

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 13th September 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 – Butcher, Cage, Darker, Hopkin, Johnson (co-opted during meeting), Milham, Probets (Chair), Stevenson & Welbourne. District Cllrs Roy & Summers.

Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 2 Members of the public.

- 69.23 It was resolved to appoint Cllr Probets as Chair for the meeting in Cllr Ferguson's absence.
- 70.23 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllrs Ferguson & Goodley; Council resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
- 71.23 **Members Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded members of the need to submit, via the Clerk; any changes to their Register of Interests information.
- 72.23 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation;**
Cllr Cage declared an interest in agenda item 10(iii) (min. ref. 79.23(iii)) due to his connection to Pro-Create included in the payment schedule.
Cllr Probets declared interests in agenda items; 10(v) (min. ref. 79.23(v)) & 14 (min. ref. 83.23) due to his connection to Friday Bridge Football Club and also item 10(vi)(min. ref. 79.23(vi)) due to consideration of an application for him to operate online banking.
Cllr Welbourne declared interests in agenda items 10(vi)(min. ref. 79.23(vi)) due to consideration of an application for him to operate online banking and also, item 12(3)(min. ref. 81.23(3)) due to his connection to the planning applicant.
- 73.23 **Open Forum**
6.33pm - Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow a member of the public to speak.

It was confirmed that the WW1 Airfield Memorial Plaque had been moved and was now in the possession of a C.R.A.G. member. Further discussion deferred to agenda item 15 (min. ref. 84.23)
- 74.23 **Council Membership, consider candidates for co-option**
The Chair invited Mr Stephen Johnson to make a presentation prior to Council's consideration of his co-option.
6.40pm - It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders.
Council resolved to co-opt Mr Johnson onto the Parish Council; the Chair welcomed him to the role.
Cllr Johnson declared his interests in agenda item; 10(iii)(min. ref.79.23(iii)) due to his connection to Boom Construction included in the payment schedule and also, items 10(v)(min. ref. 79.23(v)) & 14 (min. ref. 83.23) due to his connection to Friday Bridge Football Club.
- 75.23 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 19th July 2023 as a true record of proceedings.
- 76.23 **Police matters** –
The Clerk advised there had been an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour along Begdale Road; the police were aware and monitoring when resources permitted.
- 77.23 **District Councillor's Report** – Cllr Roy reported;
Incidents of anti-social behaviour connected to use of nitrous oxide were widespread across Wisbech, the subject would be raised with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)(NHW AGM meeting due to be held on 7th October) and also at the full District Council meeting. A Rural Action Crime Team event would take place on 21st September, discussions to include 'SelectDNA' a product designed to identify ownership of tradespersons' specialist tools and equipment. Six members of the public had undertaken training for the new Speedwatch team; equipment stored by the Parish Council would be made available for their use. Members

were reminded that the cut-off date for expressions of interest in the Communities Project Fund was 24th September, it was suggested that Friday Bridge Football Club might benefit from the scheme.

