

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 14th June 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), Milham, Proberts, Stevenson & Welbourne.
District Cllr Roy, Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 2 Members of the public.

- 22.23 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllrs Goodley & Hopkin; Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
- 23.23 **Members Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded members of the need to submit; via the Clerk; any changes to their Register of Interests information.
- 24.23 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation** – No interests declared.
- 25.23 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman** – It was resolved to appoint Cllr Proberts as Vice-Chairman, taking the role over from Cllr Welbourne. Proposed Cllr Welbourne, seconded Cllr Cage.
- 26.23 **Open Forum** – The following issues were raised;
- Vehicles travelling at excess speed through Coldham; it was confirmed that the police would be requested to monitor the area with the mobile speed detector van.
 - Had a response been received concerning the possible installation of a MVAS unit along March Road, Coldham; it was confirmed that Highways had recommended making an application via the LHI process.
 - Parishioners in Coldham were interested in setting up a Speedwatch group, Cllr Roy confirmed that there was also interest in Elm. Cllr Roy to liaise with representative from Coldham reference way forward.
- 27.23 **Council Membership, consider candidates for co-option** - Item deferred to July meeting.
- 28.23 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 10th May 2023 as a true record of proceedings.
- 29.23 **Police matters** –
The Chair advised there had been no further communications from the Police & Crime Commissioner and confirmed that she would ask for an update. The Clerk advised she would investigate the date of the next Police/Council meeting and ensure that Cllr Butcher received an invitation.
- 30.23 **District Councillor's Report** –
Cllr Roy reported;
Reference item of correspondence concerning flooding issues at a property located adjacent to the small Pocket Park, Cllr Roy had attended a meeting with representatives from the Drainage Board to consider the situation. It had been established that the existing drainage system was inadequate and additional drains would need to be installed in order to deal with surface water. All planning applications would need to be carefully monitored until this issue was resolved. See also, minute ref. 33.23(i).
An area of land on the corner of Ingle Road had become severely overgrown; arrangements for clearance had been made with the Street Scene team.
Highways had been contacted concerning lack of visibility (due to overgrown verges) at the junction of Collett's Bridge Lane with Gosmoor Lane. Councillors commented that the situation would become increasingly hazardous; should the solar farm planning application be approved; due to the movements of construction traffic.
- 31.23 **Clerk's Report** – The Clerk reported as follows;
Topple testing of memorials at Elm Cemetery had been completed. Thanks to Cllrs Milham and Stevenson for their assistance. Ten unstable headstones had been laid down and twelve black bin liners had been filled with

dead flowers and rubbish. All glass items, scissors, knives, and weedkiller had been removed to the Chapel for storage. The contents of the Chapel garage had also been checked, there were approximately 30 bags of rock salt, electric spotlights, ladders, a shopping trolley and other sundry items. Disposal/sale of the items would need to be arranged at some point.

The fencing project at Cemetery Cottage had been completed by the tenant to a good standard. The front flower bed bordering the pavement required cutting back and also the soil level needed raising in order to reduce risk to pedestrians. Clerk to seek quotation for the work.

Confirmation had been received from Highways that they would investigate the possibility of installing 'soft verge' signs along the B1101 approach to Coldham. Gallagher insurance had confirmed that the unexpectedly high raise in premium was due to the index linking applied; 12% on buildings and 8% on all other items.

Clarion Housing had confirmed that their Neighbourhood Response Team had examined trees on the green area adjacent to Birch Grove and the pruning project had been passed on their tree contractor.

Cllr Stevenson had been booked on a New Councillor Training Course, due to be held 17th June.

Elm WI ladies had held a craft morning at the portacabin, thanks to Cllr Milham for managing access arrangements. *Council resolved to approve the WI's future use of the premises subject to receipt of suitable liability insurance documents.*

The gate located at the Collet's Bridge end of the towpath had been destroyed by a vehicle during the evening of 8th June. Thanks were conveyed to Cllr Cage for arranging to fence off the gap at very short notice. The Clerk was liaising with Emneth Parish Council concerning options for replacement and the local police had been contacted concerning the possibility of making an insurance claim against the driver, should the vehicle be identified.

The streetlight project appeared to be moving forward, it was hoped that work would continue during the next week. There was concern that the contract between FDC and its maintenance contractor was due to expire on 1st July 2023; FDC's Engineering Manager was seeking reassurance that the project would be completed even if it overran the deadline.

