

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

21 SEPTEMBER 2009 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Palmby.

The minutes of the meeting of 24 August 2009 were confirmed and signed.

M61/09 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Open space at Station Road, Manea (minute M47/09 (1))

The Clerk reported his receipt from EDF Energy of an application form for an electricity supply at this site and informed members of the company's advice that applicants should consult a qualified electrician before completing and submitting the application form.

With regard to the latest position on adoption of this piece of land by the Parish Council, instead of by the District Council, the Clerk reported that he had received no communication from the Legal Services Manager at Fenland District Council (FDC). However, Mr Pain, Corporate Director at FDC, updated the Parish Council on this matter at minute 62/09 below.

Members decided that the Chairman would discuss the EDF application form with Mr R Yardy and report to the next meeting on the advice obtained from Mr Yardy.

(2) Highway maintenance works and drainage issues (minute M47/09 (2))

The Clerk reported the letter of response from Anglian Water, in which the company states that one of its officers has met with those residents of East Street who are suffering the flooding problems and is undertaking a CCTV survey of the combined sewer. Anglian Water states that it expects to be able to give feedback to the local residents, by mid-September, on the results of the survey. The company also states in the letter that its contractors are given directions to the sewage treatment works and are asked to be mindful of their vehicle speeds.

Members are of the belief that the residents who suffer the flooding have not yet been informed by Anglian Water of the survey findings and consider that such action should be undertaken as a matter of priority.

Some members of the Parish Council have continued to witness the speeding of contractors' vehicles and they consider also that the need for the contractors having directional information in relation to the location of the STW remains, despite the action that had been taken by Anglian Water in this regard.

The Clerk reported also that the Environmental Health Team at Fenland District Council has undertaken an element of investigation work and has given a commitment to undertake further work in this regard.

Members noted the information provided by the Clerk and decided that a further letter be sent to Anglian Water, asking that local residents be informed, as a matter of priority, of the outcome of the CCTV survey and requesting that contractors be reminded of the need to use the directional instructions provided by Anglian Water and to abide by the speed limit.

(3) Cemetery Rules (minute M47/09 (3))

The Chairman reported on a proposed set of draft Cemetery Rules, following his research of the matter, for members' consideration.

Members endorsed the rules suggested by the Chairman.

Members decided that the Chairman would arrange for the purchase of a sign of appropriate appearance for the cemetery bearing the rules agreed.

(4) Land west of Station Road, Manea – potential unauthorised development (minute M47/09 (4))

The Clerk reported that he had, as a result of his further contact, received confirmation that this matter is now being investigated by Fenland District Council's Planning Enforcement Team.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(5) 4 and 6 Acorn Lane (minute M47/09 (5))

The Clerk reported that Fenland District Council (FDC) had served an enforcement notice on 18 September 2009 in relation to the unauthorised use of 4 Acorn Lane, Manea as a children's home.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(6) Bus services affecting Manea (minute M49/09)

The Clerk reported the letter of response from the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, which stated, in summary, that

- under the 1985 Transport Act, bus services are provided primarily on a commercial basis by bus companies and Cambridgeshire County Council is not a Public Transport Authority in this context. In Cambridgeshire, 80% of all bus journeys are provided on a commercial basis without any direct involvement from the County Council;
- in August 2008 Stagecoach took the commercial decision to increase the service level in Manea to try to stimulate usage. When this change was introduced, it was made clear by Stagecoach that the service would be reviewed in a year's time, which is what the company has done. However, the number of passengers using the Manea service was insufficient to maintain the increased service level on a commercial basis and, consequently, the service has now reverted to the two hourly level supported by Cambridgeshire County Council;
- there is no obligation on bus companies to consult on changes that they wish to make on their commercially operated services;
- the County Council has no power to object to or stop any changes that a commercial bus company proposes;

- where services are not provided on a commercial basis the county, or other, councils can consider tendering for services to meet local need. In Manea, the County Council has, for some time, funded a two hourly off peak service for the village. With recent budget cuts and expected future funding pressures, it is very difficult to justify replacing services that are underused and the County Council has, unfortunately, decided that it is not able to replace the increased service level;
- as a result of the concerns expressed by the Parish Council, Stagecoach will be revising the current route so that it covers more of the village than at present.

Members decided that the information be noted.

(7) Community Grants Scheme (minute M55/09)

The Clerk reported that he had obtained an application pack from Fenland District Council, which he had sent to Councillor Buckton for consideration.

Councillor Buckton explained to members Fenland District Council's Community Grants application process and he suggested that an application be made for the purchase of benches (made from recycled plastic) for use in the picnic area element of the Pit development.

Members decided that Councillor Buckton be authorised to submit an application of the nature that he had suggested.

M62/09 Fenland District Council officers' liaison/communication with Manea Parish Council

Further to minute M59/09, Mr A Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council, attended the meeting.

Mr Pain informed members that he is very keen to develop his liaison role with the Parish Council and is happy to do this in whatever way would meet the needs of the Parish Council most effectively. He stated that he has no wish to "hide" from Manea Parish Council and hopes to establish an open and transparent dialogue with the Parish Council.

Mr Pain apologised to members for the very poor level of response that it had received, over many months, from officers at Fenland District Council; he expressed the opinion that the Parish Council had not received the professional correspondence that it should expect and he gave a commitment that he would seek to ensure that this inexcusable situation is not experienced again by Manea Parish Council in its dealings with Fenland District Council.

Mr Pain offered to attend Parish Council meetings at whatever frequency members felt necessary and stated that he is happy to receive members' feedback on his performance in the liaison role.

Mr Pain gave updates on two "burning issues" for the Parish Council, as follows:

- Open space at Station Road – he apologised for the poor level response from the Legal Services Manager in this matter and stated that the Parish Council had not been provided with the best legal advice from this officer in January 2009.

Mr Pain informed members that the issues in this matter are relatively complex; there is a need for the District Council to report back to its Planning Committee to obtain approval to vary the Section 106 Planning Obligation regarding the adoption of this land. He suggested that the Parish Council obtains legal advice regarding this matter; although the District Council's Legal Services Manager had offered previously to undertake this work for the Parish Council, such an approach would not be legitimate because of the conflict of interest that could occur. Mr Pain gave a commitment that the District Council would prepare for the Parish Council a brief on the options available to progress this matter.

Councillor Jolley proposed that, to avoid the need for the Parish Council to spend money on legal fees, the District Council adopts the area of open space (as proposed by way of the existing Section 106 Planning Obligation) and subsequently transfers the ownership to Manea Parish Council. Mr Pain undertook to investigate this potential option.

- 4 Acorn Lane, Manea – the enforcement notice was served on 18 September and local residents are encouraged to supply evidence to Fenland District Council (FDC) of activities at the property, to enable FDC to defend the appeal that Castle Care is expected to lodge against the notice.

In addition, members mentioned a development of properties at Purls Bridge (in the vicinity of The Ship public house), which they consider has undermined the river bank. Mr Pain undertook to investigate the situation and to report his findings to the Clerk.

Members decided to thank Mr Pain for his attendance at the meeting, to note the information given and the commitment made by this officer and to invite him to future meetings (at a frequency to be decided).

M63/09 Communicating the work of the Parish Council

Further to minute M48/09, members considered the draft presentation produced by Councillor Barnes for use at the Parish Council's community engagement meeting scheduled for 20 October 2009.

Members suggested some minor amendments and additions to the draft presentation.

The Chairman offered to make the necessary arrangements for the provision of refreshments.

Members decided that

- (1) the presentation be approved, subject to inclusion of the minor amendments and additions suggested;
- (2) the Chairman would organise the refreshments for the event;
- (3) the cost of the refreshments be met by the Parish Council.

M64/09 Playing Field and play area issues

- (1) Fencing at the playing field – further to minute M51/09 (1), members discussed the fencing work which had been undertaken and were made aware, through letters read to them by the Clerk, of the very positive comments made by two local residents in relation to the works.

Members are of the view that further works are now required to conclude the improvements of this area, such as undertaking some grass seeding, replacing the existing metal "no parking" posts with concrete ones, improvements to the access to the car park and works to prevent the parking of cars on the grass verges.

Members decided that

- (1) a letter of appreciation be sent to the contractor who undertook the fencing works;
- (2) the Chairman would discuss with the contractor the additional works now considered necessary to complete the improvements to the frontage and surroundings of the playing field.

- (2) Annual ROSPA inspection report – further to minute M51/09 (2), the circulation of the ROSPA report among Parish Councillors had still not concluded. The Chairman reported on his assessment of the works required.

Members decided that circulation of the report among Parish Councillors be concluded prior to the next meeting to enable a schedule of agreed works to be produced at that meeting.

- (3) Cutting of conifers – further to minute M51/09 (3), the Clerk reported the quotation submitted from one of the contractors invited to tender for this work.

Members consider that the conifers should not only be reduced in height but also in width.

