

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the Open Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 23 May 2016

These minutes comprise 8 pages and include 18 reports

Present Cllrs C Rickard (CR) (Chairman), R Stevens (Chairman), E Mitchell (EM), F Platten (FP), R Small and the Clerk (ADT) together with C/Cllr M Shuter (MS), D/Cllr A Sharp (AS), Mrs A Forecast (AF) and Mr T Cassidy (TC), A Lamb (AL), and C Platten, J Sale (JS) and 12 members of the public.

Apologies Cllrs P Dean and P Lane, J Coxall (JC), A Langran (ALa), M Lord and P Wells Written reports were submitted by JC and Ala in writing and others were given orally – See below.

Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 May 2015 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Jodie Midlane from Wicksteed. She identified the outdoor gym equipment the company produces. Those present were asked to identify 4 items of the equipment which they would use. From this information a final list would be identified and these items would be purchased using a successful application for a Tesco Groundwork grant. Cllr Platten reported that plans to purchase table tennis equipment were well advanced and should not, therefore, be included in the choice. This was then followed by the reports printed below.

Chairman's Report (CR)

I am standing down after nine years as a Parish Councillor and two years as Chairman. I have enjoyed my time on the Council and have been pleased to have been involved in a number of significant developments in the village. These include the creation of the community orchard and the White Fen woodland, the publication of the Lode Walks' guide, and most recently the Lode to Quy cycle path project (which I hope will soon be under construction). However, it is time to move on and let others contribute to the development of the village. I am confident that the Parish Council will continue to serve the village well, with a good mix of long-standing and new Councillors, all with a strong interest in village life.

In addition to the projects mentioned above, a lot has happened in Lode since 2007 when I joined the Council. We have a very successful village hall but we have lost the Social Club. The Broughton Hall has become a house and the former Social Club is being converted to a pub and restaurant. We have an excellent web site and the annual village fete has been reinstated. Trees and hedging have been planted in the cemetery and elsewhere. We have established a liaison committee to improve relations with the National Trust. There are traffic lights at the crossroads, new street lights, new equipment in the play area, and the tennis court has been resurfaced. Your Parish Council has been involved in many of these developments, even if only in terms of consultation. The point I am trying to make is that the PC has an important role to play in the village, and the more support it gets from the community at large, and volunteers in particular, the greater will be its positive impact on village life.

So I commend the remaining Councillors to you, and offer my thanks to the Clerk Arthur Tomlinson for his long dedication to the Council. But I would also like to mention a number of people who have contributed significantly to the village during my years as a parish councillor. These are, in no particular order:

- Fran Platten for her persistence in promoting the cycle path project and her efforts to keep the village and surrounding areas free of litter.
- Charlie Platten for his tireless work on forming the LSC charity from the ashes of the social club, and his help maintaining footpaths and supporting the cycle path project.
- Ian Middleton for his excellent and unstinting work on developing and maintaining the village website.
- Martyn Lord for his dedication to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- Susan Swannell and Liz Mitchell for their consistent commitment to the Lode Star magazine.
- Tony Cassidy for agreeing to audit the PC accounts year after year.
- Coral Hatley for her work on the village archive.
- The volunteers who help to run the Fassage Hall – Alan Lamb, John & Jackie Lince, Jean Howard, Julie Sale, Pip Lane and, until recently Denise Cook..
- Tessa Shrubbs and her team for putting Lode on the map through the very popular half marathon, and thereby raising money for good causes.
- Bob Stevens for his work as a District Councillor and contributor to Parish Council meetings, both of which will stand him in good stead for his new role as Chairman of the Parish Council.

All of the above give their time for free and help to promote community spirit in Lode and to help to make it a great place to live.

After giving his report Cllr Rickard handed the chair over to Cllr Stevens.

County Council Report (MS)

Budget –

- ECDC was able to hold its budget. CCC had not had this luxury as it had been necessary to factor in a 2% increase to cover extra adult social care costs. This item, which is ring fenced, accounts for the largest portion of the budget.
- As there is a need to generate £30 millions various savings are being explored. These include a reduction in Highways' costs and turning street lights off in certain parts of the county at 2am and reducing the illumination by 60% in others.
- The lighting programme is nearly complete.
- The installation of fast broadband throughout the county is going well, attracting a £6 million payment from BT. Attention is now turning to rural areas which are under resourced.

