

Elm Parish Council

Clerk: Suzanne England
Church Lodge, Church Lane, Tydd St Giles, Wisbech, PE13 5LA
Tel: 07471 235906 Email: clerk@elm-pc.org.uk

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held remotely on Thursday 7 January 2021 commencing at 6.30pm

Meetings of the Parish Council are recorded by the Clerk to aid the Clerk with minute taking.
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Present: Cllrs, Butcher, Cotterell, Feaviour, Ferguson (Acting Chairman), Griffiths, Hopkin, Milham, and Welbourne.
District Councillor Sutton, C Vale (co-option candidate), 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.

01/21	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were reported for Councillor Brand. Council resolved to accept his reason for absence. It was resolved to appoint Cllr Ferguson as Chair for the meeting.
02/21	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.
03/21	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 No declarations submitted.
04/21	Minutes of Previous Meetings It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 December be approved as a correct record of the meeting.
05/21	Membership of the Council The Clerk presented a personal statement submitted by Mrs Christine Vale; candidate for co-option on to the Council. 6.37 pm - It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders to allow Mrs Vale to introduce herself and for Councillors to raise any questions. A short discussion followed. 6.41 pm – It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders. Council resolved unanimously to co-opt Mrs Vale onto the Parish Council. Clerk to liaise with Elections Department at FDC to formalise the appointment.
06/21	Police Matters <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No report submitted from the local policing team.2. Other matters –<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Gibbs advised his attendance at the November Police/Council meeting and reported statistics on criminal activities. He confirmed that the review of policing in Cambridgeshire was still under review but cuts would include; a 50% reduction in the number of PCSO's and the disbanding of Community Safety Teams. Next meeting to be held remotely at 6 pm on 8 December; Cllr Griffiths to attend on behalf of the Parish Council.• Further to concerns raised at the December meeting, Cllr Ferguson confirmed that police had visited Strathmore House on two occasions. The property had been identified as extremely dangerous and required installation of metal shutters. Furthermore, graffiti at the site was considered to be an incitement to racial hatred. Cllr Sutton confirmed that he had drawn the District Council's attention to issues at the site.• Concern was raised at the number of vehicles travelling in excess of the speed limit and carrying out dangerous overtaking on the highway between Elm and Friday Bridge. It was questioned what could be done in order to reinforce the 30 mph speed limit.
07/21	District and County Councillor Reports District Councillor Sutton reported as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs Christine Vale was welcomed as a Member of the Parish Council.

- Heavy rain on 23 December had resulted in numerous calls from residents seeking advice; Fire Brigade were extremely busy dealing with incidents.
- Cllr Sutton had driven around the district on 24 December to assess incidents of flooding. Rainwater was well above the kerb level in Limes Avenue; issue had been reported to Highways.
- Concern raised that jetting of gullies now had to be requested rather than being undertaken as part of a regular maintenance programme by the County Council. It was felt that this contributed towards flooding issues in the area.
- An update concerning the Covid-19 vaccination programme had been received. The Clerk confirmed that she had circulated the details to Councillors.
- Further to discussions with a local contractor, it was hoped that a 'new gadget' could be installed at The Leam outfall (designed to control the water level) at a cost of approximately £600.
- The status of the Section 215 notice relating to Strathmore House would be investigated.
- Impact of increased traffic through villages; due to improvement works on the A47 at Guyhirn; required careful monitoring.
- 'Keep Left' bollard located on Main Road, Elm; just before the Church; had been knocked over. The Clerk confirmed that she would report the matter to Highways.

08/21

Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised as follows;

- Streetlighting – Additional testing data had been forwarded to Garry Edwards, Engineering Manager at FDC; to date, there had been no response indicating whether this data was acceptable for the purpose of transferring the maintenance contract. The assets currently listed by FDC were not up to date and a full audit of all streetlights was required. Mr Gibbs confirmed that he would be undertaking this task.
- Progress on installation of the defibrillator at Coldham had been further delayed due to current Covid-19 restrictions.
- The new Farm Business Tenancy agreement for Meadowgate Field allotment was nearing completion.
- A new battery and replacement pads (adult & child) had been installed in the defibrillator unit at The Chequers, Elm.

