

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 MARCH 2014 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Dalliday (nee Ablett), Hopkin, Mrs Hopkin, Mrs Lankfer, Milham, Pinnock, Miss Webb and Webb.

Apologies: Councillor Stokes.

In attendance: District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield and County Councillor Gillick.

The minutes of the meeting of 18 February 2014 were confirmed and signed.

136/13 Open Forum

Possible provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge

A resident of Fridaybridge informed the Parish Council that she had met recently with the Parish Council Chairman, District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield and Mr Barclay MP to discuss options for the provision of play equipment in that village. She stated that there is a desire from young people in Fridaybridge for a skateboard park and a multi-use games area (MUGA) in the village; she suggested that the playing field at Maltmas Drove would be an appropriate location for the installation of play equipment.

The resident informed the Parish Council that the Cambridgeshire Football Association is able to provide funding towards the cost of delivering football coaching; she added that her husband, who is a qualified football coach, would be happy to deliver football coaching to local youngsters. She mentioned that the MP had suggested the possibility of producing a community garden; trees could be obtained free-of-charge from the Woodland Trust and local children could be involved in their planting.

The resident informed the council that she had undertaken consultation with local youngsters as to their wishes for play equipment provision at Fridaybridge. She had produced a pack of information in support of this proposal.

Members decided that the comments of the resident be noted and that this matter would feature as an item on the agenda for the next meeting of Elm Parish Council; a copy of the pack of information would be provided to each member of the council in advance of that meeting.

137/13 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.

138/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 122/13 (1))

The Clerk informed members that the situation with regard to Fenland District Council's adoption of the open space land at Grove Gardens is unchanged from that reported at minute 122/13 (1); the District Council is pursuing a response from the land owner's legal representatives in an attempt to achieve progress.

The Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council now suggests that, given the ongoing difficulties in seeking to achieve adoption of this area of open space and in the knowledge that there is likely to be opposition from a number of residents of the estate to the installation of play equipment at Grove Gardens, it may be now be time to explore other potential sites within Elm for the provision of play equipment.

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

(2) Elm Cemetery – operational issues (minute 122/13 (2))

The Clerk reported that at the time of his most recent inspection of burial plot North B345 (last week) the family which holds the Exclusive Rights of Burial for this plot had still taken no action to remove voluntarily the ornamental van from the foot of the plot. He reminded members that the contractor had undertaken to remove the ornamental van, unless removed by the family in the meantime, at the time of his re-instating a particular memorial which had been removed recently to enable a second interment in the burial plot to which the memorial relates.

The Clerk informed members that, given the adverse comments usually received by the council most years with regard to dead grass left lying on the ground at the cemetery following the first cut of the growing season, he had obtained a quotation from the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor for clearing the dead grass from the cemetery after its initial cutting; the cost of such works would be £260 plus VAT.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk in relation the current situation regarding burial plot North B345 be noted;
- (2) the quotation received for clearing the dead grass from the cemetery after its initial cutting this year be accepted.

(3) Maintenance of water courses (minute 132/13)

Councillor Hopkin informed members that he had inspected the drainage ditches at Elm Cemetery and the Begdale Road playing field and, as a result, had concluded that none of the ditches appears to contain water and, in the main, are free of blockages. The ditches at the playing field would, however, benefit from the cutting back of vegetation.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Hopkin be noted and that works for cutting back of vegetation be arranged, quotations to be sought where necessary.

139/13 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 – one attempted scam (an attempt to obtain a person's bank card and pin number)
- Fridaybridge – one report of noise nuisance
- Elm – one theft of a vehicle; one incident of theft from the garden of a domestic property; one report of vehicle nuisance
- Rings End – no incidents reported.

PCSO Russ' report included a further reminder that the next meeting of the Rural South Neighbourhood Forum would take place on 25 March 2014; this would operate on the basis of the New Horizon outreach vehicle being located close to the war memorial at Elm from 12 noon and concluding with a meeting (to decide the neighbourhood policing priorities for the next six months) on the vehicle commencing at 5.00 pm.

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

140/13 Planning applications/appeal

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received no planning applications, for consultation purposes, from the Local Planning Authority since the last meeting.

Further to minute 8/13, the Clerk informed members of the lodging of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the refusal by Fenland District Council (FDC) of planning permission for the erection of a 23.0 m high (hub height) wind turbine on land south-east of Laddus House, Laddus Drove, Fridaybridge (application F/YR13/0290/F refers) and of the opportunity for the Parish Council to make further comments (in addition to those submitted to FDC previously), if it wished to do so, to the Planning Inspectorate.

Members decided that

- (1) the situation regarding the absence of planning applications requiring consideration by the Parish Council at this time be noted;
- (2) no representation be made to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the refusal by Fenland District Council of planning application F/YR13/0290/F.

141/13 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Councillor Gillick, the County Councillor who represents the electoral division which includes the parish of Elm, informed members that the agenda for next week's meeting of the County Council contained a number of Motions, one of which relates to the proposal for re-instatement of a March – Wisbech railway line; he sought members' views on the proposal; he informed members of his personal concerns regarding the financial viability of the proposal.

