

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

17 MAY 2011 – 7.10 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Pinnock, Rogers, Softley, Stokes and Webb.

Apologies: County Councillor Mrs Tuck and District Councillor Sutton.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 April 2011 were confirmed and signed.

1/11 Appointment of Chairman

Councillor Brand was appointed as Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2011/12 and made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in relation to that appointment.

2/11 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Stokes was appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2011/12 and made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in relation to that appointment.

3/11 Chairman's Allowance for 2011/12

Members considered the setting of a Chairman's Allowance for the municipal year 2011/12.

The Clerk reminded members that the level of allowance in 2010/11 was £300 and that the same level of provision had been supported by members when agreeing the Parish Precept for 2011/12.

The Clerk circulated, for members' information, a breakdown of the spending from the Chairman's Allowance in 2010/11.

Members decided that

- (1) the sum of £300 be allocated to meet the expenses of the Chairman of the Council during the municipal year 2011/12;
- (2) there is no need for the Clerk to present to the Parish Council, in future years, a breakdown of the spending from the Chairman's Allowance.

4/11 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 157/10 (1))

Councillor Rogers reported that there had no further progress on this matter since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Rogers be noted.

(2) Additional street lighting in the parish (minute 157/10 (2))

The Clerk, again, sought suggestions from members for possible locations for additional street lamps, in the event of the Parish Council receiving the necessary Concurrent Functions Grant funding from Fenland District Council in 2011/12 for three additional street lamps in the parish (minute 98/10 refers).

Members feel that an appropriate location for an additional street lamp in Elm would be Gosmoor Lane.

With regard to the faulty street lamp at Bramley Court, Coldham, the Clerk reported that he had established from the Parish Council's Asset Register that the council had procured this lamp in 2002. On the basis of that information, the Clerk had contacted the Street Lighting Team at Cambridgeshire County Council to ascertain whether the County Council would be responsible for maintenance of this lamp.

In response to the Clerk's enquiry, the County Council has stated that this lamp is not included in the authority's database as a Parish Council-owned lamp but the County Council is happy to add the lamp to its database, provided that the Parish Council agrees to meet the cost of its current repair.

Councillor Softley mentioned a faulty lamp (which is illuminated permanently) outside 38 March Road, Fridaybridge, which was reported to the County Council more than a month ago but is still awaiting repair.

The County Council had responded to the report by stating that this lamp is mounted on a wooden pole, with the control box mounted above it. Because the box is in close proximity to live overhead cables that are attached to the pole, the street lighting operatives are unable, under Health and Safety guidelines, to carry out maintenance on the unit. On that basis, the County Council has approached UK Power Networks (formerly EDF Energy) and asked that company to assist. The intention is for the box to be lowered to a position far enough away from the overheads so that the repair work can be undertaken.

Councillor Softley expressed his frustration at the time that is being taken to remedy the situation.

Members decided that

(1) one of the additional street lamps for the parish be provided at Gosmoor lane, Elm;

(2) the Clerk would inform the Street Lighting Team at the County Council that the Parish Council would like the lamp at Bramley Court to be added to the Parish Council's list on the County Council's database and seek from the Street Lighting Team an estimate of the cost of repairing the current fault;

(3) the Clerk would seek information from the County Council's Street Lighting Team as to the progress in repairing the faulty street lamp outside 38 March Road, Fridaybridge.

(3) Maintenance of playing fields and open spaces across the parish and at Elm Cemetery (minute 157/10 (3))

The Clerk reported that he had received no complaints, from either councillors or the public, since the last meeting in relation to the quality of the grounds maintenance work being undertaken by the contractor.

With regard to disposal of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance equipment, the Clerk reported that he had now received a further bid for all of the equipment, except the tractor.

Councillor Mrs Hopkin reported on her discussions with a specialist auctioneer with regard to appropriate disposal of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance equipment.

Members discussed the variety of means of disposal of this equipment, being mindful of the need to both operate the disposal in an open, transparent manner and maximise the potential income from the disposal process.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk and Councillor Mrs Hopkin be noted;
- (2) disposal of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance equipment be undertaken by way of entry into a specialist auction; arrangements would be made by Councillor Mrs Hopkin in liaison with the Clerk.

