

LITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Extracts 2011

As published in the Church and Village Magazine

FEBRUARY 2011

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

Litcham Jubilee Hall: The Trustees of the Jubilee Hall had replied to the request from the Parish Council and Management Committee to re-consider its previous thoughts to sell the site. The trustees had stated that it would leave the Jubilee Hall as is at present and would continue to review the situation but would leave the Management Committee to continue with their programme of improvements. A grant has been requested from Breckland Council to improve the toilet facilities by putting in a disabled toilet which is a legal requirement and to renovate the walls both internally and externally. The Parish Council is to consider in the future if it will donate to the hall to allow renovation works to be undertaken.

Highways/Traffic Matters: The Highways Department is to be contacted regarding the installation of chevrons or warning signs on Tittleshall Road at the junction of Back Lane as several vehicles had slid into the ditch in the icy conditions.

Other problems; potholes at Litcham Close and near the Bull, flooding at Pound Lane and Lexham Road, will be reported.

Speedwatch has been active in the village now a new charger has been purchased and nine offenders were caught, one doing 48m.p.h., along the Lexham Road and a further session is to be held on the Dereham Road.

Planning: Permission had been granted for the application for a single storey rear extension after the demolition of the conservatory & the fitting of new roofs to dormer windows at Paddock Lodge Lexham Road.

Pumping Station at Dereham Road: The area had been sprayed to kill the weeds but no other maintenance had been done so Anglian Water will be contacted again.

Access to the Graveyard from Druids Lane: Two recent complaints had been received regarding the inability to access the graveyard from Druids Lane. The Parish Council explained that originally, when the site was purchased, a gate was agreed to be provided from Druids Lane but the Parochial Church Council had been adamant that no access through the churchyard should be provided. Councillor Anderson is to continue discussions with the Diocese over a possible access and old plans are to be provided to prove that a right of way has been in existence for many years.

Date of Meeting in May: Please note that the meeting has been changed to Monday 9th May which will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting when the Chairman and representatives to other bodies will be elected. This will be the first meeting after the

MARCH 2011

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

Highways/Traffic Matters: the Highways Department had replied that no further signage would be installed at the junction of Tittleshall Road and Back Lane but Wellingham Road had been swept and the flooding at the junction of Pound Lane and Lexham Road is being investigated by the jetting contractors.

A new drain had been installed on Druids Lane but the problem of flooding near the entrance to the school on Druids Lane had not been resolved. The County Councillor is to pursue this matter with the Highways Engineer.

The Clerk had been contacted by a resident regarding the access to the area behind the houses on Wellingham and Weasenhams Roads from Wellingham Road. No maintenance had been undertaken on this area but this has not been adopted Norfolk County Council and is owned by Breckland Council. The resident was advised to contact Breckland Council on this matter.

Planning: an application had been received from the Bull Public House (1 Church Street) which is a resubmission to convert ancillary accommodation to two self contained holiday lets. This is the same application as one that had been refused permission and the appeal against this application had been dismissed. As there was no material change from the original application the members decided to again object to this application as it could affect the long term financial viability of the pub.

Pumping Station at Dereham Road: Anglian Water had been contacted again and it had informed the Parish Council that no further maintenance would be undertaken.

Access to the Graveyard from Druids Lane: Councillor Anderson had investigated the possible right of way from Druids Lane to Church Street through the churchyard. From the Ordnance Survey maps of 1884, 1906 and 1958 a path is shown running from Church Street to Druids Lane. When Rectory Meadows was constructed in the 1970's it appears that the old path was enclosed by the gardens of Rectory Meadow. Norfolk County Council would consider re-instating the path if there are 12 residents who could state that the path was in existence and used to access Church Street from Druids Lane. Councillor Anderson is to contact the Diocese to inform it of her findings and to discover whether it will take the matter further.

Litcham Common Grazing Project: the Parish Council had received a request to donate to the cost of installing cattle grids and additional fencing to allow grazing throughout the Common. A decision as to whether the Parish Council would donate was deferred until after the elections in May as the sum involved is considerable and the new Council should consider this as it may affect the precept for the coming years.

