

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

20 MARCH 2012 – 6.30 pm.

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

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Hopkin and Tilney plus County Councillor Mrs Tuck.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2012 were confirmed and signed.

Councillor Pinnock challenged the statement within the second paragraph of minute 127/11 that “the law would always take precedence over Standing Orders” and suggested that the situation should be clarified for readers of the minutes by recording the following wording from The Governance Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils: “Any Standing Orders adopted by a council must not have the effect of overriding or conflicting with the requirements that are laid down by legislation. Once Standing Orders which are additional to those which reflect statutory requirements have been made, a parish council is bound to observe and comply with them”.

130/11 Open Forum

Proposal for an Elm Football Club and use of the playing field at Begdale Road, Elm

Further to minute 152/10 (4), Mr C Payne sought the views of the Parish Council with regard to the possibility of using the playing field on Begdale Road at Elm as the home ground for an Elm Football Club, which he and others are hoping to establish.

Mr Payne is aware that to be able to pursue this matter with the Cambridgeshire Football Association, secure changing rooms and showers would be needed on-site if this playing field were to be used for football matches. Given the absence currently of such facilities at the playing field, this is obviously an obstacle to this matter progressing.

It would, therefore, be necessary to be able to either adapt an existing building or to construct a temporary facility. He informed members of the level of funding available to those who are seeking to establish an Elm Football Club for that purpose.

Mr Payne enquired as to whether the Parish Council could help support the establishment of an Elm Football Club. He made the point that in addition to a football club operating in Elm, arrangements could be made for the provision, on a free-of-charge basis, of football coaching for people living in the village. It is proposed that, in addition to the team playing regular football league matches, small tournaments would be held. Both adults and young persons would be encouraged to become involved in football teams.

Mr Payne made the point that after two years of operating the proposed football club, he anticipates that the Parish Council would receive rental income from the use of the playing field in the order of £1,000 per annum.

Mr Payne responded to members' questions.

Members share the view of Mr Payne that the playing field at Begdale Road is vastly underused currently and would make an ideal home ground for a football club. They acknowledge that not only would having a football team help to raise the profile of the village but also have positive benefits for the local economy.

Members decided that

- (1) they would support, in principle, the use of the playing field as a home ground for a potential Elm Football Club;
- (2) because of the community benefit of the proposal, the Parish Council would be prepared to consider assisting the proposal financially if possible;
- (3) the matter be considered further following the receipt of a business plan for the proposal from Mr Payne.

131/11 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.

132/11 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Incidents of theft at Elm Cemetery (minute 119/11 (1))

The Clerk reported quotations from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for the provision and planting of hedging along the site boundaries at Elm Cemetery; one quotation was for mature hedging and the other related to smaller specimens. He also explained the procedure that the Parish Council would need to follow to submit an application to Fenland District Council for Section 106 Planning Obligations monies to meet the cost of planting; that being to accompany the application form with:

- a) Three quotations for works to be carried out
- b) Parish Council support for the bid
- c) Positive public consultation.

With regard to a) above, the Chairman reported that he had invited a number of local contractors to submit a quotation for this work but none had done so.

Given the level of the lower quotation submitted by the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor, the absence of other quotations and the potential difficulty in being able to demonstrate positive public support for this scheme, members consider that the Parish Council should not seek Section 106 Planning Obligations monies to meet the cost of the proposed planting.

According to information provided by the Police (minute 133/11 refers), the incidents of theft from graves at the cemetery appear to have ceased.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the quotation from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for the supply and planting of 69 Laurel plants (67 of 50/60 centimetres in height and 2 at 150 centimetres in height), be accepted;

(3) as the incidents of theft from graves at the cemetery appear to have ceased, no further action be taken by the Parish Council in relation to this matter unless the problem occurs again in the future.

(2) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 119/11 (2))

The Clerk reported that the latest progress in this matter is that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council had met, on 12 March 2012, with the developer to discuss the open space adoption issues.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would continue to seek updates from Fenland District Council for reporting to each meeting of the Parish Council.

(3) Queen's Diamond Jubilee - grant aid (minute 119/11 (3))

The Clerk reported that the grant (of £1,000) from Fenland District Council had paid into the Parish Council's bank account on 23 February 2012.

The Chairman informed members of the progress being made by the Coldham Residents' Action Group in preparing for the celebratory event.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the grant money be retained in the Parish Council's bank account until such time as a request is received from the Coldham Residents' Action Group for transfer of the funds.

