

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

21 SEPTEMBER 2010 – 6.30 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Hopkin and Rogers. An apology for absence was also received from County Councillor Mrs Tuck.

The minutes of the meeting of 24 August 2010 were confirmed and signed.

60/10 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.

Councillor Stokes made an amendment to his register entry.

61/10 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) The Leam, Elm (minute 50/10 (3))

The Chairman reported that the advice received from the Middle Level Commissioners is that chemicals should not be used as the means of ivy removal as there is no flow of water in the Leam to disperse any chemical that might find its way into the water. Consequently, the ivy removal must be undertaken manually.

The Clerk reported that, on being informed by the Chairman of this situation, he had obtained a quotation from a local contractor for the manual removal of this ivy; he informed members of the amount of this quotation.

Members decided

(1) to note the information reported;

(2) that an additional, comparative, quotation be obtained from another contractor;

(3) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lower of the two quotations.

(2) Elm Parish Council website (minute 50/10 (4))

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 has been purchased; the Clerk has produced some "biographical" details of the villages/settlements within the parish and has provided

- photographs of the areas for the front page of the site
- contact details for the members of the Parish Council
- recent agendas and minutes of Elm Parish Council meetings

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

(3) Bus Shelter at Coldham (minute 53/10)

The Chairman reported on the cost of two types of plaque, the highest cost (for one made of brass) being £28.

Members were reminded that they had agreed in principle, at minute 53/10, to meet 50% of the cost of the provision of a plaque on the bus shelter at Coldham.

Members decided that the Parish Council would support purchase, by CRAG, of a brass plaque, to bear the wording agreed at minute 53/10, and to meet 50% of the purchase cost.

62/10 Police matters

PC Julie Coales, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, attended the meeting to inform members of recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, namely:

- Coldham – two incidents of criminal damage in Overstone Road.
- Fridaybridge - thefts from vehicles, incidents of assault (involving foreign nationals) and one haystack Fire (at Maltmas Drove). Ms Coales stated that she would also be investigating the obstructive vehicle parking on Back Road, reported to her by the Clerk.
- Elm - thefts from vehicles and a small number of burglaries.

In addition, PC Coales informed members that the Constabulary is devoting resources across the County to addressing distraction burglaries; this includes providing crime prevention “education” to elderly and vulnerable members of society. She also mentioned the importance of local people engaging with the CrimeBUSTER initiative and expressed the hope that members of the Parish Council would help publicise the visits to villages within the parish by the CrimeBUSTER; at a time where all public-sector bodies are suffering funding reductions, there could be a case of “use it or lose it”.

Ms Coales responded to members’ questions.

Members decided to note

- (1) the information provided by Ms Coales;
- (2) that notices, produced by Fenland District Council, publicising the visits to villages within the parish by the CrimeBUSTER are placed, by the Clerk, on all of the village notice boards within the parish.

63/10 Community-led planning for Elm Parish

The Chairman reported that, due to illness, Mrs Wadsley of the Community Development Team at Fenland District Council had been unable to attend this meeting to update members on developments since minute 34/10.

Councillor Mrs Johnson took the opportunity of this item to achieve discussion by the Parish Council of the condition of the carriageway at Overstone Drive at Coldham, which is not at a standard at which the Local Highway Authority would undertake its adoption. Mrs Johnson stated that this matter had featured in a Coldham Village Plan but had not featured in the Elm Parish Plan. She asked that the Parish Council assists the residents of Overstone Drive in obtaining improvements to the carriageway.

Councillor Mrs Johnson stated that 68% of residents of Coldham agree that Overstone Drive should be brought up to adoptable standard. She expressed the view that the road is not safe for use by vehicles of the emergency services.

Members discussed at some length the likely legal position and responsibilities of the three tiers of local councils, the former developer and the residents.

Members took into account the comments made by the local resident at minute 70/10 (1).

Members decided that

- (1) the update report, from Mrs Wadsley, on the delivery of actions within the Elm Parish Plan be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council;
- (2) there is no action that could be taken by the Parish Council to achieve improvement of the condition of the carriageway at Overstone Drive, Coldham; it was suggested that residents of Overstone Drive obtain legal advice as to how this matter could be pursued.

64/10 Facilities for young people in the parish

Members decided that, given the absence of Councillor Rogers, who had requested the Parish Council's consideration of this matter, this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

65/10 Highway issues

(1) Hedgerows alongside the public highway

Further to minute 52/10 (2), the Clerk reported that the Local Highway Authority had issued an instruction for the hedge at the unoccupied property at Well End to be cut back and had arranged for overhanging vegetation letters to be sent to the relevant land owners in the Redmoor Lane/Redmoor Bank/Begdale Road area.

Members decided the situation be noted.

