

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

23 NOVEMBER 2010 – 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell (until 8.30 pm), Mrs Cotterell (until 8.30 pm), Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Rogers and Stokes.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Pinnock, Pooley, Softley and Webb.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2010 were confirmed and signed.

89/10 The Standards Board for England – Members' Code of Conduct

Members were reminded of the need to ensure that their register of Declarable of Interests is kept up-to-date.

No members had any amendments to make to their register entries.

90/10 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Elm Parish Council website (minute 76/10 (2))

Councillor Rogers reported on the additional website content that he had compiled since the last meeting, as a result of his consultation with members of the Parish Council and investigations into local facilities and activities.

The suggested content additions included:

- Play areas and sports fields
- Venues available for hire
- Shops and Post offices
- Schools
- Places to visit and things to do
- Useful contact telephone numbers and websites.

Members supported Councillor Rogers' suggestion that he would take photographs of some of the facilities within the parish.

Suggestions from members included adding details of local businesses, but being careful not to be seen to be promoting particular companies/traders, and places of worship.

Members decided that they would forward any further ideas to Councillor Rogers, who would then present to the next meeting of the Parish Council a final draft of the additional website content, for members' approval.

(2) Parish council office and adjoining land – maintenance and security (minute 76/10 (4))

The Clerk reported further in relation to the decisions reached at minute 66/10.

Members were informed by the Clerk that he had

- met with the Manager of the Community Payback Team (CPT) to discuss the operational arrangements in relation to painting of the security fencing. Based upon the information provided by the Manager of the CPT, the estimated cost of materials would be of the order of £2,000 and the painting works would take a number of weeks (with a need for weather to be dry and mild) to complete.
- made further attempts to obtain advice from the Property and Asset Manager at Fenland District Council in relation to a ventilation system for the pavilion and is still awaiting a response.
- made arrangements, in liaison with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, for locking the outer gates to the office and playing field area, because of anti-social behaviour incidents in the car parking area since the last meeting.

Members decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the Clerk would continue to seek to identify suitable ventilation systems for the office building;
- (3) Councillor Cotterell would make enquiries as to what arrangements were in place for cleaning out the dykes at the playing field;
- (4) the painting of the fencing at the playing field would not be an efficient use of the Parish Council's financial resources in terms of community benefit and, consequently, not to proceed with such work.

91/10 Police matters

In the absence from the meeting of PC Julie Coales, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, members were unable to receive information in relation to incidents of crime and disorder within the parish since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Members decided that they had no issues for reporting, by the Clerk, to PC Coales for investigation.

92/10 Community-led planning for Elm Parish

Further to minute 78/10, Mrs Wadsley of the Community Development Team at Fenland District Council attended the meeting to obtain any further comments from members in relation to the Elm Parish Plan, to enable her to produce a final draft version of the document.

Some members suggested a number of updates and revisions to the document circulated at the last meeting.

In addition, Mrs Wadsley asked questions and sought members' views in relation to certain issues within the document.

Members decided that a final draft version of the updated Elm Parish Plan be produced by Mrs Wadsley, for members' consideration at a future meeting.

93/10 Facilities for young people in the parish

Further to minute 79/10, Councillor Rogers circulated plans of locations that he had identified as potential sites for the provision of play equipment for young children within the parish. He also mentioned that he had identified a potential supplier of appropriate play equipment.

Councillor Rogers explained that he had decided to focus upon potential sites in Elm initially, as it is the area with the lowest level of play equipment provision. Sites in other villages could be identified in the longer-term.

Councillor Rogers re-iterated the suggestion that he had made at the last meeting, i.e. that the Parish Council should consider developing, initially, a number of small play areas with one or two pieces of play equipment for young children on small sites and, in the longer-term, a project for providing a larger scheme for a range of ages.

Members discussed the practical issues in relation to some of the sites suggested by Councillor Rogers, particularly where they are not in the ownership of the Parish Council.

Members decided that Councillor Rogers would report to the next meeting on suggestions for the provision of (suitable items and cost of) play equipment at the Pocket Park, adjacent to Chapel Lane, in Elm.

94/10 Rural Exception sites – affordable housing for local people

Further to minute 80/10, Catherine Shilton, a Rural Housing Enabler at Cambridgeshire ACRE, and Karen Freya, Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer at Fenland District Council, attended the meeting to present the information that members had requested at the last meeting; that information being details of those living within the parish of Elm who are on the housing waiting list.

Ms Freya presented details of numbers of people on the housing waiting list for each of the villages of Elm, Fridaybridge and Coldham and for the settlement of Coldham; the total numbers, for various sizes of accommodation are 27, 13, 5 and 2 respectively. The information provided detailed the level of need (ranging from A being the most urgent to E being the least urgent) of those on the list.

