

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 OCTOBER 2012 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Brand, Chairman; Councillors Cotterell, Mrs Cotterell, Mrs Johnson, Milham, Pinnock, Softley, Stokes and Webb.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Hopkin and Mrs Lankfer plus County Councillor Mrs Tuck and District Councillor Sutton.

The minutes of the meeting of 18 September 2012 were confirmed and signed.

67/12 Open Forum

(1) Grove Gardens, Elm

A number of residents of Grove Gardens attended the meeting to inform the Parish Council of their concerns regarding the proposal to provide an equipped play area on this estate (minute 70/12 (2) refers).

One of the residents mentioned that a Neighbourhood Watch Group for this estate has been established within the last 12 months and that one of the matters which is causing the group concern is anti-social behaviour and the potential for an equipped play area to become a "magnet" for youths to congregate and act in an anti-social manner, with the potential for vandalism to any play equipment provided. He asked for an update on the initiative, to enable him to feedback to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Watch Group.

One resident commented that a clause in the deeds of his property gives him rights to an unrestricted view across the existing play area and that the installation of play equipment would impact upon that right.

The Clerk explained, for the benefit of the residents, the background to this proposal and the current position in that regard; in summary, the Parish Council wishes to provide an equipped play area in Elm and has, consequently, allocated a financial sum for the purchase of such equipment; the District Council is keen to enhance the existing play area on the estate; therefore, a joint approach has emerged. No scheme would be implemented at Grove Gardens without prior consultation with residents.

The Clerk made the point that nothing could happen regarding enhancement of the existing play area until such time as the land is adopted by Fenland District Council (FDC) and that FDC has been working with the developers of the site for the last 3 to 4 years to achieve an adoptable standard of open space. Until adopted by the District Council, the land remains in the ownership of the developers. The joint approach between Fenland District Council and Elm Parish Council was agreed in February 2012 (minute 119/11 (2) refers) and, as can be seen from minute 70/12 (2), the initiative is no further advanced.

Members decided that the concerns of these Grove Gardens' residents be noted and drawn to the attention of Fenland District Council.

(2) Birch Grove, Elm

A local resident informed the Parish Council of his concerns regarding the difficulties caused by obstructive/dangerous car parking on Birch Grove, in the vicinity of the village shop, which had, in his opinion, increased recently as a result of re-location of the Post Office to this shop.

The resident mentioned the existence of a "half-width" layby opposite the shop and made the point that it is of insufficient width to enable cars to be parked on both sides of the road. He informed members that he had contacted the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to ascertain the possibility of the LHA undertaking works to increase the width of this layby; its response had been that it possesses no funding for such a scheme but it could pursue the matter if the necessary funding could be provided by the community. The LHA had, therefore, suggested to the resident that he should refer the matter to the Parish Council for consideration.

Members decided that the concerns of the resident be noted and that the Clerk would seek to arrange a site meeting between members of the Parish Council and a relevant officer of the Local Highway Authority to discuss this matter.

(3) Obstructive parking around Elm Primary School

A local resident informed the Parish Council of his concerns regarding dangerous/obstructive car parking in the vicinity of Elm Primary School at opening and closing times each day.

Members decided that the concerns of the resident be noted and that

- (1) the Clerk would seek to arrange a site meeting between members of the Parish Council and a relevant officer of the Local Highway Authority to discuss potential measures to address this issue;
- (2) the Constabulary be requested to take appropriate action against motorists who are found to be parking their vehicles in a dangerous/obstructive manner in the vicinity of Elm Primary School.

(4) Bar Drove, Elm – planning appeal

A local resident informed the Parish Council of his concerns regarding the recent decision of the Planning Inspectorate to uphold the appeal against Fenland District Council's refusal of planning permission for the change of use of land for the siting of two mobile homes, two touring caravans, a day room involving the formation of hardstanding and erection of a 2.0 metre high fence on land south of Bar Drove, Elm (application reference number F/YR11/0521/F).

The resident made the point that the Inspector 's main reason for upholding the appeal, and granting planning permission, was because of the fact that, despite the evidence of a high level of unmet demand for gypsy and traveller sites in the district, Fenland District Council possesses no adopted policies which seek to address this issue. He mentioned that he is aware of the submission of a further planning application for a similar proposal at Bar Drove and is concerned that because of its lack of appropriate policies, the District Council would be unable to substantiate a refusal of planning permission for that additional development.

The resident requested that the Parish Council draws his concerns to the attention of Fenland District Council.

Members decided that the comments of the local resident be noted and that they be brought to the attention of Fenland District Council, with the suggestion that it takes action to adopt an appropriate policy in relation to the provision of gypsy and traveller sites in Fenland.

68/12 Members' Code of Conduct

Further to minute 31/12, 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 that they would act accordingly.

69/12 Redevelopment of The Dale site at Elm

Further to minute 50/11 (1), members received a presentation from representatives of the Circle Anglia Group on a revised scheme for re-development of The Dale site at Elm.

Members were informed that the latest version of the housing scheme has resulted from consultations undertaken with the community (via a public meeting held in the village), the Local Highway Authority and the public utility companies. One of the representatives, Ms F Coulson, summarised the comments made through the consultation exercise.

One of the other representatives, the architect of the scheme, explained the rationale of the design and showed layout/design plans. The majority of the properties now provide 2-bedroom accommodation.

Ms Coulson explained that Roddons Housing Association, which is part of the Circle Anglia Group, is looking to develop, in consultation with Fenland District Council and Elm Parish Council, a local lettings policy; the policy would give tenancy priority to people with a local connection.

It is the intention of Circle Anglia to submit a planning application to Fenland District Council (FDC) in the near future, with the aim of commencing construction of the properties in mid-2013. The Parish Council would be consulted formally by FDC on any application submitted.

Members made a number of, mainly critical, comments in relation to the proposed housing scheme. Some of the comments related to the design and layout of the properties; the lack of provision of specific elderly persons' accommodation; the loss of some trees from the site; the potential impact of this additional development upon the capacity of Elm Primary School; the potential for use of the roadways within the development by "boy racers".

The representatives responded to members' questions and concerns and gave a commitment that they would review the scheme to see if the views of the Parish Council (particularly whether the scheme could be revised to include some bungalows) could be taken into account in producing the final design (which would be the subject of the planning application).

Members decided that the information reported be noted and that the Circle Anglia Group be requested to take into account the views of the Parish Council in the design of the final scheme.

70/12 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Golden Age emergency planning (minute 54/12)

Members considered the appointment of local emergency co-ordinators for the parish.

Members decided that the local emergency co-ordinators for the parish be:

- Councillor Mrs Cotterell (for Rings End)
- Councillor Mrs Johnson (for Coldham)
- Councillor Milham (for Elm)

- Councillor Softley (for Fridaybridge).

(2) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 55/12 (1))

The Clerk reported that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council has still been unable, due to continued workload pressures, to progress this matter with the developers of this estate (as he has not yet found time to calculate the cost of the works to bring this area of land up to a standard where it could be adopted by the District Council); he has, however, undertaken to try to give this matter priority attention.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would continue to seek updates from Fenland District Council for reporting to each meeting of the Parish Council.

(3) Speed limit on March Road, Coldham (minute 55/12 (3))

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) that the cost of providing and installing the necessary speed limit signs would be £2,550.00 (plus VAT).

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council had allocated the sum of £4,000.00 to meet the costs of achieving a 40 mph speed limit through Coldham and that the only other expenditure related to this process had been a financial contribution (of £279.15) towards the cost of the consultation advertisement.

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

(4) Elm Cemetery – maintenance (minute 55/12 (4))

The Clerk reported that he had, in accordance with members' wishes, requested the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to undertake the sowing of grass seed at the new area of the cemetery.

However, upon receipt of the quotation from the contractor, he and the Chairman had agreed that no work should be undertaken until the Parish Council had been given the opportunity to be informed of the cost of the proposed work and to decide whether to proceed on that basis.

The Clerk read to members the quotation for this work.

In addition, the Clerk reported that he had written to the holder of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for the particular grave discussed by members at minute 55/12 (4), requesting that the family of the deceased restricts the area of the floral tributes and other articles to that particular plot (and not to use also any adjoining land). Some members stated that they had seen an improvement in the situation but the practice of placing floral tributes and other articles on adjoining land continues.

Members decided that

(1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;

(2) the sowing of grass seed at the new area of the cemetery should remain "on hold" at this time and the matter be considered further at the next meeting;

(3) the Clerk would write again to the holder of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for the particular grave, stressing that floral tributes and articles must be restricted to the particular grave (and not to "spill" on to any adjoining land) and that if these are not removed from adjoining land voluntarily by the family, they would be removed by the Parish Council.

(5) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club (minute 55/12 (5))

Councillor Pinnock reported on his attendance at the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club on 27 September 2012. He mentioned that the level of attendance by young people was very low.

Members are aware that the Parish Council's current financial support to the youth club runs until 31 March 2013 and that, to date, no financial commitment has made for future financial years.

Members commented that they wish to assist the youth club where possible but need to be able to justify to parishioners any funding which they allocate to supporting operation of the youth club, as opposed to, potentially, other sections of the parish community; members need to feel confident that the public in the parish are receiving "a return on investment" in activities for young people.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council would need to agree its funding plans, on the basis of setting a Precept for 2013/14, at its December 2012 meeting.

In addition, the Clerk informed members that the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club has arranged a quiz night for 17 November 2012 (7.00 pm at the Elm Centre) to raise funds for the club. The youth club has asked whether a member of the Parish Council would be prepared to act as Quizmaster. Councillor Stokes volunteered to perform this role.

Members decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the Chairman and Councillors Pinnock and Stokes would continue attending future sessions of the youth club and report their observations/conclusions at the subsequent meeting(s) of the Parish Council;
- (3) the County Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator be invited to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council to report on
 - attendance figures at the youth club on a week-by-week basis
 - levels of income and expenditure for 2011/12 and to the end of September in 2012/13
 - outcomes achieved in terms of young persons' development
 - actions that have been taken to make the youth club less reliant upon funding from the Parish Council.

(6) Provision of new street lighting in Elm parish (minute 60/12)

The Clerk reported the quotations received from Balfour Beatty for the provision of new street lamps within the parish, as follows:

- a) Overstone Road, Coldham: £2,031.54
- b) Gosmoor Lane, Elm: £874.23
- c) March Road, Fridaybridge: £7,774.20.

The Clerk informed members that the total amount still available to the Parish Council, from the Concurrent Functions Grant allocations for street lighting in 2011/12 and 2012/13, is £4,140.00.

Members decided that

- (1) the street lighting works at a) and b) above be undertaken;

(2) because of the significant cost involved, the street lighting works at c) be not pursued further;

(3) the remaining street lighting funding be set aside for meeting or contributing towards the costs of any necessary repairs to existing Parish Council street lamps.

71/12 Police matters

PCSO Dave Russ, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, reported on recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council, including:

- Coldham – one incident of poaching
- Fridaybridge – one incident of rowdy behaviour; one noise complaint; one dwelling burglary; one theft from a motor vehicle; one theft of a motor vehicle
- Elm – one incident of criminal damage; one dwelling burglary
- Rings End – no incidents reported.

PCSO Russ also informed members of the results of Speed Watch activity undertaken in Elm and Fridaybridge on 9 October 2012.

PCSO Russ responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information reported by PCSO Russ be noted.

72/12 Highway matters

(1) B1101

Members considered, in the light of a recent accident, involving two motor vehicles, on the B1101, possible options to improve highway safety on this road.

The Clerk reported on a site meeting – involving an officer representative (Mr C Bedford) of the Local Highway Authority, the Chairman, County Councillor Mrs Tuck and himself (with the aim of discussing possible measures to reduce the potential for future accidents along the B1101) - held on 10 October 2012.

Subsequent to the site meeting, Mr Bedford had produced a list of potential measures/works which have the potential to improve highway safety on the stretch of the B1101 where the accident occurred. In addition, he provided his professional opinions as to the potential advantages and disadvantages, and any other implications, of each. The Clerk had forwarded this information to members in advance of the meeting.

The potential highway safety measures/works identified by the Local Highway Authority included:

- installing speed cushions and traffic build-outs (not usually used in a rural location and a 30 mph speed limit would be required)
- reducing the speed limit
- straighten the road, by removing the bends (this could, however, result in an increase in vehicle speeds)
- remove roadside trees, to increase sight lines (this could, however, result in an increase in vehicle speeds)
- providing double white lines along the centre of the road
- provide SLOW markings on the carriageway (the experience of the Local Highway Authority is that such markings tend to be ignored)
- provide signs warning of bends etc.

Members decided, on the basis that they consider that no works are likely to address the issue of irresponsible driving by motorists along the B1101, to take no action regarding the matter at this time.

(2) Salt bins

Further to minutes 122/11 (2) and 135/11 (2), members considered the two requests from residents of Fridaybridge for the provision of additional salt bins in the village – one on West Drive and the other at Bullfinch Way.

Members decided that two additional salt bins be purchased, to be sited at the locations requested by the respective local residents.

73/12 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Given the absence from the meeting of the County Councillor (Mrs Tuck) who represents the parish of Elm, no report was received by the Parish Council in relation to current County Council issues.

Councillor Cotterell one of the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, informed the Parish Council that he had nothing specific to report. The other District Councillor for the parish of Elm, Councillor Sutton, was absent from the meeting.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

74/12 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 and the formation of a shared access, involving demolition of existing shed, on land south of 2 Rookery Cottages, Well End, Fridaybridge – F/YR12/ 0686/F (applicant: Mrs J Wainwright).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Felling of 7 Poplar Trees covered by TPO4/1976 (retrospective) at land west of Soffits, Halfpenny Lane, Elm – F/YR12/0735/TRTPO (applicant: Mr D Housden).

No comment, on the basis that the trees have already been felled.

- (3) Erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling on land south-west of Enfield House, Needham Bank, Fridaybridge – F/TY12/0762/F (applicant: Mr D Stannard).

That the application be supported.

75/12 Financial matters

The Clerk reported on the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting, as follows:

Income

Richard King Memorials	Cemetery memorial - Retchless	£135.00
Fenland District Council	Parish Precept – second half	£13,750.00
UK power Networks	Electricity wayleave	£203.50
Maxey Grounds	Cottage rent (less fees and boiler repair)	£523.60
W & W G West	Interment fee - Stoppard	£125.00
Total Income		£14,737.10

Expenditure

Coldham Residents Action Group Ltd	Donation – contribution towards cost of installing electricity supply to playing field	£5,000.00
Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery	£36.00
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,381.42
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £116.27), Broadband and other expenses	£547.09
Coldham United Football Club	Donation - contribution towards cost of purchasing netting	£143.00
Mrs S Woodhouse	Playing field security (quarterly payment to 30 September 2012)	£100.00
SLCC	Annual membership subscription (cost shared with Manea PC)	£70.00
D A Pest Control	Control of moles at Fridaybridge playing field	£60.00
Elm Friendship Club	Donation – 1 October 2012 to 31 March 2013	£168.00
Total Expenditure		£7,505.51

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 September 2012 (in the total sum of £122,232.65), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 September 2011.

In accordance with minute 21/11, the Clerk reported on the management accounts that he had produced for the second quarter of the 2012/13 financial year; he gave explanations as to variances between the estimated income and expenditure for the year and the actual levels of income and expenditure in the financial year to date.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £14,737.10 be noted and that the expenditure of £7,505.51 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 30 September 2012, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 September 2011, be noted;
- (3) the financial information within the first quarter's management accounts be noted.

76/12 Correspondence

- (1) Victim Support - request for a financial donation.

The Clerk read to members a letter of request from Victim Support for a financial donation towards the cost of providing support to people whose lives have been affected by crime.

Members decided that no financial donation be made to Victim Support.

- (2) Cambridgeshire ACRE’s Community Action magazine: Autumn 2012.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest edition of this magazine.

Members decided that the magazine be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

- (3) Elm Cemetery – request to purchase burial plot.

The Clerk read to members a letter of request to pre-purchase a specific burial plot in Elm Cemetery.

In her letter, the requester had provided certain information (of a medical nature) as a case for the Parish Council to depart from its policy on the sale of burial plots in Elm Cemetery. This information was taken into account by the Parish Council in reaching its decision.

Members are aware that the reason for introducing a policy (at minute 67/08) of no longer allowing the pre-purchase of burial plots was because of the small number of plots available in Elm Cemetery and the consequent possibility of not being able to accommodate future demand; the situation has not changed since that policy was introduced.

Members decided that there should be no departure from its policy on the sale of burial plots and, consequently, the request to pre-purchase a burial plot be refused.

- (4) Application to the NHS for a preliminary consent for a pharmacy in Elm.

Further to minute 38/12 (3), the Clerk reported a letter detailing the outcome of the application.

The letter informs the Parish Council that the application had been refused, for the reason that “it was neither necessary nor expedient to grant the application in order to secure the adequate provision of pharmaceutical services within the neighbourhood of Elm”. The relevant regulations provide the applicant with a right of appeal against this decision; this would need to be submitted within 30 days of the date of the letter (dated 5 October 2012).

Members decided that the information be noted.

77/12 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 20 November 2012, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm

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

Date:.....