Annual Parish Meeting: this will take place on Monday 4 April 2011 commencing at 7.00 p.m. reports will be received from local organisations as well as the annual report from the Parish Council.

A P R I L 2 0 1 1

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Monday 4th April attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor M. Kiddle-Morris and nine members of the public. Reports were received from local organisations, the Chairman of the Parish Council, County and District Councillor and the Clerk. All these will be published on the website.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

At the April Parish Council meeting, attended by five Councillors, County and District Councillor M. Kiddle-Morris, and one member of the public the following was considered:

Highways/Traffic Matters: the drain on Druids Lane outside the entrance to the school had been jetted and the water is now running away to the culvert on the opposite side of the road. It is not known whether a replacement pipe is to be fitted.

The drains on Church Street are again blocked, the road appears to be crazing on Butt Lane, the VAS sign on Lexham Road is still not working and several white lines need refreshing. All these matters will be reported to Norfolk County Council.

Speedwatch had carried out a session on Dereham Road but only one vehicle had been reported in excess of the speed limit . It is proposed to hold another session on Lexham Road especially as Norfolk Constabulary is promoting the Camera and Speedwatch campaigns from 14th to the 23rd April. A request had been received from Beeston Parish Council to train a team to operate within their village and the co-ordinator agreed to investigate the possibility.

Access to the Graveyard from Druids Lane: Councillor Anderson is to continue to obtain evidence that the footpath was used regularly to access Church Street from Druids Lane prior to an application being made to Norfolk County Council to re-instate the footpath.

Consultation on Norfolk's Children's Centres: the Parish Council agreed to support the Litcham Children's Centre in its application to increase its catchment area by responding to the consultation and proposing that a third option is more suitable for Litcham which would encompass part of Swaffham and Dereham in its area. This would enable the number of potential children that could use the facilities to increase to over 600.

MAY 2011

At the May Parish Council meeting, attended by seven Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle-Morris, and fifteen members of the public the following was considered:

Election 2011: The following were elected to the Parish Council following the elections on 5 May 2011:- Mrs. Mary Anderson, Mr. Trevor Carter, Mrs. Liz Christie, Mr. John Jones, Mrs. Claire Lawrence, Mr. Chris Mitchell and Mr. Mike Oldfield.

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman: Councillor Mike Oldfield was elected Chairman and Councillor Trevor Carter was elected Vice-Chairman.

Election to Outside Bodies: the Parish Council representatives to outside bodies were elected as follows:- Litcham Jubilee Hall Trust-Councillor Anderson: Litcham Primary School and Children's Centre Committee-Councillor Lawrence; Litcham Common Management Committee-Councillor Oldfield

Transfer of the Ownership of The Green: confirmation had been received from Norfolk County Council that the ownership of The Green could be transferred to the Parish Council at a cost of £1 with each side paying its own solicitors costs.

Highways/Traffic Matters: several problems have not as yet been repaired by Norfolk County Council and the Highways engineer will be contacted again to try and resolve the matters on Back Lane, Church Street, Dereham Road and outside the Bull Public House.

Finance: a request had been received from the Litcham Common Management Committee to donate to the Litcham Common grazing Project to allow the ponies to roam the whole of the Common. This would entail the installation of cattle grids and some additional fencing. The total cost for this would be £100,000 which would be funded by external organisations but would leave a shortfall of £5,500. The Parish Council decided that it could not commit this amount of money to this project. However, it was decided that any large donations that the Parish Council give in the next year should go to village organisations which would be of greater benefit to the parishioners.

Access to the Graveyard from Druids Lane: the Parish Council had received a request from the Diocese of Norwich requesting the payment for the extension to the graveyard that the Parish Council had agreed in 2002. A response has been forwarded stating that the Parish Council was only willing to partly fund the acquisition provided there was free access to the graveyard from Druids Lane. No reply has yet been received from the Diocese.

Play Area: it was agreed to attempt to find a new site for a play area within the village and to utilise funds from Play 2000 and external sources to provide play equipment.