Bottisham Village College

- Funding for the building programme has been approved. This work will increase the size of the campus by 25%. The result of this will be that all pupils living in the catchment area will be accommodated in Bottisham.
- Concern is regularly expressed about the parking problem and this has led to the proposal that two entrances to the site being considered. This will, however, be a planning matter.
- As part of the Marshall Wing Development a new school is planned as part of the project.

Police

- An agreement has been reached with the police authority how this speedwatch project will be managed. New equipment is to be purchased.
- The recently appointed PCC has a great interest in rural policing and it is expected that a greater police presence will be experienced in the county's

villages. The way in which Newmarket is surrounded by Cambridgeshire often creates problems and a solution is high on the agenda.

Devolution

- It is expected that the formula for the introduction of this into the region will be published on 28 June.
- As the amalgamation of Cambs, Suffolk and Norfolk was unacceptable the latest proposal is that Cambs combines with Peterborough.
- The final solution is vital to the development of the infrastructure.

Dangerous Dogs

- Six months ago the law governing dangerous dogs was changed. Now owners are legally responsible if their dog bites someone and the police can be notified. Previously it could only be pursued under civil law.

District Council Report (AS)

Budget

- As identified above the ECDC is unchanged. This is the third year in a row that this has been achieved.
- As the grant from Central Government had been greater than expected plans were being into place to distribute this excess to 42 of the smaller villages. This should not be added to the precept but used for some worthwhile project to the benefit of all residents. Each small village will receive in the region of £2904.76.

Waste Collection

- It is pleasing to note that there has been a 11.2% increase in material for recycling which has raised the district from a low base up to 26th out of 320 Councils.
- ECDC has set up a trading company to take advantage of a change in the law. It is imperative that the Council develops new sources of revenue as from the 2019/2020 financial year the central government grant will disappear. Business rate collection will devolve to the district.

Boundary Commission

- The recommendation is that elected councillors will reduce in number.

Treasurer's Report ADT)

Parishioners can be confident that procedures are in place to ensure that the portion of the Council Tax (the Precept) which is paid into the current account by the District Council is well controlled. If the PC decides that a purchase, which is not included in the normal spend, is required grants and donations to cover the cost are sought. The resurfacing of the tennis court, carried out last year, is a perfect example of this approach. Club members, through their own efforts, raised the £15k+ required to carry out the work. The only two things involving the PC was a loan of 3k which is repayable over 3 years and, because the court belongs to the village, the recovery of the VAT paid. The calendar for the 2015/2016 financial year was as follows:-

External Audit. Commenced early April and will be submitted early June.

Budget Development

- Early October - the budget for the new 2016/2017 financial year was developed and from this the required level of precept was calculated. This task is made difficult by the fact that it is necessary to anticipate any spend or income up until 31 March 2017..

- Mid October - the financial information was emailed to members of the Finance sub-committee (Cllrs Rickard, Dean, Lane and Mr Cassidy as internal auditor) to prepare them for a meeting which was held in late October.
- Late October - at their meeting members of the sub-committee scrutinised the figures and as they were not happy with some totals, asked that the information be reworked..
- After this had been completed this information was considered by the full Council at the November meeting. Following the meeting, and the acceptance of precept requirement, the information was forwarded to ECDC to allow its financial committee time to develop its budget. In January as no changes to the budget were identified the level of Precept was confirmed to ECDC. It is pleasing to report that the Precept request has remained unchanged at £14000 since 2013.

Controls.

- In preparation for each meeting a list of all payments which need to be processed is prepared and sent to Councillors. During the meeting Councillors are given the opportunity to question any proposed payment. The majority of payments are made through the BACS system but if a cheque is required it will be signed by the two nominated Councillors.
- After the meeting any cheques are posted out and the remainder of the bills paid through the web. For each web payment a cover sheet is printed out and these together with a print out of the current state of the current account are presented to Councillors at the following month's meeting.
- The internal auditor is charged with ensuring that the correct policy and procedures and documents are in place and closely followed.
- The external audit process for the 2015/2016 financial year is well advanced. The Parish report is complete and will be posted to the auditor on 9 June.

