

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 13th December 2023 commencing at 6.00pm

[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, Darker, Ferguson (Chair), Goodley, Hopkin, Johnson, Milham, Probeta, Stevenson & Welbourne. District Cllr Roy.

Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 8 Members of the public.

141.23 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllr Cage; Council resolved to accept his reason for absence.

142.23 **Members Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded members of the need to submit; via the Clerk; any changes to their Register of Interests information.

143.23 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation;**

Cllr Butcher declared an interest in agenda item 11(1) (Min. ref. 151[1]) due to the close proximity of his property to the proposed site. Cllr Goodley declared an interest in agenda item 11(1) (Min. ref. 151[1]) due to a member of his family owning a property in close proximity to the proposed site. Cllr Welbourne declared an interest in agenda item 22 (Min. ref. 162.23) due to his connection to an individual involved in the personnel matter.

144.23 **Open Forum**

6.05 pm – It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders.

Four members of the public requested to speak; the following subjects were raised;

1. A summary of objections to proposals submitted under planning application ref. F/YR23/0904/O.
2. A summary of objections to proposals submitted under planning application ref. F/YR23/0987/O.
3. Concerns relating to certain aspects of revised proposals submitted under planning application ref. F/YR23/0921/F.
4. It was queried why there were no bus shelters in Elm or Friday Bridge; the Chair confirmed that the issue had been raised with Stagecoach on a number of occasions.
5. Issues raised in connection to the chicanes recently installed in Fridaybridge Road. The Chair confirmed that the scheme was generally supported by residents.

6.20 pm – It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders.

145.23 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 8th November 2023 as a true record of proceedings.

146.23 **Police matters** –

The Clerk advised that the parking issue at Elm School had again been raised with Sgt. Arnold.

147.23 **District Councillor's Report** – Cllr Roy reported;

Reference planning application ref. F/YR23/0904/O (North of Antwerp House, Gosmoor Lane, Elm), matters were in hand to ensure that highway safety issues would be taken into consideration. A meeting had taken place with an FDC Environment Officer to address concerns that street cleaning issues were not being carried out in Elm (for example; road cleaning, leaf clearance, emptying of dog waste bins). County Highways Officers were being chased in connection to ongoing outstanding issues/projects. FDC was rolling out a package of improvements which were supported by 'Safer Streets' funding. Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator meetings would be commencing; supported by the police. A number of benches had been removed from Wisbech Market Place and refurbished, it was suggested that one could be made available for installation in Elm Parish in memory of Cllr Mac Cotterell; item to be placed on next agenda.

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

1. The Clerk and Chair had attended a productive meeting with representatives from Council's grounds maintenance contractor, Idverde. A new point of contact had been established for day to day enquiries and it

was confirmed that a credit note would be issued in respect of tasks not completed. It was also confirmed that the Parish Council would be taking over inspection of play areas and this task would be removed from the contract. Moving forward, it was suggested that further meetings could be organised on a regular basis.

2. There had been no further response concerning the condition of Elm footpath no. 8; Clerk to chase.
3. The matter of health & safety issues connected to the ponds at Grove Gardens had again been raised with Tilia Homes; no response to date.
4. Clarion Homes Neighbourhood Response Officer had attended Birch Grove to advise people they should not be parking on the grass; Clerk to monitor the situation.
5. Tree works at Birch Grove had been completed by Clarion Homes contractors.
6. Amanda Hill, County Highways Officer had provided the following updates on outstanding issues;
 - Soft verge signs, March Road, Coldham – request passed on to ‘Carriageway, Footway & Cycleway’ department for consideration.
 - The Stitch gullies – the gullies were cleaned and jetted on 10th July 2023; pipework was also checked for damage. The system was operational and flowing when the team left site.
 - Birch Grove gullies – Issue referred to the ‘Drainage & Resilience’ team for investigation; request submitted for jetting.
 - Atkinsons Lane (flooding issue) – Referred to the ‘Flood & Water’ team; no response to date.
 - Wales Bank improved signage – Still awaiting details of cost for the installation.
 - WW1 Memorial plaque – Permission granted for the plaque to be installed on the grass area adjacent to the bus stop in Coldham.
7. Garry Edwards had confirmed that the streetlight contractor was still waiting for UKPN to complete connections to the new pole brackets. A quotation had been sought for phase 2 of the upgrade project which would include those assets identified as having 0-5 years remaining life span.
8. Further work had been completed on calculations for the 2024/25 budget.

