

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 13
September 2021

These minutes comprise 5 pages

Present: Cllrs R Small (Chair), R Stevens, F Platten, C Purbrook, T Crickmar; M Walsh
 C/Cllr A Sharp; D/Cllr C Cane

Items from the public: None

54/21 Chair's Welcome: Cllr Small welcomed those present to the meeting

55/21 Apologies: D/Cllr J Trapp

56/21 Declarations of interest: Cllr Small declared an interest in the Planning Application 21/01192/FUL the architect for which is his wife, Liz King. He took no part in the Council's determination of its view on this application

57/21 Minutes of meeting 12 July 2021 – these were approved unanimously

58/21 Clerk's Report: Regarding the quotation for restoring the vandalised bus shelter, D/Cllr Cane reported that she had chased this again on behalf of the Council. The correspondence regarding establishing a Bush Craft Group will be considered under Environment and Open Space matters

59/21 Finance matters:

a) **The following payments were approved:**

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£405.30	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£163.14	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Fen Group	Installation of paths (already approved and paid)	£14,682.00+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Zoom (pd by card)	Remote meeting software (DD)	£14.39	Local Govt Act 1972 s 111
Truelink	Grasscutting etc	£91.80 + VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Mill Blossom Flowers	Wellbeing Workshop (FCC Grant co-finance)	£50.00	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19

In relation to the caretaking of the Cemetery, the Clerk advised that Mr Jaggard is temporarily unable to do the work following a fall. The mower is also awaiting a part that is difficult to obtain. Mr Jaggard is seeking to sub-contract the work in the meantime

ACTION: Cllr Small will make the claim to FCC for the 2nd stage payment of the grant

ACTION: The Clerk will cancel the Zoom subscription

b) **Purchase of wild flower seeds for Fassage Green:** It was proposed by Cllr Walsh and seconded by Cllr Purbrook that £343 from the Parish Council's co-finance contribution to the FCC Grant be allocated for this purpose. This was agreed unanimously

c) **Purchase of trees with the remaining allocation from CCC's A1303 tree replacement fund:** The Council agreed that orders for further trees could be made up to the value of £1250 being the remaining allocation

d) **Pre-approval for reimbursement of invoices from Well-being session facilitators:** The Council agreed that the Clerk can pay these invoices when Cllr Crickmar has confirmed the session has been provided within the total allocation of £300 (£50 for each of six sessions)

60/21 Planning:

- a) **21/01020/LBC – Anglesey Abbey:** Proposed internal fire protection works. Council members had raised no concerns when this application was circulated over the summer and noted that it had now been approved by ECDC
- b) **21/01192/FUL – 36 High Street, CB25 9EW:** Demolition of existing rear porch and single storey outbuilding. New single storey rear extension, attic dormer extension to rear, 2 new windows at ground floor in existing flank elevation, and 2 rooflights.

The Council reviewed the plans and recorded no concerns with the application

Councillors expressed the view that hard copies of applications should be provided now that meetings are again taking place on a face to face basis. D/Cllr Cane will raise the issue with the Planning Team

61/21 District Council Report: D/C Cane referred to her report appended at the end of these minutes. She drew particular attention to the new A-Z Waste Guide setting the detail of what can be recycled in the East Cambs area. It was agreed that Cllr Platten would make this the key focus of the Parish Council article for the next Lode Star.

D/Cane is now on the Audit Committee and as such is no longer able to sit on Finance & Assets Committee. She noted a concern that the Risk Register records a failure in IT systems as low risk despite several recent actual failures.

She also noted that the Operations Committee had withdrawn a paper on Civil Parking Enforcement which is a sign that the Council does not wish to get involved with this issue. There is also concern about a possible cut to the funding for CAB in Newmarket; this means that people who find this the most accessible location will no longer have an alternative to the Council's own service which would not be independent if the service user has concerns about the Council itself.

The Council has approved a feasibility study into the provision of a cycleway from Swaffham Prior and Reach to Burwell. A planning application has now been received for a new crematorium at Mepal on the site of the old leisure centre. D/Cllr Cane noted that public opinion was substantially against the proposal.