Members decided that

(1) the Clerk should ascertain from the contractor whether the quotation includes trimming the width of the conifers as well as reducing their height and, in the event that the quotation does not include such trimming, the contractor be requested to submit a revised quotation to cover the cost of the additional work;

(2) in the event that the quotation does include trimming the width of the conifers, the quotation, in the sum of £2,781.00 plus VAT, be accepted and the contractor be requested to undertake the work at the earliest opportunity.

- (4) Standard of grass cutting – further to minute M51/09 (4), members remain of the view that the current standard of grass cutting is not adequate and that the Parish Council may need to consider awarding the grass cutting contract to a different contractor for the cutting season 2010. The Clerk reminded members that the current cost to the Parish Council is £63.12 per cut (i.e. a total of £1,578 per annum).

The Chairman informed members that he had requested the grass cutting contractor to spike the field following the final cut of 2009, which the contractor had agreed to undertake for the cost of a cut.

Members decided to continue monitoring the grass cutting situation for the duration of the current contractual year and to endorse the Chairman's action regarding spiking of the playing field.

- (5) Williams Way play area – further to minute M51/09 (7), the Clerk reported the response from Fenland District Council in relation to the Parish Council's request for the provision of signage to direct users to the correct means of access to the play area.

Fenland District Council advises that, firstly, it has no budget for the purchase of such directional signage and, secondly, its records show that the pathway from the High Street is a public right of way.

Members decided that the information be noted.

- (6) Future development of facilities – further to minute M51/09 (8), Councillor Jolley presented draft plans/drawings of a possible design for a new pavilion.

Councillor Jolley explained his discussions with the architect who had produced the draft plans/drawings and the rationale applied in producing the design in the manner drawn. He also informed members of the likely cost of obtaining planning permission for a new pavilion.

Members decided that

(1) the information reported by Councillor Jolley be noted;

- (2) the plans/drawings be circulated amongst Parish Councillors between this meeting and the next;
 - (3) the matter be considered further at the next meeting.
- (7) Mr M Short – the Chairman informed members on the current health situation of Mr Short, the groundsman at the playing field.

Members decided to give Mr Short a “get well” gift of £20.

(Councillor Barnes declared his personal interest in part (3) of this item of business, by virtue of family ownership of land adjoining the conifer hedging)

M65/09 Manea Pit

Further to minute M53/09, Councillor Barnes reported on his discussions with the Carp Syndicate regarding membership fees for 2009/10. He reported that, on the basis of a proposed reduced length of membership year (to June, instead of August 2010), the representative of the Carp Syndicate had requested a reduction in the level of annual membership fee of £100 and had suggested a revised fee of £75.

Councillor Barnes reported that he had agreed with the Carp Syndicate, following discussions with the majority of Parish Council members, a provisional membership fee of £80 for 2009/10 and that, to date, 14 members of the syndicate had paid a fee at that level. Councillor Barnes proposed that a Carp Syndicate membership fee of £80 be approved by the Parish Council.

Councillor Jolley suggested a compromise membership fee of £90, being mindful of the need for the Parish Council to generate income to maintain the facilities at Manea Pit. To help inform members’ debate, Councillor Barnes detailed the level of income and expenditure for 2008/09 and for 2009/10 to date in relation to Manea Pit.

The majority of members supported Councillor Barnes’ proposal to levy a Carp Syndicate membership fee for 2009/10 of £80.

It was noted that the revised draft Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Sub-Committee that had been produced by the Clerk were still being circulated among members of the Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) the Carp Syndicate membership fee be set at £80 for 2009/10, on the basis that the membership year 2009/10 will expire on 16 June (instead of 31 August) 2010 (to bring the Carp fishing season into line with the general fishing season);
- (2) the revised draft Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Sub-Committee continue to be circulated among members of the Parish Council between this meeting and the next, to enable a decision to be made at the next meeting.

M66/09 Planning application/appeal

Members considered the following planning application and decided to submit to the Local Planning Authority the comments set out (in italics) below:

Erection of 1 x 3-bed detached house and 6 x3-bed semi-detached houses with associated parking at International House, Station Road, Manea – F/YR09/0521/F.

Object to the application, on the basis that the site lies outside of the Development Area Boundary for Manea.

Further to minute M10/09 (2), the Clerk reported the submission of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against Fenland District Council's refusal of planning permission for the erection of 4 x2-bed chalet bungalows with associated parking at land south-west of 61 Station Road, Manea and informed members of the process for the Parish Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate, if it wished to do so, of comments additional to those made previously to the Local Planning Authority.

