

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

22 NOVEMBER 2011 – 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell (until 7.55 pm), Mrs Cotterell (until 7.55 pm), Mrs Johnson, Mrs Lankfer, Pinnock, Rogers and Stokes.

**In attendance:** District Councillor Sutton.

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs Hopkin, Softley, Tilney and Webb plus County Councillor Mrs Tuck.

The minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2011 were confirmed and signed.

### 76/11 Open Forum

#### Incidents of theft at Elm Cemetery

A number of members of the public attended the meeting to both express their concern regarding the incidents of theft of flowers and other items from graves at Elm Cemetery and to ascertain from the Parish Council, as owner of the cemetery, what action it would take to address the situation.

The members of the public stated that the thefts had been reported to the Police and information had been given to the local newspapers. They informed members of the distress that these thefts cause the families of the deceased.

One of the members of the public made reference to e-mail correspondence that had been sent to the Chairman of the Council and the Clerk.

These members of the public would like to see the Parish Council consider the installation of CCTV cameras at Elm Cemetery as a means of deterring thefts from graves.

One of the members of the public also mentioned the need for levelling/topping some of the graves in the cemetery following ground settlement after interment had taken place.

Members decided that

- (1) the feasibility of installing a CCTV system at Elm Cemetery be investigated; advice to be sought from Fenland District Council in this regard;
- (2) the Clerk would obtain, from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor, a quotation for grave levelling/topping works at Elm Cemetery.

### 77/11 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.

## 78/11 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

### **(1) Speed limit on March Road, Coldham (minute 61/11 (2))**

The Clerk reported on his discussions with officers of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) regarding the feasibility of the Parish Council making application, under the LHA's new local speed limits policy, for extension (further towards March) of the existing 40 mph speed limit which applies to part of March Road, Coldham.

In response to the Clerk's enquiry, the LHA has stated that the new speed limit policy applies only speed limits within settlements and not lengths of rural roads between settlements; also, according to the LHA, experience and research shows that reducing speed limits does not, in itself, usually achieve lower vehicle speeds or reduce accidents.

Members expressed their concern at the stance being taken by the County Council in this matter.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the County Councillor for the parish, Councillor Mrs Tuck, be requested to challenge the stance being taken by the County Council in this matter.

### **(2) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 63/11 (1))**

The Clerk reported on the response from Fenland District Council (FDC) in relation to the feasibility of a joint Parish and District Council approach to developing the equipped play area off Grove Gardens (once the site has been adopted by FDC).

Fenland District Council has stated that it would support such a joint approach but is unable to contribute financially towards the cost of upgrading the play equipment on this site. The District Council makes the point that the Parish Council would need to undertake a consultation exercise and has indicated that it would assist in this process where possible. FDC has committed to making efforts over the coming weeks to achieve adoption of the open space land.

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

### **(3) Appointment to Elm Centre Management Committee (minute 69/11)**

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

Members decided that, given the absence of a number of members of the Parish Council from the meeting, this matter be deferred to the next meeting of Elm Parish Council.

## 79/11 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 theft of scrap metal and an electricity generator.
- Fridaybridge – two garden and shed burglaries.

- Elm – one incident of theft from a vehicle; one incident of criminal damage; one incident of theft from the scout camp; one attempted dwelling burglary; one minor incident of youth-related anti-social behaviour; one incident of anti-social behaviour; two reports of poaching; two thefts of flowers and other items from graves at the cemetery.

The Clerk also informed members of emerging and ongoing issues across the area covered by the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team. The most significant emerging issue is thefts of metal, which is occurring across all rural districts.

With regard to ongoing issues, thefts of flowers and other items from graves at Elm Cemetery are continuing. The Police have given these incidents wide publicity via the local newspapers and radio stations and through officers conducting door-to-door enquiries of all properties which overlook the cemetery. In addition, warning notices have been affixed to the cemetery gates.

Members considered whether the Parish Council also should issue a press release in relation to the thefts from the cemetery – Councillor Pinnock had produced a draft press release for members' consideration – but did not consider it to be an appropriate course of action at this time.

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

### **80/11 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish**

Given the absence from the meeting of 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 District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that they are currently unaware of any specific District Council matters affecting the parish. They informed members, however, that the District Council's main area of focus currently is its budget for 2012/13.

Members decided that the information reported by District Councillors Cotterell and Sutton be noted.

### **81/11 Highway issues**

#### **(1) Abington Grove, Elm – street lighting**

Further to minute 53/11, Councillor Pinnock reported that the new street lamp installed at Abington Grove is still not working.

Members decided that the Clerk would pursue the matter with the Street Lighting Team at the County Council.