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

1. A meeting with FEET and representatives from Emneth PC had taken place on 12th September, it had been confirmed that FEET would maintain the pocket park end of the towpath. Measures to encourage wildlife had not taken place due to lack of manpower, it was hoped that more volunteers would attend the next working party meet up due on 30th September at 10.30am. FEET asked Emneth PC to support installation of an additional compost bin. Ongoing health checks were taking place on the tree saplings planted in 2022. An Emneth Cllr had made five bird boxes for installation along the towpath.
2. Levelling up of front border at Cemetery Cottage had been completed. Thanks to the tenant and Cllr Johnson for their assistance.
3. VAT reclaim had been completed and sum refunded to PC bank account.
4. Council's Annual Governance Audit Return had been approved by the External Auditor; no issues highlighted.
5. Further investigations had revealed that the no. 56 bus service was continuing to operate.
6. A sign advising the presence of war graves had been installed by the War Graves Commission on the entrance gates at Elm Cemetery.
7. Incidents involving cats suffering injury and mutilation appeared to have ceased; the police were continuing their investigations.
8. Fire safety equipment had been serviced at the portacabin and cemetery garage; quotation sought for appropriate equipment at the smaller unit used by the FC.
9. Clarion Housing had been chased concerning their proposed plan of action for tree pruning on the green area adjacent to Birch Grove; still awaiting response. Photographs of fallen branches had been forwarded for their attention. The Clerk was also requested to enquire if Clarion would consider installing bollards on the boundary between the green area and Grove Gardens to prevent vehicles being parked on the grass.
10. Cambs Highways had been chased again concerning installation of a new bus stop pole and removal of the jagged remains of the old post; no response to date. (Also soft verge signs on approach to Coldham).
11. A new access gate had been fitted at the Collett's Bridge end of towpath; arrangements made for padlock keys to be delivered to FEET and Emneth Clerk.
12. An ash tree located along the towpath was allegedly suffering from die back; Idverde investigating.
13. Concerning the alleged discharge of septic tank waste into the roadway drain at Coldham, representatives from Middle Level DB and Highways had confirmed that they would be visiting the property concerned.
14. Tilia Homes had confirmed that maintenance work on the ponds at Grove Gardens should be completed by the end of September.
15. Regarding the possible planning issue at a property located in Friday Bridge, the Senior Planning Enforcement Officer had been in contact to confirm that he was dealing with the case.
16. Council's bank mandate had been successfully updated to include to include Cllrs Proberts & Welbourne as signatories. Authorisation for their use of online banking was included later on the agenda.
17. Streetlight upgrade works were still ongoing, CTL's contract had been extended until the end of January 2024; Garry Edwards had promised to provide another update shortly.
18. A new Lunch Bunch event had been set up at All Saints' Church in Elm; every Monday 12 noon to 2pm.

79.23 Financial Matters

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; VAT refund £8420.03, Cemetery Cottage rent £1500.00; Cemetery fees £3475.00; Interest £563.35.
- ii. To resolve to confirm August expenditure as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds Maint. July 2023	£1,359.94	£271.99	£1,631.93
CAPALC	Cllr (N Stevenson)	£75.00		£75.00
CAPALC	Cllr Training (G Darker)	£75.00		£75.00

Warrick Services	Cem Cottage - stove check	£45.00	£9.00	£54.00
Wave	Water rates - Cem & Cottage	£124.31		£124.31
L Welbourne	Cemetery Admin	£78.00		£78.00
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55
Mrs S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,167.68		£1,167.68
Mrs S England	Clerk's Expenses	£130.90		£130.90
HMRC	PAYE M4	£130.36		£130.36
Nest	Pension Contr's	£89.78		£89.78
		£3,298.93	£285.58	£3,584.51

It was resolved to confirm the payments detailed in the August schedule.

iii. To resolve to approve payments for September as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds Maint. July 2023	£1,359.94	£271.99	£1,631.93
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit Fee	£315.00	£63.00	£378.00
Pro-Create	Temp. fencing - towpath	£479.81	£95.96	£575.77
Boom Construction	Soil & gravel - Cem Cottage	£95.84	£19.16	£115.00
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55
Mrs S England	Clerk's Salary	£1,133.20		£1,133.20
Mrs S England	Clerk's Expenses	£174.41	£7.53	£181.94
HMRC	PAYE M5	£140.78		£140.78
Nest	Pension Contr's	£83.27		£83.27
Wave	Water rates (Cem & Cottage)	£78.06		£78.06
		£3,883.27	£462.23	£4,345.50

Cllr Cage confirmed his interest in the payment to Pro-create, Cllr Johnson confirmed his interest in the payment to Boom Construction. It was noted that £40.00 included in Clerk's expenses was for RBL poppy wreaths classed as S137 expenditure. It was resolved to authorise payment of invoices included in the September schedule.

