

# Elm Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 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 – Darker (co-opted during meeting), Ferguson (Chair), Hopkin, Milham, Probets, Stevenson & Welbourne. Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 1 Member of the public.

- 49.23 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllrs Cage & Goodley ; Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence. District Cllr Roy had also submitted his apologies.
- 50.23 **Members Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded members of the need to submit; via the Clerk; any changes to their Register of Interests information.
- 51.23 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation** – No interests declared.
- 52.23 **Open Forum**  
Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow a member of the public to speak.  
The following issues were raised;
- Concern expressed relating the cost of Council's streetlight upgrade project; would the precept need to be significantly raised again in order to fund the next stages of the scheme? *The Clerk explained that; although there had been a 100% increase in the precept for 2023-24 (£30,000 to £60,000); in previous financial years the precept had been in excess of £40,000 (2020-21) and £50,000 (2018-19). The lower figures raised in 2021-22 and 2022-23 were in response to the Auditor's view that Council should reduce its level of reserves.*
  - There were rumours circulating that the Stagecoach no. 56 bus service would be ending on the 27<sup>th</sup> July; *Clerk to investigate.*
- 53.23 **Council Membership, consider candidates for co-option**  
The Chair invited Mr Graham Darker to make a presentation prior to Council's consideration of his co-option. It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders.  
Council resolved to co-opt Mr Darker onto the Parish Council; the Chair welcomed him to the role.
- 54.23 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 as a true record of proceedings.
- 55.23 **Police matters** –  
The Chair advised there had been no further communications from the Police & Crime Commissioner. It was confirmed that the police were investigating incidents where cats had been mutilated and/or killed and the matter was being taken very seriously. It was stressed that anyone who had been affected must make a report to the police and contact the support group.  
It was confirmed that an incident that had occurred in Elm Cemetery did constitute a public order offence, a report had been made to Sgt. Arnold; subject to be discussed further in closed session.
- 56.23 **District Councillor's Report** – The Clerk reported on behalf of District Cllr Roy;  
Overgrown hedges at the old Dairy Crest depot were being monitored; There would be a Neighbourhood Watch leaflet drop on 20<sup>th</sup> July; Volunteers interested in forming a new Speedwatch group would be contacted concerning training; Three new Committees had been formed at Fenland – Culture, Arts & Heritage; Rural & Farming; Project Review.
- 57.23 **Clerk's Report** – The Clerk reported as follows;  
There was still work outstanding connected to Council's streetlight upgrade, it was recommended that no payment should be made until all lights in the schedule had been checked. *Councillors confirmed that they would be happy to check the streetlights; assets to be divided between Councillors at the end of the meeting.*

Friday Bridge residents would shortly be receiving more information concerning the 'Heat Pumps for Friday Bridge' pilot project. A working specification had been received in respect of Council's proposed Chapel Conversion project; it was acknowledged that a meeting would need to be organised in order to consider the viability of the project. Local community groups had been made aware of the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund which provided an opportunity to apply for up to £40,000 for the purpose of upgrading community buildings. A quotation had been sought for clearing and levelling the border to the front of Cemetery Cottage however it was reported that the tenant had kindly already undertaken most of the work; Clerk to investigate supply of top soil in order to finish the task. A large willow branch had fallen onto the towpath, Idverde had cleared the debris; 50% of the cost would be covered by Emneth Parish Council.

**58.23 Financial Matters**

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; Cemetery Cottage rent £750.00; Cemetery fees £605.00; Interest £229.56; FDC Concurrent Functions Grant £7837.00.
- ii. Council resolved to approve expenditure for July as detailed below; with the exception of the payment to FDC for UKPN charges; which would be settled once streetlight upgrade works had been completed;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL	
FDC	Streetlight Upgrade UKPN charge	£37,165.41	£7,433.08	£44,598.49	} Combined in one invoice
FDC	S'light energy & repairs re-charge	£17,931.55	£3,586.31	£21,517.86	
Idverde	Grounds Maint. June	£1,359.94	£271.99	£1,631.93	
Idverde	Tree work Pocket parks	£1,610.93	£322.19	£1,933.12	
Idverde	Tree work Towpath	£876.67	£175.33	£1,052.00	50% to Emneth
L Welbourne	Cemetery Admin	£110.50		£110.50	
FDC	Cemetery bin emptying	£186.84		£186.84	
A1 Signs	P Office sign	£55.00	£11.00	£66.00	
Hundred of Wisbech	Agric. Water Rates	£97.91		£97.91	
Flame Heating	Cem. Cottage, gas safety insp.	£75.00		£75.00	
Wave	Water rates - portacabin	£17.32		£17.32	
S England	Clerk's salary	£1,153.34		£1,153.34	
S England	Clerk's Expenses	£143.39	£2.60	£145.99	
Nest	Pension	£87.06		£87.06	
HMRC	PAYE M3	£306.12		£306.12	
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55	
		£61,199.94	£11,807.09	£73,034.58	

Chairperson .....

