

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

19 JULY 2016 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Davis, Hopkin and Patrick plus District Councillor Tanfield.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 June 2016 were confirmed and signed.

31/16 Open Forum

(1) Bar Drove, Elm

Further to minute 1/16, a parishioner enquired as to whether the Parish Council had received any update from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in relation to this matter and, if not, he offered to share with the council the information that he had obtained from the LPA.

In response to the Clerk stating that Elm Parish Council had received no information from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the parishioner informed the council that the LPA had served upon the land owner a Planning Contravention Notice; consequently, the LPA anticipates that the land owner would be submitting a planning application. The parishioner mentioned that the relevant officer at the LPA had indicated to him that the grant of planning permission would be unlikely.

Members decided that the information provided by the parishioner be noted.

(2) Gosmoor Lane, Elm – planning applications F/YR16/0543/F and F/YR16/0545/O

Mr G Edwards, of Swann Edwards Architecture, referred to planning applications F/YR16/0543/F and F/YR16/0545/O (considered subsequently by the council at minute 35/16) and reminded the council of its previous decision at minute 91/15 (at which it considered planning application F/YR15/0952/O) that it would consider favourably the proposal for the erection of 50 dwellings (max.) at 33 and land north of 17 – 31 Gosmoor Lane, Elm if the application were to be revised to include the gift of land to Elm Primary School to be used for the purpose of providing off-street parking facilities for parents to drop-off and collect pupils (with vehicular access to the land being from the proposed development).

Mr Edwards stated that, in accordance with the wishes of Elm Parish Council, an application had been submitted for the change of use of agricultural land to form school

car park on land east of Elm Children and Families Centre, Main Road, fronting Gosmoor Lane, Elm; that being F/YR16/0543/F.

Members decided that the comments of Mr Edwards be noted and taken into account when considering planning applications F/YR16/0543/F and F/YR16/0545/O at minute 35/16.

(3) Highway re-surfacing works at Coldham

A parishioner referred to re-surfacing works which had been undertaken by the Local Highway Authority recently at Coldham, commenting that no white lining works to the new surface had been undertaken. He expressed the opinion that the situation is dangerous, as motorists tend to cross the centre of the road on the s-bends.

In addition, the parishioner mentioned his understanding that re-surfacing works are planned for other sections of the B1101 (which are marked) between March and Coldham and enquired as to whether the council is aware of the date for such works.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and that the Clerk would draw to the attention of the relevant officer at the Local Highway Authority the comments of the parishioner regarding the absence of road markings on the re-surfaced section of carriageway and seek an update on the situation regarding any highway re-surfacing works planned for other parts of the B1101.

32/16 Members' Code of Conduct

The Clerk reminded members of the need for them to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council, via the Parish Clerk, any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

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

33/16 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 19/16 (1))

With regard to the provision/installation of benches at the new play area at Elm, Councillor Stokes enquired of Councillor Pinnock as to why he had not been invited to the site meeting regarding the matter. In response, Councillor Pinnock stated that no meeting in the context implied by Councillor Stokes had taken place; the fact of the matter is that he had received a telephone call from District Councillor Sutton who was in Elm and asked if Councillor Pinnock would be able to meet with him for a chat in Abington Grove.

At the meeting with Councillor Pinnock, District Councillor Sutton had confirmed a previously written e-mail that he had sent to Councillor Pinnock, which stated that RoSPA - Playsafety Ltd - recommends a minimum of 1.0 metre between the bench (es) and a fence. The meeting lasted only a few minutes.

Certain members believed that the 1.0 metre distance does not apply and Councillor Pinnock suggested that members should vote on the issue as they wished but he would

request that the Clerk record in the Minutes of this meeting his dissent from any agreement to a distance of less than 1.0 metre. Members agreed that the professional advice from RoSPA be followed.

Councillor Pinnock requested that the self-closing gate into the play area be adjusted so that it closes more slowly. The Chairman undertook to discuss this with contractor which installed the play equipment and associated fencing. Councillor Pinnock mentioned that he would making contact, on Friday of this week, with the contactor which would be undertaking the installation works regarding siting and installation of the benches.

The Chairman suggested that some form of “pathway”, perhaps rubber matting, be installed at the entrance to the play area.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk reminded members of his understanding that that Elm Parish Council’s application for funding from Fenland District Council’s Rural Capital Grants Fund towards the cost of this project had been approved by the Cabinet of that council on 26 May 2016 and he informed them that he is still awaiting formal notification from Fenland District Council of the amount of the financial allocation and the terms and conditions applying to such.

With regard to the funding application to WREN, the Clerk informed members that he would be able to complete and submit the application following his receipt of written confirmation from Fenland District Council (FDC) of the outcome of Elm Parish Council’s application for funding from FDC’s Rural Capital Grants Fund.

Members decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the Chairman would discuss with the contractor which had installed the play equipment at Elm the possible options (and costs) of providing a pathway into the play area and also request that the operation of the self-closing gate be checked (and adjusted if necessary) to ensure that its operation accords with any approved specification.

(2) Speeding across the parish (minute 19/16 (2))

Councillor Pinnock updated members on the operation of the Speed Watch scheme across the parish. He informed members that that Speed Watch activity continues and that for the period January 2016 to date just under 11,000 vehicles had been “clicked”, with 798 motorists reported to the Constabulary for exceeding the limit. This represents 7.2%. Unfortunately, the percentage of speeders in certain locations is higher, at between 9.1% and 11.9%. Indications are that speeds in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School are lower.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that the Constabulary had been very co-operative in supporting the activities of the Elm Parish Speed Watch group and that the leaflet which had been produced to recruit additional volunteers (which already appears on the Parish Council website and on all of its notice boards) would soon be circulated within the parish. In addition, he mentioned that The Speed Indicator Device (SID) is exhibiting an

intermittent fault which would be referred to the suppliers, as would the question of the tripod not having adjustable legs.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(3) Local Highway Improvements scheme 2016/17 (minute 25/16)

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Project Manager of the County Council's Highways Service who would be delivering the approved Local Highway Improvements schemes in Fenland on the Local Highway Authority's assessment of possible measures to improve highway safety in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School and the surrounding area.

The officers of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have concluded that it would be feasible to reduce to 30 mph the current 40 mph limit which operates between Fridaybridge and Elm. Although the LHA would not be supportive of the introduction of a variable speed limit in the vicinity of the school, it would be prepared to consider the introduction of an advisory 20 mph speed limit in that part of Elm.

It is the view of the LHA that to deliver the most effective speed reduction and to achieve compliance, traffic calming should be incorporated in the scheme. Experience shows that signage and road markings alone have minimal impact; horizontal features could work, depending upon traffic flows, but siting would be difficult near the school. Vertical features are the most effective form of speed reduction and work all the time, regardless of enforcement, therefore, protecting the playground and children visiting the school not only at normal school times. Any scheme would need to be the subject of formal consultation.

To enable a detailed discussion of possible options, the Project Manager of the County Council's Highways Service had suggested a further meeting be held – involving the Headteacher of Elm C of E Primary School, Councillor Pinnock, the Clerk to the Council, the Elm Parish Speed Watch Co-ordinator and he – with the aim of discussing the development of a co-ordinated scheme. Following consultation with the suggested invitees, a meeting had been arranged for 29 July 2016 (to commence at 10.00 am at Elm C of E Primary School).

Members decided that the situation be noted and they be updated at the next meeting of the Parish Council on progress in developing a traffic management proposal for Elm.

34/16 Police matters

No member of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team was present at the meeting and on this occasion no report had been received by the Clerk from PCSO Clarke; consequently, members received no information relating to recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, in relation to the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, since the last meeting of the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would raise with the Police Inspector for the District of Fenland the council's question as to whether there remains a PCSO who covers the parish and its concerns regarding the fact that recently there had been neither a PCSO presence at meetings of the council nor a report from the Constabulary on crime and disorder issues affecting the parish.

35/16 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 3-bed dwelling on land north of Blackberry Farm, Back Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0483/F (applicant: Mrs D Hutler).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a side extension to existing stable block on land north-west of 6 Bramley Court, Coldham – F/YR16/0510/F (applicant: Mr M Pilling).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a single-storey side extension and formation of pitched roof over flat roof element of existing dwelling at Amberleigh, 159 Gosmoor Lane, Elm – F/YR16/0527/F (applicant: Mrs Norgate).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Change of use of agricultural land to form school car park, involving the demolition of existing building, on land east of Elm Children and Families Centre, Main Road, fronting Gosmoor Lane, Elm – F/YR16/0543/F (applicant: S Ayers).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Erection of 50 dwellings (max.) involving the demolition of existing buildings (Outline application with some matters committed – Access) at 33 and land north of 17 – 31 Gosmoor Lane, Elm – F/YR16/0545/O (applicant: S Ayers).

Object to the application for the following reasons:

- *approval of the proposal would contribute, through cumulative impact of current and planned residential development, to overdevelopment of the village of Elm*
- *the current community infrastructure (including lack of capacity at Elm Primary School, insufficient medical facilities and inadequate local road network) is insufficient to support the continued development within the village*
- *approval of the proposal would be in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014).*

In addition, the Clerk reported the submission of an appeal against Fenland District Council's issue of an enforcement notice in relation to the stationing of a caravan and demolition of a barn at land west of The Coach House, Needham Bank, Fridaybridge and informed members of the opportunity to submit a representation to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to this matter.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that no representation be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

36/16 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Given the absence from the meeting of the County Councillor who represents the parish of Elm (Gordon Gillick), no report was received by the Parish Council in relation to current County Council issues.

Councillor Sutton, one of the two District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- the meeting at the new Elm play area had, as had been described by Councillor Pinnock (minute 33/16 (1) refers), had not been planned; it
- with regard to planning application F/YR16/0545/O, there is no capacity at Elm C of E Primary School to accommodate any children that would live at the new development; although not all of the pupils at the school are residents of the village, the school is full to capacity; this had been the situation for around 20 years
- Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan does not automatically prohibit the provision of additional residential units once the policy's threshold figure (10% in the case of Elm) is met; it is acceptable to continue to permit additional development provided that each of the development proposals receives community support
- he had no specific matters in relation to the parish to draw to the council's attention but would provide a brief update on the devolution proposal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. He mentioned that Cambridgeshire County Council and the five District Councils within the County had all agreed to support a devolution proposal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and a public consultation exercise is underway. He considers that, on balance, such a proposal would be beneficial for Fenland; the district would no longer receive in terms of funding "the crumbs from the table".

Members decided that the situation be noted.

37/16 Open spaces (including the cemetery) under the Parish Council's control

Further to minute 23/16, the Clerk informed members that the Chairman and he had undertaken a "walkabout" in the parish with a representative of the grounds maintenance contractor; it was made clear to the contractor's representative the quality of service that is expected by the council.

The Chairman expressed the opinion, with which there was concurrence by other members, that the trees (believed to be in the ownership of Cambridgeshire County Council) which overhang the entrance to the new play area on the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove and the B1101 could pose a danger to users of the play area and, therefore, a request should be made to the County Council for these trees to be cut back.

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from a resident of Henry Warby Avenue, Elm regarding an overgrown tree, which the resident believes may be in the council's ownership, on the boundary of his property, enquiring as to whether the tree could be felled.

Councillor Pinnock expressed the opinion that the tree, although located on the boundary of the cemetery and Henry Warby Avenue, is not in the ownership of the council and, if that is the case, the council should not meet the cost of any tree felling works. He offered to investigate ownership of this tree and to report to council on his findings.

Members decided that the situation in general be noted and that

- (1) the performance of the grounds maintenance contract continue to be monitored;
- (2) the Clerk would request Cambridgeshire County Council to arrange cutting-back of the trees which overhang the entrance to the new play area on the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove and the B1101;
- (3) Councillor Pinnock would investigate ownership of the overgrown tree and report to council on his findings.

38/16 Parish street lighting

Further to minute 104/15 (4), the Clerk informed members of the latest position in this matter.

District Councillor King, Cabinet member for Rural Affairs, had given an undertaking to meet again with Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks to discuss the results of the market testing which was being undertaken by officers at Fenland District Council (FDC) in relation to FDC's street lighting contract. Unfortunately getting like-for-like information had proved more difficult than had been anticipated; also, part way through that process, FDC had decided to incorporate the Comprehensive Spending Review decision to consider switching-off some of FDC's lights in the comparisons.

The process is, according to District Councillor King, now nearing completion and, consequently, he hopes to arrange a meeting with Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks in early August 2016.

The Clerk informed members that, having considered the latest correspondence from District Councillor King, the Parish Councils of Christchurch, Doddington, Manea, Wimblington and Wisbech St Mary had all agreed to await the outcome of Fenland District Council's tendering process before proceeding with the replacement of their respective Category 2 street lamps.

Members decided that Elm Parish Council would, like the other Parish Councils listed within this minute, await the outcome of Fenland District Council's tendering process before proceeding with replacement of the Category 2 street lights across the parish.

39/16 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
---------------	--------------------------	---------

Fenland District Council	Concurrent Functions Grant: first 50%	£2,653.00
Peter Barnes Funerals	Plot purchase and interment fee	£1,279.00
Richard King Memorials Ltd	Additional inscription	£99.00
Total Income		£4,524.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £15.20)	£91.20
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £263.58)	£1,581.47
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £155.38 and NI of £12.58) and reimbursement of expenses	£786.96
C Brennan	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 30 June 2016)	£100.00
Carter Accommodation Ltd	Collection of disabled toilet (includes VAT of £5.00)	£30.00
Total Expenditure		£2,589.63

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 June 2016 (in the total sum of £144,680.19), together with the figure as at 30 June 2015.

The Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the first quarter of the 2016/17 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 that financial year.

Further to minute 123 /14, the Clerk reported also that he had received an e-mail from Mr P Clark, the Community Greenspaces Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council, providing an update on the Friends of Rings End Nature Reserve project, in respect of which Elm Parish Council had earmarked the sum of £1,000 as a contribution towards the cost of that project.

Mr Clark makes the point, in his e-mail, that the grant offer from Elm Parish Council had formed part of a larger bid that the Friends group was making to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the purchase of a pedestrian mower that would assist the volunteers in managing the nature reserve; however, the application had been unsuccessful and, consequently, the Friends group is now submitting an application for funding from the Awards for All grants scheme. It is anticipated that the success (or otherwise) of the application should be known by the end of September 2016. The Friends of Rings End Nature Reserve have, therefore, requested the Parish Council to continue to reserve the sum of £1,000 as a contribution to this project.

.Members decided

- (1) that the income of £4,524.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,589.63 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 June 2016 and the position as at 30 June 2015 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £93,595.00) at 30 June 2016), the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 30 June 2016 was £51,085.19; making further allowance for a general contingency of £55,000 reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 30 June 2016 to approximately - £3,915.00;
- (4) that the financial information within the first quarter's management accounts be noted;
- (5) to note the update from the County Council's Community Green Spaces Manager in relation to the grants to the Rings End Nature Reserve project and to continue to hold the sum of £1,000 as an ear-marked reserve towards the cost of this project.

40/16 Correspondence

Charity fundraising

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the tenant of Cemetery Cottage, in which he informs the council that he would providing, as he did last year, a Christmas lights display at the cottage to raise money for charity.

The tenant informed the council of the charity for which he proposes raise money this year and invited the council to nominate a second charity to receive half of the money collected.

Members decided that the content of the e-mail be noted and that they would consider, at the next meeting of the council, the selection of a charity.

41/16 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 16 August 2016, to commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.10 pm

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

Date:.....