

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

20 OCTOBER 2015 – 7.00 pm.

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs Davis, Hopkin, Mrs Hopkin, Milham and Patrick.

**In attendance:** District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2015 were confirmed and signed.

### 73/15 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.

### 74/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

#### (1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 60/15 (2))

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Elm, the Clerk reported that installation of the boundary fencing within which the play equipment would be sited is now underway.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that, subject to signing of the form by the Chairman, the application for £100,000 to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund is ready for submission and that, subject to obtaining the results of the community consultation and compiling other pieces of documentation (including a copy of the lease held by the Parish Council in relation to the playing field) the Clerk would be submitting the funding application to WREN for £75,000.

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

#### (2) Parish street lighting (minute 67/15)

The Clerk reported the response that he had received from District Councillor King, the Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs at Fenland District Council. The Clerk had forwarded to members, in advance of the meeting, copies of the e-mails which had been sent by District Councillor King in relation to the comments which had been made by the Parish Council at minute 67/15.

In response to the Parish Council's request that the Cabinet at Fenland District Council gives serious consideration to using the Concurrent Functions Grant money which would be paid to Parish Councils over the next ten financial years be not paid to those councils but be used by Fenland District Council instead to meet the cost of replacing all of the category 2 street lights across all 12 parishes within the district, District

Councillor King commented that "the future of Concurrent Functions Grants would be considered in parallel with the District Council's Comprehensive Spending Review".

In response to the Parish Council's expressed concern regarding the ethics of a single contractor – Balfour Beatty – undertaking both the condition survey of the lighting stock and the consequent replacement works (and this being seen as a conflict of interest), District Councillor King had commented that "Balfour Beatty is responsible for all highway lighting within Cambridgeshire; this amounts to many thousands of units across the County, including Fenland. The company's buying power and local resources are not matched by any other provider, which allows the company to provide best value to third parties such as Fenland District Council and the local Parish Councils. It also gives the District Council access to the knowledge and skills which this specialist provider offers".

In response to the Parish Council's request for clarification as to why the cost of the works that it is expected to fund had increased since information was last provided to Elm Parish Council (in December 2014) (there being fewer lights requiring replacement but at a greater cost), District Councillor King had commented that "the total contribution proposed by Fenland District Council (FDC) remains at £250,000. Equally the unit price used for estimating the budget costs remains as before. The method of establishing the level of contribution also remains related to the proportion of Category 2 lights in the respective parish area. However, the number of Category 1 lights had increased; which are being funded by FDC. This results in less remaining of the initial £250,000 to contribute towards the replacement of Category 2 lights. Also, since December 2014, Benwick Parish Council is now included in the proposal and the contribution proportion now takes this into consideration".

Members decided, disappointedly, that the responses from District Councillor King be noted.

### **75/15 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.

Members had no issues to raise, for reference by the Clerk to the local policing team.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **76/15 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 5-bed dwelling with detached triple garage with storage over at plot 3, land north of 89 – 95 The Stitch, Fridaybridge – F/YR15/0888/F (applicant: Mr L Russell).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of 11 two-storey 4-bed dwellings with garages on land west of Cedar Way, accessed from Grove Gardens, Elm – F/YR15/0907/F (applicant: Kier Living Ltd).

Object to the application for the following reasons:

- over-development of the site

- the application site provides insufficient facilities for the off-road parking of vehicles likely to be generated by occupiers of the proposed dwellings
- a part of the application site is subject to a Section 106 Planning Obligation requiring its use, once adopted by Fenland District Council, as community land.

Further to minute 165/14, the Clerk reported 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 4 dwellings on land south of Needham Road Cottages, Needham Bank, Fridaybridge (application F/YR15/0194/O refers) and informed members of the opportunity, if they so wished, to make further comments (to those submitted to FDC previously) to the Planning Inspectorate.

The Clerk reminded members of the consultation response that it had submitted to Fenland District Council at minute 165/14 in relation to this application.

Members decided that no representation be made to the Planning Inspectorate

### **77/15 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 is currently undertaking a public consultation exercise in relation to its Comprehensive Spending Review and she asked members to encourage parishioners to complete the survey document and return it to the District Council. She mentioned that those members of the public who complete and return the survey document would be sent subsequently a further, more detailed document. She commented that the District Council would have difficult service/spending choices to make in achieving financial savings of approximately £1.8 million over the next three financial years
- the Fenland District Youth Council still has around £4,500 of funding available in the current financial year to be able to award grants of up to £1,000 per application for youth-related projects.
- in an effort to increase levels of participation in sport, particularly by young persons, the District Council had installed, using funding provided by Sport England, table tennis tables, manufactured in concrete, in outdoor locations at March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

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

- Fenland District Council had entered into a joint service arrangement with Peterborough City Council in the delivery of Planning services for the two council areas; a Head of Planning Services covering the shared service had been appointed (the post had been awarded to the officer who had been the Head of Planning Services at Peterborough City Council)
- he had taken action to address incidents of fly tipping within the parish
- he had attended the Fenland Enterprise Business Awards ceremony on 16 October 2015 and that it had been his pleasure to present, in the stead of the Leader of Fenland District Council, to Elm Parish Councillor Miss Ferguson the award for Best New Business (that being the Black Cat estate agency).

