

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

19 NOVEMBER 2013 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Milham, Pinnock, Stokes, Miss Webb and Webb.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton and County Councillor Gillick.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Lankfer and Softley.

The minutes of the meeting of 22 October 2013 were confirmed and signed.

80/13 Malcolm (Mac) Cotterell

The Chairman referred to the death, on 23 October 2013, of Mac Cotterell, who had served for many years as a member of Elm Parish Council (and was a serving member at the time of his death).

All of those present at the meeting observed one minute of silence in his memory.

81/13 Open Forum

(1) Removal of "cats eyes" from part of the B1101

A member of the public mentioned that prior to the highway re-surfacing works carried out in June 2013 the "cats eyes" were removed from the B1101 March Road, Coldham, for a length of approximately one mile to the junction at Coldham Bank and the Twenty Foot Road, and that, to date, these had not been replaced.

The member of the public informed the Parish Council that he had made contact with the Local Highway Authority (LHA) on two occasions regarding this matter but had received no response; he asked whether the Parish Council would be able to obtain a response from the LHA as to its proposals for re-instatement (or not) of the "cats eyes".

Members decided that the comments of the member of the public be noted and that the Clerk would raise this matter with the Local Highway Authority and report back to the Parish Council.

(2) Coldham layby

Further to minute 56/13 (3), the resident of Coldham who had proposed laying a few slabs on the grassed area within the layby (opposite the bus shelter) at Coldham asked the Parish Council whether it had received a response from the Local Highway Authority regarding his request to undertake such work.

The Clerk informed the council and the resident that he had referred the resident's request to the relevant officer within the Local Highways Team and had pursued a response on more than one occasion; he offered to now draw this issue to the attention of the manager of the highway officer concerned, with the aim of achieving a response.

Members decided that the comments of the resident and the Clerk be noted and that the Clerk would continue to pursue this matter, in the manner that he had suggested, with the Local Highway Authority.

82/13 filling the vacancies on Elm Parish Council

Members considered issues relating to filling the two vacancies on Elm Parish Council; these being the vacancy resulting from the resignation of Mrs G Johnson (Coldham ward of the council) (minute 69/13 refers) and the one caused by the recent death of Mr M Cotterell (Elm and Fridaybridge ward of the council) (minute 80/13 refers).

With the regard to the vacancy in the Coldham ward, the Clerk reported that he had still received no applications from persons seeking co-option to membership of the Parish Council.

With regard to the vacancy in the Elm and Fridaybridge ward, Fenland District Council had published formal notice of the vacancy with effect from 11 December 2013.

In accordance with the notice, given under The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986, the opportunity exists, until 29 November 2013, for ten local electors for the parish to call for the vacancy to be filled by way of an election. If no election is called, the Parish Council must fill the vacancy by co-option.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that, in the event of no election being called to fill the vacancy in the Elm and Fridaybridge ward, the Clerk would advertise (via publication of a notice on the Parish Council's website and its notice boards) the two vacancies jointly, with the aim of filling both vacancies by co-option, using the process utilised by the Parish Council previously, at the January 2014 meeting.

83/13 Members' Code of Conduct

Further to minute 31/12, the Clerk reminded members of the need for them to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

Members decided the reminder from the Clerk be noted and acted upon.

84/13 Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club

Further to minute 78/13 (3), members received a presentation from Ms Lizzi Wales, the County Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator, and Miss Amber Crawshaw, the Lead Youth Worker for the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club, on funding issues relating to continued operation of this youth club.

Ms Wales informed the Parish Council of

- the income received by the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club during the current financial year to date (the significant majority of which had been provided by Elm Parish Council)
- the fundraising events planned by the youth club between now and the end of the calendar year
- the current level of financial resource available to the youth club (£2,218.62)
- the club's estimated income and expenditure between now and the end of calendar year
- the estimated weekly cost of running the youth club in 2014 (approximately £111.00)
- the fact that, based upon current costs, it should be possible to continue to run the youth club until 9 weeks into 2014
- unless the youth club is able to secure operational funding, it would close before the beginning of the 2014/15 financial year; it is estimated that, to operate the youth club for the whole of 2014, income of around £3,900.00 would be required.

Ms Wales reminded members that the application submitted by the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club for funding (to cover three years' full operating costs) under the BBC's Children in Need scheme had been unsuccessful (as had been reported to the council by the Clerk at minute 78/13 (3)).