It had been reported that a resident in Elm parish had been discharging the contents of their septic tank into the highway drain. Reports had been made to both the Environment Agency and Middle Level Drainage Board. Council's architect had confirmed that work had been completed on the detailed drawings and specifications for the proposed conversion of Cemetery Chapel, these would assist in making an accurate assessment of the cost of the project. Planning was granted in September 2022, Council had three years from this date to commence works. It was likely that funding would need to be raised for the project via the Public Works Loan Board; subject to be re-visited as further information was received.

It was confirmed that the number of enquiries received from parishioners had significantly increased in recent weeks, possibly due to publicity connected to the 20mph survey. Every query had been responded to, referring to the controlling authorities where appropriate.

32.23 Financial Matters

i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting;

Cemetery Cottage rent £750.00; Cemetery fees £1950.00; Interest £237.21.

ii. Council resolved to approve expenditure for June as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds maint. May	£1,359.94	£271.99	£1,631.93
Gallagher Insurance	Insurance premium	£4,699.92		£4,699.92
T Jordan	Internal Audit fee	£225.00		£225.00
Fenland D C.	Cemetery - bin emptying	£217.98		£217.98
L Welbourne	Cemetery records admin.	£136.50		£136.50
Tamar IT	Hosting & Domain name	£87.00	£17.40	£104.40
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55
S England	Clerk's salary	£1,398.72		£1,398.72
S England	Clerk's expenses	£192.61	£5.52	£198.13
HMRC	PAYE M2	£130.36		£130.36
Nest	Pension contributions	£133.10		£133.10

Inst. of Cem Mgmt.	Annual sub.	£95.00	£95.00	Addendum
		£8,699.09	£299.50	£8,998.59

Chairperson

- iii. To resolve to approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022-23; Resolved to approve.
- iv. To resolve to approve Section 2 of the AGAR (Accounting Statements) 2022-23; Resolved to approve.
- v. To resolve to accept the content of the Internal Auditor's Report for 2022-23 and confirm action to be taken; It was resolved to accept the content of the Internal Auditor's Report and implement the recommendations contained therein.

33.23 Correspondence

For comment and/or resolution;

- i. Email, parishioner – concerning flooding issues at a property located in the vicinity of the Old Post Office. The Clerk confirmed that an on-site meeting had been arranged with Hundred of Wisbech Drainage Board in order to consider what action might be taken to improve drainage.
- ii. Letter, NHS Social Prescriber – raising concern at an incident that had allegedly taken place at Elm Cemetery. Item deferred to closed session in order to protect personal data. See minute ref 44.23.
- iii. Email, parishioner – request to walk dogs off lead at Friday Bridge playing field. Council resolved not to allow dogs to be walked off lead due to the risk it would present to the unfenced children's play area.
- iv. Email parishioner – relating to Coldham WW2 plaque. Council resolved to confirm it was happy for the plaque to be installed on the green area adjacent to Coldham layby. Clerk to contact CRAG concerning style of 'fixing', it was suggested that grants may be available from both the Whitemoor and Whitemill fund committees in order to support the project.
- v. Letter, parishioner – concerning planning enforcement issue. Item deferred to closed session due to protection of personal data. See minute ref. 45.23.
- vi-viii. Emails, parishioners – concerning overgrown hedges. Ther Clerk confirmed that she had written to all householders concerned.
- ix. Email, parishioner – raising concern at vehicles speeding along Henry Warby Avenue. The Clerk advised she had advised the parishioner to report vehicle registration numbers to the police.
- x. Emails (x3) – Grave location enquiries. The Clerk confirmed that locations had been investigated and details forwarded appropriately.
- xi. Addendum, Email, parishioner – request to install acro pops to support garden office on resident's side of the cemetery boundary drain. It was resolved to advise the parishioner to seek authority from the local drainage board.

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

- i. FDC – Planning training presentation slides.
- ii. Cambs ACRE Newsletter.
- iii. Cambs Matters Newsletter.
- iv. FDC – Election data statistics.

