

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 9
March 2020

These minutes comprise 3 pages and appendix

Present: Cllrs R Stevens (Chairman), F Platten, T Crickmar, C Purbrook, R Small, M Walsh; D/Cllr C Cane; Mr D Durrant (member of the public)

23/20 Items from the public: Mr Durrant explained that he is applying to Cambridgeshire County Council for permission to alter the surface of part of Footpath 12 which runs SW from the bridge on the Fen Road close to the Jack of Clubs. On the specified section, he proposes to excavate a 200mm deep trench, lay a terram sheet which will be covered with clean certified hardcore and topped with fine planings and a rolled finish. The intention is to achieve a surface that will not be rutted by agricultural traffic and will be usable throughout the year. He asked the Parish Council to confirm that it has no objection to the work. Cllr Stevens responded that the Council has no objection

24/20 Apologies: Ms P Ingham-Watts (National Trust)

25/20 Co-option of Councillor: The Clerk reported that one application had been received in response to the advertisement of the vacancy. The Council unanimously endorsed the co-option of Meleena Walsh who duly signed the Acceptance of Office form and took her seat on the Council

26/20 Resignation of Councillor: Cllr Stevens reported that he had received notice of resignation from Cllr Ian Faulkner. The Council members recorded their gratitude for his service, including particular care of the Cemetery, and asked the Clerk to write to him

27/20 Declarations of interest: Cllr Purbrook declared a pecuniary interest in respect of the planning application on Gallys Farm

28/20 Minutes of meeting 10 February 2020: These were confirmed as a correct record with the addition of the following note in respect of the invitation from the National Trust's agent, Alison Williamson, to comment on the application to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) proposing diversions to Lode Footpaths 7 and 9. "There was no objection to the diversion proposed for path 7 where the currently designated route shows the path going through the pond at Sportsman's Pit. Regarding path 9, it was noted that the application states that the proposed route actually follows the path being walked on the ground. Cllr Stevens pointed that this was because the designated route cannot be walked as the area has been illegally fenced off. No reason has been given for this and it would be preferable for walkers to be able to pass through woodland on the originally designated route. These comments were passed to the Trust's agent"

29/20 Matters arising:

- **Replacement trees for felled Silver Maple in Northfields:** Steve Alexander, District Highway Maintenance Mgr, CCC, has confirmed that Bob Rossiter will work with Liz King and Kevin Drain (ECDC Tree Officer) to replace the maple with a semi-mature Whitebeam placed in a tree pit, as well as 3 Mountain Ash trees in the cemetery and replace the two trees felled in Fairhaven Close. Cllr Stevens agreed to mark the trees in the cemetery which need replacement
- **Highways, Swan Corner:** Steve Alexander has confirmed that CCC will undertake the pruning of the Willow tree whilst continuing to research the owner of the land. The Clerk will forward the advice from Cathy White about how the pruning should be undertaken
- **Cycle Way maintenance:** There has still been no response from CCC regarding the request from C/Cllr Shuter for the maintenance team to ensure that the area behind the hedge is properly maintained, as the normal equipment operates from the road and is not suitable to be used on the path. In the meantime, Ms Ingham-Watts advised that she is pursuing Central Office for the agreement made with National Trust at the time the path was constructed to see what was stated about maintenance
- **Path to Quay by the river opposite Lode Mill:** Cllr Platten contacted Ms Ingham-Watts about the muddy state of the path following the last meeting. The matter was quickly dealt with and Cllr

