

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 11th May 2022 commencing at 6.40pm

[Meetings of the Parish Council may be recorded by the Clerk to aid with minute taking. Any such recording is destroyed once the minutes are agreed].

Present: Cllrs - Ferguson (Chair), Brand, Butcher, Cotterell, Exell, Feaviour, Goodley, Hopkin, Lea, Milham & Welbourne, District Councillor Sutton, Mr G Edwards (FDC Engineering Manager), Mrs S England – Parish Clerk.

- 26.22 **To elect a Chairman for 2022-2023** – Council resolved to appoint Cllr Ferguson to the role of Chairman for 2022-23 (Proposed Cllr Cotterell, seconded Cllr Feaviour). Declaration of Acceptance completed.
- 27.22 **To elect a Vice-Chairman** – Council resolved to appoint Cllr Feaviour to the role of Vice-Chairman (Proposed Cllr Cotterell, seconded Cllr Milham).
- 28.22 **Apologies** – No apologies to report.
- 29.22 **Code of Conduct** – The Chairman reminded Councillors of the need to advise any changes to the content of their Register of Interests forms.
- 30.22 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation** – The following interests were declared;
Cllr Goodley - Item 27, Canal Towpath possible breach of planning (min. ref. 50.22).
Cllr Welbourne – Item 29, Clerk’s payroll arrangements. (min. ref. 52.22).
Cllr Ferguson – Item 28, Tenancy arrangements for Cemetery Cottage (min. ref. 51.22).
- 31.22 **Open Forum** – No members of the public present.
- 32.22 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve minutes of meeting held on 13th April 2022 as a true record of proceedings.
- 33.22 **Council Membership** – Council resolved to approve the co-option of Mr Jason Lea as a member of Elm Parish Council (Proposed Cllr Feaviour, seconded Cllr Milham).
- 34.22 **Police matters** – (i) Appointment of new Council representative to attend monthly police/council meetings; it was resolved to appoint Cllr Butcher to the role. (ii) To resolve on Council representative to attend virtual meeting concerning progress of Police & Crime Plan – it was resolved to appoint Cllr Ferguson to attend. (iii) To receive update concerning formation of new ‘Crimestoppers’ Committee’ – The Clerk was asked to enquire if a more convenient location could be arranged for the meeting/s; March or Chatteris for example.
- 35.22 **District Councillor’s Report** – District Councillor Sutton advised;
Congratulation to Cllrs Ferguson and Feaviour for being appointed as Chair and Vice-Chair for another term. Congratulations to Cllr Lea on his co-option to Council. Thanks to Cllr Griffiths for the work he had undertaken during his time as a member of the Council. Thanks to members of Streetpride for their continued hard work in Elm. The draft version of the new Local Plan would be consulted on during June/July, it was important for Councillors to submit their comments.
Members raised concern that only part of the subsiding road surface at Coldham had been repaired, everyone agreed that it made no sense; Clerk to raise enquiry with Cambridgeshire Highways.
- 36.22 **To receive information from Mr Garry Edwards (FDC Engineering Manager) concerning streetlight upgrades required in Elm parish** – Mr Edwards reported as follows;
- There were currently 161 streetlight assets in Elm parish; 83 pole brackets and, 78 columns.
 - The two key areas of testing were electrical (every six years) and structural (columns at 20 years; brackets slightly less than 20 years).
 - E.T.L. had undertaken full electrical and structural testing in 2018 where it was noted that there were; 34 electrical faults requiring urgent action, 25 assets unable to be tested (unsure why). In structural terms - 3 units had ‘red’ status requiring immediate action, 37 were ‘amber’ rated and 117 ‘green’, 4

were not tested. All the above data had been entered into the FDC spreadsheet along with 'Data capture' information commissioned by Council in 2021.

- Any concrete or cast iron columns must be treated as a priority upgrade (4 identified)
- Network Power was responsible for the wooden pole supporting the pole brackets.
- In 2018, 41 assets had been identified as having a 0-36 months remaining lifespan and therefore required urgent action. 24 assets were identified as 0-5 years and should also be treated as a priority.
- 82 assets were in good condition and 41 of these had been fitted with LED units, the remaining 41 should be transferred to LED as soon as possible, this would save 40-50% in energy consumption.
- Dimming units could be fitted to new installations, this would save a further 10% (approx.).
- Average cost for new assets (dependent on traffic management and input required from Network Power); Pole brackets £900, columns £1050.
- There was currently a long lead time on supply of columns due to shortage of steel.
- In order to make savings, some Councils were removing streetlights in areas where there was no footway; could be unpopular with residents.
- Energy costs would be increasing significantly in the near future (+50% immediately and further increase in October).