At the beginning of the year the bank accounts stood at £14815.47 and when the year ended on 31 March 2016 they stood at £19378.86.

Internal Audit (TC)

The position of Internal Auditor, independent of the Council, was introduced by the Government as an on-going requirement to ensure that local Councils "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of their accounting records and control systems" and "to assist the council in fulfilling its responsibility for the protection and detection of fraud, error or mistakes".

I have now undertaken the duties of Internal Auditor to Lode Parish Council for 13 years. After helpful meetings with the Parish Clerk and the Finance Sub-Committee, I have inspected the documents provided, and obtained clarification of the various procedures undertaken within the Lode Parish Council to my satisfaction. I wish to report as follows

1. Book-keeping System. The basic requirements relating to the keeping of the Day Book, which contains details of all receipts and payment are satisfactory. Subsidiary records such as allotment rents, cemetery fees, and petty cash all support the Day Book. The Day Book and computer spreadsheets support the necessary Bank Reconciliation monitored by Finance Sub-Committee.

2. Financial Standing Orders and Payment Controls. The current Standing Orders include a Financial Procedures document and the role of the Finance Sub-Committee is clear. Purchasing procedures and payments are supported by the necessary paperwork. Quotations, cheque book stubs, payment receipts, invoices, etc. are all filed for checking. VAT is appropriately accounted for and recovered.

3. Risk Assessment and Asset Control. The Annual and on-going risk assessment achieved its objectives, and financial reserves and 'ring fenced' sums are clearly recorded. A regular review of assets, (mainly equipment), is undertaken as is the adequacy of insurance cover.

4. Budgetary, Income and Petty Cash Controls. The regular reporting of expenditure and any variances from the budget is under adequate control, with the involvement of Finance Sub-Committee.

The Precept and Grant income has been properly and promptly received. All cheque payments are checked against invoices and initialled on the cheque book stubs.

5. Payroll Controls. A review of arrangements for payments to employees and contractors, particularly regarding administration and documentation in accordance with PAYE/NIC regulations, was carried out to my satisfaction.

6. Year End Procedures. From my review to date of the Local Councils' Governance and Accountability Guidance, plus the helpful clarifications and provision of documents by Parish Clerk,

I feel that the Annual Return for Year Ending 31st March 2016 can be satisfactorily completed. to my satisfaction.

Anglesey Abbey (AF)

50 year celebrations: 2016 marks 50 years since Lord Fairhaven gifted Anglesey Abbey to the National Trust. There will be exhibitions throughout the year and a contemporary art installation from June–October.

New features: we will be installing a new feature in the garden from July this year – the Skylight Garden. This is designed to allow people to sit back and watch the clouds and to have a bit of quiet contemplation. It's sited at the bottom of the East Lawn which runs parallel to the Winter Walk.

Planning for the future: Last year Anglesey had 340,000 visitors, many of these are members visiting several times. Housing growth around Cambridge and the rising number of National Trust members means we will continue to grow and are anticipating seeing 400,000 visitors by 2020.

We are looking at ways of managing this growth which include the potential for timed tickets, extending and changing visitor routes, providing new features in different parts of the garden and developing and improving facilities. Our aim is not to attract new audiences, but to manage those who will come due to local expansion and to provide a great experience for everyone.

Extending house opening: This year we will be opening the house throughout the school holidays as a step towards opening it more regularly throughout year. By 2018 we hope it will be open every day.

Conservation work: We completed the conservation and renovation work in the Newmarket Corridor and have reopened it to visitors.

Volunteering: We now have more than 350 volunteers undertaking a variety of roles. This includes a more structured programme for the Duke of Edinburgh award and work experience.

Let estate: We have a number of cottages in the village which we work to keep in a good state of repair. Last year we renovated number 3 High St and have rented it out.

Cycleway (FP)

- Two matters continue to delay the project, the DNA testing for a colony of Great Crested Newts and the location of the site compound.
- An email from Cllr Platten reports that with regards to the DNA test the advice has been received is that the work should be carried out under a precautionary

method of works. Regarding the site compound; if it's to be off highway a licence will be required and being investigated.