#### **(2) Salt bins**

Further to minutes 108/10 (2) and 141/10, the Clerk reported that the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is now seeking confirmation as to the desired locations for the five salt bins purchased by the Parish Council.

The Clerk reminded members of the locations suggested by the Parish Council to the LHA at minute 108/10 (2) and of the opportunity to revise those locations due to the fact that siting of the bins had not yet taken place (minute 141/10 refers).

Members decided that the locations for the Parish Council's five salt bins be those suggested to the Local Highway Authority (LHA) at minute 108/10 (2) and that the Clerk would seek to encourage the LHA to arrange siting of the bins as a matter of priority.

## 82/11 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 an extension and fence enclosed sub-station to rear of existing agricultural building on land south of Everglens, Outwell Road, Elm – F/YR11/0830/F (applicant: Mr K Lawrence).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of a 5-bed detached house, involving demolition of existing outbuildings on land east of Soffitts, Halfpenny Lane, Elm – F/YR11/0839/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs M Gower).

*That the application be supported.*

*(Councillor Rogers declared his personal and prejudicial interest in this application, by virtue of ownership of adjoining land and property, and retired from the meeting for the discussion and voting thereon)*

- (3) Erection of an attached garage to existing dwelling at Fen Lodge, Back Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR11/0848/F (applicant: Mr J Stratton).

*That the application be supported.*

- (4) The felling of 4 x Elders, 1 x Silver Birch, 1 x Sequoia, 1 x Cedar and works to 1 x Norway Maple, 1 x Hazel, 1 x English Oak, 2 x Holm Oaks, 1 x Beech, 3 x Silver Birches, 1 x Mulberry, 1 x Yew, 1 x Irish Yew, 2 x Apples, 1 x Scots Pine, 1 x Lime and 2 x Cherries within a Conservation Area at The Limes, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR11/0857/TRCA (applicant: Mr R O'Conner).

*That the application be supported.*

- (5) Erection of one wind generator (14.97 metres to hub) on land west of 19 Crooked Bank, Wisbech – F/YR11/0866/F (applicant: Mr S Hiland).

*That the application be supported.*

## 83/11 Finance

### Income

J P Smith	Allotment rent	£1,312.50
A Fitzjohn	Allotment rent	£1,575.00
D Bates	Allotment rent	£187.50
Grounds & Co.	Cottage rent (less fees)	£524.00
A R Clingo	Interment fee	£125.00
A R Clingo	Ashes plot purchase and interment fee	£470.00
Richard King Memorials	New memorial	£135.00

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Richard King Memorials	New memorial	£135.00
Hanchets	New memorial	£270.00
Kent Memorials	Memorial inscription	£60.00
Richard King Memorials	Memorial inscription	£60.00
Richard King Memorials	Memorial inscription	£60.00
W Bailey and Son	Interment fee	£125.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£5,274.00</b>

### **Expenditure**

Smith of Derby	Repairs to clock face at Fridaybridge Clock tower	£542.40
Glazewing	Emptying of skip at Elm Cemetery	£186.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £141.99), Broadband and other expenses	£703.73
Dewdene Management Ltd	Pavement works at Coldham	£1,074.00
Elm Friendship Club	Donation – October 2011 to March 2012	£168.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£2,674.13</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2011 (in the total sum of £129,569.35), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £5,274.00 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,674.13 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2011, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months, be noted.

### **84/11 Parish Council Standing Orders: Resolutions Moved on Notice**

Further to minute 73/11, members considered inclusion of a provision for "Resolutions Moved on Notice" within the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

The wording of the proposed additional Standing Order had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

Members supported the suggestion of Councillor Stokes that the wording of part 6 of the proposed Standing Order be amended to read "Every resolution or recommendation shall be relevant to a matter over which the Council has power or duties affecting its area".

Members decided that the provision for "Resolutions Moved on Notice", as set out in the Appendix to these minutes, be included within the Standing Orders of Elm Parish Council.

### **85/11 Elm Cemetery – rules and memorials**

Councillor Pinnock informed members of his concerns regarding the sizes of a number of the memorials at Elm Cemetery and the impact that the situation, if allowed to continue, could have upon the availability of grave space in the cemetery. He gave details of the measurements of some of these large memorials, which exceed the maximum height requirement set by the Parish Council.

Councillor Pinnock informed members of his concern regarding the absence of regulations and rules for Elm Cemetery and that he had, consequently, prepared a draft set for consideration by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the draft cemetery rules and regulations be circulated to members by Councillor Pinnock, for consideration at the next meeting.

