

ORWELL PARISH COUNCIL

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF ORWELL PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Orwell Parish Council was held in the back room of the Village Hall on
Wednesday 20th February 2008 at 19:30 hrs.

Present: Mr R Bryant (RB) – Chairman, Mrs K Reid (KR) – Vice Chairman, Mr J Chapman (JC), Mrs J Graham (JG),
Mr M Kenyon (MK), Mrs M Lawton (ML), Mr R Primett, (RP), Mr W Talbot (WT), Mrs J Damant – Clerk.),

Action

1. Apologies for absence:

Mrs J Avery (JA), Cllr D Bird (SCDC), Cllr S Kindersley (CCC),

2. Declaration of interests: (for items on the agenda)

There were no declarations of interests.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (16th January) and Planning Committee Meeting (31st January)

16.01.08

The minutes were agreed, proposed by MK, seconded by JC and agreed by all, they were then signed by the Chairman as a true record.

31.01.08

The planning minutes were agreed, proposed by JC, seconded by RB, they were then signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. CCC Report: Read out by the Clerk

Mark Lloyd is set to join the County Council as its new Chief Executive on 31st March. This followed the rather embarrassing set-to that senior County Councilors got themselves involved in and which no doubt you read all about. He has a great deal of work to do – the Adult Social Care service from the County has – for the sixth year in a row – received a one star inspection (and that's very poor) and the County Council, as a whole, is now only judged to be Fair by the Audit Commission.

The County Council is preparing to set its budget for 2008-09 following a grant increase from Government below the rate of inflation and well below the increases received by neighbouring authorities. We received an increase of just 2% in Revenue Support Grant for next year, compared with a shire average of 5.6%. Increases for the next two years have been set at 2% and 2.2%.

Despite this, Cambridgeshire is planning to increase Council Tax by just 5% next year. The Council has embarked on an ambitious efficiency and cost-saving programme in order to provide a budget increase of 6.6% for older people's services and 8.5% for children and young people, as well as investment in environmental programmes. What these are exactly remains a closely guarded secret – of course any additional spend on services for the most vulnerable in our society (the elderly and the young) is welcomed. Interestingly – and sadly – when it comes to School Funding Cambs ranks 130 out of 149 authorities on per pupil funding for 2008/09 at £3,787.15 despite a 4.5% increase.

Congestion Charging in Cambridge

1. Commitment to environmental objectives. The present proposal focuses on congestion reduction, treating carbon reduction and other environmental objectives as side-effects. This results in carbon reductions between 2000 and 2021, which fall far short of the targets in the Government's Draft Climate Change Bill (16% and 1% for Cambridge and the sub-region respectively, compared to a mid-range Climate Change Bill target of 29%). The scheme must be re-designed to achieve environmental objectives. Specifically, there must be a sliding scale for road pricing charges, which reflects vehicle emissions.

2. Surplus revenue to be ring fenced and spent only on public transport, cycling and walking. All that has been said so far is that the revenue surplus of up to £30m a year will be spent on unspecified transport projects. The Council must undertake that surplus revenue will be ring fenced, and will be spent only on sustainable transport projects, i.e. public transport, cycling, and walking.

Pg 505

3. Greater improvement to public transport between Cambridge and the rest of the

County. In order to achieve the environmental objectives, public transport needs to be substantially improved between Cambridge and **all parts of the County**. There is also a need for additional outlying Park & Ride sites in order to shorten car journeys, and for improved inter-connection between rail and bus travel.

4. Greater improvement to public transport within Cambridge. The proposals do not include additional bus routes within Cambridge. To conform to good practice for sustainable urban transport the scheme should provide residents of Cambridge with access to frequent good quality bus services within 400 metres of every home between 0600 and 2400.

5. Provision for special needs groups. The present congestion charge proposals contain no arrangements for exemptions, discounts, or employer reimbursements for special needs groups such as disabled people, patients who are assessed as being too ill to travel to appointments by public transport and NHS staff undertaking operational journeys as part of their work. Such arrangements must be put in place.

