv 1077	£18.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111

ECTC	Grass Cutting (parish wide) – Inv 61357	£1,305.72	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Playsafety	ROSPA Inspections 2023 – Inv 70265	£217.80	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Zurich Insurance	Insurance cover for Fassage Hall – Inv 1598677950	£577.92	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
Eastern Tree Surgery	Tree Works at Swan Corner (reimbursement of fee (ex VAT) requested from CCC) – Inv 03/23/3955	£2,310.00	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE EXPENDED:</b>		<b>£5,173.14</b>	

Monies received in to the Parish Council (for information)

East Cambs DC	Precept (1 <sup>st</sup> payment)	£9,496.25	
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Invoices Sent (for information)

CCC	Payment for works at Swan Corner	£1,925.00	
Southgate Newmarket	Interment Fee (Resident)	£100.00	

b) The outstanding form to enable the switch from Barclays to Unity Trust Bank had now been completed and Members reviewed all documentation pertaining to the transfer. It was AGREED that the whole application pack could now be submitted to Unity Trust to enable the switch to take place.

#### 23-24.24 Planning Matters

a) 23/00498/VAR – Drove Bridge, 15 Station Road, Lode – To vary condition 1 (approved plans) of previously approved 17/00913/FUL for demolition of two bungalows and replacement with three houses, with additional house on adjacent garden land.

It was RESOLVED to send the following response to ECDC:

No comments from the Parish Council in respect of this variation.

#### 23-24.25 County Council Matters

A planning application had been submitted to the County Council in respect of the extension of the busway and this was due to be further considered at a meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

CCllr Sharp had requested CCC Officers to provide a firm timetable in respect of road maintenance works planned and this will be circulated when received.

Mill Road Bridge – an application had been made for this proposal to be subject of a Judicial Review. The consultation on the proposed Congestion Charge for Cambridge City had now closed the results were awaited. As soon as this was available it will be circulated to all Parish Councils.

#### 23-24.26 District Council Matters

Below are the reports received from the District Councillors in respect of both Annual and Monthly updates for information.

## **District Councillors' Annual Report to Parishes**

**May 2023**

### **Refuse Collection and Street Sweeping**

The problems with uncollected bins continued into the start of this year. We pressed the administration to improve the service and finally around July ECSS, the Council-owned company that does waste collection for the District, recognised the problems and drew up a strategic action plan.

The service has now improved, but there are still issues. For example, there were some missed/late bin collections in January, because of problems with vehicles. And the delivery of the black bin bags was significantly delayed and was very patchy – we were still getting residents with no black bags earlier this month.

Despite these many shortcomings with the service, Council agreed an additional £500,000 fee to ECSS for the 2022/23 financial year and budgeted for a similar extra sum in the current financial year. Charlotte proposed an amendment that the £500,000 should be a loan and that the Directors, Observers and auditors should provide reports to relevant committees about why it had taken so long for the overspend to be brought to Councillor's attention and what changes were being put in place or needed to be put in place to ensure better financial management and service delivery going forward. This amendment was defeated despite one of the Observers admitting that neither she nor the Directors had reviewed Management Accounts before January 2023, which is very worrying given the well-known inflationary pressures; the extra costs of getting back on track with missed deliveries after the round reconfiguration; and the significant increases to staff pay.

### **East Cambs Trading Company**

The Council agreed a further £7.5M loan to its Trading Company.

At the Finance and Assets Committee this April, there was a bid for £10,060 from Kennett CLT for funding towards their completing the development and purchase off the developer. This bid from Kennett CLT shows how complicated the finances of ECTC are. ECTC took the planning proposals to ECDC for outline planning permission. Once they had permission, the land, with permission, was sold to Bellway homes who are now developing the site. ECTC received significant financial benefit from this arrangement. But now the CLT must make payments to Bellway Homes, for which ECDC is giving them a grant. So, there is money coming in to one ECDC pot and going out from another ECDC pot. Where there is money coming in from ECTC which is genuinely additional, it is often money which would come from any developer – eg CIL payments. It is therefore really difficult to see what, if any, financial benefit is coming to ECDC from ECTC.

### **Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

Prior to the commencement of the October meeting of Full Council, the Chairman delivered a tribute and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

### **Buses**

In October, Stagecoach announced that it would be axing the 11 & 12 bus routes. Thanks to a lot of local people signing petitions and sending emails and the AtoB1102 group the number 11 and 12 buses were saved, initially until the end of March 2023, funded by the Combined Authority making £3.5m emergency budget available for these routes and the 19 other routes. In February Charlotte was a substitute member on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to review the draft budget for the Combined Authority. She was disappointed to find that only the £3.5m was included – only half what would be needed to keep the buses running for a year. She raised this and the rest of the Committee agreed to ask the Combined Authority to find at least £7m for each of the next two years to fund our

bus services. This just maintains the current position, we still need improvements not least to get the number 11 stopping at Bottisham.

#### **Advice Bus**

The East Cambs Housing and Community Advice Team's Advice Bus is scheduled to visit:

Burwell, Mandeville Hall every Thursday from 10.00am-12 noon.

Bottisham, Sports & Social Club every Thursday from 1.00pm-3.00pm

Unfortunately, it is frequently cancelled so residents should check with East Cambs that the Advice Bus is coming to this area before travelling to Burwell or Bottisham.

