

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 APRIL 2013 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Lankfer, Milham, Pinnock, Miss Webb and Webb.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Softley and Stokes plus County Councillor Mrs Tuck.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2013 were confirmed and signed, subject to deletion of the following words from the decision at minute 140/12: “and that a sum of £12,000 be provisionally ear-marked for such” (the amendment would be made to those minutes prior to publication).

145/12 Open Forum

(1) Planning application F/YR13/0191/F (Erection of 2 x two-storey dwellings, comprising of 1 x 2-bed and 1 x 3-bed with parking and temporary siting of mobile home, on land south of 19 Oldfield Avenue, Elm)

The applicants for this proposal informed members that they have both lived in Elm for many years and had decided to purchase this land at Oldfield Avenue when it was offered for sale. They stated that this site already possesses planning permission for the erection of a pair of semi-detached houses and that they are merely seeking, through this planning application, to vary the approved scheme to be able to provide two detached properties.

The applicants commented that letters of support for the planning application had been submitted to the Local Planning Authority by nine neighbouring residents. They requested that Elm Parish Council, in its consultation response to the Local Planning Authority, expresses support for this planning application.

Members decided that the comments of the applicants be noted and that they be taken into account when considering this planning application (minute 151/12 refers).

(2) First Fenland Scout Group

Further to minute 134/12 (6), Mr P Collins updated the Parish Council on the latest activities of the First Fenland Scout Group and made particular mention of a St George’s Parade scheduled for 3.00 pm on 28 April 2013. He informed members that the group is proposing to operate a “bob-a-job” scheme and enquired as to whether the Parish Council could assist in publicising this scheme, through its website and notice boards.

Mr Collins stated that the group is looking to recruit volunteers to assist with running the scout group activities and expressed his hope that the Parish Council would be able to help “spread the word”.

Members decided the information provided by Mr Collins be noted and that publicity material produced on behalf of the First Fenland Scout Group be displayed on the Parish Council’s website and upon its notice boards.

146/12 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.

147/12 Community Navigators

Members received a presentation from Mr T Barzycki, the Community Navigators Co-ordinator for the Fenland area, on the new Community Navigators scheme being operated by the Care Network (Cambridgeshire) with funding provided by Cambridgeshire County Council (for a period of three years).

Mr Barzycki explained the role of Care Network and informed members of some of the services and activities it provides; one of those activities is operation of the local community car schemes.

The Community Navigator programme

- will provide a clear friendly signposting service accessible to all older members of the community
- will provide new volunteering opportunities for all age groups
- will reimburse all expenses incurred by a Community Navigator
- is able to provide additional training and certificates for volunteers if required
- will be supported by the Library service, which will be working closely to support the navigators
- will include all relevant services in the 'navigation' information - increasing exposure and publicity
- offers the opportunity to become part of a large County-wide network for both volunteers (navigators) and service providers
- will attempt to collate information from other organisations to help provide a clearer picture of signposting across the County and provide data on numbers and type of referrals or 'navigations' to organisations that may find this information useful, e.g. for funding bids etc.

Care Network has appointed a Navigator Co-ordinator for each of the five district areas within the County and these officers are looking to recruit volunteer Community Navigators through making contact with local groups (such as the Women's Institute, lunch clubs, Over 60's groups etc).

It is hoped that achievements of this scheme will be older people

- feeling less isolated
- feeling secure and safe in the local environment (the Co-ordinator is working with local PCSOs in this matter)
- maintaining good health
- receiving assistance with checking entitlement to benefits
- receiving assistance with arranging minor maintenance minor works to their homes.

The Community Navigators Co-ordinators are liaising with the other agencies which undertake similar community development work, to both avoid duplication of effort and share good practice etc. In this regard, Councillor Cotterell drew Mr Barzycki's attention to the work already being undertaken by the Golden Age Team at Fenland District Council to support older people living in the district.

Mr Barzycki expressed his hope that the Parish Council would be able to "spread the word" regarding this project and possibly assist with identifying people within the community who could be interested in volunteering to become a Community Navigator.