6. Support from the District Councils directly affected. It would be undemocratic to force through a scheme which does not have the support of the District Councils most directly affected, namely Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Cambridge City Council has not yet given its support to the TIF proposal, having reservations, which include the lack of serious attention to carbon reduction and the lack of a discount for residents. The County Council must modify its proposals to obtain the support of both these District Councils.

7. Evidence to justify the proposed hours of operation and boundary. Further analysis must be undertaken to assess the environmental, economic, social and congestion impact of alternative options for the hours and days of operation of road pricing, and for the charging zone boundary.

Future Developments in South Cambs

Northstowe – The application for Northstowe was lodged on 19 December for 9,500 dwellings, employment and office space and a wide range of education and community facilities. Public consultation commenced on 7 January 2008 and will run until 28 March. If you have any views please make them known via the link on www.scambs.gov.uk.

The Government has decided that the current rate of building in South Cambs is not fast enough and that a further housing allocation of between 1,000 and 2,000 units is required. Needless to say this has sent every large landowner with development ambitions into a frenzy and sites all over the place are being keenly promoted – especially at Cambourne where the promise of a secondary school is being used to sweeten the pill. Another developer is promoting an Eco-Town at Waterbeach and yet another a new town at Streatham. So all very interesting to see who wins (my money is on a massive extension to Cambourne).

5. SCDC Report: Read out by the Clerk

Pest Control (Rats and Mice): I have written to the Housing and Environmental Officer on this matter. They recognise the concerns and are looking at options for diverting additional funds to address this. As soon as I have further news I will let you know. Please be aware that I am calling and mailing the H&E group almost every other day on this one.

Christmas Bin Collection: Due to an administrative error SCDC did not manage to get the schedule out in time and in addition there was a large gap (3 weeks in some places I believe) for collecting the rubbish bins. Apologies for that and I am told that the issue has been fixed and we should all get normal collections over the holiday period this year.

Corporate Governance Inspection: The re-inspection from the Audit Commission was conducted over a 4 day period from Mon 21st through Thu 24th January. The inspectors were the same team as last year and they were looking at the same areas in order to draw a valid comparison.

The Audit Commission team measured our performance today against the weaknesses in Corporate Governance found in 2006/7. At the feedback session the inspectors said that they felt there had been "*some real progress*".

Police & Neighbourhood Panel Meetings: The Gamlingay Panel met at Orwell Village Hall on 23rd January. From previous reports Crime and Disorder levels are relatively low within the neighbourhood. During the Oct-Dec 2007 period a proactive operation has been running across South Cambridgeshire and 18% of all of the crimes recorded were cannabis confiscations.

Vehicle crime has continued to be an issue within the neighbourhood, specifically in the Gamlingay ward. The next meeting of the Panel will be at the Wimpole Village Hall on April 23rd. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for a 7:30 start.

Post Offices: Just a reminder that we should continue to use our Post Offices as much as possible. Time is rushing on and in **April 2008** Post Office Ltd will reveal to Postwatch which post offices will be earmarked for closure, thus starting a 10 week consultation period with Postwatch and those Sub-Postmasters whose business is threatened. In **mid-June 2008**, following the 10-week period, there will be a 1-week consultation period with MPs. In **mid to late June 2008**, (11 weeks after 1 April 2008), the closure programme will become public knowledge, thus starting a final 6 week period of consultation before the closures take effect. Let's use it, not lose it.

6. Financial Matters:

February Financial Statement Payments: Proposed by RP, seconded by MK all in agreement

Additional payments: P Chilvers £120.00(internal audit), Moore Stephens £658.00 (external audit) Proposed by RP, seconded by MK all councillors were in agreement.

Authorisation of cheques is still ongoing; JC has sent off the paperwork to Alliance & Leicester, hopefully RB will soon be added on as a signatory. Cheques were signed by RP and JC.

