

Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2008

Present

Chairman Cllr Aves, Cllr Harrison, Platt, Clark, Dunnett and Lang, D/Cllr Alderson, C/Cllr Williams - also 41 members of the public for the National Trust Update at the beginning.

National Trust Update.

Two representatives from the National Trust gave an update on the current plans and developments for the local area. 41 members of the public attended giving lots of opposing opinions about the Wicken Fen Vision.

Public comments such as:

“What about the 15,000 acres of land that could be used for producing food for 3rd World countries?”

“What about those that live in the middle of the water area - what if they want to pass on their land to generations to come”?

The National Trust representative stated that although there are certain areas of land that the NT own, they have no rights to compulsory purchase. There are no negotiations going on at present as nobody wants to sell their land.

The National Trust have no desire to see the Reach Lode disappear. It is of no benefit to the NT to lose the Lode.

Other recent issues with the local area (such as Straight Drove, gating and fencing problems) where their County Council refused to give them permission, has made the National Trust realise that they need to speak to local people – they have learned their lesson.

Members of the public also expressed concern over the possible bridge over the Lode - what about car parking – would Reach become a car park for non-National Trust members? Cars would swamp the villages. What about the Hide at Mere Fen – where would the car park be? The NT replied that if necessary some land may be able to be used at Tubney Fen if that became an issue.

Forum for Members of the Public

Hilary Almond expressed her concern over Roe deer around the area, especially out to Swaffham Prior Fen and Upware. Accidents are waiting to happen and she felt that some warning signs should be put up at the entrance to these roads to remind drivers to slow down.

Mrs Almond also expressed her concern that Straight Drove is being churned up by 4 wheel drive vehicles, who are apparently using the area at high speed (as a sport) at weekends down the grassy drove near Robinson's farm. She also expressed her concern over the abuse of Reach Wood by certain horseriders. It was agreed that the clerk should ask Jonathan Plow of the Woodland Trust to come to a public meeting as soon as possible so that negotiations can be made and hopefully a compromise will be reached.

Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 05 March 2008 were confirmed and signed.

Reports

District Council Report

New Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme

This new fares scheme went live on April 1st and over 8,000 applications have been received in E Cambs for the new 'Smart' enabled bus passes, which represents any increase in pass holders of 6%. It is anticipated the overall increase will rise to 20% by the end of the year. Previous pass holders were able to travel free throughout the country, but from April free travel will be possible throughout England on local bus services, including London.

Cecelia Tredget, Deputy Chief Executive at East Cambs as accepted the post of Regional Director of the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership hosted by the East of England Regional Assembly.

New appointment at Waste Management – East Cambs

Dave White has been appointed as a replacement for Gerald Tickner who left some time ago. He will be undertaking part of Martin Stacey's work along with Ian Thompson.

Ely Master Plan

The Councils Strategic Development Committee have agreed that the recently produced Masterplan should be published as a document for formal public consultation. Public consultation will take place during April and May.

Neighbourhood Panel – South Area

The latest meeting was on April 1st at Newmarket. An advantage of this meeting is the involvement of the local police and being able to hold them to account. At the meeting, they report on actions taken on problems highlighted at the previous meeting.

County Council Report

The County Council have commenced consultation on the appointment of a new senior lead officer for adult social services. It is hoped that the position will be filled by May.

Cambridgeshire and Northampton County Councils have signed an agreement with Fujitsu for back office services. This will make services more efficient and it is likely that other councils will wish to buy into the service.

Guided Bus – Trials of buses have begun along the only section of the route that is completed. There is likely to be some severe disruption when work begins at the Hills Road Bridge. Phase one of the Addenbrookes access road is nearly complete. Phase two is to be funded by developers and this means that the £800,000 that was allocated for this can now be used on other projects.

Waste – The County Council has signed a 28 years contract for waste disposal with Donarbon. This will include an educational centre that will hopefully encourage future recycling.

The Scrutiny committee have looked at the way that the County Council receive petitions. This is to be improved as it is not seen as good community engagement.

Bus Subsidies – The new scoring system for those routes that are subsidised will now include social needs as well as numbers using the bus.

Fire Service – Tony Raine a fireman from March Fire Station has won a national award. Despite being paralysed in one leg he wished to remain in the service and has been supported in this by the Fire Service and he now works as a watch manager at March Fire Station.

Reports

Village Hall

A letter had been received from Rita Dunnett on behalf of the VH Committee asking for permission to close roads around Reach on Monday 5th May for Reach Fair, as detailed in her letter. The Parish Council granted their permission.

Items Discussed:

Cemetery

The clerk would contact the contractor to ask if they could finish painting the cemetery fence before the Fair on 5th May.

All were in agreement that Debbie Blocksage should be asked to cut the cemetery grass again as last year.

Playground Inspection

The playground inspection has taken place and no major problems were reported. This will be put on next months agenda.

Parking problem

It has been reported that people are parking their car on the junction near the pub so that buses/lorries are having to drive over the grass. This is a conversation area so it is a shame to see the verges damaged. The clerk agreed to send a letter to the owners of the car.

Tree Work around Reach

Eastern Tree Surgery have carried out tree work around Reach.

We are still awaiting the County Council to attend to the trees and brambles at the back of the last house on the Hythe. The Clerk will contact them again to find out when they intend to do it.

Election of Police Liaison Contact

Ross Clark will be the new police liaison contact for Reach. All were in agreement.

Election of New Parish Councillor

Following notices of the parish councilor vacancy, one application was received from Mrs Angela King. The Parish Council were all in agreement that Mrs King should fill this position. The clerk will ask Mrs King to sign the necessary documents at next months meeting.

Salt Bin for Ditchfield

The salt bin has been delivered and is being stored by Cllr Platt. The County Council will visit Ditchfields to suggest a suitable site for it. This will be in the Autumn prior to making their grit deliveries.

Audit Commission

A letter had been received from the Audit Commission stating the Moore Stephens had again been appointed as External Auditors.

Insurance

The annual insurance renewal has been received from Allianz Cornhill. This will be looked at in detail at the next meeting. The clerk will contact Ben Burgess to check the value of the village mower.

CALC Affiliation Fee

The Parish Council agreed to renew the CALC Affiliation Fee - £102.48

CCC Integrated Plan Document

The above document has been received from CCC. Parish Councillors will peruse it over the next month.

The next Meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 May 2008 at 7.30pm.

Cheques:

Glasdon UK Limited	£148.05
Eastern Tree Surgery	£499.38
Cambridgeshire County Council (lighting)	£227.50
East Cambs District Council	£ 47.85
The Wildlife Trust	£ 36.00
CPALC Affiliation Fee	£102.48
Browns of Burwell	£ 21.10
Ben Burgess	£120.58
Ron Greenhill (playground repairs)	£ 30.00