(2) 39 Main Road, Fridaybridge – access on to Back Road

Further to minute 52/10 (3), the Clerk reported that he had obtained confirmation from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) that KEEP CLEAR markings could be provided on Back Road for the sum of £150.00 and, consequently, given the decision of the Parish Council at minute 52/10 (2) in relation to this matter, he had both given instruction to the LHA to undertake this work and informed Mr Warby of the situation.

Members decided the situation be noted.

(3) B1101 through Coldham

Members mentioned the recent spate of accidents involving vehicles travelling along the B1101 through Coldham towards March. all attributable to vehicles being driven at excessive speeds.

Members explained that the primary stretch of road involved is between the junction of Station Road with the B1101 and Union Cottages. Fortunately, there were no injuries, only damage to vehicles and property. Members, however, feel that it is only a matter of time before a local resident is injured, or even killed, by a speeding motorist along this stretch of road.

Because of the recent accidents involving speeding motorists, members consider that the Local Highway Authority should be requested to consider the implementation of appropriate measures to reduce vehicle speeds along the B1101, particularly through the village of Coldham.

Although the Parish Council is aware that the County Council is currently experiencing particularly difficult circumstances financially, it feels that a request for the implementation of measures which will improve public safety, and possibly prevent injury and save lives, should be taken very seriously by agencies which have the ability to deliver a solution to the problem.

Members decided that a letter be sent to the Local Highway Authority, with a copy being sent to the Leader of the County Council, requesting that it considers the implementation of appropriate measures to reduce vehicle speeds along the B1101, particularly through the village of Coldham.

66/10 Parish council office and adjoining land – maintenance and security

The Chairman expressed his concern that internal condition of this building would deteriorate unless it were heated during the winter and a ventilation system were installed.

In addition, members were unclear as to any arrangements in place for cleaning of the interior of the building.

Members felt that painting of the security fencing around the office building and the playing field would improve its visual appearance. The Clerk suggested that it may be worth approaching the local Community Payback Team to undertake this work.

Councillor Cotterell presented a letter of “resignation” from the local resident who had, until recently, locked and unlocked daily the outer security gates to the office and playing field area. Members considered what action to take in future in the light of these circumstances.

Members feel that clearing of the dykes at the playing field would be beneficial but were not aware, following retirement of the previous Clerk, of the arrangements in this regard.

Members decided that

- (1) the Clerk would seek to identify suitable ventilation systems for the office building and ascertain from the former Clerk what arrangements were in place for cleaning out the dykes at the playing field and, if any, for cleaning of the interior of the building;
- (2) the Clerk would seek to engage the services of the Community Payback Team to undertake the painting of the security fencing;
- (3) the outer gates to the office and playing field area would no longer be locked, unless such action resulted in vandalism/damage to the area; in such circumstances, this decision would be reviewed.

67/10 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 a4-bed detached house with integral garage on land north of Florence House, Back Road, Friday Bridge – F/YR10/0589/F (applicant: Mr B Dove).*

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a detached double garage with store over at Elm Manor, Main Road, Elm - F/YR10/0601/F (applicant: Mr P Blackmore).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a single-storey side extension, porch to front and car park to side of existing dwelling at "At Last", Low Road, Elm - F/YR10/0621/F (applicant: Mr J Johnson).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Erection of a two-storey extension to side and conservatory to rear of existing dwelling at "East View", 99 Friday Bridge Road, Elm - F/YR10/0627/F (applicant: Mr P Murray).

That the application be supported.

M68/10 Finance

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

Income

Richard King Memorials	Cremated remains tablet – Roy Green	£100.00
Total Income		£100.00

Expenditure

Fenland District Council	Replacement of street light FPC4 - Coldham	£1,056.36
Hc solicitors	Legal advice regarding The Leam	£857.83
Elm Friendship Club	Donation – September to December 2010	£112.00
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax – July and August 2010	£252.67
Watson	Diesel for tractor	£185.87
Buildbase	Gravel and mortar – The Leam	£16.97
M Hartigan	Grounds maintenance works	£612.49
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £114.04), Broadband and other expenses)	£531.14
Total Expenditure		£3,625.33

Members decided that the income of £100.00 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,625.33 be authorised.

69/10 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minute 56/10, the Clerk reported on the latest position regarding the tenancy of this property.

The Clerk informed members that the tenant had vacated the property on 17 September 2010, as agreed by the Parish Council at minute 56/10, and that he is now in possession of the keys. He reported a request from the tenant for re-payment of the tenancy deposit.

Members decided, having regard for all of the relevant factors (i.e. the legal and tenancy advice reported by the Clerk, the condition of the property at the time of the tenant's departure and the decision that had been reached previously with regard to writing-off the tenant's rent arrears), that the tenancy deposit be re-paid.

(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))

70/10 Open Forum

(1) Overstone Drive, Coldham

Councillor Mrs Johnson invited a resident of Coldham to explain his understanding of the background to the current situation in relation to the unadopted state of the carriageway and the results of his investigations into possible measures to address that situation.

The local resident expressed the view that the residents of Overstone Drive are faced with the current situation because of an error made by the former Wisbech Rural Council in not requiring a financial bond which could be used to provide a road to adoptable standard in the event that the developer failed to do so.

The resident detailed his investigations into the legal aspects of the matter, such as seeking to establish which company, body or organisation acquired the assets of the development company when it went into liquidation in the 1970s.

Members decided to note the information and opinions presented by the local resident, which they took into account when discussing this matter at minute 63/10.

(2) Cemetery maintenance

The former Cemetery grounds person, Mr C Drew, informed members that he had been approached by the Chairman to undertake this work again. He detailed the nature of the discussion with the Chairman of the Parish Council and informed members of the terms under which he would be prepared to return to his former role.

Members decided to note the comments made and opinions expressed by Mr Drew and agreed to take them into account when discussing grounds maintenance across the parish and in Elm Cemetery (minute 71/10 refers).

71/10 Grounds maintenance across the parish and in Elm Cemetery

Further to minute 50/10 (5), the Chairman reported on the current situation in relation to the grounds maintenance across the parish and in Elm Cemetery. He explained that, as result of a discussion with the new part-time, seasonal grounds person, he had contacted the former Cemetery grounds person to see whether he would be interested in returning to his former role.

The Chairman explained the nature of his discussions with both individuals and the reason for the approach now being taken.

Members discussed issues in relation to the quality of the grounds maintenance required by the Parish Council and measures to achieve the standards sought.

In reaching their decision, members had regard for the comments made and opinions expressed by the former Cemetery grounds person at minute 70/10 (2), as well as the workload capacity of the part-time seasonal grounds person.

Members decided that

- (1) the Chairman would invite the former Cemetery grounds person to return to his former role, on the terms now agreed by the Parish Council;
- (2) the Clerk would meet with the part-time seasonal grounds person to agree working practices for the grounds maintenance across the parish of Elm (but excluding the Cemetery), with the aim of ensuring that the standards required by the parish Council can be achieved;
- (3) the effectiveness of the new arrangements be monitored, for further revision if necessary.

(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 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended))

72/10 Correspondence

- (1) War Memorials Trust Bulletin: August 2010.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest Bulletin.

Members decided that receipt of this document by the parish Council be noted.

- (2) Neighbourhood Engagement Structure in Fenland.

Further to minute 58/10 (4), the Clerk reported that the Parish Council has been invited by Fenland District Council to appoint a representative to serve upon the panel within the new Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum, which has its first meeting at the Queen Mary Centre in Wisbech on 29 November 2010.

Members decided that Councillor Brand be appointed to represent Elm Parish Council on the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Forum and that Councillor Mrs Johnson be appointed to act as substitute for Councillor Brand when necessary.

- (3) Cambridgeshire County Council's Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) – results of informal consultation exercise.

The Clerk presented briefly the results of this informal consultation exercise and informed members that a formal consultation exercise will be undertaken between 9 September and 29 October 2010.

Members decided that the information reported be noted and that the document detailing the results of the informal consultation exercise be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

(4) Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Local Development Framework – consultation on Core Strategy.

The Clerk reported briefly on the content of this consultation document, which invites the submission of representations between 1 September and 13 October 2010.

Members decided that, given the fact that none of the proposals within the document relate to any of the villages settlements within the parish of Elm, they had no representations to make to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk in respect of the proposed changes to its Core Strategy.

(5) Registration of land.

The Clerk reported an invitation from the Land Registry for the Parish Council to undertake the voluntary registration of its land and property.

The Clerk informed members that, upon receipt of this invitation, he had sought further information from the Land Registry in relation to the estimated cost and work involved in this process. The Land Registry (LR) has advised that the likely cost to the Parish Council would be around £40.00 and the work involved would be the completion of an application form and for LR to view the deeds for the Parish Council's land and property.

Members decided that registration of the Parish Council's land and property be undertaken, the Clerk being authorised to complete the necessary documentation etc in relation to this matter.

73/10 Gate at Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge

The Chairman reported a quotation for replacement of a gate at Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge.

Some members were unsure as to whether such work is necessary.

Members decided that the situation would be assessed by Councillor Softley before any further action is taken.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to enable any works to be undertaken without undue delay)

74/10 Next meeting

Members decided that the next meeting of the Parish Council be held on 19 October 2010, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Pavilion, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm

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

Date:.....