

# Elm Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 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, Darker, Ferguson (Chair), Goodley, Hopkin, Johnson, Milham, Probits, Stevenson & Welbourne. District Cllr Roy.

Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 1 Member of the public.

- 164.23 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllr Butcher; Council resolved to accept his reason for absence.
- 165.23 **Members Code of Conduct** – The Chair reminded members of the need to submit; via the Clerk; any changes to their Register of Interests information.
- 166.23 **Disclosable interests and requests for dispensation;**  
No interests declared.
- 167.23 **Open Forum**  
6.40 pm – It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders.  
One member of the public requested to speak; the following subjects were raised;
1. The large pothole adjacent to Cobra Engineering had been filled.
  2. Concern raised at financial incentives allegedly having been paid/offered for supporting a planning application at Coldham.
- 6.42 pm – It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders.
- 168.23 **Review and approval of Minutes** – Council resolved to approve the minutes of meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as a true record of proceedings.
- 169.23 **Police matters** –  
None reported.
- 170.23 **District Councillor's Report** – Cllr Roy reported;  
He had provided practical support and assistance to a Birch Grove resident during recent flood events; a meeting was being arranged between relevant parties (CCC, District Cllrs, Drainage Board) in order to consider what might be done to resolve the flooding issue.  
Concerns had been raised in relation to a property located in Fridaybridge Road; the matter was being investigated.
- 171.23 **Clerk's Report** – The Clerk reported as follows;
1. Council's 2024/25 LHI Application had been completed (based on recommendations provided by Jacob Hobbs, Highways Engineer); it would be submitted prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> January deadline.
  2. An enquiry had been raised with UKPN reference outstanding wayleave payments due to the Parish Council. Response not expected for several weeks due to UKPN experiencing a high volume of enquiries.
  3. A number of grounds maintenance tasks had been identified as a result of new play area inspection protocol; work approved by Chair and Clerk - (i) remove branches overhanging Elm pay area entrance gate, £37.50, (ii) spray and scrape moss from surface of MUGA and footpaths at Friday Bridge play area, £90.00, (iii) removal of ivy to a height of 1m on six trees at Friday Bridge playing field boundary, £95.00.
  4. Quotations had been sought for the installation of a new kissing gate at the entrance leading from Tower Hall car park into Friday Bridge playing field. The Clerk advised she needed to undertake further investigations to ensure that the gateway would accommodate larger mobility scooters.
  5. Representatives from Elm WI would be visiting the portacabin on 15<sup>th</sup> January to assess its suitability for their meetings. If approved, the group would require the premises commencing last Monday in February.
  6. A quotation had been received from a specialist contractor for undertaking a risk assessment (RA) of The Leam pond; £506 + VAT for a desk based report and, £980 + VAT (plus expenses) for an on-site visit. The

Clerk advised that she had investigated the risks/factors that needed to be taken into account and felt confident that she could undertake the RA herself. Subject to be carried forward.

7. The new system for play area inspections was working well, quotations were being sourced for a number of repairs that were required to the play equipment.
8. Inspections at Elm Cemetery had identified a number of graves that required levelling; the contractor had completed the necessary work. Christmas decorations were permitted to remain on graves until the end of January, at which point they would be removed.
9. Maintenance work had been scheduled for an Ash tree (growing along the Towpath) which was suffering from die-back.
10. Idverde had agreed to cut back remaining overgrown shrubs/trees located on the Pocket Park boundary at no extra cost to Council.
11. Large pothole located on the highway (adjacent to Cobra Engineering) had been repaired.
12. Confirmation had been received that Tilia Homes were analysing the results of RoSPA water safety tests undertaken on the ponds at Grove Gardens.
13. Clarion Neighbourhood Response Officer had confirmed that she was seeking support for installation of bollards on the boundary of the green area adjacent to Birch Grove.
14. No further response received from Amanada Hill (Highways Officer) concerning ongoing outstanding issues.  
*Cllr Milham voiced his concern at (i) the parking/traffic situation and, (ii) the deteriorating road surface along Gosmoor Lane.*
15. Terry Jordan had confirmed his willingness to continue in the role of Internal Auditor for the Parish Council.
16. Quotations had been received for Streetlight Upgrade Project, phase 2. Initial findings indicated that the sum proposed for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget would cover the cost of installing 15 replacement columns. Subject to be carried forward.

