



## Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held on; Wednesday 2nd March 2011

### Attendance

Michael Aves	Vice Chairman	Present
Ross Clark	Chairman	Present
Rita Dunnett	Councillor	Not Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Joyce Harrison	Councillor	Present
Angela King	Councillor	Present
Helen Platt	Councillor	Present
David Parr	Clerk	Present
Allen Alderson	District Councillor	Not Present
David Brown	County Councillor	Part-time

### 1. Forum for Members of the Public

No members of the public attended.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Fielding declared an interest in one item contained within her Rights of Way report. Since this was deemed to be non-prejudicial, she was able to contribute to the discussions on this item

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting were reviewed and signed.

### 4 (1) Amenity Fund Committee

No payments were made and no applications received since the last meeting.

### 4 (2) County Council Report

February at the County Council was dominated by the full meeting of Council on February 15th, with the main agenda item being the Budget for 2011/12 and the Integrated Plan for the coming 5 years. I arrived at Shire Hall at 8.40am to find the access road blocked by protestors complaining about the proposed budget cuts. The meeting started with a large number of protestors in the public gallery. After numerous interruptions and three separate arrests of protestors, the Council finally managed to agree a balanced budget with the proposals reported last month going through. It was a long and stormy meeting and I eventually got home at 8.20pm.

In the run-up to the full Council meeting I also attended three separate scrutiny committees to examine budget proposals in greater detail - the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee. I also attended 3 informal cabinet meetings.

Councillor Jill Tuck, for personal reasons, will not be seeking re-election as Leader of the Conservative Group and therefore as Leader of the Council. The Conservative Group will shortly elect a new Leader.

#### **4 (3) District Council Report**

On February 22<sup>nd</sup> I attended the final Full Council meeting before May's local elections. A balanced budget was set for 2011/2012 with no increase in council tax despite the cuts in central government funding. Pay will be frozen for all staff other than those earning a full-time salary of £21,000 or less, who will be eligible for a £250 increase, in line with the central government suggestion. The Council's elected members will be taking a 10% cut in their allowances. Changes were made to the Council's committee structure and timing of its meetings; these should achieve significant savings.

Due to the forthcoming elections, the March series of Neighbourhood panels have been cancelled. Information and updates from the January meetings will be made available in March and April. The next South area meeting will be on June 28<sup>th</sup> at the Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth.

Suffolk County Council is to close the Newmarket Recycling Centre on May 9<sup>th</sup>. As this is used by many people from the south of ECDC, Councillor Alderson has made officers aware that there could be an increase in fly-tipping. **The Clerk** was asked to write to Suffolk County Council expressing the concern of the Parish Council regarding this closure.

The Parish Council noted that the District Council report (read out by the Chairman in the absence of Councillor Alderson) did not provide answers to three questions raised at the February meeting – these are as follows;

There was a members-only Neighbourhood Panels meeting recently which Reach was not invited to. **Councillor Alderson** will investigate why no invitation was made and report back at the next meeting.

Councillor Platt raised the issue of members of ECDC using taxis as transport down to London, as reported in the press. **Councillor Alderson** will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

Councillor Platt commented that the latest issue of East Cambridgeshire Magazine, containing information about Diary events to take place in Dec 2010 and January 2011, was delivered only at the end of January 2011. **Councillor Alderson** will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

It is expected that **Councillor Alderson** will provide answers to these questions at the next Parish Council meeting.

#### **4 (4) Financial Report**

The Parish Council is in a financially sound situation and should finish the year with reserves of +around £5,000.

#### **4 (5) Neighbourhood Panels Report**

No meetings have taken place since the last Parish Council meeting. The March meetings have been cancelled due to the timing of the local elections.

#### **4 (6) Parish Council Members**

No meetings attended.

#### **4 (7) Play Spaces Officer Report**

Spikes to deter birds from alighting on the top of the swings on the Green and in the Playground have been received and will be put in place shortly.

#### **4 (8) Rights of Way Report**

At the behest of the Parish Council, the Clerk had written to local landowners, reminding them of their responsibility to keep hedges under control. It appears that only one landowner has taken action so far and whilst most of the work carried out was very acceptable, one area of hedgerow for which the landowner is not responsible was cut without the permission of the actual landowner. **The Clerk** was asked to write to the landowner, thanking him for carrying out remedial work but asking him, in future, to only cut hedges for which he is responsible or where he has the express permission of the landowner to carry out the work.