Mr Barzycki responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information reported be noted.

148/12 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Obstructive parking around Elm Primary school (minute 134/12 (2))

The Clerk informed members that the current situation is unchanged from that reported at minute 134/12 (2); a decision from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in relation to the Parish Council's bid for works under CCC's Local Highway Improvements scheme is still awaited.

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

(2) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 134/12 (3))

The Clerk reported that the current situation is unchanged from that reported at minute 134/12 (3).

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.

(3) Elm Cemetery – operational issues (minute 134/12 (4))

The Clerk reported that he had sent (by Recorded Delivery) a letter to the family which holds the Exclusive Rights of Burial for plot North B345 in Elm Cemetery, informing the family of the Parish Council's decision that removal of the "surplus" items from this plot must take place, as instructed previously, and that any application for the installation of a memorial on this burial plot would not receive favourable consideration by the Parish Council until there had been compliance with its previous instructions.

The Clerk reported that he had received no contact from this family as a result of his letter, nor had he received any application for a memorial. He added that, it could be seen from his inspection of this burial plot earlier today, the family had still not taken the necessary action to restrict the area used for the placing of floral tributes etc to the burial plot (a maximum area of 9 feet in length and 4 feet in width).

Members expressed their disappointment that, despite a number of requests, still no action had been taken by this family to restrict the area used for the placing of floral tributes and other articles to the size of the burial plot and, consequently, are not prepared to give consent for a memorial on this grave of the size agreed at minute 120/12 (3) unless there is compliance with the Parish Council's previous instructions regarding the placing of floral tributes and other articles on and around this grave.

Some members commented that, because of the current frequency at which emptying takes place, there are occasions when the wheeled bin at Elm Cemetery is full before the next scheduled emptying and, consequently, suggested that the frequency of emptying should be increased. The Clerk informed members that increasing the emptying frequency from fortnightly to weekly would increase the cost of this service by around £430 per annum.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would send a further letter to this family, informing them that, unless there is compliance, within fourteen days from their receipt of that Clerk's letter, with the Parish Council's previous instructions, the decision of the Parish Council at minute 120/12 (3) - to allow, as a one-off exception to the requirements of the Elm Cemetery Regulations, the installation on grave number

North B345 of a memorial with a maximum headstone height of 5 feet (instead of 3 feet, 6 inches) - would be rescinded;

(2) the Clerk would seek to enlist the support of the Traveller Liaison Officer at Fenland District Council in achieving communication with this family;

(3) arrangements be made by the Clerk for the frequency of emptying of the wheeled bin (provided by the council for disposal of waste materials) to be increased to a weekly (instead of fortnightly) basis.

(4) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 134/12 (5))

The Clerk reported that he had informed the County Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator of the Parish Council's decision in relation to funding for the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club for 2013/14; she is pleased that the Parish Council feels able to provide funding which will enable continuation of this service for the time being; the contracts of the Youth Workers who operate this youth club have now been extended.

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

(5) Provision of play equipment at Coldham (minute 140/12)

The Chairman reported that he had obtained the necessary form from Fenland District Council to apply for monies from its Rural Capital Grants Fund. To make application, a number of pieces of information need to be provided; these include:

- a business plan for the project
- evidence of community consultation, demonstrating community need/desire for the project
- plans, specifications and detailed quotations for works or equipment.

In addition, it is necessary for applicants to specify how their project supports the objectives within the District Council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Chairman commented that he is working on production of the information which needs to accompany this application

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

(6) Tower Hall, Fridaybridge (minute 141/12)

The Clerk reported on the meeting of the Tower Hall Management Committee held on 26 March 2013 – arranged, at the Clerks' suggestion, to both agree a way forward and to receive feedback from Elm Parish Council in relation to the support that it wished to provide – in summary:

- the Clerk had provided procedural and constitutional advice to the management committee in relation to the filling of vacancies on the committee and the appointment of trustees
- it was agreed that sets of keys for the Tower Hall would be issued to the regular user groups
- there is now a single point-of-contact for bookings - this should address the Parish Council's concerns (minute 141/12 refers) regarding the management committee's previous proposal that the Bookings Secretary role would be shared by two volunteers
- the Clerk would assume the role of Treasurer to the Tower Hall Management Committee following completion of the accounts for the financial year 2012/13; administrative arrangements are to be put in place to minimise the amount of time required of the Clerk to perform this role

