

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 January 2018 – 6.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand: Chairman; Councillors, Mrs Cotterell, Miss Ferguson, Milham, Hopkin, Mrs Luffman, Mrs Davis and Stokes.

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Hopkin and District Councillor Ms. Tanfield

130/17 Members' Code of Conduct

Members were reminded of the need for them to submit to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council, via the Parish Clerk, any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

Members decided the reminder be noted and acted upon.

131/17 Minutes of December Meeting

The Minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Public Forum

A Parishioner raised an issue in respect of street lighting in Rose Lane Elm. The light is currently not working but when it is, it is an annoyance to those living near it and they feel it is not required as they all have porch lights. The Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of the light being removed.

A Parishioner asked that the new time of the Parish Council meetings be noted on the website. He also mentioned about the accident at March Road Coldham which had knocked down the Vehicle Activated Speed Sign. The Clerk confirmed that she was aware of this and it had already been reported.

A Parishioner asked for confirmation of the email address for the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that it was as detailed on the website and that she was no longer using a forwarding address from Gmail but a recent update had affected some of the emails being forwarded to the Clerk's email address. The Clerk was meeting with the IT contractor on the 17th January to try to rectify the issue.

132/17 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Fridaybridge (Minute 111/17 (1) refers

The Clerk confirmed that she was meeting with officers from FDC on the 24th January to discuss the Contractors who had made tenders for the project and report back at the next meeting.

(2) Speeding across the Parish (Minute 111/17(2) refers

A report was received by email from the Speedwatch Co-Ordinator confirming that one session had been held in December.

(3) & (4) Local Highway Improvements schemes – Elm & Fridaybridge (Minute 111/17(3) & (4) refers)

Nothing further to report at this time. The speed reduction in Fridaybridge is expected to happen in the Spring. CCC are waiting for another Parish Council to agree a similar speed reduction and then the works/materials can be shared with Elm to reduce costs.

133/17 Police matters – PCSO Sue Clarke

No email was received from the Police prior to the meeting.

134/17 Planning Applications

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

F/YR17/1169/F – Erection of 2 x 2-storey 3-bed dwellings at Land West of the Holt Begdale Road Elm

Resolved: That the Application be supported

F/YR17/1180/F – Erection of a dwelling (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at Land east of 2 Overstone Road Coldham

Resolved: That the Application be supported subject to the Highway Authority being satisfied with the access to the development.

F/YR17/1175/F – Formation of a vehicular access to Main Road and erection of 1.8 metre high fence facing Back Road (retrospective) at 11A Main Road Fridaybridge

Resolved: The Application be supported

F/YR17/0604/F - Notification of Appeal – Land at Tower Road Fridaybridge – Erection of 2 x2-storey 4-bed dwellings with attached double garage

Resolved: Members noted the Appeal.

135/17 Reports from District and County Councillors

Councillor Sutton reported that he had a contact number for another PCSO for the Clerk to contact in the absence of PCSO Sue Clarke.

He further reported that FDC are out for consultation in respect of their 2018/19 Business Plan. He informed Members that the FDC Brown Bin scheme was £40 for those paying by cash and £36 for those paying by direct debit and people could still sign up for the next financial year.

He said that he had been called out early one morning over the Christmas period in respect of getting some sand bags because of flooding in Birch Grove.

Finally Councillor Sutton confirmed that he had not been selected to be the Conservative candidate for the 2019 local elections. He was considering his future position and whether to stand as an independent but was reluctant to do so as he was a Conservative. He assured Members that he would do his Councillor role right up to his last day.

Members noted District Councillor Sutton's comments.

136/17 Open Spaces (including the cemetery) within the Parish

The Clerk reported that she had written to those Parishioners whose properties backed onto the dyke at the Cemetery in Elm, requesting £46.80 as a contribution towards the maintenance works. She had requested that those wishing to have the work carried out on their side of the dyke reply with a cheque by the 19th January 2018. She confirmed she would report back at the next meeting as to progress. Those not making a payment would not have the work carried out to their side of the dyke.

Members noted the situation.

