

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 AUGUST 2015 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Dalliday, Mrs Davis, Miss Ferguson, Milham, Pinnock, Stokes and Webb.

Apologies: Councillors Hopkin, Mrs Hopkin and Patrick.

In attendance: District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 July 2015 were confirmed and signed.

41/15 Open Forum

(1) Speeding across the parish

A parishioner mentioned a number of the speed limit signs along the B1101 are obscured in part by overgrown vegetation; he is concerned that this situation does not help at a time when the council and the Police are trying to address the speeding issues across the parish.

Members decided that the Clerk would draw to the attention of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) the comments of the parishioner, with a request that the LHA assesses the situation and then sends letters to the respective owners of the land from upon which the "offending" vegetation is growing.

(2) Condition of road surface of the B1101

A parishioner expressed his concern regarding the poor condition of the road surface of the section of the B1101 when leaving Coldham (heading towards Wisbech); he mentioned that two cars had recently left the road along that stretch of road and expressed the view that the road surface was a contributory factor to those accidents.

The Clerk reminded the council that officers of the Local Highways Team had submitted a bid for funding for a re-surfacing scheme along that stretch of road and suggested that he would seek to ascertain from the Local Highway Authority the current situation in that regard.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and that the Clerk would seek an update from the Local Highway Authority with regard to its bid for funding for a re-surfacing scheme along parts of the B1101.

42/15 Members' Code of Conduct

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.

43/15 Proposed residential development at Gosmoor Lane, Elm

Further to minute 29/15, members considered further this scheme, following the public consultation event held at the Elm Centre on 25 July 2015.

With the consent of the Chairman, Mr G Edwards of Swann Edwards Architecture informed the council of the outcome, from his perspective, of the community consultation event which had been held on 25 July 2015. Mr Edwards stated that the consultation event had generated nine responses, raising four issues, in relation to the proposal; the four issues raised relate to:

- concerns regarding the ability of the Elm C of E Primary School to be able to accommodate additional pupils
- the amount of traffic, and the speed at which it travels, on Gosmoor Lane
- concerns regarding the adequacy of the current drainage systems (for foul and surface water) to support further residential development within this part of Elm
- the potential for the overlooking of existing properties.

Mr Edwards explained how the issues raised by way concerned parishioners would be addressed, as follows:

- any planning permission granted would be subject to a Section 106 Planning Obligation requiring the payment of a sum to the County Council for the provision of additional educational infrastructure; also, an area of land would be gifted to the Elm C of E Primary School to facilitate extension of its playing field
- the owner of the land at Gosmoor Lane is prepared to fund the installation of traffic calming measures on Gosmoor Lane
- appropriate systems would be put in place to ensure the drainage of the site
- the current layout of the scheme is indicative only at this stage; the plans to be drawn for the purpose of submitting a planning application would ensure that no overlooking would occur; also fencing would be provided along the site boundaries.

In terms of the principle of developing this site residentially, Mr Edwards made the point that approximately one-third of the site is brownfield in nature.

Some members expressed concerns as to the ability of the community infrastructure within Elm - particularly the ability of the Elm C of E Primary School to be able to accommodate additional pupils - to be able to accommodate any further large-scale residential development.

Other views expressed by members related to the fact that approval of a residential development scheme of this scale would be contrary to the provisions of Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (see minute 48/15) and that all proposals for large-scale development in Elm should be assessed as a "package" in the context of that policy.

The views of one member that improvements in community infrastructure should precede new large-scale residential development schemes - the situation should not be the other way around - were supported by other members. Members also feel that a scheme of this scale should provide off-street parking provision for three cars per residential unit.

Members decided that this proposal be not supported by Elm Parish Council, on the basis that the current community infrastructure (including lack of capacity at Elm Primary School, insufficient medical facilities and inadequate local road network) is insufficient to support the continued development within the village and that approval of the proposal would be in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014).

44/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 30/15 (1))

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Elm, the Chairman reported that the majority of the play equipment and fencing had been manufactured and is ready for painting; he anticipates that installation would take place within the next three weeks.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that he had completed the funding application to WREN for £75,000 and submitted a draft application for £100,000 to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund. He had forwarded both of these documents to the relevant officer at Fenland District Council for an initial assessment; however, he had received no feedback on the content of the application forms. The Clerk informed members that the Parish Council would need to submit copies of certain documentation, of the types described, with the application to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund.

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

(2) Abington Grove, Elm - parking on the grassed verge area (minute 30/15 (2))

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by the supplier/installer of the bollards that the installation works would be undertaken later this week.

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

45/15 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.

The Clerk informed members that PCSO Sue Clarke is currently on secondment to the Prince's Trust and that, in her absence, contact should be made with Sergeant Robin Cawston.