Ms Wales and Miss Crawshaw explained how the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club had been addressing the actions required by the Parish Council previously (when considering the provision of operational funding to the youth club):

- Reduce operating costs - changes to the ownership and management of the Elm Centre (transferring from a charitable trust to the County Council), which is used by the youth club for meetings, mean that the Youth Service no longer incurs charges for use of the use of Elm Centre; this reduces the cost of operating the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club by almost £2,000 per annum.
- Reduce staffing costs – staffing has been reduced to one Lead Youth Worker, one Youth Support Worker and two volunteers.
- Increase youth club membership – activities (including visits to local schools) have been undertaken; as a result, the club has attracted 30 new members since May 2013. The average weekly attendance is between 20 and 30 young people.
- Publicise the youth club – the youth club is promoted on both the County Council's Youthoria website and the Shape Your Place community website.
- Development of young people – three young people have recently completed Senior Member's training.

Ms Wales and Miss Crawshaw requested the Parish Council to continue to provide financial support for the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club, to secure its operation until at least the end of 2014. They responded to members' questions.

Members decided that

- (1) the Parish Council would provide funding to the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club in 2014/15 at the rate of £1,000 for each of the first two quarters;
- (2) the level of financial support for the second half of 2014/15 would be considered, during that financial year, upon receipt from the Youth Development Co-ordinator of an update on the membership levels and financial standing etc of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (members' expectation is that the club would continue to at least maintain the current level of membership and performance).

85/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 71/13 (1))

The Clerk informed members that the situation with regard to Fenland District Council's adoption of the open space land at Grove Gardens is unchanged from that reported at minute 71/13 (1).

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

(2) Elm Cemetery – operational issues (minute 71/13 (2))

The Clerk reported that he had, in accordance with minute 71/13 (2), sought a quotation from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for rotavation of the extended area at Elm Cemetery; however, the contractor suggests that such a course of action would be inappropriate and that he would, instead, recommend:

- cutting and clearing the grass to approximately 4 inches in height
- removing stone and rocks from the grassed area
- re-cutting and clearing the grass to as low as possible, without scalping
- raking and re-seeding areas where the "trial burial plots" holes were dug
- removal and disposal of the large heap of stone and rock.

The contractor had provided a quotation, as reported to members, for undertaking this work.

The Clerk reported that, further to minute 71/13 (2), he had made contact with an appropriate local contractor, with the aim of the contractor removing the remaining "unauthorised" items from around burial plot North B345. As a result, the contractor (who had constructed and installed the memorial on this burial plot) had contacted the family which holds the Exclusive Rights of Burial for this plot; subsequently, the contractor had informed the Clerk that the family had undertaken to remove the ornamental van situated at the foot of the plot and to re-locate it to their garden.

The Clerk reported also that the two solar lights which had been situated at the head of the plot had now been removed by the family. With regard to the artificial grass which had been laid by the family on the land between burial plot North B345 and the cemetery roadway, the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor had suggested that it would now be best to leave this in place until next spring, at which time the area could be re-seeded.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) no action be taken at this stage regarding the works suggested by the grounds maintenance contractor in relation to the extended area of the cemetery;

86/13 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PCSO Dave Russ, 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 – no incidents reported
- Fridaybridge – one theft of items from a storage building
- Elm – one report of a male acting suspiciously
- Rings End – no incidents reported.

The PCSO's report mentioned that there had been no Speed Watch activity in the parish in recent months, as the monitoring equipment is being used extensively by the new community-led Speed Watch team in Parson Drove. It is PCSO Russ' aim to establish similar groups in each village. PCSO Russ states that he is happy to arrange the necessary training for anyone interested in establishing community Speed Watch teams within the parish of Elm.

In his report, PCSO Russ mentions also that, although no such incidents have been reported within Elm parish, there had been a number of thefts of heating oil across Fenland. In addition, PCSO Russ is continuing to monitor, and taking enforcement action where necessary, the parking of vehicles in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School at opening and closing times.

Further to minute 74/13, the Clerk reported that he had informed the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector of the value that the Parish Council places upon being able to have a dialogue at its meetings with a PCSO and had made the request, on behalf of members, that the Constabulary makes every effort to facilitate this. He reported also the response from Police Inspector Sissons.

In response to the Parish Council's request, Police Inspector Sissons comments that PCSO levels are down by almost 50 percent and may drop even further; this means that the Constabulary needs to prioritise the use of these resources even more than ever before. Inspector Sissons makes the point that, although he is fully supportive of Parish Councils and the great work they do, he must balance PCSO attendance at meetings with having officers out on the streets. He comments also that the reports provided to the Parish Council each month by PCSO Russ are above and beyond what needs to be done.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk, provided by PCSO Russ and Police Inspector Sissons, be noted;

87/13 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 a two-storey 4-bed dwelling with integral single garage and 1.8 metre (max height) wall, railings and gate to front on land north-west of Homelands, Well End, Fridaybridge – F/YR13/0802/F (applicant: Mr A Edgeley).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling with attached garage and 1.8 metre high fence on land north of May Cottage, Wales Bank, Elm – F/YR13/0838/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs G Harland).

That the application be supported.

In addition, members noted that planning application F/YR13/0734/F (which proposed the erection of 2 x 22.6 metre high (hub height) wind turbines with associated works at Newsham Farm, March Road, Rings End), which was considered by the Parish Council at minute 75/13, had been withdrawn by the applicant.

88/13 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Councillor Gillick, the County Councillor who represents the electoral division which includes the parish of Elm, informed members that, since his election to membership of the County Council in May 2013, he had been dealing with a number of matters relating to the parish, including home/school transport issues, overgrown vegetation, highways maintenance issues etc. Councillor Gillick expressed the opinion that the Fenland area receives less than its fair share of attention and funding from the County Council than it deserves; he feels that the more affluent parts of the County fair better in that regard.

Councillor Gillick suggested that the three Parish Councils within his electoral division may wish to work together to lobby the County Council for improved services and commented that he would be happy to lend his support any Parish Council initiative.

Councillor Sutton, one of the District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that he continues to ensure that officers at Fenland District Council are pursuing adoption of the play area at Grove Gardens, Elm (minute 85/13 (1) refers); he commented that the responsibility for the delay in the District Council adopting this land rests with the land owners. In addition, Councillor Sutton had addressed an issue raised by the Clerk, on behalf of an Elm resident, relating to the clearance of litter in the village; as a result of Councillor Sutton's intervention, litter clearance at Atkinson Lane and Birch Grove, Elm had been undertaken by Fenland District Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

89/13 Local Highway Improvements 2014/15

The Clerk reported that the County Council is inviting proposals from local communities which wish to submit a bid for funding from that council's 2014/15 Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme. Any community group, which includes local councils, is eligible to submit a bid.

Under the LHI scheme, applicants are able seek up to £10,000 from the County Council as a contribution to their scheme. The applicant is expected to provide a contribution towards each project of at least 10% of the scheme cost.

Bids are restricted to one per applicant.

Projects could involve any highway measure or improvement that is considered to offer benefit to the local community; applicants are required to state within their applications how they feel that the proposal would provide that community benefit.

The Clerk informed members of the application process relating to this scheme and of the method of application evaluation/prioritisation that the County Council will operate.

Long-term maintenance of schemes would normally be the responsibility of the County Council, provided that the scheme is constructed to normal County Council standards.

The deadline for submission of applications is 9 December 2013.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that application be made for a scheme to change the priority for vehicles at the junction of Main Road and Low Road, Elm; this is so that vehicles travelling from the Wisbech direction towards Elm using Main Road would be required to give way to those making the same journey via Low Road, for the purpose of improving safety at this location by reducing the potential for vehicle collisions.

90/13 Grants to the voluntary and community sector

(1) Elm Friendship Club

Further to minute 28/13 (1), members considered, in accordance with the policy adopted at minute 23/13, an application for financial assistance from the Elm Friendship Club.

The Clerk had provided each member of the council, in advance of the meeting, with a copy of the application form completed by the Secretary of the Elm Friendship Club and supplementary information provided by the Secretary in response to enquiries made by the Clerk (to clarify certain elements of the application).

The total sum requested is £1,505.00, to cover the annual cost of hiring accommodation for the club's fortnightly meetings, two outings (involving coach hire and fees for entrance to activities) and meeting the cost of speakers/presenters attending some club meetings. The Secretary of the Elm Friendship Club had confirmed, following enquiry from the Clerk, that the Elm Friendship Club receives no funding from any other source.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council had provided financial support of £336 (payable in two equal instalments each year) in both the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Members expressed the view that it is important to support parishioners at both ends of the age spectrum; the youth club at one end and the friendship club at the other.

Members decided that the application be approved in full, meaning that the Elm Friendship Club be awarded the sum of £1,505.00.