34.23 Planning

1. **F/YR23/0397/F** – Replace rear windows, insert basement windows, first floor side window & flu, install balcony and construct shed to existing dwelling (part retr.) at, Waterfront Lodge, 167 South Brink, Wisbech, PE14 0RZ. Council resolved to support the proposals.
2. **F/YR23/0398/LB** - Listed building consent for the above property. Council resolved to support the application.
3. **F/YR23/0436/O** – Construct up to 4 dwellings (outline app.) at, land east of 'At Last', Low Road, Elm. Council resolved to object to the proposals on the grounds that the proposed site was adjacent to a lane that it is subject to significant flooding. No plans for the site should be approved until the drainage system in the area had been significantly improved.
4. **F/YR23/0467/TRCA** - Works to pine tree within conservation area at; Granary Barn, Main Road, Elm. Council resolved to support the application.

- 35.23 **Highways & Footways**
Update on outstanding matters;
i. LHI application 2022-23, updated plan – Councillors considered the revised plan which reduced the number of chicanes from four to two in order to remain ‘in budget’. It was resolved to approve the new design.
New matters;
i. Highways issues enquiry raised by County Councillor Steve Count – Cllr Count thanked the Parish Council for providing feedback and confirmed that efforts were being made to improve the system.
ii. To resolve on date for consideration of options for 2023-24 LHI application. Clerk to liaise with Councillors reference suitable date.
- 36.23 To resolve on response to Fenland’s Dog Control Order Consultation – It was resolved to support the renewal of the Public Space Protection Order.
- 37.23 To resolve on Parish Council representatives for the Whitemill Environment Fund Committee – It was resolved to approve the continued appointment of Cllr Hopkin and additionally, appoint Cllr Welbourne.
- 38.23 To review condition of trees planted in 2022 and resolve appropriately. The Clerk advised there were still approximately 90 trees growing at Begdale field. It was resolved to monitor the situation.
- 39.23 To review situation concerning access arrangements to Meadowgate Field agricultural allotment – The Clerk advised she had spoken with the tenant, it had been confirmed that; whilst the allotment was officially ‘landlocked’; the new housing development had not made things any worse. Access was available via the adjacent fields farmed by the tenant and he was happy to continue with the tenancy for the foreseeable future.
- 40.23 **To receive requests from Members for subjects to be included on the next agenda.**
Cllr Milham – reported that the bins had not been emptied. Clerk to chase.
Cllr Ferguson – reported that footpath no. 8 had again been ploughed over and a stack of wooden crates was still present on the land. The Clerk confirmed that she would contact the County Rights of Way Officer, Ely Diocese and the Diocese’s land agent instructing that the situation should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.
- 41.23 **Date of next meeting** – It was resolved to confirm that the next Parish Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 12th July commencing at 6.30pm.
- 42.23 **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).**
7.35pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.
- 43.23 **To receive update on matters connected to alleged breach of planning on Council owned land, resolve appropriately** (confidential due to personal data protection and possible legal implications).
The Clerk updated members concerning the subject.
It was resolved to approve the undertaking of an ecological survey on the stacks of vegetation created along the towpath; cost to be shared 50% with Emneth PC.
It was confirmed that a letter which was expected to be received from another party involved in the matter had; as yet; not been delivered to the Clerk.
A copy of the title plan for the towpath area was considered by Members.
All matters to be carried forward to the July meeting.
- 44.23 **To consider content of correspondence item (ii), resolve appropriately** (confidential due to protection of an individual’s personal data).
Council considered the content of the letter. It was resolved that no further action was necessary.

- 45.23 **To consider content of correspondence item (v), resolve appropriately** (confidential due to protection of an individual's personal data).
 The Clerk presented details of the letter to Members. It was resolved to support the resident wherever possible and chase the relevant authorities to take appropriate action. It was confirmed that District Cllrs Roy and Summers would also be providing their support.
- 46.23 **To consider issues relating to a grave in the new lawn cemetery area** (confidential due to protection of an individual's personal data).
 The Clerk presented design details of a memorial headstone proposed for the new lawn cemetery area. Council resolved to approve the design on condition that the grass area was maintained in accordance with the Lawn Cemetery Regulations.
 It was resolved for the Clerk to seek a quotation for turfing the area presently covered by grass matting.
- 47.23 **To consider personnel matters, resolve appropriately** (confidential due to protection of staff/contractual matters).
 The Clerk presented a report to Council concerning workload and the potential risk presented relating to business continuity. It was resolved for the Clerk to compile a further report; item to be carried forward.
- 48.23 **Close of meeting** – The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed
 Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date