

# MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

14 JANUARY 2013 – 7.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Emery, Chairman; Councillors Archer, Mrs Desborough, Fielding, Jolley, Risbridger and Woodard.

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs Berry and Cole.

The minutes of the meeting of 17 December 2012 were confirmed and signed.

### **M121/12 Members' Code of Conduct**

Further to minute M33/12, the Clerk reminded members of the need to inform the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council of any changes to the content of their Register of Member Interests forms.

The Clerk reported that, further to minute M106/12, all members had been granted a dispensation to participate in the Precept-setting process (minute M130/12 refers).

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and acted upon.

### **M122/12 Fenland Association for Community Transport**

Members received a presentation from Jo Philpott, Manager of the Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT), and Charlie Jenkins, the Chairman of FACT, on the services that FACT provides across the district and what it offers to the residents of Manea.

Ms Philpott informed members that FACT is a not-for-profit organisation which offers: a door-to-door service for: people who are unable to access local bus routes due to age or disability; people living in rural locations with limited or no access to local bus routes; people without access to a car. The service receives £38,000 per annum from Cambridgeshire County Council towards its operating costs.

Ms Philpott requested the Parish Council's assistance in promoting FACT's Dial-a-Ride service which serves Manea, (providing three pick-up times per day for six days of the week). She explained how the service operates – people need to become a member, at an annual membership fee of £10.00, and then they are able to travel free-of-charge on a timetabled route using a Fenland concessionary fares bus pass; those who do not possess a bus pass are required to pay a fare. FACT has introduced recently a mechanism by which users are able to pay membership fees and fares by electronic means; also, FACT now possesses a website.

Ms Philpott circulated usage statistics for the Dial-a-Ride service by residents of Manea for the whole of the calendar years 2011 and 2012; for the period June to December 2012, the figures show an increase in usage of 24% on the same period in the previous year. She explained the methods used by FACT to publicise the Dial-a-Ride service, which had included a leaflet drop throughout the village.

Members decided that the information be noted and that they would "spread the word" within the village.

## **M123/12 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

### **(1) Manea Youth Club (minute M108/12 (1))**

The Chairman reported that Councillor Archer and he had still not been able, because of other commitments, to discuss options for engaging further with village youngsters; they would, however, endeavour to make progress in this regard prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Members considered the request from the County Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator for continued funding from the Parish Council towards operation of Manea Youth Club in the financial year 2013/14. The Clerk reminded members that the sum sought is £4,443.75, which would cover the staffing costs of running Manea Youth Club for that financial year (this figure includes continuation of the £1,050.00 contribution being made by the Parish Council in the current financial year).

The Clerk informed members that representatives of the Manea Youth Club (including some of the members) had intended to attend this meeting but it had been necessary for the staff to cancel the visit because of the weather conditions. The Lead Youth Worker had, however, provided a report on the club's activities and achievements in recent months, which the Clerk read to members.

The report provided by the Lead Youth Worker included details of:

- the age range of attendees
- levels of attendance for each of the months of June to November 2012
- the rationale for operating a youth club; this being to provide a safe environment in which young people can interact with other young people in their leisure time, as well as engage in various activities and projects aimed at giving young people new experiences and challenges, raising their self-esteem and improving their social skills.
- the progress being made in formulating a Manea Young People Committee
- youth club members' suggestions for future activities (such as cooking sessions, discos, trips, movie nights, fund raising events, arts and crafts)
- trips and activities which had taken place during 2012.

Members share the opinion of the Lead Youth Worker that the Manea Youth Club plays a vital role in the community as it helps young people's personal and social development and provides them with vital skills for their future in and around their community. It also helps to reduce anti-social behaviour, risk taking and young people becoming 'NEET' – Not in Education, Employment or Training.

The Lead Youth Worker believes that the youth club can also play a vital role within the 'Targeted Youth Support Service', by means of early intervention, in identifying vulnerable young people and, subsequently, ensuring that they receive a personalised package of support, information, advice and guidance.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Chairman and the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the request for funding of Manea Youth Club, at a cost of £4,443.75 in 2013/14 be approved; the award of this funding is subject to provision by the County Council of a Partnership Agreement between the County Council's Youth Service and Manea Parish Council – to include: details of what will be delivered by the Youth Service in return for the financial contribution to be made to this service by the Parish Council; receipt by the Parish Council of quarterly progress reports; initiatives for fund raising by the youth club;

(3) the cost of providing funding for Manea Youth Club be taken into account in setting the Parish Precept for 2013/14 (minute M130/12 refers).

**(2) Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011-2031 and Manea Station (minute M108/12 (2))**

The Clerk reported the response from Fenland District Council (FDC) in relation to his informing FDC of the decisions reached by the Parish Council at minute M108/12 (2).