The Clerk drew members' attention to an e-mail from Police Inspector Will Davis, which he had forwarded to members since the last meeting of the council, with regard to the new approach to Policing in Cambridgeshire; in summary, the Constabulary needs to review, given the significant budgetary reductions to be made by the service, its current ways of working. Consequently, the Inspector is currently reviewing what meetings officers attend across Fenland and what community engagement opportunities currently exist. The Constabulary wishes to maintain community engagement across the district but has yet to decide how this is to be achieved; it may not include a presence by Police Officers at all meetings of Town and Parish Councils.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

46/15 Planning application

Members considered the following planning application and decided to submit to the Local Planning Authority the comments set out (in italics) below:

Erection of 30 x two-storey dwellings, comprising 21 x 2-bed and 9 x 3-bed on land north of Henry Warby Avenue, Elm – F/YR15/0614/F (applicant: Mr P Land).

Object to the application for the following reasons:

- *approval of the proposal would contribute, through cumulative impact of current and planned residential development, to overdevelopment of the village of Elm*
- *the current community infrastructure (including lack of capacity at Elm Primary School, insufficient medical facilities and inadequate local road network) is insufficient to support the continued development within the village*
- *approval of the proposal would be in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014).*

47/15 Procedure for consideration of the consideration of planning applications

Councillor Pinnock presented a report that he had produced, for the purpose of establishing, if the council feels necessary, a process for consideration by Elm Parish Council of planning applications which would, if referred to a scheduled meeting of the Parish Council, be "out of time" in terms of the consultation deadline set by the Local Planning Authority (i.e. Fenland District Council).

In his report, Councillor Pinnock explained the background to his conclusion that the Parish Council needs to establish a process if it is to be in a position to be able to provide a consultation response to all applications referred by Fenland District Council (FDC) to the Parish Council; the problem of not being able to submit a response to FDC by its consultation deadline results from the fact that the standard response deadline is 21 days from the date of FDC's postage of the application to the Clerk and the Parish Council meets at intervals of four or five weeks (i.e. 28 or 35 days).

Members decided that in cases where a planning application received by the Clerk would be "out of time" in terms of the consultation deadline set by the Local Planning Authority if its consideration were to await the next scheduled meeting of Elm Parish Council, the following process be operated:

- (1) the Clerk would request from the Local Planning Authority an extension of the time for the Parish Council's submission of a consultation response;
- (2) if the request for extension of time were not agreed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) or the Clerk receives no response from the LPA within 3 working days of submitting the request, the Clerk would convene – giving the statutory three clear days notice – a meeting of Elm Parish Council for the sole purpose of discussing the planning application(s) in cases where the planning application proposes the erection of 2 or more new residential units;
- (3) in the case of "out of time" planning applications for development which is not residential in nature, the Clerk would consult members by e-mail as to whether they wished a meeting to be held for the purpose of submitting a consultation response;
- (4) in the case of a planning application not being considered by Elm Parish Council because such consideration could produce only an "out of time" response if discussed at a scheduled meeting and no additional, specific "planning applications" meeting had been held, the Clerk would provide a response to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) stating that the application had not been considered by Elm Parish Council as it had not been possible for the council to accord with the LPA's consultation deadline.

48/15 Fenland Local Plan Policy LP12

Councillor Pinnock presented a report that he had produced, for the purpose of familiarising members with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan. He explained, through his report, that the need for the council to be mindful of the provisions of Policy LP12 had been brought to the council's attention by way of the presentation given at minute 29/15 in relation to a proposal for a scheme of residential development at Gosmoor Lane, Elm.

Councillor Pinnock commented that Policy LP12 suggests that the number of residential properties in Elm should increase by no more than 10% between April 2011 and April 2031. On that basis, the erection of only 73 additional dwellings should be expected during that twenty years period; as planning permissions and completed between April 2011 and the current date total 62 additional dwellings, the inference of Policy LP12 is that only a further 11 dwellings should be erected between now and April 2031. Councillor Pinnock made the point that current planning applications F/YR15/0514/F (minute 32/15 refers) and F/YR15/0614/F (minute 46/15 refers) propose a total of 50 additional dwellings and the proposal for residential development at Gosmoor Lane, Elm (minute 43/15 refers) would increase that total to 100 new dwellings. Policy LP12 also states that applications which would otherwise fall foul of that policy need to have clear support from both the community and the Parish Council if they are to be considered favourably by the Local Planning Authority.

Members decided that the provisions of Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan be noted and that they be taken into account by Elm Parish Council in its consideration of planning applications for residential development in the parish.

49/15 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 Sutton, one of the District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- with regard to minute 47/15, he would always be happy to support requests to Fenland District Council from Elm Parish Council for reasonable extensions of time for the Parish Council's submission of consultation responses to planning applications
- he had reminded the relevant officer of the Local Highways Team regarding the need for trimming works to the trees which are overhanging the layby at Coldham and mentioned the need for cutting back of vegetation at various locations along Fridaybridge Road, Elm, as well as an overhanging bush on Gosmoor Lane, Elm; in response, the Local Highway Authority would be arranging for the Community Payback Team to undertake the necessary works.

Councillor Tanfield, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- she is also happy to support requests to Fenland District Council from Elm Parish Council for reasonable extensions of time for the Parish Council's submission of consultation responses to planning applications
- it would, in her opinion, be a useful practice for the Clerk to copy-in both Councillor Sutton and her in relation to any issue involving Fenland District Council for which backing from the District Councillors for the ward would be beneficial to the Parish Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

50/15 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 34/15, the Clerk reported that he had informed the council's grounds maintenance contractor of the need for works to control weed growth within the Garden of Rest area of Elm Cemetery and that, consequently, the contractor had undertaken to address the issue.

One member expressed the opinion that trimming works are needed to the trees on the council-owned land at The Leam; other members concurred.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would arrange for the council's grounds maintenance contractor to undertake the necessary trimming works to the trees at The Leam.

51/15 Local Highway Improvements 2016/17

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 2016/17 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 2 November 2015.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and to defer to the next meeting of the Parish Council the consideration of submission of an application for a LHI scheme.

52/15 County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Transport and Infrastructure Policy and Funding Team at Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to that council's consultation exercise in relation to the review of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), which was adopted in 2006 as part of the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011.

Cambridgeshire County Council states, in its letter of consultation, that the principal aim of the ROWIP is to bring about improvements to the rights of way network and enhancing countryside. The draft version of the updated plan can be viewed at:

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20006/travel_roads_and_parking/66/transport_plans_and_policies.

Any comments on the draft version of the updated ROWIP, which can be submitted by e-mail to transport.plan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk, must be received by the County Council no later than 21 October 2015.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that members would submit to the County Council, prior to expiry of the consultation period, any comments that they wish to make on the draft version of the updated ROWIP.

53/15 Street lamps

The Clerk informed members that Fenland District Council had identified two street lamps – FPC2 at Overstone Drive, Coldham and FPC10 at Fridaybridge Road, Elm – which require repair works; the quotations for the necessary works are £1,103.61 and £627.53 respectively.

Members decided that Fenland District Council be authorised to arrange, via its street lighting contractor, the required work to street lamps FPC2 at Overstone Drive, Coldham and FPC10 at Fridaybridge Road, Elm.

54/15 Cemetery Cottage, Elm

Further to minutes 104/14 (4) and 119/14 (2), members considered both the extent to which the council would reimburse the tenant for the cost of the improvement works that he had undertaken to this property - those being flooring works to the ground-floor and the installation of a wood burning stove in the lounge – and the need to undertake repair works to the central heating boiler (or its replacement).

The tenant of the property had provided, via the letting agents, copies of receipts for the materials purchased for the improvement works that he had undertaken to the cottage (in the total sum of £848.78).

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the letting agents of the property, which detailed the works required to the current central heating boiler (estimated to cost up to £550) and the estimated cost of installing a new boiler (£1,400).

Members decided that

- (1) the tenant of the cottage be reimbursed the full cost of his undertaking improvement works to the property, in the sum of £848.78;
- (2) arrangements be made, via the letting agents for this property, for a new central heating boiler to be installed, at the estimated cost of £1,400.00, at this property.

55/15 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
Richard King Memorials	Memorial tablet	£110.00
Kent Memorials	Memorial tablet	£110.00
Richard King Memorials	Memorial tablet and additional inscription	£176.00

Richard King Memorials	Additional memorial inscription	£66.00
Peter Barnes Funerals	Plot purchase and interment fee (ashes)	£259.00
A R Clingo	Plot purchase and interment fee (ashes)	£259.00
M J Coates	Cemetery memorial and additional inscriptions	£280.00
Total Income		£1,783.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £18.60)	£111.60
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £259.95)	£1,559.71
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £156.87 and NI of £13.48), Broadband and other expenses	£703.81
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit of 2014/15 accounts (includes VA of £60.00)	£360.00
Fenland District Council	Replacement of street lamp FPC2 (Oldfield Avenue, Elm) (includes VAT of £249.67)	£1,498.01
D A Pest Control	Control of moles at Coldham and Fridaybridge	£60.00
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£42.18
P Heron	Reimbursement of the costs of improvement works (that being tiling of floors and the installation of a wood burning stove)	£848.78
Total Expenditure		£5,184.09

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2015 (in the total sum of £146,760.78), together with the figure as at 31 July 2014.

Further to minute 12/15, the Clerk reported that the Parish Council's accounts for 2014/15 had been "signed off" by the External Auditor.

Members decided

(1) that the income of £1,783.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £5,184.09 be authorised;

- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2015 and the position as at 31 July 2014 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £79,775.00) at 31 July 2015), the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 July 2015 was £66,985.78; 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 July 2015 to approximately £15,014.00;
- (4) that the situation regarding the Parish Council's accounts for 2014/15 be noted.

56/15 Correspondence

The Clerk informed members that there are currently no items of correspondence for reporting to the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

57/15 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 15 September 2015, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.25 pm

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

Date:.....