

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

19 APRIL 2011 – 6.30 pm.

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

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs Cotterell.

The minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2011 were confirmed and signed.

### 156/10 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.

### 157/10 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

#### **(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 144/10 (1))**

Councillor Rogers reported that he has made contact with the pre-school to obtain views as to the type of play equipment that young children would like to see provided in Elm.

The Clerk reported that during his discussions regarding the Partnership Agreement (minute 157/10 (4) refers) he had enquired as to the possibility of involving, as appropriate, the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club in undertaking the necessary consultation exercise; this enquiry had received a positive response.

In addition, Councillor Rogers informed members of a request from the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club for a skateboard park in Elm and that he had agreed to meet with the club to discuss funding options etc.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Rogers be noted and that he would continue to progress this initiative.

#### **(2) Additional street lighting in the parish (minute 144/10 (2))**

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

Members feel that an appropriate location for an additional street lamp in Fridaybridge would be at Flints Corner, March Road.

Councillor Mrs Johnson mentioned a faulty street lamp at Bramley Court, Coldham. She had previously raised the matter with the Clerk, who had established from the Street Lighting Service at the County Council that this lamp is not shown on its database of street lamps which are maintained at the public expense.

Although members are aware that Bramley Court is a private, non-adopted, road, Councillor Mrs Johnson believes that the Parish Council provided this particular street lamp in 2002.

Members decided that

- (1) one of the additional street lamps for the parish be provided at Flints Corner, March Road, Fridaybridge;
- (2) they would continue to give thought to potential locations for an additional street lamp in Elm;
- (3) the Clerk would seek to establish both the background to provision of the street lamp at the top of Bramley Court, Coldham and the responsibility for its maintenance.

(3) **Maintenance of playing fields and open spaces across the parish and at Elm Cemetery (minute 144/10 (3))**

The Clerk reported that, as planned, the contract had commenced on 28 March 2011.

Despite a couple of minor issues raised by relatives of people interred in Elm Cemetery, the level of satisfaction with the work being undertaken so far appears to be high.

With regard to disposal of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance equipment, the Clerk reported that he had received a bid from the new grounds maintenance contractor for all of the equipment. He informed members that, based upon the age and purchase price of some of the items of equipment, it may be possible to obtain higher prices for some of the items (particularly, the grass cutting equipment).

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) any issues raised by members of the community in relation to satisfaction with the grounds maintenance activities be referred to the Clerk;
- (3) Councillor Mrs Hopkin would seek advice from a specialist auctioneer with regard to appropriate disposal of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance equipment.

(4) **Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 144/10 (4) refers)**

The Clerk reported that he had received only one comment from members – that being from the Chairman in relation to efforts to be made by the club to raise additional money to contribute towards its operating costs – in relation to the draft Partnership Agreement, produced by the County Council's Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) team.

The Clerk reported that he had met, on 12 April 2011, with the relevant member of the Youth Support Services team to finalise the Partnership Agreement. Once the partnership Agreement has been updated, the Clerk, as Proper Officer of the Parish Council, will sign the document on behalf of the Parish Council. He reported also that the IYSS would submit invoices to the Parish Council on a mid-quarter basis; as such, the first invoice would be presented to 17 May 2011 meeting of the Parish Council.

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

**(5) Women's Institute – meeting place (minute 153/10 refers)**

The Chairman reported that the local Women's Institute (WI) group had decided, for the reasons explained, not to use the meeting room at the Parish Council office as the venue in which to hold its meetings. The group will, in future, meet at the Elm Centre.

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

**(6) Repair and maintenance works at Fridaybridge (minute 154/10 refers)**

The Clerk reported that the contractor has scheduled the works to repair one of the gates at the Maltmas Drove playing field and to provide and install posts at Back Road (to prevent the inconsiderate vehicle parking which obstructs the access gate to The Leam) for 20 April 2011.

Members decided that information reported by the Clerk be noted.

**158/10 Police matters**

PCSO Martin Bogunovic, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, introduced himself to members and then reported on recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, namely:

- Coldham – no issues.
- Fridaybridge – one dwelling burglary (Main Road); one vehicle theft (March Road); one incident of criminal damage (West Drive).
- Elm – damage to crops and vehicle tyre tracks across fields (Redmoor Lane), which is being investigated by the Rural Community Action Team.
- General – low-level anti-social behaviour across the parish, including the use of quad bikes on fields.

PCSO Bogunovic responded to members' questions.

Councillor Cotterell mentioned the difficulties caused recently, when large HGVs were diverted through Elm as a consequence of closure of part of the A47 due to a road traffic accident. In response, PCSO Bogunovic explained the processes operated by the Constabulary and the Local Highway Authority in such circumstances and he gave an assurance that every effort is made when implementing diversions to minimise disruption to road users and local residents alike.

