

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 AUGUST 2016 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Dalliday, Miss Ferguson, Milham, Patrick, Pinnock and Stokes.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Davis and Webb.

In attendance: District Councillors Sutton and Tanfield.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2016 were confirmed and signed.

42/16 Open Forum

- (1) 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, on land west of Townfield House, Main Road, Elm)

A resident of Halfpenny Lane, Elm informed the council of his objection to this proposed development, which he considers would destroy completely his family's privacy and make worse an already dangerous road junction.

The resident of Halfpenny Lane stated that at the time of building his family's house, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) had required that property to be positioned in such a way that no overlooking would be caused to neighbouring properties. He commented that if planning application F/YR16/0604/O were granted, his family's property would suffer overlooking, loss of privacy and the impact of vehicular movements to and from the new dwelling. In addition, he expressed the opinion that wildlife habitats, including bats and owls, would be destroyed if a dwelling were to be erected at this site; he expressed the view that the current Halfpenny Lane/B1101 junction is already dangerous (due to the lack of visibility when exiting Halfpenny Lane and the speeds at which vehicles travel along the B1101) and that allowing further residential development on Halfpenny Lane would exacerbate the situation.

Members decided that the comments of the local resident be noted and taken into account when considering planning application F/YR16/0604/O (at minute 46/16).

- (2) Overgrown hedges between Fridaybridge and Elm

Further to minute 17/16, a parishioner commented that hedges between Fridaybridge and Elm are still in need of cutting-back.

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.

(3) Pot hole at Coldham

A parishioner informed the council that a pot hole which had been repaired recently, in the vicinity of the bus stop at Coldham layby, requires repair again.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and that the Clerk would draw this matter to the attention of the Local Highway Authority (LHA); in addition, the Clerk reminded all present of the on-line highways fault-reporting system, whereby pot holes and other defects could be reported by members of the public direct to the LHA instead of via the Parish Council.

43/16 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.

44/16 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Highway re-surfacing works (minute 31/16 (3))

The Clerk reported that he had drawn to the attention of the relevant officer at the Local Highway Authority (LHA) the comments made by a parishioner at minute 31/16 (3) regarding the absence of road markings on the re-surfaced section of carriageway at Coldham and he had sought an update on the situation regarding further highway re-surfacing works planned for other parts of the B1101.

As a result of his enquiries of officers of the LHA, the Clerk had been informed that road markings would be undertaken in September 2016 but the exact date is unknown currently. The re-surfacing works to the parts of the B1101 which had been marked in preparation for works would be undertaken as soon as the contractor is able to programme the works and the necessary road space, to facilitate the works, could be booked.

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

(2) Play equipment provision in Elm and Fridaybridge (minute 33/16 (1))

With regard to the provision/installation of benches at the new play area at Elm, these had now been installed.

With regard to the provision of play equipment at Fridaybridge, the Clerk informed members that he had now received a letter from Fenland District Council (FDC), confirming that Elm Parish Council's application for funding from Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund towards the cost of this project had been approved and that the amount allocated to this project by FDC is £77,100.00; attached to the letter is a document setting out the terms and conditions of the grant. The Clerk read to members the "key" terms and conditions and undertook to forward to members a copy of the letter and attachment.

The Clerk informed members that, now being in possession of written confirmation from Fenland District Council (FDC) of the outcome of Elm Parish Council's application for funding from FDC's Rural Capital Grants Fund, he is able to complete and submit the application for funding to WREN.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(3) Speeding across the parish (minute 33/16 (2))

Councillor Pinnock updated members on the operation of the Speed Watch scheme across the parish. He informed members that that Speed Watch activity continues and that for the period January 2016 to date 62 sessions (totalling 85 hours) had taken place, during which under 11,979 vehicles had been "clicked"; 898 motorists had been reported to the Constabulary for exceeding the speed limit. This represents 7.4% of the total "clicked". In addition to the time spent by volunteers at the roadside, time is also spent by the Co-ordinator in administering the scheme. Members concurred with the opinion of Councillor Pinnock that the efforts of the Speed Watch volunteers should be applauded.

Members are hopeful that additional Speed Watch volunteers would come forward, to lessen the burden on those who are currently undertaking this activity for the benefit of the community.

Speeding across the parish continues; the areas which are particularly problematic are Gosmoor Lane at Elm and The Stitch and the stretch of the B1101 in the vicinity of The Leam at Fridaybridge and the B1101 in the vicinity of the wind farm at Coldham.

