

Elm Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held remotely on Wednesday 11 November 2020 commencing at 6.30pm

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Present: Cllrs Brand (Chair), Butcher, Cotterell, Feaviour, Ferguson, Griffiths, Milham, and Welbourne.
District Councillor Sutton, Locum Clerk; D Gibbs, Parish Clerk; S England

A public forum did not take place as no members of the public were present at the meeting.

115/20	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were reported for Councillors Bunting, Butcher, Dalliday and Hopkin. Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
116/20	Members Code of Conduct The Chair reminded members of the need 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.
117/20	To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest regarding items on the agenda Members of the Council are subject to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) Regulations 2012. Members were reminded that all dispensation requests must be made to the Clerk prior to the meeting and that unless the member has obtained a dispensation, he or she cannot discuss or vote on the matter and must leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on. There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda. To receive Declarations of Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or a Non-Pecuniary Interest There were no declarations of non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda.
118/20	Minutes of Previous Meetings It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 October be approved as a correct record of the meeting.
119/20	Membership of the Council The Clerk reminded members that a vacancy existed. Members were advised of Councillor Bunting's intention to resign from the Parish Council; written confirmation to be forwarded to Fenland District Council in order to commence advertisement of the vacancy. Vacancies to be advertised in the next edition of the Parish Magazine.
120/20	Police Matters 1. No report submitted from the local policing team.

	<p>2. Mr Dave Gibbs provided feedback on the remote Police/Council meeting held 5 November, advising as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-structuring of the police service had resulted in number of PCSO positions being reduced by half including a reduction of two posts in Wisbech. A number of PCSOs would transfer to training as Police Constables as part of a government initiative. • Posts relating to Community Safety and Crime Reduction would cease to exist and ‘front desks’ at police stations in March and Wisbech would be closing. Appointments would be made available for face to face meetings with officers. • The police were using a ‘light touch’ approach in relation to lockdown offences with enforcement being implemented as a last resort. • October crime statistics; Elm – 3 offences; Friday Bridge – 8 offences plus 3 anti-social behaviour incidents. <p>It was unofficially reported that two or three incidents of car theft had occurred in the Coldham area.</p> <p>18.43 Cllr Milham joined the meeting.</p>
121/20	<p>District and County Councillor Reports</p> <p>District Councillor Sutton reported as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies were conveyed for absence from the October meeting. • Mrs England was welcomed to her new role as Clerk to the Parish Council. • Thanks were conveyed to Mr Dave Gibbs for the work he had undertaken in acting as Locum Clerk during recent months. Members endorsed Councillor Sutton’s comments. • The County Council had taken responsibility for the partly felled tree in Wales Bank; removal of the remaining part of the tree to be arranged in due course. • A number of emails had been received raising concerns in connection to the planning application submitted by the Sportsman Public House in Elm. Advice had been provided on the correct process to register comments in connection to the application. • A meeting held in order to discuss community use options for Elm church had been extremely positive. • Thanks had been expressed to Councillor Sutton for his influence in arranging for white lines to be painted on the carriageway at the A1101 road junction. • A new section of pavement had been completed in The Stitch at Friday Bridge. The matter had been outstanding for at least seven years. <p>Members expressed their thanks to Councillor Sutton for his assistance in arranging; the drains to be cleared; the repair to a kerbstone outside the village shop in Elm; clearance of leaves on the pavement adjacent to the church.</p>
122/20	<p>Clerk’s Report</p> <p>The Clerk reported as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates had been made to the website although the process of managing the site was not straight forward. Moving forward documents would need to be simplified in order to comply with accessibility legislation. • An analysis of the 2019-20 accounts had revealed an outstanding sum was due to HMRC in respect of PAYE and National Insurance totalling £1296.23. Considering that interest was accruing daily, Council resolved in principle for the debt to be settled immediately; confirmation to be resolved at the December meeting. • An examination of the burial records had revealed that work needed to be undertaken in order to ensure accuracy of the records; this would be undertaken as a matter of priority. • Sorting of documents at the parish office was progressing but there was still a significant way to go. • Work would be undertaken on Council’s policies and procedures during December. • The Clerk queried if an Electrical Installation Condition Report had been obtained for the Cemetery Cottage; It was confirmed that it was in the process of being arranged. The Clerk was advised to move

forward with arrangements for repair works to the chimney breast at the cottage; terms as resolved at the December meeting.