### **86/11 Correspondence**

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

The Clerk reported a request from the Volunteer Centre, Fenland for financial assistance towards the organisation's annual operating costs.

The letter of request, which detailed the Volunteer Centre's aims and activities, was accompanied by the Chairman's of the Volunteer Centre's Annual Report 2011 and a copy of the Fenland Volunteer Bureau's Accounts for 2010/11.

Members decided that the request for financial support be not supported.

- (2) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places – results of consultation exercise.

Further to minute 56/11 (3), the Clerk reported a letter from Fenland District Council detailing the outcome of this consultation exercise.

The Clerk reminded members of the consultation response submitted by Elm Parish Council and informed them that the review exercise had not resulted in changes to the polling arrangements in the parish.

Members decided that the outcome of the consultation exercise be noted.

- (3) The Leam, Fridaybridge.

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from a resident of Fridaybridge, suggesting that the pond at The Leam could be used for teaching fishing to young children. The resident mentioned in his e-mail that that he had been challenged recently at the pond by another resident of the village, pointing out the No Fishing sign, when he was teaching his young son to fish.

The writer of the e-mail expresses the view that it is a shame that The Leam is not appreciated fully as a village pond and stated his willingness to supervise any child who would like to use it as a way to learn fishing.

Although members are sympathetic to the suggestion of using the pond at The Leam as a means of teaching youngsters to fish, they feel that the No Fishing rule must apply, without exception, to all members of the community.

Members are aware that the Parish Council did receive a number of complaints earlier in the year from some residents of The Leam, asking it to take action in respect of persons fishing at the pond in contravention of the No Fishing rule.

Members decided that suggestion of using the pond at The Leam as a means of teaching youngsters to fish, which would contravene the No Fishing rule at The Leam, be not supported.

(4) Fenland District Council's Interim Planning Policy Leadership Statement.

The Clerk reported a letter from a local planning agent requesting the Parish Council to express an opinion as to whether his client's site at Fridaybridge complies with the District Council's Interim Planning Policy Leadership Statement (IPPLS).

Details of Fenland District Council's Interim Planning Policy Leadership Statement were reported to the Parish Council at minute 23/11 (3).

Members felt that it would not be appropriate to express any opinion as to whether the site at Fridaybridge complies with the District Council's IPPLS as the expression of such an opinion could prejudice the Parish Council's ability to consider objectively any planning application submitted in the future for the residential development of this site.

Furthermore, members were unable see how they could be expected to express such an opinion without seeing a detailed proposal; for example, criteria 2 of the IPPLS states "where the proposal is of the highest standard of design"; this cannot be assessed by seeing only a red line on a map.

Members decided that the local planning agent be informed of the Parish Council's view, as indicated above, regarding the inappropriateness of expressing any opinion as to whether the site at Fridaybridge complies with the District Council's IPPLS.

(5) Footpath adjacent to Bramley Court, Coldham.

Further to minute 66/11, the Clerk read to members a letter from a resident of Coldham expressing thanks on behalf of village residents for the Parish Council's funding of the improvement works to the footpath adjacent to Bramley Court.

Members decided the content of the letter be noted.

**87/11 The Leam, Fridaybridge – drainage**

The Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate for rodding works to be undertaken to the drainage overflow pipe at The Leam.

Members decided that the Clerk would arrange for a local drainage contractor to undertake the necessary work.

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

**88/11 Next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 20 December 2011, commencing at 6.30 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Appendix**

**(Minute 84/11 refers)**

**Parish Council's Standing Orders: Resolutions Moved on Notice**

1. Except as provided by these Standing Orders, no resolution may be moved unless the business to which it relates has been put on the agenda by the Clerk, or the mover has given notice in writing of its terms and has delivered the notice to the Clerk not less than 7 days preceding the next meeting of the Council.
2. The Clerk shall date every notice of resolution or recommendation when received by him, shall number each notice in the order in which it was received and shall enter it in a book which shall be open to the inspection of every member of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall insert in the summons for every meeting all notices of motion or recommendation properly given in the order in which they have been received unless the member giving a notice of motion has stated in writing that he or he intends to move at some later meeting or that he withdraws it.
4. If a resolution or recommendation specified in the summons is not moved either by the member who gave notice of it or by any other member, it shall, unless postponed by the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
5. If the subject matter of a resolution comes within the province of a committee of the Council, it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to such committee or to such other committee as the Chairman may determine for report; provided that the Chairman, if he considers it to be a matter of urgency, may allow it to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was moved.
6. Every resolution or recommendation shall be relevant to a matter over which the Council has power or duties affecting its area.

**Meeting finished at 8.10 pm**

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

Date:.....