

LITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Extracts 2009

As published in the Church and Village Magazine

FEBRUARY 2009

At the February Parish Council meeting, attended by 5 Councillors, District Councillor Kiddle Morris and one member of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters. Several potholes in the parish had been noted and these would be reported to the Highways Department. The sign on Dereham Road for Litcham had not yet been replaced and this would be requested again with the addition of Please Drive Slowly.

Druids Lane had been added to the gritting route for the parish and it was hoped that the route to the Primary School would also be added in the near future although no decision had been received as yet, as there are a number of requests across the county to add roads to the routes.

Concern was expressed at the poor parking on Church Street near the junction with Druids Lane and it was agreed to write to the High School to enquire if it was possible to put an article in their newsletter requesting that the junction be kept clear to ensure there is adequate visibility when accessing Church Street.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary, cutting of the churchyard, the replacement light bowls and new photo-electric cells for the street lighting, and donations to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, Open Spaces Society, and the Litcham Common Conservation Group were all approved.

Planning. The Parish Council had raised no objection to the proposed conservatory shed, courtyard and fencing at nocks Cottage Front Street although concern was expressed that the style of fencing was not suitable for a conservation area and the application had received permission.

Other Matters. The Parish Council had received a quotation for the cutting of the churchyard for 2009 but it was agreed to request further quotations on a reduced cutting basis so that the area would only be cut four times per year not monthly as had been the programme in previous years.

Land Registry had been contacted regarding the parcel of land the gives access to the river between the allotments on Dunham Road and the land registry have confirmed that this is not registered but a caution has been placed on the land which means that it is not able to register the land until such time as this caution is removed. Therefore Land Registry is to be contacted to confirm the procedure to follow.

The street lighting had now been changed to the reduced period so that the lights do not remain in operation all night but up to midnight and from just before dawn.

Complaints had been received about anti-social behaviour on Church Street but as none of these had been reported to the Homewatch co-ordinator no record of the complaints had been received by the police which makes any response difficult to justify.

Vacancy on the Parish Council. Following the resignation of Councillor Payne no election had been requested by a parishioner so the Parish Council may now co-opt a parishioner to the Council. If any parishioner wishes to become a member of the Parish Council would they please contact the Clerk on 01362 861112.

A P R I L 2 0 0 9

At the April Parish Council meeting, attended by three Councillors, District Councillor Kiddle Morris and eight members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters. The drains on Church Street have again become blocked and Norfolk County Council is to be requested to clear them.

Permission has at last been granted for the planting of wild flowers on the Dunham Road but this has arrived too late for this planting season and so this will take place in the autumn.

The small potholes on Pound Lane and the sign that has been flattened on Wellingham Road are also to be reported to the Highways Department.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary and membership of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils were approved. It was agreed to leave the funds of the Parish Council with the Bank of Ireland as these are covered by guarantee from the Irish Government. It was agreed to donate £750 to The Friends of All Saints Church Litcham for the restoration of the clock dials.

Planning. There were no planning applications or decisions received during the month.

Other Matters. Prior to the meeting there was a presentation from Savills the agents for Lexham Estates regarding the proposed development to the rear of Litcham Hall. Their indicative plan showed a development of about 25 dwellings together with the provision of land for a village hall and sports pitches. The Core Strategy of the Local Development Plan for Breckland Council, which is at present being studied by the Inspector, shows Litcham as Key Service Centre to protect the local facilities but not to allow large-scale growth. The Parish Council will consider the proposals at a future meeting but at present the Parish Council does not wish to see this size of development within the village.

Allotments: In the period for the public to bring to the attention of the Councillors any matters many parishioners raised concerns about the management of the allotments and the letter received from solicitors acting for the trustees of the Charity giving them notice to quit in 2010. The Parish Council, whilst not having any influence over the trustees, noted the concerns and are hopeful that the trustees can resolve their differences amicably to enable the Charity to operate for the benefit of all.

Registration of Green. The documentation for the registration of the Green had been forwarded to Norfolk County Council and the Parish Council thanks everybody who has assisted with the provision of supporting evidence. It was agreed to place a caution on the registration of the cut to the river near the allotments whilst research is done at the Archive centre on the use of the cut by parishioners.

M A Y 2 0 0 9

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on 20 April attended by four Councillors, District Councillor Kiddle Morris and twenty-one members of the public. Reports were received from local organisations all of which will be posted on the Litcham website. At the open forum after the meeting many parishioners expressed concern about the management of the Litcham Relief in Need Charity and it was agreed to place this on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting. A parishioner raised the matter of a village fete, as had been held in previous years, and it was again agreed to discuss this at the May Parish Council meeting.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

At the May Parish Council meeting, attended by six Councillors, District Councillor Kiddle Morris and seventeen members of the public the following was considered:

Elections. Councillor Oldfield was re-elected Chairman and Councillor Carter was elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the current year.

