

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 11 September 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Hughes (Chairman), J Bliss, J Hayes, P Owen, S Potter, A Sparrow, Cllr D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), Two parishioners

052/23-24 Apologies for Absence

Cllr R Feeney, Cllr M Summers (FDC)

053/23-24 Chairman's Announcements

None.

054/23-24 Public Time

Mr Benjamin reported a broken inspection cover on the pavement at the junction of Fen View and Upwell Road. The Clerk will investigate.

Ms Nason reported that a Clarion Housing Association property in Upwell Road has been empty for more than a year and the garden is now overgrown. The contents of the property were removed following the death of the tenant in August 2022. The Clerk will report this to the District Council for further investigation.

Cllr Owen reported concerns expressed by residents regarding the behaviour of a resident of Crown Road. The Clerk will discuss this again with the District Council.

Speeding in Upwell Road has again been raised by residents. Cllr Hughes will move the MVAS speed monitoring device and download data to provide a record of speeding for enforcement action.

Cllr Bliss reported an overgrown hedge in Church Road. The Clerk will investigate.

A resident has reported loud music from the Dun Cow late at night. The Clerk asked members to monitor the situation.

055/23-24 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

056/23-24 Matters Outstanding

- a) Bus shelter improvement project - Cllr Sparrow reported that there are 123 cobbles each measuring approximately 10cm x 10cm, which Townley School will seek to incorporate into the new building project.
- b) Pavement outside Field Lodge, Upwell Road - The developer is awaiting a quotation from the contractor.
- c) Affordable housing proposal - No further update.
- d) Skate park repairs - The repairs have been completed, with additional safety works included.
- e) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - The Clerk has asked Clarion Housing Group for an update.
- f) Wayside Estate pedestrian safety - A Road Safety Officer will attend to consider the issues. Members asked to be advised of the date of the meeting.
- g) Annual report to residents - The report was delivered with the latest edition of The Heron.

- h) Parishioner engagement - Members reviewed the draft questionnaire which, following minor amendments, will be distributed with the November edition of The Heron. Cllr Feeney will be asked to create a Facebook page.
- i) Crown Drove grass cutting - Crown Drove is not included in a public contract, so it is the responsibility of the adjoining landowners to cut the grass. It has been cut recently, although it is unclear who cut it.

057/23-24 Police Report

The Clerk reported that two meetings had taken place. Current priorities include anti-social behaviour, speeding in the villages and issues relating to the school summer holidays. Reported crime in Elm and Christchurch is lower than last year. The Rural Crime Action Team is holding a meet and greet event with the Police and Crime Commissioner later this month. The Safer Streets initiative in Wisbech made a significant difference there and lessons from the project will be applied across the District.

058/23-24 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Roy advised members that the enforcement action regarding the caravan behind Syringa House was delayed due to staffing issues, but will take place shortly. The District Council has established a new Rural and Farming Advisory Committee, of which Cllr Roy is a member. The District Council's Head of Planning, Nick Harding, will be leaving his post in the coming weeks.

059/23-24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a forthcoming County Council Flood Groups conference, from the District Council a survey on the Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Strategy, an invitation to the Chairman's Charity Coffee Morning, a consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement on planning matters, and the timetable for the decision on the Wisbech Incinerator application, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils annual conference and consultation on the model financial regulations, Cambridgeshire ACRE's AGM, Greening Your Community Spaces webinar and Community Living Room webinar and a playground inspection workshop provided by Online Playgrounds. There are two forthcoming road closures, at Stonea crossing underpass from 2-6 October and Wayside Estate on 26 October.

060/23-24 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Protecting hedgehogs - Members discussed the purchase of hedgehog highway surrounds from Hedgehogs R Us project. They agreed to purchase 100 surrounds at a cost of £300 with one to be distributed to every household at Townley School.
- b) Highway weeds - Members considered a request from Cllr Count to sign a petition to reinstate the cyclical spraying of weeds on the highway. The Chairman commented that there is no obvious problem with weed growth at present. Cllr Roy reported that the District Council has asked the County Council to reinstate this activity. Cllr Potter wondered whether some residents were spraying outside their properties. Members resolved not to sign the petition, but to monitor the situation and report individual areas of concern.

061/23-24 Recreation Ground Extension

- a) Cllrs Hughes and Potter reported that the steering group has received positive feedback from residents on some aspects of the project. The bridge to Crown Drove will require the consent of the County Council and the Clerk offered to introduce Cllr Hughes to the County Council's Bridges Officer to discuss the proposal.

- b) Application to the Whitemill Environment Fund - The Chairman reported that the application for a grant of £10,000 was successful, enabling the first phase of works to get under way this winter.

062/23-24 Planning

Members considered the following application:

CCC/23/060/FUL - Provision of a classroom extension, infill extension and internal alternations to improve existing facilities, new fencing and hard play area, removal of mobile classroom and base

They resolved to support this application.

063/23-24 Finance

- a) The management accounts as at 31.8.23 showed income of £11,875.73 and expenditure of £7,306.96, resulting in a surplus of £4,568.77 and total funds held of £45,887.03.
- b) Members ratified the following payments issued since the last meeting:
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|---------------------------------------------------|---|--------|
| Middle Level Commissioners (drainage rates) | £ | 49.10 |
| Upwell IDB (drainage rates)..... | £ | 43.47 |
| March Stationery and Print (annual reports)..... | £ | 166.80 |
- c) Members approved the following accounts for payment:
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|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------|
| Clerk salary and home office allowance | £ | 441.13 |
| Christchurch Recreation Ground Charity (Golden Age Fair)..... | £ | 45.00 |
| Fenland District Council (street lighting)..... | £ | 2,958.67 |
- d) Members noted the confirmation of the conclusion of the audit for 2022/23.
- e) Members approved the transfer of £5,000 transferred from the Council's Barclays Bank account to the new NatWest Bank account.
- f) Members authorised the signing of direct debit mandates for the following liabilities:
- Information Commissioner (annual fee)
 - Middle Level Commissioners (drainage rates)
 - Upwell Internal Drainage Board (drainage rates)

064/23-24 Confidential Item

Members resolved to exclude the press and public from the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, paragraph 1(2).

Cllr Sparrow declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting.

Members considered the tenders received for the supply and installation of outdoor gym equipment and for the installation of picnic benches. They resolved to accept the tenders received from Fenland Leisure Products Ltd for the supply and installation of two items of outdoor gym equipment at a cost of £3,593.00+VAT and for the installation of two picnic benches on Conipave surfacing at a cost of £2,345.00+VAT.

065/23-24 Matters for Next Meeting

None.

066/23-24 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 9 October.