

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

20 AUGUST 2013 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Lankfer and Pinnock.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Milham, Stokes, Miss Webb and Webb.

The minutes of the meeting of 23 July 2013 were confirmed and signed.

44/13 Councillor Cotterell

In response to the Clerk reporting apologies for absence from the meeting, members expressed their hope for Councillor Cotterell's speedy recovery from illness and requested the Clerk to pass on to him their best wishes.

45/13 Open Forum

(1) Provision of play equipment at Coldham

A resident of Coldham spoke in support of the Chairman's proposal for the provision of play equipment at Coldham, as had been discussed most recently by the Parish Council at minute 41/13. The resident commented that he had seen many children, of all ages, playing in the village; not only children who live in Coldham but also visitors to the village, and expressed the opinion that there is a need for the provision of play equipment at Coldham.

The resident informed the Parish Council that some children had made a swing rope, which is being used at a particular location within the village; he expressed the view that this is not a safe situation and that there is a need for purpose-built play equipment so that children are able to play safely.

Members decided that the comments of the resident be noted and taken into account, at minute 47/13 (6), when considering this matter further.

(2) Cemetery memorial

Further to minute 32/13 (2), the applicant for a memorial on plot South B267 spoke in support of her request for the Parish Council to re-consider its decision to refuse the application (for a kerbstone and headstone) on this burial plot.

The applicant explained why a memorial of the type sought is so important to the family of the deceased and expressed the view that if the Parish Council were to allow the installation of memorials incorporating a kerbstone along the whole of the row in which burial plot South B267 is situated, it would, given the existence of memorials incorporating a kerbstone in the row immediately to the rear, enhance the appearance of the cemetery.

Members decided that the comments of the applicant be noted and taken into account, at minute 47/13 (2), when re-considering this application for a memorial in Elm Cemetery

46/13 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.

47/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 32/13 (1))

The Clerk reported that the progress situation in this matter is unchanged from that reported at minute 32/13 (1).

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk regarding the District Council's progress in achieving adoption of the play area be noted and that he would continue to seek updates from Fenland District Council for reporting to the Parish Council.

(2) Elm Cemetery – operational issues (minute 32/13 (2))

Members re-considered an application for the installation of a cemetery memorial in Elm Cemetery; for a headstone and kerbstone on plot South B267, having regard for the presentation made by the applicant (minute 45/13 (2) refers) and a letter (accompanied by photographs showing the burial plot and its surroundings) that she had sent to the Parish Council requesting re-consideration of its decision to refuse the application (for a kerbstone and headstone) on this burial plot. The Clerk had forwarded to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the applicant's letter and accompanying photographs,

The Clerk reminded members that the reason for the Parish Council's refusal, at minute 32/13 (2), of this application was that it proposed the installation of a kerbstone in a part of the cemetery where headstones only are permitted as well as having a headstone of a height which exceeds the maximum allowed under the council's cemetery regulations.

The Clerk explained that the applicant had stated that she is now prepared to reduce the height of the headstone element of the proposed memorial to one which accords with the council's cemetery regulations; consequently, the only issue now is whether members wish to allow the installation of a kerbstone in a part of the cemetery where headstones only are permitted currently.

With regard to removal of debris from the extended area of the cemetery, the Clerk reported that he would be meeting with the Manager of the Community Payback Service following this officer's return from holiday.

With regard to the issue as to whether, in the event that there were significant amounts of debris buried within the soil at the extended area of the cemetery, the council could face difficulties in the use of this land as burial plots, the Clerk reported on investigations which had been undertaken in this regard since the last meeting of the Parish Council. He informed members that the tests undertaken by Environment Agency of the soil used to provide the extended area at the cemetery had been of a very small sample and had sought to establish that the soil did not contain chemicals or elements which could cause harm to the water course; the purpose was not establish that the Parish Council would be receiving clean inert soil.