149.23 Financial Matters

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; Allotment rent £2261.25; Cemetery fees £1180.00; Cottage rent £1500.00; Interest £289.17.
- ii. To resolve to approve payments for December as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds Maint. Nov. 2023	£1,359.94	£271.99	£1,631.93
L Welbourne	Cemetery/play area admin.	£84.50		£84.50
P Smith Landscaping	Begdale football pitch cut	£75.00		£75.00
Plusnet	Broadband	£22.96	£4.59	£27.55
S England	Clerk's Salary (inc backpay)	£1,744.20		£1,744.20
S England	Clerk's Expenses	£424.64	£33.90	£458.54
HMRC	PAYE M8	£305.92		£305.92
Nest	Pension Contr's	£221.24		£221.24
Wave	Water rates Cem & Cottage	£85.00		£85.00
S Johnson	Exps - new chain FB p. field	£22.00		£22.00
L Green Electrician	Lights - portacabin	£285.00	£57.00	£342.00
		£4,630.40	£367.48	£4,997.88

Addendum to Agenda

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It was resolved to approve payment of December invoices as detailed in the schedule.

Chairperson

- iii. To resolve to approve grant funding for new internal battery to be fitted in Speedwatch equipment; total cost £163.00 + VAT. Resolved.

- iv. To resolve on quotation for remaining tree works along Pocket Park boundary and Ash tree on Towpath (50% cost to Emneth). Deferred pending receipt of updated quotation.
- v. To resolve on quotation received for installation of hard surface access to Begdale playing field car park. Contractor had advised that the installation would need to be in accordance with Highways specification; total cost £6740.00 + VAT. It was resolved to arrange for the large dip at the entrance to be filled with asphalt as a temporary measure. Subject to be re-visited as and when funds were available.
- vi. To resolve to confirm acceptance of quotation received for installation of steel fencing along gap in boundary at Friday Bridge playing field; total cost £390.00 (no VAT). Item resolved.
- vii. To resolve to confirm acceptance of quotation received for removal of large willow branch on the Pocket Park/Towpath boundary; total cost £225.00 (no VAT), 50% re-charged to Emneth PC. Item resolved.
- viii. To receive update on proposals/cost for extending car park area (including relocation of fencing) at Begdale; resolve appropriately. The contractor had advised that a standard parking bay was 5m in length which would mean the turning circle in the proposed new area would be very tight and regular maintenance would be required to the surface. Total cost £13450.00 + VAT. It was resolved to put the project on hold and continue to allow vehicles to park on the grass areas (outside the portacabin and smaller unit) on football match days.

150.23 Correspondence

- i. Email, parishioner – (i) report of dogs out of control at Begdale and, (ii) dog fouling incidents in Elm. The Clerk confirmed that both matters had been dealt with appropriately.

For information purposes;

All information circulated to Council Members and posted to the website and Facebook platform where appropriate. For further details contact the Parish Clerk.

151.23 Planning

1. **F/YR23/0904/O** – Construction of up to 5 x dwellings (outline application) at, land North of Antwerp House, Gosmoor Lane, Elm. Cllrs Butcher and Goodley confirmed their interests and left the meeting.

Council resolved to object to the proposals on the grounds that they were contrary to Fenland Local Plan (2014) Policies; LP3, LP5, LP12(d), LP12(k), LP16(d). Furthermore, contrary to Policy DM3 of the 'Delivery and Protection of High Quality Environments in Fenland and Supplementary Planning Document (2014). Members were also extremely concerned regarding matters connected to highway safety, both for pedestrians and motorists. For full details of Council's response, please refer to the District Council Planning Portal at; <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/planning> using the above planning reference in 'Simple Search' and selecting the 'Documents' tab.

Cllrs Butcher and Goodley re-entered the meeting.

2. **F/YR23/0921/F** – Change of use of land for use as a public house car park involving formation of hard-standing, siting of storage container, new lighting & installation of 2m high acoustic fence (part retrospective) at, land West of the Sportsman, Main Road, Elm. District Cllr Roy advised he would leave the meeting as the site was in close proximity to his own dwelling.

Council resolved to support the proposals on condition that; the reduction in height of the fence did not affect sound proofing qualities and, details of the boundary gap measurement were clarified.

District Cllr Roy re-entered the meeting.

3. **F/YR23/0927/F** – Change of use of land for domestic purposes, formation of 2 x accesses and demolition of existing outbuilding at, Barn at Collett's Bridge Farm, Gosmoor Lane, Elm. Council resolved to support.

4. **F/YR23/0937/F** – Conversion of agricultural buildings to 2 x dwellings (2-storey, 4 bed) and detached garage/store, involving demolition of existing lean-to and glasshouse at, The Barn, West of Long Beach Farm, Thurlands Drove, Upwell. Council resolved to support.

