

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

23 NOVEMBER 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 19 October 2009 were confirmed and signed.

M84/09 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Open space at Station Road, Manea (minute M72/09 (1))

The Clerk reported that the application form for an electricity supply at this site had been submitted to EDF Energy and, subsequently, a representative of EDF Energy had met on-site with Councillor Emery to discuss the application. Since that meeting, a quotation for the electrical installation, in the sum of £957.00 plus VAT, had been received.

In addition to the cost of the installation, it will be necessary for the Parish Council to arrange and meet the cost of providing a meter cabinet/kiosk and a concrete base for the cabinet/kiosk. Councillor Emery reported the costs of purchasing such a metal cabinet/kiosk from a supplier recommended by EDF Energy and of construction of a brick-built version.

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 been informed by e-mail from Mr Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council (FDC), that this matter is being progressed in the manner agreed by that officer at minute M62/09 and that Mr Pain has asked for the Parish Council to now submit a formal letter of request for transfer of the land from the District Council to the Parish Council consequent to the District Council's acquisition from the administrators of the former Hazelmere Homes.

Members decided that

(1) the quotation from EDF Energy, for the installation of an electricity supply at this area of open space, be accepted and that Councillors Cole and Jolley would arrange the construction of a concrete base and acquisition of a metal cabinet/kiosk;

(2) the situation regarding formal acquisition of this land by the Parish Council be noted and that a letter in the nature suggested by Mr Pain be sent to Fenland District Council.

(2) Highway maintenance works and drainage issues (minute M72/09 (2))

Councillor Mrs Desborough updated members on the latest situation regarding the drainage issues at East Street. She informed members that Anglian Water is now in possession of all the necessary documentation to progress the matter. In addition, Rod Marshall of the County Council's Highways Team has visited the site and

also relevant officers of Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Anglian Water will be meeting on 3 December 2009 to discuss the drainage issues.

Councillor Cole mentioned the existence of a water leak at Berry Lodge, Fallow Corner Drove, which requires remedial action by Anglian Water.

Members would like to know, from Anglian Water, why there are still a number of tankers travelling to and from the village sewage treatment works.

Members agreed that highway maintenance works are needed (to address road "sinkage" near the Old Mill and a crack in the road near the last bungalow on the left-hand side of the road) at Fallow Corner Drove and (to repair a pot hole) on Park Road. In addition, members are still awaiting a response from the Local Highway Authority in respect of the highway drain at the top of East Street.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by Councillor Mrs Desborough be noted;
 - (2) a letter be sent, by the Clerk, to Anglian Water, requesting repair works to the water leak at Fallow Corner Drove and seeking an explanation for the tanker movements to and from the sewage treatment works;
 - (3) the highway repairs/issues described above be drawn to the attention of the Local Highway Authority.
- (3) **Bus services affecting Manea (minute M72/09 (3))**

The Clerk reported the letter of response from the Leader of the County Council, in which she informs the Parish Council that the bus service provider, Stagecoach, has given an assurance that it still intends to extend the bus service to Westfield Road but a commencement date has not yet been set.

Members decided that the information provided by Leader of the County Council be noted.

(4) **Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) (minute M72/09 (4))**

The Clerk reported a letter of request from the Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) for financial assistance to continue to deliver an outreach service in Manea.

Members of the Parish Council were given to understand, by Councillor Mark Archer at their last meeting, that the Fenland CAB provides the outreach service to Manea residents on a fortnightly basis, which costs the CAB £40 per visit. The CAB states that it dealt with 521 new enquiries from residents in the Manea Ward in the last financial year.

The Parish Council places a significant value upon the assistance that is provided by the CAB to the residents of this rural community and, consequently, is prepared to offer financial support, based upon the information reported by Councillor Archer, at the level of £40 per month (i.e. meeting 50% of the costs of providing the current level of service), for an initial period of 6 months (i.e. equating to a sum of £240.00), subject to the current level of outreach service being maintained. Members indicated that they would be prepared to consider extension of this funding at conclusion of the initial 6 months period, provided that residents of Manea continue to require the current level of support from the CAB.

Members decided to provide financial support towards the cost of the beneficial work that is undertaken by Fenland Citizens' Advice Bureau for the benefit of Manea residents, on the basis outlined above.