#### **Audit Committee – the watchdog with neither bark nor bite**

Unfortunately, the Audit Committee 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 Charlotte's questions around IT, where many audit actions remained 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. By March, most of the actions had been completed – but some key further actions are still outstanding.

#### **Grants Available**

ECDC was successful in its bid from UK Shared Prosperity Fund and was allocated £839,851. £180,000 was set aside for a *Pride of Place East Cambridgeshire* fund to enable Parishes to create or improve local spaces for the pride of the local residents and for access to improve health and well-being. Information about bids for these funds will be forthcoming.

#### **District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils - May 2023**

At the District Elections on 4 May John and Charlotte were re-elected as the District Councillors for Bottisham Ward. We look forward to working with Parish Councils and local residents over the next 4 years. We shall continue to send reports to Parish Councils for each meeting, and hope that you find our reports informative and interesting. If you think that we could improve our reports, please let us know.

Turnout in Bottisham ward was 40.3%, which was the fourth highest turnout – the highest was Stretham at 46.2%, but that was surpassed by the Stretham Parish Council turnout of 53.6%. The lowest turnout at just 22.4% was in Littleport.

Across the District as a whole, the Liberal Democrats won the most votes but the Conservatives won the most seats. There are 15 Conservative Councillors and 13 Lib Dem Councillors.

### Votes cast in East Cambs DC elections 2023

Party	Votes	Percentage
Lib Dem	18831	39.7%
Conservative	18226	38.4%
Labour	8489	17.9%
Green	560	1.2%
UKIP	85	0.2%
Others	1220	2.6%

The only meetings in April were two Planning Committee meetings, and there were no local applications considered at either.

The only meeting in May will be the Annual Council on 25 May.

Cllr Trapp was also asked about the situation with the District Council's account audit not having been completed/signed off and he confirmed that this process was still ongoing.

Cllr Trapp also updated the meeting in respect of the Greenways project and confirmed that Bottisham Parish Council were not in favour of the suggestion concerning the A1103 Bottisham to Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck. A site visit had been arranged with the scheme designer and an update will be provided in due course. Cllr Trapp stated that Bottisham Parish Council had reservations about the available use of the proposed scheme and requested Lode Parish Council to contact Bottisham Parish Council for an update.

#### 23-24.27 Council Administration Matters

a) Clerk's Update:

Nothing further for this meeting.

d) Change of Bank Accounts – Updated earlier in the meeting.

#### 23-24.28 Environmental and Open Space Matters

a) Meeting with Allotment Tenants re water management issues – A meeting had taken place with those Allotment Tenants who were available on 27<sup>th</sup> April when the issues of water management was discussed. The Chairman subsequently, via the Clerk, emailed all tenants with the proposed plan for stand pipes and water containers. Following discussion it was AGREED that there be a budget set aside in the sum of £2,300 for the work to be carried out and it was agreed that this will be further discussed at the meeting to be held in June when it was anticipated that offers of plant and equipment will have been finalised.

b) Replacement of seat for playground rocking horse

It was AGREED that a new seat be purchased from Wicksteeds for the approximate sum of £45.00.

c) Purchase of replacement mower for the maintenance of Fassage Green.

The Chairman had carried out investigations in respect of the costs of replacing the mower used for the maintenance of Fassage Green and it was AGREED to purchase a Cobra MM518 mower with a cutting width of 51cm at a cost of £274.99 (ex VAT).

#### 23-24.29 Community Matters

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

b) Future upkeep of Parish Council owned bus shelters

It was agreed that Councillors will carry out site visits to the Parish Council shelters and canvass residents of Long Meadow as to their views about the shelter which is currently not fit for purpose. An item to be placed on the agenda for June for decision on way forward.

c) The Chairman had investigated options for the replacement of the village noticeboard and these had been circulated to all Councillors for consideration. The Clerk had contacted ECDC to ascertain whether any grant funding would be available and is awaiting a response. Following discussion, it was AGREED that as a response from ECDC is expected no decision will be made until the meeting in June. It was raised that the current noticeboard is situated in a conservation area and the Clerk was instructed to contact the Conservation Officer at ECDC to ascertain whether they would be in agreement to a replacement being purchased and erected.

d) 20mph Speed Limits

Applications for the scheme had now closed for 2023 but Cllr Sharp confirmed that this was an annual initiative and the Parish Council could apply during the next round (2024) if it was something that the majority of residents wished to pursue.

e) Update on LHI Scheme for Lode crossing to South of Crossroads

This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

23-24.30 Correspondence (for information only)

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

23-24.31 Communications

The Vice Chairman agreed to compose and submit the Parish Council article for inclusion in the forthcoming edition of Lode Star.

It was acknowledged that communication between the Parish Council and the National Trust in respect of Anglesey Abbey had not been very regular and the Clerk was requested to contact the General Manager, Mr M Beaver, to ascertain whether an officer would be available to attend Parish Council meetings to aid communication and understanding between the two organisations.

23-24.32 Items for next agenda (12<sup>th</sup> June 2023)

CAPALC Training Courses

Regular informal online meetings of Cllrs and Clerk

Infographic inclusion in Lodestar – Budget implications

Annual Meeting of the Electors of the Parish – decision about whether to hold a meeting this year.

Action Tracker document – updates.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

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

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