(Councillor Mrs Hopkin declared her personal interest in the part of this item relating to disposal of equipment, by virtue of a family relationship with one of the bidders)

(4) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 157/10 (4) refers)

The Clerk reported that the Partnership Agreement between the County Council's Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) team and Elm Parish Council has now been signed by the relevant officers of both parties.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

(5) Parish Council elections 2011 (minute 165/10)

Members considered the manner in which they would fill, by co-option, the two vacant seats (one in the Elm and Fridaybridge ward and the other in the Rings End ward) on the Parish Council.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council is required to advertise the vacancies and then co-opt through decision at a Parish Council meeting; the vacancies need to be filled under this process by 24 June 2011.

The Clerk read to members a draft notice that he had prepared, upon which he sought members' views. He also sought members' views as to the manner in which the vacancies should be advertised to potential candidates.

Some members indicated that they are aware of parishioners who may be interested in co-option to Elm Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) subject to a minor textual alteration, the draft notice produced by the Clerk be approved;
- (3) the vacancies be advertised via publication of the approved notice on the Parish Council's website and its notice boards;
- (4) the deadline for applications for membership of Elm Parish Council be 9 June and that the co-option process be undertaken at the meeting of Elm Parish Council on 21 June 2011.

5/11 Police matters

PCSO Martin Bogunovic, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, reported on recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, including:

- Coldham – no issues.
- Fridaybridge – criminal damage to a vehicle at Maltmas Drove; two incidents of anti-social use of a motorcycle; one burglary (during which jewellery was stolen) at Long Drove; one shed burglary (during which power tools were stolen) at Jew House Drove.
- Elm – one minor assault; theft of a trailer at Colletts Bridge Lane; anti-social use of a motorcycle at Wales Bank; one incident of arson to an abandoned chair at Peartree Way.

The PCSO informed members of the results of a Speed Watch exercise (of 100 minutes duration) which had been undertaken in the parish recently, whereby 77 motorists travelling between Elm and Fridaybridge were found to have been exceeding the speed limit. He added that a further Speed Watch exercise would take place within the parish later this month.

PCSO Bogunovic responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information provided by PCSO Bogunovic be noted.

6/11 Highway issues

(1) B1101 through Coldham and County Council's review of speed limits

Further to minute 159/10, the Clerk reported that he had pursued a response from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to his letter and that, as a result, the LHA has stated that "this matter has not slipped off the radar...publication of the report on the results of the speed limit review is expected soon". The response goes on to state that the LHA is considering how the changes to highways policies and the localism agenda will impact upon its forward plans.

In addition, the Local highway Authority had provided the Clerk with a copy of the report detailing its policy changes, as mentioned by the Clerk at minute 159/10.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that a copy of the report from the Local Highway Authority be circulated electronically to Parish Council members.

(2) Halfpenny Lane, Elm

Councillor Rogers mentioned that pot holes along Halfpenny Lane have been marked, using yellow paint, by the Local Highway Authority. Although this indicates that the need for repair had been identified, Councillor Rogers asked if it would be possible to ascertain the time scale for this work being undertaken.

Members decided that the Clerk would seek to ascertain the information from the Local Highway Authority.

(3) Hedges in Elm

Councillor Softley expressed concern regarding the height, and the consequent impact upon visibility, of the hedges at the Begdale/Belt Drove/Redmoor Lane crossroads.

Members decided that the Clerk would draw this matter to the attention of the Local Highway Authority, with a request that action be action to reduce the height of these hedges.

7/11 Planning application

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

Installation of an air source central heating pump to rear elevation of existing dwelling at 2 Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/ 0287/F (applicant: Mr G Breame).

That the application be supported.

8/11 Finance

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Precept – first half year payment	£13,750.00
W and W G West	Interment fee	£125.00
Cambridgeshire County Council	Reimbursement of cost of fencing at The Leam	£1,608.00
HM Revenue and Customs	VAT refund for 2010/11	£3,962.53
Total Income		£19,445.53

Expenditure

R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,271.41
GLW Engineering Ltd	Repairs to gate at Maltmas Drove playing field	£591.76
GLW Engineering Ltd	To supply and fit posts at The Leam	£413.94
Allianz	Insurance for tractor	£320.12
Aon Ltd	Parish Council insurance	£5,938.40
Elm Friendship Club	Donation – January to March 2011	£84.00
Fenland Fire Appliance LLP	Servicing of fire extinguishers	£84.06
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £160.99), Broadband and other expenses)	£779.18
Total Expenditure		£9,482.87

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 April 2011 (in the total sum of £130,677.36).