- The email appears to give the green light for the project.

Fassage Hall

In the absence of Cllr Lane, Mr Lince as chairman reported:-

- A successful AGM had been held and the retiring committee re-elected en masse.
- There is an excellent team of volunteers who ensure that the Hall functions well.
- The bank account is in a healthy state (£13428.34 in hand) even though a sizeable sum had been spent on maintenance.

Lode Chapel (PW)

- Our main Sunday morning worship still takes place at Bottisham Primary School, whilst evening services are held in Lode Chapel on the second and fourth Sundays of each
- In the summer of 2015 the exterior of the Chapel was painted and a number of repairs carried out to windows and shutters and other external woodwork. The maintenance of the garden is undertaken by regular work parties from RENEW.
- The Chapel continues to be a well-used and appreciated resource for the village community, as well as for RENEW and other churches and Christian groups in the surrounding area.
- In August 2015 we were delighted to welcome, as the new minister of RENEW Church Rev Alan Bran, his wife Tammy and their four children Faith, Reuben, Benjamin and Grace
- The church has been able to purchase 4 Mill Road as a manse for the family, who have settled very happily into our village community

Lode Local Charity (ADT) continues to work well with grants being made to 74 pensioners and 1 student in July, and 77 pensioners and 1 student who also received an educational grant in November.

Lode Star (EM)

- As it has been for the past 39 years, in 2015, eleven issues of Lode Star were delivered to every house in the village. For many years Doreen Webb has managed the delivery team and sorted out the rounds. She is hanging up her delivery bags this year and we want to thank her publicly for all her work over the years. She and John Webb have played a huge role in ensuring village news comes to your door every month. Thank you to you both.
- I am the Editor but it is Susan Swannell as Production Editor who burns the midnight oil to get the magazine in great shape every month – as she has done every year since the first issue. An huge contribution to the community so everyone's thanks go to her.
- Thank you also to the Parish Council for the £200 donation. In 2015 Jeff Kempster took over as Treasurer from Mark Crawford. The accounts show that advertising revenue increased from £3750 in 2014 to £3929 for 2015. Printing costs fell from £4048 in 2014 to £3954 in 2015. Accounts available in July issue.
- As always our main thanks go to the contributors. There have been several new

ones this year but please don't feel shy about sending in your news, ideas, gripes, comments and pictures. Ian Middleton tells us that Lode Star gets the most hits on the website so that is encouraging. If it inspires you to improve the design and content please get in touch. Susan and I will welcome your input with open arms.

Mothers' Union (Ala)

The Anglesey Group Mothers' Union (which includes members from three of our five villages (Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck)) continues to meet in Lode Chapel on the 3rd Thursday afternoon of each month at 2.30pm.

During 2015 we enjoyed a programme of guest speakers on a wide range of topics, social events and combined activities with fellow members in the Fordham and Quy Deanery. Throughout the year we raised £52 for the Big Wheels Appeal, £59 for the Christmas Appeal and £60.90 for Overseas Fund.

Mother's Union is celebrating its' 140th Anniversary in 2016, with the theme for the year being "A Celebration of Faith". During the year various celebration events will be taking place at Branch, Deanery and Diocese level.

Neighbourhood Watch

- The NHW is in good form and the enthusiastic support from various members of the village who contribute is appreciated.
- Recently some damage occurred over night at the Fassage Hall, principally concerned with damage to bicycles. If anyone else saw three car loads of males and a scooter parked outside the church last Wednesday evening and the occupants heading off down Fassage Close at 9pm it would be appreciated, as I can pass onto the police under the incident number I raised with them on Thursday the 19th. Finally, there is perhaps some question as to the exact extent of the damage, so but let's see what the Fassage Hall committee conclude when they are all together at the meeting and I'll ask John when I see him in passing, what the actual damage was.

St James Church (JS)

A very busy year filled with some new opportunities and all the usual activities, allowing us to share time together in worship, social, and fund raising events, all of which form an important part of our lives together at St James.