5. **F/YR23/0974/F** – Single storey rear extension (involving demolition of conservatory) and detached garden room to rear of existing dwelling at, Armalene, Halfpenny Lane, Elm. Council resolved to support.

6. **F/YR23/0980/F** – Replace thatch roof with natural slate at, Meadowcourt, Main Road, Elm. Council resolved to support.

7. **F/YR23/0988/F** – Construction of double garage at, 137 March Road, Friday Bridge. Council resolved to support.

8. F/YR23/0987/O – Construction of up to 6 x dwellings (outline application) at, land East of Bramley Court, Coldham. Council resolved to object to the proposals on the grounds that; Coldham was classed as an ‘other village’ where development should be restricted to single dwelling infill. The proposals were contrary to Fenland Local Plan (2014) Policies LP3 and LP12(c) and of paramount concern was the close proximity of the site to an extremely dangerous bend in the highway. For full details of Council’s response, please refer to the District Council Planning Portal at; <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/planning> using the above planning reference in ‘Simple Search’ and selecting the ‘Documents’ tab.

District Cllr Roy Confirmed that a meeting had taken place with the new owner of the Redmoor House site and it had been confirmed that remedial work on the boundary wall and tree would be completed by the end of the year; situation to be monitored.

152.23 **Highways & Footways**

- i. LHI application 2022/23 – receive update and resolve on new design plan;
Thanks were conveyed to Cllrs Welbourne and Stevenson for attending an on-site meeting with Highway’s Officers in order to discuss issues arising as a result of the recent chicane installation. The amended design plan had been circulated for Members’ attention prior to the meeting; as a gesture of goodwill; the new design included a MVAS fixing pole. It was confirmed that costs associated with the additional work would be fully covered by the County Council. Council resolved to approve the revised design plan.
- ii. LHI application 2024/25 – resolve on project to be submitted.
Members were advised that Highways Design Engineer, Jacob Hobbs had suggested that the Parish Council may wish to combine an application for additional give-way chicanes along Fridaybridge Road (thereby completing works originally agreed for the 2022/23 application) with a request for an extra MVAS unit. The unit could be rotated between Fridaybridge Road and a further fixing post along Well End/Needham Bank. Mr Hobbs advised that the total cost should be in the region of £30,000; £25k being contributed by the County Council and £5k from the Parish Council. It was resolved for the Clerk to complete the LHI application in line with Mr Hobbs’ recommendations.

153.23 **To receive update on matters relating to Friday Bridge Youth Football Team, resolve appropriately.**
Item deferred to January meeting.

154.23 **To resolve on permitting Elm WI to hold their monthly meetings at the Begdale portacabin.**
It was resolved to approve the use of the portacabin by Elm WI subject to implementation of appropriate Hirer’s Agreement and Fire Safety & Risk Assessment Policies. It was further resolved to charge an hourly rate of £10.00 per hour for use of the premises; to be reviewed after 12 months. District Cllr Roy suggested that the Fenland Culture Fund could be a source of funding for the WI.

155.23 **To resolve to adopt play area inspection protocol; details as circulated.**
It was resolved to approve and adopt the new play area inspection sheets and risk assessment document (which also included ‘open spaces’). Elm and Friday Bridge play areas would be inspected weekly, a more detailed inspection would take place monthly. RoSPA inspections would continue to be undertaken on an annual basis. The Clerk advised she would investigate the cost of arranging a RoSPA Water Safety Report for The Leam Pond.

156.23 **To resolve to adopt Parish Tree Management Policy; draft circulated.**
It was resolved to approve and adopt the Policy.

157.23 **To receive comments/requests from Members; to be included on the next agenda.**
Installation of bench in Elm Parish; see minute ref. 147.23.

158.23 **Date of next Parish Council meeting & Finance Working Party meeting** – It was resolved to confirm that the next Parish Council meeting would take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 10th January and a Finance

Working Party meeting would take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 3rd January.

- 159.23 **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).**
7.15pm - It was resolved to enter closed session.
- 160.23 **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. The contractor had advised that a double width memorial headstone (total weight 300kg) would be too heavy to install on the concrete beam. Subject on hold pending contact from the owner of the Rights to the plot.
- 161.23 **To receive update concerning alleged incident at Elm Cemetery, resolve appropriately** (confidential due to protection of an individual's personal data).
The Clerk updated Members on the subject; it was confirmed that the item could be removed from the agenda.
- 162.23 **Consideration of personnel matters** (confidential due to protection of an individual's personal data & contractual matters).
Cllr Welbourne confirmed his interest and left the meeting room.
Council resolved on the personnel matter presented.
Cllr Welbourne re-entered the meeting room.
- 163.23 **Close of meeting** – The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date