

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

16 AUGUST 2011 – 6.30 pm.

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

**In attendance:** District Councillor Sutton and County Councillor Mrs Tuck (until 7.55 pm).

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs Lankfer and Webb.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2011 were confirmed and signed, subject to addition of the word "alleged" in the first line of the final paragraph of minute 26/11(3) to read "The Clerk informed members of a recent alleged incident of intimidation...."

### 37/11 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.

### 38/11 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

#### (1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 26/11 (1))

Councillor Rogers reported that Councillor Stokes had indicated that he wished to be a member of the action group which would progress the overall requirement of play provision for all ages and consider the associates issues (including suitable locations, funding etc).

In addition, Councillor Rogers informed members that he would be meeting with representatives of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club to discuss the wider community issue of recreational and leisure provision for young people in the parish. He would also arrange to meet with the appropriate representative of Cambridgeshire ACRE for further advice in relation to consultation and funding processes.

Although members consider that a potential site for both a skateboard park and an equipped play area would be the open space area off Grove Gardens (which is not in the ownership of Elm Parish Council), they feel that further information is required as to the planning and ownership status of this land.

Members decided that

(1) the information reported by Councillor Rogers be noted and that further updates be given at future meetings;

(2) the Clerk would seek from Fenland District Council information in relation to the planning and ownership status of the open space area off Grove Gardens.

(2) Elm Cemetery (minute 26/11 (3))

The Clerk reported on the observations and conclusions of the members who had inspected the cemetery on 2 August 2011 (between 6.00 pm and 7.10 pm). Members in attendance at the inspection were Councillors Brand, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Pinnock, Stokes and Tilney (apologies were received from Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell and Rogers).

The primary purposes of the cemetery inspection were to enable the Parish Council to:

- view the extension works that had been undertaken
- examine both the re-surfacing works carried out to the roadway and the extension of the water supply (including the provision of an additional tap)
- assess the quality and amount of the grounds maintenance work being carried out under the new arrangements
- identify any additional works that members feel may be required to maintain/develop the facility
- assess any health and safety risks to visitors to the cemetery and to the Parish Council's contractors and employees.

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the members present at the inspection had

1. expressed their satisfaction with the extension works;
2. expressed their satisfaction with the current standard of grounds maintenance work being carried out at the cemetery;
3. noted that the Clerk had obtained quotations from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for both the annual cutting of the hedges at the cemetery and for cultivating and seeding the new extension and decided that these issues be considered at 16 August 2011 meeting of Elm Parish Council;
4. expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the roadway re-surfacing works and extension of the water supply but "flagged up" the possibility of the surfacing becoming slippery in times of frosty weather conditions; the situation will be monitored and appropriate action taken to address the problem if it occurs;
5. decided that no action be taken to replace the type of tap at this time but the situation be monitored; if there becomes a situation whereby users fail regularly to turn off the tap, the matter would be re-considered;
6. supported the action taken by Councillor Stokes regarding the engagement of a local carpenter to construct and install a box to enclose the new water tap (in its current location);
7. noted that the Clerk had obtained quotations from the Parish Council's skip supplier in relation to the provision of alternative sizes of skip and frequencies of emptying and decided that the information from skip supplier be considered at 16 August 2011 meeting of Elm Parish Council;
8. identified no current health and safety risks to visitors to the cemetery or to the Parish Council's contractors and employees;
9. decided that the cemetery should be inspected formally by the Parish Council on at least an annual basis, to ensure that a formal risk assessment regime is in place;
10. noted and supported the intention of Councillor Pinnock to inspect (not from a health and safety perspective) the cemetery on a weekly basis.

With regard to 3 above, the Clerk reported the quotations from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for both the annual cutting of the hedges at the cemetery and for cultivating and seeding the new extension.

In connection with 7 above, the Clerk reported the quotations from the Parish Council's skip supplier in relation to the provision of alternative sizes of skip and frequencies of emptying.

The current annual cost of skip provision at the cemetery is £620 plus VAT. By using wheeled bins (1,100 litre or 660 litre capacity with more frequent emptying than the current skip), the Parish Council's costs would be either £390 plus VAT or £520 plus VAT.