(5) Highway issues (minute M72/09 (5))

The Clerk reported the response to the Parish Council's request to the County Council for highway improvements between Manea and Wimblington, to enhance the road safety situation in the vicinity of the access road to the RSPCA centre.

The County Council states that, because of the width of the particular section of road, it is not possible (because of the criteria set by the Government) to introduce double white lines to prevent vehicles overtaking.

Members decided that the information be noted.

(6) Land at The Fifties, Manea – request to purchase or rent (minute M81/09)

The Chairman reported he had asked the requester to make application in writing and to commit to meeting the Parish Council's valuation, legal and any other associated costs in this matter. In addition, he had sought the views of the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust regarding the requester's proposed use of this land, if acquired.

The requester had agreed to make formal application but, given that the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust has concerns regarding the requester's proposed use of this land, the request has been withdrawn.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that no further requests for acquisition of Parish Council assets would be considered in the absence of a written agreement to meet the Parish Council's valuation, legal and any other associated costs.

M85/09 Playing Field and play area issues

- (1) Annual ROSPA inspection report – further to minute M74/09 (2), the Chairman reported that he had undertaken the minor repair works required.

The Clerk reported the quotation that he had received from Wicksteed Leisure Limited for the material required to undertake the re-gluing etc work to the safety surfacing.

Members decided to note the current position in addressing the issues raised by way of the ROSPA report and that Councillor Emery would investigate other options for the works required to the safety surfacing.

- (2) Cutting of conifers – further to minute M74/09 (3), the Clerk reported the receipt of an e-mail from the contractor in response to the concerns raised by members at the last meeting.

The contractor explained that the work is progressing but it is experiencing costly and time-consuming difficulties in transporting the cuttings from the site and asked whether the Parish Council could assist in meeting the additional, unexpected transport costs.

Members decided that

- (1) the current progress situation be noted;
- (2) the contractor be informed that the Parish Council expects the work to be completed as planned and is unable to provide additional funding to meet the increased costs being experienced by the contractor.
- (3) Future development of facilities – further to minute M74/09 (4), Councillor Jolley reported that the architect is still in the process of revising the draft plans.

Members decided that a decision be made at the next meeting in relation to seeking planning permission for a new pavilion.

- (4) Dogs on the playing field – further to minute M74/09 (6), the Clerk reported a further e-mail from one of the residents of the village who had raised concerns, debated by members at their last meeting, regarding the Parish Council's "No Dogs" ruling. Members considered also the request made at the Open Forum element of the meeting.

The e-mail from the local resident states that he understands the "No Dogs" decision made by the Parish Council as a means of seeking to address the problem of dog fouling on the playing field but suggests that the Parish Council could consider designating another area within the village where villagers could exercise their dogs "off the lead", instead of the village playing field. The resident expressed the opinion that such a course of action by the Parish Council would be appreciated by the many dog owners in Manea.

Members listened to the comments made at the Open Forum element of the meeting by the four local residents who spoke in support of a letter of request, from Mr T Ryman, for the Parish Council to re-consider the decision made at the last meeting regarding its "No Dogs" ruling in relation to the village playing field (minute M74/09 (6) refers), to enable the site to continue to be used for holding dog agility events.

The Clerk read to members the contents of the letter from Mr Ryman. The letter asks that if the Parish Council feels unable to re-consider its decision in respect of access to the playing field by dogs, so that Mr Ryman could hold two days of organised dog training in the village, members seek to identify a suitable alternative location in the village for dog agility activities to take place.

Members decided that

- (1) they are unable to identify a suitable area within the village for dog owners to exercise their dogs "off the lead";
- (2) it would not be appropriate to change the decision that it made at minute M74/09 (6) in relation to the "No Dogs" ruling in respect of the village playing field, to enable the playing field to be used for dog agility events. In addition, the Parish Council is unable to identify a suitable alternative site within the village for dog agility activities.

M86/09 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting of 10 November 2009 and updates given by Councillor Barnes, Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

Members considered the Sub-Committee's recommendation that that the total sum of £6,000 allocated by the Parish Council at minute M75/09 for the purchase of Carp be paid to the supplier in two equal instalments over the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 (rather than three equal instalments spread over three financial years, which was not acceptable to the supplier).

In addition, Councillor Archer suggested further revisions to the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Sub-Committee agreed by the Parish Council at minute M75/09, in relation to the quorum, members' conduct, a maximum period of office for Chairman etc.