Ms Freya commented that the information shows that: the majority of people on the list are aged between 35 and 65 years; around one-third of those seeking one-bedroom accommodation are 65 years of age or older; the figures demonstrate a need for affordable housing within the parish; the majority of those on the waiting list are not deemed to be in urgent need, so would be unlikely to be accommodated within the parish unless development were to take place on an "exception site" and those people could be housed in that development because of the "local connection" criteria.

Ms Freya and Mrs Shilton reminded members of the information that they had presented to the last meeting.

Mrs Shilton and Ms Freya responded to members' questions.

At this stage, members are still not convinced that a housing needs survey is necessary and wish to see, before reaching a decision on this matter, information on how Parish Councils can propose a Rural Exception Site and the processes that had been used by any other Parish Council within Fenland to invite land owners to offer potential exception sites.

Members decided that

- (1) before reaching a decision on whether or not to proceed with a housing needs survey, they would like information on how Parish Councils can propose a Rural Exception Site and the processes that had been used by any other Parish Council within Fenland to invite land owners to offer potential exception sites; Ms Freya undertook to produce this information;
- (2) this matter be considered further at the next meeting, in the light of the information to be provided by Ms Freya.

95/10 Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club

Members received a presentation from members of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club, supported by staff of the County Council's Youth Service Team, on the activities undertaken at the Youth Club and the benefits to the young people who attend the club. The club, which operates on a weekly basis between 6.00 pm and 8.00 pm, is open to young people of 11 years of age and above.

In addition, Miss Goose of the Youth Service Team explained to members the implications for the Youth Service and Connexions of the budget reductions being imposed by the Government. In summary:

- the need to reduce expenditure on the youth work and Connexions services by £1m; this has meant merger of the two areas of service to create the Integrated Youth Support Service
- a reduction in the number of posts within the Youth Service in Fenland from 20.72 to 15.66 full-time equivalents
- a reduction in the level of service, which would result in services being targeted to areas of greatest need
- the closure of a number of Youth Clubs unless external funding can be secured.

Miss Goose enquired as to the possibility and likelihood of the Parish Council being able to provide funding to support continuation of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club; she informed members that she would be able to provide the Parish Council with details of the costs of running the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club.

Members were informed of the ways in which the club is promoted/publicised, which includes the display of posters on the Parish Council notice boards.

The members of the Youth Club explained how participation in activities at the club had helped them to interact with others and to develop into responsible citizens; they stated how important the club is to them. They explained also that they have undertaken charity fundraising events, been on various trips, received presentations from various organisations (including Drinksense) and they receive "informal" education and learning (on matters such as bullying).

Members viewed a DVD film of a song that had been written and performed by members of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club.

The members of the club and the staff of the Youth Service Team responded to members' questions.

Members decided

- (1) to express their support for the valuable work taking place at the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club and to consider at their next meeting, when fixing the Parish Council Precept for 2011/12, the possibility of providing financial support to help secure the future of the Youth Club;
- (2) that information be provided by the Youth Service Team in relation to club's annual operating costs (detailing all income and expenditure), to assist member's consideration of providing financial support.

96/10 Highway issues

- (1) Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements Programme 2011/12.

Further to minute 35/10 (1), the Clerk reported the outcome of the Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements Programme (JFMHI) bidding process for 2011/12.

The funding bid submitted by Elm Parish Council (i.e. an appropriate means of reducing vehicle speeds (possibly a build-out into the carriageway) on March Road, Friday Bridge (in the stretch of road between

Woodhouse Corner and the clock tower), plus the possible installation of an interactive speed limit sign) had not scored a sufficient number of points using the County Council's scoring system to be successful.

Members decided that the outcome of the JFMHI bidding process for 2011/12 be noted.

- (2) Stopping-up of land in front of the Artful Dodger public house, Elm Low Road, Wisbech.

The Clerk reported on an application to Cambridgeshire County Council, under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980, to "stop up" land in front of the Artful Dodger public house at Elm Low Road, Wisbech on the grounds that the land is unnecessary as highway.

Members decided to raise no objections to the application.

- (3) Fridaybridge Road, Elm.

Councillor Stokes referred to difficulties experienced by the residents of a row of cottages on Fridaybridge Road, Elm because of the existence of a large hedge which obscures visibility of the accesses to these properties. He suggested that the difficulties could be eased by the installation of a "concealed entrance" sign on the highway approach to these properties.

Members decided that this issue be referred to the Local Highway Authority.

- (4) HGV advisory signs.

