

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 JUNE 2015 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Stokes, Vice-Chairman in the Chair; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Dalliday, Miss Ferguson, Hopkin, Mrs Hopkin, Milham, Patrick, Pinnock and Webb.

In attendance: District Councillor Tanfield.

Apologies: Councillors Brand and Mrs Davis plus District Councillor Sutton.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2015 were confirmed and signed.

15/15 Open Forum

Orchard Gardens Neighbourhood Watch Group

The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Orchard Gardens, Mr D Roy, informed the council of the group's aims to build good relations with Elm Parish Council, act as a valuable resource to help to move village of Elm forward and maintain a safe and healthy place for residents. He expressed the view that this could be achieved only if the group supports the Parish Council and if it looks to the council for guidance in supporting the needs of the residents of Elm.

Mr Roy acknowledged that the group had not engaged positively with the Parish Council in the past but he is hopeful that it proves possible for the group and the Parish Council to work collaboratively from now on. He mentioned that the group has some safety concerns in relation to the installation of play equipment on one of the grassed areas at Abington Grove and feels that perhaps the council could have undertaken some public consultation on the proposal but accepts that the decision has now been made and that the project has been commissioned.

Members decided that the comments of the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Orchard Gardens be noted.

16/15 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.

17/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 8/15 (1))

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Elm, the Clerk informed members that he had now received formal confirmation from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) that – as the scheme for the creation of a play area on the grassed verge area at Abington Grove, Elm would not involve any change to the public highway, such as pedestrian crossing points or parking bays – there is no requirement for the LHA to undertake a

safety audit. Consequently, the Clerk had given the “go ahead” to the contractor with whom the order had been placed for the manufacture and installation of the play equipment, as agreed at minute 124/14 (1), to begin the necessary manufacturing work.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that officers at Fenland District Council are in the process of obtaining quotations for the cost of the proposed play equipment – instead of using estimated costs based upon their experience of schemes delivered elsewhere – for inclusion within the application form for funding from WREN towards the provision of play equipment at the playing field at Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the Clerk would continue to seek updates from Fenland District Council in relation to the progress in delivering a scheme for the provision of play equipment at the playing field at Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge;

(2) Abington Grove, Elm - parking on the grassed verge area (minute 8/15 (3))

The Clerk reported that he had forwarded to the supplier of the timber bollards the requirements of the Local Highway Authority in terms of the bollards being manufactured in a way which accords with the outcome of the safety audit; he had subsequently received a response from the supplier that he had arranged for the manufacturer to undertake the necessary works to the bollards in that regard and that, as soon as the bollards are delivered, he would undertake the installation works.

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

18/15 Police matters

No member of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team was present at the meeting and, consequently, members received no information relating to recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, in relation to the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, since the last meeting of the council.

Councillor Webb expressed the opinion that, despite the assurances given by representatives of the Constabulary at recent meetings of Elm Parish Council that the issues would be tackled, illegal and inconsiderate parking (including parking on footpaths (which causes obstruction)) and speeding within the parish remain an issue and, consequently, appropriate Police attention continues to be needed in that regard. Other members of the council concurred with the comments of Councillor Webb.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would draw to the attention of PCSO Sue Clarke the concerns of members regarding the continued need for Police activity to address the illegal and inconsiderate parking and speeding issues within the parish.

19/15 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 a two-storey 4-bed dwelling with integral garage, involving the demolition of existing shed, on land north of 81 the Stitch, fronting Bar Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR15/0403/F (applicant: Mr J Klue).*

That the application be supported.

- (2) Installation of external wall insulation to existing dwelling at North View, Well End, Fridaybridge – F/YR15/0422/F (applicant: Mrs L Blades).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a three-storey 6-bed dwelling with detached double garage at plot 1, land south of 188 Fridaybridge Road, Elm – F/YR15/0424/F (applicant: Mr Dane Jardine).

That the application be supported. However, the Parish Council would prefer to see a revision to the application to avoid the positioning of the garage to the front of the dwelling, on the basis that such an arrangement would not be in keeping with the street scene and the character of the area

20/15 Section 106 Planning Obligations – outstanding requirements upon developers etc

Councillor Pinnock reminded the council that District Councillor Sutton had, some time ago, looked into the situation regarding outstanding Section 106 Planning Obligations in respect of the parish of Elm and suggested that District Councillor Sutton be requested to provide the council with an update on that position.

Councillor Pinnock questioned whether, now that parrot weed had been removed from the ponds at the entrance to the Grove Gardens estate (minute 143/14 refers), Fenland District Council would be making further efforts to secure adoption of the open space areas, including the community land, at the estate; also, information should be obtained from Fenland District Council as to whether that council has knowledge of any proposals for the land which adjoins the Grove Gardens community land.

Members decided that the comments of Councillor Pinnock be noted and that District Councillor Sutton be requested to investigate the issues which had been raised by Councillor Pinnock.

21/15 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 Tanfield, one of the District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that Fenland District Council (FDC) would soon be running a planning training session for local council members and Clerks; details would be provided to Clerks in due course. She mentioned that the FDC Youth Council has funding available in the current financial year to be able to award grants of up to £1,000 per application for youth-related projects.

