

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 FEBRUARY 2009 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Emery, Chairman; Councillors Archer, Buckton, Mrs Desborough, Jolley, Mrs Palmby and Risbridger.

Apologies: Councillors Barnes and Cole.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2009 were confirmed and signed.

M63/08 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Open spaces (minute M49/08 (1))

Station Road – the Clerk reported that he had written to Councillor Harper, the Leader of Fenland District Council (FDC), in the manner agreed at minute M49/08 (1), but had received no response.

The Clerk reported also that he had received an e-mail for Fenland District Council's Parks and Open Spaces Manager, explaining the situation regarding the adoptable status of the site. He had not, however, received a response from the company which is dealing with the administrative affairs of Hazelmere Homes, i.e. BDO Stoy Hayward LLP (Chartered Accountants).

Members decided

- (1) that they would be happy for the Parish Council to adopt this piece of open space in its current condition;
- (2) to await a response from BDO Stoy Hayward LLP before considering the matter further.

(2) Highway issues (minute M61/08)

The Clerk reported a response from Rod Marshall of the County Council's Highways Division, in relation to the issues raised at the last meeting.

Furthermore, Councillor Archer informed members that he had taken Mr Marshall on a tour of the village, drawing to his attention all of the footway and carriageways that require remedial works. Consequently, the County Council, as Highway Authority, is now fully aware of the situation in Manea.

Members decided that the current position be noted.

(3) Parish Council Internal Auditor (minute M58/08)

The Chairman reported that he had spoken with Mr B Cundell and asked him to re-consider his decision to resign as the Council's Internal Auditor, given the difficulties that this is likely to cause for the Parish Council.

Members were pleased to note that Mr Cundell is now prepared to remain as Manea Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the purpose of auditing the council's 2008/09 accounts.

(4) Castle Care, Acorn Lane, Manea (minute M49/08 (4))

The Clerk reported that, although he had received no update from Fenland District Council on the planning situation at this site, he understood that planning application F/YR08/1084/F (opposed by the Parish Council at minute M55/08) had been refused planning permission by officers under their delegated powers.

Members decided that the current position be noted.

(Councillor Emery declared his personal interest in this item of business, by virtue of his wife being an employee of Castle Care)

(5) Safer Routes to School (minute M57/08 (7))

The Chairman reported on a meeting that he had attended with the Chairman of the Governors and the Head teacher of Manea School plus a representative of the Education Authority.

Discussions at that meeting included the school's participation in the Safer Routes to School initiative. The Chairman reported that the school had planned to participate in the Safer Routes to School initiative but this was not implemented due to sickness absence of the Head teacher.

At the meeting at Manea School, the Chairman made the point that the Parish Council is keen to foster a strong working relationship with the school. He informed members that this keenness was reciprocated by the representatives of the school.

In addition, the Chairman reported a request from the Chairman of Manea School Governors to attend the next Parish Council meeting to explain the school's proposals and initiatives and to begin development of a good working relationship between the Manea School and the Parish Council.

Members decided that this positive situation be noted and that the Chairman of Manea School Governors be invited to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(6) Dog fouling in Glebe Close/Westfield Road, Manea (minute M57/08 (5))

The Clerk reported the response from the Environmental Protection Manager at Fenland District Council (FDC) in relation to the dog fouling matter considered at the last meeting, in which that officer explains how the matter will be addressed by FDC.

Councillor Archer reported on his discussions with FDC concerning the provision of additional dog waste bins within the village. He informed members that the District Council will fund, in the new financial year, the provision of two additional bins within the village at locations to be identified by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the current position be noted.

(7) Manea Sewage Treatment Works (minute M59/08)

The Clerk reported that, to date, no response had been received from Anglian Water in relation to the issues raised with the company.

Members decided that the position be noted.

M64/08 Managing change in Fenland - presentation by the Leader of Fenland District Council

Further to minute M60/08, members received a presentation from Councillor Harper, Leader of Fenland District Council, on how the District Council is managing change in Fenland.

Councillor Harper informed members, by way of his presentation:

