

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 JANUARY 2010 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Buckton and Cole.

In attendance:

- (1) Councillor Geoffrey Harper (until 7.25 pm), in his capacity as the County Councillor for the Electoral Division which includes Manea - at the invitation of the Parish Council;
- (2) Mr Alan Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council (FDC), in his capacity as FDC's liaison officer for Manea Parish Council - at the invitation of the Parish Council.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 December 2009 were confirmed and signed.

M108/09 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Open space at Station Road, Manea (minute M98/09 (1))

The Clerk reported that he had submitted an application to E.ON for the provision of electricity metering at this site and that he had been informed by EDF Energy that installation of the electricity supply would take place on 9 and 10 February 2010.

Councillor Jolley reported that the cabinet/kiosk, which would "house" the electricity meter, has now been provided at the site.

Alan Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council, reported on the latest position, further to minutes M62/09 and 84/09 (1), on adoption of this piece of land by the Parish Council, instead of by the District Council.

Mr Pain informed members that the legal principles of the District Council adopting this area of open space (as proposed by way of the existing Section 106 Planning Obligation) and subsequently transferring the ownership to Manea Parish Council are sound and that the administrators who are dealing with the affairs of the former Hazelmere Homes are aware of the situation.

Mr Pain informed members that once the land is in the possession of Fenland District Council (FDC), the transfer of land would require a decision by the Cabinet at FDC; it is proposed currently that the matter be reported to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 28 January 2010. Following Cabinet approval, the proposal would need to be the subject of public notice in a local newspaper circulating in the area, to give members of the public the opportunity to make comment on the District Council's intended disposal of public land. The Cabinet would be required to take into account any public comments in reaching a final decision on the matter. Based upon current timescales, Mr Pain expressed the opinion that transfer of the land to Manea Parish Council should take place in April or May 2010.

Members decided that

- (1) the progress situation regarding installation of the electricity supply and the associated metering be noted;
- (2) the progress situation regarding adoption of this piece of land by the Parish Council, instead of by the District Council, be noted;
- (3) the offer of Mr Pain, in relation to obtaining for Manea Parish Council an informal legal opinion in respect of the Parish Council's use of this land, be accepted.

(2) Highway maintenance works and drainage issues (minute M98/09 (2))

The Clerk read to members a letter from Anglia Water, explaining the needs for the current level of tanker movements to and from the sewage treatment works over recent months and stating that the water leak at Fodder Fen will receive the necessary attention (minute M84/09 (2) refers).

The Clerk reported that he had received no further information, since the last meeting, regarding the joint working by Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Anglian Water to resolve the drainage difficulties at East Street.

Members decided that

- (1) the information provided by Anglian Water be noted;
- (2) the progress regarding the joint working by Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Anglian Water to resolve the drainage difficulties at East Street be discussed at the next meeting.

(3) Request for a financial donation (minute M103/09 (3))

Councillor Mrs Palmby reported on the results of her research into this organisation, from which she has concluded that the work of Red2Green is providing benefits to residents of Manea.

Members decided that a donation of £25 be made to Red2Green towards the cost of the services that the organisation provides to support people who are disabled or have learning disabilities.

M109/09 Councillor Harper – issues affecting Manea Parish

Councillor Geoffrey Harper, the County Councillor for the Electoral Division which includes Manea, attended the meeting to update members on an issue which he has been investigating on behalf of local residents and to report on County Council matters which affect services delivered to Manea parishioners.

Firstly, Councillor Harper informed members of the results of his investigations in relation to possibilities for addressing the difficulties experienced by local residents as a result of the use of 4 Acorn Lane as a children's home. His investigations have shown that Ofsted is the only agency which could deal with issues relating to care and welfare of the children living at this property. Councillor Harper read to members the letter that he had received from Ofsted, following the organisation's examination of the situation at 4 Acorn Lane in accordance with obligations under the Children's Home Act 2001.

Ofsted has informed Councillor Harper that the management of this property has utilised Ofsted's mediation service and the organisation has determined that the registration applying to this property remains valid and that it will be taking no further action.

Councillor Harper made the point that, although councillors of all three tiers of local government may wish to support the local residents in this matter, it is only those persons who are directly affected by the activities at this property who are eligible to make complaints to Ofsted.

Secondly, Councillor Harper informed members that the County Council is currently assessing the impact of the economic downturn upon service provision from 2010/11 onwards. The County Council will need to make budget reductions of around £100 million pounds over the next three financial years, which will mean reductions in the level of service delivery; given that certain services will be exempt from reduced levels of expenditure (such as education and child protection), it means that this burden will fall upon services such as libraries and highway maintenance.

Councillor Harper explained that the grant received by the County Council from the Government does not take into account that Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing County in the United Kingdom and also that the County Council would face “capping” by the Government if it were to increase its element of the Council Tax in excess of 3%.