The issue of an Architect to prepare plans for the works at the Cemetery was discussed. The Clerk had received one quote and was awaiting a second one. The quote was for £300 (the Contractor said that it would be in that region but possibly higher if extra work was found to be required).
Members resolved to approve costs in the region of £300.00

137/17 Bus Shelter Provision in the Parish

The issue was raised in respect of the lack of Bus Shelters in Parish and a discussion took place.

Members resolved that the Clerk liaise with the Bus Company about the provision of Bus Shelters, with a view to ascertaining the demand for them and whether they would be willing to contribute towards the costs.

The Clerk to report back at the next meeting.

138/17 Memorandum of Understanding in respect of MVAS in the Parish

A Councillor agreed to volunteer to be trained in placing MVAS (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign) as specified under the MOU with CCC. A Parishioner mentioned that Elm Speedwatch were also prepared to be trained in and move the signs. They would need to sign an MOU with the CCC as well and this was in hand.

139/17 Discussion on Half-Yearly Report from Internal Auditor

Members previously discussed the Report and resolved to note the Report and the information contained therein.

140/17 Financial Matters

(1) Income and Expenditure since last meeting

ELM PARISH COUNCIL		
Income & Expenditure		
16 January 2018		
Income		
Payer	Description	Amount £
National Savings	Interest Received	63.10
Peter Heron	Cemetery Cottage Rent	595.00
Peter Barnes Funerals	Burial	990.00
JG Cross Memorials	Cemetery memorial	222.00
Fenland District Council	Concurrent Functions	2,640.00
Total		4,510.10
Expenditure		
Payee	Description	Amount £
T Jordan	Clerk Training Expenses	200.00
Anglian Water	Water for Playing Field Elm	11.97
Anglian Water	Water for Cemetery	68.57
Fenland District Council	Wheelie bins emptying	184.27
C Brennan	Security - Playing Field Elm	100.00
RJ Warren Ltd	Grounds Maintenance	1,727.27
canalbs ltd	Internal Audit Fee	154.00
CL Butcher	Salary & Expenses	700.57
Doddington Parish Council	Training Fees	135.00
Total		3,281.65

In addition to the above reported expenditure there has also been £178.88 paid out in December by the Council in Pension contributions for the Clerk. This covers the period from July to December 2017. The Council has paid £19.88 and the Clerk £159.00 deducted from her wages. This is paid by direct debit to NEST. The EPC contributions increase to 2% from April 2018

Members considered the level of Parish Precept for the financial year 2018/19.

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the Parish Council's income and expenditure for 2017/18 and as at 31 December 2016, the financial position as at that date, estimates of income and expenditure for 2018/19 and various notes to aid members' deliberations regarding the level of Parish Precept to be set, including the facts that