123/20

Financial Matters

1. To note sums received since last meeting.
The Clerk advised receipts as follows; Burial fees £2128.00, Cemetery Cottage rent £595.00, NSI interest £95.72.
It was noted that rent for the Cemetery Cottage should have increased to £650.00; it was resolved for a letter to be sent to the tenant requesting payment of the outstanding sum.
2. To receive update on the investment of surplus funds.
Mr Gibbs advised that he was still waiting for one Councillor to submit personal information to Redwood Bank in order for the account to be opened. Clerk to chase the matter.
3. To receive update on the bank mandate and resolve on further action where appropriate.
Mr Gibbs advised that the mandate documents were ready to be signed, clarification would be sought on whether signatories needed to attend Barclays in person for identity checks to be undertaken.
4. To resolve to close Council's unused Barclays Community Account (ref ****7444) transferring remaining balance (£1) to functioning account.
Item resolved as detailed above.
5. To resolve to create a Finance Working Party in order to assist with preparation of Annual Budget and other matters where appropriate.
It was resolved to create a Finance Working Party with Councillor Welbourne named as official leader of the group.
6. To resolve on Terms of Reference for the Finance Working Party
It was resolved to adopt the Terms of Reference, draft details as circulated prior to the meeting.
7. To consider latest draft of Council's Asset Register and receive feedback from members.
The Clerk requested clarification regarding a number of items on the Asset Register. Further work to be undertaken on the document including an investigation into whether certain items actually existed and, if so, where they were located.
8. To consider latest draft of Council's budget preparation and receive feedback from members.
The Clerk advised that the 2021-2022 budget was in the early stages of preparation and further information would be provided at the December meeting. Finance Working Party to provide input on the subject, meeting to be arranged once current lockdown measures had ended.
9. To approve expenditure for November 2020.
Council resolved to approve the payments as scheduled for November 2020.

Schedule of accounts for payment 11 November 2020:

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Sharman Fabrications	See-saw repair, Coldham	£250.00	£50.00	£30.00
Local Councils Update	Annual Subscription	£100.00		£100.00
Cambs ACRE	Annual Subscription	£47.50	£9.50	£57.00
J Brand	Chairman's Allowance	£150.00		£150.00
S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,098.50		£1,098.50
S England	Clerk's Expenses	£185.82	£5.17	£190.99
FDC	Bin emptying	£184.27		£184.27
Tower Hall - FB	Hall hire	£45.00		£45.00
Idverde	Grounds Maint. & Play equip checks: May-Nov (£1195.40 + VAT per month)	£8,367.80	£1,673.56	£10,041.36
		£10,428.89	£1,738.23	£11,897.12

Chairman

124/20	<p>Correspondence; For comment;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elm Street Pride – Thanks to Council for donation, request for ideas for further enhancement of the village. 2. GeViews – Details provided of recyclable, self-watering planters/baskets. Council suggested that the planters may be of interest to Elm Street Pride; Clerk to forward details to the group enquiring if the GeView products may be suitable for future projects. 3. Mr Allen – Request for Council’s support in his request for deployment of mobile speed unit along B1101 through Coldham It was resolved for the Clerk to contact Cambridgeshire County Council and the Road Safety Partnership in support of Mr Allen’s request. 4. Longstanton Parish Council – Trade reference request for Idverde. It was resolved to provide a reference for Idverde confirming that they had been contractors for the Council during the past four years. 5. Mr Bullen – Request for information relating to Elm Community Speedwatch. It was resolved for the Clerk to respond to Mr Bullen advising that it was Council’s intention for volunteers to be sought in order to set up a new Community Speedwatch group in Elm parish. Training would commence in early spring and it was hoped that volunteers would come forward from all sectors of the parish. Notice to be included in next edition of the Parish Magazine. 6. FDC Elections – Enquiry relating to potential use of parish office as a polling station. It was resolved to confirm Council’s support for the parish office to be used as a polling station where appropriate. <p>For information purposes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Count – Cambs Covid-19 update. (To website). 2. FDC – Details of additional support for businesses during Covid-19 pandemic. (To website). 3. Cambs & Peterborough CCG – Advice and information including ‘how to keep warm in winter’ (To website). 4. Co-op Food Fund – information relating to who can apply. The Clerk advised that the Fund had now closed for new applications.
125/20	<p>Planning Applications</p> <p>F/YR20/0990/F – Single storey 2-bed annexe, ancillary to existing dwelling at land north of Homelands, Nettle Bank. Council resolved to raise no objection to application ref. F/YR20/0990/F.</p> <p>F/YR20/1053/F – (received after publication of the Agenda) Part single storey, part 2-storey extension with balcony to side of existing dwelling involving the demolition of existing conservatory at Two Woodhouse Cottages, 78 March Road, Friday Bridge, PE14 0HA. Council resolved to raise no objection to application ref. F/YR20/1053/F (to be confirmed at December meeting).</p>
126/20	<p>Highways & Footways</p> <p>Update on outstanding matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerb damage, Birch Grove Elm – It was confirmed that the repair had been carried out. <p>To report new matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge adjacent to Abington Grove play park – Council was advised that vegetation on the boundary was overgrowing the pavement, furthermore, the conifer hedge was dead in parts presenting a fire hazard. It was resolved for the Clerk to write a polite letter to the property owners asking if they would undertake work on the boundary in order to reduce the risk. • It was reported that a remote Teams meeting would be held on 19 November at 2 pm providing an update on A47 Guyhirn improvement works. Clerk to attend; request to be put forward for Cllrs Feaviour and Milham to also attend. • A temporary traffic order would be put in place to close a section of Moll’s Drove between 25th and 31st January 2021. Diversion would be via Needham Bank. <p>7.50 pm - Cllr Butcher joined the meeting.</p>

