

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 DECEMBER 2012 – 7.00 pm.

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

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: None.

The minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2012 were confirmed and signed.

92/12 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.

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had informed members of the need for them to possess a dispensation to enable their participation in the Precept-setting process at the January 2013 meeting; he collected from members their applications in that regard.

Members decided the information reported by the Clerk be noted and acted upon.

93/12 Fenland Association for Community Transport

Members received a brief presentation from Jo Philpott, Manager of the Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT), on the services that FACT provides across the district and what it can offer to the residents of the parish. She informed members that FACT is a not-for-profit organisation which offers: a door-to-door service for: people who are unable to access local bus routes due to age or disability; people living in rural locations with limited or no access to local bus routes; people without access to a car.

Ms Philpott requested the Parish Council's assistance in promoting FACT's Dial-a-Ride service which operates within the rural villages around Wisbech. She explained how the service operates – people need to become a member, at an annual membership fee of £10.00, and then they are able to travel free-of-charge on a timetabled route using a Fenland concessionary fares bus pass; those who do not possess a bus pass are required to pay a fare.

Ms Philpott circulated usage statistics for the Dial-a-Ride service by residents of Elm for the whole of the calendar year 2011 and for the calendar year 2012 to date; it is anticipated that the 2012 total will show an increase on the previous year.

Councillor Cotterell suggested to Ms Philpott that she looks at the Golden Age pages on Fenland District Council's website as a means of identifying groups of potential users of the service.

Members decided that the information be noted and that they would "spread the word" within the parish.

94/12 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Resignation from membership of the Parish Council (minute 78/12)

The Clerk reported and that he had informed Fenland District Council (FDC) of the resignation of Maurice Tilney from membership of Elm Parish Council and that, as a result, FDC had published formal notice of the vacancy with effect from 22 November 2012.

In accordance with the notice, given under The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986, the opportunity existed, until 12 December 2012, for ten local electors for the parish to call for the vacancy to be filled by way of an election. In the absence of an election being called, the Parish Council must fill the vacancy by co-option. The Clerk reported that no election had been called to fill the vacancy and, consequently, the Parish Council must fill the vacancy by co-option.

The Clerk outlined briefly the recommended process to be used in filling a Parish Council vacancy by co-option, as had been used in filling the two vacancies on Elm Parish Council which existed following the local elections in May 2011 and on the occasion of the resignation of Owen Rogers in April 2012 (minutes 16/11 and 145/11 refer). On that basis, the vacancy would be advertised via publication of a notice on the Parish Council's website and its notice boards.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk with regard to filling the vacancy be noted and that co-option to membership of Elm Parish Council, using the process utilised by the Parish Council previously, be undertaken at the February 2013 meeting.

(2) Obstructive parking around Elm Primary school (minute 81/12 (2))

At the Chairman's invitation, the Headteacher of Elm C of E Primary School, Mrs F McCallum, addressed the Parish Council on her perspective of the parking of parents' cars in the vicinity of the school and action that she had taken to seek to address the problem. She commented that this parking has been a long-standing problem and that she sends letters to parents approximately every two months trying to encourage them to not park in the vicinity of the school; in her experience, any positive results are only short-term. She made the point that the when the local Constabulary is able to devote resources to the issue, benefits are seen.

The Headteacher informed members that the school operates a Walk to School Week each year; unfortunately, this does not persuade parents to adopt such a practice on a permanent basis. She undertook to send a further letter to parents, encouraging walking to school.

Mrs McCallum expressed the opinion that it is the parking of vehicles along the stretch of the B1101 between All Saints Church and the school which is the most problematic. Because of the parking along the road, there have been incidents of some vehicles mounting the pavement.

PCSO Russ made the point that this issue is not unique to Elm; it is experienced outside schools across the County. He expressed the view that parents are unlikely to stop taking their children to school by car and that, therefore, preventing on-street parking is the only action which is likely to address the parking problem in the vicinity of this school.

The Clerk reminded members of the opportunity to submit an application under the County Council's Local Highway Improvements scheme for parking restrictions at this location (minute 86/12 refers).

Mrs McCallum was asked her views on the possibility of running a "Keep Your Child Safe" poster competition, whereby pupils at the school would design a poster and prizes (to be funded by the Parish Council) would be awarded to those who had produced the winning posters. She agreed to undertake such an initiative.

Members decided that the Parish Council would consider

- (1) this matter further at the next meeting; such consideration to include the allocation of funding towards prizes for the "Keep Your Child Safe" poster competition;
- (2) submitting (at minute 98/12) an application under the Local Highway Improvements scheme for the implementation of on-street parking restrictions in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School.