The Transport Development Manager at the District Council (Ms W Otter) states that she had been in discussion with the Partnerships Manager at Greater Anglia (Mr G Hughes), who manages the Station Adoption Scheme and she is, consequently, aware that Councillor Archer has spoken with him regarding that scheme.

Ms Otter reports that she and Mrs Hughes have a few thoughts about setting up the new station adoption group and also taking forward the work for Manea on the rail strategy. She suggests that, after taking time to clarify these thoughts, it would be beneficial to have a further meeting with the Parish Council. Ms Otter would expect any such meeting to include discussion about how members of the local community could be involved in this initiative.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

**(3) Trees in Manea Cemetery (minute M108/12 (3))**

The Clerk reported that he had requested a further copy of the survey document from the company which undertook the tree survey and is still awaiting its receipt.

In the light of a recent incident whereby a youngster was injured by a tree in poor condition in a Parish Council playing field elsewhere in Cambridgeshire, members consider it would be appropriate to commission a survey of the condition of the other trees in the village which are on land owned by the Parish Council.

Councillor Jolley reported to members that a local resident had informed him of concerns regarding some of the trees at the village playing field; Councillor Jolley circulated photographs taken by the local resident, showing branches which had fallen from trees.

Members supported the suggestion of Councillor Jolley that the Parish Council should not wait until the financial year 2013/14 to undertake works to the trees on its land but should take action as a matter of priority and that it should then establish an annual maintenance programme for its trees.

Members decided that

- (1) arrangements would be made by Councillor Cole for the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to undertake the necessary works to the trees in Manea Cemetery;
- (2) quotations would be obtained by the Clerk for necessary works to the trees around the playing field on Park Road, Manea;
- (3) an annual tree maintenance programme be introduced.

**(4) Dog fouling at Williams Way, Manea (minute M117/12 (3))**

The Clerk reported that a new dog waste bin had been installed on behalf of the Parish Council, by Fenland District Council (FDC), at the location suggested by the local resident and that FDC had cleaned up any dog

fouling found at the location; in addition, the District Council is examining the possibility of its Street Scene Team including the area for dog patrols, as well as checking that dog fouling notices are being displayed in the area.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

**(5) Commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (minute M118/12)**

Councillor Jolley informed members that he had been unable to make any progress in this matter since the last meeting as he had still not been able to obtain a photograph of the original structure.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Jolley be noted.

**M124/12 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 43 dwellings (comprising of 7 x two-storey 4-bed dwellings with attached garages, 14 x two-storey 4-bed dwellings with detached garages, 4 x two-storey 3-bed dwellings with attached garages, 6 x two-storey 3-bed dwellings with detached garages, 2 x single-storey 4-bed dwellings with attached garages, 2 x single-storey 3-bed dwellings with integral garages, 4 x single-storey 3-bed dwellings with detached garages, 4 x single-storey 2-bed dwellings with associated parking) and the formation of allotments, public open space and a new access on land west of Teachers Close, Manea – F/YR12/0791/F (applicant: Mr P Humphrey) = revised proposal: revisions to layout to address concerns raised relating to highway and security issues.

*That the Parish Council has no comments to make in relation to the revisions to the layout of the scheme but wishes to make the point that the council's response to consultation on the original application (as set out at minute M92/12) is unaffected by revision of the scheme layout.*

*(Councillor Jolley declared his pecuniary interest in this application, by virtue of his ownership of the application site, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)*

- (2) Erection of a single-storey 2-bed annexe for key worker accommodation and store involving demolition of garage to existing care home at Cathryn Wheel House, 43 High Street, Manea – F/YR12/0985/F (applicant: Mr R Divkovic).

*That the application be supported, subject to the imposition of a planning condition upon any consent granted to link occupation of the annexe to a person employed at the care home.*

- (3) Erection of a detached shower/toilet block to be used in conjunction with existing fishing lakes (part retrospective) at 57A Station Road, Manea – F/YR12/0996/F (applicant: Mr W Bishop).

*That the application be supported. The Parish Council would, however, prefer to see the provision of a mini sewage treatment works, instead of a septic tank, as a means of dealing with the sewage that would be generated by the use of this facility.*

**M125/12 Police matters**

PCSO Martin Bogunovic and PCSO Sam Dyer, of the March and Chatteris Policing Team, attended the meeting to inform members of incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary since the last meeting of the Parish Council.

PCSO Bogunovic informed members that there had been only two crimes reported within the village since the last Parish Council meeting; one incident related to theft of approximately 400 litres of diesel from a mobile irrigation pump on a farm and the other incident related to criminal damage to a vehicle parked on Station Road.

PCSO Bogunovic stated that there had been no further motorcycle related nuisance since the November 2012 meeting of the Parish Council. He informed members that Speed Watch activity is now taking place in Manea on a regular basis.