(2) Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2013

Members considered making a donation, in addition to purchase of the annual Poppy Wreath, to this year's British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council had made such a donation (of £25.00) in 2012 (minute 99/12 refers).

Members decided that a donation of £50.00 be made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2013.

91/13 Financial matters

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

Income

Maxey Grounds	Cottage rent (less fees)	£523.60
A Fitzjohn	Allotment rent	£1,700.00
D Bates	Allotment rent	£250.00
HM Revenue and Customs	VAT re-claim: April to September 2013	£2,306.95
Kent Memorials	Memorial tablet	£110.00
Total Income		£4,890.55

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £16.79)	£100.74
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £175.76) (on the basis of usual monthly amount of £1,411.96 less credit of £357.43 because of deleting notice board	£1,054.53

	cleaning from contract).	
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £142.00 and NI of £7.68), Broadband and other expenses	£674.17
M P and D Coleman	Re-decoration works to Fridaybridge Clocktower (includes VAT of £256.00)	£1,536.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	Poppy wreath	£17.50
Fenland Fire Appliances LLP	Annual fire extinguisher servicing (includes VAT of £5.78)	£34.68
Total Expenditure		£3,417.62

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2013 (in the total sum of £145,332.45), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2012.

Further to minute 77/13, the Clerk informed members of the outstanding financial commitments made by the Parish Council (with the exception of day-to-day running costs) during 2013/14; these commitments are in addition to those contained within the earmarked reserves (currently standing at £53,459.50); the 2013/14 outstanding financial commitments are:

- Funding for repair works to the bells at All Saints Church, Elm (minute 18/13 (3) refers) = up to a maximum of £8,000
- Provision of play equipment at Coldham (minute 59/13 (4) refers) = £18,500
- Contribution towards LHI scheme 2013/14 (minute 59/13 (3) = £200.00.
- Cutting of trees across the parish (minute 71/13 (3) refers) = £585.00.

Further to minute 77/13, the Clerk provided each member with a document he had prepared setting out

- the definition of a Capital Receipt (Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2003 refers)
- details of the sums to be treated as Capital Receipts (Sections 7 to 9 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 refer)
- the purposes for which Capital Receipts may be used (Section 23 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 refers)
- the definition of expenditure which is deemed to be capital expenditure (Section 25 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 refers).

Section 23 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 confirms that capital receipts must be used for capital, and not revenue, expenditure.

Further to minute 77/13, members considered what action to take regarding the need for further works to improve the condition of allotment plots 1 - 8 Shepperson's Field (so that they would be in a suitable condition for cultivation by the tenant). The Clerk reminded members of the Parish Council's decision at minute 99/12 to charge the new tenant of those plots no rent until 11 October 2014 (on the understanding that he would clear the site and cut the surrounding hedging). The current annual rental value of those plots is £400.00.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £4,890.55 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,417.62 be authorised;

- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2013, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2012, be noted;
- (3) the outstanding financial commitments made by the Parish Council during 2013/14, in the total sum of £27,285, be noted;
- (4) the contents of the Capital Receipts document prepared by the Clerk be noted;
- (5) the rent-free period applying to the tenancy of allotment plots 1 to 8 inclusive at Shepperson's Field (agreed at minute 99/12) be extended by a further two years, to 11 October 2016;
- (6) in accordance with the recommendations of the company which undertook the annual servicing of the Parish Council's fire extinguishers, an additional extinguisher and associated signage (at a total cost of £63.15 plus VAT) be purchased.

92/13 Correspondence

Review of the Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – consultation exercise.

The Clerk read to members a letter from Cambridgeshire County Council, consulting the Parish Council on its review of the Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Clerk had forwarded to members, in advance of the meeting, a link to the SCI document on the County Council's website. The deadline for the submission of responses to the consultation exercise is 20 December 2013.

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the County Council intends to involve the community in the development of its land use policy and projects; this includes:

- Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- Local Enforcement Plan for Minerals and Waste Development in Cambridgeshire
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Local Transport Plan
- Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- Market Town Transport Strategies
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- the delivery of County Council infrastructure projects and the consideration of development proposals in cases where the County Council is the Local Planning Authority.

The SCI also sets out the County Council's requirement in respect of community involvement for nationally strategic infrastructure projects for major developments in the energy, transport, waste, waste water and water sectors. In addition, it provides general advice on how communities can engage in the democratic processes relating to these issues.

Members decided that they had no comments to make in relation to the review of the Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

93/13 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 17 December 2013, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.20 pm

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

Date:.....