District Councillor Tanfield is aware that speeding through Elm is an issue which needs to be addressed and that she had, consequently, sought to raise the matter with PCSO Sue Clarke but had been unable, on a number of occasions, to make contact with the PCSO; District Councillor Tanfield is of the opinion that there is a case for Elm to receive speed enforcement activity by the Constabulary.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

22/15 Open spaces (including the cemetery) under the Parish Council's control

Members considered whether there are any issues relating to the open spaces under the Parish Council's control which required discussion by the Parish Council.

Further to minute 163/14,(2), the Clerk informed members that he had engaged the services of a local locksmith to remedy the problem of accessing the clocktower and, following undertaking of the remedial works, had subsequently arranged the annual maintenance of the clock mechanism and replacement of the failed illumination to one of the clock faces, to be undertaken on 18 June 2015.

Councillor Pinnock commented that he is extremely pleased with the appearance of the cemetery, as a result of recent grounds maintenance activities. Other members made positive comments regarding other areas of open space which are maintained by the council's grounds maintenance contractor; some expressed the opinion that they had never seen the areas looking better.

Some members mentioned the parking of unused vehicles on the grassed verge area at Station Road, Coldham and wondered if action could be taken by any agency, in the interest of improving the appearance of the area, to secure removal of these vehicles.

Members decided that the situation be noted and the Clerk would

- (1) inform council's grounds maintenance contractor of their comments regarding the contractor's work across the parish;
- (2) refer to the Street Scene Team at Fenland District Council the issue relating to the parking of unused vehicles on the grassed verge area at Station Road, Coldham.

23/15 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
Co-operative Funerals	Plot purchase and interment fee	£853.00
A R Clingo	Interment fee	£687.50
Mark Skinner Funeral Service	Cremated remains plot and interment fee	£259.00
Total Income		£2,323.10

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £14.88)	£89.20
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £272.95)	£1,637.71
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £155.38 and NI of £12.58), Broadband and other expenses	£776.88
Anglian Water	Water for playing field	£55.24
Chairman's Allowance Account	Chairman's Allowance 2015/16	£300.00
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax and NI (March, April and May 2015)	£625.99

Carter Cabin Hire	Hire of disabled toilet for Coldham Fun Weekend (includes VAT of £24.00)	£144.00
A-LOCK-AND-KEY	Replacement of lock to Fridaybridge Clocktower	£238.50
D A Pest Control	Control of moles at Coldham	£60.00
Total Expenditure		£3,927.52

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 May 2015 (in the total sum of £148,372.10), together with the figure as at 31 May 2014

Members considered, given that the council now possesses only two such persons (now that Mr P Softley is no longer a member of Elm Parish Council), authorising an additional member of the council to act in the capacity as signatory to Elm Parish Council's bank accounts.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £2,323.10 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,927.52 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 May 2015 and the position as at 31 May 2014 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £79,775.00) at 31 May 2015), the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 30 April 2015 was £68,597.10; making further allowance for a general contingency (at the level of 150% of the 2015/16 Precept, which equates to £51,972.00) reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 May 2015 to approximately £16,625.00;
- (4) Councillor Mrs Cotterell be authorised as an additional signatory to the council's bank accounts.

24/15 Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire

Further to minute 115/14, members considered the submission of a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Clerk reminded members that the aim of the electoral review is to achieve electoral equality, whereby each County Councillor would represent roughly the same number of electors as others across the County.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England proposes to publish, for consultation purposes, final recommendations in September 2015.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, details of the review process and the potential implications for the electoral divisions of relevance to the parish of Elm. He drew members' attention to the possible changes to electoral division boundaries across the County, which would result in a reduction in the total number of County Councillors, with effect from the next County Council elections in 2017, from 69 to 61; at the time of minute 115/14, it was anticipated that the number of County Councillors with effect from May 2017 would be 63.

The Clerk mentioned that the reduction from 69 to 61 Cambridgeshire County Councillors would result in the number of County Councillors in Fenland reducing by two (from 11 to 9) with effect from May 2017.

In terms of the specific implications for the parish of Elm, the recommendations show that the whole of the parish would be included within a March North and Waldersea electoral division, to be represented by one County Councillor.

Responses to the current consultation exercise must be received by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by 6 July 2015.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the council would make no submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in relation to its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council.

25/15 Correspondence

(1) Magpas – financial assistance

Further to minute 170/14 (2), the Clerk read to members a letter from the Head of Fundraising at Magpas expressing the organisation's appreciation of the financial assistance provided by Elm Parish Council towards the cost of operating its services in the financial year 2015/16.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

(2) Elm Friendship Club – financial assistance

Further to minute 119/14 (1), the Clerk read to members a further letter from the Secretary of the Elm Friendship Club expressing the club's appreciation of the financial assistance provided by Elm Parish Council (at minute 102/14 (1)) towards its annual operating costs. This latest letter provided details of some of the activities that had been possible, and had been enjoyed by club members, as a result of the financial assistance provided by Elm Parish Council.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

26/15 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 21 July 2015, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 7.40 pm

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

Date:.....