

ELM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 April 2019 – 6.00 pm.

Held at the Parish Council office, Begdale Road, Elm

Present: Councillor Mr Brand: Chairman; Councillors, Mrs Cotterell, Butcher, Stokes, Ms Ferguson, Mrs Hopkin, Milham.

In attendance: District Councillors Ms Tanfield and Sutton.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Davis, Feaviour (was due to attend but was stuck in severe traffic and did not arrive in time), Hopkin, Pooley.

181/18 Members' Code of Conduct

Members were reminded 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 be noted and acted upon.

182/18 Disclosure of a Pecuniary Interest in an Agenda Item.

Councillor Butcher confirmed that he had a pecuniary interest in Item 23 and would therefore not be taking part in the discussion and would leave the meeting for that item.

183/18 Minutes of March Meeting

The Minutes of the March meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

184/18 Assembly Minutes from May 2018 Minutes

The Clerk confirmed that these Minutes can be signed at any time from the meeting. There were included in this meeting as from May 2019, a large number of the Councillors present at the May 2018 meeting will not be on the Council so it seem prudent to get the Chairman of the meeting at that time to sign the Minutes as a record of the meeting.

Public Forum

A Parishioner raised the issue of the Minutes being signed at this meeting rather than at the Assembly. The Clerk confirmed her comments above and the fact that she had taken advice from SLCC as to the legality of the Chairman signing them at this meeting. The Parish Assembly is not a meeting of the Council. The Parishioner said that Parishioners had not had an opportunity to comment on them and the Clerk said that they will go on the website and anyone not happy with them could raise the matter with the Clerk. She also said she could not double check this evening as the Council laptop was not working but she had checked previously, and the Minutes had always been signed by the Chairman since at least 2011.

The same Parishioner raised the matter of the Agenda Item 11 (2) relating to the balancing of the Council's accounts despite social media reports to the contrary. The Parishioner confirmed that he was not saying that the

accounts did not balance but that the Bank Reconciliation did not reconcile. The Clerk confirmed that two forms were produced by her for the finances in March 2019. One which showed that the Bank accounts and Reconciliation form did balance and reconcile. The other form produced later in the month was to show the reserves figures but this is produced on the same form by the spreadsheet used by the Clerk and the finance figures had moved on by the time the reserve figures were produced so therefore the bank figures did not balance as there were not month end figures reconciled with the bank statement. This was explained to Members of the Council and to the one Parishioner who took away copies of the forms at the meeting.

A Parishioner raised the issue of the changes to the earmarked reserves. The Clerk confirmed that the figures had changed by £10,000 in the March Minutes as they were originally recorded incorrectly in the draft Minutes. The Parishioner asked where this money had come from. The Clerk confirmed that this was in the Council's bank account and savings.

He also raised the matter of the November Minutes which were still incorrect on the website. The Clerk said that as her laptop was not working, she could not confirm but would have a look when she had a working laptop. He also raised the matter that there were three confidential items on the Agenda but only one is referred to in the Agenda Item 22 to exclude the public.

The Clerk confirmed that this was an administrative error and items 24 and 25 should have been added.

The Chairman confirmed that the items could be discussed as they were on the Agenda.

The Parishioner said that he would be referring the matter to the Monitoring Officer.

185/18 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Play equipment provision in Fridaybridge (Minute 168/18(1) refers

The Clerk confirmed that some additional works had been carried out today at the play park to install a small area of path and a bin and a seat.

Members were asked to approve the signage for the site which they resolved to do.

The Clerk reported that in June 2018 Members agreed to fund some keep fit equipment for the site but that the figures previously agreed did not include installation costs. This meant that Members need to approve this additional cost to finalise the figures for the site. Members resolved to agree to fund the additional £1,109.33.

(2) Land at Chapel Lane Elm (Minute 168/18(2) refers)

The Clerk confirmed that after some considerable work to identify who had carried out recent works on the other side of the site the debris of which was hanging over on to the Council's land, she had spoken to the tenant. He had agreed to go and have a look at the site with a view to arranging some works to rectify the situation. He was also prepared subject to a small charge to cut the grass once or twice a year. This would be for the Council to consider in the future.

186/18 Planning Applications

F/YR19/3013COND – Details reserved by conditions 3 of appeal decision APP/D0515/W/17/3183432 relating to planning application F/YR17/0469/F (Erection of a 2-storey 4-bed dwelling with detached double garage involving demolition of existing stables) at Land West Of Townfield House Main Road Elm

Members had no comment to make on the Application.