During 2015 we started to plan, organise and implement the changes needed to grow our family at St James as part of the bigger Anglesey Benefice family. We obtained an Archdeacon's License which allowed us to remove 7 pews to create a social space at the back of the church, providing a safe and comfortable area to meet for coffee with tables and chairs.

In the warmer weather this space is being used by Play and Praise and Film Church. We hope to develop our Pop Up Café over the summer months. We are now applying for a Faculty to remove the rest of the pews and put in under floor heating. We hope the area will be used for lots of activities including displays, concerts, fund raising, sales, children's activities. We have also obtained a faculty to repair the clock workings and to add auto wind to it. The work will start in September. We have applied for a grant to help with the cost. We thank Ellis Weinberger and Graham Cox for winding the clock at the moment.

Ely Diocesan launched the Strategy for Growth which is a 10 year plan to look at the way we use our buildings, run our services and engage with our communities. Our vicar, Rev'd Sue Giles has to manage services in the 5 villages mostly on her own with the help of Lay ministers. Sadly there have been many funerals for Sue to conduct but on a happier note there have been more requests for baptisms. The Bishop has asked that we adopt a service format that is manageable. Hence the Sunday services rota has been reformatted to include an All Age Service at 11am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays every month alongside the Benefice Communion Services at 9.30am. The plan to provide lifts to other churches is successful, and so will be continued in 2016 for all those who need transport.

The St James website was updated and is linked to the Benefice website, which can be accessed from the Lode village website or independently.

Sports' Club (AL)

Football

- It is to be regretted the Bottisham/Lode football club has been unable to raise an adult team. Fortunately Burwell Tigers have been more than happy to use the facilities offered on the Passage and have expressed a wish to return next season.

Cricket

- As the club has lost a number of players it was relegated from division 1 of the league. As the players are quite youthful a request to place the team in division 3 was submitted and accepted.
- Following a great deal of hard work the cricket square is in a good condition. .

Social Club Report (CP)

The new charity has been approved by the Charity Commission and will be put in place over the next months and administrative processes communicated via Lodestar Magazine. The Club Committee continues to organise activities very successfully. A cycle of events approximately every 2 months is now in place.

Tree Report (CP)

- White Fen Wood is growing through nicely this year, and we have submitted a bid for a further 420 saplings for planting in the autumn.
- Hedging along the B1102 commenced last year along the Glebe field and is anticipated to continue in the further field towards Longmeadow in the autumn with submissions for plants to the Woodland trust and National Trust for plants. Permission has not been given for the middle field.
- The orchard trees are mostly doing well but 2 or 3 need replacing. The PC might like to consider funding these replacements.

Women's Institute (JC)

- This year has been an extra special year for WI's as it celebrated 100 years since its foundation in Britain on 16 September 1915 in LlanFairPG. The Federation had many special events throughout the year and we as an Institute celebrated in style by having a centenary meal which was thoroughly enjoyed by all members.
- Janet Aves and Fay Bawtree delighte members at our June meeting by wearing their finery – hats as well – that they had worn when they attended the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

- Members enjoyed a Centenary meeting where Michael Portillo was the speaker, regaling the audience with stories of his political career and his many railway journeys both in Britain and abroad. He sported a bright green jacket in honour of the WI.
- Once again this year our speakers have been both educational and entertaining. We had an open meeting in November – a Christmas cookery demonstration – where many members from our local WIs joined us.
- Members have been on many events organised by the Federation; Highclere Castle – better known as Downton Abbey – guided tours of Stetch worth and Mill Road cemetery; yearly quiz evening at Cottenham; a Magical Extravaganza; Val Dal shoe factory – which turned out quite an expensive day for some! During the year two members attended courses at Denham College, one using the bursary set up by our institute to help fund such courses.
- We again fielded two darts teams who are having a great deal of fun but very little success with the darts! It is a great way of meeting other WI members and hearing about their institutes.
- We again delivered Christmas presents to all known over 75's in the village which are always greatly appreciated.
- The programme for 2016/2017 has just been printed and it looks as though we are in for another interesting and entertaining year.

55/16 There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 9.15 pm.

..... **Signed by the Chairman Cllr R Stevens**