In addition, the Clerk had arranged, following consultation with members, for a local gravedigger to dig trial holes in the extended area at the cemetery; this had taken place on 15 August 2013 and was witnessed by the Chairman, Councillor Pinnock and the Clerk. The trial digs appeared to indicate that there is almost no debris below the surface of the extended area; the grave digger commented that the condition of this soil is better than he finds in most cemeteries and stated that, in his opinion, the soil situation should give the Parish Council no cause for concern in terms of suitability for use as burial plots.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the application for installation of a memorial on plot South B267 be approved, subject to receipt by the Clerk of a revised application showing the height of the headstone element of the memorial being reduced from 48 inches to 42 inches;
- (3) memorials incorporating a kerbstone be allowed in the whole of the row containing burial plots South B265 to South B277.

(3) Street lighting in Elm (minute M32/13 (5))

The Clerk reported that he had received, since the last meeting of the Parish Council, a response from Balfour Beatty in relation to the street lighting issues mentioned by Councillor Pinnock at minute 25/13 and that a copy of that response had been forwarded to Councillor Pinnock. The Clerk informed members that he would be happy to forward a copy of the response from Balfour Beatty to any other councillor who would wish to receive one.

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

(4) Local Highway Improvements 2013/14 (minute 35/13)

The Clerk reported on the process for implementation of an approved local highway improvements scheme (including the need for consultation by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) on the introduction of a new Traffic Regulation Order and the LHA's subsequent consideration of any representations received from members of the public in that regard) and the possible implications of preventing the parking of vehicles in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School (such as an increase in traffic speeds as a result of the removal of parked vehicles from the public highway and the displacement of vehicle parking to other roads in the vicinity of the school).

The Clerk had circulated, in advance of the meeting, two possible scheme designs produced by the Local Highway Authority (LHA); one of the schemes shows the yellow lining works requested through the Parish Council's bid (minute 98/12 refers) and the other scheme provides for that lining plus additional lining (in a northerly direction) to a point just beyond Church Grove. In addition, the LHA is seeking confirmation from the Parish Council that it is happy to meet 10% (estimated at £200) of the cost of implementing either of these schemes.

Members decided that, given the low number of members in attendance at the meeting, consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(5) Cemetery Cottage, Elm (minute 39/13)

The Clerk reported that he had informed the letting agent of the Parish Council's decision at minute 39/13, inviting the submission of quotations for replacement floor covering in the kitchen of the cottage, as well as

the actions required of the tenant. In addition to the original communication sent to the letting agent, the Clerk had sent a reminder, but, to date, no response had been received.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would send a further reminder to the letting agent.

(6) Provision of play equipment at Coldham (minute 41/13)

The Chairman proposed that, given the low number of members in attendance at the meeting, further consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that he and Councillor Pinnock had produced a five years cash forecast for the Parish Council. The Chairman had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, copies of the three quotations that he had obtained for the provision and installation of play equipment at Coldham.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) given the low number of members in attendance at the meeting, further consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council;
- (3) In considering this matter further, the Parish Council would have regard for the cash forecasts produced and the quotations received;
- (4) Councillor Pinnock would arrange the supply of copies of the cash forecasts to members of the Parish Council in advance of the next meeting.

(7) Coldham windfarm extension (minute 42/13 (2))

The Chairman reported that, despite his concerns regarding the appropriateness and likely effectiveness of the proposals, it is unlikely that Fenland District Council (FDC) would change its proposed arrangements for membership and operation of the Whitemoor Local Environment Fund Committee and that FDC would be soon be advertising for members of the committee.

District Councillor Sutton offered to discuss the Chairman's concerns with the relevant Corporate Director at the District Council.

Members decided that the information reported by the Chairman be noted and the offer made by District Councillor Sutton be accepted.

48/13 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 – no incidents reported
- Fridaybridge – one report of burglary at an office building; one incident of a person action suspiciously
- Elm – one report of theft of items from a shed; one incident of rowdy nuisance; one theft of an ornamental item from the garden of a residential property

- Rings End – no incidents reported.

The PCSO's report mentioned that there had been no Speed Watch activity in the parish since the last meeting of the Parish Council, as the monitoring equipment had been used extensively by the new community-led Speed Watch team in Parson Drove. It is PCSO Russ' aim to establish similar groups in each village, using the results of the groups' speed monitoring activities to assist the effective targeting of speed enforcement activities by the Constabulary.