F/YR19/0217/F – Erection of a single-storey extension to form link to garage and conversion of garage to 1-bed annexe at 36 Queens Drive Friday Bridge PE14 0JB.

Members resolved to support the application

F/YR19/0236/F – Erection of a porch to front, detached garage and 1.2-metre-high front boundary wall and gate to existing dwelling at Holly Cottage 27 Gosmoor Lane Elm PE14 0AH.

Members resolved to support the application

F/YR19/0237/F – Erection of a 2-storey side extension to existing dwelling at 19 Henry Warby Avenue Elm PE14 0BT.

Members resolved to support the application

For information Only – Outcome of Appeal at Land South of Needham Cottages Needham Road F/YR18/0158/O

The Clerk confirmed that the Appeal had been dismissed.

187/18 Reports from District and County Councillor(s)

Cllr Sutton confirmed that a new bench had been installed near the Play area in Elm.

He had reported some potholes in Bar Drove and Needham Bank had been reported and would be repaired shortly.

He had gone to Nettle Bank on Saturday about the state of the road and this had been reported and he had received a response very quickly and it was hoped that it would be done this coming week.

Cllr Tanfield was very pleased with the support from Elm Parish Council for the play area in Fridaybridge and it was a pleasure to go down there and see the fun that local children were having. She said that she hoped to still be a Councillor in May and thanked all for their support.

188/18 Open Spaces (including the cemetery) within the Parish

A Parishioner had approached the Clerk about the fact that his reserved plot at the Cemetery was no longer fit for purpose due to encroachment from grave furniture and asked that he could reserve an alternative plot. Members agreed to his request.

Members discussed the quotes for the cleaning of Noticeboards and Village signs and boards.

The Council resolved to accept the quote from the cheapest of the two quotes.

A resident had mentioned some debris from trees etc at The Leam and the fact that the run off drain was blocked. Members resolved that the Clerk could ask the Council's Ground's Maintenance Contractors to carry out the additional works.

A request was received by the Royal mail for the siting of a new Post Box near the Noticeboard by the site of the old Post Office in Elm.

189/18 Police Matters

Members discussed the report received from the PCSO and noted its contents.

190/18 Financial Matters

(1) Income and Expenditure since last meeting

ELM PARISH COUNCIL		
Income & Expenditure		
16 April 2019		
Income		
Payer	Description	Amount £
National Savings	Interest Received	86.46
Tenant	Cottage Rent	595.00
Cottage Rent Deposit Account	Interest Received	0.36
Total		681.82
Expenditure		
Payee	Description	Amount £
NEST	Clerk Pension	213.37
HMRC	Clerks' Tax & NI	639.19
CB	Security - Playing Field Elm	100.00
Idverde (VAT £206.67)	Grounds Maintenance	1,240.00
CommuniCorp	Membership Fees	100.00
Fenland Fire Appliances LLP (VAT £15.15)	Extinguisher Service	90.90
King's Lynn IDB	Agricultural Drainage Rates	67.07
A B Technical (VAT £59.34)	Lighting at Parish Office	356.04
CL Butcher (VAT £96.18)	Salary & Expenses	1,173.23
Fenland District Council (VAT £69.83)	Street Lighting	418.96
Fenland District Council (VAT £65.43)	Street Lighting	392.56
Fenland District Council (VAT £17.40)	Street Lighting	104.40
Total		4,895.72

Members decided

- (1) that the income of £681.82 be noted and that the expenditure of £4,895.72 be authorised
- (2) Members noted the Bank Reconciliation report for March 2019 and the Clerk's confirmation that the Council's accounts do balance and the form reconcile.
- (3) Members noted the Quarter 4/End of year report
- (4) Members resolved to agree the Accounting Statements for 2018/19 and for the Chairman to sign them.
- (5) Members noted the visit of the Internal Auditor on the 25th April 2019 and that the Chairman was hoping to attend.

- (6) Members resolved to ratify the decision taken by the Chairman/Vice Chairman in consultation with the Clerk to the purchase of a new laptop by the Clerk due to the ongoing issues with the current model. Two quotes were considered to get best value. It was also noted that £100 had been secured for the old laptop.