Highways/Traffic Matters. The sign on Dereham Road had still not been replaced and Norfolk County Council is to be pressed to replace this. Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary the hire of Jubilee hall and a donation to the Friends of Litcham Church were approved.

Planning. The members raised no objection to the re-submission for the erection of a pair of semi-detached cottages on Manor Drive as this was only a re-alignment caused by incorrect information being given regarding the position of the main electricity cable. The Parish Council decided not to support the application from Lexham estates for the development to the rear of Litcham hall but to confirm the previous response for a small number of dwellings along Pound Lane.

Other Matters. Churchyard Cutting: The cutting of the churchyard had been raised at the Annual parish meeting as there was concern that this had not been cut in April. The Parish Council listened to the comments of the contractor and agreed to consider further cuts during the season at its next meeting.

Litcham Relief in Need Charity: A long discussion was held regarding the Charity following a meeting that the Clerk had attended called by the co-opted trustees. Attempts were made to find an amicable solution to the ongoing problems of the trustees but this was not possible despite the majority feeling of the meeting. The Clerk is now to write to the Charity Commission to attempt to resolve the problems.

Village Fair: It was agreed to support a fair if an organiser could be found from within the village. Any person interested in becoming involved with the proposed fair should contact the Clerk. Registration of the Green: All the information has been passed to Norfolk County Council as the registering authority but as it is the owner of the land this may be forwarded to Suffolk County Council for a decision.

JUNE 2009

At the June Parish Council meeting, attended by four Councillors, District Cllr Kiddle Morris and 8 members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters. The sign on Dereham Road, although this had still not been replaced, Norfolk County Council had stated that this would be replaced in the next two or three weeks. The Highway Rangers had visited the village and tidied up many areas and the drains on Church Street had been cleared.

The drains on Back Street need clearing and several potholes have appeared on the Dereham, Dunham and Tittleshall Roads. These will be reported and Lexham Estates are to be contacted regarding the overhanging hedge on Pound Lane near to the primary school.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary, the cutting of the churchyard and the internal audit were all approved. The accounts for the financial year 2008-2009 were approved and any parishioner can view the accounts from 20 July.

Planning. There were no planning applications to consider or decisions to report in the month. Breckland Council is consulting on parish groupings for S106 payments from the construction of new dwellings for sport and play areas. The Parish Council decided that it would prefer Mileham to be in the Litcham cluster.

Other Matters. Churchyard Cutting: The Parish Council decided to have two further cuts of the churchyard done in the growing season following the representations made at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Litcham Relief in Need Charity: The running of the Charity was again discussed at length with the co-opted trustees informing the Parish Council that all the allotments are now occupied and they feel that the extra income that would be generated by dividing up some of the allotments into smaller area would be greater than the income received from investing the proceeds of any sale of the allotments in the village. The Parish Council decided to write to the nominated trustees stating that the nominated trustees should accept mediation to resolve the differences and to desist from any further legal action until such time as the mediation has taken place. Whilst the Parish Council is determined to maintain the provision of allotments within the village no decision would be taken regarding the purchase of the allotments until mediation had taken place.

Village Fair: No person had volunteered to organise the fair although assistance had been promised from one parishioner.

Registration of the Green: Norfolk County Council had informed the parish Council that it has requested another authority to consider the registration. Fencing at Long Meadow: It was agreed to obtain quotations for the provision of new fencing at Long Meadow with a new gate to provide access. Cut to the river: The Litcham common Conservation Group volunteered to clear the cut to the river and this was accepted.

JULY 2009

At the July Parish Council meeting, attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor Kiddle Morris and eight members of the public the following was considered:

Co-option to the Parish Council. Mrs Anderson was unanimously co-opted onto the parish Council to fill the vacancy following the resignation of Roy Payne.

Highways/Traffic Matters. Potholes have appeared on Dereham road just prior to the new village sign that has at last been replaced. The school sign on Druids Lane is now obscured by the hedge and the landowner is to be requested to cut the hedge back.

The Highways Department are to be contacted as there is confusion on Manor Drive as there are no markings at the junction that is half way to the health centre.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary, the cutting of the churchyard, the yearly insurance, the cost of the wildflowers for the Dunham Road, hire of the Jubilee hall and the cost of a caution against first registration were all approved. It was agreed to renew the membership of the Norfolk Rural Community Council for another year.

Planning. There were no planning applications to consider. The re-siting of the dwellings at land off Manor Drive had been granted permission.