(3) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 81/12 (3))

The Clerk reported that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council has now begun work on calculating the cost of the works required to bring this area of land up to a standard where it could be adopted by the District Council and he is hopeful that he will be able to make further progress during January 2013.

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.

(4) Elm Cemetery – maintenance and request to purchase burial plot (minute 81/12 (5))

The Clerk reported that, to date, he had received no letter of appeal against the Parish Council's decision (at minute 76/12 (3)) to refuse the application to pre-purchase a specific burial plot in Elm Cemetery.

Some members commented that, despite the letters from the Parish Council to the family of the deceased, the practice of placing floral tributes and other articles on land adjoining a particular grave (numbered North B345) continues.

Members agreed with the suggestion of one member that anyone who breaches the Parish Council's Cemetery Regulations, as is the case with burial plot number North B345, would not receive favourable consideration by the Parish Council in relation to any application to purchase a burial plot in Elm Cemetery and, consequently, re-affirmed the decision at minute 76/12 (2) to refuse the application to pre-purchase burial plot number North B344 in Elm Cemetery.

One member suggested that the grassed area between plot North B345 and the access road (currently shown on the cemetery plans at plot number North B344) is not of sufficient width to be used as a burial plot; if used as a burial plot there would be a danger of vehicular damage being caused to any memorial likely to be placed thereon. Other members supported this suggestion.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the land currently shown as burial plot North B344 be deleted from the cemetery plans;
- (3) the Clerk would send a further letter to the family which holds the Exclusive Rights of Burial for plot North B345, informing them that

- the area of land sold as a burial plot measures 9 feet (in length) by 4 feet (in width) and that purchasers of a plot are not able to use any other land outside of those measurements.
- the Parish Council is still hopeful that the family would address this matter voluntarily and that the Parish Council would not be put in the position of needing to take action itself to remove items from the land around the grave.
- the Parish Council has now agreed a final deadline of 31 January 2013 for the family to take the necessary action to comply its decision relating to the removal of floral tributes etc from land adjoining the grave.
- the Parish Council is of the opinion that some of the articles placed on and around the grave – such as a car battery and solar-powered lights – are not appropriate for a cemetery and must be removed.
- the grassed area between plot North B345 and the access road (shown on the cemetery plans at plot number North B344) is no longer deemed to be a burial plot in Elm Cemetery;

(4) in the event of non-compliance with the letter from the Clerk, the matter be referred to the Parish Council's legal advisors.

(5) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 81/12 (6))

In response to a question from a member, Councillor Stokes stated that he had still not received a written apology in relation to the manner in which the Youth Service had treated his offer to act as Quizmaster at the quiz night held on 17 November 2012. The Clerk informed members that he had provided, at the request of the officer, the new Lead Youth Worker for the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club with Councillor Stokes' postal and e-mail addresses, so that an apology could be sent to the councillor.

The Clerk circulated two posters produced by members of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club; the production of these posters resulted from a suggestion made by Councillor Pinnock at the meeting of the youth club he had attended in September 2012, for the purpose of publicising the youth club via the Parish Council's website and notice boards. Members were disappointed that so few posters had been produced and are of the opinion that neither of the two which had been produced is suitable for use by the Parish Council as a means of publicising the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported be noted;
- (2) neither of the posters produced by members of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club be used by the Parish Council as a means of publicising the youth club;
- (3) the Youth Development Co-ordinator be reminded by the Clerk of the need to submit, in advance of 15 January 2013 meeting of the Parish Council (at which it will set the Parish Precept for 2013/14), an application for continued funding from the Parish Council towards the cost of operating the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club;
- (4) the Chairman and Councillors Pinnock and Stokes would continue attending future sessions of the youth club and report their observations/conclusions at the subsequent meeting(s) of the Parish Council.

(6) Local Scout and Guides groups (minute 89/12)

The Chairman reported that he had been unable, since the last meeting, to make contact with representatives of the local Scout and Guides groups but that he would make further attempts between this meeting and the next.

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

95/12 Police matters

PCSO Dave Russ, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, reported on recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, including:

- Coldham – no incidents
- Fridaybridge – theft of a trailer
- Elm – one incident of horses running loose on Gosmoor Lane; one dwelling burglary; two incidents of rowdy behaviour; two non-dwelling burglaries; theft of a fish from a fishing lake in Begdale Road
- Rings End – theft of a wheeled bin.

The PCSO added that the theft of trailers is becoming an emerging trend across the district.

PCSO Russ also informed members of the results of Speed Watch activity undertaken in Coldham, Elm and Fridaybridge on 7 December 2012. Of the total of 70 vehicles observed during the exercises, only one was being driven in excess of the speed limit.

PCSO Russ responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information reported by PCSO Russ be noted.

96/12 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.

Councillors Cotterell and Sutton, the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that there would be meetings of both the District Council's Cabinet and full Council on 20 December 2012. One of the items for discussion is revision of the Council Tax Benefit scheme (minute 83/12 refers). They also mentioned that, although the District Council has begun work on producing a budget for 2013/14, the level of financial settlement that the council would receive from the Government in 2013/14 is still unknown.

Further to minute 83/12, District Councillor Sutton mentioned that officers of Fenland District Council are now pursuing with Kier Property the overgrown condition of an area of land adjoining Cedar Way, Elm.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

97/12 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 21 x two-storey dwellings, comprising of 14 x 2-bed and 7 x 3-bed; 2.1 metre high fencing and landscaping involving demolition of existing sheltered accommodation and garage and alterations to the gardens of 6 existing bungalows at The Dale, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR12/0903/F (applicant: Ms F Coulson).*

Object to the application for the following reasons:

- *approval of the proposal would result in overdevelopment of the site*

- the current community infrastructure (including lack capacity at Elm Primary School, insufficient medical facilities and inadequate local road network) is insufficient to support this development
- the design and nature of the proposed properties is out of keeping with the surrounding built environment.

(2) Change of use of detached double garage and part of garden land to engineering business (retrospective) at Elm Engineering Services, Orchard House, Main Road, Elm – F/YR12/0905/F (applicant: Mr M Claxton).

That the application be supported, subject to imposition of conditions 2, 3 and 4 of the current temporary planning permission.

(3) Erection of 3 x two-storey 4-bed dwellings with detached garages involving the formation of a new access on land north of 89 – 94 The Stitch, fronting Bar Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR12/0932/F (applicant: Mrs N Smith).

That the application be supported.

(4) Erection of a three-storey 4-bed dwelling with attached double garage at plot 2 on land north of Old Killeen, 172 Fridaybridge Road, Elm – F/YR12/0929/F (applicant: Mr A Edgoose).

That the application be supported.

98/12 Local Highway Improvements 2013/14

Further to minute 86/12, members gave further consideration to the submission of an application for highway works under the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) scheme.

Members decided that an application be submitted for a scheme to create a safer environment at school opening and closing times for pupils at the Primary School and their parents, as well as removing the traffic congestion faced currently by those motorists who travel through the village along the B1101 at those times of the day; the Parish Council feels that the introduction of on-street parking restrictions (yellow lines) on the B1101 on both sides of the road, between the All Saints Church and the entrance to the Elm Centre, would achieve the objective of preventing the dangerous parking of vehicles in the vicinity of the school (minute 94/12 (2) refers).

99/12 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 and boiler repair)	£523.60
A R Clingo	Interment fee - Bates	£250.00
W Bailey and Son	Interment fee - Sergeant	£250.00
Total Income		£1,023.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery	£36.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,549.42
Magpas	Donation	£400.00
Anglian Water	Water at cemetery	£46.29
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Membership fee	£30.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	Wreath	£17.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £116.27), Broadband and other expenses	£549.57
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income tax (September, October and November 2012)	£361.11
Total Expenditure		£2,989.39

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 November 2012 (in the total sum of £132,418.18), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 November 2011.

Councillor Stokes suggested that, in addition to purchase of the poppy wreath, the Parish Council makes a financial donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The other members agreed.

Further to minute 87/12, the Clerk reported on a meeting held on 17 December 2012 involving the Chairman, Councillor Pinnock and himself with the prospective new tenant of allotment plots 1 - 8 Shepperson's Field (which provide an annual income to the Parish Council of £400.00). At minute 87/12 the Parish Council had delegated to the Chairman, Councillor Pinnock and himself the authority to address any issues raised by the prospective new tenant at that meeting

The agreement reached at the meeting with the prospective tenant of 1 – 8 Shepperson's Field was:

- the tenancy of allotment plots 1 to 8 inclusive at Shepperson's Field would commence on 11 January 2013 but no rent would be charged by the Parish Council for this tenancy until 11 October 2014 - on the understanding that the new tenant would clear the site (with the exception of the two large heaps of debris left by the previous tenant) and cut the surrounding hedging.
- a new, single tenancy agreement would be issued, to cover both the new (numbered 1 to 8) and current allotment plots (numbered 9 to 13) at Shepperson's Field.
- the new tenancy agreement would, subject to there being no legal reason as to why it would not be possible, be issued in both the names of the tenant and his son.
- the Parish Council would arrange cutting down of the two large trees (one on each side of the allotment site) and that the new tenant would subsequently dispose of the resultant logs and branches.
- The Clerk would write to the former tenant of the allotment plots numbered 1 to 8 Shepperson's Field, reminding him of the need to remove from the land the two heaps of debris; the deadline for this work to be carried out is 31 March 2013.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £1,023.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,989.39 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 November 2012, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 November 2011, be noted;
- (3) a donation of £25.00 be made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal;
- (4) the agreement reached with the new tenant of allotment plots 1 -8 Shepperson's Field be noted and that quotations be sought by the Clerk for felling the two large trees at the site.

100/12 Elm village sign

The Clerk informed members that the Elm village sign (located on the grassed area at Birch Grove) had been removed, due to failure (resulting from decay of the wood) of the post to which it had been affixed, and is now being stored in the former Chapel of Rest at Elm Cemetery. He sought members' views regarding repair or replacement of the sign.

In advance of the meeting, the Clerk had, at the request of the Chairman, checked the cost incurred by the Parish Council in 2007 when it had replaced the wooden village sign at Fridaybridge with one constructed from metal; that cost was £1,050.00.

Members decided that no action be taken before the spring of 2013, at which time arrangements would be made for the current wooden sign to be refurbished and then re-instated using a hardwood such as Oak) post.

101/12 Street lamp FPC8, Begdale Road, Elm

The Clerk informed members that Fenland District Council had identified a street lamp – FPC8 on Begdale Road, Elm – which requires attention; it has been deemed by the District Council as requiring a new lantern and column, at a total cost of £1,039.65

With regard to funding this work, the Clerk informed members that the amount still available to the Parish Council, from the Concurrent Functions Grant allocations for street lighting in 2011/12 and 2012/13, is, following the decision at minute 70/12 (6) to procure two new street lamps and the decision at minute 89/12 to undertake repair work to an existing street lamp, is £704.76.

Members decided - on the basis of the cost of this repair, the funding currently available for street lighting and what they consider to be the limited benefit of a street lamp at the location of FPC8 (opposite the entrance to the dairy premises on Begdale Road) – that the Parish Council would not meet the cost of the repair work to this street lamp.

102/12 Correspondence

- (1) Volunteer Centre, Fenland - request for a financial donation.

The Clerk reported a request from the Volunteer Centre, Fenland for a financial donation towards the cost of its work in promoting and developing volunteering activities in Fenland.

Members decided that no financial donation be made to the Volunteer Centre, Fenland.

(2) Request to use Elm playing field as a wedding venue.

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from a resident of Elm, enquiring as to the possibility of using the Elm playing field as the venue for her wedding in 2014 (preferably 19 July). Under such an arrangement, the bride's family would arrange the erection of marquees in which to hold the event (including musical entertainment).

Members indicated that they are happy to agree to this request in principle but before approving the request formally, they would like further information, such as whether the marriage ceremony, or only the reception, would take place on the playing field; also, the requester would need to ensure, in the event that the marriage ceremony were to take place at the field, that there would be no liability upon the Parish Council in terms of it needing to obtain any licences etc. Under this arrangement, the Parish Council would only be providing use of the field and the car park (and not facilities within the Parish Council office) and would require the requester to clear the site after use and to make good any damage.

Members decided that the Clerk would inform the requester of the views of the Parish Council, as set out above.

103/12 New Elm Pre-school

Further to minute 7/12, Mrs F McCallum, Headteacher of the Elm C of E Primary School, who had attended the meeting for minute 94/12 (2), took the opportunity to thank the Parish Council in person for its donation of £3,000 towards the cost of setting-up the new pre-school in the village; she commented that the pre-school, which has been running since September 2012 is operating very successfully (with more than 40 local children attending each week) and is providing a valuable community facility.

Members decided that the comments of Mrs McCallum be noted.

104/12 Dates of meetings for 2013

Members decided that meetings of the Parish Council in 2013 (all commencing at 7.00 pm and taking place in the Parish Council office on Begdale Road, Elm) be held on the following dates: 15 January, 19 February, 19 March, 16 April, 21 May (Annual Meeting of the Council, following the Annual Assembly), 18 June, 23 July, 20 August, 17 September, 22 October, 19 November and 17 December.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm

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

Date:.....