133/11 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PCSO Martin Bogunovic, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, was unable to attend the meeting, This officer had, however, provided a report detailing recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, which the Clerk presented to members, including:

- Coldham – one theft of electrical equipment from a tractor
- Fridaybridge – one report of persons acting suspiciously on farmland
- Elm – one incident of criminal damage; one dwelling burglary; one attempted dwelling burglary; one report of youths acting suspiciously
- Rings End – one incident of criminal damage
- A47 Nettle Bank – two thefts from agricultural buildings.

For the fourth month in a row there have been no reports to the Police relating to thefts of flowers and other items from graves at Elm Cemetery.

The PCSO's report also provided information regarding arrests made in relation to the production of cannabis.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk, on behalf of PCSO Bogunovic, be noted.

134/11 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Given the absence from the meeting of the County Councillor (Mrs Tuck) who represents the parish of Elm, no report was received by the Parish Council in relation to current County Council issues.

Both Councillors Cotterell and Sutton, the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that they are currently unaware of any specific District Council matters affecting the parish. Councillor Cotterell

did, however, inform members of one issue affecting the whole district, i.e. that there would be no increase in the District Council element of the Council Tax for 2012/13. In addition, he informed members that a Golden Age Fair would be held at Fridaybridge on 17 May 2012.

Members decided that the information reported by District Councillors Cotterell and Sutton be noted.

135/11 Highway issues

(1) Speed limit on March Road, Coldham

Further to minute 122/11 (1), the Clerk reported information provided by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) regarding the feasibility (and cost) of re-locating the existing 40 mph speed limit signs which are adjacent to Bramley Court (one on either side of the road), to the location of the Coldham sign (on the approach from Fridaybridge), to achieve, when combined with the original proposal, a 40 mph speed limit on the B1101 through the whole of Coldham.

The Local Highway Authority states that such a proposal would be feasible and is estimated (on the basis of re-locating the existing terminal signs and erecting two repeater signs) to cost an additional £1,000.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the Parish Council would proceed on the basis of seeking to achieve a 40 mph speed limit on the B1101 through the whole of Coldham.

(2) Salt bins

Further to minute 122/11 (2), Councillor Webb suggested that, given the potential for an early on-set of winter and to allow time for the acquisition and installation of salt bins, the requests for the provision of additional salt bins be considered at the October 2012 meeting (instead of the November meeting) of the Parish Council.

Members decided that the suggestion of Councillor Webb be supported and that the requests for two additional salt bins at Fridaybridge be considered at the October 2012 meeting of the Parish Council.

136/11 Neighbourhood Forums in Fenland

The Clerk reported to members on the latest position regarding Neighbourhood Forums in Fenland, in the form of a proposal from Police Inspector Robin Sissons.

The Clerk reminded members that after two rounds of multi-agency Neighbourhood Forums, Fenland District Council had decided, in light of reduced resources, to "step back" from being the lead agency in terms of administering, organising and publicising forum meetings. Consequently, the other key agencies involved in the Neighbourhood Forum meetings had been considering how this decision of the District Council would impact upon their engagement with communities within Fenland. As an interim measure, the Constabulary organised a series of forum meetings in Fenland in October 2011 and a further round in January/February 2012.

After those two rounds of Police-led meetings (at which there was participation by officers of the District Council and the County Council as well as members of the three tiers of local government), Police Inspector Sissons feels it appropriate to seek to agree arrangements for the future.

Inspector Sissons now proposes to introduce, subject to the views of local councils, the following:

- Rather than holding separate meetings across Fenland, engagement meetings would be linked to (already scheduled) local council meetings

- The engagement at the meeting would be in two parts; the first part - for a multi-agency dialogue with the public - taking place an hour before the meeting of the local council and then a section at the beginning of the council meeting - for a similar dialogue with elected members. Priorities would be set at the conclusion of the second part.
- Rather than a quarterly programme of separate forum meetings (currently January/April/July/October each year) based upon the former Neighbourhood Policing Team areas, a timetable along the following basis would operate:

January – March Town Council
Wisbech Town Council.

February – Whittlesey Town Council
North Rural Parish Councils – Northern group (Parishes of Wisbech St Mary, Leverington, Parson Drove, Tydd St Giles, Newton, Gorefield).

March – Chatteris Town Council.
North Rural Parish Councils – Southern Group (Elm, Christchurch).

