

# LITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Meeting for the Parish of Litcham, Norfolk,  
held on the 16th April 2007 at 7:30pm in the  
Jubilee Hall, Church Street, Litcham.

Present: Mike Oldfield (Chairman)  
Roy Payne (Vice Chair)  
Les Raven  
Chris Mitchell  
John Relph (Clerk)  
Christopher Lloyd-Owen (District Councillor)  
Members of the public.

The meeting was convened at 7.34 p.m.

## 1) Welcome by Parish Council Chairman

The Parish Council Chairman, Mr. Mike Oldfield welcomed members of the Parish Council, representatives of village organisations and members of the public to the meeting. The meeting was well attended with approximately thirty members of the public present.

2) Apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Richard Vogt, Hermione Birkbeck, Diana Collen, Mark Sheard, Trevor Carter and Claire Lawrence.

3) Minutes of Previous Meeting were agreed and signed as a true record of the Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2006.

## 4) Reports

Reports from the following Village Organisations were received.

Organisation	Submitted and presented by
1. Litcham Bell-ringers	Tim Angell

2. British Legion	John Jones
3. Litcham Common Conservation Group	Tim Angell
4. Litcham Common Management Committee	Tim Angell
5. Litcham Allotments and Leisure Gardeners	Henry Dennet
6. Litcham Youth Project	Judith Bentley
7. Play 2000	Judith Bentley
8. Litcham Historical Society	Ron Shaw, presented by Joyce Green
9. Jubilee Hall	Mark Kiddle-Morris
10. Litcham and District Ladies Group	Joyce Green
11. Parochial Church Council	Richard Vogt, presented by Roy Payne.
12. Friends of Litcham Primary School	Sadie Bailey
13. Litcham and District Red Cross	Hermione Birkbeck, presented by Mike Oldfield.
14. Litcham Primary School	Christine Watts
15. Litcham High School	Jeremy Nicholls

Several questions were raised by the reports, among them were:

i) Litcham Relief in Need Charity: Questions were asked concerning the continuing dispute over the Trusteeship of the Litcham Relief in Need Charity. Several people wanted to know what the Parish Council was doing to resolve the issue. The Council replied that it was doing what it could and was continuing to liaise with the Charity Commission over this matter. Apart from the power to appoint two trustees it had no powers to intervene in the workings of the Trust. The ultimate responsibility for resolving the matter lies with the Trustees themselves.

ii) Litcham Common: Some villagers raised concerns over the plans to fence the Common in order to allow the introduction of grazing. In reply Tim Angel from the Common Management Committee assured the meeting that the best possible advice was always sought regarding the conservation of the common and the Management Committee is keen to ensure the most suitable type of stock is used for the grazing project. Currently the plan is to use Dartmoor ponies as these are the least likely to interact unfavorably with people or dogs. Mr. Angell explained that the

introduction of grazing was widely considered to be the best possible way of managing the Common.

Mr. Angel also informed the meeting that at present Norfolk County Council were re-considering their decision not to permit the installation of cattle grids on the Dunham Road. If allowed, this measure would remove the need to erect fencing along the road, although some dog walkers had commented that they would not mind this as it would stop dogs running into the road.

iii) The Old Café. Concerns were raised over the work currently being carried out on the Old Café, which has been renamed "The White House" by the new owners. The Historical Society in particular were very worried at the demolition of some outbuildings at the rear of the property and queried whether proper planning permission had been obtained. The Clerk reported that he had contacted Breckland's planning department several weeks ago. A Breckland planning officer had inspected the site and had informed the clerk that because the building is not listed the current work was in order and currently did not require planning permission.

A query was also raised as to the wisdom of having two houses in Litcham called "The White House". Christopher Lloyd-Owen (County Councillor) told the meeting that this was quite in order and people were free to name their house as they wished, regardless of similar names in the area.

iv) On hearing that Diana Collen had stepped down from the Chair of the Jubilee Hall Management Committee the meeting unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the many years of tireless effort she had put into the successful running of the Jubilee Hall. She will remain involved in the Jubilee Hall, being responsible for bookings.

5) Annual Report of the Parish Council . The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Mike Oldfield presented the Annual Report of the Council. He listed the achievements of the council over the last twelve months and the work they had done, in co-operation with Breckland and Norfolk County Council, to maintain the village in a manner that we all appreciate. Over the last year the Council have been responsible for the publishing of the Parish appraisal, the installation of five new litter bins, the purchase of new chairs for the Jubilee Hall and the maintenance of streetlights, grass cutting for the graveyard and general maintenance including repairs to various signs.

He talked about the visits by various organisations including the Police and N.C.C. Youth workers with regard to tackling anti-social behaviour in the Village.

Ongoing issues include:

i) Pedestrian access to the graveyard extension: The Council has now received a total of 28 requests for the provision of a pedestrian gate to allow access from Druids Lane and in continuing to liaise with the Parochial Church Council over the matter.

ii) The Village Green. The Parish Council hope to be able to sign a 'Open Space License' agreement with Norfolk County Council Property Services soon. This will safeguard the green opposite the Bull as 'Open Space' for the next ten years.

iii) Footpaths: Working with N.C.C. the council hopes to improve the number of footpaths in the area.

iv) Notice Board: A new three panel oak notice board has been ordered and will be erected on the Village green in the next few months.

The Council donated totaling £693 to various charities and organizations in the last twelve months.

6) Parish Council Accounts. The Clerk then made a brief presentation of the Accounts for the year 2006-7. He explained that at the end of 2005 the Council's reserves were a little high so it resolved to spend a little of this money during 2006/7. This it has done and the Council ended the year £1064.61p worse off than this time last year, but still with a balance of over £14,000 in the bank, £7000 of this is the balance due to the Diocese for the graveyard extension and this has still not been paid due to the continuing disagreement over the provision of access from Druids Lane. In all The Council spent a total of £9,415 last year. After not raising the precept last year, the Council decided to increase this years Precept by 5% to £7,875 or £16.71 per elector.

7) Matters Arising: The Chair then asked if anyone had any topics they wished to bring to the attention of the meeting.

i) One villager asked if would be possible to install a dog waste bin on the Dunham Road for dog walkers who use the Common. The Clerk replied that bins had been considered when the Dog fouling signs had been installed and they cost a minimum of £170 to install and needed emptying, however he would agenda the item at a future Council meeting.

ii) It was reported that needles had been found on the Common on two occasion recently, the Clerk urged villagers who found or witnessed any evidence of drug use or dealing to report this immediately to the Police using their non-emergency number, (0845 456 4567).

iii) The meeting was informed by Sadie Bailey that there were plans to hold a Village Fete on Archer's Meadow on the Saturday 7th of July this year.

The Chair then asked Litcham's County Councillor, Christopher Lloyd Owen if he wished to address the meeting. Mr. Lloyd-Owen said he had little to report and invited questions from the floor. He went onto say the he was disappointed with the County Council's decision to increase it's rates by 4.8% but this had come about because of a considerable reduction in the subsidy from central government.

On behalf on the Parish Council the Chairman then thanked all those who presented a report to the meeting and wished their organisations every success in the year ahead.

8) Next Meeting: The date and time of next Parish Meeting was confirmed as Monday 21st April 2008 at 7.30 in the Jubilee Hall, Church Street, Litcham.

Meeting Closed at 09.31 p.m.