

# ELM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

13 SEPTEMBER 2016 – 7.00 pm.

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Brand, Patrick and Miss Ferguson plus District Councillor Sutton.

**In attendance:** District Councillor Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 16 August 2016 were confirmed and signed.

### 53/16 Open Forum

#### (1) Highway re-surfacing works

Further to minute 44/16 (1), a resident of Coldham expressed gratitude on behalf of the residents of the village that road markings had now been laid on the re-surfaced section of the carriageway at Coldham and he thanked the Parish Council for pursuing this matter with the Local Highway Authority,

Members decided that the comments of the resident of Coldham be noted.

#### (2) Overgrown hedges between Fridaybridge and Elm

Further to minute 42/16 (2), a parishioner commented that hedges between Fridaybridge and Elm are still in need of cutting-back; he mentioned that he had witnessed a situation recently whereby a person whose bag of shopping had been hit by a passing motorist because of the pedestrian needing to walk very close to the carriageway because of hedges overhanging the footway.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and that the Clerk would, again, draw this matter to the attention of the Local Highway Authority (albeit that the responsibility for cutting back the hedges falls to the respective private land owners) and to the local Member of Parliament.

#### (3) Planning application F/YR16/0717/F (Conversion of existing barns to 6 dwellings (comprising of 1 x 2-bed single-storey, 2 x 3-bed single-storey, 2 x 4-bed single-storey and 1 x 5-bed two-storey) and to provide an extension to existing dwelling, involving the demolition of 3 existing agricultural buildings, at Stags Holt Farm, Stags Holt, Coldham)

A parishioner informed the council of his belief that approval of this planning application would result in the threshold figure for new residential development at Coldham, in accordance with Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan, being exceeded.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and taken into account when considering planning application F/YR16/0717/F (at minute 57/16).

#### **(4) Recent fatality on the B1101**

A parishioner mentioned the recent death of a local resident as a result of a road accident on the B1101 and enquired as to whether the Parish Council had knowledge of any proposals to improve the safety of that road.

The Clerk informed members of his awareness that this matter had been raised with the Local Highway Authority by the Chairman of the Council.

A number of members expressed the opinion that the majority of accidents on rural roads are as a result of driver error and not the condition of the carriageway.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted.

#### **54/16 Members' Code of Conduct**

The Clerk reminded members 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 from the Clerk be noted and acted upon.

#### **55/16 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

##### **(1) Play equipment provision in Fridaybridge (minute 44/16 (2))**

The Clerk informed members that he had submitted an application, using the form provided to him by Fenland District Council, to WREN for funding towards the cost of providing an equipped play area scheme at Fridaybridge; however, the application form and supporting documents had been returned to the Clerk, as WREN now only accepts applications and supporting documentation submitted by electronic means.

The Clerk stated that he would, following scanning of the supporting documentation (which includes the lease of the playing field, bank statements, quotations etc), submit the application to WREN by electronic means.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

##### **(2) Speeding across the parish (minute 44/16 (3))**

Councillor Pinnock updated members on the operation of the Speed Watch scheme across the parish. He informed members that that Speed Watch activity continues, although (because of volunteers' holidays) only two sessions had taken place since the last meeting of the council. Because of the "quiet" period of activity, the opportunity had been taken to return the Speed Indicator Device (SID) to the manufacturer for the repair of an intermittent fault; the repair work has been carried out and the equipment is now operating as it should.

Councillor Pinnock had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, reports containing statistical data in relation to Speed Watch activity between January and September 2016. The reports show that: 12,267 vehicles had been "clicked"; 932 vehicles (7.5% of the total) had been speeding; 64 Speed Watch sessions (covering a period of 87.5 hours) had taken place.

Councillor Pinnock suggested that an enhanced version of the tripod (with adjustable legs) for the SID, at a cost of approximately £300, be purchased by the council. This would enable the device to be used more effectively in certain parts of the parish. He mentioned that although Cambridgeshire Constabulary continues

to support the local Speed Watch group, he is disappointed with the current arrangements for the training of volunteers and the risk assessment of new locations, as well as the level of feedback received from the Constabulary. Consequently, Councillor Pinnock would be making arrangements to discuss the situation with the new Cambridgeshire Constabulary Speed Watch Co-ordinator; thereafter he would report to council on the outcome of those discussions.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that the council would meet the cost of purchasing an enhanced version of the tripod for the SID.

**(3) Local Highway Improvements scheme 2016/17 (minute 44/16 (4))**

Councillor Pinnock informed members that the monitoring of vehicle speeds and traffic volumes at certain locations in and around Elm, as promised by the County Council's Highways Service, is underway. He reminded members that following the Local Highway Authority's assessment of the results of this exercise, a draft LHI scheme would be produced by the Local Highway Authority, for consideration by Elm Parish Council.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

**(4) Charity fundraising (minute 44/16 (5))**

Members considered further the selection of a charity to benefit from half of the money which would be collected by the tenant of Cemetery Cottage as a result of the Christmas lights display which he would be providing at the cottage again this year.