April – Waterlees and Clarkson Forum
South Rural Parish Councils – Northern Group (Doddington, Wimblington, Benwick).

May – South Rural Parish Councils – Southern Group (Manea)
Fenland District Council meeting (an unidentified meeting as yet where all District Councillors come together).

There would be no meetings in June but this cycle would be repeated in July, August, September, October and November.

In addition to the meetings, proactive engagement would occur during the morning of the meeting. PCSOs would go out onto the streets with questionnaires asking direct questions. Furthermore, a “Shape Your Place” forum would take place to ascertain the other issues - an experimental exercise that took place in the lead up to the last Chatteris and District Neighbourhood Forum resulted in more than 90 hits on the site).

The Clerk explained to members the rationale behind Inspector Sissons’ proposal (including deficiencies in the current process and how they could be addressed through the changes proposed).

Under this proposal, there would no longer be a stand-alone Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum, meeting on a quarterly basis but an Elm and Christchurch event, every six months, “attached” to a scheduled meeting of Elm Parish Council (to which members of Christchurch Parish Council and its parishioners would be invited) and Christchurch Parish Council (to which members of Elm Parish Council and its parishioners would be invited). On that basis, there would be one “forum” meeting in Elm each year.

Members are concerned that implementation of the arrangements now proposed by Inspector Sissons would be a retrograde step. They are of the opinion that such meetings would not attract attendance by members of the public; members’ experience is that meetings of the former Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum rarely attracted attendance by residents of Elm parish, even when these meetings were held in Elm. Members are of the opinion that councillors and residents of Christchurch parish would not travel to a meeting in Elm parish nor would councillors and parishioners of Elm travel to Christchurch. Members are also of the view that a meeting being held at six monthly intervals is insufficient in terms of frequency for effective engagement and priority-setting.

Members are concerned that linking the proposed meetings with those of local councils would “eat into” the Parish Council meeting and result in those meetings finishing later in the evening. They are also of the opinion that members of the public would not attend a meeting which were to take place as early as 5.30 pm in the evening (i.e. an hour

before the start of the Parish Council meeting at 6.30 pm). There could also be operational difficulties in hosting a meeting in advance of a Parish Council meeting.

In terms of Elm Parish Council engaging with the Constabulary, members are very happy with the current arrangements, i.e. attendance by a PCSO at monthly Parish Council meetings (or a written report in his absence).

Members decided that Police Inspector Sissons be informed of the views of Elm Parish Council in relation to his proposal for Neighbourhood Forums in the future.

137/11 Coldham wind farm extension - Section 106 Planning Obligation monies

Further to minute 107/11 (1) - at which Councillors Brand and Mrs Johnson were appointed to represent Elm Parish Council - the Parish Council has been asked to re-consider its appointments to membership of the committee set up to deal with spending the Section 106 Planning Obligation monies relating to the Coldham wind farm extension. The reason for the request is so that not both of the representatives are councillors for the Coldham ward of Elm Parish Council.

Members are of the opinion that, even though both of these councillors were elected for the Coldham ward of the Parish Council, they would, when participating in the committee meetings, take into account the interests of the whole parish (and not Coldham only).

Members, therefore, decided, unanimously, that its current representation on this committee be unchanged.

138/11 Planning applications

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

Erection of a single-storey 3-bed holiday let on land south of Little Ranch, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR12/0137/F (applicant: Mr M Day).

That the application be supported.

In addition, members noted that planning application F/YR11/0351/F (proposing the erection of a three-storey dwelling with first-floor balcony to the rear of land north of Florence House, Back Road, Fridaybridge), considered by the Parish Council at minute 20/11, had been withdrawn by the applicant.

139/11 Financial matters

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Queen's Jubilee grant	£1,000.00
A R Clingo	Burial plot and interment fee	£600.00
Maxey Grounds	Cottage rent (less fees and cost of annual gas safety check)	£464.60
Total Income		£2,064.60

Expenditure

R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,964.30
Wisbech Youth Clubs	Financial support to Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (January to March 2012)	£2,135.50
G L W Engineering	Provide and install post at Pocket Park, Elm	£300.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £111.80), Broadband and other expenses	£537.19
Glazewing	Skip emptying – Elm Cemetery	£186.00
D A Pest Control	Treatment of moles at Fridaybridge playing field	£60.00
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income tax (December 2011 and January and February 2012)	£335.40
Total Expenditure		£5,518.39

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 29 February 2012 (in the total sum of £127,557.59), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2011.