127/20	<p>Website – To resolve to authorise the Clerk to undertake SLCC training in the creation of accessible Word and Excel documents in line with Public Sector Website Accessibility legislation.</p> <p>It was resolved for the Clerk to attend the training as detailed above at a cost of £30 + VAT per course.</p>
128/20	<p>Streetlights;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorised contractor for repair works – Councillors reported that they understood a contract had been pursued but the contractor was unable to fulfil it. It was not believed that a formal contract existed with Balfour Beatty who were currently undertaking repair work. <p>It was resolved for the Clerk to investigate the possibility of the Parish re-joining the District Council's Repair & Maintenance Contract.</p> <p>In the meantime, it was resolved for the Clerk to contact Balfour Beatty concerning repair works when at least four issues had been reported.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. LED replacements – It was confirmed that there were still streetlights which required conversion to LED. 3. Instructing Utility Aid to source details of most economical power supply provider – This was not considered due to resolution passed under (1.).
129/20	<p>Cemetery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive update concerning improvement works and resolve where appropriate – It was reported that the Clerk and Mr Gibbs would be meeting Paul Harvey from Fen Ditching in order to discuss proposals to fill in the ditches running adjacent to the Cemetery and installing a new agricultural drain. This would remove the 10 metre restriction zone and permit burials to take place immediately next to the existing dyke line. Mr Harvey would be producing proposals and an estimated cost for the work which could then be presented to Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board. 2. To resolve to join the Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management (ICCM) – It was resolved to join the ICCM at a cost of £95.00 per annum in order for the Clerk to source specialist advice and training opportunities. 3. To review terms of the Cemetery Regulations concerning the purchase of adjacent double plots in the Garden of Rest – It was resolved for the Clerk to seek specialist advice on how double plots could be facilitated in the Garden of Rest.
130/20	<p>Cemetery Chapel – To resolve on final draft of tender document to be submitted to architects in relation to re-design works.</p> <p>Council resolved to approve the draft tender document (as circulated prior to meeting) and for it to be presented to architects in the local area.</p>
131/20	<p>The Leam – To consider issues relating to the area and resolve on further action.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that one quote had been received for tree works to be undertaken at The Leam. It was resolved for the Clerk to seek two further tenders from local qualified tree surgeons.</p>
132/20	<p>Clock Tower Memorial, Friday Bridge – To resolve on specification for refurbishment works to be undertaken. It was resolved for the Clerk to seek quotes for 'patching up repairs to the render' and 're-painting' of the Clock Tower with a view to work being undertaken in spring 2021.</p> <p>A general discussion followed concerning both Memorials in the Parish, it was reported;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private individuals were placing wreaths at the Clock Tower Memorial. As from 2021, the Council would also arrange for the laying of a wreath at Friday Bridge. • There had been a good turnout at the memorial service held in Elm; approximately 60 people had attended. • Thanks conveyed to Mr & Mrs Prince for the work they had undertaken in maintaining the area around the Elm Memorial. It was resolved for the Clerk to send a letter of thanks and a flower arrangement to Mr & Mrs Prince. • Thanks conveyed to Cllr Milham for laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.
133/20	<p>Coldham Lay-by – To confirm details of improvement works and resolve appropriately.</p>