In response to a question, she advised that the condition of the Guildhall was still an open matter for the Enforcement Team and would be progressed now that restrictions have been eased. The collapsing wall in Station Road was considered by the Conservation Officer on account of its age but needs to be referred to Building Control as it is in a poor state

62/21 Council Administration matters:

- a) **Budget for secure cloud-based software for storage and sharing of documents, including subscription for gov.uk domain:** The principle of making the change was agreed at the last meeting and an indicative cost of £500 noted for an unsupported service. After discussion it was agreed that a supported service is required and it was agreed that this could proceed if it could be purchased within an overall budget of £750
- b) **Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks:** Cllr Small proposed this as a solution to ensure that the Clerk has access to the latest advice on the range of a parish council's activity as recommended in the recent training with CAPALC. The cost would be £8 joining fee and £112 for the annual subscription. This was agreed

63/21 Environmental and Open Space matters:

- a) **Fassage Car Park – opening hours and security:** Cllr Small sought views from the Council on the next steps with this issue. He noted that there had been no recurrence of the late night visits to the Car Park by young people from outside the area since early summer.

He raised the question of whether it was appropriate to have a lockable bollard that could be put in place in the event of any future problems. He was concerned that the Council should be prepared rather than reacting after the event if problems should recur. After discussion it was proposed that a sign should be put up indicating opening hours so that there is a clear reference point if physical restrictions do need to be considered in the future. He asked that proposals about the wording of the sign be circulated by email between members so they could be agreed at the October meeting. The proposal to erect a sign was moved by Cllr Purbrook and seconded by Cllr Stevens. 5 Councillors supported the motion and there was one abstention

- b) Fassage Green & FCC Grant update:** The Fen Group completed the work on the paths close to the agreed schedule and on budget; they absorbed increased costs which arose above the level of their quotation. Cllr Platten noted that the new grass on the Zip wire site would benefit from a light mow to ensure it is robust when the wire is installed.
ACTION: Cllr Platten will ask Charlie Platten if he can mow the site
Cllr Small said that he had met with two staff from the National Trust who gave advice on woodland management. They also advised the Council to arrange for a contractor to cut the Fassage Green at the end of the summer and take away the cuttings. The Clerk indicated that he had asked Truelink to quote for the work, which they had indicated would be more labour intensive as their normal equipment would have difficulty accessing the site. The Council agreed a figure which would enable the work to proceed if the quotation falls below it.
- c) Public footpath around the Fassage Recreation Ground from Wild Rose Cottage to the Longmeadow path:** Cllr Stevens reported that he had met with Jonathan Clark from Highways who had indicated that while the Parish Council is responsible for dealing with any encroachment on the path, Highways remains responsible for maintaining the path.
ACTION: Cllr Stevens will contact him to seek a timetable for the renovation of the path
In this context, C/Cllr Sharp said that he had asked the relevant officer to provide the schedule of pavement and footpath repairs planned by Highways
- d) Allotment water supply:** Cllr Small said that the provision of three troughs, linked to the Cemetery water supply, would make a considerable difference to allotment holders particularly those at a distance from the Cemetery. He estimated that the cost would be around £1500. This was agreed in principle by the Council as a basis for consultation with Allotment holders and, if agreed by them could be put into the draft budget for 2022-23 which will be developed for the November meeting.
- e) Proposal for Bush Craft group on Fassage Green:** Cllr Walsh is proposing a group of up to 8 young people to take part in monthly 2 hour sessions and sought the support of the Council. It was commented that this accords with the intention behind the purchase of Fassage Green as a way of helping local people connect with the natural environment and was supported unanimously by the Council members. Cllr Purbrook suggested there may be an opportunity for the group to do some activity at Oily Hall; he will explore the possibility with the National Trust
- f) Offer to plant daffodils in memory of a local resident:** Cllr Small had received a letter seeking approval to plant daffodil bulbs on the Fassage Recreation ground along the fence at the rear of the Old Vicarage. The Council supported this proposal

64/21 Committee Matters: Cllr Small advised that he will bring draft terms of reference for the Employment Committee to the October meeting

65/21 Highway and Footpath matters:

- a) **Local Highways Improvement Application:** The draft application had been circulated by the Clerk and Cllr Stevens responded by suggesting that the proposal for dropped kerbs should be extended to three location rather than the one originally proposed. These locations would be the junction of Abbey Lane with the High Street, and on Station road adjacent to Sunnyridge Farm. The third pair would involve adding a new pair of dropped kerbs on Lode Road further from the crossroads with the B1102, next to the bus layby, to allow for safer crossing by pedestrians and cyclists. C/Cllr Sharp indicated his support for the proposal but advised that officers from Highways would meet with Council representatives to indicate whether the proposal meets the criteria set by Highways and to recommend improvements where appropriate.