Members decided that

- (1) the content of the report from the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the quotation from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for the annual cutting of the hedges at the cemetery (at £450.00 per annum) be accepted and that this activity be added to the current grounds maintenance contract;
- (3) no action be taken at this time regarding cultivation and seeding of the new extension to the cemetery;
- (4) at the time of the current 8 cubic yard enclosed skip needing to be emptied, it be replaced with a 1,100 litre wheelie bin (to be emptied on a fortnightly basis). If this, however, proves not to be sufficient, a 660 litre bin be used (to be emptied on a weekly basis).

### (3) Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge (minute 33/11 (2))

The Clerk reported on the additional information that he had received from Cambridgeshire ACRE as to the benefits of this initiative for the community of Elm parish.

Cambridgeshire ACRE has stated that the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge offers the following benefits:

- Protection of the land – once a field becomes a Queen Elizabeth II Field, the land is protected in perpetuity, meaning that it cannot be sold or compulsorily purchased; the protection is by way of a Deed of Dedication; there may well be pressure applied to local authorities in the future to sell or use for other purposes any field which does not benefit from protection.
- Funding – once becoming a Queen Elizabeth II Field, the Parish Council would be eligible for BIFFA Funding and, in the future, funders will be looking for security of tenure before awarding grant funding; by having Queen Elizabeth II Field status, funders are assured that their investment will be well used and not lost if the field ceased to exist in a few years time.

Members decided that, as there is no land that they wish to protect permanently as a playing field, the Parish Council would not make a nomination under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

### 39/11 Police matters

PCSO Martin Bogunovic, 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 of crime and disorder.
- Fridaybridge – two incidents of criminal damage, one to a garden wall and gate and the other involving a motor vehicle.
- Elm – arrest of a person found to be going equipped to undertake burglaries; sightings of suspicious van in the area believed to be involved in metal thefts in rural areas; one incident of anti-social behaviour outside the Elm Tree public house.

The PCSO also informed members of emerging and ongoing issues across the area covered by the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team. He reported that there are currently no new crime trends in the parish of Elm and that the trends experienced previously in relation to vehicle crime had ceased.

PCSO Bogunovic responded to members' questions on his report.

Members raised two issues which PCSO Bogunovic undertook to investigate, as follows:

- a dog which roams loose in the Station Rd area at Coldham.
- a vehicle which is often vehicle parked adjacent to the traffic island in Fridaybridge.

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

#### **40/11 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish**

Councillor Mrs Tuck, the County Councillor for the parish of Elm, reported on matters of relevance to the local community, as follows:

- (1) Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative – Councillor Mrs Tuck explained this project, which involves the County Council replacing, over a five years period, all of the street lamps across Cambridgeshire with ones which both reduce energy costs and improve night-time vision.

Councillor Mrs Tuck informed members that, under this initiative, local councils would be given the opportunity to replace street lighting which they own with the improved method of illumination.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Mrs Tuck be noted.

- (2) Bus services – Councillor Mrs Tuck reminded members that, as a result of reductions in County Council budgets, subsidies paid in respect of a number of bus routes had been withdrawn in the current financial year, with a view to placing a greater emphasis upon supporting and developing community transport schemes, and that a project is currently underway to develop alternative public transport provision for rural communities.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Mrs Tuck be noted.

- (3) Winter maintenance – Councillor Mrs Tuck suggested that the Parish Council should give thought to preparations for the forthcoming winter season, such as providing salt bins and assisting with certain winter maintenance activities.

Members decided that the comments made by Councillor Mrs Tuck be noted.

Councillor Cotterell, one of the District Councillors for the parish of Elm, drew members' attention to the consultation exercise in relation to the Fenland Communities Development Plan Core Strategy (minute 44/11 (3) refers), recommending that members attend one of the consultation workshops - invitations from Fenland District Council had been circulated to members by the Clerk – and making the point that both Elm and Fridaybridge are shown in the consultation document as Limited Growth Villages, where a small amount of development and service provision will be permitted to support their continued sustainability.

