

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

19 JULY 2011 – 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Lankfer, Pinnock, Stokes and Tilney.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Rogers and Webb plus County Councillor Mrs Tuck.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 June 2011 were confirmed and signed.

25/11 The Standards Board for England – Members' Code of Conduct

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

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

26/11 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 17/11 (1))

Although Councillor Rogers was absent from the meeting, he had provided, via e-mails to the Clerk, details of his current awareness of the activity and interest within Elm for a both a skateboard park and play equipment. In this regard, Councillor Rogers recommends the establishment of an action group, comprising members of the community and representatives of the Parish Council, to progress the overall requirement for all ages and to consider all of the associates issues (including suitable locations, funding etc).

The Clerk reported that he had obtained some examples, from a local manufacturer/supplier of "model" skateboard parks, together with estimated costs; this information had been circulated electronically to Parish Council members and shared with the family of the young person who had attended the last meeting.

A group of young people and some of their parents attended the meeting and the Chairman invited the young people to speak to this item if they wished.

Two of the young people (including the author of the letter of request reported to the last meeting) addressed members. The young people showed members some possible designs that they had produced for a skateboard park and other play equipment in Elm. The youngsters have produced a DVD of their riding cycles, which they handed to the Parish Council for members to view.

The young author of the letter of request has now collected 331 signatures from local people in support of the provision of a skateboard park in the village. In addition, the young people handed to the Parish Council the results of a consultation with children at the Elm Pre-school in relation to the types of play equipment that they would like to see provided in the village.

Members share the view of local residents that a potential site for both a skateboard park and an equipped play area would be the open space area off Grove Gardens.

Members decided that

- (1) the information provided by Councillor Rogers, via his e-mails to the Clerk, be noted;
- (2) Councillor Rogers' recommendation regarding the establishment an action group be approved and that members who are interested in representing the Parish Council on that group would inform Councillor Rogers accordingly;
- (3) the level of public support for the provision of a skateboard park and play equipment in Elm be noted;
- (4) the information provided as a result of the consultation at the Elm Pre-School be forwarded to Councillor Rogers;
- (5) the DVD provided by the young people be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

(2) **The Leam, Fridaybridge – fishing (minute 17/11 (5))**

The Chairman informed members that he had witnessed, earlier in the month, an adult male standing in the water at The Leam using a fishing pole.

Members stated that they had received no other reports from local residents regarding persons fishing at The Leam, although they are aware (minute 28/11 refers) that one further incident had been reported to the Police.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(3) **Elm Cemetery (minute 22/11 (1))**

The Clerk reported to members on the current situation regarding re-surfacing etc of the roadway at Elm Cemetery.

The Clerk informed members that, following a meeting on-site (involving the contractor which had submitted the lowest quotation, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council and he), the contract had been awarded to the contractor which had submitted the lowest quotation and the work was completed on 15 July 2011.

Councillor Pinnock raised concerns regarding the current standard of grounds maintenance at the cemetery and also expressed the opinion that the tap which had been installed as part of the roadway re-surfacing contract had not been placed at the most appropriate location within the cemetery; he also suggested that the tap (which is of traditional design) should be replaced with a type which could not be left running after use.

In the light of the various comments made and views expressed by members, the Clerk suggested that an inspection by all members of the Parish Council of Elm Cemetery be undertaken prior to the next meeting.

The Clerk informed members of a recent alleged incident of intimidation towards the grounds maintenance contractor's staff whilst they were working in the cemetery and the action that had been taken by the staff to avoid the situation escalating. Councillor Pinnock informed members of an alternative version of events that had been reported to him. Members are hopeful that such a situation would not recur and of the view that, whatever the circumstances, intimidation of the Parish Council's staff and contractors is unacceptable and would not be tolerated.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk in relation to the re-surfacing works be noted;
- (2) the details of the recent incident at Elm Cemetery be noted;
- (3) an inspection by all members of the Parish Council of Elm Cemetery be undertaken at 6.30 pm on 2 August 2011, with the conclusions of that meeting being referred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

27/11 Homeshare Dementia Initiative

Members received a presentation from Paul Rhodes on the Homeshare Dementia Initiative.