**172.23 Financial Matters**

- i. The Clerk advised the following sums had been received since the last meeting; Cemetery fees £1900.00; Cottage rent £750.00; Interest £298.81.
- ii. To resolve to approve payments for January as detailed below;

PAYEE	DETAIL	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Idverde	Grounds Maint. Dec. 2023	£1,263.80	£252.76	£1,516.56
L Welbourne	Cemetery/play area admin.	£98.00		£98.00
Tawny Owl maint. Servs.	Willow removal, new fence & hedge planting FB p field	£788.00		£788.00
CAPALC	Cllr Training	£50.00		£50.00
Upwell PC	Salt - Upwell Health Centre	£29.14		£29.14
BT Business	Broadband	£10.82	£2.16	£12.98
Westcotec	Speedwatch equip. battery	£180.00	£36.00	£216.00
S England	Clerk's salary	£1,329.49		£1,329.49
S England	Clerk's Expenses	£164.34	£0.99	£165.33
HMRC	PAYE M9	£767.24		£767.24
Nest	Pension Contr's	£141.06		£141.06
		£4,821.89	£291.91	£5,113.80

\*\* The Clerk advised that the sum included for Upwell PC (for gritting at Upwell Health Centre) was not required at present; funds to be released as and when Upwell confirmed the expenditure. It was resolved to approve payment of January invoices as detailed in the schedule.

Chairperson .....

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- iii To resolve to approve Finance Report & Bank Reconciliation for quarter end 31.12.23. Resolved.
  - iv To resolve to approve Budget Update Report for quarter end 31.12.23. Resolved.

- v To resolve on 2024/25 Budget and Precept. It was confirmed that the Finance Working Party had met on two occasions in order to consider sums to be allocated under each budget category. The Budget Report presented to Council proposed a Precept claim of £78,420.00 for financial year 2024/25 (for full details please contact the Parish Clerk at: [clerk@elm-pc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@elm-pc.org.uk)). The proposed budget included the following earmarked reserves;

Streetlight Upgrade Project, phase 2 - £24,000.00

Cemetery Chapel Conversion Project - £65,000.00

Recreation Ground Gates, Friday Bridge - £2,000.00

LHI Contribution 2024/25 - £6,000.00

FDC Contribution to Coldham Village Sign - £500.00

It was resolved to confirm the 2024/25 Budget; details as presented in the draft document.

It was resolved to confirm a Precept claim of £78,420.00 for 2024/25.

It was resolved to transfer the sum held in reserve for a new village sign in Coldham over to C.R.A.G.

Cllr Roy confirmed that; further to publishing of FDC's draft budget and business plan; it was being proposed to freeze Council Tax (CT) over the next 12 months. Residents, businesses, and organisations (such as the Parish Council) were being encouraged to 'have their say' on the matter. Members raised concern that it made no sense to freeze CT when services were so appalling furthermore, why was FDC carrying forward a £2 million deficit? It was resolved to authorise Cllr Roy to convey Council's views to the Scrutiny Committee.

### 173.23 **Correspondence**

#### **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.

### 174.23 **Planning**

1. **F/YR23/1035/VOC** – Variation of condition 23 (list of approved drawings), relating to planning permission F/YR22/0226/F (63 dwellings, pumping station and formation of attenuation pond), to enable changes to house designs at, land north of 17-31 Gosmoor Lane, Elm.

Council made no comment in respect of proposed changes to house designs. It was resolved to reiterate Council's strong objection to the proposals overall on the grounds that arrangements for management of surface water were totally inadequate. Recent flooding events in the area around the proposed site supported the view that the existing drainage system could not cope with the volume of water created during periods of heavy rainfall and it would be impossible to pump additional water into the main drain from the proposed attenuation pond. Clerk to notify all relevant parties concerning the matter (FDC, CCC, Flood Resilience Team, Drainage Boards etc).

### 175.23 **Highways & Footways**

i. Flooding in Birch Grove and other areas of the Parish – subject covered under District Councillor's Report (Min. ref. 170.23) and Planning (Min. ref. 174.23).

### 176.23 **To receive update on matters relating to Friday Bridge Youth Football Team, resolve appropriately.**

Authorisation of use of playing field for additional pitches – deferred.

Additional grass cutting – It was resolved to authorise an additional cut to the pitch area (as and when required) at a cost of £75.00;

### 177.23 **To consider installation of refurbished bench in memory of the late Cllr Mac Cotterell.**

Cllr Roy confirmed that the bench; originally installed in Wisbech Market Place; had been refurbished by 'Shedders & Fixers'. It was resolved; subject to approval being sought from Mrs Cotterell and Mr Prince; to arrange for installation of the bench on the grass area around the Elm War Memorial.

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

The following issues were raised – (i) Barrel planters near Friday Bridge sign needed refurbishing or removing, (ii) Play area at Queens Drive, Friday Bridge was unfit for purpose; raise query with Clarion Housing, (iii) A

door needing fitting on cabinet located to the right at the entrance to Elm Cemetery. Clerk to deal with all matters appropriately.

179.23 **Date of next Parish Council meeting** – It was resolved to confirm that the next Parish Council meeting would take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February.

180.23 **Close of meeting** – The meeting closed at 7.16pm.

Signed .....  
Elm Parish Council Chairman

Date .....

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