

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 8th March 2023 commencing at 6.30pm

[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 – Cage, Ferguson (Chair), Goodley, Milham & Welbourne.
Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 13 Members of the public.

- 222.22 **Apologies for absence** – Apologies were reported for Cllrs Brand, Butcher, Cotterell & Proberts; District Cllr Sutton had advised he would be late for the meeting. Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
- 223.22 **Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded Councillors of the need to advise any changes to the content of their Register of Interests forms.
- 224.22 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation** – Cllr Ferguson advised an interest in agenda item 11(i) (due to a non-pecuniary connection with the planning applicant, min.ref. 232.22). Cllr Goodley advised his interest in agenda item 19 concerning the Canal Towpath (due to his connection to an individual involved, min.ref. 245.22).
- 225.22 **Open Forum** – Six members of the public indicated they wished to speak; it was resolved to suspend standing orders in order for them to do so. The following matters were reported;
- Speaker 1 – Raised objections relating to outline planning application ref. F/YR23/0106/O in connection to; Concerns relating to the number of larger developments which were proposed for Friday Bridge and the wider parish; villages were losing their identity. Access to the proposed location was located on a bend which would be hazardous to negotiate due to poor visibility, vehicles travelling at excess speed and the highway being regularly used by heavy agricultural machinery. Loss of green open space and wildlife habitat. Proposals were not in-keeping with the existing streetscene. Local infrastructure (schools, medical facilities etc) were already overburdened with demand.
- Speaker 2 – Echoed the concerns raised in connection to planning application F/YR23/0106/O adding that; bats were present at the site; contrary to details included in the submission there were trees which would be affected by the proposals; the design could create an overbearing effect on a neighbouring property.
- Speaker 3 – Supported the comments voiced regarding F/YR23/0106/O in respect of; loss of green space, wildlife habitat, village identity and highway health & safety issues.
- Councillors confirmed that the issues of concern would be taken into account when the planning application was considered under agenda item 11(i), see minute ref. 232.22 (1).*
- Speaker 4 – Provided information in support of request for bench to be installed at Elm Cemetery. *It was confirmed that the subject would be considered under agenda item 14, see minute ref. 236.22.*
- Speaker 5 – Reported issues concerning dogs being walked off-lead at Coldham playing field and raised query concerning appropriate signage.
- It was suggested that the risk presented to children using the play equipment (which was not enclosed by fencing) could be a factor which C.R.A.G. (Coldham Residents' Action Group) may wish to consider when making a decision on the subject.*
- Speaker 6 – Provided information in support of requests submitted concerning Cemetery Cottage.
- It was confirmed that the subject would be considered under agenda item 22, minute ref 243.22 and the Clerk would be in touch to confirm the outcome in due course.*
- 6.50pm – It was resolved to reinstate standing orders.
- 226.22 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 8th February 2023 as a true record of proceedings.
- 227.22 **Police matters** –
The Chair advised there had been no further response from the Police & Crime Commissioner. Sgt. Arnold had advised that; due to limited resources, issues such as parking at Elm School and anti-social behaviour at Begdale car park could not be a priority; their focus was currently directed towards criminal and child sexual exploitation. He confirmed that the police were using speed guns in the area around Guyhirn

roundabout.

228.22 **District Councillor's Report** – It was resolved to defer the item pending Cllr Sutton's arrival.

229.22 **Clerk's Report** – The Clerk reported as follows;

It was confirmed that the Clerk and two Councillors had attended briefing sessions held at FDC for the purpose of providing information concerning the upcoming elections. Contact details for the FDC Elections Team and a timetable for the election process were distributed. The benefit of making an appointment with the Elections Team to go through nomination paperwork was stressed to Members. Training on the new Coldham defibrillator had taken place and feedback from participants had been positive, it was suggested that a similar course could be arranged for Friday Bridge. Emneth Parish Council had confirmed that it would contribute 50% towards the cost of tree works required along the towpath. A section of the newly installed fencing at Friday Bridge playing field had been broken down causing damage to the new hedging plants, Idverde were due to reinstate the fence, raising soil levels on each side to deter further vandalism. An update had been received from Garry Edwards (FDC Engineering Mgr.) concerning the streetlight upgrade project, it was hoped that all materials would be delivered by the end of March and works completed by 1st July. The Clerk had responded to an individual who had uploaded a post on Twitter criticising Council's rise in precept; no acknowledgment or response had been received from the person concerned.

