

**ELM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**15 MARCH 2016 – 7.00 pm.**

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Brand, Mrs Davis and Webb.

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

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

**141/15 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.

**142/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

**(1) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 129/15 (1))**

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that District Councillor Sutton had arranged the submission to Fenland District Council of a letter from the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in support of Elm Parish Council's application for funding of £75,000 from Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund. The Clerk read to members a copy of the letter which had been produced by the Fenland CSP.

With regard to the funding application to WREN for £75,000, the Clerk reported that he hopes to be in a position in the near future to revise the draft application (to reflect the revisions which had been made the application to Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund) and then submit the application and supporting documentation

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

**(2) Speeding across the parish (minute 129/15 (2))**

Councillor Pinnock updated members on the operation of the Speed Watch scheme across the parish. He expressed the opinion that the public appear to remain positive about the Speed Watch initiative and he congratulated the volunteers for their time and commitment to its operation. A programme of regular Speed Watch activity had been devised and it is anticipated that the positive impact upon speed reduction across the parish would continue.

With regard to the Speed watch volunteers, Councillor Pinnock commented that although there are currently 13 trained volunteers, most of the activity is undertaken by the same few; it would, therefore, be beneficial for additional volunteers to be recruited, possibly through an article in the local press, to be able to "spread the

load". He mentioned that the Speed Watch Co-ordinator had asked that a special thank you be given to Councillor Mrs Dalliday for participating in more than half of the sessions to date.

It was reported by Councillor Pinnock that, further to minute 129/15 (2), the Parish Council had taken delivery of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and that it had been used on four occasions so far; consequently, the equipment which had been on loan from the Constabulary had been returned. He mentioned that between 18 February and 14 March 2016, 11 Speed Watch sessions had taken place and that 4.96% of those vehicles were found to have been travelling at speeds which are eligible for reporting to the Constabulary.

Councillor Pinnock proposed to members that Elm Parish Council now purchases Speed Watch signs (that he had mentioned at minute 129/15 (2)) for display in the villages now that the Elm parish Speed Watch initiative is "up and running".

Councillor Pinnock mentioned an e-mail which had been received from Cambridgeshire Roadwatch (an organisation which claims to undertake independent research regarding all speeding), asking a number of questions regarding Speed Watch activity and HCV movements within parishes. Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had spoken with Paul Cole (the Speed Watch Co-ordinator who had addressed the council at minute 95/15) with regard to this e-mail questionnaire and that Mr Cole had responded that, having taken advice from the Constabulary, it is suggested that the Parish Council should disregard the request.

Members decided, unanimously, that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) Elm Parish Council would purchase 6 Speed Watch signs (at an approximate cost of £80 each) for display at appropriate locations across the parish;
- (3) no response be given to the questionnaire from Cambridgeshire Roadwatch.

### **143/15 Police matters**

PCSO Sue Clarke reported on recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, and updated the council other relevant matters, since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

PCSO Clarke expressed the opinion that the Elm parish Speed Watch scheme is very successful and stated that she is keen to support the scheme as far as she is able. She informed the council that the Constabulary had undertaken a speed monitoring exercise within the parish earlier today; in addition, a penalty notice been issued to a motorist who had parked his vehicle on a pavement and further penalty notices had been issued to one motorist found to have been exceeding the speed limit on High Road and another who had been travelling along Gosmoor Lane, Elm.

PCSO Clarke expressed her concern regarding the condition of at least one of the speed limit signs along Gosmoor Lane, which could have a detrimental effect upon the Constabulary's ability to enforce the speed limit. Councillor Pinnock undertook to inspect the speed limit signs on Gosmoor Lane and to provide his findings to the Clerk, for forwarding to the Local Highway Authority if necessary. The PCSO commented that High Road, Elm is subject to high levels of traffic and that she would be spending as much time in the parish, with the aim of tackling traffic issues, as she is able.

PCSO Clarke informed the council that there had been a spate of burglaries in Elm and other villages in the vicinity of Wisbech during recent weeks and expressed the view that local people need to be vigilant. She made the point that, as the amount of time that she is able to spend in the parish is limited, she is happy to be informed

via her mobile telephone of any matters which the public would like to bring to her attention; her number is 07738 025220.

The PSCO responded to members' questions.

Further to minute 130/15, the Clerk reported that he had obtained an update from the Constabulary on the stance being taken in relation to the damage caused by a motorist, on 19 January 2016, to one of the grassed areas at the junction of Abington Grove, Elm with the B1101; that being that the Constabulary had decided to take no action in the matter.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **144/15 Planning and Fenland Local Plan Policy LP12**

Further to minute 131/15, the Clerk summarised for members two documents produced recently by Fenland District Council (and which are available on the District Council's website) in relation to the Local Plan Policy LP12; one of the documents provides guidance on what Fenland District Council considers should be included in a pre-application consultation exercise in the event that the village thresholds of 10% (or 15% for Growth Villages) as specified in Policy LP12 are exceeded. The other document consists of a table showing each village or settlement in Fenland, the built stock as at April 2011, the threshold (number of additional dwellings allowed for the remainder of the Local Plan period) and the number of dwellings committed or built since April 2011 (as at 21 February 2016). The Clerk had forwarded to members, in advance of the meeting, the link to Fenland District Council's website to these documents.