Planning: no objection was raised to the application for the installation of a single small wind generator at Grenstein Farm. The conversion of ancillary accommodation to two self contained holiday lets at the Bull Inn had been refused by Breckland Council.

JUNE 2011

At the June Parish Council meeting, attended by seven Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle Morris, and three members of the public the following was considered:

Tour of Britain Cycle Race: Stage 7 in this year's race will be passing through Litcham on 17 September. Councillor Lawrence is keen to organise an event in the village on that day as part of the race celebration. If any parishioner would like to assist with the organisation of this or have any suggestions as to what form the event should take would they please contact her on 01328 700145.

Highways/Traffic Matters: Highway problems were again discussed and it is disappointing to note that so many are not being repaired. All the outstanding items plus many new ones including problems with kerbs on Druids Lane and Manor Drive are to be reported. The white lines throughout the village are in need of refreshing and this will be requested as a priority. This will include the white lining outside the museum.

Finance: A request had been received from a parishioner to reconsider the decision not to donate to the Litcham Common Grazing Project to allow the ponies to roam the whole of the Common. This matter was discussed at length and the Parish Council re-iterated the feelings of the previous meeting; to refuse the request for a donation. It was suggested that as there may have been a change of opinion within the village about the project and an Open Meeting should be called to allow all parishioners to have a chance to put forward their point of view. The Litcham Common Management Committee will be meeting in the near future to discuss the matter.

Play Area: No meeting had as yet been held to find a new site but a local landowner is being contacted to see if a parcel of land is available.

Finance: The accounts for the year April 2010 to march 2011 were approved. These are available for any parishioner to view by contacting the Clerk.

JULY 2011

At the July Parish Council meeting, attended by six Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle Morris, and one member of the public the following was considered:

Tour of Britain Cycle Race: the District Councillor informed the meeting that the Communities Team at Breckland Council will be contacting all parishes on the route to offer assistance with events. There have already been offers of assistance for the day and it is thought that the Bull public house will be hosting a barbeque. The final format for the event has not yet been finalised but if any parishioner would like to assist with the organisation of this or have any suggestions as to what form the event should take would they please contact Councillor Lawrence on 01328 700 145.

Highways/Traffic Matters: the problems reported last month are all programmed to be repaired or have been repaired.

Community Car Scheme: the Parish Council is to consider the setting up of a community car scheme to provide transport for parishioners to the doctor, dentist and hospitals. This scheme would be funded jointly by Breckland Council and the Parish Council. The scheme would need volunteer drivers to take passengers to their required destinations and a co-ordinator to receive the requests and to organise the drivers. The scheme is only being considered at present but if any parishioner would be willing to give up some time to assist please contact the Clerk.

Minerals and Waste Consultation: in the latest round of the consultation no minerals or waste sites have been allocated for the parish.

Litcham Common Grazing Project: Litcham Common Management Committee had conducted a survey over the proposed fencing of the south side of the Common and the installation of cattle grids to allow the ponies to roam and graze over the whole of the common. This had resulted in a response from 28 people so far the majority of who are in favour of the cattle grids which would allow the ponies to roam over all the common. However those who are opposed to the ponies being able to graze both sides of the Dunham Road stated that they were frightened or intimidated by the ponies, fears about an accident along the Dunham Road, vandalism to the gates thereby allowing the ponies to escape and that there is no area to walk dogs without the ponies possibly being in that area. The Parish Council is supporting the proposed reduction of the speed limit along the Dunham Road as it is felt that the 30 m.p.h. limit is too close to accesses to the Common and is a highway safety issue. This support will be given whether cattle grids are installed or not but it would be imperative to reduce the limit along this road if the ponies are to graze both sides of the common. The Parish Council is to await the next Litcham Common Management Committee meeting to see whether the cattle grids are to proceed.