The PCSOs responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information reported by the PCSOs be noted.

### **M126/12 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish**

Councillor Harper, the County Councillor for the electoral division which includes Manea, was not present at the meeting. On this occasion, he had not produced a report, for reporting by the Clerk, on County Council-related issues.

Councillor Archer, the District Councillor for the Manea ward, informed members that he had nothing specific to report on this occasion.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **M127/12 Public open spaces**

- (1) Skateboard park – Councillor Woodard presented the Clerk with £20.00 of income from the sale of tokens for use of the lighting at the skateboard park. He mentioned that one of the lamp columns requires a new bulb.

Members agreed with the suggested of one councillor that it may be worth considering replacing the complete head unit of the lamp column with one which uses less expensive bulbs, rather than merely replacing the current type of bulb.

Members decided to accept the offer of the Chairman to discuss the matter with the electrical contractor which maintains this lighting system.

- (2) Public toilet at the playing field – the Clerk reported receipt of an e-mail from a resident of the village regarding her unfortunate experience of using the toilet at the rear of the pavilion on 1 January 2013, which she feels may, because of the condition of the toilet, have led to contracting an illness.

The resident requests that the Parish Council takes urgent action in this matter; suggesting that perhaps the toilet should be closed unless the Parish Council is able to guarantee that no-one else has the same experience as her.

Members considered the comments made by the resident and sought to identify a course of action to address the matter.

Members commented that there is only so much that the Parish Council can do to ensure that this facility, to which entry is neither supervised nor controlled, is clean and free from damage at all times. They are of the opinion that even if the toilet were inspected several times each day, it would not be possible to guarantee that the situation experienced by the resident could not happen again.

The Parish Council is keen to retain this facility and would consider closure only as a last resort. When the new pavilion is provided at the playing field, the current toilet facility would be removed.

Members decided that arrangements be made for

- (1) the toilet be included as part of the weekly cleaning regime at the pavilion (if not already the case);
- (2) the playing field groundsman/caretaker to check the condition of the toilet on a daily basis;
- (3) the fitting of a new (more substantial) door;
- (4) a system of locking the door of the toilet “out of hours” be introduced.

### **M128/12 Manea Pit**

Members considered whether there are any issues regarding Manea Pit which required discussion by the Parish Council at this time.

The Clerk reported that it had not proved possible, since the last meeting of the Parish Council, to arrange the next meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that

- (1) there are no issues currently which require consideration by the Parish Council;
- (2) the next meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee be arranged for 30 January 2013 and that, in accordance with minute M113/12, an item be placed on the agenda for the meeting regarding a review of the current Standing Orders and Terms of Reference of that committee..

### **M129/12 Financial matters**

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

#### **Income**

|                          |  |                  |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|
| Anglia Memorials         | Additional memorial inscription                | £80.00           |
| Fenland District Council | Concurrent Functions Grant – second instalment | £1,955.00        |
| <b>Total Income</b>      |  | <b>£2,035.00</b> |

#### **Expenditure**

|                           |   |         |
|---------------------------|---|---------|
| Manea Action Plan         | Donation towards cost of producing community-led plan for Manea | £300.00 |
| Fenland District Council  | Installation of dog waste bin at Williams Way, Manea            | £108.69 |
| Volunteer Centre, Fenland | Donation towards operating costs                                | £30.00  |
| M Short                   | Second half-year Caretaking wages                               | £390.00 |
| Mrs A Ryman               | Wages and expenses  | £69.18  |
| Anglian Water             | Water for cemetery  | £31.33  |

|                          |   |                  |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| E.on                     | Electricity for pavilion  | £171.74          |
| E.on                     | Electricity for village green                                       | £11.54           |
| E.on                     | Electricity for sports area   | £14.77           |
| T Jordan                 | Salary (less income tax of £89.44),<br>Broadband and other expenses | £438.89          |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b> |   | <b>£1,566.14</b> |

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 December 2012 (in the total sum of £56,669.25), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2011.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Archer, seconded by Councillor Fielding, that the income of £2,035.00 be noted and that the payments totalling £1,566.14 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 December 2012, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2011, be noted.

### **M130/12 Parish Precept 2013/14**

Members considered the level of Parish Precept for the financial year 2013/14.