Members considered the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the audit of the Parish Council's 2011/12 accounts. The Clerk informed members that the person who undertook this role for the purpose of the Parish Council's 2010/11 accounts, Mr Stephen Cowell, is willing to do likewise for the 2011/12 accounts.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £2,064.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £5,518.39 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 29 February 2012, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2011, be noted;
- (3) Mr Stephen Cowell be appointed as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the 2011/12 audit of accounts.

140/11 Elm Cemetery – fees and regulations

Further to minute 126/11, members considered cemetery fees for 2012/13 and the implementation of some brief cemetery regulations (to include sizes of memorials etc).

To assist members' deliberations in relation to reviewing cemetery fees, the Clerk had provided members in advance of the meeting with a schedule setting out the current fees levied currently by Elm Parish Council and those of a number of other Parish Councils across Cambridgeshire (including two from within Fenland) and information in relation to Elm Parish Council's actual cemetery income and expenditure in 2010/11 and 2011/12 and estimated for 2012/13..

Members are of the opinion that the fees currently levied by Elm Parish Council compare favourably with those levied by other local councils and are, based upon Elm Parish Council's cemetery income and expenditure figures in recent years, likely to continue to ensure full cost recovery in 2012/13 without the need for an increase.

Members considered a set of general regulations for Elm Cemetery, which had been produced by the Clerk and circulated to members in advance of the meeting. A small number of minor amendments, suggested by members, were agreed.

Members decided that

- (1) the Parish Council's cemetery fees for 2012/13 be maintained at the same level as in 2011/12, except that a fee for the purchase of a double-depth grave space (of £525.00 for 2012/13) be introduced;
- (2) the cemetery regulations, set out in the Appendix to these minutes, be adopted.

141/11 Abington Grove, Elm

The Chairman explained to members his proposal to provide car parking facilities on part of the current grassed area (highway verge) at the entrance to Abington Grove, as a means of both addressing the highway safety problems caused by on-street parking in the vicinity of Elm Community Primary School and providing a parking area for visitors to the cemetery. He informed members of the particular of area of land which he considers would be appropriate for that purpose and reported to members the quotations that he had obtained from a local contractor, to give an indication as to the likely cost of the necessary works (relating to four different design/construction solutions).

In addition, the Clerk reported the comments of the Local Highway Authority (LHA), as owner of the land in question, in relation to the Chairman's proposal. In summary, the LHA is likely to be supportive of the proposal, provided that all works are carried out to the County Council's standards and the Parish Council would assume responsibility for future maintenance of the area. The Local Highway Authority would not be able to meet any of the costs associated with this scheme.

Councillor Rogers suggested that in addition to the provision of such an off-street parking facility, the Parish Council should request the Local Highway Authority to consider the laying of double yellow lines in the vicinity of the school, to prevent the obstructive and inconsiderate parking which currently takes place at school opening and closing times; he expressed the view that unless the proposal were supplemented by double yellow lines, parents would still park their vehicles in front of the school.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Chairman and the Clerk be noted;
- (2) copies of the information reported by the Chairman and the Clerk be circulated to members in advance of the next meeting of the Parish Council;
- (3) this matter be discussed further at the next meeting.

(Councillor Stokes declared his personal interest in this item, by virtue of residing in close proximity to the area of land being discussed)

(Councillor Pinnock declared his personal interest in this item, by virtue of ownership and residency of a property at Abington Grove)

142/11 The Leam, Fridaybridge – weed clearance

The Chairman informed members that a small number of residents of Fridaybridge had recently undertaken some weed clearance from within the pond area at The Leam. This had resulted in a pile of weeds being left on an adjoining grassed area at The Leam.

Members decided that arrangements be made

- (1) with the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for removal and disposal of the pile of weeds at The Leam;
- (2) for a local ditching contractor to undertake any necessary weed clearance and pond maintenance works at The Leam.

143/11 Correspondence

- (1) Community ACTION magazine: Spring 2012.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest edition of this magazine.

Members decided that the document be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

- (2) Drought situation and imminent hosepipe ban.

The Clerk reported a letter from Anglian Water setting out its approach to managing the current drought situation.