With regard to the parish of Elm, the threshold figures and the number of dwellings committed or built (shown in brackets) are as follows:

Coldham: 6 (1); Elm: 73 (44); Fridaybridge: 58 (21); Rings End: 4 (3).

Members are grateful that this information has now been produced by Fenland District Council (FDC). However, they had been seeking this information from FDC, with the support of District Councillor Sutton, for a number of months in relation to the threshold figure for the village of Elm.

Members are aware that Councillor Sutton had provided information orally at a couple of recent meetings recently, which indicated initially that the LP12 threshold for Elm had been exceeded but then corrected the situation at minute 131/15, explaining that the reason for the difference in the "old" and "new" figures had been as a result of officers' error in including within the Elm figures some new dwellings which are actually in the parish/town of Wisbech and because of an initial officers' assessment that the re-development of The Dale site had been classified originally as new development but subsequently (as a result of challenge) re-classified as replacement development.

District Councillor Sutton had informed Elm Parish Council at minute 131/15 that the change of classification of The Dale development had come about through FDC officers' studying of planning law and other relevant guidance. Members, being unhappy with the situation, would like to see this information.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Head of Planning Services at Fenland District Council be requested to provide to Elm Parish Council copies of the planning law and other relevant guidance to which officers had regard in the reaching their conclusion that re-development at The Dale does not constitute new development in planning terms.

### **145/15 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 3 dwellings (Outline application with all matters reserved) on land west of Rowde House, Bar Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0136/O (applicant: Mrs S Medcalf).

*Object to the application for the following reasons:*

- *the access road is inadequate to serve the traffic likely to be generated by the site*
- *inadequate facilities for drainage of the site.*

- (2) Certificate of Lawful Use (Existing): Use of land as domestic garden at The Courtyard, 2A High Road, Elm - F/YR16/0143/CERTLU (applicant: Mr K Tallon).

*That the council is unable to confirm, or otherwise, whether the applicant's claims in relation to the use of this land as domestic garden are correct.*

### **146/15 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 there had been some progress regarding devolution; the proposal, which it is anticipated would be mentioned during the Chancellor of the Exchequer's forthcoming Budget speech, is for a combined East Anglian authority, to embrace the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk (which includes 23 councils and the Local Enterprise Partnerships within those counties), with an Elected Mayor and a Cabinet. In terms of the level of support for the proposal, only one of the councils (that being Cambridge City Council) and one of the Local Enterprise Partnerships had refused to sign the "in principle" agreement. If a final proposal is agreed, the new arrangements could be in place in 2017.

Councillor Sutton, the other District Councillor who represents the parish of Elm, informed members that he had nothing specific to report to Elm Parish Council at this time but did comment that, although he initially had reservations regarding the devolution proposal mentioned by District Councillor Tanfield, he now sees that such a proposal would enable more matters of regional significance, such as major infrastructure projects, to be progressed more easily.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **147/15 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 134/15, the Clerk reported the quotation that he had obtained from Fenland District Council (FDC) for the purchase and installation of a new bin at Coldham playing field. Being unsure as to whether the stolen bin had been for dog waste or general waste, FDC had provided a quotation for both a dog waste bin (at £153.80) and a general waste bin (at £308.74). Councillor Mrs Hopkin confirmed that the stolen bin had been for dog waste.

Further to minute 134/15, the Clerk reported on the notice period required to terminate the existing contract for the provision of a trade waste service (weekly emptying of a 1,100 litres wheeled bin) for Elm Cemetery and the “early termination” charges which would be faced by the council if it wished to terminate the current contract earlier than 23 June 2016. Based upon that information, the Clerk recommended to members that the current contract remains in place until 23 June 2016.

In response to a question from Councillor Pinnock, the Clerk commented that he had heard nothing further from the contractor in relation to the scheme for installation of a “matching set” of bollards around the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove with the B1101; he has, therefore, assumed that the situation is the same as had been reported at minute 120/15, i.e. that the works would be undertaken as soon as ground conditions improve.

Further to minute 94/15, Councillor Pinnock had intended to seek to obtain an update from the Chairman as to the views of the villager who cuts the area of grass around the war memorial regarding the possibility of fencing being erected around that area, as a means of preventing vehicles being driven across that area. Given the Chairman’s absence from the meeting, Councillor Stokes undertook to discuss the matter with the villager concerned.