In response to a comment made by Councillor Mrs Johnson regarding the number of road accidents which have happened along the B1101 through Coldham, the PCSO stated that the village is on the route of the Speed Reduction Camera Van.

Councillor Cotterell mentioned also the speed at which vehicles travel along Well End and Needham Bank, Fridaybridge.

With regard to attempts to control vehicle speeds, PCSO Bogunovic explained the Speed Watch initiative; he informed members that this has been operated in a number of villages recently (32 vehicles were found to have been speeding in Fridaybridge on 11 March 2011) and is scheduled to take place in Elm later this week. PCSO Bogunovic explained that the Constabulary needs additional Speed Watch volunteers from within the parish and sought members' assistance, by "spreading the word", in this regard.

In addition, PCSO Bogunovic reported on the latest policy for deployment of the Speed Reduction Camera Van and he informed members that the parish of Elm qualifies under the new criteria.

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

### 159/10 Highway issues

#### (1) B1101 through Coldham

Further to minute 147/10, the Clerk reported that he had sent a letter to the Local Highway Authority - both requesting that it considers the implementation of appropriate measures to reduce vehicle speeds along the B1101, particularly through the village of Coldham, and seeking an update on the progress of reviewing the speed limits along the B1101 – but, to date, had received no formal response.

Members decided that the Clerk would pursue a response from the Local Highway Authority to his letter.

#### (2) County Council's review of speed limits

The Clerk reported briefly on his understanding of a recent decision by Cambridgeshire County Council to revise its speed limit review policy.

In summary, the County Council proposes to cease its current review of the speed limits on A and B road across Cambridgeshire and to allow communities to propose changes to speed limits; this would, however, mean that the cost of the process (consultation, the legal fees necessary to implement a Traffic Regulation Order and the costs of providing and installing signage) would need to be met by local communities. It is anticipated that this would, in most cases, be Town and Parish Councils.

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

### 160/10 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) Erection of a smoking shelter and alterations to door on front elevation of existing public house (retrospective) at The Chequers public house, March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/ 0226/F (applicant: Mr R Hotson).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of a smoking shelter and alterations to door on front elevation of existing public house (retrospective) at The Chequers public house, March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/ 0227/LB (applicant: Mr R Hotson).

*That the application be supported.*

- (3) Erection of a single-storey 2-bed dwelling on land east of 23 March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/0265/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs T and L Green).

*That the application be supported.*

## 161/10 Finance

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

### Income

Mr and Mrs Rose	Purchase of plot in Garden of Rest at Elm Cemetery	£220.00
P Barnes	Burial plot purchase (£700) and interment fees (£1,000)	£1,950.00
A R Clingo	Burial plot purchase (£700) and interment fees (£500)	£1,200.00
A R Clingo	Interment fee	£250.00
M J Coates	Memorial inscription	£60.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£3,680.00</b>

### Expenditure

Cambridgeshire County Council	White lining – Back Road, Fridaybridge	£96.00
Fenland District Council	Council Tax – Cemetery Cottage – April 2011	£116.74
Mrs S Woodhouse	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 31 March 2011)	£100.00
R J Warren	Grounds Maintenance Contract	£1,680.22
Area Fencing	Fencing at The Leam	£1,608.00 (net cost to be reimbursed by Cambridgeshire County Council)
Grounds & Co.	Energy performance Certificate for Cemetery Cottage, Elm	£84.00
Simply Interiors	Supply of carpets and other floor coverings at Cemetery Cottage, Elm	£1,000.00
P Williamson (for Simply Interiors)	Fitting of carpets and other floor coverings at Cemetery Cottage, Elm	£250.00
Cambridgeshire County Council	Fridaybridge playing field rent	£375.00
King's Lynn IDB	Agricultural drainage rates 2011/12	£64.04
Smith of Derby Ltd	Service visit to Fridaybridge Clock Tower	£196.80
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £126.33), Broadband and other expenses)	£618.23
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£6,189.03</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 March 2011 (in the total sum of £119,290.75).

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £3,680.00 be noted and that the expenditure of £6,189.03 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 March 2011 be noted.

### **162/10 Cemetery Cottage, Elm**

Further to minute 150/10, the Clerk reported on the latest position regarding the refurbishment and letting of this property.

The Clerk informed members that the building works have been completed and the property was "handed over" to the Parish Council on 1 April 2011.

Following the "hand over" the Clerk has arranged, via a local estate agent, letting of the property. As anticipated, the estate agent advised, in the interests of maximising the rental potential of the property, that the Parish Council should provide carpets and other floor coverings in the property. Consequently, arrangements have been made (following the estate agent obtaining quotations) for a local company to undertake this work, which is scheduled to take place on 21 April 2011.

The Clerk also informed members that it may, in the opinion of the estate agent, be necessary, depending upon the circumstances of prospective tenants, for the Parish Council to provide a cooker at the property

The Clerk will also arrange for the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to cut the grass at the property until such time as a new tenant takes up occupation.