Members are of the opinion that the charity to be selected by the council should be one which provides services or support to parishioners.

Members decided that the Wisbech and District Stroke Club be selected as the charity to benefit from half of the money which would be collected by the tenant of Cemetery Cottage as a result of the Christmas lights display which he would be providing at the cottage again this year.

**56/16 Police matters**

Further to minute 45/16, members received a presentation from Police Inspector Will Davis on the current approach to policing in Fenland. He commented that he had served in the Constabulary for seventeen years and that his experience is that Fenland is the "busiest" area.

Inspector Davis informed the council of the structure of the local policing service and the level of staffing resource in Fenland and that he possesses the responsibility for managing the "uniformed" policing across the district (there are two Neighbourhood Policing Teams, based at March and Wisbech); there are also two CID teams, managed by an Inspector.

The Inspector made the point that all of the calls received by the Constabulary are assessed on a threat, risk, harm basis; this is to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately to address issues with the highest priority need; the Constabulary does not possess sufficient resources to do everything and it must try to make sure that members of the public have realistic expectations of the Constabulary. He informed the council of the Constabulary's current priorities, which include dwelling burglaries and child sexual exploitation. If the need arises, the Fenland Team is able to bid for additional (temporary) resources from elsewhere within the County to help tackle specific issues.

Inspector Davis informed the council of the activities of the PCSOs within Fenland, which includes the visit by a PCSO at a primary school each day of the week and forums in secondary schools on a monthly basis; at the forum meetings, each school is able to agree a community priority for police attention. In addition, the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) engages with the multi-agency Problem Solving Group, as a means of addressing community concerns. Also, officers of the NPT produce reports to Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Watch groups. There is also engagement with the fourteen children's homes in Fenland (because of this number of children's homes, the Police are regularly dealing with incidents of "missing from home").

With regard to engaging with communities, the Neighbourhood Policing Teams operate Neighbourhood Forums as a means of setting community priorities – the current one for the forum area which includes the parish of Elm is speeding in villages. However, the current arrangement is not considered by Inspector Davis to be an effective means by which to engage with communities, as they attract very few members of the public. The Inspector is, consequently, proposing to use different methods of engagement (including Survey Monkey and a police (and FDC officer) presence at local supermarkets). It is also the aim of the Inspector to provide additional assistance to Speed Watch and Neighbourhood Watch groups in the district.

Inspector Davis mentioned Operation Pheasant, which is a multi-agency operation with the aim of addressing the exploitation of migrant workers in Fenland. He mentioned also the two teams of Police Cadets in Fenland, both of which are based in Wisbech. Support for the Police Cadets is provided by volunteers and the aim of the project is to keeping safe those youngsters who are vulnerable; one of the teams of cadets comprises a number of pupils at Meadowgate School – this is the only team of cadets in the UK which comprises pupils of a school for those with special educational needs.

Inspector Davis responded to members' questions.

In response to a question from Councillor Pinnock, Inspector Davis expressed the opinion that Neighbourhood Watch groups play a very positive role in disseminating information to the public in relation to local crime and disorder issues.

Councillor Webb commented that the parking of vehicles on pavements is a significant problem throughout the parish and made a plea that local officers give this matter some attention when "going about their business".

Members decided that the information presented by Inspector Davis be noted.

### **57/16 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) Conversion of existing barns to 6 dwellings (comprising of 1 x 2-bed single-storey, 2 x 3-bed single-storey, 2 x 4-bed single-storey and 1 x 5-bed two-storey) and to provide an extension to existing dwelling, involving the demolition of 3 existing agricultural buildings, at Stags Holt Farm, Stags Holt, Coldham – F/YR16/0717/F (applicant: Savills (UK) Ltd).

*That the application be supported. The council is mindful of the provisions of Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted in May 2014) and believes that new residential development of this scale at Coldham would result in the threshold figure for that village being exceeded; however, the council is not aware of any community opposition to the proposal.*

- (2) Erection of 2 dwellings, involving demolition of northern section of existing building (Outline application with all matters reserved), on land north of Friday House Residential Home, 141 March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0724/O (applicant: Mr Joseph Greenhow).

*That the application be supported.*

- (3) Erection of a detached double car port to front of dwelling and covered barbeque area to rear of outbuildings of existing dwelling at The Old Vicarage, March Road, Coldham – F/YR16/0736/F (applicant: Mr Craske).

*That the application be supported.*

- (4) Works to 6 Sycamore trees within a Conservation Area at Halfpenny House, Rose Lane, Elm – F/YR16/0761/TRCA (applicant: Mr McMillan).

