

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

24 AUGUST 2010 – 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Johnson, Rogers, Softley and Tilney.

Apologies: Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Pinnock, Pooley, Stokes and Webb.

In attendance: Councillor Jill Tuck, in her capacity as County Councillor for the Waldersey Electoral Division.

The minutes of the meeting of 27 July 2010 were confirmed and signed.

49/10 The Standards Board for England – Members’ Code of Conduct

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

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

The Clerk reported that, further to minute 32/10, he had received the necessary registration form from Councillor Rogers and had sent a copy, as required under the appropriate legislation, to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council.

50/10 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Elm Friendship Club – application for assistance (minute 36/10)

Members considered further an application from Elm Friendship Club for either a financial contribution or free-of-charge use of the Parish Council’s pavilion for club meetings.

Members received, during the Open Forum element of the meeting (minute 57/10 (1) refers), details of the manner in which Elm Friendship Club operates, the activities that it provides and the costs that it incurs.

Members decided that

- (1) the Elm Friendship Club be supported in the manner requested and that, because of the operational difficulties that members could foresee in terms of the club’s use of the pavilion, the support be in the form of financial assistance;
- (2) the financial assistance to the Elm Friendship Club be set at a level which covers the cost of the club holding its meetings at the Elm Centre, i.e. £28 per month;
- (3) the initial period of financial assistance be for the remainder of the current financial year;
- (4) the Clerk to the Council and the Treasurer of the Elm Friendship Club would agree the manner in which the financial assistance would be paid.

(2) Elm Centre Management Committee (minute 40/10)

Members considered the invitation from Fenland District Council for Elm Parish Council to appoint a representative to serve upon the Elm Centre Management Committee.

Members decided that Councillor Rogers be appointed as Elm Parish Council's representative on the Elm Centre Management Committee and that, given the existing commitments upon Councillor Rogers' time, Councillor Stokes be appointed to act as substitute for Councillor Rogers when necessary.

(3) The Leam, Elm (minute 42/10)

The Chairman reported on a meeting between himself and an officer of the Middle level Commissioners on 13 August 2010 with the aim of identifying appropriate methods of removing the ivy from the fencing.

The outcome of the meeting was that the officer from the Middle Level Commissioners undertook to identify suitable types of chemicals for control of the ivy by spraying and to provide such details to the Chairman in due course.

Members decided to note the information reported and to await receipt of the advice from the Middle Level Commissioners.

(4) Elm Parish Council website (minute 43/10)

The Clerk reported on the current position regarding the development of a website for Elm Parish Council.

In summary: the domain name agreed by members is currently being purchased; there will be a need to produce some "biographical" details of the villages/settlements within the parish and to provide photographs of the areas for the front page of the site.

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

(5) Grass cutting within the village (minute 45/10)

The Clerk reported that, following a series of interviews by the Chairman and himself on 12 August 2010, Mr M Hartigan had been appointed as the Parish Council's part-time, seasonal grounds person.

Mr Hartigan had also agreed to undertake the future maintenance of Elm Cemetery, in the light of the recent resignation of the previous cemetery grounds person, Mr C Drew. Mr Hartigan commenced his duties on 16 August 2010.

In addition, the Clerk reported that he had reported, to the developer of the site, the need for cutting of the grass at the entrance to Grove Gardens, Elm but, to date, had received no response from that company.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that Mr Drew be sent a letter from the Parish Council, expressing members' appreciation of his service to the community, and a financial gift (to be funded from the Chairman's Allowance).

51/10 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PC Julie Coales, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, was unable to attend the meeting. She had, however, informed the Clerk that there had been no significant incidents of crime and disorder within the parish since the last meeting of the Parish Council meeting.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

52/10 Highway issues

(1) Cambridgeshire County Council's winter service – gritting arrangements for 2010/11

The Clerk reported on the results of the County Council's review of its winter gritting service, which has taken into account the difficult winter conditions during the 2009 and 2010 seasons. The Clerk detailed the gritting activities which were examined as part of the review.

Members noted particularly that the precautionary gritting routes include all A and B roads, links to A&E hospitals, roads adjacent to fen drains and the majority of bus routes.

The deadline for the submission of comments on the County Council's proposals is 10 September 2010.

Members decided that the County Council be informed that the Parish Council supports the approach to winter gritting suggested in the consultation letter.

(2) Hedgerows alongside the public highway

Members mentioned a number of areas within the parish where hedgerows are in need of cutting, in the interests of maintaining satisfactory pedestrian and highway safety.

The areas detailed by members are:

- on Well End, opposite the Post Office
- at the junction of the B1101 with Station Road, Coldham; causing highway visibility problems when entering the B1101 and looking towards March
- large lengths of hedging along Redmoor Lane and Begdale Road.

Members decided that these areas be drawn to the attention to the Local Highway Authority, with a request that action be taken to address the problem.

(3) 39 Main Road, Fridaybridge – access on to Back Road

Members considered the request from Mr Warby of 39 Main Road, Fridaybridge, as outlined by him during the Open Forum element of the meeting (minute 57/10 (2) refers), for assistance from the Parish Council in addressing the problem that he experiences in accessing the rear of his property because of inconsiderate parking on Back Road.

Members decided, having regard for the comments made by Mr Warby during the Open Forum element of the meeting, that, subject to confirmation from the Local Highway Authority that the suggested KEEP CLEAR markings could be provided for the sum of £150.00, the Parish Council would meet the cost of the road markings in an attempt to address the vehicular access difficulties experienced by Mr Warby.

53/10 Bus Shelter at Coldham

Members considered a request from the Coldham Residents Action Group for the Parish Council to agree to the provision, and a contribution towards the cost, of a plaque on the bus shelter, to bear the wording "This shelter was provided by Coldham Residents Action Group Ltd in partnership with the former Fenland Links and is maintained by Elm Parish Council".

Members support the request but feel that the year that the shelter was provided should be added to the wording.

Members decided to agree in principle to the provision of such a plaque and to meet 50% of the cost of its purchase but wish to be provided with an estimate of the cost before making a final decision.

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

54/10 Planning applications

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

- (1) Conversion of barn to form 2-bed dwelling (renewal of planning permission F/YR05/0689/F) on land west of the Coach House, Needham Bank, Friday Bridge – F/YR10/0518/EXTIME (applicant: Mr P Dunton).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of stables and tack room and formation of ménage and erection of 8 x 7.5 metre high floodlights on land west of Bar Drove, Elm – F/YR10/0537/F (applicant: Mrs L Smith).

Object to the application, for the following reasons:

- *The existing access to the site is considered to be of inadequate width to accommodate the type of traffic likely to be generated by the proposal;*
- *There is potential for light pollution to nearby residential properties resulting in a detrimental impact upon the residential amenities of the occupiers of those properties.*

In addition, the parish Council is of the belief that residents living along Friday Bridge Road, Elm – who are likely to be affected by the proposed development - have not been consulted on this planning application. The Parish Council requests that Fenland District Council does not determine this planning application until such consultation has been undertaken.

- (3) Erection of a single-storey extension to create a disabled bedroom, porch to front, covered walkway to restaurant, re-positioning of external staircase to bedrooms and siting of temporary storage container to existing public house at The Artful Dodger, Low Road, Elm - F/YR10/0540/F (applicant: Mr A Edgoose).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Erection of a 3-bed detached house on land east of Fern Cottage, Begdale Road, Elm - F/YR10/0572/F (applicant: Mr and Mrs C Bennett).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Erection of a 1.8 metre high wooden fence to front boundary of existing dwelling a Manor Farm, March Road, Coldham - F/YR10/0585/F (applicant: Mrs G Longley).

That the application be supported.

M55/10 Finance

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

Income

MJ Coates	Cemetery Memorial	£135.00
Thornally Funeral Services	Interment fee	£220.00
Total Income		£355.00

Expenditure

Singh (UK) Ltd	Skip hire	£182.13
Shaw and Sons Ltd	Accounts register	£59.73
Aon Ltd	Insurance premium	£94.42
Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd	Tractor repairs	£584.47
C Drew	Wages plus expenses (of £20)	£1,001.50
J Smith	Salary and expenses	£416.07
HM Revenue and Customs	J Smith Income Tax	£119.82
Clarkes Mowers	Mower service	£37.50
Clarkes Mowers	Equipment hire	£45.00
Buildbase	Equipment hire	£30.57
Fenland DC	Street light replacements and repairs	£1,834.81
T Jordan	Re-imbusement of cost of placing Grounds Person advert	£161.56
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £138.63), Broadband and other expenses (including purchase of printer and stationary)	£692.46
Total Expenditure		£5,260.04

Members decided that the income of £355.00 be noted and that the expenditure of £5,260.04 be authorised.

56/10 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minute 41/10, the Clerk reported on the latest position regarding the tenancy of this property.

The Clerk read to members the exchange of correspondence between the tenant and himself since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Members decided, based upon the information reported by the Clerk, to agree to the tenant's request for termination of the tenancy on 17 September 2010.

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).)

57/10 Open Forum

(1) Elm Friendship Club

Mrs Spriggs, Treasurer of the Elm Friendship Club, spoke in support of the application from Elm Friendship Club for either a financial contribution or free-of-charge use of the Parish Council's pavilion for club meetings. She informed the Parish Council that the club, which has operated since 2007 and has 20 members, provides a

facility for elderly people – the average age of current attendees is approximately eighty years; some attendees are more than ninety years of age – to meet on a monthly basis, to undertake various activities and to receive talks etc. The club also organises a number of trips and visits.