The Clerk also sought members' views as to whether they wished to review the cheque signatories in relation to operation of the Parish Council's bank accounts and investments, given that one of the current authorised signatories

(Mrs Pinnock) had not sought re-election to the Parish Council. The Clerk made the point that although the Parish Council still possesses the minimum number of signatories to be able to operate its bank accounts and investments, it is beneficial to have at least one additional signatory from a business continuity perspective.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £19,445.53 be noted and that the expenditure of £9,482.87 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 April 2011 be noted; in future reports, the Clerk would include the total sum of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts for each of the preceding six months;
- (3) Councillor Softley be added to the list of authorised signatories for both the National Savings and Investments mandate and the Barclay Bank accounts; the Clerk would obtain the necessary documentation to facilitate this.

9/11 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minute 162/10, the Clerk reported on the latest position regarding the refurbishment and letting of this property.

The Clerk informed members that the tenancy of the property commenced on 5 May 2011, at a monthly rental of £595 per calendar month. The initial period of the tenancy is the standard contractual term of six months.

The tenancy agreement has been signed by the Clerk, as the Proper Officer of the Parish Council, and witnessed by the Chairman.

To secure the tenancy, it had proved necessary for the Parish Council to provide a cooker at the property.

Prior to the tenants' occupation, the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor cut the grass and tidied the garden at the property at no cost to the Parish Council.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

10/11 Elm Cemetery extension – roadway re-surfacing etc

Further to minute 163/10 (1), the Clerk reported to members on the current situation regarding re-surfacing etc of the roadway at Elm Cemetery, following completion of the extension works.

The Clerk reported that a second quotation for these works, based upon the specification set prior to the last meeting, has now been received.

In accordance with the decision at minute 163/10 (1), the Clerk had obtained advice from the Local Highway Authority (LHA), which he read to members, regarding a recommended approach to re-surfacing the cemetery roadway (both in terms of depth and method of laying new surfacing). The Clerk had also obtained from the LHA details of other potential contractors for this work.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the depth of surfacing of the roadway be 40 mm;

- (3) the two contactors which has submitted quotations (on the basis of a surfacing depth of 25 mm) both be invited to submit a revised quotation (on the basis of a surfacing depth of 40 mm);
- (4) the Clerk would seek a quotation from at least one of the additional contractors suggested by the Local Highway Authority;
- (5) to enable this matter to be progressed as a matter of priority, the authority to accept a quotation for this work be delegated to the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Clerk.

11/11 Correspondence

Elm Friendship Club – request for continued financial support.

Further to minute 50/10 (1), the Clerk reported a request from Elm Friendship Club for financial support in the 2011/12 financial year.

The Clerk reminded members of the level of financial support provided to the club in 2010/11, i.e. at the rate of 28 per month (to cover the cost of the club holding its meetings at the Elm Centre) and informed members that, according to the Secretary/Treasurer of the club, the Elm Friendship Club's meeting costs had not increased in the current financial year.

Members decided that the Parish Council would provide financial support to the Elm Friendship Club for the financial year 2011/12, the level of funding to be on the same basis as in 2010/11 (i.e. at the rate of £28 per month) (payable in two instalments of 168.00)).

12/11 Fridaybridge Clock tower

Councillor Softley mentioned that one of the clock faces at Fridaybridge Clock tower now has a “cloudy” appearance and suggested that work be undertaken to remedy the situation.

Members decided that the Clerk would make contact with the company which undertakes the servicing of the clock mechanism at the clock tower, with the request that the problem be investigated and the necessary repairs undertaken.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to enable the repair works to be undertaken as a matter of priority)

13/11 The Leam, Fridaybridge

(1) Fishing

Councillor Cotterell informed members of a complaint that he had received from a resident of The Leam concerning fishing activities which are being carried out at the pond, in contravention of the Parish Council's No Fishing rule.

Members decided that this matter be referred to the Water Bailiff at the Environment Agency (EA), to see if the EA is able to assist in the enforcement of the No Fishing rule.

(2) Reeds around the pond

Councillor Webb mentioned the need for cutting of the reeds around the edge of the pond.

Councillor Webb expressed the belief that the Parish Council is required, for insurance purposes, to keep the reeds cut back so that the edges of the pond are clearly visible to anyone who might otherwise fall into the water.

Members decided that the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor be requested to undertake this work when next carrying out the scheduled grounds maintenance activities at this site.

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

14/11 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 21 June 2011, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

.Meeting finished at 8.25 pm

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

Date:.....