

Witham on the Hill Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Witham on the Hill Parish Council (Min
23-04) 6 November 2023 at 7.00 p.m. held at St Andrews Village
Hall, Witham on the Hill

Present: **Councillors:** Charles Henriques, Duncan Brock, Paul Smith, Sue Pennant-Jones and Richard Burbidge
Residents: Frances Plummer, Valentino Calabrese
Others: Bernard Champness – Clerk.

	Open Forum
	Frances Plummer and Valentino Calabrese were present to address the council regarding the telephone kiosk by the stocks. Mrs Plummer expressed the view that this amenity was no longer necessary, and would the parish council consider adopting it? This would facilitate redecoration, which Valentino Calabrese was happy to undertake, and she suggested that it would be a useful alternative location for the village book exchange which is currently in the church porch. Mrs Plummer had made enquiries to BT who explained that as it was a listed structure, planning permission would be required for any alternative use, but that they would very likely consider adoption by the parish council favourably. Mrs Plummer said that as a feature and focal point within the village, we should do what we could to retain it. Mr Calabrese had cleaned the kiosk two years ago and before that another resident had voluntarily repainted it.
	The Council were supportive of any efforts to improve the appearance of the phone box but were not in a position to approve such work. As for adopting it, concern was expressed that we would be taking on a matter which we could not simply change our minds about it in a few years' time. Furthermore it would be difficult for BT to remove it in the foreseeable future because of its listed status. We would have to apply for planning permission for any alternative use, maintain it and pay for any electricity that might be used. It was also felt that it would not be as convenient or suitable as an alternative location for the book exchange. At the moment the council were not of a mind to pursue the request.
	The meeting was formally opened at 19:26
49.	Apologies for absence, acceptance of Apologies
	49.1 No apologies were given as all Parish Councillors were present.
50.	Declaration of Interest – To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, as set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and the nature of those interests relating to any Agenda item
	50.1 No one declared an interest in any matter that was on the agenda.
51.	Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 4 September 2023 (23-03)
	51.1 Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 4 September 2023 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.
52.	Matters to Report
	52.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Henriques said that he had written to the County Councillor to see if she can talk with Highways about the condition of Bottom Street, but she had not replied. He was concerned that all that happens is a crew arrives, patches up the worst of the potholes

		<p>and then leaves the rest of the road surface to deteriorate further. In the circumstances this makes no economic sense at all because the cause of the problem is water leaking into the gully drainage system and flooding up out of it as it is clearly blocked/broken. Anglian Water have investigated, and it is understood they are satisfied this is not a mains water leak.</p> <p>The reasons why this should now be a priority are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential flood risk to Bridge Cottage. • Rapid degradation of the road surface resulting in many deep potholes. • Ice hazard for both vehicles and pedestrians as soon as we get some cold weather. <p>He also mentioned the 30mph signs at each end of the village have taken a battering this year and need replacement, also the bends sign at the Little Bytham Rd end of the village. The village name signage also could do with replacement as this is looking very tired. As a discussion point, would it be possible to have side gates at each end of the village to give a sense of enclosure.</p> <p>Cllr Henriques said that he had been to Harrison & Dunn in Bourne, and they said that they already had a poppy wreath for the Parish Council. It was agreed that Cllr Smith would represent the Council at the Remembrance Sunday service on 12th November and lay the wreath.</p> <p>It appears that the initial discussions relating to the provision of additional parking at the Six bells were progressing in a positive manner although no formal planning application has been made yet.</p>
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53.	To receive a report from the County and District Councillors.
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53.1	County Cllr Charlotte Vernon was not present and had not sent a report
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53.2	<p>District Cllr Penny Robins was not present but sent her apologies and the following report:</p> <p>Greater Lincolnshire Devolution This is moving ahead rapidly. We understand that the Minister is due to decide shortly whether he is happy with the bid proposed by the three top tier authorities (LCC, N Lincs, and NE Lincs) and if he is, the deal will be announced in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement on 22nd November.</p> <p>Health care I’m sure that as community leaders we are all aware of our residents’ concerns local healthcare services. NHS Lincolnshire is currently carrying out a survey of people’s experiences of using NHS services. They would like to hear from patients and groups from all communities, towns and villages across Lincolnshire to help understand our experiences.</p> <p>Bins Purple lidded bin, paper and card households will be delivered in the next few weeks ready for the launch of the change next year. The council is sending more than 68,000 households across the district about how recycling collection are about to change with information packs which should drop through your door any day if you have not received one already.</p> <p>Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Concerns Rightly there is a lot of concern at the possibility of dangerous RAAC in our council housing stock and any other council buildings. Officers have responded quickly on the issue. The steps being taken by South Kesteven District Council following Government advice to schools to close due to safety risks associated with the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in their construction RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete used</p>
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		<p>in roof, floor, cladding and wall construction in the UK from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. Experts believe much of the RAAC used in construction projects has exceeded its lifespan of 30 years and could collapse. While the material was used mainly in the construction of office and school buildings we are checking as a matter of urgency whether it is present in any buildings within our estate. As part of that a stock condition on database check has been carried out to identify any of our properties that fall within the scope of the construction type that would be affected. That check shows we have several flat roof domestic dwellings that were built circa 1947 and we understand these to be poured concrete and outside of the general mescals originally identified in relation to RAAC so they are not within the scope. There are some suggestions that RAAC was used as far back as the 1950s and as we have a couple of the properties identified as being built circa 1947 as void we are conducting further investigations. While we do not have any concrete roofed buildings within our housing stock and we cannot be 100% sure about alternative uses of RAAC, such as floor finishes, checks on that are being carried out. We are pulling together a list of all blocks with concrete floors for checking and will also revisit non-traditional buildings. This will also give us a better idea of any remedial on required on nontraditional buildings generally. We intend to prioritise this list based on the scope as part of a desktop survey and will not need to check every block, just the type. This will be completed by the Housing Team by the end of next week. We will be engaging the services of a surveyor as soon as possible and, in line with the Government guidelines, we will carry out a visual structural survey on any properties we cannot definitely rule out as being affected. Any areas where we are uncertain or believe to be RAAC we will need to engage a consultant with experience of identifying and RAAC. Although we first looked at this last year we are taking a fresh look to see if there is anything else that comes within the scope following additional information received extending the scope of the possible use of RAAC. These actions provide the reassurance that all steps are being taken.</p> <p>Spinney Monday 30th October the Spinney in Little Bytham will close for the play equipment to be replaced. The site will be closed for roughly 6/8 weeks to the public.</p>
54.	Clerks Report and Correspondence received.	
	54.1	The Clerk had circulated in advance notice of the various e-mails received since the last meeting. If anyone wanted to see any e-mails they should let him know and he would send it on.
	54.2	The Clerk advised Councillors that we had not been included in consultation for an application for a quarry at Thetford Farm, Baston. Thurlby had and had attended a meeting arranged by Baston Parish Council. It seemed that there were strong objections from all concerned. Thurlby had until the 12 November to respond and had objected. Their main concern was the increase in traffic on an already busy A15. It was expected that there would be up to 150 lorries a day entering or leaving the site. They were also concerned about lorries using Thurlby as a route to the A6121. Heavy empty lorries travelling through the village in the early hours of the morning can be very noisy.
55.	Planning applications:	
	55.1	Planning Applications to Approve: there were no planning applications to consider
	55.2	Planning Applications approved: - S23/1692 - Proposal: Remove part-dead Spruce tree (T1) to just above ground level. Location: The Pillared Cottage Main Street.