Members decided that

- (1) the contents of the minutes and the updates reported by Councillor Barnes be noted;

- (2) a sum of £6,000 be spent on the purchase of Carp, with the fish being provided in the current financial year but payment being made in two instalments of £4,000 in the current financial year and £2,000 in 2010/11;
- (3) the revised Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Sub-Committee be amended to state that the quorum of the Sub-Committee must include no fewer than three members of the Parish Council.

M87/09 Planning

Applications

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

- (1) Erection of a detached single garage to existing dwelling at 18 Valentine Close, Manea – F/YR09/0639/F (applicant: Mr J Kember).

That the application be supported.

(Councillor Cole declared his personal interest in this application, by virtue of business connections with the applicant)

- (2) Erection of a 3/4-bed detached bungalow on land north-west of Cedar Lodge, The Old Dairy Yards, Westfield Road, Manea – F/YR09/0666/F (applicant: Mr R Taylor-Brook).

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

- (3) Erection of part-single, part two-storey side extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of garage/outbuildings and utility, at 5A High Street, Manea – F/YR09/0679/F (applicant: Mr D Pressland).

That the application be supported.

(Councillor Barnes declared his personal interest in this application, by virtue of the fact that he and the applicant are owners of adjoining land)

- (4) Erection of 3 x 2-bed terraced houses with associated parking involving demolition of existing dwelling at 24 Park Road, Manea – F/YR09/0720/F (applicant: Mr P Baxter).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Erection of first-floor extension and conservatory to rear of existing dwelling at Rose Cottage, High Street, Manea – F/YR09/0729/F (applicant: Mr and Mrs Smith).

That the application be supported.

- (6) Change of use from steel fabrications to shop (A1), cafe (A3) and fish and chip shop (A5) at 16A High Street, Manea – F/YR09/0734/F (applicant: Mrs S Savage).

That the application be supported.

(Councillors Cole, Emery and Jolley declared their respective personal interest in this application, by virtue of business connections with the applicant's immediate family)

Policy

Members discussed the Parish Council's general approach to the consideration of planning applications.

Some members of the Parish Council feel that the approach taken currently lacks sufficient flexibility to reflect changing circumstances, such as decisions made by Fenland District Council, as Local Planning Authority, and the outcome of appeals lodged with the Planning Inspectorate. For example, the Parish Council's stance of opposing automatically all applications for development on land which lies outside of the Development Area Boundary for Manea, irrespective of the fact that other applications may have been granted planning permission by the District Council or the Planning Inspectorate on the same or adjoining site.

Members decided that, in future, a less rigid approach be taken and that each planning application would be considered on its own merits.

Appeal

Further to minute M47/09 (5), the Clerk reported the submission of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against Fenland District Council's issue of an enforcement notice in respect of the change of use of 4 Acorn Lane, Manea to a children's home and informed members of the process for the Parish Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate, if it wished to do so, of comments (in addition to those submitted by Fenland District Council).

Given the deadline for submission of representations to the Planning Inspectorate (20 November 2009), the Clerk had submitted an interim response pending members' formal consideration of the matter. The Clerk read to members his interim submission; in summary:

"The Parish Council supports strongly Fenland District Council's reasons for issuing the notice, i.e. to seek to achieve cessation of this unauthorised change of use.

The Parish Council is of the opinion that the use of 4 Acorn Lane as a children's home does require planning permission for a change of use, as the activities at this property are significantly different to those that one would expect at a normal domestic property, in terms of the occupants' anti-social behaviour and the "comings and goings" of staff, plus the number of vehicle movements and the amount of parking associated with the current use of the property.

Manea Parish Council concurs with the view of the Local Planning Authority that the change of use should be resisted on the basis of the grounds detailed within the enforcement notice issued by Fenland District Council."

Members decided, unanimously, that the interim submission made by the Clerk had represented accurately and fully their views in this matter and that, consequently, they had no further comments to add.