Councillor Gillick informed members that he had spoken with the relevant officers at the County Council regarding the need for road repairs across the parish and that he had been given an assurance that the necessary works would be undertaken.

Councillor Sutton, one of the District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that

- he continues to ensure that officers at Fenland District Council are pursuing adoption of the play area at Grove Gardens, Elm (minute 138/13 (1) refers) and is keen that sites other than the one at Grove Gardens be explored as potential locations for the installation of play equipment
- the Parish Councils across the district had been sent invoices in error by the County Council in relation to the energy costs of the street lamps owned by those councils; these invoices should have been sent to the district council; the situation has since been rectified
- it may be possible to utilise the services of the Community Payback Team to litter pick areas of land owned by the Parish Council, such as the Begdale Road playing field
- at the last meeting of Fenland District Council (FDC), the Leader of the Council had agreed that FDC should re-visit the decision made in relation to the Concurrent Functions Grants awarded to Parish Councils; to that end, the Leader would be arranging to meet collectively with the Chairman and Clerk of each of the Parish Councils within Fenland.

Councillor Tanfield, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that she had nothing to add to the information provided by Councillor Sutton.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

142/13 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
A R Clingo	Burial plot (double depth) purchase and interment fee	£853.00
Total Income		£1,376.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £13.43)	£80.59
Glazewing	Annual EPA charge for 2014 (includes VAT of £12.00)	£72.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £264.28)	£1,585.66
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £147.66 and NI of £11.08), Broadband and other expenses	£658.94
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income tax and NI (December 2013 and January and February 2014)	£611.54
John Williams and Son	Trimming trees at Chapel Lane, Elm and guttering repairs at pavilion	£350.00
Fenland Fire Appliance LLP	Supply and installation of fire extinguisher and signs (includes VAT of £12.63)	£75.78

Total Expenditure	£3,434.51
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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 28 February 2014 (in the total sum of £125,114.16), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2013.

Further to minute 126/13, the Parish Council considered the appointment of members to the Finance Committee.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £1,376.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,434.51 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 28 February 2014, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2013, be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £48,939.50) at 31 January 2014 and its other financial commitments (with the exception of day-to-day running costs) made between 1 April 2013 and 28 February 2014 (in the total sum of £8,785.00), the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 28 February 2014 is £67,389.66; making further allowance for a general contingency (at the level of 150% of the 2013/14 Precept, which equates to £45,000) reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 28 February 2014 to approximately £22,400.00;
- (4) that Councillors Brand, Mrs Cotterell, Milham, Pinnock and Webb be appointed to membership of the Elm Parish Council Finance Committee;
- (5) that arrangements for the first meeting of the Finance Committee be agreed at the next meeting of Elm Parish Council; the principal item of business for the committee would be consideration of the end of year accounts and submission of the Annual Return for 2013/14.

143/13 Applications for financial assistance

(1) Fridaybridge Community First Responders

Further to minute 131/13, members considered a request from the Fridaybridge Community First Responders (CFR) group for re-consideration of its application for financial assistance to purchase certain pieces of medical equipment.

The request for re-consideration of the CFR application included details of the training which is to be delivered to CFR volunteers in the use of the equipment to which the funding application relates. The Clerk had forwarded the additional information provided by the CFR group to members in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Milham informed members that he undertaken some investigations following receipt of the additional information provided by the CFR group, as a result of which he had ascertained that the syllabus for the training mentioned by the CFR group is yet to be written.

Members decided, having regard for the information reported by Councillor Milham, that the application be refused again at this time but the CFR group be invited apply again once the training of volunteers had taken place.

(2) Magpas

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

The letter of request gave details of the number of accidents that it had attended over the previous twelve months period and examples of some of the costs it incurs in operating the service it provides.

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

144/13 Local Highway Improvements (LHI) schemes

(1) 2013/14

Further to minute 59/13 (3), members considered the County Council's consultation on a proposal to introduce the waiting prohibitions necessary to deliver the LHI scheme requested by Elm Parish Council under the bidding process for 2013/14.

Given that the details upon which the County Council is consulting accord with the draft design (produced by Matt Pickering) was considered and agreed by Elm Parish Council at minute 59/13 (13), members support this proposed prohibition of waiting, as set out on the plan attached to the letter of consultation. However, Councillor Pinnock requested that the concerns he had raised at minute 59/13 (3) in relation to the potential for problems to be caused by "displacement" parking be forwarded to the County Council with the Parish Council's formal response to this consultation exercise.

In addition, Parish Councillor Pinnock requested the County Council to consider the introduction, as an addition to this scheme or separately, Prohibition of Waiting at Any Time (instead of the existing "school time" restriction) on the right-hand side of Abington Grove at its junction with the B1101.