The property was placed on the market, at a monthly rental of £595 per calendar month (the estate agent's valuation) on 13 April 2011. As a result, three viewings have taken place to date and a further viewing has been arranged for later this week; the Clerk informed members of the feedback from the viewings so far.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that, if necessary, in the interests of securing tenants for Cemetery Cottage, a cooker to be purchased and installed at the property.

### **163/10 Elm Cemetery**

#### **(1) Extension**

Further to minute 151/10, the Clerk reported to members on the current situation regarding the extension of Elm Cemetery.

The movement and subsequent levelling of soil to facilitate the extension works was completed today.

Quotations for replacement of the cemetery roadway have been sought from three local companies and, to date, one has been received.

At members' request, the Clerk detailed the work included within the contractor's quotation. Some members considered that the depth of surfacing being proposed by the contractor would not be sufficient to provide a long life of the roadway.

Members decided that

- (1) the current position regarding the extension of Elm Cemetery be noted;
- (2) advice be sought from the Local Highway Authority as to an appropriate depth of surfacing for the roadway;
- (3) following receipt of advice from the Local Highway Authority: the contractor which has submitted a quotation be invited to submit a revised quotation (if the Local Highway Authority recommends a higher specification than that detailed within the current quotation); the Clerk would seek quotations from two further contractors.

## (2) Fees

The Clerk sought members' views on the need to clarify one element of the Parish Council's cemetery fees, in the light of a recent question raised by a local undertaker.

At the end of the list of charges on the cemetery fees schedule it states: "The above fees apply where the person to be interred is, or recently was, an inhabitant of the parish of Elm. In all other cases, the fees are doubled".

The issue for clarification is the "or recently was (an inhabitant...)". The Clerk asked members whether they wished to agree a period of time to qualify as being "recent". In the case raised by the undertaker recently, the person to be interred in Elm cemetery had moved out of the parish more than four years prior to the interment. In that case, the Chairman and the Clerk considered that the "recent" qualification had not been met and, consequently, double fees were levied.

Members discussed the various circumstances under which a person might leave the parish but wish to be buried in Elm cemetery, being mindful that some residents have no choice in the matter because of their need for residential care.

Members decided that the cemetery fees be amended to read: "The above fees apply where the person to be interred (1) is, or was until two years prior to death, an inhabitant of the parish of Elm; (2) had lived in the parish of Elm for 20 years or more but had no option but to move out of the parish to reside in a residential care home. In all other cases, the fees are doubled".

## 164/10 Correspondence

- (1) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC) – membership renewal 2011/12.

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation for renewal of CPALC membership for 2011/12.

With the invitation for CPALC membership, the organisation had provided copies of its Membership News 2010/11 publication (detailing its Core Objectives, Member Services, and Membership News). The Clerk provided each Parish Council member with a copy of this document.

The Clerk informed members of the cost of membership of CPALC for 2011/12. He also informed members of the benefit derived by the Parish Council through his membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks, which provides a high quality support to local councils in terms of information, advice and training.

Members are not convinced, based upon their experience of CPALC membership, that the Parish Council would derive sufficient benefits from membership to justify the annual cost and, given the current economic climate

and the other uses to which that financial resource could be put, they do not consider it to be in the best interest of the community currently to utilise financial resources in this way.

Members decided that the Parish Council would not renew its membership of CPALC for 2011/12.

(2) PC Coales retirement.

Further to minute 132/10, the Chairman circulated to members of a Thank You card from former PC Coales, expressing her gratitude for the Parish Council's retirement gift.

Members decided that Ms Coales' appreciation of the gift from the Parish Council be noted.

**165/10 Parish Council elections 2011**

The Clerk reported that, given the number of candidates for the three wards which comprise the parish of Elm, there would be no contests for membership of Elm Parish Council and that all of the ten candidates for the twelve seats on the Parish Council would automatically become members of the Council on 9 May 2011.

Nine of the ten candidates are current members of Elm Parish Council; these being Councillors Brand, Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Rogers, Softley, Stokes and Webb. This means that Councillors Mrs Pinnock, Pooley and Tilney have not sought re-election. The new Parish Council member will be Mr R Pinnock.

The two vacant seats (one in the Elm and Fridaybridge ward and the other in the Rings End ward) need to be filled by co-option. In this regard, the Clerk read to members a guidance document relating to the co-option process provided by Fenland District Council.

In summary, the Parish Council is required to advertise the vacancies and then co-opt through decision at a Parish Council meeting; the vacancies need to be filled under this process by 24 June 2011.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the necessary co-option measures be undertaken.

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

**166/10 Next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 17 May 2011, commencing at conclusion of the Annual Assembly, which takes place at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**.Meeting finished at 8.30 pm**

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

Date:.....