Play Area: then Parish Council is to await the final reading of the Localism Bill before deciding whether to proceed with a proposed play area

SEPTEMBER 2011

At the September Parish Council meeting, attended by seven Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle Morris, and four members of the public the following was considered:

Finance: Three objections had been received from a parishioner by the External Auditor concerning the accounts for the year 2010-2011. The objections are that the Parish Council did not follow its regulations when placing a contract for the refurbishment of the village sign and bench, that the tenant for Long Meadow should have paid for the replacement of the fencing and gate and that the Parish Council did not obtain the maximum sum from the sale of the telephone box. The External Auditor, who has taken legal advice, must investigate these objections and has therefore written to the Parish Council requesting their comments. The cost of the time spent by the Senior Partner of the auditors has to be borne by the Parish Council. This at present should cost about £500 but if further correspondence is needed then this figure could increase to at least £1000. The Parish Council is to respond prior to the next meeting at which time a further report will be given.

Community Car Scheme: The Parish Council is to proceed with the setting up of a community car scheme to provide transport for parishioners to the doctor, dentist and hospitals provided there are enough volunteer drivers to make the scheme viable. This scheme would be funded jointly by Breckland Council and the Parish Council. Councillor Christie has agreed to become the co-ordinator for the scheme but volunteer drivers are needed to take passengers to their required destinations. If any parishioner would be willing to give up some time to assist please contact the Liz Christie on 701765.

Access through the graveyard from Druids Lane: No progress has as yet been made but it was decided to allow a lawyer to look through all the paperwork held by the Parish Council to see if there is any legal matter that could be raised with the Diocese, Parochial Church Council or Norfolk County Council.

Speedwatch: a report had been received from Norfolk Constabulary for the first seven months of the year showing that 42 vehicles had been caught speeding of which 26 had been sent letters from Norfolk police. The highest speed that was recorded was 55 m.p.h. and the average 43 m.p.h. Nearly all the sessions had been held on Lexham Road and this is the area that shows the highest number of speeding vehicles. It was agreed that the scheme has been very active and is making a difference to the speeding and so will persevere with the sessions.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration: Councillor Christie is heading up a sub-committee to take forward a celebration for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The suggestion, at present, is to hold a Scarecrow Weekend with additional events being held alongside this, e.g. refreshments with a Hog Roast and Village Quiz. If there are any other suggestions for the event or you wish to assist please contact Liz Christie on 701765.

OCTOBER 2011

At the October Parish Council meeting, attended by seven Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle Morris, and four members of the public the following was considered:

Finance: the Parish Council had responded to the objections to the accounts and is now awaiting the decision of the External Auditor. As it is not yet known what the cost to the Parish Council will be for the investigation into the objections, a decision on the precept, which is the portion of the Council tax that is raised by Breckland Council on behalf of the Parish Council, has had to be deferred until the next meeting. It is hoped that a decision will have been received from the External Auditor by that time. No decision on the precept has to be made until the meeting in December. The Parish Council in common with the District and County Councils would like to keep the precept at the level of the previous four years. However, if the cost to the Parish Council, of the investigation is higher than has been intimated then it may be necessary to reduce the amount of work that the Parish Council undertakes or raise the precept.

Community Car Scheme: as was stated in last month's edition the Parish Council wishes to proceed with the setting up of a community car scheme to provide transport for parishioners to the doctor, dentist and hospitals and for visiting the sick and elderly. This scheme would be funded jointly by Breckland Council and the Parish Council. Councillor Christie has agreed to become the co-ordinator for the scheme but volunteer drivers are needed to take passengers to their required destinations. Unfortunately to date no person has come forward to volunteer to be a driver. If any parishioner would be willing to give up some time, even if this is only a few hours per month, to assist please contact the Liz Christie on 701765. Volunteer drivers are paid at a rate of 45pence per mile which is the maximum that is allowed by Inland Revenue without incurring any tax liability. The scheme is unable to run without public spirited people in the village.

Highways: whilst the village had had its roads swept in the past fortnight Back lane had not been. This matter is to be raised by the County Councillor with the necessary department. A new initiative has been forwarded to all parishes from Norfolk County Council to deliver local highway improvements. The Parish Council is to commence negotiations to see if the footway along Lexham Road near to Pound Lane can be widened. This project would have to be funded jointly by Norfolk County Council and the Parish Council.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration: Councillor Christie who is heading up a sub-committee to take forward a celebration for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 has received several offers of assistance. No firm date has been set for the event as the surrounding parishes are to be contacted to try and ensure that dates do not clash. If there are any other suggestions for the event or you wish to assist please contact Liz Christie on 701765.