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### 78/15 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 65/15, the Clerk reminded members of their decision to obtain one more quotation in relation to trimming works to trees at The Leam, Fridaybridge and to trees and hedgerows at one of the Pocket Parks in Elm and the offer that had been made by certain members to invite further quotations. Those members expressed disappointment that the Clerk had not been sent quotations by the contractors with whom they had made contact in that regard.

Members decided that

- (1) the situation in general be noted;
- (2) the members who had invited the quotations from contractors in relation to trimming works to trees at The Leam, Fridaybridge and to trees and hedgerows at one of the Pocket Parks in Elm would make further contact with those contractors in an attempt to achieve the submission of quotations for this work.

### 79/15 Parking in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School

The Chairman informed members of complaints that he had received from parishioners regarding the parking difficulties in the vicinity of the Elm C of E Primary School since installation of the bollards around the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101 (minute 60/15 (3) refers) and, therefore, he invited members to consider whether the council should examine the possibility of creating a car parking area on the grassed area on the opposite side of that junction.

Councillor Pinnock, who had drawn this item of business to the attention of parishioners via social media, stated that had been informed by a number of residents that they would oppose such a proposal; there were comments made in relation to the fact that this area of land is prone to flooding during winter, provision of a car parking area would be very costly and it would be difficult to provide a safe means of vehicular access to the land. Councillor Pinnock expressed the opinion that it is not the responsibility of Elm Parish Council to provide off-road car parking facilities for the parents who currently park in the immediate vicinity of the school.

Some members commented that this matter had been considered and dismissed by the council previously and that the reasons for not pursuing car parking provision in this location at that time remain valid.

A number of members mentioned that they had heard positive comments from a number of parishioners regarding the bollards which had been provided by the Parish Council on the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101 – not only has installation of the bollards achieved the council's objective of preventing the parking of vehicles on that grassed area but also improved the appearance of that part of the village and, because of the reflectors affixed to the bollards, it had also improved road safety (by "highlighting" the bend in the road at that point). For those reasons, some members expressed the opinion that the council should consider installing a "matching set" of bollards around the grassed area on the opposite side of that junction.

Members decided that the possibility of creating a car parking area on the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101 that not be considered at this or any future time during the term of this council (i.e. until May 2019) and that the Clerk would obtain a quotation, from the contractor which had manufactured and installed the bollards at the bollards around the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101, for the manufacture and installation of a "matching set" of bollards around the grassed area on the opposite side of that junction.

## 80/15 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
M J Coates	Cemetery memorial	£148.00
UK Power Networks	Electricity wayleave	£230.91
Fenland District Council	Parish Precept and CTSG (second 50%)	£19,156.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£20,058.51</b>

### Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £18.60)	£111.60
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £281.64)	£1,689.84
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £186.75 and NI of £31.41), Broadband and other expenses	£788.66
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax and NI (June, July and August 2015)	£588.36
C Brennan	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 30 September 2015)	£100.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	Poppy wreath	£17.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£3,295.46</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 September 2015 (in the total sum of £136,784.31), together with the figure as at 30 September 2015.

The Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the second quarter of the 2015/16 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 gave initial thoughts to setting a budget and Parish Precept for 2016/17, particularly in the light of the need to be in a position to be able to fund the cost of street lighting replacement works (minutes 67/15 and 74/15 (2) refer).

Councillor Pinnock proposed that, now that the council is in receipt of the remainder of its Precept for 2015/16, a further £6,000 be added to the ear-marked reserve for the replacement of street lights across the parish (i.e. to increase this financial provision from £25,000 to £31,000).

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £20,058.51 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,295.46 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 September 2015 and the position as at 30 September 2014 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £80,765.00) at 30 September 2015, the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 30 September 2015 was £56,019.31; 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 30 September 2015 to approximately £4,047.00;
- (4) that the financial information within the second quarter's management accounts be noted;
- (5) that the era-marked reserve for funding replacement of street lights across the parish be increased from £25,000 to £31,000 (i.e. one-third of the estimated cost of £93,000).

### **81/15 Grants to voluntary and charitable bodies – Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2015**

Members considered making a donation, in addition to purchase of the annual Poppy Wreath, to this year's British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council had made such a donation in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (minutes 99/12, 90/13 102/14 (3) refer).

Members decided that a donation of £30.00 be made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2014.

### **82/15 Parish Council IT provision**

The Clerk explained to members the operating inefficiencies that he is now experiencing with the laptop provided to him for use on Elm Parish Council business and the need, in his opinion, to replace this piece of IT equipment (which he believes to be at least 8 years of age) in the near future, in the interests of both business continuity and safeguarding the council's data.

As the Clerk had mentioned in conversation with the councillor the operating inefficiencies of the council's current laptop, Councillor Pinnock had undertaken research into an appropriate replacement machine and he made a suggestion to council in that regard.

Various views were expressed by members as to the appropriate level of specification required for a council laptop.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk be authorised to purchase, within a budget of £500.00, a new laptop for use on Elm Parish Council business.

### **83/15 Correspondence**

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the operator of a small family-run circus (which aims to provide access to a circus by those living in more rural areas across the UK), enquiring as to whether Elm Parish Council could suggest a possible site in the parish from which to operate a circus as part of its 2016 tour.

Members concluded that they are unable to identify a site within the parish which would be of sufficient size to accommodate not only a circus and its associated vehicles etc but also on-site facilities for the parking of visitors' vehicles.

Members decided that the Clerk would inform the enquirer of the council's conclusions in this matter.

**84/15 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 17 November 2015, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.15 pm**

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

Date:.....

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