Members decided that a representation should be made to the Planning Inspectorate stating that the Parish Council wishes to reiterate the content of the representation that it made to Fenland District Council in opposition to this proposal. The representation should also make the point that members are concerned that approval of this proposal would make worse the drainage/sewerage difficulties which are now being experienced in the village.

M67/09 Finance

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

Income

Graham Dack and Company	Refund of fees from CCC in relation to Car Park legal issues	£16.00
Mr S Millward	Hire of field on 06/09/09	£40.00
Kent Memorials	New memorial (Lorna Marshall) and additional inscription (Arthur Barnes)	£195.00
Fenland DC	Recycling Credits	£81.69
Fenland DC	Refund of planning application fee	£167.50
J H Landin and Son	Burial - Glover	£300.00
Total Income		£800.19

Expenditure

B Carson	Village Show – contribution towards cost of prizes	£100.00
T R Savage	Fencing works at playing field	£6,612.50
Suffolk ACRE Services	Annual insurance premium	£1,622.08
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax (June, July and August 2009).	£271.04
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£56.16
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £86.42), Broadband and other expenses	£397.95
Manea Village Hall Committee	Hire of room 24/08/09	£7.50
M Short	Illness gift	£20.00
Total Expenditure		£9,087.23

Members decided, upon a proposal from Councillor Archer, seconded by Councillor Jolley, that the income of £800.19 be noted and that the payments totalling £9,087.23 be authorised.

M68/09 Correspondence

(1) Community Fairs in Fenland.

Further to minute M55/09 (6), the Clerk reported a letter from Fenland District Council detailing briefing sessions arranged for Parish Council members in respect of the forthcoming Community Fairs.

Members decided that the information be noted.

(2) Fenland District Council's Street Scene Service Newsletter.

The Clerk reported receipt of this newsletter.

Members decided that the newsletter be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

(3) Fenland District Council's Access to Services review.

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to appoint a representative to attend a meeting, scheduled for 30 September 2009, in relation to a member-led review of Access to Services being undertaken by the District Council.

Members decided that Manea Parish Council be represented at this meeting by Councillor Risbridger.

(4) E-mail from Mr M Crompton.

The Clerk read to members the contents of an e-mail received from this resident of the village.

The issue raised in the e-mail related to the parking of vehicles on the grassed area in front of Manea Cemetery.

Members decided to note the comments raised in respect of this matter and consider that the issue would be addressed by the works proposed for the playing field frontage etc.

(5) Victim Support – request for donation

Members considered a request from Victim Support for a financial donation towards the ongoing development of the organisation's work to support victims of crime in local communities in Cambridgeshire.

Members decided that a financial donation of £25 be made to this organisation.

(6) Community ACTION Magazine.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest edition of this magazine produced by Cambridgeshire ACRE.

Members decided that the magazine be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

(7) Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau AGM.

The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation to the Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau AGM on 22 September 2009.

Members decided that the Parish Council be represented at this meeting by Councillor Risbridger if attendance proves to be convenient for him.

(8) Cemetery memorials.

Members decided that the two requests from Kent Memorials - firstly, for consent for a memorial stone on the grave of Mrs Lorna Marshall in Manea Cemetery and, secondly, in relation to a proposed inscription on an existing memorial stone for Mr P Barnes – be approved.

(9) "More Powers to Parish and Town Councils: Including Local Councils in the Sustainable Communities Act" campaign.

The Clerk reported a request from the Local Works, Unlock Democracy organisation for the Parish Council to support its campaign to achieve approval of The Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill.

Members decided that no action be taken in relation to this request.

M69/09 Items for Press Release or news stories

Members decided that the following matters be the subject of Press Releases or news stories for public attention:

- Manea's success in the recent Anglia in Bloom Awards
- the Parish Council's community engagement meeting arranged for 20 October 2009
- The "official opening" of the Allotments on 20 September 2009.

M70/09 Highway issues

Members mentioned a number of highway-related issues in the village, including:

- ascertaining the progress situation in relation to the provision of double yellow lines at the junction of Glebe Close and Westfield Road, as promised by the Local Highway Authority
- a request, via Councillor Cole, from a resident of Fallow Corner Drove for the provision of a street lamp
- the possibility of the Local Highway Authority installing a Stop sign at the Boots Bridge junction, for the benefit of motorists travelling from Manea
- the possibility of the Local Highway Authority providing highway safety measures at the junction of the access road to the RSPCA Centre.

Members decided that these matters/enquiries be referred to the County Council's Highways Team.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to avoid undue delay to determination of this matter)

M71/09 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 19 October 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm, at Manea Village Hall.

Meeting finished at 10.00 pm

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

Date:.....