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

Councillor Sutton, the other District Councillor for the parish of Elm, mentioned the requirement of the Environment Agency for the registration (by December 2011) of septic tanks and the consequent need for many local people to be made aware of this situation.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Sutton be noted and that the Clerk be requested to seek to achieve the attendance, at a future meeting, of an appropriate representative of the Environment Agency (EA) to explain the details of the registration scheme and EA's proposals for publicity in that regard.

#### 41/11 Highway issues

##### (1) Highway safety in Elm

Further to minute 29/11 (2), the Clerk reported that, following its assessment of the situation regarding the possibility of implementing measures to reduce the potential for accidents at the Halfpenny Lane junction, the Local Highway Authority proposes to install a junction ahead sign and a bend warning sign on the approach from the March to Wisbech direction.

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

##### (2) B1101 at Elm

Further to minute 29/11 (4), the Clerk read to members an e-mail from the resident of Main Road, Elm, in which he expresses his thanks for the support of the Parish Council in this matter and attaches a copy of the response from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) in relation to his letter (which was read to members at minute 29/11 (4)) concerning the current condition of a specific section of the B1101 carriageway at Elm.

The Clerk read to members the Local Highway Authority's letter of response to the local resident. To address the residents' concerns, the LHA proposes to arrange the painting of SLOW markings on the carriageway on the approaches to the area of concern and to seek to obtain funding for the next financial year to undertake highway re-surfacing works in that area.

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

#### 42/11 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 two polytunnels on land north of Newsham Farm, March Road, Rings End – F/YR11/0550/F (applicant: Mr D Crockford).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of a 4-bed single-storey dwelling on land north of Newsham Farm, March Road, Rings End – F/YR11/0551/F (applicant: Mr D Crockford).

*That the application be supported.*

- (3) Erection of a house on land west of 4 Wales Bank, Elm – F/YR11/0579/O (applicant: Mr P J Mcfarlane).

*That the application be supported.*

- (4) Erection of 5 x 5-bed, three-storey dwellings with attached double garages on land west of Townfield House, Low Road, Elm - F/YR11/0591/F (applicant: Mr J Lock).

*Object to the application for the following reasons:*

- the site lies outside of the Development Area Boundary for the village of Elm
- the access road is inadequate to serve the traffic likely to be generated by the residential development of this site
- the nature of the proposed development, being of three-storey design, would be out of character with existing residential development in the area
- the residential development of this site would result in the irreversible loss of high grade agricultural land.

(Councillors Cotterell and Mrs Cotterell declared their respective personal and prejudicial interest in this application, by virtue of ownership of land adjoining the application site, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

- (5) Formation of a vehicular access (retrospective) at Beech Cottages, 128 Fridaybridge Road, Elm – FYR11/0608/F (applicant: Mr M Warby).

*That the application be supported.*

#### **43/11 Finance**

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

#### **Income**

M J Coates	Memorial inscription	£60.00
Grounds & Co.	Cottage rent (less fees)	£524.00
H M Revenue and Customs	VAT refund up to 31 July 2011	5,001.57
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£5,585.57</b>

#### **Expenditure**

R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,592.41
Latta Hire Limited	Hire of disabled toilet for Coldham Village Fun Day	£186.00
Hundred of Wisbech IDB	Agricultural land drainage rates	£58.18
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £111.80), Broadband and other expenses)	£549.82
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£2,386.41</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2011 (in the total sum of £117,427.83), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months.

Further to minute 32/11, the Clerk provided members with information in relation to the Parish Council's allotments; this information included: the locations and acreage of each of the allotments; the number of allotments at each of the locations; the annual rental fee per allotment; the total annual income for each of the locations; comparative fees charged by another local council in the district; the fact that, because of statutory notice requirements, any increase in allotment rents could not take no earlier that October 2012

Members, having considered the information reported by the Clerk, are in no doubt that there is a need to increase the allotment rents, which had not been reviewed since October 1985, but wish to give further thought to the level of increase which should be applied. Members undertook to give further thought to the matter between this meeting and the next one.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £5,585.57 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,386.41 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2011, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months, be noted;
- (3) a decision in relation to allotment rents be deferred to the next meeting.