Councillor Pinnock expressed his disappointment that speeding is occurring, as this would inevitably lead to the installation of physical measures on the highway as a means of seeking to achieve a reduction in the speeds at which motorists drive through the parish; these measures, together with the associated signage, would detract from the appearance of the area.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(4) Local Highway Improvements scheme 2016/17 (minute 33/16 (3))

Councillor Pinnock reported briefly on the meeting which had taken place on 29 July 2016 - involving the Project Manager of the County Council's Highways Service, the Headteacher of Elm C of E Primary School, the Clerk to the Council, the Elm Parish Speed Watch Co-ordinator and he - with the aim of discussing the development of a co-ordinated scheme to improve highway safety in the vicinity of Elm C of E Primary School and the surrounding area.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that the Project Manager of the County Council's Highways Service reported at the meeting on his assessment of the options which had been suggested previously (minutes 25/16 and 33/16 (3) refer) and his discussions with the relevant officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary regarding some potential measures to improve highway safety in the "centre" of Elm. It had been agreed at the meeting held on 29 July 2016 that the Project Manager of the County Council's Highways Service would arrange for monitoring of vehicle speeds and traffic volumes to be undertaken at certain locations in and around Elm, to help "shape" a scheme (which the LHA would need to install within the current financial year); once the results of the results of the monitoring exercise are in the possession of the LHA, a further meeting - involving those who attended the one on 29 July 2016 - would be convened (likely to be September 2016).

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(5) Charity fundraising (minute 40/16)

Members considered 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.

Although certain members made suggestions as to appropriate charities to benefit from this fundraising, no conclusion as to one specific charity was reached; members did, however, agree that the charity to be selected by the council should be one which provides services or support to parishioners.

Members decided that this matter be considered further, and a decision reached, at the next meeting of the council.

45/16 Police matters

Although no member of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team was present at the meeting, PCSO Sue Clarke had provided to the Clerk a brief report on recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary since the last meeting of the Parish Council. PCSO Clarke's report mentioned that she had been working with officers of Fenland District Council regarding trading activities, involving the sale of used cars, from a residential property at Elm. In addition, there had been incidents of noise and disturbance involving motorcycles in Cedar Way/Grove Gardens, Elm (and she had been liaising with the estate's Neighbourhood Watch group in that regard) and at Maltmas Drove, Fridaybridge.

In her report, PCSO Clarke states that she undertakes regular patrols within the parish, including visits to schools and care homes, and that she would encourage parishioners to report to the Constabulary, via the 101 telephone number, any matters of crime and disorder of which they are aware.

Further to minute 34/16, the Clerk informed members that he had raised with the Police Inspector for the District of Fenland the council's question as to whether there remains a PCSO who covers the parish and its concerns regarding the fact that recently there had been neither a PCSO presence at meetings of the council nor a report from the Constabulary on crime and disorder issues affecting the parish. He mentioned the response that he had received from Inspector Davis, which he had circulated to members in advance of the meeting; the approach of the local Constabulary is:

- Police officers or PCSOs would not routinely attend Town/Parish Council or Neighbourhood Watch meetings but would where possible
- in the absence of attendance at a meeting, a written summary of crime and disorder incidents etc would be provided
- officers would attend meetings upon request to address specific matters that may arise in the community
- contact and response can be sought via the local team mailboxes in a timely fashion.

District Councillor Sutton, who had seen Inspector Davis address Wisbech Town Council some time ago on the current approach to policing in Fenland suggested that Elm Parish Council may wish to receive a similar presentation from Inspector Davis.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would invite Inspector Davis to make a presentation to a future meeting of Elm Parish Council on the current approach to policing in Fenland

46/16 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) *Erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling on land north of Blackberry Farm, Back Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0483/F (applicant: Mrs D Hutler). = revised proposal; the revisions being dwelling design and positioning revisions which seek to overcome issues raised with regard to overshadowing and dominance; together with clarification relating to extent of highway visibility achievable.*

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a dwelling (Outline with matters committed in respect of access) on land north of 79 The Stitch, fronting Bar Drove, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0592/O (applicant: Mr F Smith).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Removal of condition 9 of planning permission F/YR12/1001/O (Erection of four dwellings) relating to footway provision and variation of condition 3 (imposition of a condition listing approved plans) relating to F/YR155/0989/RM (Erection of a two-storey 5-bed dwelling with detached double garage) at plot 3 land south of 188 Fridaybridge Road, Elm – F/YR16/0598/F (applicant: Mrs Sarah Ratcliffe).

Object, on the basis that condition 9 is still required; if the provision of a footway were deemed necessary at the time of granting planning permission F/YR12/1001/O, it is required now; nothing which would justify a change of approach has happened in the vicinity of the site since that time.