230.22 **Financial Matters**

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; Cemetery Cottage rent £750.00; Cemetery fees £337.50; Interest £208.22.
- ii. Council resolved to approve expenditure for March as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Fen Group	Clearing Leam Pond	£3,085.00	£617.00	£3,702.00
Idverde	Grounds Maint. Feb	£1,145.40	£229.08	£1,374.48
Idverde	Tree works, pock't park/Begd'le	£1,610.93	£322.19	£1,933.12
Idverde	Tree/hedge works, FB pl. f.	£737.34	£147.49	£884.83
Idverde	Tree works, Towpath (50% cost to Emneth)	£876.67	£175.33	£1,052.00
FDC	Cemetery bin emptying	£172.80		£172.80
D A Pest Control	Control of moles	£120.00		£120.00
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55
S England	Clerk's salary	£1,170.67		£1,170.67
S England	Clerk's expenses	£267.97	£14.39	£282.36
HMRC	M11	£142.74		£142.74
NEST	Pension contributions	£90.32		£90.32
		£9,442.80	£1,510.07	£10,952.87

Chairperson

- iii. To resolve to adopt Statement of Financial Internal Control – item deferred to April meeting.
- iv. To resolve to approve purchase of mini shredder for use at parish office, cost £42.99 (inc. VAT). It resolved to approve the purchase.

231.22 **Correspondence**

For comment and/or resolution;

- i. Email – request to use Begdale field for fitness class (to be held 6th & 13th April, 20th July, 10th, 17th & 31st August). The Clerk confirmed that satisfactory evidence of public liability insurance and risk assessment had been received. It was resolved to authorise the classes to be held on condition that participants left the field before dusk; Clerk to confirm timings.
- ii. Letter, FEET – Details of proposed plan of work and suggestions for future activities. Deferred to agenda item 13, see minute ref. 235.22.
- iii. Email, parishioner – Raising issue of dogs running off lead at Coldham playing field and request for new signage. It was confirmed that the matter needed to be referred to C.R.A.G. (Coldham Residents' Action Group).

- iv. Email, Commonwealth War Graves Commission – Would Council be interested in having War Graves sign installed on gates at Elm Cemetery (all costs covered by CWGC)? It was resolved to confirm the installation, Clerk to make necessary arrangements.
- v. Email, Orchard Gardens Neighbourhood Watch – Notifications of issues in the parish. The Clerk confirmed that all matters had been dealt with.

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

- i. FDC, Details of business grant scheme.
- ii. CCC, Cambs Matters Newsletter.
- iii. FDC, Notification of reduction in Council Tax as budget approved.
- iv. FEET, Minutes of meeting.

232.22 Planning

1. **F/YR23/0106/O** – Construction of up to 6 x dwellings and formation of new access (outline, all matters reserved) at, land south east of Aberfield, Well End, Friday Bridge.
Cllr Ferguson confirmed her interest (due to her connection to the applicant) and left the meeting. It was resolved to appoint Cllr Welbourne as Chairman in Cllr Ferguson's absence.
Council considered the concerns raised during public forum. It was resolved to raise objection to the outline proposals on the grounds of issues relating to; highway safety, overburdened infrastructure, loss of open view/habitat, presence of protected species, design not in-keeping with street scene.
Cllr Ferguson re-entered the meeting; it was resolved to reinstate her as Chairperson.
2. **F/YR23/0126/TRCA** – Works to 1 x Ash tree & 1 x Sycamore tree within conservation area at, Halfpenny House, Rose Lane, Elm. It was resolved to support the application.

233.22 District Councillor's Report (Deferred agenda item, see minute ref. 228.22)

Cllr Sutton advised as follows;

He had questioned when the Garden Waste collection charge would be abolished (as promised at the time of the last elections), the response had been that it would likely never happen.

Funds held under the control of a former quango 'Cambs Horizons' (defunct for approx. 9 years) had previously been distributed amongst the area's District Councils. East Cambs had used the funds for the benefit of the local community; Cllr Sutton had queried why Fenland had not done the same. Further to the 'waffled' response received from FDC, Cllr Sutton had submitted funding requests for projects supporting a new community space, solar panels and the installation of a MVAS unit.

It was confirmed that Cllr Sutton had identified; what he believed to be; material considerations in support of the Parish Council's objection to planning proposals for 63 dwellings at land north of Gosmoor Lane. Despite the application being granted, there were still drainage issues at the site and the filling of ditches may still be refused.