	Mr Gibbs confirmed that he had details of the works required and would create a detailed specification for presentation at the December meeting.
134/20	Coldham Defibrillator & Cabinet – To resolve on design statement for the apparatus. Cllr Ferguson to provide contact details for the Coldham residents who had kindly agreed to permit installation of the defibrillator to the exterior of their property. It was resolved for the Clerk to contact the resident in order to discuss proposals for the design and also installation of electricity supply.
135/20	Risk Assessment; 1. Trees – to receive information sourced from Council’s insurers and resolve on further action. The Clerk reported that a risk assessment should be in place for all trees falling under the responsibility of the Parish Council. Reports should be undertaken by an arborist at least every three years. Interim inspections needed to be carried out by a person who ‘has knowledge of trees’, at least annually and also, following adverse weather conditions. Issues identified in the reports as medium and high risk required prompt action; low risk issues could be categorised as a general maintenance issue. The Clerk advised that she had requested details of Tree Preservation Orders in the parish but to date, FDC had not supplied the information. Once received, contact would be made with appropriately qualified individuals in order to seek quotations for the report to be undertaken. 2. Play areas/Open spaces – to receive information sourced from Council’s insurers and resolve appropriately. The Clerk advised that weekly inspections of play equipment/areas was recommended but monthly checks were acceptable as a bare minimum. It was noted that monthly checks of all play areas should be undertaken by Council’s maintenance contractor however the check forms were not being supplied to the Clerk as required. Clerk to contact Idverde requesting copies of the documents dating back to April 2020. Signage – a draft design which could be adopted for all play areas in the parish had been circulated – It was resolved for the design to be amended to include visual symbols in addition to the text. Updated design to be presented at the December meeting.
136/20	Noticeboard at Rings End – To consider issues relating to the structure and resolver appropriately. The Clerk advised that the noticeboard was very difficult to open and its location within the bus shelter was not ideal. It was resolved for the Clerk to seek quotes for a new noticeboard with a view to installing it on the exterior wall of the shelter.
137/20	Canal Towpath – To consider matters relating to boundaries, signage and litter bins and resolve appropriately. Cllr Feaviour advised that litter bins were due to be installed and signage had been ordered. It was reported that ground level boundaries of the land purchased in conjunction with Emneth Parish Council were unclear. It was questioned whether a caravan located in the area was encroaching onto parish owned land and furthermore, was the caravan legally occupied. It was resolved for the Clerk to investigate the title plan for the land. It was resolved for the Clerk to contact the Borough of West Norfolk & Kings Lynn District Council Planning Department in order to report a suspected breach of planning legislation.
138/20	To receive requests from Members for items to be included on the next Agenda Members put forward the following items for discussion on the next Agenda; 1. Use of Elm Church as a community hub. 2. Arranging a social media platform for the Parish Council.
139/20	To resolve on date and format of next meeting It was resolved for the Clerk to contact the Bookings Clerk at Tower Hall in order to make arrangements for a face to face meeting on or around 9 December at the venue. Clerk to confirm details in due course.
140/20	To resolve to enter closed session in order to consider the following agenda items on the grounds of confidentiality. By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) It was resolved to enter closed session.

	8.57 pm Cllr Sutton left the meeting.
141/20	<p>Personnel/Staffing;</p> <p>1. Clerk's Contract of Employment; It was resolved to approve an amendment in the Contract of Employment as requested by the Clerk. It was resolved for the Chairman to sign the Clerk's Contract of Employment on behalf of the Council. It was resolved for the Chairman to authorise the Clerk's overtime as and when required.</p> <p>2. To resolve on handover arrangements moving forward; It was resolved to review the handover arrangements to the new Clerk on a month to month basis.</p>
142/20	<p>Contract of Works – To consider information relating to a works contract and resolve appropriately. The Clerk presented details of her concern to Councillors. No further action required. Additional item presented (for reasons of risk assessment) – Council considered information presented by the Clerk in connection to an allotment tenancy. Further action was resolved appropriately.</p>
143/20	<p>Close of Meeting The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.</p>

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date