Members decided that

- (1) the County Council be informed that Elm Parish Council supports the proposed Prohibition of Waiting shown on the plan which accompanied the letter of consultation (and which accords with the draft scheme considered by the council previously);
- (2) the specific comments made by Councillor Pinnock, as mentioned above, would accompany the Parish Council's formal response to this consultation exercise.

(2) 2014/15

Further to minute 89/13, the Clerk reported on the outcome of the 2014/15 bidding process.

The Clerk informed members that the total budget allocation for the district of Fenland was £100,000 and that the district area assessment panels (comprising County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the district) were asked to consider bids and make recommendations on how the budget should be allocated in respect of the scheme bids submitted.

In most cases, the assessment panels adopted a simple scoring system with a maximum of 10 points per scheme. Using this assessment system, the scheme submitted by Elm Parish Council (to change the priority for vehicles at the junction of Main Road and Low Road, Elm; so that vehicles travelling from the Wisbech direction towards Elm using Main Road would be required to give way to those making the same journey via

Low Road, for the purpose of improving safety at this location by reducing the potential for vehicle collisions) scored 1.8 points out of a maximum of 10; the bid was ranked in tenth place out of the thirteen submitted throughout Fenland. The County Council has decided that the top nine ranking schemes in Fenland (which scored between 4.0 and 7.67 points) would be allocated funding.

The County Council anticipates that a budget will be available for Local Highway Improvement schemes in 2015/16.

Members decided that the outcome of the 2014/15 bidding process be noted.

145/13 Making Money Count project

The Clerk reported to members on an offer from Roddons Housing Association to roll-out its Making Money Count (MMC) project (using the New Horizons outreach vehicle) to villages within the parish.

The aim of the MMC project is to provide practical, friendly help with money issues. Since the service was launched in the summer of 2013, more than 750 people have visited the bus when visiting towns within Fenland and the MMC team is keen to ensure that people who may be more isolated have opportunities to benefit from the service. A bus visit includes a CAB adviser with volunteer Money Mates giving help and support with everyday money issues, e.g. swapping energy suppliers, budget meals and recipe ideas, keeping a spending diary, discount shopping, understanding your bills. The bus has free online access and as well as talking through issues we can signpost to useful websites and other relevant services.

To benefit from this free-of-charge service to local communities, the MMC team is asking that local councils promote the bus visit time as widely as possible. As part of the initiative, advertising leaflets and posters can be provided to the council.

Members feel that that this service could be very helpful to residents of the parish and, consequently, would welcome it being rolled-out to serve the population of Elm parish. They would be happy for the Parish Council to give publicity to any Making Money Count visits to the parish by the New Horizons outreach vehicle. Members do not feel able to suggest particular dates/times for visits; they are happy to leave such decisions to the organisers of the MMC service.

Members decided that Roddons Housing Association be informed of the views of Elm Parish Council, as set out above.

146/13 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minute 116/13 (3), the Clerk read to members a report from a damp-proofing company in relation to an assessment it had carried out on behalf of the letting agents with regard to suggesting a solution to the condensation issue mentioned by the tenant of the cottage.

The report makes suggestions as to works which could be undertaken; however, all of these are costly and are not considered by the Parish Council to be necessary.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would inform the letting agent that the decision of the Parish Council is unchanged from that at minute 116/13 (3), i.e. that the council would not be undertaking works to the conservatory at Cemetery Cottage.

147/13 Correspondence

Dog Order Awareness campaign.

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from Fenland District Council, enquiring as to whether there are specific areas locally where dog fouling is of concern to the Parish Council and where a partnership approach that is already attracting attention elsewhere in Fenland may assist in changing the behaviour of local dog owners.

In the e-mail, the point is made that dog fouling is recognised as being a priority issue for many Fenland communities and that, consequently, Fenland District Council has been working with local Street Pride and In Bloom volunteers to identify community priority areas and to incorporate these into a high profile awareness campaign. To highlight the impact that the minority of irresponsible dog owners have upon local amenity, volunteers have been out in the larger of Fenland's open spaces spraying dog fouling with brightly coloured biodegradable paint. This is to raise awareness of the problem and for users of the open spaces to see clearly the effect that dog fouling has on the enjoyment of those open spaces.

Fenland District Council (FDC) states that it has been approached by residents who have seen what is happening in FDC's open spaces and would like that council to hold similar events in their communities. Therefore, FDC is asking Parish Councils the following questions:

1. is the Parish Council interested in being involved in this or future campaigns?
2. is there an area locally which the Parish Council feels would benefit from this type of partnership approach, and
3. which local volunteer groups should be involved along with the Parish Council in any local campaign?
4. are there any Dog Control Order-related issues in their area with which they would like assistance?

None of the members is aware of dog fouling problems within the villages that they represent and, therefore, can see no need for the delivery of a Dog Order awareness campaign within the parish of Elm.

Members decided that Fenland District Council be informed that Elm Parish Council can see no need for the delivery of a Dog Order awareness campaign within the parish.

148/13 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 15 April 2014, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.00 pm

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

Date:.....