Cllr Ferguson thanked Mr Edwards for attending the meeting and confirmed that action would be resolved under item 20 on the agenda.

37.22 Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported as follows;

Footpath Elm FP8 – Mark Peck (CCC Rights of Way Officer) had confirmed that he would be seeking a site meeting with David Buttery (Agent) to discuss the tenant's management of the footpath.

Right of Way access to Friday Bridge playing field from Tower Road – Mark Peck had forwarded details of the application process for seeking a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) in order to officially recognise the Right of Way. Historic evidence of usage would be required and the process could take up to six years to complete.

Defibrillator Unit, Coldham – Clerk was awaiting further guidance from Community Response Manager at East of England Ambulance Service.

Strathmore House – PC Fenn Smith confirmed that the property was in a very poor state and presented danger to anyone attempting to enter the premises; asbestos present throughout the building. Nick Harding (FDC Head of Planning) had confirmed that a multidisciplinary meeting would be held to establish how the issues onsite could be resolved.

30 mph wheelie bin stickers – a pack of 100 stickers had been received, Cllr Ferguson confirmed that she would distribute along Fridaybridge Road, other areas may be suitable; contact Clerk for supplies.

New waste bins – FDC had confirmed that bins would shortly be installed at; March Rd (end of Tower Rd passageway) and Elm Low Rd (dog waste, opp. Curston Close).

Tree works recommended in survey – Council's contractor had recommended that all works should be deferred to the autumn.

Giant Hogweed, garden adjacent to towpath – It was confirmed that the Clerk to Emneth PC had written to the resident of the affected property; no response to date.

Elm village sign – Mr Barnes had advised that restoration of the sign was nearing completion; Councillors welcome to call in to view progress.

Trees, Coldham layby – No response from Highways concerning safety check, Clerk to keep chasing.

Plaques to mark tree planting projects in recognition of HM The Queen's Jubilee – Emneth PC had advised it did not wish to pursue purchase of a plaque for the towpath. Clerk advised to purchase a single plaque for trees planted at Begdale Field.

38.22 Financial Matters

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; Rent (Cemetery Cottage) £450.00; Burial fees £1302.50; Interest £40.27.
- ii. Council resolved to approve expenditure for May as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds Maint. Apr 22	£1,145.40	£229.08	£1,374.48
ROSPA	Play area inspections	£329.00	£65.80	£394.80
Cambs CC	Rent - FB playing field	£375.00		£375.00
Smith of Derby	Clock Tower Service	£194.00	£38.80	£232.80
FDC	Bins - Cemetery	£201.60		£201.60
Plusnet	Broadband	£24.11	£4.82	£28.93
Elm PCC Magazine	Contr. towards printing	£50.00		£50.00
S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,147.26		£1,147.26
S England	Clerk's Expenses	£243.29	£2.40	£245.69
Nest	Pension	£92.09		£92.09
Carter Accom.	Disabled Toilet hire	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
Elm Fete Committee	Jubilee Event Grant	£500.00		£500.00
CAB Rural Cambs	Grant S137	£300.00		£300.00
Streetpride	Grant S137	£200.00		£200.00
L Welbourne	Cem records admin	£182.00		£182.00
HMRC	PAYE & NI Month 1	£429.02		£429.02
		£5,552.77	£368.90	£5,921.67

Chairman

iii. To resolve on quotations received for new security gates at Tower Hall.

The Clerk presented details of two quotations received. Council resolved to accept the quote received from Sharman Fabrications (£1900.00 + VAT) to complete the work.

39.22 Correspondence

For comment and/or resolution; N/A

For information purposes (see website or contact Clerk for further details);

- i. FDC Press release – Fenland welcomes first Ukrainian refugees.
- ii. Email, Nexus – Highlighting urgent need for foster carers.
- iii. FDC Press release – Council Tax rebates start to arrive in customers' bank accounts.
- iv. Email, FDC – Council Tax refund Scam Alert.

40.22 Planning

1. **F/YR22/0422/F** – Single storey rear extension to existing dwelling at, 67 The Stitch, Friday Bridge.
Council resolved to support the application.
2. **F/YR22/0361/RM** – Reserved matters application relating to matters of access, appearance, layout (plot 2 only) pursuant to outline permission F/YR21/0337/O, land west of 207-215 Fridaybridge Rd, Elm.
Council resolved to support the application.
3. **F/YR22/0405/F** – 1 x 2 storey 3-bed dwelling at land east of The Lodge, 84 March Rd, Friday Bridge.
Council resolved to object to the application on the grounds that; it was overdevelopment of the site and, there was a lack of amenity space.
4. **F/YR22/0450/F** – Siting of storage container (retrospective) and stable block, land north of Six Acres, Bar Drove, Friday Bridge.
Councillors voiced concern that the container had been sited without prior permission; no further comments resolved for submission.
5. **F/YR22/0406/VOC** – Variation of condition 09 to allow for amended solar farm layout, including new ancillary buildings, Coldham Wind Farm, March Rd, Coldham.
Council resolved to raise no objection to the application.