- iii. Bank reconciliation, quarter end 30.6.23 – Council resolved to accept the content.
- iv. Budget update, quarter end 30.6.23 – Council resolved to accept the content.
- v. Payment of August 2023 invoices – It was resolved to authorise Cllrs Ferguson, Probets & Welbourne to approve payment of invoices due in August 2023.
- vi. Quotations for gate at Collett's Bridge end of Towpath – The Clerk confirmed she had sought quotations for a timber gate and also, 'off the shelf' and 'bespoke' steel gates. Emneth Parish Council had advised their preference for the timber option. It was resolved to accept the quotation submitted by Idverde Ltd totalling £497.61 + VAT for the supply and fitting of a timber gate; 50% of cost to be re-charged to Emneth PC.

**59.23 Correspondence N/A.**

## 60.23 Planning

1. **F/YR23/0569/F** – Single storey side extension to dwelling at; Chez Nous, 326 Low Road, Elm. Council resolved to support the application.
2. **F/YR23/0604/TRCA** – Works to Acer & Plum trees at; The Old Vicarage, Main Road, Elm. Council resolved to support the application.
3. **F/YR23/0594/F** – Change of use of land for car parking (retrospective) at; land east of Fenmarc, Gosmoor Lane, Elm. Council resolved to object to the proposals relating to artificial lighting on the grounds that it caused nuisance to neighbouring residential properties.
4. **F/YR23/0502/F** – Erect car port to front of existing dwelling and change of use of land for domestic purposes at; 22 Fridaybridge Road, Elm. Council resolved to support the proposals on condition that the land subject to ‘change of use’ was used solely as a domestic garden area.

## 61.23 Highways & Footways

### **Update on outstanding matters;**

- i. LHI application 2022-23 – There was a three month delay on road closure notices however it was hoped that work would commence on the project in October 2023.
- ii. Cllr Count had contacted the County Senior Road Safety Engineer in connection to the Parish’s request for a meeting with the Road Safety Team. Clerk to arrange a mutually convenient date and time for the meeting; Parish Councillors welcome to attend.

### **New matters;**

- i. TTRO – Road closure (sewer connection), 207-215 Fridaybridge Road, 29/8 to 1/9/23.
- ii. Presentation, District Cllr Summers concerning ideas for 2024-25 LHI application – Item deferred in Cllr Summers’ absence.

## 62.23 **To resolve on request for Friday Bridge playing field to be used by new Youth Football Team for training and matches.**

Council confirmed their support for the initiative subject to appropriate risk assessment and insurance measures being in place; Clerk to liaise further with those involved.

## 63.23 **To receive comments/requests from Members; to be included on the next agenda where appropriate.**

Cllr Milham – Friday Bridge village sign required refurbishment – to be included for consideration in 2024-25 budget.

Cllr Milham – Chase Highways concerning replacement of bus stop pole (Main Road, Elm) and removal of protruding metal edge of the old pole.

Cllr Milham – Overgrown hedge at property along Main Road – Clerk confirmed she had sent a letter.

Cllr Welbourne – Possible grant funding for a new shed at Elm School – It was confirmed that they could make a funding application to the Parish Council.

## 64.23 **Date of next meeting** – It was resolved to confirm that the next Parish Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 commencing at 6.30pm.

## 65.23 **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).**

7.25pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.

## 66.23 **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, including details of a letter; received from a person connected to the matter; which had been addressed to both Elm and Emneth Parish Councils. Responses to questions raised in the letter were confirmed by resolution.

Further to advice received from various parties (and, acknowledging that the stacks had rotted down naturally) it was resolved not to mechanically reduce the height of vegetation stacks on the towpath.

67.23 **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 updated Members on the subject and also, provided details of an incident that had occurred in the Cemetery connected to parties involved. It was agreed that the situation had reached an impasse; Clerk to seek advice from the Institute of Cemetery & Crematoria Management; subject to be carried forward.

68.23 **Close of meeting** – The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed .....  
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date .....