

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

15 DECEMBER 2015 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Cotterell.

In attendance: District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 17 November 2015 were confirmed and signed.

102/15 vacancy in the membership of the Parish Council

Further to minute 86/15, the Clerk reported that the Returning Officer at Fenland District Council had received no request for the vacancy on Elm Parish Council to be filled by way of an election and, consequently, the Clerk had undertaken the process that he had outlined at minute 86/15 in relation to filling the vacancy by co-option.

The Clerk informed members that persons interested in filling the vacancy had been invited to make application in writing (setting out why he or she would be suitable for co-option to membership of Elm Parish Council, as well how he or she meets the qualification criteria for membership of a Parish Council) by 3 January 2015 (to enable the co-option process to be undertaken at 19 January 2016 meeting of Elm Parish Council); to date, no applications had been submitted.

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

103/15 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.

104/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 89/15 (1))

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Elm, the Clerk reported that installation of the equipment is now complete.

At the suggestion of Councillor Stokes, members considered the installation of benches either inside or close to the exterior of the fencing which encloses the play area. Members discussed a number of options in relation to such provision and potential sources of funding. The Chairman mentioned the Whitemill Local Environment Fund as a potential source of funding but made the point that applications to that fund must be submitted by community groups within the parish; an application could not be submitted by the Parish Council.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that the application for £100,000 to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund had been submitted and that as a result of the District Council's initial assessment of the application, the Clerk had been informed that the Parish Council would need to submit: a business plan for the project; three written quotations in respect of the cost of the items of play equipment etc; an Equal Opportunities Policy; a Child Protection Policy. In this regard, the Clerk has produced draft Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies, for consideration by Elm Parish Council. He expressed his understanding that officers of Fenland District Council's Sports Development Team would be obtaining quotations on behalf of Elm Parish Council and that he would, when time allows, seek to produce a business plan for this project.

With regard to the funding application to WREN for £75,000, the Clerk reported that he had collated all of the supporting information required but is now aware, as a result of informal discussions with a representative of WREN, that it would be necessary to submit with that application written quotations in respect of the cost of the items of play equipment etc.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) Councillor Stokes would discuss with the Headteacher of Elm C of E Primary School the possibility of the school's Parent Teacher Association making an application for funding from the Whitemill Local Environment Fund for the purchase of benches;
- (3) both the Child Protection Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy, produced by the Clerk, be adopted.

(2) Parish Council IT provision (minute 89/15 (2))

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had taken delivery, on behalf of Elm Parish Council, of a new laptop, manufactured to the specification agreed by the council, and that he is currently installing the necessary programmes (including the financial management programme which he had written) etc. He expressed the view that the new laptop should be ready for use by the Clerk no later than the end of January 2016.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(3) Speeding across the parish (minute 95/15)

Councillor Pinnock reported on the situation to date on seeking to recruit volunteers for a Speed Watch group for Elm. He informed members that a sufficient number of volunteers had come forward, to enable four teams to be created.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he would arrange for Paul Cole, the local Speed Watch Co-ordinator who had addressed the council at minute 95/15, to arrange training sessions for volunteers in the use of Speed Watch equipment and the associated operational/recording processes. Councillor Pinnock made the point that initially the Speed Watch teams would be able to borrow equipment when available but requested the council to consider agreeing in principle to the purchasing Speed Watch equipment for the parish.

The Clerk informed members that he had send a letter to the Local Highway Authority enquiring as to the possibility of a 20 mph variable speed limit (to cover daily opening and closing times) being implemented in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School but is awaiting a response to that letter.

In accordance with minute 85/15 (1), the Clerk had written to the haulage contractor mentioned by the resident, with a copy of that letter being sent to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, setting out the concerns of local residents and the council and requesting the contractor to consider using routes which do not include Gosmoor Lane for the transportation of goods. The Clerk had not yet received a response from the haulage contractor.

Members decided that the information reported be noted and that the council agrees in principle (subject to it proving possible to recruit and sustain an appropriate number of Speed Watch volunteers) to purchase Speed Watch equipment (at an estimated cost of £2,400 plus VAT).

(4) Parish street lighting (minute 98/15)

The Clerk read to members a further letter from District Councillor King, Fenland District Council Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, on the latest position in this matter.

In the letter, District Councillor King confirms the situation as described to members at minute 74/15 (2), i.e. that the cost of the replacing the 89 Category 2 street lamps in the parish of Elm would be £106,000 and that the District Council would be making a contribution of £13,449 towards the costs faced by Elm Parish Council. This means that that Elm Parish Council would need to provide funding of £93,351 over a period of three years to meet the costs involved. The letter also provides the relevant contact details of Balfour Beatty, for the purpose of arranging for the lighting replacement works to be undertaken. It also goes on to say that if Parish Councils have concerns, from a funding perspective, regarding the timescales for undertaking the works, they should discuss with Balfour Beatty the possibility of a phased approach in that regard.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the letter (and attachments) from District Councillor King.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that Elm Parish Council would include within budgets from the financial year 2016/17 sufficient funding to enable the replacement of Category 2 street lights within the current timescale.

105/15 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. However, on this occasion, PCSO Helen Norton-Smith had provided to the Clerk a brief report, which he read to members.

The report from the PCSO mentioned speed enforcement checks which had been undertaken by Special Constables in Elm and Fridaybridge during November and December 2015 to date. It also detailed the dates and times of community engagement events which would take place across the Wisbech South Neighbourhood Forum area (using the New Horizons Outreach Vehicle) on 3 and 17 March 2016.