41.22 Highways & Footways

Update on outstanding matters – It was confirmed that Council's LHI application for additional speed

reduction measures to be installed along Fridaybridge Rd had been included in the next stage of the selection process.

- 42.22 **Reports from representatives of outside bodies;**
- (i) Community Facility Working Party – Cllr Exell advised there had been 80 responses to the survey; additional copies would be circulated at the upcoming Jubilee event. Results would be incorporated into a pie chart and forwarded to Elm Parochial Church Council. Cllr Feaviour confirmed that a statement of need had been sent to the Diocese.
 - (ii) Platinum Jubilee Event – Cllr Welbourne advised arrangements were going well, activities included; bouncy castle & fancy hat competition, a live band would also be playing. Friday Bridge School had been invited to get involved, additional volunteers were needed to assist on the day.
 - (iii) To appoint new representative to act in consideration of bids submitted to the Whitemill Fund – It was resolved to appoint Cllr Rosa Hopkin to act as Council representative on the Fund Committee.
- 43.22 **To consider information presented by Garry Edwards concerning streetlight upgrades and resolve on action** – It was resolved to seek a quotation for replacement of the four remaining concrete columns and also, those streetlight assets identified as having a remaining useful life of 0-36 months. Further upgrades to be completed during the next financial year.
- 44.22 **To consider measures to improve security at Elm Cemetery** – It was resolved to install a CCTV camera and appropriate signage at the entrance to Elm Cemetery, a further review of security measures would take place if and when conversion works commenced at the Cemetery Chapel.
- 45.22 **To review Cemetery fees** – Council was requested to re-consider the 250% surcharge which had been implemented a number of years ago for ‘non-resident’ interments (due to lack of burial/ashes plots). Members agreed that this was excessive and; in view of the recent extension to burial facilities; resolved to reduce the surcharge to 50%. The Clerk advised she would undertake a survey of burial fees charged by other parishes in the district in order to review basic costs for interments; item to be carried forward to June meeting.
- 46.22 **To receive update concerning access into Friday Bridge playing field from Tower Road** – The Clerk advised she had been in contact with Mark Peck (CCC Rights of Way Officer) concerning how a Right of Way might be established for the Tower Road access to Friday Bridge playing field. He had advised it was a lengthy process (up to six years) however; if enough evidence could be obtained from people who had used the access over the past 20 years; then an application could be made. Council resolved for the subject to be investigated further.
- 47.22 **To receive requests from Members for subjects to be included on the next agenda.**
Cllr Exell – Issue of parking around Elm War Memorial. The Clerk confirmed that she would report the matter to the local police team and asked Councillors to forward photographs illustrating the problem.
Cllr Hopkin – Issue of vehicles speeding through villages in the parish.
Cllr Lea – Reported that the seat on zip-wire in Friday Bridge play park was too low; Clerk confirmed she would ask the contractor (HAGS) to undertake a repair.
- 48.22 **To resolve on date for next meeting** – It was resolved to hold the next meeting on Wednesday 8th June at the Begdale portacabin.
- 49.22 **To resolve on entering 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 s. 1[2])** – Council resolved to enter closed session.
- 50.22 **To receive update concerning alleged breach of planning regulations on Canal Towpath** (confidential due to data protection and potential legal issues). Cllr Goodley confirmed his interest due to connection to person

involved and left the meeting. Members discussed the matter further and resolved to seek professional advice in order to protect the Council's interests in respect of public liability insurance cover.

51.22 **To receive update concerning tenancy for Cemetery Cottage and resolve appropriately** (confidential due to personal data protection issues - carried forward from April meeting due to Council being inquorate).
Cllr Ferguson confirmed her interest due to her connection to the arrangements for the tenancy and withdrew from taking part in the item.
Council resolved to confirm the arrangements for the new tenancy at Cemetery Cottage.

52.22 **To resolve on arrangements for payment of Clerk's salary** (confidential due to personal data protection issues – carried forward due to Council being inquorate at the April meeting).
Cllr Welbourne confirmed his interest due to his connection with operating the payroll and withdrew from taking part in the item.
Council resolved to confirm the arrangements put in place for organising the staff payroll.

53.22 **Close of meeting** - The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date