PCSO Russ' report included a reminder that the New Horizon Outreach Vehicle (formerly the CrimeBUSTer) would be used for the Rural South Neighbourhood Forum on 18 September 2013; the vehicle would be located in Church Road, Christchurch between 12.00 noon and 6.00 pm with the meeting taking place between 6.00 pm and 7.00 pm. The neighbourhood policing priorities for the following six months period would be set at that meeting.

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

49/13 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) Change of use of butchers shop and detached cold store to 3-bed dwelling with two dormers to front and detached 1-bed annexe ancillary to the main dwelling (retrospective) at Der Vajo, 9 Main Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR13/0500/F (applicant: Mr A Johnson).

That the application be supported.

(Councillor Pinnock declared his non-pecuniary interest in this application, by virtue of a friendship with the applicant)

- (2) Erection of 4 x 4-bed two-storey dwellings with double garages on land west of Appletree House, Begdale Road, Elm – F/YR13/0541/F (applicant: Mr f Leach).

Object to the application for the following reason:

- *the site lies outside of the Development Area Boundary for the village of Elm.*

50/13 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Given the absence from the meeting of the County Councillor who represents the parish of Elm (Gordon Gillick) 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, informed the Parish Council that he had nothing specific to report on Fenland District Council issues at this time. Councillor Sutton did, however, comment that he continues to ensure that officers at Fenland District Council are pursuing adoption of the play area at Grove Gardens, Elm (minute 47/13 (1) refers).

Members decided that the situation be noted.

51/13 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
Kent Memorials	Cemetery memorial	£303.00
W Bailey and Son	Garden of Rest plot purchase and interment fee	£259.00
UK Power Networks	Electricity wayleave – Fridaybridge spur	£34.30
UK Power Networks	Electricity wayleave – Walsoken	£132.95
Total Income		£1,252.85

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £16.79)	£101.74
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £240.63)	£1,443.76
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £149.33 and NI of £12.08), Broadband and other expenses	£709.38
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£37.08
R Pinnock	Purchase of stain for new storage box at cemetery (includes VAT of £1.35)	£8.08
SLCC	Clerk's Manual (cost shared with Manea PC)	£25.25
John Williams	Construction of wooden storage container etc at Elm Cemetery	£215.00
John Williams	Repairs to existing storage container at Elm Cemetery	£75.00
Total Expenditure		£2,615.29

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2013 (in the total sum of £130,995.50), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 July 2012.

With regard to the council's grounds maintenance activities, the Clerk reported that he had been informed by the contractor that an amount of green waste had been dumped by persons unknown at one of the Pocket Parks at Elm and sought members' views regarding removal of this waste; the Clerk had obtained a quotation from the council's grounds maintenance contractor for such.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £1,252.85 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,615.29 be authorised;

- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2013, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 July 2012, be noted;
- (3) the Clerk would make arrangements for removal of the green waste which had been dumped at one of the Pocket Parks, the cost not to exceed that quoted by the council's grounds maintenance contractor.

52/13 Community Payback Team

Arising from discussion at minute 32/13 (2), regarding using the services of the Community Payback Team to remove debris from the extended area at Elm Cemetery, members considered possible activities within the parish for which the services of the Community Payback Team could be utilised.

One member suggested that one possibility could be undertaking litter picking across the parish on, say, a fortnightly basis; it was also suggested that the Manager of the Community Payback Team (CPT) may wish to contact the Elm Parochial Church Council to see if it could benefit from activities being carried out by the CPT.

Members decided that the Clerk would discuss with the Manager of the Community Payback Team, when meeting him at Elm Cemetery (minute 47/13 (2) refers), the suggestions made by members in terms possible activities within the parish for which the services of the Community Payback Team could be utilised.

53/13 Playing field at Begdale Road, Elm

The Clerk informed members of repair works required to one of the gate posts, which form part of the security fencing, at the playing field and reported a quotation that he had received, from the company which installed the fencing, for undertaking the repair works.

Members decided that the repair works be undertaken and that the quotation, in the sum of £345.00 (for re-instating the gate post, re-hanging the gate etc), be accepted.

54/13 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that he had received no items of correspondence, since the last meeting, requiring consideration by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

55/13 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 17 September 2013, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 7.45 pm

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

Date:.....