09/21

Financial Matters

1. To note sums received since last meeting.

The Clerk advised receipts as follows; Burial fees £3670.50, Cemetery Cottage rent £110.00, Barclays interest £0.02.

2. To approve Financial Report for quarter ended 31 December 2020.

Council resolved to accept the Financial Report for quarter ended 31 December 2020.

3. To approve 2021-22 Budget

Council considered sums included under each category of the draft 2021-22 Budget, amending as considered appropriate. It was resolved to approve the updated document as Council's Annual Budget for 2021-22. See Appendix A.

4. To approve the Parish Precept submission for 2021-22.

Taking into account figures approved for the annual budget, it was resolved to set a Precept of £30,000.00 for 2021-22.

5. To receive report concerning outstanding charges raised by Wave (Anglia Water) and resolve appropriately.

The Clerk advised that an invoice for £660.90 had been received from Wave in relation to the water supply at Elm Cemetery.

Whilst it was acknowledged that; no payments had been made to Wave during the past 15 months; the charge appeared to be excessive. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate the matter further and checks would be made on the meter to ascertain if it was working properly.

In the meantime, it was resolved to pay the outstanding balance to Wave.

6. To approve expenditure for January 2021.

Schedule of accounts for payment 7 January 2021:

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Tamar IT	Microsoft Office 365 Package	£78.33	£15.67	£94.00
Idverde Ltd	Hole repair - FB P. Field	£28.00	£5.60	£33.60
Mrs S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,453.42		£1,453.42
Mrs S England	Clerk's Expenses (inc. defib. battery & pads)	£484.76	£68.55	£553.31
HMRC	Tax & NI - Month10	£214.77		£214.77
Nest (D/D)	Pension Contributions	£142.36		£142.36
		£2,401.64	£89.82	£2,491.46

Council resolved to approve the payments as scheduled for January 2021.

Chairman

10/21	<p>Correspondence; For comment/resolution;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email, parishioner – queries concerning mobile vehicle speed activation signs and 20 mph flashing units at Elm School. SEE AGENDA ITEM 14/21 <p>For information purposes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cambs County Council – Covid-19 update – see website. 2. Census.gov.uk – Promotional information – see website.
11/21	<p>Planning Applications F/YR20/0940/F – Revised proposals in respect of change of use of land at The Sportsman Public House, Main Rd, Elm. Revision to include; new site layout and detail for acoustic fencing, updated Design & Access Statement. Council resolved to support the revised proposals for the application.</p> <p>F/YR20/1188/F – Development of 3 x 2-storey dwellings at land north of Eastleigh, Elm Low Road. Council considered details of the application, paying particular attention to arrangements for parking. It was resolved to support the application on condition that adequate provision was made for off-road parking.</p>
12/21	<p>Highways & Footways Update on outstanding matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement works to A47 at Guyhirn – Further Teams update meeting to take place 9-10 am, 20 January. The Clerk confirmed that she would attend; Cllrs Feaviour and Milham had also been invited. • Halfpenny Lane (A47 end), overgrown Right of Way – No response had been received from Highways concerning clearance; Clerk to chase. It was queried if the Parish Council might take over responsibility of maintaining the route; Clerk to raise the matter with Mark Peck (Public Rights of Way Officer – CCC). • Sycamore tree, Halfpenny Lane – The Clerk advised that she was awaiting a response from Graham Causey (FDC Tree Officer) concerning advice on appropriate action to be taken. • Health & safety concerns relating to dead boundary hedge adjacent to Elm play park – Council authorised Cllr Ferguson to raise the issue on an informal basis with the resident of the property. <p>To report new matters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge encroaching onto pavement at property in Fridaybridge Road, Elm – Council authorised Cllr Ferguson to raise the issue with the owner of the property. • Flooding issues, Birch Grove – Cllr Sutton updated Council regarding flooding issues at Birch Grove. Members of both Middle Level and Hundred of Wisbech Drainage Boards had met on site; the following concerns were discussed; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The drainage ditch at the southern end of Birch Grove (into which drains flowed) was overgrown and the outlet pipe blocked with mud and vegetation. ○ The ditch fell under riparian ownership and therefore no-one was maintaining it. ○ Jetting of drains along the main road had possibly pushed debris into the lower level drains along Birch Grove. <p>Action to be taken;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Sutton to raise issue of maintenance of the ditch with Julia Beeden, Flood & Water Business Manager, Cambs CC. ○ As a gesture of goodwill, Hundred of Wisbech would clear out the ditch thereby allowing water to drain from the sump. ○ Submit a request for the whole drainage system to be jetted. ○ Put forward a proposal for Hundred of Wisbech to adopt the drainage ditch; no guarantee that this would be supported.
13/21	<p>Policies & Procedures – To approve and adopt (draft documents as circulated prior to meeting);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code of Conduct for Members 2. Data Protection Policy 3. Equality & Diversity Policy 4. Complaints Procedure 5. Disciplinary Policy 6. Grievance Policy <p>Council resolved to adopt the policies and procedures en bloc.</p>
14/21	<p>Speed Monitoring Equipment – To resolve on (i) responsibility for re-charging and relocating MVAS, (ii) re-programming 20 mph flasher units at Elm School.</p> <p>A parishioner had queried why the MVAS were not being moved or re-charged and also why the 20 mph flash units at Elm School were not correctly programmed (See correspondence item under 10/21).</p> <p>Councillors noted health & safety issues connected to moving the MVAS. It was resolved to ask Council’s ground maintenance contractor to advise the cost of incorporating the task (on a monthly basis) into the parish contract.</p> <p>It was resolved to authorise Cllr Butcher to undertake re-programming of the flasher units outside Elm School.</p>
15/21	<p>Cemetery Chapel – To resolve on tenders received for design/planning of proposed conversion.</p> <p>Three tenders had been received in relation to the project, the details of which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.</p>