Mr Rhodes explained his role, working as part of Crossroads Care, in delivering this initiative in Wisbech and surrounding villages (including Elm).

The objective of this initiative, which is currently a grant-aided pilot scheme, is to provide respite for the carers of those suffering from dementia; this is achieved through volunteers assuming the role of carer by collecting the dementia sufferer from his or her home and for the volunteer to then care for that person (either at the volunteer's home or some other location). The volunteers seek to "entertain" and "stimulate" the dementia sufferers through activities such as baking, gardening, visits to the seaside, playing cards etc.

Mr Rhodes expressed the view that participation in this initiative is preferable to the traditional day centre option because it offers the dementia sufferer independence, rather than being placed within an institutional environment.

Mr Rhodes circulated photographs of some of the dementia sufferers enjoying activities with the volunteers. He made the point that this service has proved particularly beneficial to those carers who are the spouses of dementia sufferers.

Mr Rhodes responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the content of Mr Rhodes' presentation be noted.

28/11 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 – one incident of trespass, involving travellers seeking to set up overnight, at the wind farm.
- Fridaybridge – one incident of criminal damage; two incidents of theft from vehicles; one theft of a power tool from the driveway of a property; one report of a person fishing at The Leam.
- Elm – one theft and an attempted theft of wheels from vehicles.

The PCSO also informed members of emerging and ongoing issues across the area covered by the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, including:

- an increase in thefts from empty and new build properties (targeting heating oil and copper piping).
- thieves are still targeting vehicles for their catalytic converters.
- various items were recovered when Police executed nine warrants across three travellers' sites in the Wisbech area on 1 July 2011.

PCSO Bogunovic responded to members' questions.

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

29/11 Highway issues

(1) Halfpenny Lane, Elm

Further to minute 19/11 (1), the Clerk reported that he had been informed by Councillor Rogers that the pot holes on Halfpenny Lane had been repaired by the Local Highway Authority.

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

(2) Highway safety in Elm

Further to minute 19/11 (2), the Clerk reported that the Local Highway Authority has undertaken to assess the situation regarding the possibility of implementing measures to reduce the potential for accidents at the Halfpenny Lane junction.

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

(3) Cambridgeshire County Council's new Local Speed Limits Policy

The Clerk reported receipt of a leaflet produced by Cambridgeshire County Council entitled "Your Community – Your Speed Limit: a guide to how local communities can change speed limits".

The leaflet sets out the County Council's new approach, following a change of policy in the light of the Localism agenda, to changing or extending speed limits on roads within Cambridgeshire.

The new policy allows communities to be able to decide upon the setting of local speed limits, provided that they are willing to meet the costs involved; these costs would relate to the necessary consultation/advertisement process, the legal process of making a new Traffic Order and the purchase and ongoing maintenance of speed limit signs.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had established, through consultation with the Clerk (who had raised the question with the Local Highway Authority), that this policy could not be used to achieve 20 mph speed limits around the schools at Elm and Fridaybridge because the B1101 is part of the "strategically important A and B road network".

Members decided that Cambridgeshire County Council's new Local Speed Limits Policy be noted.

(4) B1101 at Elm

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from a resident of Main Road, Elm in relation to issues that he had raised with the local Highway Authority concerning the current condition of a section (between the former Church Hall and the War Memorial green) of the B1101 carriageway at Elm.

With his letter to the Parish Council, the resident had included a copy of a letter that he had sent to the Local Highway Authority (LHA), detailing both his concerns regarding this matter and his consequent request for appropriate action by the LHA.

The Clerk read to members both letters from the resident.

Members decided that they support the stance that the local resident is taking in this matter and that the Local Highway Authority be informed, by the Clerk, accordingly.

30/11 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 3 x 15.0 metre high (hub height) wind turbines on land west of Chestnut Farm, Nettle Bank, Elm – F/YR11/0469/F (applicant: Mr P Lankfer).

That the application be supported.