ACTION: Cllrs Platten and Stevens will complete the application and submit before the deadline of 29 September

- b) **ECDC Bus Services, Cycling and Walking Routes Consultation:** D/Cllr Cane advised that emphasis on the information sought from Parish Councils was on Cycling and Walking routes.

ACTION: Cllrs Platten and Stevens agreed to complete the survey on the spreadsheet for sign-off by the Council at its October meeting

66/21 County Council Report: C/Cllr Sharp advised that he had attended a meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee and also of the Audit and Accounts Committee. The latter considered a report on the "Farmgate" enquiry which remains confidential at this stage. He is attending a Children's Services Committee on 14 September and also reported on his liaison with the B1102 Group reflecting on their concerns over transport issues within this part of East Cambs. He noted that the Mayor of the Combined Authority has stated that more bus services are proposed but so far very little detail has been provided. He and D/Cllr Dupre have arranged a call with the Mayor to discuss these matters

67/21 Correspondence:

- a) **Bottisham United Charities:** The Clerk of the Charities has approached the Parish Council for nominees to replace the two representatives for Lode who had sadly died recently. She indicated that Mr Sale was interested and the Council agreed to support his nomination if he chooses to stand

ACTION: The Clerk will contact Mr Sale

- b) **Contact from Julie Sale regarding storage at the Fassage Hall:** This contact arises from the amount of equipment held by Little Legs Pre-School who hire the hall on weekdays. It was suggested that the original agreement may have limited the amount of equipment to capacity already existing within the hall.

ACTION: Cllr Platten will discuss with the Fassage Hall Management Committee and bring forward any proposals from them at the October meeting

68/21 Date of next meeting: Monday 11 October at 7.30 pm in the Fassage Hall

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils – September 2021

To reduce the waste sent to landfill, ECDC have created a new web page to help people decide how to dispose of their waste. It aims to be comprehensive, so if you have something to dispose of which isn't on the list ask Darren Hughes Darren.hughes@eastcambs.gov.uk , who will find the answer and add the item to the A-Z.

Full Council approved the Corporate Plan for the year, Special Responsibility Allowances for the new Audit Committee and amended the Constitution so that members cannot sit on the Finance & Assets Committee as well as the Audit Committee. This decision appears to arise from the incorrect assumption that the Audit Committee scrutinises the work of the Finance & Assets Committee, so there could be a conflict of interest. In fact the Audit Committee scrutinises all the Council's activities. The decision has meant that Charlotte has stood down from Finance & Assets so that she can sit on the Audit Committee.

Finance & Assets Committee approved funding for feasibility studies on several cycle routes, including one between Swaffham Prior, Reach and Burwell. The Bus, walking and cycle working group is also asking Parish Councils to provide information on the standard of existing pathways.

The initial meeting of the Audit Committee was unsatisfactory, as key officers were not present because the Chief Executive overruled members' requests for those officers to attend. This resulted in most questions being unanswered, although answers were sent to members about two weeks after the meeting. The committee agreed for IT to be reviewed by Internal Audit as a high risk since the email system had already failed twice. It then failed for a third time a few days after the meeting and has still not been fully resolved. The Risk Register had shown failure as 'unlikely' – even though it had already happened twice.

Operational Services Committee will meet on 13 September, business will include parking enforcement with a paper which accepts that the Community Support Accreditation Scheme is not an option, but continues to refuse to consider taking on civil parking enforcement. Instead ECDC are asking the police to target hotspots and use volunteers. It will also receive a presentation from the Newmarket CAB. This is an important presentation, as the Council will be reviewing their payment to the Newmarket CAB as part of their budget for 2022-23 and we fear the funding will be cut with ECDC confident it can handle the work in house. This will take away the clear independence which is provided by the CABs.

Finance & Assets was due to meet on 23 September, but has been postponed to 5 October. There is no agenda yet for this meeting.

The planning application has been submitted for a cemetery and crematorium at the site of the Mepal Outdoor Centre. The public consultation showed little support for the proposal.