*That the application be supported.*

Further to minute 46/16, the Clerk reported that the appeal against Fenland District Council's refusal to grant planning permission for the erection of 5 x 2-bed and 15 x 4-bed two-storey dwellings with garages on land west of Cedar Way, accessed from Grove Gardens, Elm (application reference F/YR15/0514/F) had subsequently been withdrawn by the appellant.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

The Clerk reported that planning application F/YR16/0604/O (Erection of a dwelling with detached garage (Outline with matters committed in respect of access and layout), involving removal of existing stable block, at land west of Townfield House, Main Road, Elm), which was considered and supported by Elm Parish Council at minute 46/16 had subsequently been withdrawn by the applicant.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **58/16 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 two District Councillors who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that

- she had no specific matters in relation to the parish to draw to the council's attention
- further to minute 47/16, the public consultation exercise in relation to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution proposal had now closed and that Fenland District Council would be making a decision in November 2016 as to its support or otherwise for the proposal
- further to minute 27/16, Fenland District Council would making a decision prior to its budget-setting for the financial year 2017/18 in relation to the garden waste service.
- in relation to a request from Councillor Pinnock, she would discuss, later this week, with District Councillor Sutton the provision to Elm Parish Council of details of Section 106 Planning Obligations applicable to residential developments across the parish.

Although not present at the meeting Councillor Sutton, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, had provided information to the Clerk, for reporting to members, as follows:

- further to minute 47/16, he is still pursuing matters with the Local Highway Authority in relation to issues at Fridaybridge Road and Belt Drove, Elm
- he had received an e-mail from a parishioner who would be supportive of a proposal to reduce to 30 mph the current 40 mph speed limit between Elm and Fridaybridge.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **59/16 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.

Councillor Pinnock mentioned that the tree in the grounds of Elm Cemetery which had been cut-back on a number of occasions in the past to prevent it overhanging the vehicle-activated speed warning sign requires cutting-back again; he suggested that, as the regular works to this tree had resulted in it no longer being an attractive feature, members may wish to consider its removal.

Councillor Pinnock mentioned a recent incident of a van (of a contractor working on behalf of one of the utilities companies) being parked on one of the grassed areas at the Abington Grove/B1101 junction, which demonstrates that, despite the installation of bollards around these areas, it is still possible for vehicular access to be achieved; consequently, he suggested that members may wish to consider the installation of a removable, lockable bollard to prevent unauthorised vehicular access to this green area. Councillor Stokes mentioned that it is also possible to gain similar access to the green space opposite the one referred to by Councillor Pinnock and suggested that a lockable, removal bollard be installed at that location also.

Further to minute 103/13, Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had almost completed work on transcribing the council's "historic" burial records into an electronic format and asked them to consider if/how they wished to publish this information.

Members decided that the situation in general be noted and that

- (1) arrangements be made for removal of the tree (which overhangs the vehicle-activated speed warning sign) at Elm Cemetery;
- (2) arrangements be made for the installation, by the contractor which installed the other bollards around the grassed areas at the Abington Grove/B1101 junction, of a lockable, removable bollard at both of the locations agreed;
- (3) they would give thought, between this meeting and the next one, as to if/how Elm Parish Council should publish its burial records.

### **60/16 Local Highway Improvements 2017/18**

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 2017/18 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 would 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 30 November 2016.

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.

### **61/16 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 and repairs to bathroom radiator)	£337.00
Tony Clingo	Interment fee (ashes)	£517.50
Tony Clingo	Interment fee	£412.00
Crowland Funerals	Interment fee	£412.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£1,678.50</b>

#### **Expenditure**

Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£54.95
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £263.58)	£1,581.47
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £150.90 and NI of £9.90) and reimbursement of expenses	£697.36
Anglian Water	Water for playing field	£8.75
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax and NI (June, July and August 2016)	£545.97
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£2,888.50</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 August 2016 (in the total sum of £140,805.19), together with the figure as at 31 August 2015.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £1,678.50 be noted and that the expenditure of £2,888.50 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 August 2016 and the position as at 31 August 2015 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £93,595.00) at 31 August 2016), the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 August 2016 was £47,210.19; making further

allowance for a general contingency of £55,000 reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 August 2016 to approximately - £7,790.00.

### **62/16 Cambridgeshire Parish Conference**

The Clerk reminded members of the "save the date" notification that he had forwarded from Cambridgeshire ACRE to members recently in relation to a Cambridgeshire Parish Conference which is being arranged for 18 November 2016 and he reported additional information in relation to that event.

The Clerk - who is a member (because of his role as Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks) of the Parish Conference Steering Group which is planning this conference - informed members that the event would run between 9.00 am and 1.00 pm on 18 November 2016 at the Burgess Hall, St Ives and would include presentations by the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council and a representative of the Department for Communities and Local Government as well as a number of workshop sessions (subjects are likely to include Neighbourhood Planning, managing community facilities, crime reduction and community transport); it is anticipated that a draft programme and invitations to the conference would be despatched by Cambridgeshire ACRE to all of the Town and Parish Councils within Cambridgeshire in late September/early October 2016.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that Elm Parish Council would be represented at the Cambridgeshire Parish Conference.

### **63/16 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.

### **64/16 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 18 October 2016, to commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.20 pm**

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

Date:.....