Platten has passed on the thanks of the Council for such a prompt response

- **Lode Cricket Club:** Contact has been made with the Chair of the Cricket Club to seek a meeting to draw up a revised agreement for the use of the facilities at the Fassage recreation Ground as the previous one has now expired
- **Trees to replace those felled on A1303:** Chris Foyle has indicated that CCC's preference is that "locations are found off highway to absolve highways of any future maintenance liability. Any locations within the highway boundary would need to be accepted by the local highway officer and not within 15 feet (4.5 metres) of the centre line of the carriageway. Planting of the trees would have to be carried out by the parish in non highway locations." Liz King advises that the trees would be best planted in October and agreed to liaise between the PC and CCC. The PC will determine a proposal for which type of tree is to be planted in which location(s) and advise Chris Foyle by the end of June. The Clerk will advise Mr Foyle of this timetable
- **Land south of 60 Longmeadow:** CCC's Principal Urban Surveyor responded to the PC's proposal that the land to the rear of the site should be developed as woodland and/or play area as follows: "...this [land] remains part of CCC's Farm estate and at the current time is not offered for sale or otherwise. The County Council's policy is not to dispose of the Farms Estate where this is income producing, in order to support the Council's Services generally." The Clerk will advise Hastoe Housing of the imminent marketing of this land. D/Cllr Cane commented that while CCC will be seeking full market value for this land a prospective social housing developer could point out that this land has community as well as monetary value. She confirmed that there would be an affordable housing condition for all developments exceeding 9 homes

30/20 County Council Report: None

31/20 District Council Report: D/Cllr Cane drew attention to ECDC's decision to cease funding Citizen's Advice Rural Cambridgeshire as set in the report circulated before the meeting (attached to these minutes). This primarily affects residents in the northern part of the District Council area; those from this part will continue to be able to access the CAB in Newmarket. She also highlighted concern about the District Council's financial strategy which entails using reserves to fund shortfalls for the next two financial years. This would lead to a shortfall of £3.3 million in 2022/23. She highlighted the meetings related to the questionnaire on Bus, Walking and Cycling, as well as the District Councillors surgery to take place in the Shed from 6.30pm on 31 March followed by "meet your Councillors" from 7.45pm

32/20 Parish Reports:

- **Anglesey Abbey:** Ms Ingham-Watts sent a report highlighting that February had been a challenging month with storms and poor weather – it is hoped that Spring will bring better fortunes. She indicated that discussion on tree felling plans could be pursued in the Liaison Group meeting to take place on 11 March. There have been a number of petty crime incidents over the past few months including damage to the mobility scooters. There are plans to enhance the stability of the perimeter fence and hedges, starting in the Orchard
- **Fassage Hall & Recreation Ground:** Cllr Stevens said that he had placed white posts to show the outer boundary around the football pitch. The footpath sign on the Longmeadow entrance to the ground has been positioned to direct walkers across the ground avoiding the Cricket pitch along the definitive legal route. The ground source heating system appears to be working well. Cllr Stevens pointed out that it is necessary to heat the changing room water system each week, even when there are no bookings, to combat legionella
- **Fassage Green Plan:** Cllr Small circulated the final version of the plan following receipt of comments and a meeting of the Working Group. He outlined the spending plan for the current financial year and proposed that the amount of £1,000 allocated within the Council's budget for maintenance include costs related to volunteers who fulfil the bulk of the maintenance tasks. This was agreed by the Council

33/20 Parish Council Reports:

- **Finance Approvals:** The following payments were agreed:

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£393.33	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£169.16	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Cartridge Shop	Printer ink (pd by card)	£37.99	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
CAPALC	Membership and Data Protection insurance	£355.84	Local Govt Act 1972 s111

- **Parish Engagement Event, 7 March:** The event was very successful in giving a forum for residents of the village to find out about the work of the Council and other organisations as well as being able to express their own views. The meeting expressed gratitude to Cllr Crickmar for the extensive preparation and planning which underpinned its success. Cllr Crickmar had circulated a summary of the key messages emerging. She drew attention to a suggestion that the Fassage Hall have a premises licence which would permit the showing of films etc. She is meeting with someone from a neighbouring village who has experience of what can be done within a community space such as the Fassage Hall. Another significant outcome was that four people signed up as volunteers for the Fassage Green
- **Planning:**
 - **20/00157/FUL Gallys Farm, Lode Fen** (Cllr Purbrook withdrew from the meeting for this item). The following comments were made:
 - It was estimated that the error in location of the buildings in relation to the originally agreed Plan could be as much as 20 metres and there was concern that this had not been identified at the beginning of the construction phase
 - There is general concern at creeping development in the Fen but the Council recognised that this development is appropriate in scale for the agricultural business activity carried out at this location
 - In order to prevent any application for conversion of the barn to residential use at some point in the future, the Council wishes to see a section 106 agreement completed to cover this point in perpetuity
 - **20/00307/TRE 1 High Street, Lode:** The Parish Council commented as follows:
 - T1 Sycamore – No objection to proposed work. A TPO should be applied to this tree
 - T2 Holm Oak – Whilst regretting the loss of a mature example of a native species, the Council believes it could be problematic in the future and accepts that it be felled
 - T3 Spruce – No objection to proposed felling
 - T4 Chestnut – The Council believes that there is no justification for the removal of this tree and that a TPO should be applied
 - T5 8 Thujas – No objection to proposed fellingWhilst outside the scope of the comments to the District Council, the Parish Council encouraged the National Trust to consider replacing the lost trees with an equivalent mass of planting within the parish
- **Request from Swaffham Bulbeck PC for a dog bin at Red Tile Farm:** Cllr Stevens reported that he advised the Swaffham Bulbeck Clerk that the appropriate location for the bin on the road actually lies within Swaffham Bulbeck. SBPC apologised for the error

34/20 Correspondence/items of interest:

- The Council noted the items of correspondence received. With reference to the bid by Wicken Fen for funding for the “Eyes over the Fen” bird hide circulated by Cllr Faulkner before his resignation, the Council confirmed its support in principle for the application
- Cllr Stevens reported that Mr Hatley had offered to repaint the village sign: the offer was gratefully accepted

35/20 Date of next meeting: Monday 6 April 2020 at 7.30pm

Appendix: District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils March 2020

The administration at East Cambs cancelled their grant to Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC), without warning and without discussion with Councillors prior to the recommendation to Committee. CARC provides a range of independent advice to East Cambs residents, but they explained that without this grant from East Cambs they would have to close. East Cambs will be expanding their services to cover the housing advice which CARC currently delivers. The housing advice team at East Cambs are excellent, but they are not independent and their advice is limited to housing and connected matters. We therefore supported the call-in to review the decision and argued for a 6 month delay for full discussions with CARC and involving all Councillors.

The Budget for 2020/21 was agreed with a freeze in Council tax. The budget will be balanced for 2020/21 and 2021/22 by drawing down £5.9 million from reserves. But by 2022/23 there will be a shortfall of £3.3 million. The council's auditor expressed some concern about this, recommending – "We suggest that the Council could be more transparent in its planning around the areas it has identified to help bridge funding gaps and we recommend that the Council considers updating its Medium Term Financial Strategy and its underlying assumptions more frequently than the current annual cycle." We supported proposals to set up a Strategic Planning Committee, to make sure the Council was planning for the future of the area in terms of housing, employment, transport, environmental sustainability etc. We also supported a proposal to employ a member of staff to liaise with Parish Councils to help develop and implement initiatives to address the climate emergency. These 2 proposals would have required a 1% increase in Council tax. These proposals were not accepted.

The Bus, Walking and Cycling Questionnaire will be delivered to everyone from 9 March. We are holding meetings to discuss these issues with local residents:

Monday 23 March 7.30 – Poppy Room, Sports & Social Club, Bottisham

Monday 30 March 7.30 – Memorial Hall, Brinkley

Thursday 2 April 7.30 – Small Hall, Swaffham Prior

The Mayor is consulting on his CAM Metro Plans – no consultation is planned in East Cambs and there are no detailed plans for East Cambs or to address congestion at the Quy roundabout or the A14/A142 junction at Newmarket. One of our colleagues is pressing the mayor to arrange some consultation in East Cambs.

Charlotte seconded a motion calling for our Planning decisions to take full account of the Climate Emergency, eg by making sure the houses are built to high sustainability standards and car traffic is not increased. Unfortunately, this motion was voted down by the administration.

The Council is consulting on two Supplementary Planning Documents on the Natural Environment and Self-Build. These are important documents, so please let the District Council know your views.

Our next Councillors' Surgery is Tuesday 31st March at 6.30pm in the Passage Hall, Lode, followed by 'meet your Councillors' at 7.45pm in The Shed, Lode.