Other Matters: Litcham Relief in Need Charity: This was again discussed and as there was no nominated trustee at the meeting the Clerk was only able to report that no reply had been received following the letter that had been sent to the nominated trustees that mediation should take place prior to any further meetings being called. A further letter is to be sent to the Chairman of the Charity again requesting mediation. Village Fair: No person had volunteered to organise the fair. Registration of the Green: Cambridge County Council will be deciding the request to register the Green.

Cut to the river: The Litcham Common Conservation Group have cut a small path to the river but stopped after experiencing a problem with youths on the bridge. After discussion it was agreed to request that the Conservation Group cut the whole area at a later date and this it agreed to do.

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SEPTEMBER 2009

At the September Parish Council meeting, attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor Kiddle Morris, Jackie Bryant from Peddars Way and seven members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters: Potholes have appeared at the junction of Wellingham and Weasenham Roads, Manor Drive, Pound Lane and Druids Lane and these will all be reported. Norfolk County Council is also to be requested to trim the hedge on Druids Lane opposite the School as it has done in the past as this is now impairing visibility and the passage of vehicles when coaches are parked on Druids Lane at the School.

Peddars Way is to investigate a problem of a tree at Litcham Close which is impairing television reception. Many residents complained at the increase in HGVs along Front Street and it was decided to contact the companies concerned to request that Back Street be used rather than using Front Street as a short cut to Church Street.

It was agreed to write to all residents of Keppel Close informing them that the Parish council wished to erect a kissing gate at the Weasenham Road end of the path to the rear of the properties for safety reasons and to request if there was any objection to the erection of this.

The representative from Peddars Way informed the meeting that some residents of Manor Drive had contacted her to say that it is not possible to negotiate the barriers to Church Street with motorised buggies. Peddars Way would alter the configuration and the Parish Council agreed to this alteration.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary, the cutting of the churchyard, membership of the Norfolk Rural Community Council and a percentage of a course for the Clerk were all approved.

Planning. There were no planning applications to consider.

Other Matters. Litcham Relief in Need Charity: No nominated trustee was present at the meeting to give a report. The Parish Council had arranged for mediation to take place at the offices of the Norfolk Rural Community Council but no confirmation had been received from the nominated trustees that they would attend although all co-opted trustees are willing to be present.

Cut to the river: The Litcham Common Conservation Group had finished cutting a path to the river and it is now possible to access the river and the Parish council is appreciative of all the work the group has undertaken. Future of the High school: No representative was able to attend the meeting and it will now be discussed at the October meeting.

OCTOBER 2009

At the October Parish Council meeting, attended by four Councillors, County and District Councillor Kiddle-Morris, Jeremy Nicholls Headteacher at Litcham High School and four members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters. The problems from the previous month had all been reported to Norfolk County Council and whilst some would not be attended to at present as they are not at intervention level. All have been placed on its list for regular checking. The white lines in Manor Drive had been programmed for painting.

Two haulage contractors had been spoken to by the Clerk regarding the use of Front Street rather than Back Street and they both promised to speak to their drivers to try and ensure Back Street is used. A further haulage contractor is now using Front Street and it is hoped to contact them shortly.

New problems that were reported at the meeting were a pot hole in Druids Lane, the state of the hard surface in front of the Post Office and a drain near to Coronation Cottages which appears to have dropped. Peddars Way are obtaining prices for the alteration of the barrier between Manor Drive and Church Street.

Finance. Payments for the Clerk's salary and the cutting of the churchyard were approved. It was agreed to continue with the same contractor for the cutting of the churchyard for 2010 as it was felt that the contractor had maintained the area to high standard.

Planning. There were no planning applications to consider as the application for the Bull Public House has been placed on hold by Breckland Council as further details and applications for listed building consent are required and a new consultation would be forwarded in the future..

Other Matters. Litcham Relief in Need Charity: No nominated trustee was present at the meeting to give a report. The nominated trustees were unable to attend the mediation meeting arranged and the Parish Council is to attempt to find a date that is suitable for all trustees.

Future of the High School: The Head Teacher from the High School gave a report to the Parish Council regarding the future of the High School and the feeder primary schools within its catchment area. The future, which is being strongly favoured by Norfolk County Council, is for more co-operation between High and Primary Schools. With assistance for routine matters being addressed by an Advanced School business manager and curriculum needs, that have to be adhered to at both levels, being met with teaching of some subjects being carried out by teachers from the High School at the Primary Schools. Whilst at this stage no decision has been reached on the future location of the High School, a survey had highlighted the fact that the buildings are outdated and not necessarily all fit for purpose. If funds are available in the future it may well mean that the High School would move to a site adjacent to the Primary School, which could create all-through schooling to the age of eighteen. At present the Governors of the two schools are considering closer co-operation by moving towards a federation status.

NOVEMBER 2009

At the November Parish Council meeting, attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor Kiddle-Morris, and three members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters: The problems from the previous month had all been reported to Norfolk County Council and it will monitor these.