Audit recommendations: The 2006/07 audit has been passed with the following comments:

1. We note that the council is taking steps to increase its level of reserves. The level held should be sufficient to enable it to meet its current expenditure plans, after allowing for its income, accrue funds towards approved projects; and provide a contingency.
2. The Internal auditor has noted that the council is in the process of updating its risk assessment review. We remind the Council that a risk assessment should be carried out annually.

7. Planning:

S/1965/07/F, 1Hillside – SCDC has refused planning permission for a woodshed with log store. The proposed outbuilding is contrary to policies DP/3 and HG/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007.

Planning Minutes of the 31st January 2008 were agreed by all.

8. Community Grants:

KR to report back at the next meeting.

KR

9. Standing Orders:

Still ongoing.

RB, KR, JC

10. Correspondence and Clerk's Report:

A new village sign has been ordered to replace the one on Hurdditch Road, which has the missing letters.

Highways

The Capital Bid for the renewal of the Drainage Scheme at the bottom of Town Green Road failed. But a further bid will be submitted in the 2009/10 budget. Dennis Vacher, Highways (CCC) is to meet with Cllr David Bird (SCDC), to discuss.

Highways/Cllr Bird

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) RB has contacted the Rural Payments Agency and established that because they had not received the councils forms for last year there would be no payment in 2008. Forms for the 2009 bid are due in March 2008.

South Cambridgeshire Cabinet and South Cambs Parishes representative will meet on the 6th March, RB and WT will attend.

RB/WT

If the Parish Council has accepted responsibility of a closed churchyard they are then responsible for the maintenance of the trees as part of that agreement. (See Local Government Act 1972).

RB has written to Petersfield school pledging the Parish Councils support in their bid to gain a grant to finance their Travel to School Plan.

RB has written to the village hall concerning this year's precept allocations.

11. Parish Plan update:

Melanie Baker is no longer affiliated with Cambridgeshire ACRE. WT recorded his thanks to David Miller for drafting a Village Design Statement. There has been a productive response from the Biodiversity Dept (SCDC) who has invited WT to a meeting where they will give advise on obtaining grants.

There were no comments from the Parish Councillors on the Parish Plan Progress Report prepared by WT.

RP stated that 500 Parish Councils, throughout the country, have now acquired quality status.

Pg 507

12. Village Maintenance:

Fire damaged bench – Needs to be purchased and invoice sent to the insurance company. MK to look through the brochures.

MK

Village benches – MK has received a quote from Glebe Joinery (£170 +vat) to replace the slats in the four damaged benches on the recreation ground. It was proposed by ML, seconded by RP that as Glebe Joinery have already been repairing the benches, it would seem appropriate to continue using their services. All the hardwood seats would then have been repaired, the remaining benches are made of pine and it was suggested by MK that when these seats need repairing that they are replaced with hardwood seats.

Notice board – it is not known when the air conditioning units are likely to be fitted at the village store when this occurs there will be a need to move the notice board to a position adjacent to Mr Chamberlains wall.

MK has looked over the 3 quotes for the burial ground/churchyard grass-cutting contract. It was proposed by RP, seconded by JG to accept a 3-year tender from Meadow Nurseries, all agreed. [The clerk had also obtained quotes for the recreation ground, which will be passed onto ORCA.](#)

14. Committee Reports & Areas of Responsibilities:

Village Hall

[MK had an informal discussion with the structural engineer who suggests that buttressing might not be practicable and will probably advise insertion of tie bars. The engineer will be submitting a written report to the Village Hall Committee.](#)

Clunch Pit

Natural England provides a maintenance grant to assist with the management of the Clunch Pit. Due to Blue Tongue there has been problems obtaining sheep to graze and since grazing is a major part of the management then we are in fear of losing some of the Natural England grant. Clerk to enquire if Wimpole Home Farm is still interested in grazing some of their sheep.