		S23/1502 - Proposal: Section 211 notice to reduce lowest limb of lime tree by 2-3m. Location: New Home Farm Main Street
	55.3	To note any Planning Applications refused or withdrawn: S23/1324 - FIRST SCHEDULE - Application to obtain a lawful development certificate for the creation of a single dwellinghouse in woodland off Stamford Road, PE10 0JG. And SECOND SCHEDULE Location: Carlby Hawes Wood Off Stamford Road PE10 0NG. Refused S22/1733 - FIRST SCHEDULE Use/operations/other matter Application to obtain a lawful development certificate for the creation of a single dwellinghouse (the Property) including associated infrastructure (utility, decking, woodstore and septic tank) (together, the Development) in woodland off Stamford Road, PE10 0JG (the Site). SECOND SCHEDULE Location: Carlby Hawes Wood Off Stamford Road PE10 0JG. Refused
	55.4	To note any Application appealed or any decision made regarding an appeal: there were none to consider
	56.	To consider the draft budget for 2024-25 and agree a Precept for that year
	56.1	The Clerk had prepared a budget for 2024-25 and this had been circulated in advance. The draft budget was discussed in detail with every expenditure considered and approved or amended. The Clerk advised that an agreement had been reached regarding salary increases for Clerks, but the exact figure had not been given. The union were seeking the same increase as last year. This meant that the figures for salary and PAYE were amended and increased to reflect this possible agreement. After discussion it was resolved that our Precept request for 2024-24 would be £3599.00.
	57.	To discuss the various village entrance road signs which are badly damaged and whether they can be repaired or replaced.
	57.1	An email had been received from a resident who was concerned about the state of the village signs at both ends of the village. This matter had been dealt with in the email Cllr Henriques had sent to Cllr Charlotte Vernon (LCC).
	58.	To receive any data from the reactive sign
	58.1	No data had been downloaded but this would be done and Cllr Brock would prepare another report to circulate.
	59.	To confirm Expenditure £3.35 – B M Champness (postage) £82.20 – HMRC (NI and PAYE) £328.92 – B M Champness (salary from Oct, Nov and Dec) []denotes those payments paid between meetings, which have been approved by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Parish Council or at a previous meeting but not listed Payments made by Direct Debit - £
	59.1	Resolved: that the payments be approved. Cllr Henriques had an invoice for £20.00 for the wreath, and this was resolved to be paid as well.
	60.	Any other business – Reminder – by law no decision can be made under this item only information exchanged.

	60.1	There being no other business the meeting was formally closed at 20.23
61.		The date of the next meeting – to be held on Monday 8 January 2024 at 7.00 p.m. at St Andrew's Parish Hall, Witham on the Hill