- the employment of a paid caretaker/cleaner was agreed – this should address the Parish Council’s concerns (minute 141/12 refers) regarding what appeared previously to be a “flexible” approach to caretaking of the hall
- arrangements are to be made for the Community Payback Team to undertake re-decoration and “spring cleaning” activities within the hall as well as general tidying of the outside areas
- the secretary of the management committee would arrange for the Tower Hall to be publicised on the Cambridgeshire.net website
- the next meeting of the Tower Hall Management Committee is the Annual General Meeting, which is scheduled for 22 May 2013 (commencing at 8.00 pm).

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

149/12 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PCSO Dave Russ, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, was unable to attend the meeting, This officer 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 report of theft from a motor vehicle
- Fridaybridge – one report of persons acting suspiciously; one theft of scrap metal
- Elm – one report of a person acting suspiciously
- Rings End – no incidents reported.

The PCSO’s report included the results of Speed Watch activity undertaken in Coldham on 3 April 2013. Of the total of 37 vehicles observed during the exercise, only 2 were being driven in excess of the speed limit.

The main issue raised as a community concern at the South Neighbourhood Forum held on 28 March 2013 was speeding in villages; this was, consequently, adopted as the neighbourhood policing priority for the next six months. Other issues raised, to be tackled by other agencies, included dog fouling and litter.

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

150/12 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.

Councillor Sutton, one of the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, read to members a message from County Councillor Mrs Jill Tuck, who had decided not to seek re-election to the County Council next month. In her message to the Parish Council, Councillor Mrs Tuck states that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve the parish of Elm and to have worked alongside the Parish Council.

Councillor Cotterell, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, reminded members of the Community Resilience event which had been arranged (further to minutes 54/12 and 70/12 (1)) by Fenland District Council for 16 May 2013 (commencing at 6.30 pm at Fenland Hall, March).

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported be noted;
- (2) County Councillor Mrs Tuck be informed, by the Clerk, of the Parish Council’s appreciation of the support that she has given to both Elm Parish Council and the people it serves and that she be wished well for the future.

151/12 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) Erection of 3 x two-storey 4-bed dwellings with detached garages involving the formation of a new access on land north of 89 – 94 The Stitch, fronting Bar Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR12/0932/F = revised proposal to include land to the rear of the dwellings (applicant: Mrs N Smith).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of 2 x two-storey dwellings, comprising of 1 x 2-bed and 1 x 3-bed with parking and temporary siting of mobile home, on land south of 19 Oldfield Avenue, Elm – F/YR13/0191/F (applicants: Mr P Halliday and Ms T Ablett).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a detached garage/store with storage over at Cedar Lodge, Halfpenny Lane, Elm – F/YR13/0194/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs M Gower).

That the application be supported.

152/12 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
M J Coates	Cemetery memorial	£135.00
HM Revenue and Customs	VAT refund 2012/13	£3,784.30
Richard King Memorials Ltd	Additional memorial inscription	£66.00
P Barnes	Interment fee	£275.00
Total Income		£4,783.90

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery	£36.00
D. A Pest Control	Control of moles	£50.00
Morgan Lakey	Felling of two Poplar trees at Gosmoor Lane allotments	£600.00
Cambridgeshire County Council	Speed limit change at Coldham	£1,442.17
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £154.22), Broadband and other expenses	£721.68
Fenland District Council	Replacement of street lamp FPC7 (Low	£1,247.58

	Road, Elm)	
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board	Agricultural Drainage Rates	£64.04
Wisbech and District Stroke Club	Financial support (minute 134/12 (1) refers)	£300.00
1 st Fenland Scout Group	Financial support (minute 134/12 (6) refers)	£2,000.00
T Jordan	Salary back pay (less income tax of £365.51) as a result of re-grading, with effect from 1 April 2012, of post of Clerk (minute 143/12 refers)	£1,462.03
1 st Elm (All Saints) Brownies	Financial support (minute 134/12 (6) refers)	£300.00
Mrs S Woodhouse	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 31 March 2013)	£100.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,411.86
Total Expenditure		£9,735.36

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 March 2013 (in the total sum of £126,029.96), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 March 2012.