The Clerk reported the quotation from Fenland District Council (FDC) for the provision and installation of seven "Not suitable for HGVs" advisory signs at various locations in Elm. The total cost of this scheme is £1,182.63 plus VAT.

Members decided that this quotation be accepted and that FDC be requested to arrange for the work to be undertaken as a matter of priority.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to enable the signage to be provided at the earliest opportunity)

97/10 Planning applications

Members considered the following planning applications and decided to submit to the Local Planning Authority the comments set out (in italics) below:

- (1) Erection of 2 x semi-detached houses (outline planning application) on land south of 19 Oldfield Avenue, Elm – F/YR10/0782/FDC (applicants: Mrs J Rumbelow and Fenland District Council).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Conversion of part double garage to form additional living accommodation at 21 Kilderkin Close, Fridaybridge – F/YR10/0789/F (applicant: Ms P Auker-Howlett).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a 5-bed detached house on land east of Soffits, Halfpenny Lane, Elm – F/YR10/0814/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs O Rogers).

That the application be supported.

(Councillor Rogers declared his personal and prejudicial interest in this application, by virtue of being one of the applicants for the proposal, and retired from the meeting for the discussion and voting thereon))

M98/10 Finance

The Clerk reported on the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting, as follows:

Income

Fenland District Council	The Leam – Section 106 payment	£1,309.45
D Bates	Agricultural holdings rent	£187.50
Allianz	Payment of insurance claim for damaged street lamp in Coldham	£649.03
Kent Memorials	Cemetery memorial - Stewart	£275.00
Richard King Memorials	Headstone	£135.00
A R Clingo	Burial of cremated remains (Smart) and interment of body (Clingo)	£310.00
Coldham Residents Action Group	50% of the cost of plaque for Coldham bus shelter	£14.00
Total Income		£2,879.98

Expenditure

ATS Euromaster	Tractor puncture repair	£58.64
E.on	Electricity – Cemetery Cottage	£28.75
Wildlife Gardening Services Ltd	Grounds maintenance works	£137.81
M Cotterell	Reimbursement of cost of poppy wreath	£16.50
Fen Regis Trophies Ltd	Plaque for Coldham bus shelter	£32.90
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £118.51), telephone, Broadband and other expenses)	£605.10
Total Expenditure		£879.70

In addition, members considered the invitation from Fenland District Council to make application for a Concurrent Functions Grant and Additional Items expenditure for 2011/12 and the level of funding which should be sought via this process.

The Clerk informed members that it would be necessary to fix the Parish Council's Precept for 2011/12 at the next meeting and, consequently, he suggested that members should give thought prior to that meeting to any areas of additional spending for that financial year and beyond.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £2,879.98 be noted and that the expenditure of £879.70 be authorised;
- (2) the Parish Council makes an application to Fenland District Council (FDC) for a Concurrent Functions Grant for 2011/12 at the level awarded by FDC in 2010/11 plus an inflationary increase of 2.5%, together with a bid for Additional Items expenditure in relation to the provision and installation of three additional street lights in that financial year;
- (3) the information and advice given by the Clerk in relation to fixing a Parish Precept for 2011/12 be noted and acted upon.

99/10 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minute 84/10, the Clerk reported on the latest position regarding the proposals to refurbish this property, following departure of the former tenant.

The Clerk informed members that he had now received all six of the anticipated quotations and that he would, consequently, make arrangements for the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and himself to meet to discuss the quotations and to accept, in accordance with the authority delegated by the parish Council at minute 69/10, the quotation which provides best value – not necessarily the cheapest – in terms of refurbishment of this property.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

100/10 Section 106 (of the Town and Country Planning Act) monies - identification of possible projects which could access this funding

The Clerk reported on recent discussions involving the Parish Council Chairman, himself and officers of Fenland District Council (FDC) regarding Section 106 monies that are being held by FDC as a result of the windfarm developments in Coldham.

The Clerk explained that of the £60,000 Section 106 money provided by the developer, £15,000 had been awarded to the Coldham Residents' Action Group and the District Council had funded other works totalling approximately £7,500. This leaves approximately £37,500 available to fund other community projects within the parish of Elm that would accord with the criteria for use of this money, e.g. those which would "incorporate actions to minimise environmental impact". Bids can include not only the capital cost of a project but also funding for maintenance for a period of 10 years.

The Clerk provided each member of the Parish Council with a copy of the eligibility criteria for accessing this particular funding and informed members that Fenland District Council is looking for support from the Parish Council in achieving bids from within the community or in bidding for project funding itself. The deadline for receipt, by Fenland District Council, of funding bids is 31 March 2011. Bids will not be successful unless they comply with the "environmental impact" criteria and have achieved community support via a public consultation exercise.