Club members pay £2.00 per meeting, to contribute towards the cost of transport and refreshments etc.

Mrs Spriggs informed members that the club is, ideally, looking for funding but stated that if the club were to be permitted free-of-charge use of the Parish Council's pavilion, it would not need to incur the monthly hire cost (£28) of the Elm Centre, where it currently meets. She expressed the view that the Parish Council's pavilion would be a suitable venue for the monthly meetings of the club, which operate between 1.30 pm and 3.30 pm on Wednesdays.

Members decided to note the information provided by Mrs Spriggs and to take it into account when discussing the application (minute 50/10 refers).

(2) Vehicle parking to the rear of 39 Main Road, Fridaybridge

Mr C Warby of 39 Main Road, Fridaybridge explained to members the difficulty that he experiences regarding vehicular access to the rear of his property (where his garage is situated) because of inconsiderate parking on Back Road. He made the point that he has been experiencing this difficult for around ten years, since the bungalows were built, on former Parish Council land, to the rear of his property, on Back Road.

Mr Warby stated that he is seeking the Parish Council's assistance in addressing the difficulty that he experiences. He informed members that he had discussed the situation with an officer of the Local Highway Authority (LHA), who had stated that one option would be to install KEEP CLEAR markings on Back Road where the vehicles are being parked but the LHA has no funds to meet the costs of such works; the estimated cost is £150.00.

Mr Warby asked whether the Parish Council would meet the cost of the KEEP CLEAR markings.

Members decided to note the comments made by Mr Warby and to take them into account when discussing his request for assistance (minute 52/10 (3) refers).

(3) Planning application - land west of Bar Drove, Elm (F/YR10/0537/F)

A resident of Elm raised concerns in relation to this planning application, in terms of the detrimental impact that the development could have upon nearby residents, and made the point that some construction works had already been undertaken at the site. He detailed both the works which have been undertaken and his conversations with an officer of the Planning Enforcement Team at Fenland District Council in that regard.

Members decided to note the information provided by this resident and to take it into account when discussing the planning application (minute 54/10 (2) refers).

58/10 Correspondence

(1) Cambridgeshire County Council's Library Service.

The Clerk reported a briefing document prepared by the County Council in relation to its current review of library services, which will need to achieve a reduction in the total level of expenditure on this service of £2,215,000 over the financial years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The briefing document details the aims of the review, which are to:

- seek positive and innovative outcomes which will benefit customers and embody best practice and modernised services
- achieve the required budget savings in a way that minimises the impact upon frontline service delivery
- ensure the long-term sustainability of services which are fit for purpose and meet community needs
- support staff and customers through the change process.

The briefing states that County Councillors are clear that their main aim is to protect library services as much as they can while making the savings required by the Government.

The report detailed the current public consultation process, which commenced on 9 August and concludes on 30 September 2010.

Members decided that that the situation be noted.

(2) COPE newsletter: August 2010.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest newsletter.

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

(3) Community Grants.

The Clerk reported details of the Fenland District Council Community Grants scheme for 2011/12.

The scheme enables community groups to apply for funding towards the cost of community projects from a total budget of £100,000. The grants will be awarded by the four new Neighbourhood Forums, each of which will be allocated a grant pot of £25,000.

To enable a grant application to be successful, it must support outcomes within the District Council's Sustainable Community Strategy; the Clerk explained to members each of the five themes within the strategy.

The closing date for the submission of applications to Fenland District Council is 8 October 2010.

Members decided that the details of the grants scheme be noted and that they would "spread the word" to community groups within the village.

(4) Neighbourhood Engagement Structure in Fenland.

The Clerk reported on the new arrangements for neighbourhood engagement in Fenland which were approved by the Cabinet at Fenland District Council on 12 August 2010.

The Clerk reported that the new arrangements had resulted from a review (led by Fenland District Council) following the trial year of operating Community Fairs and Neighbourhood Management Boards as the means of engaging with communities in Fenland.

The new arrangements create four Neighbourhood Forums (in place of the five Neighbourhood Management Boards), each forum being linked to a geographical area covered by a Neighbourhood Policing Team; this means that the parish of Elm would be part of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum, rather than the Rural North Community Fair and the associated Rural Neighbourhood Management Board. The Parish Council will be entitled to one seat on the panel within the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum.

The Clerk explained to members the importance of the Parish Council participating in these arrangements, as a means of engaging with the community and helping to improve the delivery of services and problem-solving on a multi-agency basis.

Members decided that the information be noted.

59/10 Next meeting

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

Meeting finished at 8.30 pm

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

Date:.....