As previously agreed, Members wished to be reminded of any previously agreed expenditure not yet made and/or invoiced for, which is detailed below: -

The Council currently have agreed expenditure outstanding in the total of approximately £12,000. This is for the following items: -

LHI Payments
Community Centre Admin. Costs

191/18 World War One Airfield Plaque

The design was discussed but Members felt it was too big and therefore too expensive. The Clerk was asked to go back to the contractor for a more appropriate quote.

192/18 LHI Application 2019/20

Members confirmed ratification of the decision to contribute £654.25 to the LHI Application bid for 2019/20. However, the Clerk had to report that the application on the face of it had not been successful as it had been scored low by the CCC and it was unlikely that any funds would be available to get the works carried out. Members discussed about a whether a Privately Funded Application could be made, and the Clerk said she would investigate this.

193/18 Street Lighting Matter

The Council resolved in principle to an additional street light being installed in Rings End subject to final costs being agreed and it could be included under the new Tender.

Members resolved to agree to grant the Clerk delegated powers to authorise the repair to any additional lights that go wrong between now and when the new Contract is in place to reduce delays to repairs between meetings. Members resolved to agree for the Clerk to negotiate electricity costs for an Unmetered Supply from an Electricity Company.

Members agreed to the Chairman signing the Unmetered Supply Form to secure a supply from UK Power Networks.

Members agreed to the wording of the draft Tender document subject to the Clerk making a couple of additions in respect of FDC specifications and industry standards.

194/2018 Email from Parishioner

The matter was discussed by Members.

They were aware of speeding which is an ongoing issue.

It was believed that the footpath in question was in the ownership of the County Council and the matter needed reporting to them.

Members felt that there were enough bins available in the vicinity and it was more a matter of educating people to use them.

195/2018 Local Council Elections 2019

The matter was discussed, and the Council resolved that the Clerk could advertise the vacancies on the website and Noticeboards at the appropriate time.

196/2018 Siting of Recycling Bin

Members discussed the matter and felt that there was no suitable site in the Parish and to refuse the request.

197/2018 Section 137 Request

A request and associated paperwork were received from Citizens Advice Rural Cambs.
Members discussed the matter and agreed to fund £500 for the organisation.

198/2018 Governance and Policies

Members resolved to agree to the updates to the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
The Clerk reported that the Council's Regulations and Orders were not up to date to reflect the new 2015 Legislation governing tenders for Contracts which came into place in January 2016.
This matter had been reported to the Internal Auditor.

199/18 Correspondence

An email had been received from a Parishioner raising several issues some of which were discussed earlier in the meeting and the Public Forum.

The wisdom of Councillors allowing matters to be delegated to the Clerk and agreeing items of expenditure at their last meeting of their current term was questioned. The Clerk confirmed that the Council is a legal entity that continues to operate regardless of who is on the Council. It still must carry out its legal duties and make payments and decisions. The current Members are the Council until the 6th May 2019.

The Clerk confirmed that she now had the final figures for the Fridaybridge play area and she would let the Parishioner have these as requested.

It was raised that the Tender document was being signed without the new Councillors or the public having sight of it. The Clerk confirmed that this is a document that would not go out to the public for approval or prospective candidates as they are not on the Council yet. It is not being signed; the wording is being agreed only. This also applies to the UK Power Networks document to enable the Council to receive a power supply to its street lights.

200/18 Date of Next meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting was immediately after the Parish Assembly on the 14 May 2019 which is scheduled to start at 6.00pm.

201/18 Resolution to exclude the Press and Public

Members resolved to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of Items 23, 24 and 25.

202/18 Parish Council staffing

Cllr. Butcher left the meeting room.

Members considered the brief presentation by the Clerk about her considerable unused annual leave.

The Clerk left the meeting room.

Members discussed the matter and resolved to agree to the Clerk receiving a payment in lieu of her unused annual leave for the Leave Year 2018/19 to be paid in her May salary.

203/18 Freedom of Information Request Refusal

The matter was discussed with the Clerk who confirmed her reasons for refusing the request under the FOI legislation after consulting with the ICO and SLCC.

Members resolved to support the Clerk's decision.

204/18 Complaint Received

The complaint was discussed by Members and the Clerk was asked to write to the Parishioner.

The meeting closed at 19.50

Signature:(Council Chairman).

Date:

Elm Parish Council, Antwerp House, 252 Gosmoor Lane, Elm Wisbech PE14 0EG