The primary water preservation measure will be the imposition of a hosepipe ban for Anglian Water customers with effect from 5 April 2012. Anglian Water (AW) makes the point that this decision has not been taken lightly but is necessary to protect water resources in the East of England. AW will be considering exemptions to the ban where appropriate, to protect jobs and livelihoods as well as vulnerable people; there will also be consultation with those businesses which depend upon a water supply for their day-to-day activities.

The letter also details actions that Anglian Water has taken and initiatives that it is pursuing to tackle the drought situation; this includes: investment in schemes to mitigate its effect; tackling leakages within the water network; launching a high profile campaign called "Drop 20" (this will encourage everyone to reduce their daily water consumption by 20 litres).

Further information is available on Anglian Water's website: www.anglianwater.co.uk.

Members decided that the content of the letter from Anglian Water be noted.

144/11 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 17 April 2012, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Appendix

(Minute 140/11 refers)

Elm Cemetery

GENERAL REGULATIONS – ELM CEMETERY

Your attention is drawn to the following regulations, which are made for the purpose of maintaining a feeling of peace, serenity and dignity in Elm Cemetery. Your co-operation will help to ensure that this aim is achieved.

1. The Cemetery is open to visitors each day.
2. Burial plots may be purchased as single or double-depth, at the fee currently in force at the time of application. The plot size is 9 feet by 4 feet.
3. Cremated remains plots in the Garden of Rest section of the cemetery may be purchased, at the fee currently in force at the time of application. The plot size is 2 feet by 2 feet.
4. An Exclusive Right of Burial certificate, giving burial rights to a particular plot for a period of 99 years, will be issued in relation to each plot purchase. These certificates will be issued only to an individual and not to a Funeral Director or other body/agency.
5. With the exception of graves for the interment of ashes, plots cannot be purchased in advance of a death occurring.
6. All requests for interments must be made by a Funeral Director.
7. The installation of a headstone is permitted on all graves; in certain sections of the cemetery, other types of memorial (including a kerbstone) are permitted. In no case may the headstone or any other structure exceed 3 feet and 6 inches in height. The size of a single kerbstone is 7 feet by 3 feet.
8. The cemetery contains a specified area for the interment of cremated remains, referred to as the Garden of Rest. The only monuments allowed on these plots, which measure 2 feet by 2 feet, shall be flat stone tablets set flush with the ground; these maximum measurements for these memorials in 18 inches by 18 inches by 2 inches.
9. Proposals for all monuments and tablets are subject to prior approval by Elm Parish Council. No application for a memorial will be considered unless the Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased.
10. The application for a monument or tablet must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Parish Council and include the correct fee. The application must provide:
 - all measurements of the monument
 - the design of the monument (including the colour and type of material to be used)
 - the wording of the proposed inscription.
11. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any structure or memorial which does not accord with these regulations or for which no consent has been obtained.
12. Additional inscriptions may be added to an existing memorial, subject to approval by the Parish Council of an application which details the additional wording and is accompanied by the appropriate fee.

13. A flower vase is permitted on a temporary basis until such time as it is possible to erect a permanent memorial, which can incorporate a vase within the memorial if desired. The temporary vase should be of unbreakable material. There is no charge for placing a temporary vase on a grave.
14. The Parish Council does not accept any responsibility for damage to memorials or thefts of items from graves.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. If whilst in the cemetery you have an accident or become aware of a hazardous situation e.g. an unsafe memorial or an act of vandalism, please report the matter to the Parish Clerk as soon as reasonably possible. Any incidents of thefts of flowers or other items from graves should be reported to the Police.
2. The Parish Council undertakes regular inspections at the cemetery. If any memorial is found to be in a dangerous condition, the Council has the right to lay flat, repair, or otherwise make safe the memorial. The Parish Council will seek to recover any costs incurred from the owner.
3. Cycles, skateboards or similar are not allowed in the cemetery.
4. No motor vehicles (except for those used in connection with funerals and cemetery maintenance activities) are allowed in the cemetery.
5. Dogs (with the exception of guide dogs) are not allowed in the cemetery.
6. Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
7. This is a working cemetery, which means that from time to time the operatives of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor, grave diggers, memorial installers and possibly other persons will be working on site. Care should be taken not to interfere with this work or to put yourself at any risk from this work.

Mr T Jordan
 Clerk to Elm Parish Council
 1 St Mary's Drive
 March
 Cambs
 PE15 8BJ

Tel. 01354 656677
 E-mail: clerk@elm-pc.org.uk

Meeting finished at 8.10 pm

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

Date:.....