Members decided that they would each give thought to the development of projects which could utilise this Section 106 funding.

101/10 Correspondence

- (1) Victim Support - request for a financial donation.

The Clerk reported a request from Victim Support for a financial donation towards the cost of providing support to people whose lives have been affected by crime.

Members decided, in the absence of any evidence that people in the parish of Elm have received assistance from this organisation, that no financial donation be made to Victim Support.

- (2) Fenland District Council shops and contact centre – opening hours.

The Clerk reported a letter from Fenland District Council (FDC), consulting the Parish Council on proposed changes to the opening hours of the Fenland@yourservice shops and the contact centre.

The letter states that, subject to the outcome of consultation and subsequent approval by the Cabinet at FDC, the opening hours of its shops and contact centre on Mondays to Fridays will be 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (instead of 8.30 am to 5.30 pm) because of the low numbers of customers using these facilities during the first and last 30 minutes of the current opening times; no changes are proposed to the opening hours on Saturdays.

Members noted that the Town Councils in Fenland have been consulted upon the proposal and have all given it their support.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted and to raise no objection to the District Council's proposal to reduce opening hours of its shops and contact centre.

- (3) Norfolk County Council Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Plan – invitation to make information on how Parish Councils can propose a Rural Exception Site and the processes that had been used by any other Parish Council within Fenland to invite land owners to offer potential exception sitesrepresentations.

The Clerk reported on the invitation from Norfolk County Council to make representations in respect of its Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Plan, which the subject of consultation between 22 October and 17 December 2010.

Members decided that they had no comments to make in response to this consultation exercise.

- (4) Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau – request for financial assistance.

The Clerk reported a letter of request from the Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) for financial assistance in relation to delivery of its outreach service in Elm and Christchurch.

The CAB states that it dealt with 974 new enquiries from residents in the Elm and Christchurch Ward in the last financial year.

Members decided that a donation of £250.00, the same level awarded in 2009, be made to the Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau.

(5) Tenders for contracted bus services – consultation.

The Clerk reported on a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Passenger Transport Services Team at Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to the tenders for contracted bus services (i.e. those which receive a financial subsidy from the County Council), with effect from April 2011.

As part of this exercise, Parish Councils are being consulted upon the tendering options for each of these bus services. The services which are of relevance to the parish of Elm are numbers 46 and 56 (Wisbech – March), operated by Norfolk Green.

Members decided that the County Council be informed, in response to the consultation, that Elm Parish Council supports the tendering options for these routes, as detailed in the table enclosed with the County Council's letter (i.e. existing timetable only for route number 46 and two options, including existing timetable, for route number 56).

(6) Elm Friendship Club.

Further to minute 50/10 (1), the Clerk reported receipt of a Thank You card signed by members of the Elm Friendship Club, expressing their gratitude for the Parish Council's support to the club.

Members decided, after reading the comments written within, to note the receipt of the card.

102/10 Open Forum

(1) Affordable housing within the parish

A resident of Elm informed members of her opinion that there is a need for the provision of affordable housing within the parish, particularly in Elm. She gave examples of people who she knows that are seeking to find such accommodation within the village and who are not deemed, by the Local Housing Authority, to be in urgent need and are, consequently, unable to reside locally.

The resident requested that the Parish Council gives serious consideration to supporting the undertaking of a housing needs survey, as it is very apparent that local people will not be able to obtain affordable housing within the parish of Elm unless development were to take place and on an "exception site" and people with a "local connection" given the opportunity to occupy those properties.

Members decided to note the views of the local resident, which they undertook to take into account when discussing this matter again at their next meeting (minute 94/10 refers).

(2) Overstone Drive, Coldham

A resident of Overstone Drive, Coldham explained the difficulties experienced by residents of this estate because of its unadopted status; the carriageway continues to deteriorate and, in the opinion of the resident, is becoming dangerous.

The resident enquired as to whether it would be possible to use Section 106 monies (minute 100/10 refers) to fund the necessary improvements to the carriageway at Overstone Drive.

The Chairman reminded members of the previous debate on this issue (minutes 63/10 and 70/10 (1) refer) and the Clerk informed members and the local resident that the Section 106 funding available could only be used for community projects which would "incorporate actions to minimise environmental impact" (minute 100/10 refers).

Members decided to note both the views of the local resident and the information provided by the Clerk.

103/10 Next meeting

Members decided that the next meeting of the Parish Council be held on 21 December 2010, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Pavilion, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 9.05 pm

Signature:.....(Council Chairman).

Date:.....