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

M88/09 Finance

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

Income

C Barnes	Allotment rent	£22.50
E Barnes	Allotment rent	£180.00
P Lawrence	Allotment rent	£180.00

P Clarke	Allotment rent	£225.00
B Fletcher	Allotment rent	£180.00
Commonwealth War Graves Commission	Maintenance of war graves in Manea Cemetery	£6.00
Richard King Memorials	Memorial – Basil Short	£125.00
Various	Fishing season tickets and day tickets	£567.00
New Carp Syndicate member	One membership fee	£80.00
C Howell	Allotment rent	£180.00
A Howell	Allotment rent	£180.00
Fenland DC	Recycling Credits	£78.54
Mr Ryman	Dog show and agility event	£70.00
Total Income		£2,074.04

Expenditure

Public Works Loans Board	Loan re-payment	£95.39
Royal British Legion	Wreath	£19.00
Signwise	Sign for cemetery	£34.50
EDF Energy	New electricity connection –open space in Station Road	£1,100.55
E-on	Electricity for playing field	£20.72
E-on	Electricity for Pavilion	£169.61
Richard Yardy	New showers in pavilion	£358.80
Sears Bros Ltd	Verge and grass cutting	£947.89
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£83.46
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £98.11), Broadband, telephone and other expenses	£473.31
Manea Village Hall Committee	Hire of rooms on 19/10/09 and 20/10/09	£22.50
Total Expenditure		£3,325.73

In addition, members considered, further to minute M18/08, a disputed invoice from East Anglia Tree Care for works to trees at the playing field. The Clerk reported on the exchange of correspondence between the company and himself regarding this matter and the stance now being taken by the company by way of a letter dated 16 October 2009. Members noted the comments made by the company in its letter of 16 October 2009 but are adamant that they are not prepared to pay for works that were not carried out by the company.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Mrs Desborough, seconded by Councillor Risbridger, that the income of £2,074.04 be noted and that the payments totalling £3,325.73 be authorised;
- (2) East Anglia Tree Care be informed that the Parish Council is not prepared to pay for works that were not carried out by the company and, accordingly, the company be invited, once again, to submit a revised invoice for the work that was actually undertaken (in the sum of £650 plus VAT).

M89/09 Parish Precept and General Expenses 2010/11 and other associated financial issues

Members considered the level of Parish Precept and the General Expenses for the financial year 2010/11, plus other associated financial matters.

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the Parish Council's financial position as at the half-year, the current financial position and estimates of income and expenditure for 2010/11.

To accord with the Parish Council's Standing Orders, which state that "In every year not later than the meeting at which estimates for the next year are settled, the council shall review the pay and conditions of service of existing employees", members considered the salaries, wages and expenses of the Parish Council's employees.

Members decided, being mindful of the current economic circumstances and its financial position, that

- (1) the Parish Council's financial position as at the half-year be noted;
- (2) the level of Parish Precept for 2010/11 be set at £19,000 (i.e. the same level as for 2009/10);
- (3) the Parish Council makes application for a Concurrent Functions Grant from Fenland District Council for 2010/11 at the same level awarded in 2009/10;
- (4) the Parish Council's fees and charges for 2010/11 be retained at the same level as for 2009/10;
- (5) in relation to the Parish Council's employees: (1) the Clerk's salary be increased, with immediate effect, to the same level paid to the previous Clerk to the Council; (2) the salaries and wages (plus other employment benefits) paid to all Parish Council staff be increased annually in line with the annual pay award to local government employees.

Members expressed their appreciation of the quality of service provided by the Clerk to the Council.

M90/09 Correspondence

- (1) Fenland District Council's consultation on revisions to "taxi" licensing conditions, proposed re-location of the Wisbech taxi ranks and the three-yearly review of its Gambling Act Policy.

The Clerk reported on consultation documents from Fenland District Council in relation to revisions to the Council's "taxi" licensing conditions, its proposed re-location of the Wisbech taxi ranks and the three-yearly review of its Gambling Act Policy.

Members decided that they had no comments to make in respect of these consultation exercises.

- (2) Proposed prohibitions of waiting in Westfield Road/Glebe Close and Station Road/School Lane, Manea.

The Clerk reported the County Council's proposals for implementing "No waiting" restrictions, by way of introducing double yellow lines, at these two locations.

Members decided that the proposals, which they consider will improve highway safety in the village, be supported.

(3) Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements Programme 2010/11.

Further to minute M34/09, the Clerk reported the outcome of the Jointly Funded Minor Highways Improvements Programme (JFMHI) bidding process for 2010/11.

Neither of the two funding bids submitted by Manea Parish Council (i.e. for upgrading of the bus stop area in Westfield Road and for the provision of warning signs and road markings on the approaches to the playing field on Park Road) had scored a sufficient number of points using the County Council's scoring system to be successful. The County Council has, however, undertaken to renew the SLOW road markings on Park Road.

