

Lode Parish Council
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 14
February 2022

These minutes comprise 5 pages

Present: Cllrs R Small (Chair), R Stevens, C Purbrook, F Platten
D/Cllr J Trapp; C/Cllr A Sharp (from 8.20 pm)

Items from the public: None

126/21 Chair's Welcome:

127/21 Co-option of Councillor: Christina Ferdinando was introduced to members of the Council having submitted an application to be considered for co-option. It was proposed by Cllr Small and seconded by Cllr Purbrook that she be co-opted. This was approved unanimously and Cllr Ferdinando signed the declaration confirming her acceptance of office.

128/21 Apologies: D/Cllr C Cane

129/21 Declarations of interest: None

130/21 Meeting 10 January 2022

- a) **Minutes:** These were approved unanimously
- b) **Clerk's Report:** The Clerk advised that had today received notice from Truelink that the business is being restructured and that they will no longer be providing grasscutting services to the Council. He had contacted neighbouring villages and it appears that Quy PC has received a similar email

ACTION: Clerk to seek prices from alternative providers

131/21 Finance:

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

J E Giles	Salary & PAYE	£405.30	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
W Jaggard	Cemetery	£173.39	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Truelink	Hedge cutting	£391+VAT	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10
Fassage Hall	Litter Picking– room hire	£12.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
J Giles	Printer paper	£2.38+VAT	Local Govt Act 1972 s111
AtoB1102 Group	Contribution to signs	£30.00	Local Govt Act 1972 s111

132/21 Planning:

a) **Item for comment:**

21/01524/RMA – site South of 60 Longmeadow, CB25 9HA

The following comments were made to be submitted to ECDC planning Team:

'With reference to the newly submitted drawing A101 Rev C, the Parish Council remains unclear about the significance of the "Red lines amended as per the Planners' request". It questions whether these red lines show the extent of the work included within the development or whether they indicate ownership. The Parish Council believes that the ditch and verge bordering Longmeadow remains in the ownership of the County Council. It seeks clear documentation of the boundaries of ownership and asks the Planners to set clear conditions regarding responsibility for future

maintenance in line with ownership.

'The Parish Council owns the notice board and telephone box situated on the verge in front of the development and asks that contractors take care not to damage the power supply to the kiosk during the development phase.'

b) The Council noted the following applications approved by East Cambs District Council:

21/01623/FUL – The Rowans, 5 Station Road, CB25 9HB

Replacement front entrance porch

21/01728/FUL – 61 Lode Rd, CB25 9ET

Single story rear extension with mono pitched roof and internal alterations. Garage conversion with removal of existing double doors to front and replace with matching window (retrospective)

133/21 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS: D/Cllr Trapp referred to the report circulated at the beginning of the month. He noted concern that the Audit Committee had had to meet without the presence of the external auditor who was unable to attend due to Covid restrictions. He noted that if remote meetings had been permissible, the meeting would have been much more effective.

He advised that Waste Collections are being reviewed to make them more efficient. This is likely to mean a change from Thursday to Monday for the normal collection day. It was pointed out that notifying local residents through Lode Star would require submission to the Editor by 20 February at the latest.

134/21 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS: C/Cllr Sharp reported that the budget meeting to set the County Council precept took place on 8 February, when an increase of 4.99% was approved (being the maximum possible without a referendum being called). The Conservative group supported the 3% increase to social care budgets but opposed the increase to reserves from 3 to 4%. The group also proposed significantly greater investment in flood protection.

He indicated that the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan for the Cambridgeshire area is being delayed under purdah rules, as S Cambridgeshire has elections in May. This means that consultation will begin once the elections are over. This is likely to affect the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Cambridge Eastern Access project as well.

C/Cllr Sharp reported that prices are being sought by Highways for the repair of older part of the Passage perimeter path with a view to work taking place during next financial year. Regarding the willow tree on Swan Corner, he reported that Highways have reiterated their view that the land is not theirs and they have no responsibility. (See below under Highways & Footpath matters.)