In her report, the PCSO set out the liaison which had taken place between local PCSOs and the schools within the villages surrounding Wisbech and made the point that a number of tickets had been issued to motorists in relation to illegal and inconsiderate parking in the vicinity of Elm c of E School.

With regard to incidents of crime and disorder within Elm parish, the PCSO's report stated that there had been 4 reports of theft. Members expressed the view that information in relation to the locations of these incidents of theft would be helpful to the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would seek to ascertain from the Constabulary information in relation to the locations of the incidents of theft mentioned within the PCSO's report.

106/15 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 a single-storey rear and single-storey side extensions to existing dwelling at 10 Birch Grove, Elm – F/YR15/1069/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs D Ryan).

That the application be supported.

107/15 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

- she is aware of a number of parishioners who are interested in becoming a Speed Watch volunteer and that she would supply the contact details of those parishioners to the Parish Council
- the Cambridgeshire Fens Tourism Partnership is looking to develop its website and, as the current website includes little in terms of visitor attractions in the Fenland villages, the council is asking that local people produce some text for the new website on places of interest etc
- work is ongoing in terms of Fenland District Council's Comprehensive Spending Review and more information should be available in January 2016.

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

- the proposal to introduce fees for the provision of pre-application planning advice would be considered, following the recent consultation exercise, by Cabinet and then full Council on 17 December 2015
- Fenland District Council's budget-setting process for the 2016/17 financial year is well underway
- the wheeled bin provided at Elm Cemetery is often not returned, by the contractor, to its correct position (at the rear of the cemetery) following weekly emptying, which is resulting in rubbish being left by visitors to the cemetery in the position to which the bin should be sited.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that if the issue described by District Councillor Sutton with regard to the wheeled bin provided at Elm Cemetery persists, the Clerk would raise the matter (again) with the contractor.

108/15 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.

The Clerk informed members that, in accordance with minute 93/15, he had accepted, on behalf of Elm Parish Council, the quotations for manufacture and installation of a "matching set" of bollards around the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101 and for the trimming works to trees at The Leam, Fridaybridge and to trees and hedgerows at one of the Pocket Parks in Elm. Although he had received confirmation from both

contractors that the respective works would be undertaken, he had not so far been provided with specific timescales for the works.

No issues were raised by members.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

109/15 School Crossing Patrol Service

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, details of Cambridgeshire County Council's proposal to withdraw, because of its need to achieve significant financial savings, the school crossing patrol service which it operates across the County and to offer schools and local communities the opportunity to take on the function.

Where there is support within the community to provide the necessary funding, the County Council would be offering two options, as follows:

- for the school crossing patrol to be funded but with the County Council delivering the service (at an estimated cost of £3,500 to £5,000 per annum), or
- a management only option, whereby the County Council would provide the training, uniform, equipment etc (estimated at £800 per annum) and the school or local community would pay directly the person undertaking the activity.

Although neither of the two primary schools within the parish currently receive a school crossing patrol service, Councillor Pinnock had requested the Clerk to make enquiries of the County Council as to whether this review could be utilised to secure a crossing patrol service at schools where no such provision currently exists, provided that the necessary funding would be forthcoming from the local community. The Clerk reported that he had made such an enquiry of the County Council and had been informed that the aim of the review is reduce, not increase, the school crossing patrol service.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

110/15 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
A R Clingo	Interment fee	£138.00
Richard King Memorials	Memorial inscription	£66.00
Peter Barnes	Plot purchase and interment fee	£853.00
M J Coates	Cemetery memorial	£148.00
Peter Barnes	Interment fee	£275.00
Total Income		£2,003.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £14.88)	£89.28
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £265.36)	£1,592.15
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £149.40 and NI of £9.00), Broadband and other expenses	£697.59
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£71.79
Sharman Fabrications	Playground equipment (includes VAT of £6,023.00)	£36,138.00
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income tax and NI (September, October and November 2015)	£591.78
D A Pest Control	Control of moles across the parish	£60.00
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Membership 2016 (includes VAT of £9.00)	£54.00
Total Expenditure		£39,294.59

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 November 2015 (in the total sum of £156,242.57), together with the figure as at 30 November 2014.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £2,003.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £39,294.59 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 November 2015 and the position as at 30 November 2014 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £86,765.00) at 30 November 2015, the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 30 November 2015 was £69,477.57; 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 November 2015 to approximately £17,505.00.

111/15 Correspondence

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

Councillor Pinnock reported concerns that had been raised with him by parishioners in relation to both mud being deposited on the road and damage which is being caused to the carriageway on Begdale Road, as a result of activity associated with the solar farm development works being undertaken.

Other members mentioned that they also had concerns regarding this situation.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that Councillor Miss Ferguson would speak with the contractors working on the solar farm development regarding the need to clean mud from the road and that the Clerk would report to the Local Highway Authority the damage which is being caused to the carriageway.

112/15 Dates of meetings for 2016

Members decided that meetings of the Parish Council in 2016 (all commencing at 7.00 pm and taking place in the Parish Council office on Begdale Road, Elm) be held on the following dates: 19 January, 16 February, 15 March, 19 April, 24 May (Annual Meeting of the Council, following the Annual Assembly), 21 June, 19 July, 16 August, 13 September, 18 October, 15 November and 13 December.

Meeting finished at 7.50 pm

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

Date:.....