Members expressed the opinion that residents in Manea would be prepared to pay an increase in Council Tax of more than 3% in 2010/11 if it would result in preservation of the highways maintenance budget, given the poor condition of the highway network in the parish, which would become worse through reductions in maintenance funding. Consequently, members requested Councillor Harper to support the Parish Council’s concerns regarding the possible impact of the County Council’s budget reductions upon the parish of Manea.

Members decided that

- (1) the information provided by Councillor Harper be noted;
- (2) Councillor Harper be requested to bring to the attention of Cambridgeshire County Council the Parish Council’s concerns and views regarding the possible impact of the County Council’s budget reductions upon the parish of Manea and the desire of Parish Council members to not see a reduction in the level of highways maintenance in the village.

M110/09 Playing Field and play area issues

- (1) Cutting of conifers – further to minute M99/09 (2), 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 there are still more trees to prune before the work is completed, however, it is not recommended that conifer trees be pruned during cold weather conditions; therefore, the remainder of the work will be undertaken when the weather becomes warmer.

The contractor has stated that there will be no reduction in the company’s invoice for this work as the contractor had not asked the Parish Council to clear the clippings, merely asking if the Parish Council is aware of any land upon which the contractor could dispose of the clippings or a farmer who could make use of use them.

Councillor Emery informed members that, subsequent to the last meeting, three loads of clippings had been removed from the playing field (on 6 January 2010) by certain Parish Council members; as it was apparent that approximately ten further loads remained on the field, he contacted the contractor and requested that a team of employees be sent to clear the remaining clippings. Consequently, the contractor cleared the remainder of the clippings on 7 and 8 January 2010.

Members decided that the current progress situation be noted.

- (2) Future development of facilities – further to minute M99/09 (3), members discussed further the revised plans produced by the architect.

Members generally supported the plans but consider that the views of potential users of a new pavilion should be obtained before reaching a final decision.

Members decided that

- (1) the Chairman would arrange a consultation meeting with potential users of a new pavilion, to take place at the existing pavilion at 9.30 am on 30 January 2010;
 - (2) a decision be made at the next meeting, taking into account any views expressed by potential users, in relation to seeking planning permission for a new pavilion.
- (3) Maintenance and enhancements – Councillor Mrs Desborough raised a number of issues for consideration by the Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) Councillor Jolley would identify a means of ensuring that the gate to the pedestrian entrance to the playing field would “self-close”;
- (2) an additional waste bin be purchased from Fenland District Council and thereafter installed in a suitable location;
- (3) the missing posts from along the site frontage be replaced.

M111/09 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting of 12 January 2010 and updates given by Councillor Barnes, Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

Members expressed their support for the work of the Sub-Committee in relation to the progress being made in delivering against the Management Plan and the Strategic Plan for Manea Pit.

With regard to minute SC35/09 (2), a number of members expressed concern regarding the apparent change of stance of the Sub-Committee regarding the possible use of Dyofix as a means of weed control at Manea Pit. Some members felt that the use of barley straw for that purpose should be tried.

With regard to minute SC35/09 (4) (c), Councillor Barnes reported on the meeting held on 14 January 2010 (organised by Mrs B Carson) to seek the views of villagers on the possible creation of a Community Orchard in Manea. As a result of the meeting, a group of villagers (including Mr I Fost and Mrs M Larham) is developing a possible layout plan for a Community Orchard on the field adjoining Manea Pit. Any proposals to be implemented will be subject to consultation with the public and approval by the Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) the contents of the minutes and the updates reported by Councillor Barnes be noted;
- (2) the revision to the Manea Pit: Strategic Plan 2008/11 (minute SC37/09 refers) be endorsed;

- (3) Dyofix be not used as a means of weed control at Manea Pit (minute SC35/09 refers) without the prior consent of the Parish Council.

M112/09 Planning application

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

Erection of a first-floor extension to front of existing dwelling at 20A Station Road, Manea – F/YR09/0811/F (applicant: Mr and Mrs Wales).

That the application be supported.

M113/09 Finance

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Concurrent Functions grant – second instalment	£2,065.00
Fenland District Council	Recycling Credits	£133.61
Total Income		£2,198.61

Expenditure

Fenland Fisheries Ltd	Carp for Manea Pit	£4,424.63
Fenland Fisheries Ltd	Scaffold poles and sleepers for Manea Pit works	£675.63
Fenland Fisheries Ltd	Scaffold poles and sleepers for Manea Pit works	£526.06
E Mason and Son	Cemetery etc maintenance: March to December 2009	£5,368.98
Fenweb Limited	Website hosting etc for the year commenced on 10/11/09	£340.40
Anglian Water	Cemetery water charges	£32.31
Anglian Water	Playing field water charges	£228.84
Manea Village Hall Committee	Hire of room on 21/12/09	£7.50
Mr M Short	Caretaking duties: August to December 2009	£390.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£94.35
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £74.34), Broadband and other expenses	£320.85
Total Expenditure		£12,409.55

Members decided, upon a proposal from Councillor Emery, seconded by Councillor Mrs Desborough, that the income of £2,198.61 be noted and that the payments totalling £12,409.55 be authorised.

M114/09 Correspondence

(1) Joint meeting of Parish Councils.

Further to minute M90/09 (7), the Clerk reported receipt of a further e-mail from the Clerk to Welney Parish Council regarding a joint meeting of adjoining Parish Councils.

The e-mail states that Welney Parish Council will be suggesting possible dates for such a meeting, likely to be late January or early February 2010, and it invites the participating Parish Councils to forward to the Clerk of that Parish Council any items that they wish to discuss at the joint meeting.

Members decided that the Clerk to Welney Parish Council be informed that Manea Parish Council (MPC) is happy that this matter is progressing and that Welney Parish Council is prepared to host the meeting; MPC has no particular agenda items for the joint meeting agenda but sees value in working together to achieve common aims.

(2) Street Scene newsletter: December 2009.

The Clerk reported receipt, from Fenland District Council, of a number of copies of the December 2009 edition of the Street Scene newsletter.

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

(3) Election fees.

The Clerk reported receipt of an e-mail from the Electoral Services Manager at Fenland District Council, which states that the Returning Officer has decided that a fee of £50 will be charged to all Parish and Town Councils for future uncontested by-elections to cover the administration of nomination packs and notices.

Members consider this to be a reasonable approach by Fenland District Council to achieve cost recovery.

Members decided that the information be noted.

(4) Rural Neighbourhood Management Board meeting.

The Clerk reported receipt of a copy of the agenda (including all supporting documentation) for the meeting of the Rural Neighbourhood Management Board, which took place on 14 January 2010 and at which the Parish Council was represented by Councillor Archer.

Councillor Archer repeated the comments he had made at the last Parish Council meeting and which he had made also at the Rural Neighbourhood Management Board meeting on 14 January 2010 in relation to the manner in which the community grants process is operated; a total sum of £20,000 is allocated by Fenland District Council for all of the rural areas in the district, of which approximately £9,000 was proposed by the District Council for allocation to district-wide bids.

Alan Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council, made the point that the concerns which had been expressed by Councillor Archer at the Rural Neighbourhood Management Board meeting had been made by councillors at other Neighbourhood Management Board meetings and that, as a result, Fenland District Council would be giving further consideration to the manner in which the community grants process will be operated in the future.

Members decided to note the comments made by both Councillor Archer and Mr Pain and that the agenda of the Rural Neighbourhood Management Board meeting be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

(5) Manea's Walk for Charity – request for use of playing fields.

The Clerk reported a request from Mrs B Lovegrove for use of the playing field and pavilion on 13 June 2010, free-of-charge, for a charitable fundraising event. The event would be a repeat of the one held on 7 June 2009, which resulted in £1,584 being raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Councillor Mrs Palmby informed members that the success of this event features in a recent publication by Macmillan Cancer Support.

Members decided that the request be approved and that the Clerk be requested to confirm the situation in writing to Mrs Lovegrove.

(6) Local Transport Plan – consultation by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Clerk reported on the County Council's consultation exercise in relation to the Local Transport Plan, which concludes on 9 April 2010.

Members decided that the documents be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council, who would submit to the County Council any comments that they to make on the plan's proposals.

M115/09 Items for Press Release or news stories

Members decided that the only matter that has arisen since the last Parish Council meeting that would benefit from being the subject of Press Release or news story for public attention is the reference to last year's "Manea's Walk for Charity" in the recent publication by Macmillan Cancer Support (minute M114/09 (5) above refers).

M116/09 Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies

Members decided, further to minute M105/09, that, in the absence of Councillor Buckton from the meeting, it would be necessary to defer this item of business until the next meeting.

M117/09 Skateboard Park

Further to minute M106/09, Councillor Archer reported that the Young Lives organisation expects to be able to provide information to Councillor Archer, within the next two weeks, on the outcome of the funding bid towards the cost of constructing a Skateboard Park at the village playing fields.

Members are keen that this facility be provided at the earliest opportunity, to emphasise the Parish Council's commitment to help address the requirement of young people in Manea, but are mindful of the need to maximise the availability of external funding sources to make the most effective use of the money provided to the Parish Council by its tax payers.

Members decided that the provision of this facility be discussed further, in the knowledge of the outcome of the funding bid, at the next meeting.

M118/09 Manea Cemetery

Members referred to recent tree cutting in the Cemetery and the need for wood preservative to be applied to the cut areas.

In addition, Councillor Mrs Desborough suggested the provision of planting in front of the Cemetery fencing.

Members decided that

- (1) Councillor Emery would request the maintenance contractor to undertake the wood preservation work;
- (2) bulbs be planted in front of the Cemetery fencing.

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

M119/09 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 15 February 2010, commencing at 7.00 pm, at Manea Village Hall.

Meeting finished at 8.50 pm

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

Date:.....