New problems reported were a sign at the junction of Weasenham and Wellingham Road which has been altered to point in the wrong direction, a pothole on Druids Lane, the damaged sign on the B1145 to the west of the village, the bend on Dereham Road opposite Holly Cottage and flooding on the Weasenham Road.

Two replies had been received regarding the positioning of a barrier at the rear of Keppel Close and as neither was against the proposal the Parish Council is to obtain quotations for the work.

Finance: Payments for the Clerk's salary, hire of the Jubilee hall, the external audit and training for a new Councillor were approved.

It was agreed to keep the precept which is the portion of the Council Tax that the Parish Council receives at the same amount as in the previous two years which is £6000 and to utilise reserves for any major expenditure.

The External Auditor had raised no comments on the audit and the return is available for viewing by contacting the Clerk.

It was agreed to donate to the Litcham Common Conservation Group as has been the practice in previous years. It was agreed to proceed with the replacement post and wire fence at Long Meadow.

Planning. There were no planning applications to consider or decisions to report. It was agreed to respond to the Preferred Options Consultation on the Minerals and Waste Framework as the response to the consultation in 2008.

Other Matters: Litcham Relief in Need Charity: Again no nominated trustee was present at the meeting to give a report. The co-opted trustees were present and reported that the registration of the land had been completed but it was not certain if the cut to the river had been included in this registration and the Chairman of the trustees who had been forwarded the registration from the solicitors would check this as well as Osier Carr. A further attempt at mediation had been arranged and the Parish Council is awaiting confirmation that all trustees will be able to attend.

Registration of the Green: Cambridgeshire County Council had informed the Parish Council that there is insufficient evidence to warrant registering it as an open space but the Parish Council has been given until February to produce more evidence.

Telephone Box on Weasenham Road: The Parish Council had received a request to purchase this box and if any parishioner wishes to purchase the box would they please contact the Clerk with the price they are offering.

DECEMBER 2009

At the December Parish Council meeting, attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor Kiddle Morris, and nine members of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters: The problems from the previous month had all been reported to Norfolk County Council and a response had been received stating that these would be repaired or monitored in the future. The flooding on the Weasenham Road had not improved although the verge grips along this section of the road had been cleared. Norfolk County Council will be informed that there is still a problem. Two new potholes on Butt lane and Pound Lane are to be reported as well as the road outside The Bungalow on Front Street, which needs repairing.

Speedwatch: Councillor Carter informed the meeting that he had been to a training session to enable villagers to use the radar gun to monitor the speed of vehicles in villages. The feeling of the police at the training session was that it would be advantageous if a group is formed of Litcham, Mileham and Tittleshall. The time involved would not be more than two half days per month and if any parishioner is interested in becoming part of the Speedwatch group would they please contact either Councillor Trevor Carter on 701688 or the Clerk on 01362 861112.

Village Fair: The Chairman of the Parent Teacher and Friends Association of Litcham High School was present and informed the members that she would be organising a fair/fete in June 2010 as there appears to be overwhelming support for the event. The Parish Council agreed to support the event and would make funds available from the fair account to assist in the initial costs of the event. Further details will be advertised in this magazine once full details are known.

Other Matters - Litcham Relief in Need Charity

Again no nominated trustee was present at the meeting to give a report. The further attempt at mediation organised by the Parish Council had not taken place as the nominated trustees were unable to attend. The co-opted trustees who were all present reported that the registration of the land included the cut to the river and Osier Carr and a programme of maintenance at Osier Carr is to be undertaken. The Parish Council reiterated their support for the co-opted trustees who will continue to administer the Charity.

Telephone Box on Weasenham Road: The Litcham Historical Society had expressed an interest in the telephone box and if any parishioner wishes to purchase this would they please inform the Clerk by 15 January.

Parish Clerk. The members present expressed their disappointment that another Councillor had written to the EDP regarding the Parish Clerk who is a clerk to more than one parish. The Parish Council unanimously and unambiguously gave their support to the Parish Clerk and have no issue with the fact that he is also a clerk to other parishes. This multiple role brings experience and knowledge which might not be available if a person clerks to just one parish.

END OF EXTRACT FOR 2 0 0 9

All parishioners are welcome to attend the monthly meeting that are held in the Jubilee Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m. The first part of the meeting is made available for public discussion and to bring matters to the attention of councillors. Council meetings will normally take place on the first Monday of each month, but this could be subject to change in any one month. Please consult the Notice Board for the date or contact the Clerk on 01362 861112.

The full minutes are available for viewing by any parishioner by contacting the Clerk or via the Litcham Webiste at www.litcham.org

Downloadable PDF of Full Minutes and Extracts are available on the Meeting Page:

http://www.litcham.org/Litcham/Litcham_Parish_Council_Meetings.html