#### **44/11 Section 106 Planning Agreement monies relating to the parish of Elm**

Members decided that this item of business be deferred to the next meeting, to enable the Clerk to obtain from Fenland District Council information in relation to:

- what monies are available
- which body is holding the money and by which body can it be spent
- for what purpose(s) is the money provided.

#### **45/11 Correspondence**

- (1) East of England Ambulance Service.

Further to minute 23/11 (4), the Clerk read to members a letter of thanks from the East of England Ambulance Service in relation to the financial support provided by the Parish Council, which funded the purchase of a Pulse Oximeter, for use by the Community First Responders group which covers the parish of Elm.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

- (2) Annual Coldham Village Fun Day.

Further to minute 33/11 (4), the Clerk reported an e-mail of thanks from the Secretary of the Coldham Residents Action Group Ltd (CRAG) for the Parish Council meeting the cost of hiring disabled toilet facilities for the Annual Coldham Village Fun Day, which took place on 13 August 2011.

The Secretary of CRAG made the point in his e-mail that, despite the poor weather at times, the event was well attended and felt to have been successful.

Members decided that the content of the e-mail be noted.

(3) Fenland Communities Development Plan Core Strategy and Statement of Community Involvement.

The Clerk reported to members on Fenland District Council's consultation exercises in relation to its draft Communities Development Plan Core Strategy and its Statement of Community Involvement; both exercises operate for the period 29 July to 23 September 2011.

The Fenland Communities Development Plan establishes the overall framework for growth and development in the district up to the year 2031 and sets out a number of draft policies in that regard.

The Statement of Community Involvement details the ways in which Fenland District Council consults with the public on a wide range of planning matters.

The information provided by Fenland District Council explains the methods by which members of the public and other interested parties are able to both access the documents and submit comments as part of the consultation processes.

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

(4) Preparation for the winter season 2011/12.

The Clerk reported a letter from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the ways that local councils are able to assist in delivery of the winter maintenance, such as the purchase of grit bins and participating in treating more of the footway network within their communities.

Members are aware that they have considered these issues previously (minutes 108/10 (3), 113/10 and 141/10 refer) and have, consequently, purchased five grit bins for use across the parish.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that currently no further action on the part of the Parish Council is necessary in this matter.

(5) Britain in Bloom.

The Clerk reported a letter from the Royal Horticultural Society detailing its Britain in Bloom campaign.

The letter suggests that this campaign helps local authorities to improve, through action by volunteers, public spaces. It adds that over 2,100 groups across the UK are involved in the Britain in Bloom campaign; in the majority of cases these groups work in partnership with their local councils.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted

(6) King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Local development Plan Core Strategy.

The Clerk reported to members on the adoption of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy contains strategic policies covering the period 2011 to 2026 and replaces relevant parts of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan (adopted in 1998).

Adoption of the Core Strategy took place, following a consultation exercise and a subsequent Public Examination undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate, on 28 July 2011.

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



**46/11 Begdale Road playing field - security**

The Chairman reported that due to the forthcoming holiday (for the period 28 August to 9 September 2011 inclusive) of the local resident who locks and unlocks the security gates at the Begdale Road playing field, it is necessary to consider the continuation of this activity during her absence. He informed members that this resident had provisionally made arrangements, subject to the Parish Council's approval, for another local resident to provide this service in her stead.

Under this arrangement, the gates would be locked slightly earlier in the evenings for the period 28 August to 9 September 2011.

Members decided that the temporary revised security arrangements, as detailed above, be approved and that the Clerk would inform potential users of the playing field, via a notice at the site, of the revised opening hours for the period of 28 August to 9 September 2011.

*(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency because of the need for a decision prior to 28 August 2011)*

**47/11 Next meeting**

Members decided that the next meeting be scheduled for 21 (instead of 20) September 2011, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.40 pm**

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

Date:.....