Members decided that the outcome of the JFMHI bidding process for 2010/11 be noted.

(4) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC) Autumn 2009 Newsletter.

The Clerk reported receipt of copies of this newsletter.

Members decided to each take a copy of the newsletter.

(5) The Fenland Road Safety Campaign - Progress Review: 30 October 2009.

The Clerk reported receipt of this document, which details the progress of the campaign as at the end of October 2009.

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

(6) Cemetery Memorial.

The Clerk reported a request from Richard King Memorials Limited for consent for a memorial stone on the grave of Mr B Short in Manea Cemetery.

Members were informed of the size, design and material of the proposed memorial and the wording of the inscription.

Members decided that the request be approved.

(7) Joint meeting of Parish Councils.

The Clerk reported receipt of an e-mail from the Clerk to Welney Parish Council, seeking to ascertain the interest of adjoining Parish Councils in having a joint meeting, as happened previously almost two years ago, to discuss matters affecting the area more widely

The e-mail states that Welney Parish Council is willing to host the joint meeting.

Members decided to express their interest in such a meeting and are happy for Welney Parish Council to host the event.

(8) Parish Paths Partnership 2010/11.

The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation for the Parish Council to become involved in the County Council's Parish Paths Partnership, which aims to help protect, improve, maintain and promote local Rights of Way paths networks.

Members decided not to make an application for involvement in this scheme.

(9) Rural Neighbourhood Management Board meeting.

The Clerk reported receipt of an agenda for the meeting of the Rural Neighbourhood Management Board scheduled for 30 November 2009.

Members decided that the Parish Council be represented at the meeting by Councillor Archer.

(10) Recycling Centre – Open Day.

The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation from the County Council to an Open Day at the Recycling Centre at Melbourne Avenue, March on 17 December 2009 (between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm), at which there will be demonstrations of the County Council's recycling equipment.

Members decided that the invitation be circulated among members of the Parish Council and that they would each inform the County Council if they intended to attend the event.

M91/09 Items for Press Release or news stories

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

- the outcomes of the Parish Council's community engagement meeting on 20 October 2009
- the decision of the Parish Council not to increase its precept or its fees and charges for 2010/11
- the dog fouling situation in the village.

M92/09 Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies

Further to minute M61/09 (7), Councillor Buckton reported that it had been necessary for him to withdraw the Parish Council's request for a grant under FDC's Community Grants Scheme as the application did not meet the eligibility criteria because of the Parish Council not having an Equal Opportunities Policy and a Child Protection Policy.

Members decided that draft Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies for the Parish Council be prepared by Councillor Buckton, for consideration at the next meeting.

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

M93/09 Tendering processes

Councillor Jolley stressed the importance of following, at all times, the relevant tendering procedures when procuring goods and services for the Parish Council.

Members decided to note and endorse the points made by Councillor Jolley.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to assist in effective decision-making)

M94/09 Unauthorised development at 57A Station Road, Manea

Members referred to the stationing of caravans being used residentially, without the benefit of planning permission, at this site, together with the unauthorised change of use of the bait shop to residential use.

Members decided that this matter be referred to the Planning Compliance Team at Fenland District Council for investigation and necessary action.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to enable the situation to be addressed at the earliest opportunity)

M95/09 Breach of tenancy conditions

Members are of the view that the occupiers of two properties, owned by Roddons Housing Association, in Westfield Road are in breach of the tenancy conditions, by virtue of their parking vehicles on the front gardens of the properties.

Members decided that this matter be referred to Roddons Housing Association for investigation and necessary action.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency to enable the situation to be addressed at the earliest opportunity)

M96/09 Fenland District Council officers' liaison/communication with Manea Parish Council

Further to minute M62/09, the Clerk reported an e-mail from Mr A Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council, in which he seeks to ascertain whether members had reached a decision in relation to the frequency of his attendance at meetings of Manea Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) Mr Pain be invited to attend meetings of Manea Parish Council on a quarterly basis with effect from January 2010;
- (2) an invitation be extended to Councillor Harper, in his capacity as the County Councillor for electoral division which includes the parish of Manea, to attend all meetings of Manea Parish Council.

M97/09 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 21 December 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm, at Manea Village Hall.

Meeting finished at 10.05 pm

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

Date:.....