- that the villages represent 29% of the district, not only in terms of population but also the total amount of Council Tax collected by the District Council and, consequently, the needs of their residents are an important element in the ways in which services are delivered within Fenland
- of the democratic and decision-making structures of the District Council, particularly the five Policy Development Groups (PDGs) which provide the frontline councillors with a mechanism to influence the decision-making by the Council's Cabinet. Councillor Harper explained the theme of each of the PDGs, as well as the portfolios of each of the nine Cabinet members
- of Fenland District Council's key priorities (e.g. Quality Organisation) and he detailed some of the initiatives and projects delivered under each of the priority areas
- that Fenland District Council has achieved a number of notable successes over the last five years, including: opening shops in each of the towns and a contact centre; creation of a Youth Council; running Golden Age Fairs in villages across the district; implementation of the three wheeled-bin scheme; introduction of a Rapid Response system for addressing issues of fly tipping; transfer of the Council's housing stock to Roddons Housing Association; development of the South Fens Business Centre at Chatteris and, more recently, the Boathouse at Wisbech
- in summary, of the mandatory functions of each of the three tiers of local government within Cambridgeshire
- of Fenland District Council's proposals, which are still the subject of consultation with relevant partner agencies, for the introduction of Neighbourhood Forums and Management Boards within Fenland
- of the annual income and expenditure of Fenland District Council and the sources of the income, e.g. Government grant, Council Tax, fees and charges for certain services. Councillor Harper stated that Fenland District Council is proposing an increase in its element of the Council Tax by 3.9%
- that he considers it extremely important that the village communities receive their fair share of the service provision within the district.

Councillor Harper responded to members' questions and gave a commitment that the District Council would consider seriously any request from Manea Parish Council for funding of a community facility for the village. He suggested that members develop a business plan for any community facility which they feel would benefit local people.

Councillor Harper also gave a commitment that the views expressed by rural communities in relation to the District Council's proposals for Neighbourhood Forums and Management Boards would be taken into account (in response to a question asked by Councillor Archer about the effective of the rural voice in the process and equity in the allocation of funding by the proposed Neighbourhood Management Boards) and that he would "keep a close eye" on the structure and costs of the officer management structure at the District Council (in response to Councillor Jolley's concerns regarding the apparent gradual re-introduction of an officer structure which was removed over five years ago and also salaries paid to Service Managers and Directors at the Council).

Members decided to note the information presented and to give thought to projects and initiatives that would benefit from financial support from Fenland District Council.

M65/08 Allotments

Further to minute M52/08, members considered the latest position in relation to the proposal to seek planning permission for three acres of land at The Twenties for new garden allotments.

The Clerk reported that he had updated the draft agreement to reflect the wishes of the Allotment Association, as agreed at the last Parish Council meeting. However, to finalise the agreement and to enable it to be issued, there is a need to append a plan showing the exact area that would be rented by the Allotment Association. The plan required to accompany the planning application would meet this need.

Councillor Archer reported that allotment holders are keen to erect sheds at the site; he had obtained oral agreement from officers of the Developments Service at Fenland District Council to this taking place in advance of formal planning permission being obtained. He reported also that he expects to be in possession, in the very near future, of the necessary plans/maps and the other supporting information to accompany the planning application.

Members decided that

- (1) a planning application be submitted for the three acres of land (when the necessary plans, maps etc have been obtained by Councillor Archer);
- (2) allotment holders be permitted to erect sheds on site in advance of planning permission being obtained;
- (3) the draft agreement produced by the Clerk be issued to the Manea Allotment Association when the Parish Council is in possession of a plan of the site for appending to the agreement.

(Councillor Archer declared his personal interest in this item of business, by virtue of being a member of the Allotments Association)

M66/08 Playing Field

- (1) Safety surfacing – Further to minute M53/08, the Clerk reported that he had received a quotation from Mason and Son for the cost of power washing the current surfacing and had made arrangements for a representative of Wicksteed Leisure to make contact with the Chairman, so that they could meet on site to discuss the different types of safety surfacing that are available and the likely cost of replacing the current safety surfacing.

The Chairman reported that he had met with the representative of Wicksteed Leisure on 9 February 2009 but, due to the fact that the play area was covered in snow, it was not possible for an assessment to be undertaken by the representative. An alternative inspection date is to be arranged between the representative of Wicksteed Leisure and the Chairman.

Members felt that it would not be financially prudent to commit funding to power washing of the safety surfacing at this time, given the possibility of replacing the surfacing and using such money as a contribution to that cost.

It was felt appropriate to attempt to undertake further cleaning of the safety surfacing by Parish Council members in the short term.

Members decided that

- (1) the quotation for power washing be not accepted at this time;
- (2) a work party be organised to undertake further cleaning of the safety surfacing;
- (3) the Chairman will meet again with the representative of Wicksteed Leisure regarding possible replacement of the existing surfacing.

- (2) Hire of field – the Chairman reported a request from Mr Ryman to rent an area of the playing field (of approximately 30 Square yards) for a dog show on 21 and 22 March 2009 (for 6 hours each day) and for the stationing of a motor caravan overnight on 21 March. He reported that the hirer will erect temporary fencing for the event and clear the site at the end of the event.

Members decided that the request be approved and that the hire fee be set at £50.

M67/08 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting of 20 January 2009 and details from the Clerk on the income received to date from the sale of fishing tickets and Carp Syndicate memberships.