(Councillors Mrs Hopkin and Pinnock requested that their dissent from this decision be recorded)

(Councillor Mrs Lankfer declared her personal and prejudicial interest in this application, by virtue of a family relationship with the applicant, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

- (2) Erection of a gazebo (retrospective) at 12 Orchard Close, Elm – F/YR11/0441/F (applicant: Mrs M Stoppard).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a two-storey side extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of existing carport, at 30 Peartree Way, Elm - F/YR11/0489/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Hills).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Formation of a fishing lake and extension to touring caravan site to create 15 new pitches on land south of Little ranch, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR11/0499/F (applicant: Mr M Day).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Change of use of land for the siting of two mobile homes, two touring caravans, a day room involving the formation of hardstanding and erection of a 2.0 metre high fence on land south of Bar Drove, Elm – F/YR11/0521/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs F Smith).

Object to the application for the following reasons:

- *the site lies outside of the Development Area Boundary for the village of Elm*
- *the access road is inadequate to serve the traffic likely to be generated by the residential development of this site*
- *the proposal, if approved, would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character of the area*
- *approval of this application would set an undesirable precedent for further applications of a similar nature in the locality.*

31/11 Finance

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

Income

Cheffins	Sale of agricultural equipment (less deductions for fees/commission)	£9,256.00
Allianz	Tractor insurance – part refund of premium	£293.42
Fenland D C	Concurrent Functions grant – first half	£3,970.00
Grounds and Co.	Cottage rent (net of fees)	£524.00
W Bailey and Son	Purchase of burial plot	£350.00
Mr Holmes and Miss Lawrence	Purchase of burial plot	£350.00
P Barnes	Interment fee - Searle	£250.00
Total Income		£14,993.42

Expenditure

R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£817.61
Bloom and Wake Ltd	PAT testing	£42.00
SLCC	Membership renewal 2011 (cost shared equally with Manea PC)	£67.50
East of England Ambulance NHS Trust	Donation, for purchase of medical equipment for First Responders	£324.10
M Saunders and Son Transport	Transport equipment and machinery to auction	£120.00
Mrs S Woodhouse	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 30 June 2011)	£100.00
S Cowell	Internal Audit fee	£65.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £120.74), Broadband and other expenses)	£553.43
Barnett Construction Services	Re-surface cemetery roadway	£8,580.00
Total Expenditure		£10,669.64

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 June 2011 (in the total sum of £129,914.85), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months.

Further to minute 21/11, the Clerk reported on the Annual Audit of Accounts return, informing members that the document had been examined and approved, without recommendations as to action in relation to the Parish Council's governance processes, by the Council's Internal Auditor. The Clerk read to members the Internal Auditor's report on his audit of the Parish Council's accounts 2010/11.

Further to minute 21/11, the Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the first quarter of the 2011/12 financial year and responded to members' questions in that regard.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £14,993.42 be noted and that the expenditure of £10,669.64 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 June 2011, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months, be noted;
- (3) the Audited Accounts for 2010/11 be approved and submitted to the External Auditor;
- (4) the financial information within the first quarter's management accounts be noted;
- (5) the level of rents levied for the Parish Council's agricultural allotments be reviewed at the next meeting.

32/11 War memorials in Elm parish

Further to minute 139/10 (4), the Clerk reported on the work which had been undertaken by Mr B Krill, appointed by Elm Parish Council (at that minute) as its War Memorials Advisor, in relation to assessment of the condition of the war memorials at Elm and Fridaybridge.

Mr Krill had arranged for the photography, by Mr W Veal, of both memorials, following which he had assessed their current condition and reached conclusions as to cleaning and other minor restoration works required to the memorials.

In addition, Mr Krill had sought advice from the Conservation Officer at Fenland District Council in relation to the conclusions that he had reached and the consequent actions that he is recommending to Elm Parish Council. In summary, these recommendations relate to the cleaning of both memorials and the repair of some minor cracking of the memorial and damage to the footpath (to the memorial) at Elm. Following the cleaning of both memorials, it is likely that some of the lettering may need re-cutting and painting.

Fenland District Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that he has no objection to the works recommended by Mr Krill, provided that they are carried out by appropriately qualified and experienced contractors.

The Clerk reported that following discussion with Mr Krill and communication with the Property and Asset Manager at Fenland District Council, he has compiled a list of appropriately qualified and experienced contractors for this work; Mr Krill has suggested certain clauses for inclusion in any contract to be awarded for this work.