- **The difference between the estimated expenditure and estimated income for 2018/19 is £67,646.00.**
- Elm Parish Council Precept for 2017/18 is £52,936.00
- **The level of Council Tax Support Grant which has been allocated by Fenland District Council to Elm Parish Council for 2017/18 is £1,146.00** (a reduction from £2,293.00 in 2017/18). This will cease in 2019/20.
- Parish Council was awarded a Concurrent Functions Grant by Fenland District Council of 5,293.00 in 2017/18. **The estimated receipts figures above show Concurrent Functions Grant income from Fenland District Council (FDC) at the same level as that paid in the current financial year (FDC has confirmed that this will be the case).**
- The estimated receipts figures assume full occupancy of both Cemetery Cottage and the allotments. One of the allotment sites will only be half occupied from October 2018 as notice has been given. If a replacement tenant is not found this will reduce income by £1062.50
- The Section 137 figure is based upon average spending during recent financial years. However, guidance states that it is not necessary for a local council to set a specific annual budget figure for such payments, as Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a local council to spend under this provision (which can be summarised as funding items of community benefit where no specific power exists) at a rate currently of £7.42 per elector. In the case of Elm parish, that would be approximately £23,560 in 2017/18. The figures per elector are not yet known for 2018/19.
- Payments estimate in relation to Cemetery Cottage is a mainly a contingency item. It is anticipated that spend should continue to be minimal following renovation works in early 2011.
- Allotment rents increased, from £100 to £125 per acre with effect from October 2017; the opportunity does not exist to increase these rents again until October 2020, provided that notice is given no later than October 2019. The increased level of rent is included in the estimates of income for 2018/19.
- There is the opportunity to increase burial fees with effect from 1 April 2018; these were, however, increased on 1 April 2016 and income in 2017/18 will exceed the estimate for that financial year.
- According to the Practitioners' Guide to Local Council Governance, it is recommended that a local council should possess, as general reserves, a sum equating to three to twelve months of its gross expenditure; in the case of Elm Parish Council, that would be a sum (in addition to any ear-marked reserves) of between £15,000 and £55,000 (based upon recent average annual expenditure). **It is estimated that the level of general reserves at the end of the 2017/18 financial year will be in the order of £55,000.**
- In accordance with minute 98/15, provision made in the 2017/18 estimates of expenditure for a further one-third of the anticipated costs of replacing the Category 2 street lights (i.e. £31,000) within the parish. The council already possessed an ear-marked reserve totalling £62,000 for the other two-thirds of the anticipated cost of these works. As the Council are likely to go with the FDC Street lighting scheme from April 2018, these reserves are not required to be so high. However, due to the works required to the Cemetery in 2018, some of the reserves currently held for the street lighting, need to be reallocated to the Cemetery. It is anticipated that these costs could be as high as £75,000. A figure of £20,000 has therefore been allocated in the budget estimate for 2018/19 to allow for any street lighting works identified as required by the new FDC contractor and for lantern replacements.
- In addition to the funds that maybe expended on the LHI 2018/19 is agreed by CCC, there are also some additional works required in other areas in the Parish including Wales Bank amounting to at least £10,000.00.
- Earmarked and general reserves will need to be reviewed at the April 2018 meet

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £3,460.53 be noted and that the expenditure of £4,510.10 be authorised;
- (2) Members discussed and noted the reports in respect of Quarter Three income and expenditure, the Bank Reconciliation for December 2017 and the Precept Estimates for 2018/19.
- (3) Members resolved to set the Precept for Elm Parish Council for the financial year 2018/19 at £67,646.00. This was an increase of £10,000 from the figures provided by the Clerk to finance highway improvements in Wales Bank in addition to the allocated funds held for other highway improvements in the Parish.

(Please note by setting a precept of £67,646.00, this equates to a charge of approx. £58.27 per Band D property compared with approx. £46.52 in the current financial year).

As previously agreed Members wished to be reminded of any previously agreed expenditure not yet made and/or invoiced for, which is detailed below:-

The Council currently have agreed expenditure outstanding in the total of approximately £10,000. It is anticipated that some of these will be invoiced for by the end of the third quarter. This is for the following items:-

- Works at the Leam
- Works to the Cemetery Watercourse
- Works at the Cemetery Cottage
- Cost of replacement street lighting lantern x 3
- Placing of two litter bins in Elm/Fridaybridge
- LHI Payments

141/17 Requests from Tenant at Cemetery Cottage

Nothing further to report at this time and this will be placed on the Agenda for the February meeting.

142/17 Funding request from Elm Speedwatch Co-Ordinator

Members discussed the request from Elm Speedwatch Group for the funding to purchase 6 Hi Viz Winter Jackets in the sum of £163.50 (£27.25 per jacket). Members resolved to fund the expenditure.

143/17 Correspondence

The Clerk reported to Members that the Elections officer from FDC had confirmed that there had been no request for an Election to fill the three vacancies on the Council by the legal deadline. The Clerk further reported that three Parishioners had expressed an interest in the vacancies.

Accordingly the matter will go on the Agenda for the February meeting where the co-opting of Parishioners to the Council could be considered further.

Members noted the situation.

The Clerk reported that she and the Chairman has met with two Highways Officers from CCC to discuss a number of issues in the Parish. These include Wales Bank, Redmoor Lane, Fridaybridge and the speed bumps in Elm by the Cemetery.

A number of actions were agreed and the further progress will be reported at subsequent meetings as appropriate.

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting was 20th February 2018 at 6.00pm.

Meeting finished at 6.55pm.

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

Date: