

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

20 NOVEMBER 2012 – 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Lankfer, Milham, Pinnock and Stokes.

**In attendance:** District Councillor Sutton.

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

The minutes of the meeting of 16 October 2012 were confirmed and signed.

### **78/12 Councillor Tilney - resignation from membership of Parish Council**

The Clerk reported the resignation of Councillor Tilney from membership of the Parish Council and read to members the letter of resignation, in which Councillor Tilney explained his reasons for making this decision.

Members decided that Councillor Tilney's resignation be noted and that he be thanked formally, through a letter from the Clerk, for his services to both the Parish Council and the people of the parish.

### **79/12 Members' Code of Conduct**

Further to minute 31/12, the Clerk reminded members of the need for them to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

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

### **80/12 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Record Centre's "Recording Wildlife Near You" Project**

Members received a presentation from Ms Jane Andrews-Gauvain, Biodiversity Outreach Officer at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC), in relation to CPERC's "Recording Wildlife Near You" project.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre, which was established in 2005 as a one-stop-shop for biodiversity information, works with other relevant agencies; these include Natural England, the Wildlife Trusts and Internal Drainage Boards.

Ms Andrews-Gauvain informed members that "Recording Wildlife Near You" is an eighteen-months Heritage Lottery Funded project aimed at recording wildlife, particularly within Fenland. The aim of the project is to help provide both an up-to-date record of species in the area to ensure that it is considered during environmental planning and a legacy for future generations. She made the point that anyone can get involved with the project, which takes very little time as it only requires sending records of species as and when they are spotted. She also commented that very few records exist in relation to the parish of Elm and is keen to work with local communities to undertake surveys.

Ms Andrews-Gauvain circulated a document bearing photographs of both native and non-native species which are likely to be spotted in rural parts of Cambridgeshire, together with a CPERC recording sheet (to log: the person who saw the species; what was seen; where it was seen; when seen). She informed members that the CPERC is able to provide free training for anyone interested in learning about more species.

Ms Andrews-Gauvain responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information reported be noted and that they would "spread the word" regarding this project within the local community.

### **81/12 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

#### **(1) Birch Grove, Elm (minute 67/12 (2))**

The Clerk reported the response from the Local Highway Authority in relation to the issue raised by a local resident at minute 67/12 (2).

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) comments that a larger layby could be provided only if the Parish Council were to provide the necessary funding, which, based upon the LHA's experience of current contractual prices for this type of work, is likely to cost in the region of £20,000.

Members are of the opinion that, given the considerable cost but minimal benefit likely to be derived from such a measure, increasing the size of the existing layby would not be an appropriate course of action.

The LHA states that another possible option to address the parking situation on Birch Grove would be the introduction of parking restrictions; however, its experience is that such a measure is only likely to succeed if supported by enforcement action by the Constabulary. The costs of the necessary consultation process, making the new Traffic Regulation Order and any physical highway works (e.g. signage and lining) would need to be met by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the information provided by the Local Highway Authority be noted and that, being mindful of the costs of any action and the level of community benefit likely to result, no action be taken in relation to possible highway works at this time.

#### **(2) Obstructive parking around Elm Primary school (minute 67/12 (3))**

The Clerk reported the response from the Local Highway Authority in relation to the issue raised by a local resident at minute 67/12 (3).

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) makes that point that parking enforcement is the responsibility of Cambridgeshire Constabulary and it, therefore, suggests that the Parish Council raises the matter with the relevant local police officer. Members are aware that the Constabulary has been requested to take appropriate action against motorists who are found to be parking their vehicles in a dangerous/obstructive manner (minute 67/12 (3) refers).

The LHA states that another possible option to address the parking situation around the Primary School would be the introduction of parking restrictions; however, the LHA's experience is that such a measure is only likely to succeed if supported by enforcement action by the Constabulary. The costs of the necessary consultation process, making the new Traffic Regulation Order and any physical highway works (e.g. signage and lining) would need to be met by the Parish Council.

The LHA states that it is aware that the Parish Council had, in the recent past, considered the possibility of providing car parking facilities on part of the current grassed area (highway verge) at the entrance to Abington Grove, as a means of addressing the highway safety problems caused by on-street parking in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School; it suggests that that the Parish Council may wish to consider that matter again. The Parish Council would, however, be required to meet the cost of such a measure; such a proposal would also need to be the subject of a Highway Safety Audit. Members supported the view of Councillor Pinnock that the decision of the Parish Council, at minute 154/11, not to pursue such a course of action still remains valid and the matter should not be re-considered at this time.

Members consider that a multi-agency approach to identifying a potential solution to this matter is needed.

Members decided that this matter be discussed further at the next meeting and that the Headteacher of the Elm C of E Primary School be invited to the meeting to participate in that discussion.

**(3) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 70/12 (2))**

The Clerk reported that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council had still been unable, due to continued workload pressures, to progress this matter with the developers of this estate.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would continue to seek updates from Fenland District Council for reporting to each meeting of the Parish Council.

**(4) Speed limit on March Road, Coldham (minute 70/12 (3))**

The Clerk reported that the new 40 mph speed limit signs through Coldham had been erected on 1 November and the associated Traffic Regulation Order, under which the new speed limit is enforceable, came into effect on 12 November 2012.

The Chairman informed members that he had noticed a reduction in the speed of vehicles travelling through Coldham since erection of the new speed limit signs.

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

**(5) Elm Cemetery – maintenance and request to purchase burial plot (minutes 70/12 (4) and 76/12 (3))**

The Clerk read to members a further quotation, from a different contractor, for undertaking the sowing of grass seed at the new area of the cemetery. This quotation is significantly lower than the one considered by members at minute 70/12 (4).

Some members commented that, despite the letters from the Parish Council to the family of the deceased, the practice of placing floral tributes and other articles on land adjoining a particular grave continues. Some of the land upon which these tributes are being placed by the family of the deceased includes the burial plot which was the subject of an application to pre-purchase (minute 76/12 (3) refers).

With regard to the application to pre-purchase a burial plot, the Clerk informed members that he had received a telephone call recently from the applicant, in which she indicated that she would lodge an appeal against the Parish Council's decision (at minute 76/12 (3)) to refuse the application; during the telephone conversation, the Clerk had informed the applicant that any appeal would need to be submitted in writing (giving reasons as to why the Parish Council should re-consider the matter), which he would refer to the subsequent meeting of the Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the new quotation for the sowing of grass seed at the new area of Elm Cemetery, in the total sum of £975.00 (plus VAT), be accepted;
- (3) no action be taken at this time by the Parish Council to remove any floral tributes and articles which have “spilled” onto land adjoining the particular grave but the matter be considered further at the next meeting;
- (4) any letter of appeal against the Parish Council’s decision (at minute 75/12 (3)) to refuse the application to pre-purchase a specific burial plot in Elm Cemetery be considered at the Parish Council meeting which follows receipt of such appeal

(Councillor Mrs Hopkin declared her pecuniary interest in this item, by virtue of her involvement in the company which had submitted the successful quotation for the grass seeding works, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

**(6) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 70/12 (5))**

Members received a presentation from Ms Lizzi Wales, the County Council’s Youth Development Co-ordinator for the area, in relation to the issues raised by members at the last meeting

Ms Wales made the point that youth work activities are no longer funded by the Government and that with continuing reductions in County Council budgets, the delivery of such a service is increasingly reliant upon local funding, such as that provided by the Parish Council in relation to the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club.

Ms Wales circulated a document detailing the net weekly cost, based upon a session of 12 young persons attending, of operating the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club. It is clear from the financial information provided that the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club would cease in the absence of funding from the local community.

Ms Wales informed members that there are currently 64 members of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club and that there have been a total of 102 attendances, from within that membership, since April of this year. She acknowledged that the level of attendance by young people had been low on some occasions recently. She informed members that the new Lead Youth Worker for the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club is Liam Siddons, who has taken on this role recently from Laura Shreeve (who has moved to a new role within the Youth Service). Ms Wales expressed the opinion that the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club delivers successfully against the rationale for youth work, which is to support young people along their journey into adulthood

The planning of club activities is undertaken each term and reflects the wishes of youth club members. Ms Wales circulated a copy of the activities plan for the September to December 2012 term; the activities within the plan include arts and crafts, various games, sports, cookery and topics of informal education (as chosen by club members or to meet an identified need).

Ms Wales explained the methods being utilised by the Youth Service to seek to increase the number of members/ attendees at the youth club; this has included the circulation of flyers at local schools.

Ms Wales stated that she would be very happy to take on board any ideas from the Parish Council in terms of developing and sustaining the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club. Members made some suggestions in this regard; one suggestion was that club members could undertake litter picks within the parish, which would not only engage the young people in a positive activity but also deliver environmental benefit to the community.

Members noted that the Quiz Night held at the Elm Centre on 17 November 2012 had raised £40 for youth club funds.

Councillor Stokes mentioned that he had been informed a couple of days before the event that his services as Quizmaster at the quiz night would not be required. He and other members expressed their disappointment that the Youth Service had responded in such a manner to this offer of assistance from Councillor Stokes. Ms Wales apologised, on behalf of the Youth Service, to Councillor Stokes and undertook to investigate the matter.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by Ms Wales be noted;
- (2) the Youth Service should make further effort to increase the number of young people attending the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club and seek funding from other sources, such as Roddons Housing Association;
- (3) the Chairman and Councillors Pinnock and Stokes would continue attending future sessions of the youth club and report their observations/conclusions at the subsequent meeting(s) of the Parish Council

### **82/12 Police matters**

The Clerk reported that PCSO Dave Russ was unable to attend the meeting and that he had not produced a report for presentation to members.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that PCSO Russ be thanked for his participation in the Remembrance Service at the Elm War Memorial on 11 November 2012.

### **83/12 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.

Councillors Cotterell and Sutton, the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that, further to minute 44/12, Fenland District Council is in the process of undertaking further consultations, for a six weeks period which commenced on 5 November 2012, regarding proposed changes to Council Tax Benefit. They also mentioned that the District Council has begun work on producing a budget for 2013/14.

In addition, District Councillor Sutton mentioned that he had been contacted by a resident of Cedar Way, Elm regarding the overgrown condition of an area of adjoining land and he asked the Parish Council whether it was aware of the land's ownership. Parish Council members informed District Councillor Sutton that the area in question is in the ownership of the developers of the Grove Gardens estate, Kier Property; he undertook to pursue the matter with the land owner.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **84/12 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) Internal and external alterations including formation of an en-suite and staircase to second floor and insertion of two roof lights to side of existing dwelling at The Limes, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR12/0795/LB (applicants: Mr and Mrs R O'Conner).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of a bungalow (renewal of planning permission F/YR09/0505/O) on land east and south of Fiveways, Main Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR12/0804/EXTIME (applicant: Mr I Smith).

*That the application be supported.*

(Councillor Mrs Hopkin declared her non-pecuniary interest in this item, by virtue of the rental of land from the applicant)

- (3) Erection of a dwelling involving demolition of existing garage (renewal of planning permission f/YR09/0735/O) on land north of 3 Limes Avenue, Elm – F/YR12/0821/EXTIME (applicant: Mr White).

*That the application be supported.*

### **85/12 Planning consultations**

The Clerk reported that Fenland District Council (FDC), as Local Planning Authority, is reviewing, in its strive to become more efficient and e-enabled, its procedure for consulting local councils upon planning applications.

As part of this review, FDC wishes to provide plans in size A3 as a maximum (rather than at A1 and A0 size) – this would represent savings to FDC in terms of resources and enable consultations to be despatched in a more timely fashion.

In addition, FDC would like to reduce the amount of supporting documents that it sends currently, such as flood risk assessments and biodiversity reports – again, this would result in resource savings; these documents would continue to be available for councillors to view on line.

The deadline for the submission of comments on FDC's proposals is 30 November 2012.

The District Council will assess the success of revisions to its consultation procedure after three months of operation to ensure that implementation of the revisions had not impacted unduly upon local councils' ability to provide consultation responses.

Members decided that, to assist the District Council's strive to deliver efficiencies, they would be happy to receive application plans in size A3 as a maximum and for supporting documents to no longer be sent to the Parish Council.

### **86/12 Local Highway Improvements 2013/14**

The Clerk reported that the County Council is inviting proposals from local communities which wish to submit a bid for funding from that council's 2013/14 Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme. Any community group, which includes local councils, is eligible to submit a bid.

Under the LHI scheme, applicants are able seek up to £10,000 from the County Council as a contribution to their scheme. The applicant is expected to provide a contribution towards each project of at least 10% of the scheme cost. Bids are restricted to one per applicant.

Projects could involve any highway measure or improvement that is considered to offer benefit to the local community; applicants are required to state within their applications how they feel that the proposal would provide that community benefit.

The Clerk informed members of the application process relating to this scheme and of the method of application evaluation/prioritisation that the County Council will operate.

Long-term maintenance of schemes would normally be the responsibility of the County Council, provided that the scheme is constructed to normal County Council standards.

The deadline for submission of applications is 21 December 2012.

Further to minute 55/12 (7), the Clerk reported information received from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) regarding potential measures to reduce the potential for accidents at the Halfpenny Lane/B1101 junction. At minute 55/12 (7) it was noted that any measures suggested by the LHA could be used by the Parish Council as the basis for a bid under this round of the County Council's Local Highways Improvements (LHI) scheme.

The relevant officer of the LHA, who has examined this location again since the site meeting (minute 55/12 (7) refers), comments that there is already a SLOW road marking and bend/junction warning signs on the approach from the Wisbech direction. He suggests that similar road marking and signage could be provided from the Fridaybridge direction. It may also be possible to re-line the road and narrow the lane widths in the hope of reducing vehicle speeds, possibly both approaches but certainly from Fridaybridge. The estimated cost of these works is £1,500; under the LHI scheme, the Parish Council would need to make a £150.00 contribution.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and to consider the submission of an application at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

### **87/12 Financial matters**

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

#### **Income**

J P Smith	Allotment rent	£1,750.00
A Fitzjohn	Allotment rent	£1,700.00
D Bates	Allotment rent	£250.00
P Barnes	Interment fee	£250.00
Maxey Grounds	Cottage rent (less fees and boiler repair)	£523.60
J G Cross	Additional memorial inscription	£60.00
R King	Memorial tablet in garden of Rest	£100.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£4,633.60</b>

#### **Expenditure**

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery	£72.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,381.42
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £128.57), Broadband and other expenses	£627.08

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£2,080.50</b>
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In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2012 (in the total sum of £129,469.82), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2011.

In connection with the income from allotment rents, the Clerk informed members that the tenant of plots 1 – 8 Shepperson's Field has surrendered this tenancy; the tenant of the other plots at this site is interested in taking on the tenancy of plots 1 – 8 (which provide an annual income to the Parish Council of £400.00) also but wishes to discuss with representatives of Parish Council some issues regarding the current condition of those plots before entering into a new tenancy.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £4,633.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,080.50 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 October 2012, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2011, be noted;
- (3) the Chairman, Councillor Pinnock and the Clerk would meet with the prospective new tenant of allotment plots 1 - 8 Shepperson's Field and they be delegated the authority (which includes any of a financial nature) to address any issues to be raised at that meeting by the prospective new tenant.

#### **88/12 Street lamp FPC 12, Fridaybridge Road, Elm**

The Clerk informed members that Fenland District Council had identified a street lamp – FPC12 on Fridaybridge Road, Elm – which requires attention; it has been deemed by the District Council as requiring a new lantern and pole bracket, at a total cost of £529.47

With regard to funding this work, the Clerk informed members that the amount still available to the Parish Council, from the Concurrent Functions Grant allocations for street lighting in 2011/12 and 2012/13, is, following the decision at minute 70/12 (6) to procure two new street lamps, £1,234.23.

Members decided that Fenland District Council be authorised to arrange, via its street lighting contractor, the required work to street lamp FPC12 (Fridaybridge Road, Elm).

#### **89/12 Local Scout and Guides groups**

The Chairman referred to the participation of the local Scout and Guides groups at the Remembrance Service at the Elm war memorial on 11 November 2012 and suggested to members that the Parish Council should consider financial support to these organisations.

The Chairman mentioned briefly some of the activities offered by these groups to young people in the parish and the fact that plans are in place to renovate the groups' meeting place. He expressed the view that these groups are providing a valuable service to the community, which should be recognised with support from Elm Parish Council.

Members decided that the Chairman would invite appropriate representatives of the local Scout and Guides groups to the next meeting, to enable the Parish Council to be informed of the manner in which these groups contribute to the development of young people in the parish and the groups' ambitions for the future; this would then enable members to consider how/if it should support, financially or otherwise, the work of these groups.

**90/12 Correspondence**

- (1) Magpas - request for a financial donation.

The Clerk reported a request from Magpas for a financial donation towards the cost of providing emergency medical care at the scenes of accidents within Cambridgeshire.

Members decided that a donation of £400.00 be made to Magpas.

- (2) Coldham United Football Club – request for financial support.

Further to minute 64/12 (5), the Clerk read to members an e-mail of thanks from the Secretary of Coldham United Football Club in relation to the financial support provided to the club by the Parish Council.

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

- (3) Coldham playing field – electricity supply.

Further to minute 55/12 (2), the Clerk read to members an e-mail of thanks from the Secretary of the Coldham Residents’ Action Group in relation to the financial support provided by the Parish Council towards the cost of providing an electricity supply at the Coldham playing field.

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

**91/12 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 18 December 2012, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.55 pm**

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

Date:.....