NOVEMBER 2011

At the November Parish Council meeting, attended by seven Councillors, County and District Councillor M Kiddle Morris, and two members of the public the following was considered:

Finance: A further letter of objections to the accounts had been received from the External Auditor and the Parish Council is to respond to this letter. It is hoped that a decision will be made by the External Auditor after this letter has been received.

The precept was discussed and whilst it is not yet known what the total cost of the fee from the External Auditor will be it was agreed to maintain the level of the precept at the same amount as the last four years which is £6000. The Parish Council hopes that there will be a decision after the latest exchange of correspondence as any further time spent by the External auditor will incur increased charges and may result in a cost to the Parish Council in excess of £1000.

The Diocese of Norwich has requested the payment for the additional graveyard purchase several years ago. The Parish Council has continually requested that free access be available from Druids Lane into the churchyard but the Parochial Church Council has always refused this request despite agreeing to it in February 2003. The Parish Council is to respond again pointing out that in its opinion free access should be available to all.

Highways: several matters are to be requested to be maintained by the Highway and Community Rangers on their next visit including the re-installment of repeater signs and the post on Tittleshall Road which appears to have been damaged. The parking area outside the Post Office continues to deteriorate and whilst this has been monitored by Norfolk County Council a further request is to be made to repair this.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration: Councillor Christie who is heading up a sub-committee has formed the committee to take forward a celebration for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. No firm date has yet been set for the event as the committee is awaiting confirmation of availability from organisations who the committee wish to involve.

Planning: an appeal has been received from the Planning Inspectorate against the decision of Breckland Council to refuse permission at 1 Church street, The Bull, for the conversion of ancillary accommodation to two self contained holiday lets. The Parish Council will reiterate its objection to this application as it feels that this would jeopardise the long-term future of The Bull. Prior to the meeting the new landlord of The Bull addressed the meeting and stated that it was his intention to upgrade the rooms with the addition of two extra bedrooms and to make a success of the Bull with the better rooms offering bed and breakfast. He stated that he felt that self-catering would not work for The Bull in the long term.

The Parish Council wishes all parishioners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

DECEMBER 2011

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

Finance: a further response had been forwarded to the External Auditor regarding the objection to the accounts. It is to be hoped that a decision will be taken by the External Auditor to conclude the matter in the near future.

After conversations with the Diocese of Norwich it was agreed to remit the outstanding portion of the sum owing for the purchase of the extension to the graveyard.

Recycling: The Parish Council had requested Norfolk County Council Highways Department to recommend a suitable location in the village for the positioning of two recycling bins. The two bins would be for bottles and textiles. The most suitable location that was suggested by the Engineer was on Tittleshall Road on the opposite side of the road to Carters Coaches. Several parishioners voiced their concern at this site as it could cause a highway safety issue and that as the bins are close to properties there could be disturbance from noise if the bins are filled late at night. The Highways Engineer will be in the village again during December and will be requested to suggest another location.

Highways: The parking area outside the Post Office has been repaired and the problems reported last month are to be reported again. The first sharp frost of the year has brought two accidents along Dereham Road. The Dereham Road from Litcham to Gressenhall is not gritted. The Highways Department is to be written to stressing the problem with Dereham Road and again requesting that this road be added to the gritting routes. Parishioners are reminded that the gritted roads towards Dereham is either along the Mileham Road, B1145, and than to Dereham through Beetley on the B1146 or to travel through the Dunhams to the A47 at Necton.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration: This is to be held on 2nd and 3rd June 2012 and further details will be published in the New Year.

Planning: the installation of three small scale wind generators at Crossways Farm, Dereham Road and a single small scale wind generator at High House Farm had been granted permission by Breckland Council.

The Parish Council wishes all parishioners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

END OF EXTRACT FOR 2 0 1 1

Monthly Meetings

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