

Elm Parish Council

Minutes of an extraordinary Meeting of Elm Parish Council held at the Portacabin, Begdale, Elm on Monday 17th June 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 – Butcher, Cage, Darker, Dring, Ferguson (Chair), Hopkin, Johnson, Milham, Probets, Stevenson & Welbourne. District Cllr Roy (in his personal capacity).

Mrs S England – Parish Clerk. 48 Members of the public.

47.24 **Apologies** – Reported for Cllr Goodley; Council resolved to accept his reason for absence.

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

The Clerk advised that applications for dispensation had been received from Cllrs Johnson and Probets, it was confirmed that, in both cases, their interests were non-pecuniary. Cllr Probets was merely acting as an intermediary spokesperson for the Football Club and Cllr Johnson's role was voluntary. Council resolved to confirm that Cllrs Johnson & Probets were authorised to take part in discussions and subsequent voting on matters relating to Elmbridge Football Club.

49.24 **Open Forum**

6.33 pm – It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders.

The following comments were raised;

- The President of the Mid-Norfolk Youth League expressed his support for Elmbridge Football Club (FC) and said that he was amazed at the progress and improvements that had been achieved during the past few months. There was a need for facilities, particularly for the 9 to 11 age group as many clubs in the area had folded. He confirmed that players of all standards were encouraged and rewarded and this had led to an increase in confidence. Wisbech Town FC did not have the smaller pitches required for younger players and the proposed affiliation between the two clubs would provide a valuable and worthwhile facility.
- If proposals for the expanded facility were approved, both Elmbridge and Wisbech Town FC's would support the Parish Council in making a success of the venture.
- Parents of the players were very extremely supportive; many had noticed an improvement in their child's mental and physical well-being.
- It was a good use of the playing field for a worthwhile cause which would hopefully develop a sense of community in the parish.
- The Mayor of Wisbech was supportive of the proposals.
- Incidents of low level anti-social behaviour may be reduced as a result of the new venture as there were very few other activities available for children across the parish.
- Children (attending a number of different schools) at the club were developing good relationships which extended beyond playing football and therefore had a positive effect on their well-being.
- All children; whatever their ability; were welcome at the club, opportunities were provided for all standards.
- In response to concerns about overflow parking facilities, it was confirmed that additional parking areas would be available at Elm Self Store and a farm yard located further along Begdale Road.

6.50 pm – It was resolved to reinstate Standing Orders.

50.24 **To receive further update concerning proposals for facilities at Begdale playing field to be extended for Elmbridge Football Club (in affiliation with Wisbech Town FC), Resolve appropriately.**

INFORMATION RELATING TO THE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN CIRCULATED IN ADVANCE OF MEETING; FOR FULL DETAILS REFER TO APPENDICES 1 AND 2 TO THE MINUTES.

Cllr Probets' and Cllr Johnson's interests in the agenda item were confirmed as non-pecuniary (in their spokesperson/voluntary roles).

In addition to information circulated prior to the meeting, Cllr Probets commented as follows;

- Begdale playing field would still be a public open space, there was no intention to create a 'football only' field.
- The Football Club would be happy to take over grass maintenance; Wisbech Town FC had offered to provide a suitable mower.
- Players and their families were extremely supportive of the venture and would be keen to arrange fundraising events for the benefit of the Club and the wider community. In time, it was hoped that the Club would be able to contribute to the upkeep of the car park.
- The Club provided a safe and structured environment for children.
- The Club were happy to make arrangements for the lifting and relocation of trees (if required). Additionally, trees would be protected with steel cages.
- Arrangements for overflow parking had been confirmed (in writing), as detailed in Public Forum.
- Parents would be advised that noise should be kept to a minimum but it was difficult to control.
- The new facility would create a pathway for U6's to U13's to play football prior to transferring to Wisbech Town FC, if the venture was not pursued children would have to stop playing at the age of 13.
- It was unlikely that a third pitch would be required for the current and next seasons however, this was dependent on the number of children joining the Club.
- During the Winter months training sessions would relocate to Thomas Clarkson (or other such facility).
- Elmbridge FC would be managing the facility in affiliation with Wisbech Town FC.

A SUMMARY OF NOTES PRESENTED BY CLLR PROBETS DURING THE MEETING IS ATTACHED AS APPENDIX 3 TO THE MINUTES.

It was resolved unanimously to authorise the extension of facilities at Begdale playing field for Elmbridge Football Club in affiliation with Wisbech Town Football Club subject to the following conditions;

- i. Updates to be provided at monthly Parish Council meetings with a full review of the arrangements after six months (December 2024).
- ii. A licence agreement to be drawn up and agreed to by both parties (i.e. Parish Council and Football Club).
- iii. Details of signage and/or other installations to be approved in advance by the Parish Council.
- iv. Confirmation of arrangements for gate closure and cleaning of the portacabin toilet (used by players).

Members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting to express their views. The importance of working together and respecting the views of all parties were recognised as being essential as the project moved forward.

51.24 **Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 7.11pm.