

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

19 JANUARY 2012 – 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Lankfer, Rogers (from 6.50 pm), Stokes, Softley and Webb.

Apologies: County Councillor Mrs Tuck and District Councillor Sutton.

The minutes of the meeting of 20 December 2011 were confirmed and signed.

104/11 Open Forum

(1) Thefts at Elm Cemetery

Further to minute 92/11 (1), a number of members of the public attended the meeting to obtain an update from the Parish Council regarding the action that it agreed to take at minute 76/11 in relation to the incidents of theft of flowers and other items from graves at Elm Cemetery.

The Clerk responded by relaying the information that he had reported to the Parish Council at minute 92/11 (1) and the consequent decisions of the Parish Council in that regard. In addition, he made the point that there had been no reports to the Police relating to thefts of flowers and other items from graves at Elm Cemetery for two months (minute 108/11 refers). The members of the public acknowledged this to be the case.

The Clerk explained that, although the incidents of theft from graves at the cemetery appear to have ceased, the Parish Council does not consider this to be a matter of "case closed" but will be kept under review and considered again if the need arises (minute 92/11 (1) refers).

Even though the incidents of theft appear to have ceased, members feel that one preventative measure would be to erect fencing along the rear boundary of the cemetery; this would not only prevent access to the cemetery from that boundary but also "finish off" the extension works.

Members are of the view that there is no need to consider further at this stage the provision of a CCTV monitoring system at the cemetery. They also expressed the view that even if a CCTV system were to be installed, it may be more appropriate to locate a camera at the entrance to the cemetery, rather than within the cemetery.

Members decided that

- (1) the situation continue to be kept under review;
- (2) three quotations be sought for the provision of appropriate fencing along the rear boundary of Elm Cemetery;
- (3) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the most cost-effective fencing quotation received and to arrange the works.

(2) Taxi ranks at Wisbech

A resident of Elm attended the meeting to explain the concerns of people living in the village regarding the proposal of Fenland District Council to re-locate the taxi ranks from The Horsefair, to an alternative (less central) location, at Wisbech.

The resident expressed the view that the proposal would cause difficulties for parishioners, particularly those who are elderly or infirm. She stated her belief that the Parish Council would be consulted by Fenland District Council on the taxi ranks re-location proposal.

Members decided that the concerns expressed by this resident be noted and that they be taken into account by the Parish Council in responding to any consultation by Fenland District Council in respect of this proposal.

105/11 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.

106/11 Locality Team, Area Priority for Elm and Christchurch ward

Further to minute 91/11, members received a presentation from Sara Turton, Assistant Manager of the County Council's Locality Team for the Wisbech and District area (which includes the parish of Elm) on both the work of the Locality Team generally and two specific projects being operated currently by that team. She circulated documents which provided additional information to that reported orally.

Ms Turton explained that the Locality Team, which is located within the Children's Services department at the County Council, delivers a variety of functions, including: youth work; the education welfare service; operation of children's centres; the Connexions service; parental support; Oasis Centre nursery.

The Locality Team is currently participating in two projects:

- Graffiti - to reduce the number of illegal tags and graffiti within Wisbech and local areas by identifying and engaging with young people into positive activity. Ms Turton explained the role that the Locality Team is playing in delivery of this project, which includes providing young people with an understanding of the role of graffiti in history, enhancing their communication skills and creating a piece of graffiti art to be displayed in Wisbech. The Locality Team is currently bidding for funding to be able to take a group of young people on a visit to Berlin as part of the history of graffiti element of this project.
- Area Priority – a multi-agency approach to reducing child poverty in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland through targeted intervention with children and young families. Ms Turton explained that the Elm and Christchurch ward of Fenland has been identified as a priority area in this regard.

Ms Turton stated her hope that Elm Parish Council would be able to support this project; attendance by a member of the Parish Council at the next meeting of the project group, scheduled for 26 January 2012 at Fridaybridge School, would be valued.

Ms Turton responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information provided by Ms Turton be noted and that the Parish Council is supportive of the projects in which the Wisbech and District Locality Team is participating/delivering.

107/11 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Section 106 Planning Obligations issues (minute 90/11)

Members considered the appointment of two representatives to serve upon the committee which is being established to advise on the spending of the Section 106 monies relating to the Coldham windfarm extension.

Members decided that Councillors Brand and Mrs Johnson be appointed to serve as Elm Parish Council's representatives on this committee.

(2) Speed limit on March Road, Coldham (minute 92/11 (2))

The Clerk reported information provided by the Local Highway Authority (LHA), as a result of County Councillor Mrs Tuck's involvement in pursuing this concern.

The LHA has stated that the funding approved in 2011 by the County Council's Cabinet allows for speed limit reviews up to number 29 to be implemented. As the B1101 is review number 30, it is not included and, therefore, other forms of funding would be needed if the Parish Council wishes to take forward any changes.

The Local Highway Authority states that the speed limit review work undertaken recorded a mean speed of just over 40 mph for the length currently covered by the 40mph limit in the village, which suggests reasonable compliance. On the south approach to the village it was not possible to undertake a radar survey due to the lack of a suitable location to fix the equipment. A survey south of the Old Vicarage, however, showed a mean speed of just below 49 mph.

In terms of pursuing a reduction in speed limit, the options available to the Parish Council are agreeing to meet the costs, under the County Council's third party funding arrangements scheme, of such a measure or to make an application under the County Council's Local Minor Highway Improvements scheme (minutes 96/11 (1) and 110/11 refer).

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) depending upon the likely level of cost, they are minded to pursue a third party funding approach to securing a speed limit reduction along March Road, Coldham;
- (3) the Clerk would obtain from the Local Highway Authority an estimate of the costs involved in the third party funding approach to this matter.

(3) Appointment to Elm Centre Management Committee (minute 92/11 (3))

Members considered, again, the appointment of a representative to the Elm Centre Management Committee.

Members decided that Councillor Mrs Cotterell be appointed to serve as Elm Parish Council's representative on the Elm Centre Management Committee.

(4) Parish Precept 2012/13 - locations for new street lamps (minute 99/11)

Members considered finalising specific locations for installation of the three new street lamps which would be funded from the 2011/12 Concurrent Functions Grant.

Members decided that

(1) new street lamps be provided at the following locations:

- Overstone Road, Coldham
- Flints Corner, March Road, Fridaybridge
- Gosmoor Lane (in the vicinity of Colletts Bridge Lane), Elm;

(2) the Clerk would progress this matter with the County Council's Street Lighting Team.

108/11 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PCSO Martin Bogunovic, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, was unable to attend the meeting, He 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 incident of anti-social behaviour, involving the use of trials bikes across farmland
- Fridaybridge – one incident of theft from a vehicle; one burglary at a business premises; one theft of a cycle from a residential garden; one incident of youth-related anti-social behaviour
- Elm – one incident of theft from a vehicle; two incidents of suspected poaching; two non-dwelling burglaries
- Rings End – theft of railway sleepers from private land.

The Clerk also informed members that there are no emerging issues across the area covered by the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team. The only ongoing issue relates to thefts from vehicles.

For the second 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.

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

109/11 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.

Councillor Cotterell, one of the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that he is currently unaware of any specific District Council matters affecting the parish. He informed members, however, that the District Council's main area of focus currently is its budget for 2012/13.

Councillor Cotterell mentioned the Local Government Boundary Commission review of electoral wards in Fenland, the purpose of which is to equalise the number of electors per councillor in the district. The Clerk took the opportunity to remind members of the briefing session for local councils, to be delivered by representatives of the Boundary Commission, arranged for 24 January 2012 (7.00 pm at Fenland Hall, March).

Members decided that the information reported by District Councillor Cotterell be noted.

110/11 Highway issues

(1) Local Minor Highway Improvements scheme

Further to minute 96/11(1), the Clerk reported the response from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) with regard to:

- whether schemes for “stage two of the traffic calming on March Road, Fridaybridge” and “completion of the junction works at Elm High Road and Elm Low Road” would be valid applications under the Local Minor Highway Improvements scheme;
- the feasibility of introducing a one-way traffic system operating along Elm Low Road and the corresponding section of Elm High Road.

In its response, the LHA reminded the Parish Council that an officer from the Highways and Access Team met members of the Parish Council on 31 December 2009 to discuss the outstanding issues at the High Road/Low Road junction. Widening of the footpath was discussed; however, when the officer measured out the required width of carriageway which is needed and the amount of widening that could be achieved, it was decided by all that it was not worth undertaking any works (being mindful of the cost of such work and the minimal benefit that would be achieved).

The LHA makes the point that if the Parish Council wishes to see additional works at the High Road/Low Road junction and at March Road, Fridaybridge, applications could be made under the new Minor Highway Improvement scheme.

With regard to the suggestion of making Elm Low Road and Elm High Road into a one-way system, the Local Highway Authority comments that although this may seem a good idea, such an arrangement would increase vehicle speeds (as there would be no opposing traffic to slow vehicles down), cyclists are likely to ignore any signing (causing the possibility of head on collisions with other vehicles travelling in the correct direction) and it would add additional mileage to those living within the one-way system.

Members decided that

- (1) they no longer wish to pursue a one-way system for the High Road/Low Road, Elm;
- (2) an application be submitted, under the Local Minor Highway Improvements scheme, in respect of additional speed reduction measures on March Road, Fridaybridge;
- (3) no application be submitted, under the Local Minor Highway Improvements scheme, in respect of additional works to the High Road/Low Road junction.

(2) Salt bins

Further to minute 96/11 (3), the Clerk reported that the Local Highway Authority (LHA) has both removed the salt bin from the grassed area adjacent to the war memorial at Elm and sited it, instead, on the footpath adjacent to The Sportsman public house and provided and installed an additional salt bin, at a location agreed between the LHA and the Clerk, on Begdale Road.

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

111/11 Facilities for young people in the parish

Further to minute 78/11 (2), the Clerk reported that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council (FDC) is currently working with officers of Kier Anglia to achieve FDC's adoption of the area of open space off Grove Gardens, Elm and that he had suggested a meeting between himself and representatives of Elm Parish Council to discuss the provision of play equipment on this land.

Members decided that the current position regarding adoption by Fenland District Council of this area of land be noted and that arrangements be made, by the Clerk, for Councillors Brand, Rogers and Stokes and the Clerk to meet with the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council.

112/11 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 side extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of attached stores, at Stable Cottage, 135 March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/0981/F (applicant: Mrs E Hammond).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of 2 x 3-bed, two-storey dwellings, involving demolition of existing buildings, at Fern Cottage, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR11/0985/RM (applicant: Mr D Bell).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of four dwellings, involving the demolition of existing garage, on land north-west of 15 Overstone Drive, Coldham – F/YR12/0011/O (applicants: Mr and Mrs T Keeble).

That the application be supported, subject to the imposition of a planning condition requiring making up of Overstone Drive to adoptable standard prior to the occupation of any new dwellings.

(Councillor Brand declared his personal interest in this application by virtue of a friendship with the applicants)

(Councillor Mrs Johnson declared her personal interest in this application, by virtue of ownership and residency of a property at Overstone Drive, Coldham, and requested it be recorded that she abstained from voting)

113/11 Financial matters

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Concurrent functions grant – second instalment	£3,970.00
W Bailey and Son	Interment fee - Hathaway	£250.00
Grounds & Co.	Cottage rent (less fees)	£523.60
W Bailey and Son	Plot purchase and interment fee - Curtis	£600.00

Total Income		£5,343.60
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Expenditure

R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£588.80
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Membership renewal	£30.00
Mrs S Woodhouse	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 31 December 2011)	£100.00
Wisbech Youth Clubs	Financial support to Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (October to December 2011)	£2,135.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £111.80), Broadband and other expenses	£519.82
Total Expenditure		£3,373.62

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 December 2011 (in the total sum of £129,906.99), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2010.

Further to minute 21/11, the Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the third quarter of the 2011/12 financial year; he gave explanations as to variances between the estimated income and expenditure for the year and the actual levels of income and expenditure in the financial year to date.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £5,343.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,373.62 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 December 2011, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2010, be noted;
- (3) the financial information within the third quarter's management accounts be noted;
- (4) the level of financial information currently reported by the Clerk (both the monthly and quarterly reports) is sufficient to enable them to both make effective spending decisions and to understand the ongoing financial position of the Parish Council.

114/11 Identification of Rural Exception Sites

Further to minute 50/11 (2), the Clerk sought members' views as to whether Elm Parish Council should assist Roddons Housing Association in identifying suitable areas of land within the parish as potential Rural Exception Sites.

Members decided that, for a number of reasons, the Parish Council would not assist in the identification of potential Rural Exception Sites in the parish.

(Councillors Rogers and Stokes requested it be recorded that they abstained from voting on this item of business)

115/11 Elm Cemetery

The Clerk sought members' views, in the light of an enquiry from a local Funeral Director, as to whether the Parish Council should introduce a requirement for grave diggers to remove from Elm Cemetery the surplus soil following an interment.

Prior to undertaking of the earth moving works to extend the cemetery, this matter caused no difficulty; in fact, any surplus soil left at the cemetery was useful in helping to raise the level of the land. This is no longer the case.

Members decided that the Parish Council should require removal by grave diggers of any surplus soil following an interment and that the Clerk would inform local Funeral Directors of the situation.

116/11 Correspondence

(1) Chapel Lane, Elm – railings.

The Clerk reported an e-mail from a local resident concerning a missing section of railing on the boundary between Chapel Lane and the Pocket Park at Elm and his concern that, in the absence of such fencing, unauthorised vehicular access could be achieved to the Pocket Park.

Members decided that arrangements be made for the installation of a bollard, of similar design to those installed in recent months at The Leam (to prevent unauthorised parking), within the current gap in the railings at Chapel Lane, Elm.

(2) Queen's Diamond Jubilee - grant aid.

The Clerk reported a letter from Fenland District Council (FDC) inviting the Parish Council to apply for a grant of £1,000 being made available by FDC to contribute towards the cost of Diamond Jubilee celebrations within the parish.

Members are aware of arrangements being made by the Coldham Residents Action Group for a celebratory event in the village at which any resident of the parish would be welcome to attend.

Members decided that information be sought from the Coldham Residents Action Group in relation to the celebratory event that it is organising and that such information be used as the detail for application for the grant being offered by Fenland District Council.

(3) Parish Plans and the Shape Your Place website.

The Clerk reported an e-mail from Cambridgeshire ACRE, requesting the Parish Council's approval to providing a link to the Elm Parish Plan via the Shape Your Place (SYP) community website.

The purpose of providing access to parish plans via SYP would be to provide another way of:

- making parish plans (and the actions arising) visible to communities and public-sector partners
- enabling communities and partners to discuss the actions arising from their parish plan.

Members decided that the request from Cambridgeshire ACRE be approved.

117/11 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 21 February 2012, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.05 pm

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

Date:.....