Chairperson

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- iv. FEET grant application – it was resolved to approve a grant of £169.62 to enable FEET to purchase a strimmer and PPE equipment.
 - v. Friday Bridge Youth Football Club grant application (Cllrs Probets & Johnson confirmed their interest) – it was resolved to approve funding for the supply of a skip to facilitate clearance of the small pavilion at Begdale, total cost £148.33 + VAT.
 - vi. It was resolved to authorise Cllrs Probets & Welbourne to apply for online banking set up. (Cllrs Probets & Welbourne confirmed their interest).

80.23 Correspondence

- i. Email, parishioners – Request for permission to order soil improver and wood preservative for planters located adjacent to Elm village sign. Resolved to approve.
- ii. Email, parishioner – Raising concern at condition of boundary wall surrounding Redmoor House; a section of which appears prone to collapse. The Clerk confirmed she had written to the address and also contacted the agent dealing with the site, there had been no response to date. Cllr Johnson advised he would investigate the matter further.

For information purposes;

- i. Cambs CC – Cambs Matters Newsletter.
- ii. Cambs ACRE – Newsletter.
- iii. FDC – Wisbech welcomes new play area in the town park.
- iv. FDC – Call to help find breeders of abandoned dogs.

- v. Middle Level Drainage Board – Bank raising scheme details.
- vi. FDC – Slides detailing planning training held in July.
- vii. Police & Crime Commissioner – Details of online webinar concerning cyber crime & fraud.
- viii. FDC – Assurances over derelict building destroyed by fire (5 Market Place, formerly ‘Cashino’).
- viii. FDC – Details of free mental health webinars for businesses.
- viii. FDC – Launch of new Park Run event in Wisbech park.
- ix. FDC - Incinerator recommendation submitted for decision to be made by the Secretary of State for Business.

81.23 Planning

1. **F/YR23/0628/F** – Part single storey, part 2-storey rear extension & change of use of agricultural land for domestic purposes at, Bankside Nursery, March Rd, Rings End. INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY, response submitted based on Councillors’ individual comments 21.8.23.
2. **F/YR23/0505/F** – First floor side extension & single storey rear extension, replace and raise roof to enable loft conversion, front dormer x1, rear dormers x2, 2.5m boundary fence at, Delph House, Wales Bank, Elm. INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY, response submitted based on Councillors’ individual comments 21.8.23.
3. **F/YR23/0682/O** – Construction of up to 9 dwellings at, land east of ‘Chardor’, Needham Bank, Friday Bridge. Cllr Welbourne confirmed his interest in the agenda item. Council resolved to object to the proposals on the following grounds; (i) The proposed development lies outside the residential settlement boundary for Friday Bridge, (ii) The 60 mph speed limit along Needham Bank creates hazard for vehicles using the site access, (iii) There are no pavements or streetlighting at the location creating hazard for pedestrians and cyclists, (iv) Lack of public transport services would impede access to amenities/employment and therefore encourage the use of motor vehicles.

82.23 Highways & Footways

Update on outstanding matters;

- i. LHI application 2022-23 – It was hoped that work would commence on the project in October 2023.
- ii. Update on telephone meeting with Andrea Haslock (Senior Road Safety Engineer), Safety Audit Team – The Clerk advised as follows;
 - The role of the Safety Audit Team was to undertake audits on proposed changes, i.e. as a result of a LHI application, or, make changes in serious accident ‘cluster sites’.
 - A ‘cluster site’ was a location where (i) three very serious accidents (fatalities) or, (ii) less serious incidents causing six (+) injuries had occurred.
 - Funding was prioritised in areas where accidents were actually happening; minor accidents and ‘near misses’ did not count in the statistics.
 - Elm Low Road/Main Road junction – it was suggested that installation of the fence had improved visibility. A ‘one way’ system would not be supported because, statistically, they led to increased traffic speeds.
 - Wales Bank – improved signage was recommended; a weight limit was regarded as a final option as it would affect the use of agricultural vehicles.
 - March Road, Coldham – unsuitable for a speed limit reduction based on accident data.
 - Gosmoor Lane – unsuitable for speed limit reduction based on accident data.
 - Motorists’ adherence to the speed limit would reduce hazard/risk in all of the above locations, it was hoped that the new Speedwatch initiative would help to address this.