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the Parish Council's income and expenditure as at 31 December 2012, the financial position as at that date, estimates of income and expenditure for 2013/14 and various notes to aid members' deliberations regarding the level of Parish Precept to be set, including the facts that

- Manea Parish Council Precept had remained at £19,000 since the financial year 2009/10.
- Fenland District Council would be awarding Concurrent Functions Grants to Parish Councils in 2013/14 at the same level as for 2012/13 but it would be reviewing the process, as part of its requirement to make significant financial savings, prior to the financial year 2014/15.
- although there will be no capping of Parish Council Precepts for 2013/14, the Government has not ruled this out for future years; there is a view that capping of local councils may be introduced for the financial year 2014/15.
- the Parish Council had given a commitment, at minute M14/12, to review the salary grading of the post of Clerk to the Council.
- the Parish Council decided at minute M108/12 (1) that it would consider the request for continued funding of Manea Youth Club, as part of the Precept-setting process. The level of funding sought for 2013/14 (including continuation of the £1,050.00 contribution being made by the Parish Council in the current financial year) is £4,443.75.
- as a result of recent changes made by the Government regarding the Council Tax Support Scheme, the local councils within Fenland are being allocated grant funding by the District Council to offset the reduction in the Parish Council's Net Council Tax Base (which has reduced from 699 in 2012/13 to 640 for 2013/14). The level of grant which has been allocated to Manea Parish Council for 2013/14 is £1,879.00; this amount needs to be deducted from the sum that Parish Council directs the District Council to collect on its behalf.

Members decided

- (1) that the Parish Council's income and expenditure as at 31 December 2012 and the financial position as at that date be noted;

- (2) the estimates of income and expenditure for 2013/14 be noted and approved as the basis of the Parish Council's budget for 2013/14;
- (3) being mindful of the current economic circumstances, the Parish Council's financial position and its desire to be able to continue to meet the needs of the community, that the level of Parish Precept for 2013/14 be set at £23,103 (on the basis of a financial requirement of £25,000 less the grant from Fenland District Council of £1,879.00).

### **M131/12 Parish Council and community projects and initiatives**

#### **(1) Community-led plan for Manea (minute M115/12 (1))**

The Chairman reported that the Manea Action Plan Group is currently preparing for the public meeting scheduled for 11 February 2013.

#### **(2) New pavilion for Manea (minute M115/12 (2))**

Councillor Jolley informed members that he had nothing to report; the situation is unchanged from that reported at minute M115/12 (2).

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that Councillor Jolley would provide an update at the next meeting.

### **M132/12 Correspondence**

#### **(1) Magpas - financial donation.**

Further to minute M103/12, the Clerk read to members a letter of thanks from Magpas in relation to the financial donation provided by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

#### **(2) Allotments at Cranmore Lots – drainage.**

The Clerk read to members a letter from the tenant of 5 – 8 Cranmore Lots enquiring as to whether the Parish Council would be prepared to undertake works to improve the drainage at this site.

Members are mindful of the fact that in 2012 the UK had experienced the wettest year since records began and are aware that significant amounts of land across the country are saturated with water. They, therefore, feel that this is not the appropriate time to make a judgement as to whether there is a particular problem with drainage at this site. Furthermore, members are mindful of the need to take a balanced view on the matter, considering the level of rental income from the land against the cost to the local taxpayer of undertaking drainage works.

The Chairman undertook to inspect the land, to witness the current state of this allotment land.

Members decided that the request be noted and that the tenant be requested to monitor the situation.

### **M133/12 Parish Council Clerk – remuneration**

Further to minute M14/12, members reviewed, in the light of the recommendation of the council's internal auditor, the salary grading of the post of Clerk to Manea Parish Council.

When carrying out that his audit of Manea Parish Council's accounts for 2011/12, the auditor identified that - given the size, activities and functions of the council – the salary of the post of Clerk to the Council was not being paid using the correct scale and his conclusion was that such a situation had existed for a number of years prior to the financial year 2011/12.

Members were provided with details of the current salary scale of the Clerk to Manea Parish Council, the actual salary level paid to this employee, the process used in evaluating the level of salary scale which should be paid (depending upon the functions and responsibilities of the post holder) and the results of the internal auditor's evaluation (using the process produced by the National Association of Local Councils).

Having examined the salary evaluation exercise undertaken by the internal auditor, members concluded that the salary scale for the Clerk to Manea Parish Council should cover the points 28 to 32 inclusive of the NJC for Local Government Salary Scales.

Members consider it is appropriate for the Parish Council, as a public authority, to ensure that all employees are remunerated at a rate which reflects accurately the level of responsibility for the respective post; they believe that ensuring the Parish Council is remunerating staff at the correct rate will stand it in good stead in terms of both the retention and recruitment of staff.

Members decided, unanimously, that

- (1) the salary scale for the post of Clerk to Manea Parish Council should cover the points 28 to 32 inclusive of the NJC for Local Government Salary Scales;
- (2) the Clerk should continue to be paid at the top of any salary scale applying to the post;
- (3) because of the fact that the post of Clerk had not been paid the "going rate" for a number of years, implementation of the new salary scale be backdated to the beginning of the current financial year.

(Members resolved to exclude the public for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended))

### **M134/12 Next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 18 February 2013, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

**Meeting finished at 9.00 pm**

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

Date:.....