Members decided that

- (1) the situation be noted;
- (2) an order be placed with Fenland District Council for the supply and installation (at the entrance to Coldham playing field) of a replacement dog waste bin;
- (3) the existing contract for the provision of a trade waste service (weekly emptying of a 1,100 litres wheeled bin) for Elm Cemetery would remain in place until 23 June 2016; the new arrangement with Fenland District Council for provision of this service would have effect immediately after that date.

### **148/15 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
Peter Barnes	Interment fee	£275.00
W Bailey and Son	Plot purchase and interment fee	£853.00
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<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£2,504.60</b>

#### **Expenditure**

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery (includes VAT of £14.88)	£89.28
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £249.14)	£1,494.84
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £152.39 and NI of	£783.68

	£10.79) and reimbursement of expenses	
Fenland District Council	Fee for uncontested election in May 2015	£293.24
Fenland District Council	Replacement of pole bracket for street light FPC10, Fridaybridge Road, Elm (includes VAT of £125.51)	£753.04
Anglian Water	Water for Begdale Road playing field	£16.94
Richard Kierman	Cleaning of notice boards etc	£45.00
Westcotec	Speed Watch equipment (includes VAT of £480.00)	£2,880.00
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income tax and NI (December 2015 and January and February 2016)	£557.56
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£6,913.58</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 29 February 2016 (in the total sum of £116,027.30), together with the figure as at 28 February 2015.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £2,504.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £6,913.58 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 29 February 2016 and the position as at 28 February 2015 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £62,595.00) at 29 February 2016, the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 29 February 2016 was £53,432.30; 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 29 February 2016 to approximately £1,460.00.

#### 149/15 Local Highway Improvements 2016/17

Further to minute 66/15, the Clerk reported on the outcome of the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) 2016/17 bidding process.

The Clerk informed members that the district area assessment panels (comprising County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the district) were asked to consider bids and make recommendations to the County Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee on how the budget should be allocated in respect of the scheme bids submitted.

The assessment panels operated a simple scoring system with a maximum of ten points per scheme. Using this assessment system, the scheme submitted by Elm Parish Council (to improve safety for pupils attending the two schools within the parish) scored 1.75 points out of a maximum of 10; the bid was ranked in thirteenth place out of the twenty submitted throughout Fenland. The County Council has decided that the top ten ranking schemes would be allocated funding.

The County Council has stated that it anticipates there would be a budget for Local Highway Improvements in 2017/18, which could provide the opportunity for this year's unsuccessful bid to be submitted again.

The Clerk drew members' attention to the fact that a bid submitted by Elm C of E School (for local speed reduction measures outside of the school) (minute 96/15 refers) had been successful; it had been ranked in first place, scoring 4.75 points out of 10. He mentioned that the relevant officer of the Local Highway Authority plans to arrange a meeting with representatives of the school and the Parish Council to discuss the delivery of a suitable scheme.

Members decided that the outcome of the 2016/17 LHI bidding process be noted.

### **150/15 Begdale Road, Elm**

Further to minute 111/15, Councillor Pinnock enquired as to the current situation regarding repair of the damage caused to the carriageway of Begdale Road, Elm in association with the solar farm development.

Councillor Miss Ferguson informed members that slow progress is being achieved. The deadline for completion of the works was today but it is clear that the deadline had not been achieved. She made the point that the Local Highway Authority is monitoring the situation closely and would need to "sign off" the works when completed. Councillor Miss Ferguson stated that she would continue to pursue this matter.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **151/15 Correspondence**

#### **Halfpenny Lane, Elm – highway safety**

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from a parishioner, expressing the opinion that the exit from Halfpenny Lane is dangerous when turning right and enquiring as to whether his concerns are something about which the Parish Council has had or has a view, and, if so, would the council take any action to try to address the situation. The parishioner suggests that the situation could be improved by the implementation of a 20 mph speed limit in the vicinity of the church.

In the e-mail, the parishioner mentions that he had been in contact with an officer of the Local Highway Authority regarding this matter and that officer had suggested that the parishioner may wish to approach Elm Parish Council.

Members are aware of the situation described by the parishioner and have, in the past, raised the matter with relevant officers of the Local Highway Authority (LHA). Those officers stated at that time that no physical changes could be made to road layout etc to improve the visibility situation.

Members are of the understanding that a permanent 20 mph speed limit at that location would not be permitted (because of the strategic nature of the B1101) by the LHA; even if it were, members feel that it would be ignored by motorists.

Members decided that the parishioner be informed that Elm Parish Council is unable to suggest a means of addressing the issue that he had raised and it be suggested to him that he may wish to contact the County Councillor for the electoral division which includes the parish of Elm, to see if he is able to pursue the matter with officers of the LHA.

**152/15 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 19 April 2016, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

**Meeting finished at 8.20 pm**

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

Date:.....