	It was resolved to accept a tender of £1300 (plus planning fees in the region of £150) for works associated with the design and submission of planning application for proposed conversion of the Cemetery Chapel.
16/21	Cemetery improvement works – To receive update following on-site meeting with members of Hundred of Wisbech Drainage Board. The meeting had been arranged between Board members, the Parish Clerk and Mr Gibbs, Locum Clerk for the purpose of discussing proposals to infill drainage dykes located to the north and south boundaries of the cemetery (thereby dealing with current restrictions which prevented burials taking place within 10m of a watercourse). Cllr Sutton (Board member) advised; as a result of the torrential rainfall that had occurred on 23 December; it was agreed that infilling the dykes would be the wrong thing to do. Councillors accepted the decision acknowledging that; although the decision limited the area available for future burials; a smaller extension to burial facilitates would still be of benefit. Moving forward; in order to improve access for maintaining the dykes; it was resolved to seek quotes for reducing the laurel hedges located on cemetery boundaries to four feet in height.
17/21	To resolve on quotes received for removal of asbestos from Canal Towpath It was resolved to authorise the Clerk to approve expenditure of up to £425.00 for removal of the asbestos.
18/21	To resolve to authorise; (i) expenditure for and, (ii) the commissioning of; a specialist tree survey and report in the parish. 8.40 pm - It was resolved to enter closed session in order to consider one quote which had already been received. 8.50 pm - It was resolved to re-enter open session. It was noted that ivy would need to be removed from a number of trees in the parish in order to properly assess their condition. It was resolved to delegate authority to Cllrs Brand, Griffiths and Welbourne to make a decision on the quote to be accepted in respect of the tree survey. 8.52 pm - Cllr Vale left the meeting.
19/21	To receive requests from Members for items to be included on the next Agenda The following request was received; 1. To consider issue of caravans situated on land adjacent to the junction of Newbridge Lane and A47.
20/21	To resolve on date and format of next meeting It was resolved for Council's next meeting to be held via Zoom at 6.30pm on Thursday 11 February 2021.
21/21	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) 8.57 pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.
22/21	Legal matters associated with alleged breach of planning legislation The Clerk provided an update to Members; matter deferred pending receipt of further information.
23/21	Close of Meeting The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date