Further to minute 21/11, the Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the fourth (year-end) quarter of the 2012/13 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.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £4,783.90 be noted and that the expenditure of £9,735.36 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 March 2013, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 March 2012, be noted;
- (3) the financial information within the fourth quarter's management accounts be noted.

153/12 Correspondence

- (1) Elm Parochial Church Council – request for financial support.

The Clerk reported a letter from the Secretary of the Elm Parochial Church Council (PCC), seeking financial assistance from the Parish Council in relation to restoration works to the bells at All Saints Church at Elm.

The letter contains details of the ages of the six bells, three of which were cast in 1637. It is no longer possible to ring one of these bells because of its poor condition and, unless urgent works are undertaken, the other five bells would soon be in a similar condition. The PCC states that, because of their condition, the bells were rung on only twelve occasions during the last year. It adds that the bells would eventually fall silent unless restoration work is undertaken

The PCC is seeking funding of £8,000 (based upon a quotation of £5,885 for the restoration works to the six bells, plus VAT of £1,177 on that figure and a contingency sum of £938).

The PCC states that, under the structure of the Church of England, each PCC has sole responsibility for maintenance and repairs of its church. In Elm, the PCC does not possess the money to meet the cost of this work. Furthermore, the PCC is not able to recover from H M Revenue and Customs any payments of VAT.

The PCC states that it has investigated other options for funding but these have not proved successful. It is because of the fact that there are no other sources of funding available for this work that the PCC is approaching the Parish Council, as the democratic representative body for the village community, for assistance.

The Clerk suggested that the cost to the Parish Council, and hence to the community, could be reduced if this scheme were supported on the basis of the Parish Council paying the invoice for the cost of this work (because the Parish Council would be able to recover the VAT (of £1,777) from H M Revenue and Customs). Furthermore, there may be no need for the contingency sum (of £938) allocated by the PCC to this project.

Members decided, unanimously, that

- (1) the Parish Council would meet the cost of the repair works to the six bells at All Saints Church, up to a maximum of £8,000, but would prefer an arrangement whereby the invoice for the works could be paid by Elm Parish Council, as the council is able to re-claim VAT on the invoices it pays;
 - (2) the Elm Parochial Church Council be requested to make every effort to recruit additional bell ringers, to increase the number of times that the bells could be rung.
- (2) Proposal for an Elm Football Club and use of the playing field at Begdale Road, Elm.

Further to minute 130/11, the Clerk reported an e-mail from the club, setting out the current situation in terms of the development of this initiative.

Although the club originally planned to create a Saturday and Sunday team, it has not been possible to proceed with setting up a Saturday team; this is because one of the entrance requirements into the Saturday league is to have hot showers and toilet facilities on site; the cost of installing electricity to the club's portacabin would have been between £3,000 and £4,000, which could not be afforded.

A Sunday team has, however, been established but around 50% of the loan made to the club by one of the team members remains outstanding.

The club still has the ambition to develop a Saturday team and to provide football coaching sessions to youngsters; the club intends to try to obtain funding from the Football Foundation to make this ambition a reality.

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

154/12 Supporting the community

Arising from recent discussions in relation to providing support - including the awarding of funding of certain activities and the operation of particular groups - to the community, members are of the opinion that the Parish Council should consider whether to adopt a more structured approach, rather than operate on the basis of responding to ad-hoc requests for support/assistance.

Members decided that this matter be included as an item on the agenda for the next meeting and that, to assist members' deliberations, the Clerk would provide members with details of the financial support provided to activities

and groups, under the power provided by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, in the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

155/12 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 21 May 2013, commencing at conclusion of the Annual Parish Assembly which takes place at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.30 pm

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

Date:.....