Cllr Milham advised that the hedgerow on the boundary of Henry Warby 'green space' was full of rubbish and, the low fence had still not been properly repaired. Cllr Sutton confirmed that he would investigate the two issues.

234.22 Highways & Footways

Update on outstanding matters; N/A.

New matters;

- i. To resolve on application/s to County Council's funding programme for 20mph zones to be installed. It was resolved to submit applications for 20mph zones to be implemented on the highway at both Elm and Friday Bridge schools.
- ii. Temporary prohibition of traffic – Begdale Road (between Limes Avenue and The Dale), 17th-19th April 2023.

235.22 To receive update on meeting held between representatives of Elm PC, Emneth PC & FEET; resolve appropriately.

Cllr Ferguson advised that the meeting had been very successful; all parties were agreed that they could work together for the purpose of maintaining and further enhancing the Towpath area for members of the public to enjoy. A proposed plan of work and suggestions for social activities (submitted by FEET) had been circulated

to Councillors prior to the meeting. It was resolved to approve the schedule of works; ideas for activities would need to be considered and resolved on an individual basis.

It was resolved to appoint Cllr Milham as Council's representative within the FEET volunteer group.

It was resolved to authorise FEET representatives to attend a meeting with the Well Creek Trust in order to discuss possible funding opportunities.

Further meetings to be arranged between the representatives on a twice yearly basis.

236.22 To resolve on request for bench to be installed at Elm Cemetery.

Councillors took into consideration information presented by the applicant during public forum. Details of specification, fixing method and location had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved to approve the installation of the bench. Clerk to make necessary arrangements.

237.22 To resolve to approve content of Cemetery Risk Assessment document – Item deferred to April meeting.

238.22 To receive requests from Members for subjects to be included on the next agenda.

No matters reported.

239.22 To resolve on date for next meeting – It was resolved to hold next Parish Council meeting at 6.30pm on Wednesday 12th April 2023.

240.22 To resolve to enter closed session in order to consider the following agenda item on the grounds of confidentiality by virtue of; The Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 s1(2).

7.45pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.

It was resolved to defer agenda item 19 (matters concerning possible breach of planning) as the last item to be considered, see minute ref. 245.22.

241.22 To consider tenders received in respect of Council's grounds maintenance contract, resolve appropriately (confidential due to discussion of contractual matters).

The Clerk advised that further to expressions of interest submitted by five contractors, two had proceeded to offer a tender for the contract. Details of the tenders were reported to Council; it was resolved to accept a tender submitted by Idverde Ltd in respect of the schedule of works due to commence 1st April 2023.

242.22 To consider situation concerning grave in new lawn cemetery area, resolve appropriately (confidential due to the protection of an individual's personal data).

Council considered advice offered by the Institute of Cemetery Management in respect of the matter. It was resolved to permit a limited number of floral tributes on the grass area on the north side of the lawn cemetery. It was resolved to request that a memorial headstone should be installed on the concrete plinth as soon as possible.

243.22 To consider requests submitted by tenant of Cemetery Cottage, resolve appropriately (confidential due to the protection of an individual's personal data).

Councillors took into consideration the information presented by the tenant during public forum. It was resolved to approve the requests for re-decoration on condition that the walls were re-painted in a neutral shade at the end of the tenancy. It was resolved for the tenant to keep one dog at the property on condition that it was well behaved (i.e. did not cause damage to the property or, cause nuisance by barking).

244.22 To receive information concerning Coldham playing field lease, resolve appropriately (confidential due to discussion of legal document).

The Clerk confirmed that she had located a file containing various lease documents relating to Coldham playing field; the minutes of meetings held between 2007 and 2009 had also been examined. It was confirmed that the lease between Co-op and Elm Parish Council had been assigned to C.R.A.G. (Coldham Residents' Action Group) in 2009. The Parish Council held no responsibility for the field. Minute ref. 178/08 24th February 2009.

245.22 **To receive update on matters connected to breach of planning on Council owned land, resolve appropriately** (confidential due to personal data protection and possible legal implications).
8.40pm Cllr Goodley confirmed his interest (due to his connection to an individual involved in the matter) and left the meeting.
Councillors considered information relating to an incident that had occurred on the towpath. It was resolved to propose to Emneth Parish Council that a letter should be sent on behalf of both Councils addressed to an individual who was allegedly involved in the event.

246.22 **Close of meeting** - The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date