The Clerk reported also that grant aid may be available from the War Memorials Trust towards the cost of the cleaning and restoration work of the war memorials at Elm and Fridaybridge.

Members decided that

- (1) quotations be sought, by the Clerk, from suitably qualified and experienced contractors for the cleaning and restoration works to the war memorials at Elm and Fridaybridge;

- (2) the possibility of grant aid being available from the War Memorials Trust be investigated by the Clerk;
- (3) their appreciation of the work of both Mr Krill and Mr Veal be placed on record and that the Clerk informs them accordingly.

33/11 Correspondence

- (1) Working together for Fenland residents.

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Leader of Fenland District Council (FDC), explaining FDC's desire to both share with Town and Parish Councils the District Council's aspirations and future opportunities for closer working to deliver better outcomes for Fenland residents.

To this end, FDC proposes scheduling a series of meetings in September 2011 for the purpose of engaging with local councils in the district; dates and venues to be circulated by FDC in due course.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

- (2) Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

The Clerk reported a letter from Cambridgeshire ACRE, detailing the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

The Challenge, which is being organised to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, will protect permanently a network of 2,012 outdoor recreational spaces across the United Kingdom.

Under the Challenge, local authorities are invited to submit sites that they would be happy to protect permanently as a community asset. The deadline for submission of nominations is 16 September 2011.

The Challenge offers two benefits:

- Protection of the land – once a field becomes a Queen Elizabeth II Field, the land is protected in perpetuity, meaning that it cannot be sold or compulsory purchased; the protection is by way of a Deed of Dedication; there may well be pressure applied to local authorities in the future to sell or use for other purposes any field which does not benefit from protection.
- Funding – once becoming a Queen Elizabeth II Field, the Parish Council would be eligible for BIFFA Funding and, in the future, funders will be looking for security of tenure before awarding grant funding; by having Queen Elizabeth II Field status, funders are assured that their investment will be well used and not lost if the field ceased to exist in a few years time.

Members decided that the Clerk would seek further information from Cambridgeshire ACRE as to the benefits of this project to enable a decision be made at the next meeting as to whether or not the Parish Council should make a nomination under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

- (3) Elm Friendship Club.

Further to minute 11/11, the Clerk read to members a letter of thanks from the Elm Friendship Club in relation to the financial support provided to the club by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

(4) Annual Coldham Village Fun Day.

The Clerk reported a request from the Coldham Residents Action Group Ltd (CRAG) for financial support towards the cost of hiring disabled toilet facilities at the fourth Annual Coldham Village Fun Day, which takes place on 13 August 2011.

CRAG states that in previous years it had managed to obtain funding from the Neighbourhood Development Team at Fenland District Council (FDC) to help support the event but this year FDC is not able to provide any funding.

The cost of providing one disabled toilet at the event is £155.00 plus VAT.

Members decided that the Parish Council would meet the cost of providing a disabled toilet for the fourth Annual Coldham Village Fun Day and that the Clerk would request CRAG to arrange for the invoice from the company supplying the toilet facility to be addressed to Elm Parish Council.

(Councillor Brand declared his personal interest in this item, by virtue of membership of the Coldham Residents Action Group Ltd)

34/11 Certificate in Local Council Administration qualification

The Chairman reported that he had been approached by the Chairman of Manea Parish Council to see if Elm Parish Council would be prepared to share the cost (of £150) of the Clerk's registration for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) qualification.

The Chairman informed members that Manea Parish Council, the other local council by which Mr Jordan is employed as Clerk, had decided to seek to achieve Quality Parish Council status and that one of the criteria for achieving this status is for its Clerk to possess the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

Members concluded that, given that Elm Parish Council currently has no intention of seeking to achieve Quality Parish Council status, there would be no real benefit to Elm Parish Council of making this financial contribution.

Members decided not to contribute to share the cost of its Clerk's registration for the Certificate in Local Council Administration qualification.

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

35/11 Street name plate

The Chairman mentioned that the street name plate for Roseberry Avenue in Elm is currently lying on the ground.

Members decided that the Clerk would report this matter to Fenland District Council, with the request that the name plate be reinstated in its usual position.

36/11 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 16 August 2011, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.55 pm

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

Date:.....