New matters;

- i. TTRO – Road closure (water connection), Back Rd, Friday Bridge, 4th-6th October 2023.
- ii. TTRO – Road closure (carriageway improvement), Fridaybridge Rd (between no. 99 & Wales Bank) 23rd-25th October 2023.
- iii. TTRO application – Road closure (sewer connection), 207-215 Fridaybridge Rd, 2nd-6th October 2023. The Clerk confirmed she had raised an objection to the application based on disruption to the bus service, the Streetworks Team had subsequently advised that there was no other option available as the work involved deep excavation.
- iv. Weed Spraying Petition – Council resolved to support a petition objecting to the County Council’s policy of ending all annual spraying of weeds on roads, pavements, and cycleways.

- v. Presentation, District Cllr Summers concerning 2024-25 LHI application – It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders.
Cllr Summers advised Council may wish to consider a longer term strategy when considering its annual LHI application. Supplementary information could potentially be submitted detailing Council’s plans for improvements during the years ahead. Standing Orders were reinstated.
- 83.23 **To receive update on matters relating to Friday Bridge Youth Football Team, resolve appropriately.**
Cllrs Proberts & Johnson confirmed their interest in the agenda item. It was recognised that the project was moving forward at pace and should be supported where possible by the Parish Council.
It was resolved to approve the use of Begdale playing field for match play and training.
It was resolved to approve the use of the small unit at Begdale as a changing facility.
The Clerk confirmed she was awaiting a quotation for appropriate fire safety equipment and signage to be installed at the unit. It was hoped that an electricity supply could be connected to the unit after the end of the current season. The cost of a mobile shower and toilet facility would be approximately £1080 and floodlights ranged between £2000 (fixed) and £4500 (mobile); ideas for fundraising events were being considered.
It was resolved to arrange signage at Begdale stating, ‘No dogs permitted on the field during match play & training’. It was queried if an extra rubbish bin could be installed mid-way along the field (subject to volunteers regularly relocating the rubbish to car park bin for collection); to be considered in 2024-25 budget. Clerk to seek cost implications of weekly cuts and collecting grass cuttings in the pitch area.
Item to be carried forward.
- 84.23 **To receive update concerning WW1 plaque, resolve on appropriate action.**
Council was advised that the WW1 plaque was approximately two feet square and constructed of solid granite; making it extremely heavy. It was suggested the mounting should comprise of a brick plinth base with the plaque being set at an angle on top. The design could incorporate an area for planting which C.R.A.G. confirmed they would be happy to maintain. Cllr Johnson confirmed he would assist the Clerk in researching ideas/costings for the design.
- 85.23 **To receive comments/requests from Members; to be included on the next agenda.**
No comments.
- 86.23 **Date of next meeting** – It was resolved to confirm that the next Parish Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 11th October 2023 commencing at 6.30pm.
- 87.23 **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).**
7.45pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.
- 88.23 **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; no further action currently required.
It was resolved to approve the donation of trees (provided by the ‘Million Trees for Norfolk’ initiative) to assist with the demarcation of the towpath boundary; as requested by Emneth Parish Council.
- 89.23 **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; item deferred pending further advice from the Institute of Cemetery Management.
- 90.23 **Addendum – Incident at Elm Cemetery** (confidential due to protection of an individual’s personal data).
The Clerk reported details of an incident that had occurred at Elm Cemetery; no immediate action required.

- 91.23 **Addendum – Information relating to allotment agreement** (confidential due to protection of an individual’s personal data & contractual matters).
The Clerk advised Members on matters relating to Council’s allotment agreements. It was resolved to seek specialist advice from Longstaff & Co.; Clerk to pursue.
- 92.23 **Consideration of personnel matters** (confidential due to protection of an individual’s personal data & contractual matters).
Matters connected to personnel/staffing were discussed.
It was resolved to form a Personnel Working Party comprising Cllrs Ferguson, Johnson, Probets, Stevenson & Welbourne. Item to be carried forward to next meeting.
- 93.23 **Close of meeting** – The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date