Clerk

There is to be a working party in the Clunch Pit on the 23rd February headed up by members of the Cambs & Essex Butterfly Conservation. The aim is to plant and encourage the growth of Horseshoe Vetch; the food plan of the Chalkhill [Blue](#) butterfly.

RP commented that the hedges in the Glebe Field and the Orchard look much better for having been trimmed.

ORCA

The new litter bin has now been installed at the recreation ground. It has been reported from the football club, that the problems associated with the dog fouling appears to have improved. Permanent signs need to be placed, quotes to come to the Parish Council for a final decision. It was proposed by RP and seconded by WT that a request be submitted to SCDC for two additional dog bins. The bins to be positioned at the entrances of Victoria Drive and Chapel Orchard. The National Trust need to be advised/consulted.

RB

Footpaths

JA was to meet with Andrew Stimson, Parish Paths (CCC), RB to contact JA to find out whether the P3 forms have been submitted for this year. If not, RB will undertake their completion. Parish Councillors gave their recommendations.

RB

Carpark

The litterbin at the car park is being misused, notwithstanding, it was agreed by all that it should remain in place for the time being.

Police

The Neighbourhood Police Panel was held in Orwell on 23rd January 2008. KR circulated her report. The main topic was speeding which remains a concern for all the villages, and it was suggested that the police should carryout their speed checks at different times during the day. There did not appear to have been many of these checks carried out during the past month. The police suggested that the most effective means or curtailing traffic issues is to install some kind of traffic calming, parishes to think of ways they could encourage drivers to adhere to the speed limits. The next meeting is 23rd April at Wimpole Village Hall.

Tree Warden

MK has received a report on the cherry tree at the church. The tree has a large canker and has a serious split resulting in it being considered dangerous and the need for it to be removed. MK is waiting for the tree officer (SCDC) report. This will be reported in the Orwell Bulletin so all residents are aware of why the tree has to be removed, MK also suggested that the stump is ground out.

MK

MK has received 3 quotes for felling and clearing the dead trees on Hurdleditch Road. Proposed by JG, seconded by JC all agreed to accept the tender of £446.50 from Maple Tree Surgery.

Pg 508

Churchyard

Clerk has written to the churchwarden stating that the Parish Council were concerned about the state of the repairs to the church wall, and that they are not prepared to take on the responsibility until they are satisfied with the workmanship.

The Millennium Yew is not looking healthy MK will take a look.

MK

Glebe Field

There are still some stumps sticking out of the ground where the scrub has been cut down and these will re-grow in time, but is looking much better.

Allotments

KR will inform the new tenant of the allotments that their details need to be sent to the clerk.

KR

Website

Eastspace have replied agreeing to Orwell having a website through them. Still waiting for the final details, KR will then contact other members of the communications group.

KR

Youth

A meeting has taken place and documentation has been looked at on how to proceed with setting up a Youth Parish Council. WT will put together a report

WT

15. Councillors' Reports:

RB

Long Term Transport Strategy –

RB attended a presentation at CCC on 'Long Term Transport Strategie'. The plans included a greatly improved public transport system; this includes the guided Bus (2009). Road improvements to the A14 (2012-2015), and the A428, and a new access road to Addenbrooks. The development of Northstowe is dependent on the progress made with the expansion of the A14. According to the Deputy CE of the CCC, Mr Brian Smith, most of these items would need to be put into place before the congestion charge was introduced.

RB proposed that the **Annual Parish Meeting** to be on **7th May 2008**, all agreed.

JC

Is concerned about vehicles parking on pavements, Clerk to forward police comments to him.

Clerk

KR

Attended the final part of her training with CPALC and suggested that all Councillors should be aware of their role within the Parish Council. The clerk will circulate her portfolio for quality once it has passed inspection.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.00pm.

Next meeting will be Wednesday 19th March 2008

Pg 509

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