The Clerk read out a letter from Michael Allen which acknowledged his responsibilities as a landowner and indicated that he will be reviewing the situation with his hedges in the near future.

As regards the repairing of byways, the Parish Council asked **the Clerk** to again remind the County Council of their responsibilities in this area and to ask what remedial plans are in place.

An email from a resident complaining that horse riders have started to use the footpath from the village on the eastern side of the Lode to the new bridge, causing damage to the surface, was discussed. **The Clerk** was asked to remind Reach residents via the village magazine and the website that riding horses on designated footpaths is not allowed.

#### **4 (9) Speedwatch**

There was no activity in the preceding month.

#### **4 (10) Village Centre Committee Report**

Reach Fair preparations continue to make good progress. The repairing of the roof following the theft of the lead has yet to begin.

**Councillor Clark** will discuss with the Chairman of the Village Centre Committee the implications of any change in the date of the current May Day Bank Holiday.

#### **5. Cemetery Rainwater Collection**

The Clerk had reported that significant hedge cutting was required to provide access to the shelter for guttering to be put up. This has now been carried out and **the Clerk** will carry out the necessary work shortly.

#### **6. Land Availability – 24 acres on the Burwell Road**

At a village meeting with the National Trust, which hopes to buy this land, the three main areas of community involvement (1) orchard, (2) horse ménage and (3) cricket/football pitches were reviewed. In addition, the possibility of horticulture therapy will be considered and also the suggestion of some form of community wood to produce sustainable fuel. The National Trust continues to seek funding for this venture. Disappointingly, one application for funding, which would have paid for the land and the projects, was not successful. It is likely that the National Trust will only get funding to purchase the land in which case the village would need to seek funding for the chosen projects.

#### **7. Mowing Contracts 2011/2012**

These have been awarded to C R Contracting for the village and wood grass-cutting and to Within Reach Services for the mowing of the cemetery. **The Clerk** will arrange for contracts to be signed appropriately.

#### **8. Royal Wedding Celebrations**

The Parish Council agreed to support the barbecue which will be organised by the Village Centre Committee.

#### **9. Village Signpost Refurbishment**

The signpost in the middle of the Green would benefit from refurbishment. **Parish Councillors** will look at the signpost and a decision on how to proceed made at the next meeting.

#### **10. Planning Applications**

There were none for consideration.

#### **11. Information Items**

It was agreed that Councillor Aves would be nominated to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace to take place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011. **The Clerk** will make the necessary application.

Presently, the Clerk is paid on a three monthly basis with no tax deducted at source. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, legislation will require that the Parish Council becomes the employer of the Clerk and that tax at the basic rate is deducted at source. **The Clerk** will make the necessary arrangements.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Department has been running two pilots of a Highway Wardens scheme. The Parish Council felt that involvement in this project would be beneficial and nominated Ross Clark to fulfil this role. **The Clerk** will inform the County Council accordingly.

Cambridge Building Society are introducing a range of Savings account called Council Saver, which pay interest. **The Clerk** will investigate this opportunity and report back to the Parish Council at a subsequent meeting.

**The Clerk** was asked to liaise with Reach's Neighbourhood Watch volunteers with a view to ensuring that relevant warnings are communicated in a timely manner to villagers.

**The Clerk** was asked to write to those tennis court sponsors who have not yet been contacted to thank them for their generosity.

**The Clerk** will also organise a further meeting of the Tennis Court Committee so that plans can be put in place to build up a reserve to cover the future maintenance of the tennis court. Councillor Clark suggested that a number of tournaments should be organised where players would pay a small entrance fee and this, plus other opportunities, will be discussed at the meeting.

The Parish Council thanked those volunteers, led by John Reed, who in inclement weather, laid the turf on the damaged areas of the Playing Field, provided at very low cost by Spearhead Turf, who the Parish Council would like to thank for their generosity.

## 12. Payments

100954	Spearhead Turf	Turf for the Playing Field	£135.00
100955	CR Contracting	Hedgecutting in the Cemetery	£110.60

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 6th April 2011 at 7.30pm. The Agenda for the meeting will be issued by the previous Wednesday – and will also be posted in the Parish Council area of the Reach website ([www.reach-village.co.uk](http://www.reach-village.co.uk)).

Chairman:

Date: