

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 JUNE 2013 – 7.00 pm.

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

In attendance: District Councillor Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Johnson and Webb.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2013 were confirmed and signed.

17/13 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 acted upon.

18/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Facilities for young people in the parish (minute 6/12 (1))

The Clerk reported that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council is still liaising with the developers in an attempt to achieve the District Council's adoption of the site as soon as possible.

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.

(2) Elm Cemetery – operational issues (minute 6/13 (2))

The Clerk reported that he had received no contact from the family which had purchased the Exclusive Rights of Burial for plot number North B345, nor had he received any application for the installation of a memorial on this grave.

The Clerk informed members that the Chairman, a representative of the council's grounds maintenance contractor and he had inspected, on 13 June 2013, all of the grassed areas maintained under the contract. This inspection had included the cemetery; it had been concluded by all present at the inspection that the quality of grounds maintenance had fallen below that expected. The representative gave a commitment that the situation would return to an acceptable level within the next two to three weeks.

It was also noticed from the inspection at the cemetery that there is a considerable amount of debris remaining on the newly seeded area; the representative of the contractor made the point to the Chairman and the Clerk that it would not be possible to mow this grass until all of the debris had been cleared.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the quality of the grounds maintenance works be inspected by the Chairman and Clerk between this meeting and the next and that they would report back to the Parish Council on their observations;
- (3) in the event that the quality of grounds maintenance at the cemetery is not being achieved by the date of the next meeting, the Parish Council would consider whether to make alternative arrangements for such works;
- (4) the Clerk would seek to engage the services of the Community Payback Team in removal of debris from the extended area of the cemetery; the contractor which had undertaken the grass seeding works would then remove from the cemetery all of the debris which had been within the soil used to execute the extension works;
- (5) Councillor Pinnock would make arrangements for the contractor which had been engaged to repair the Elm village sign (minute 12/13 refers) to construct and install at the cemetery a wooden container for storage of water bottles.

(3) Elm Parochial Church Council – request for financial support (minute 6/13 (3))

Members received a presentation from Mr R Wilkes, the Treasurer of the Elm Parochial Church Council (PCC), to respond to the issues raised by the Parish Council at minute 6/13 (3).

Mr Wilkes stated that the PCC is grateful to the Parish Council for supporting in principle its request for financial assistance. He explained that although the PCC possesses the responsibility for maintaining the All Saints Church, it has no access to any external funding in that regard.

Mr Wilkes informed the Parish Council that because of the move towards churches becoming more community-focussed, a meeting room had been provided at the church in recent months; the cost of those works had reduced considerably the financial resources held by the PCC.

With regard to options for funding the works to the bells, Mr Wilkes explained that

- the PCC has a ring-fenced budget for maintaining the fabric of the building; this budget, which has an annual income of around £2,000.00, is exceeded each year
- the PCC has a General Fund of £3,000.00; the annual insurance premium for the church is £3,500.00
- the PCC holds various fund-raising events each year, which usually generate total income of between £1,000.00 and £2,000.00
- the money received from the sale of the former church hall is ring-fenced for specific purposes and cannot be used to fund repair works to the church bells
- in response to the PCC's enquiry, the Diocese has stated that it has no financial resources available for this type of project
- the Association of Bell Ringers could offer a loan towards the cost of the works but the PCC would be unable to re-pay the loan
- the Central Council of Bell Ringers is able to make available very small sums and the usual practice is for applicants to provide matched funding
- this scheme does not meet the criteria for applications for monies from the Heritage Lottery Fund
- this scheme does not meet the criteria for applications for monies from the Sharing Heritage Fund, which supports schemes which result in direct outcomes for people (not property or equipment).

Mr Wilkes reminded members of the exact repair works required to the various bells and he responded to their questions in that regard.

With regard to the Parish Council's request that the PCC obtains three quotations for these works, Mr Wilkes stated that there are only three companies which undertake such works: one of the companies had already submitted a quotation - the one copied to the council with the PCC's request for funding – but this needs updating because of the time that has passed since it was produced; a quotation from a second company should be received by the PCC very shortly; the third company is yet to inspect the bells.

Mr Wilkes, through his presentation and responses to members' questions, provided answers to the four questions asked by the parishioner at minute 1/13 (2).

Members decided, unanimously, that

- (1) the information reported by the Treasurer of the Elm PCC be noted;
- (2) the Treasurer of the Elm PCC would obtain further quotations for these works and furnish the Parish Council with copies;
- (3) the Parish Council would meet the cost of the repair works to the six bells at All Saints Church, up to a maximum of £8,000, and that, subject to such an arrangement being lawful, the Parish Council's approach to supporting this project would be on the basis of paying the invoice for the restoration works (so that the VAT could be re-claimed).

(4) Cambridgeshire Shrievalty Trust – request for financial assistance (minute 15/13 (2))

The Clerk reported information submitted by the Cambridgeshire Shrievalty Trust in relation to benefit received by residents of Elm parish through operation of the Cambridgeshire Bobby Scheme.

The Trust states that the Bobby Scheme visited and secured the homes of four Elm residents in 2012 and that 87 residents of the village had received assistance under the scheme since it began.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the Cambridgeshire Shrievalty Trust be requested to submit to the Parish Council a copy of its most recent accounts if it wishes the council to consider further its request for financial assistance towards operation of the Bobby Scheme.

19/13 Police matters

The Clerk reported that PCSO Dave Russ, of the Wisbech and District Neighbourhood Policing Team, was unable to attend the meeting. Unusually, on this occasion the PCSO had not provided to the Clerk a report detailing recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Elm Parish Council.

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

20/13 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 single-storey 3-bed dwelling on land north-east of Florence House, Back Road, Fridaybridge - F/YR13/0312/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs S Holloway).*

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a two-storey rear extension and conversion of loft to form additional living accommodation to existing dwelling at Regona, 50 Fridaybridge Road, Elm – F/YR13/0327/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs M Parrin).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of utility/store and WC, at 48 The Stitch, Fridaybridge – F/YR13/0321/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs P Reeves).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Conversion of existing garage, involving the erection of side and rear extensions, to form an annexe, and erection of a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling at 14 Tower Road, Fridaybridge – F/YR13/0342/F (applicant: Mr R Bye).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Screening opinion for the erection of 3 x 23 metre high (hub height) wind turbines at Newsham Farm, March Road, Rings End – F/YR13/0362/SCOP.

That the Parish Council has no comments to make in respect of the screening opinion relating to this proposed development.

21/13 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.

Councillors Cotterell and Sutton, the two District Councillors who represent the parish of Elm, both informed the Parish Council that they had nothing specific to report at this time.

Councillor Sutton did, however, comment that, further to minute 10/12, he had contacted the Parks and Open Spaces Manager at Fenland District Council regarding the request from residents of Peartree Way, Elm for the provision of play equipment in the village; in response to Councillor Sutton, that officer suggested that the residents of Peartree Way be included within the consultation on the proposal for installation of play equipment at Grove Gardens (minute 18/13 (1) refers) and that the consultation exercise could also be used to identify any other potential sites.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

22/13 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 boiler service)	£457.60
Kent memorials	Memorial tablet	£110.00

Richard king Memorials Ltd	Memorial tablets	£220.00
Kent Memorials	Memorial	£148.00
Hanchets	Additional memorial inscription	£66.00
Total Income		£1,001.60

Expenditure

Glazewing	Wheelie bin emptying – Elm Cemetery	£80.59
N Hopkin	Grass seeding works to cemetery extension	£1,170.00
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£11.36
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax and NI), Broadband and other expenses	£683.19
R J Warren Ltd	Grounds maintenance contract	£1,411.96
Wisbech Youth Clubs	Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club – First quarter financial support	£1,000.00
John Williams and Son	Repairs to Elm village sign	£280.00
Chairman's Allowance Account	Allowance for 2013/14	£300.00
SLCC	Annual membership subscription (cost shared with Manea PC)	£72.50
H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax and NI (March, April and May 2013)	£610.76
Hundred of Wisbech IDB	Agricultural drainage rates 2013/14	£67.40
Total Expenditure		£5,687.76

In addition, the Clerk reported on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 May 2013 (in the total sum of £131,131.26), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 May 2012.

Members decided that

- (1) the income of £1,001.60 be noted and that the expenditure of £5,687.76 be authorised;
- (2) the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank and savings accounts as at 31 May 2013, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 May 2012, be noted.

(Councillor Mrs Hopkin declared her pecuniary interest in this item, by virtue of her involvement in the company which had undertaken the grass seeding works at Elm Cemetery, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

23/13 Supporting the community

Further to minute 14/13, Councillor Pinnock reported that, as a result of consultation (between the last meeting and this one), he had received comments from a small number of members on the draft documents; he had subsequently amended the documents to reflect these comments.

Members decided that

- (1) the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy be adopted and the associated application form and guidance notes be approved;
- (2) copies of the final versions of the documents be forwarded to the Clerk by Councillor Pinnock;
- (3) the Clerk would arrange for the publication of these documents on the Parish Council's website and would, in future, provide them to all of the organisations and groups which make requests for financial support from Elm Parish Council.

24/13 Membership of the Communities, Parishes and Local Councils (CPALC) organisation

Councillor Pinnock informed members that he had taken advanced membership of CPALC – which provides access, via a website, to information which could assist the decision-making of the Parish Council - at a cost of £22.50. He enquired as to whether the Parish Council would be prepared to reimburse him for the cost of the membership, on the basis that he would share the information with the whole council.

Councillor Pinnock commented that, before deciding to make this request of the Parish Council, he had asked the Chairman whether he would be prepared to fund this through use of the Chairman's Allowance; the Chairman had declined the request.

In the light of negative responses from some members, Councillor Pinnock withdrew his request.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

25/13 Street lighting in Elm

Councillor Pinnock mentioned the street lighting replacement programme, being undertaken County-wide by Balfour Beatty on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, currently taking place in Elm. He expressed the opinion that, given that the total number of street lamps within the parish would reduce under the replacement programme, the Parish Council may receive requests from members of the public for the provision of additional street lamps to compensate for the lamps removed as part of this programme.

In addition, Councillor Pinnock mentioned a situation whereby alterations to a particular street lamp had created a nuisance for one resident of Henry Warby Avenue (because of light shining into the lounge window of his property).

Councillor Pinnock informed members of the details of conversations between staff of Balfour Beatty and him regarding street lighting issues. He suggested that a letter be sent to Balfour Beatty expressing concern regarding these issues; he offered to produce a draft letter, as the basis of a letter to be sent to Balfour Beatty by the Clerk.

Members decided that the comments made by Councillor Pinnock be noted and that a letter be sent to Balfour Beatty in that regard.

26/13 Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Councillor Pinnock reported that, in the light of comments made by a member of the public at the Annual Parish Assembly, he had examined both the Parish Council's Standing Orders and its Financial Regulations and had concluded from his examinations that both documents are still fit for purpose and not in need of change.

In addition, Councillor Pinnock offered, in response to comments made by a member of the public, to produce a draft Complaints Procedure and a Freedom of Information Publication Scheme for the Parish Council, for consideration by members.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by Councillor Pinnock be noted;
- (2) no revisions be made to either the Parish Council's Standing Orders or its Financial Regulations at this time;
- (3) a draft Complaints Procedure and a Freedom of Information Publication Scheme be produced, for members' consideration.

27/13 Parish Council website

Councillor Pinnock expressed the view that all of the public notices (such as the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors' Rights) and relevant community information which is placed on the Parish Council's notice boards should also be published on the council's website.

The Clerk reported that in response to his enquiry as whether it would be possible to retain "old" (i.e. after the date of the meeting to which they relate) agendas on the website, the host of the council's website had stated that it would be possible but, because of the need to add an additional navigation layer each time of agenda publication, this would cost the council an additional £12 per occasion (a total of £144 per annum).

Councillor Pinnock requested it be recorded that he considers the cost quoted by the host of the council's website for retaining "old" agendas on the council's website to be excessive.

Members decided that

- (1) as a matter of practice, all of the public notices and relevant community information which is placed on the Parish Council's notice boards would also be published on the council's website;
- (2) the Parish Council would not incur additional expense to retain "old" (i.e. after the date of the meeting to which they relate) agendas on the website.

28/13 Correspondence

- (1) Elm Friendship Club – request for financial support.

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Treasurer of the Elm Friendship Club requesting financial support for the financial year 2013/14. This year, the club is enquiring as to whether Elm Parish Council would not only continue to provide financial support at a level which covers the annual accommodation costs for the club's meetings but also to provide a small amount of additional funding to enable the club to provide a day trip for its members.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council had provided financial support of £336 (payable in two equal instalments each year) in both the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Members decided that the Treasurer of the Elm Friendship Club be sent a grant aid application form.

(2) Coldham Annual Fun Day 2013.

Further to minute 142/12, the Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Secretary of Coldham Residents Action Group, expressing thanks to the Parish Council for meeting the cost of providing a disabled toilet for the sixth Annual Coldham Village Fun Day 2013. The e-mail also informed the council that the event generated approximately £700, which would be used to operate and maintain the village's playing field and community building.

Members decided that the content of the e-mail be noted.

(3) Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club.

Further to minute 148/12 (4), the Clerk read to members an e-mail from the County Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator explaining the latest position regarding operation and development of the Elm and Fridaybridge Youth Club; in summary:

- for the ten weeks period between 7 March and 23 May 2013, the weekly attendance level had averaged 29 young people (for each of the last three of those weeks 35 young people had attended)
- the youth club had attracted 15 new members in the last two months
- fundraising activities planned include bag packing at local supermarkets, car washing events and a bingo evening
- with regard to applications for funding, the bid to the Reaching Communities Fund had been unsuccessful; an application for funding (to cover three years' full operating costs), to be submitted to Children in Need, on behalf of the Elm and Fridaybridge Young People group, is currently being written by the Youth Development Co-ordinator
- one regular youth work volunteer has begun supporting the youth club and a second volunteer would be ready to begin in July 2013; both of these volunteers have now qualified as Level One Youth Workers.

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

29/13 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 23 July 2013, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm.

Meeting finished at 8.40 pm

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

Date:.....