- (4) Erection of a dwelling with detached garage (Outline with matters committed in respect of access and layout), involving removal of existing stable block, on land west of Townfield House, Main Road, Elm – F/YR16/0604/O (applicants: Mr and Mrs G Proctor).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Change of use of workshop to a bowling alley, involving changes to door and window arrangement to front of existing building (part retrospective) at Workshop, Kirkhams Lane, Elm – F/YR16/0634/F (applicant: Mr R Fiske).

That the application be supported.

- (6) Erection of a first-floor side extension, including formation of balcony to rear and alterations to roof of existing dwelling and demolition of existing conservatory, at Fourwinds, Wisbech Road, March – F/YR16/0652/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Williams).

That the application be supported.

- (7) Erection of 1 x two-storey 3-bed dwelling, demolition of outbuildings, formation of new access and change of use of land by infilling of dyke to extend curtilage for 76 March Road at One Woodhouse Cottages, 76 March Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR16/0688/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs M Gower).

That the application be supported.

Further to minute 32/15, the Clerk reported the submission of an 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) and to consider the opportunity to submit a representation to the Planning Inspectorate (in addition to the comments submitted by the Parish Council to the Local Planning Authority previously) in relation to this matter.

Councillor Pinnock expressed the opinion that Elm Parish Council should submit to the Planning Inspectorate additional comments to those that it had submitted to the Local Planning Authority in respect of this planning application and he offered to produce a draft representation, which he would circulate to members for comment prior to submission by the Clerk to the Planning Inspectorate.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the Clerk, in liaison with Councillor Pinnock, be delegated the authority to submit to the Planning Inspectorate, by the deadline of 25 August 2016, a representation on behalf of Elm Parish Council in respect of the appeal against Fenland District Council's refusal to grant planning application reference F/YR15/0514/F.

47/16 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
- a Wisbech 2020 Vision Summit had taken place on 22 July 2016, during which an update on the Wisbech Garden Town proposal had been provided; District Councillor Tanfield expressed the opinion that if this proposal were to become a reality, it would have an impact upon the parish of Elm and, consequently, she suggested that members of this council keep themselves aware of the proposal as it develops
- the public consultation exercise in relation to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution proposal is still running and she expressed the opinion that it is important that local councils have their say.

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

- he had taken action in relation to a number of issues which had been referred to him by Parish Councillors and parishioners, including:
 - reporting to the Local Highway Authority (LHA), on behalf of Councillor Mrs Cotterell, the need for repair of a pot hole at Belt Drove, Elm; he commented that when he inspected the pot hole (prior to reporting to the LHA), he noted other repairs needed to the carriageway and had reported those to the LHA also
 - reporting to the Local Highway Authority the hedging which is overhanging the footpaths/highway along Fridaybridge Road, Elm
 - reporting to Fenland District Council (FDC) the vehicles which are parked on the grass verge at Station Road, Coldham. The investigations of FDC had shown that: two of the vehicles were found to be untaxed and, therefore, illegally parked on the highway (these had been reported the DVLA, as the enforcing authority); one of the vehicles is deemed to be abandoned (FDC is processing this as an abandoned vehicle with the aim of achieving its removal); the remaining six vehicles are taxed and insured and, as there are no parking restrictions on this verge/road, there is no power available to any agency to take any action.
- Christchurch Parish Council had installed recently a defibrillator in the village, with the assistance of charitable donations/fundraising. With this in mind, he suggested that Elm Parish Council may wish to consider such provision in Elm parish, as the council's charitable cause (minute 44/16 (5) refers)
- given their concerns regarding the absence of a PCSO at meetings of Elm Parish Council, they may wish to invite Police Inspector Will Davis to attend a meeting of the council to clarify the Constabulary's stance in this matter and to provide details of the approach to policing in Fenland.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

48/16 Open spaces (including the cemetery) under the Parish Council's control

The Clerk informed members that he had requested Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to arrange cutting-back of the trees which overhang the entrance to the new play area on the grassed area at the junction of Abington Grove and the B1101 and that, in response, he had been informed that an order had already been

placed by CCC with a contractor for crown lifts and cutting-back of overhanging branches of these trees; the date of the works is not yet known to CCC.

Further to minutes 23/16 and 37/16, the Chairman expressed the opinion, with which other members concurred, that the issues with regard to the performance of the grounds maintenance contract appear to have been addressed by the contractor and that the works are now being undertaken to a satisfactory standard.

Further to minute 13/16, the Clerk informed members that he had enquired of the contractor, again, as to a likely timescale for the installation of bollards around the war memorial at Elm. In response, the contractor had stated that his company is currently working at Newmarket horse museum, which must be concluded by the end of this month; once that contract is finished, it would be possible to begin the work at Elm.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had investigated the ownership of the overgrown tree on the boundary of Henry Warby Avenue and had concluded that the tree is not on land in the ownership of the council. He offered to produce a document, which could be published on the Parish Council's website, explaining the situation regarding land drainage responsibilities.

Members decided that the situation in general be noted and that

- (1) they are satisfied with the performance of the grounds maintenance contract but the situation continues to be monitored;
- (2) Councillor Pinnock's offer to produce a document explaining the situation regarding land drainage responsibilities be accepted.

49/16 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)	£523.60
M J Coates Memorials	Additional memorial inscription	£99.00
Peter Barnes Funerals	Interment (of ashes) fee	£207.00
Co-operative Funerals	Interment (of ashes) fee	£207.00
W and W G West	Interment fee	£412.00
Total Income		£1,448.60

Expenditure

Richard Kierman	Cleaning of notice boards etc	£45.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract (includes VAT of £263.58)	£1,581.47
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £159.27 and NI of £14.92) and reimbursement of expenses	£774.80
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board	Drainage rates	£70.95

Balfour Beatty Living Places Ltd	New lantern at Gosmoor Lane, Elm (includes VAT of £123.23)	£739.36
Fenland District Council	Wheeled bin emptying	£122.84
Total Expenditure		£3,334.42

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2016 (in the total sum of £143,719.38), together with the figure as at 31 July 2015.

Furthermore, the Clerk read to members a letter that he had received from the Chief Accountant at Fenland District Council (FDC), stating that, as part of its Comprehensive Review, FDC had considered the future distribution and allocation of Council Tax Support Grant.

As a result of FDC's considerations, it had been decided (at a meeting of the council's Cabinet on 21 July 2016) that continuation of the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) payments to Town and Parish Councils would be phased out over the next three financial year and that, consequently, CTSG payments would be made to Elm Parish Council as follows:

- 2017/18: £2,293.00
- 2018/19: £1,146.00
- 2019/20 and beyond: £0.00.

The Clerk reminded members that the Council Tax Support Grant payment made to Elm Parish Council for the current financial year had been £3,664.00.

In his letter to Elm Parish Council, the Chief Accountant at Fenland District Council makes the point that the Cabinet at FDC is aware that Town and Parish Councils are not subject to the referendum rules by which District Councils' ability to raise income, through increases in Council Tax, are constrained; Town and Parish Councils would, if they so wish, be able to increase their Parish Precept to compensate for the reductions and loss of CTSG.

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £1,448.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £3,334.42 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 July 2016 and the position as at 31 July 2015 be noted;
- (3) to note that, after allowing for the Parish Council's ear-marked reserves (totalling £93,595.00) at 31 July 2016, the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 July 2016 was £49,724.38; making further allowance for a general contingency of £55,000 reduces the actual balance available to the Parish Council at 31 July 2016 to approximately - £4,875.00;
- (4) that the situation in relation to the future of payments by Fenland District Council of Council Tax Support Grant be noted and taken into account when setting Elm Parish Council's budget and Precept for the financial years 2017/18 and beyond.

50/16 Big Lottery funding

Councillor Pinnock mentioned to members the opportunity for an application to be made to the Big Lottery for funding which it is making available for projects aimed at bringing communities together.

Under this initiative, the Big Lottery (BL) is offering up to £10,000 for organisations to bring people together locally. BL gives example of activities or projects for which this funding could be utilised, such as celebrating something in the community's local history or a local community hero, or maybe it is a chance to bring people together to get to know their neighbours better. To be eligible, organisations must be either voluntary or community - with their own constitution and bank account - a school or statutory body.

Councillor Pinnock informed members that the Elm Parish Speed Watch Co-ordinator had suggested to him that this funding would appear to lend itself to the establishment of one or more Neighbourhood Watch schemes across the parish, a view with which he concurs; bringing local communities together in the fight against rural crime and thus establishing closer-knit communities consisting of a few streets/roads/hamlet/village.

Councillor Pinnock stated that, if the council wishes to pursue acquisition of such funding from the Big Lottery, he would be happy to lead on this on behalf of Elm Parish Council.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Pinnock be noted and that his offer to pursue this matter be accepted.

51/16 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.

52/16 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 13 September 2016, to commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.15 pm

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

Date:.....