135/21 PARISH COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2022: The Parish Council confirmed the key areas of work as identified in the January meeting with additional comments:

- a) Co-opt a new Councillor to fill the remaining vacancy
- b) Passage Car Park – resolve outstanding issues, including the installation of the agreed sign and responding to the resident from 24A Fairhaven Close (see below) ; review effectiveness of measures taken during the Autumn
- c) Passage Hall – develop an improvement programme to secure more storage and apply for grant funding as appropriate
- d) Guildhall – maintain liaison with Mr Durrant as he reviews options for renovation to facilitate community use (Cllr Small noted that Mr Durrant is planning to hold an open session to allow local residents to see the building and offer suggestions for its future use)
- e) Resurface old section of perimeter path of the Passage Recreation Ground -liaise with Highways at start of new financial year (see County Council report above)

- f) Liaise with Sports Clubs using the Fassage Hall and Recreation Ground facilities to ensure they are sustainable (Cllr Platten advised that some local clubs are exploring whether to use the Recreation Ground as their base but a key issue is white-lining – the current approach is expensive and not durable.)
- g) Work with Fassage Hall Management Committee (FHMC) over additional storage : Cllr Platten indicated that the new metal store will require a concrete base rather than paving stones. Cllr Small indicated that the lead responsibility for this lies with the FHMC although agreement to creating the base is required from the Lode with Longmeadow Village Trust (LLVT) and the Parish Council as joint owners of the land. Once a suitable quotation for the cost of the base has been obtained this can be commissioned by the Parish Council as managing trustee of the Fassage Hall Charity but the cost would need to be borne by the FHMC
- h) Clear the area next to the Basket Ball court and seek views on its future use : Council members expressed gratitude to Cllr Stevens for the considerable work he has done clearing brambles. Cllr Walsh will seek views from local residents about this area in the March Lode Star article. It was agreed that, in the absence of other suggestions, further trees could be planted
- i) Consider offer of Leadership Courses using the Fassage Hall and surrounding facilities offered by a local organisation for the benefit of local people
- j) Plan for installation of improved water supply for the allotments

136/21 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE MATTERS

- a) **Response to request raised by the owner of 24A Fairhaven Close:** Cllr Small introduced the paper circulated to the Council. He had met with the resident who indicated that he believes the concerns raised have been taken seriously. The Council considered the risk assessment and proposed mitigations of the identified risks.
The Council approved the risk assessment and mitigations as an appropriate response to the concerns raised by the resident. The Council determined that the request to sell part of the allotment land to facilitate vehicular access from Fairhaven Close should not be agreed
ACTION: Seek quotations for new road markings identified in the Risk Assessment (Clerk)
Order and arrange installation of agreed sign for the Car Park (Cllr Small)
- b) **Update on work by ECDC to remove graffiti from the bus shelters:** The Clerk reported that he had been contacted by the officer in ECDC responsible for the removal of the graffiti who has said that he will order replacement Perspex panels since the removal of the graffiti had not been carried out in the way agreed. He has not yet responded to an enquiry about how the new panels might be protected with anti-graffiti paint. C/Cllr Sharp confirmed that the Police are aware of the anti-social behaviour issues in Lode and Bottisham and action is being taken
- c) **Confirmation of extension of Natural Cambridgeshire Community Grant:** Cllr Small advised that Natural Cambridgeshire had allowed an extension until the autumn to allow the grant works to be completed
- d) **To receive an update on the installation of the new metal store on the Recreation Ground:** see 135/21 g) above
- e) **To receive an update on the Jubilee Celebrations for the village:** Cllr Platten advised that plans for this event are being drawn up by a Committee. It was agreed that they will operate as a Working Group on behalf of the Parish Council and will complete the insurer's event form in a similar way to the fete in previous years. This should be less complicated as outside stallholders (with the possible exception of an ice cream van) will not be involved

- f) **To confirm acceptance of a donation from the Half Marathon Group and agree expenditure on hard standing and fixings for a seat purchased from the donation:** Cllr Platten explained that the Half Marathon Group is winding up and has offered to donate its remaining funds to the village. The donation will cover a robust seat to be placed in the area adjacent to the Zip Wire and about 2 meters from the path. The donation may also cover the cost of a concrete base and fixings – the Council agreed to cover any shortfall in the cost of the base and fixings
ACTION: Cllr Platten will confirm LLVT agreement to this and seek a quotation from the same supplier(s) as that quoting for the base of the storage unit

137/21 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

- a) **Local Highways Improvement Fund including agreement to additional contribution of £159 to reach 10% of estimated project cost:** Cllrs Stevens and Platten will represent the Parish Council at the virtual panel on 21 February. The feasibility study has estimated a slightly higher cost than originally envisaged requiring an increased contribution from the Parish Council of £159. This was agreed
- b) **To receive an update from the AtoB1102 Group:** Cllr Platten referred to the reports she had circulated in respect of the AtoB1102 Group. The group had purchased signs to raise awareness about the group to which the Parish Council had previously agreed to contribute £30. These were removed without trace within a day of being put up which was a considerable disappointment to all involved.
- c) **To agree a letter to Highways finalising action to make the Willow tree on Swan Corner safe:** Cllr Small reported that this issue had been raised yet again by another resident and voiced the Council's concern that the matter was still not satisfactorily resolved despite voluminous correspondence and numerous meetings with Highways staff. Highways had agreed that the tree would be made safe in the context of compensation agreed by Highways for the illegal felling of the Silver Maple at the entrance to Northfields. In the event, such work as was done was not carried out by a specialist and has not made the tree safer. There was discussion about the options including whether the Parish Council could arrange for work to be done and send a bill to the County Council. There was concern that this would set a precedent for the County Council to avoid its obligations. It was agreed that, if necessary to support the case, a report could be commissioned from Eastern Tree Surgery at an estimated cost of £75.

ACTION: Cllr Small and the Clerk will draft a letter to the County Council setting out the requirement that the matter is resolved and highlighting the liability that could arise to the County if injury or damage arises from known risks of which they have been informed on numerous occasions

C/Cllr Sharp will alert senior management in Highways to the requirement for urgent action

138/21 LODE STAR ARTICLE: Cllr Walsh undertook to write the article for the March edition

139/21 ITEMS FOR MARCH AGENDA

- Invite representative of the AtoB1102 Group to address the Council at this or subsequent meeting
- Consider cutting back the hedge at the rear of the Cemetery to facilitate vehicle using the proper location for turning rather than using the grass

140/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 14 March at 7.30 pm in the Passage Hall

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm

District Councillors' Report for February

Businesses in East Cambridgeshire which lost significant trade because of the Omicron variant are being encouraged to check if they are eligible for a one-off COVID grant of up to £6000. The deadline for applications is 11 February. Hairdressers, mobile caterers, beauticians and taxi drivers are among the list of businesses that could be eligible for the eighth round of the Additional Restrictions Grant which is being administered on behalf of the Government by East Cambridgeshire District Council. Specifically, the discretionary grant is available to support businesses that can demonstrate they have lost more than 30% of income because of the coronavirus restrictions and the rise of the Omicron variant between 13 December 2021 and 9 January 2022. For more detail see - Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Round 8 | East Cambridgeshire District Council (eastcambs.gov.uk)

The Audit Committee in January was impacted by Covid because neither the external nor internal auditors were able to attend. This hampered discussion of their reports. The major item from the external auditors was noting that there had been an error when consolidating the trading companies into the Council's Group accounts. This had meant that the income and expenditure figures had to be adjusted by £4m. Furthermore, the figures for 2019/20 published last year also had to be adjusted by £4m. Because the errors were in income and expenditure, they did not impact on the bottom line. Nevertheless, they are material and higher than the £2m which was reported to the Committee in November. The internal auditor found that 'the Council was not compliant with the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code', because not all payments over £5,000 had been properly recorded. Despite this, the risk of non-compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements on the Risk Register had been reduced, with the assertion that 'There are no known issues of non-compliance.' When asked to explain why they said there were no known issues of non-compliance when the internal auditor had said there were, they replied 'The Risk Management Group are awaiting the outcome of the Internal Review in Q4 and will make the necessary adjustment (if required).' Whilst we hope the review in Q4 finds that all contracts and payments are properly documented and recorded, the risk register should reflect what is currently known.

The Operational Services Committee, which is the Committee which oversees waste services, was due to meet in January but this meeting was cancelled. The main item for the Finance & Assets Committee was to review the budget for 2022/23. The Finance Officer briefed us on his 2022/23 budget proposal before the meeting, and this was presented to the committee for debate. The Administration tabled a motion to refer the budget proposal to Full Council where there is less opportunity for scrutiny and debate. It seems as if the Administration will rewrite the budget, and it seemed pointless to debate the budget that was presented as it might be different. So we await the papers for full Council on 22 February to see what the budget proposals are. February's Planning Committee has been cancelled, so the only meeting in February will be Full Council on the 22.

Although Councils can no longer hold remote meetings, many Councils have continued to livestream their meetings so that residents can continue to see the debate as decisions are made. East Cambs does not do this. We felt that was a missed opportunity especially for our residents and others not in or near Ely. With other Councillors we asked for this to be reconsidered and the Council has now committed to livestreaming Council and Committee meetings, starting with Full Council on 21 April 2022.

Our next Councillors' Surgery will be on Thursday 17 February at 6.30. Meeting ID: 865 7631 8040, Passcode: 490667. If you prefer to join by 'phone, the number is 01314 601196