The current income to date is £144.00 from the sale of fishing tickets and £1,460.00 from 14 adult and 2 junior Carp Syndicate memberships.

Councillor Risbridger expressed his surprise that the signing of the application for grant aid (minute SC19/08 refers) had not been undertaken by the Chairman of the Parish Council in the presence of other members at a Parish Council meeting, given that all matters of “policy” in relation to Manea Pit require approval by the Parish Council.

Members expressed their support for both the work being undertaken by the Sub-Committee and the application for grant aid.

Members decided that

- (1) the content of the minutes and the current financial situation be noted;
- (2) all future applications for grant aid be signed by the Chairman in the presence of all members at Parish Council meetings.

M68/08 Finance

The Clerk reported on the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting, as follows:

Income

Fenland DC	Recycling credits – July to September 2008	£79.77
Mr C Catling	2 junior memberships of Carp Syndicate	£60.00
Turner and Son	Burial of Mrs Edwards' cremated remains	£125.00
Manea United Strikers FC	Hire of football pitches	£270.00
Total Income		£534.77

Expenditure

Anglian Water	Cemetery water usage	£24.20
Anglian Water	Playing field water usage	£81.17
Cambridgeshire County Council	Grass cutting of playing field 2008	£1,560.29
Cambridgeshire ACRE	Membership of ACRE and the Cambridgeshire Playing Fields Network	£35.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£97.99
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £67.97), telephone, Broadband and other expenses	£331.17
Total Expenditure		£2,129.82

Further to minute M56/08, the Clerk reported also on the current financial position of the Parish Council in 2008/09.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Mrs Palmby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Desborough, that the income of £534.77 be noted and that the payments totalling £2,129.82 be authorised;
- (2) to note the Parish Council's current financial position and it is estimated that there will be in excess of £11,000 in the current account at the end of the current financial year;
- (3) to utilise an element of the estimated year-end finance to meet the cost of undertaking fencing works at the playing field;
- (4) members would meet on-site, at a convenient date and time in the near future, to develop a specification for the fencing works at the playing field.

M69/08 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 Publication Scheme.

Further to minute M57/08 (4), the Clerk reported that the Parish Council is under an obligation to adopt the model Publication Scheme produced by the Information Commissioner. In addition, the Parish Council must produce a Guide to the Information that it will make available routinely and to give publicity to that effect.

Members decided that the model Publication Scheme produced by the Information Commissioner be adopted by the Parish Council and that the Clerk be authorised to both produce the necessary Guide to Information (to include charges for the costs of copying and postage of documents) and arrange appropriate publicity.

M70/08 Correspondence

(1) Grass cutting season 2009.

The Clerk reported a quotation from Cambridgeshire County Council for cutting the grass at the playing field in 2009, in the sum of £63.12 per cut.

Members decided that the quotation be accepted and that the County Council be requested to increase the number of annual cuts from 23 to 25 and that the playing field be spiked (at the same cost as a cut) in advance of the first seasonal cut. It was agreed also that the contractor be requested to cut the grass as short as possible and that, if possible, the cutting is undertaken on Fridays.

(2) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC) AGM 2008 minutes.

At the request of CPALC, the Clerk circulated a copy of the minutes of the organisation's AGM held on 6 December 2008.

(3) Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council proposals for minerals and waste developments.

The Clerk circulated a joint consultation document on possible new sites for minerals and waste developments within the County. The consultation deadline is 9 March 2009.

Members decided that the document be considered individually and that they would inform the Clerk of any issues that they wished him to forward as part of the consultation exercise.

(4) Cambridgeshire Transport Commission – consultation.

The Clerk circulated a consultation document on proposals to tackle traffic congestion. The consultation deadline is 6 March 2009.

Members decided that the matter be considered by Councillor Archer, who would respond on behalf of the Parish Council if necessary.

(5) Complaint to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The Clerk reported on a complaint made to the HSE by a member of the public, in which it is alleged that Manea Parish Council had used the services of an "unqualified" contractor to undertake works to trees at the playing field. The Clerk explained the nature of the complaint, the response that he had submitted to the HSE and the consequent action of that organisation.

Members decided to note the details reported by the Clerk and to have regard to the advice and guidance now provided by the HSE when seeking quotations for works to trees in the future.

(6) COPE newsletter.

The Clerk distributed copies of the latest COPE newsletter.

M71/08 Members' conduct

The Chairman made comments in relation to the importance of unity in terms of the expression of views by members when speaking on behalf of the Parish Council. He went on to suggest that any requests for public comment on behalf of the Parish Council should be referred to him.

Members noted the comments made by the Chairman and supported his stance in this matter.

M72/08 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 23 March 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm, in the Village Hall.

Meeting finished at 8.55 pm

Signature:.....(Council Chairman).

Date:.....