

# MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

16 DECEMBER 2013 – 7.00 pm.

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

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

The minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2013 were confirmed and signed.

### M94/13 Open Forum

#### (1) Footpaths in Manea

Further to minute IMC7/13, Mrs Smith reported on her meeting with the Manager of the County Council's Rights of Way Team to discuss three initiatives that could possibly have synergies; the initiatives being:

1. the objective within the Manea Action Plan to produce a revised map showing local footpaths.
2. the Parish Council's wish, as part of its development of Manea Pit, to publicise the footpaths around Manea Pit and to achieve linkages with other local footpaths.
3. as part of the Ouse Washes Landscape Project (OWLP), Cambridgeshire County Council has made a bid for £20,000 to provide Heritage Circular Walks and Heritage Geocaching. Manea Parish Council has also identified a project to be included in the OWLP relating to the use of Manea Pit and its potential to develop educational and visitor facilities on the west side of the Ouse Washes.

Mrs Smith informed the Parish Council that the outcomes of the meeting were:

- Mrs Smith will be sent a detailed Ordnance Survey map of Manea, which could be a starting point for a revised footpaths map.
- it might be possible for the County Council to renew existing footpath signs (which would include additional information), so that they read "public footpath to xxxxx 1.5 miles". This would require input from someone in the village to collate this information.
- it may be possible to develop some new 'permissive' footpaths, to provide some new circular walks in Manea.
- the Parish Council could make the paths at Manea Pit into 'permissive' paths. As soon as Mrs Smith receives the paperwork from the County Council, she will forward it to the Parish Council.
- the project being promoted by Cambridgeshire County Council as part of the OWLP scheme is to create circular walks to promote the heritage of communities with signposts along the route with QR codes. These are read by a mobile phone app and the user can then be linked to a website with information or some spoken history. A circular walk at Manea, including the Pit, could be a candidate for the County Council's project. The only drawback is the poor mobile signal in Manea.

Mrs Smith explained to the Parish Council the benefits of having permissive footpaths in the village, including around Manea Pit, and she recommended that the council considers registering certain footpaths as ones with that status.

Members decided that the information reported by Mrs Smith be noted and that it is supportive of the outcomes of her discussions and of her suggestions.

(2) **Manea Action Plan**

Mr P Townrow, a member of the Manea Action Plan Implementation Group (MAPIG), informed the Parish Council that MAPIG meets regularly and is working its way through the actions within the plan. He mentioned that the plan contains an action for the Parish Council to identify dental service options for Manea and he enquired as to whether the Parish Council would be happy for MAPIG to pursue this matter on behalf of the Parish Council.

Members decided that they would very happy for MAPIG to pursue, on behalf of the Parish Council, the action to identify dental service options for Manea.

(3) **Members' conduct**

A resident of the village made comments in relation to a complaint which is currently the subject of investigation by Fenland District Council's Conduct Committee. The resident stated that he wished to apologise for the fact that Councillors Emery and Jolley had been the subject of this complaint (made by Councillor Archer and supported by Councillor Fielding), which had, the resident alleged, been made because of long-standing personal issues between Councillor Archer and the resident.

In addition, the resident alleged that both Councillors Archer and Fielding had been heard publicly making inappropriate comments about certain members of the Parish Council and that those members of the public who had heard the comments made by Councillors Archer and Fielding would be prepared to produce written statements to that effect and submit them to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised the resident that issues relating to councillors' conduct are not a matter for the Parish Council; they should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District for investigation.

Members decided that the comments of the local resident be noted.

**M95/13 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.

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

**M96/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting**

(1) **Charlemont Drive, Manea (minute M84/13 (1))**

The Clerk reported that he is still awaiting a response from the Charlemont Drive Residents' Association as to whether it would be prepared to meet 50% of the cost of purchasing and installing a waste bin on the estate.

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

**(2) Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011-2031 and Manea Station (minute M84/13 (2))**

The Clerk reminded members that the official launch of the Manea two hour rail service will take place on 10 January 2014 (commencing at 9.45 am); the event would comprise a formal launch, involving speeches from representatives of the partner agencies and photographs of the gathering, followed by a train journey to and from Ely.

Councillor Woodard commented that the Fenland Association for Community Transport had arranged to convey school pupils to and from Manea Station as part of the launch event.

The Clerk reminded members of the need to inform a certain officer at Fenland District Council if they wished to travel by train to and from Ely on 10 January 2014.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

**(3) New pavilion for Manea (minute M84/13 (3))**

Councillor Fielding reported further on his suggestions for operation of the proposed new pavilion. He reiterated comments that he had made at minute M84/13 (3) regarding what he saw as the benefits of modifying the proposal to include a sports hall and the potential users of such a facility; he expressed the view that a sports hall use would generate sufficient income to make it a financially viable proposition.

Councillor Fielding reminded members of the possible changes to the current design of the proposed pavilion that he had suggested at minute M84/13 (3), including a bar and viewing area at first-floor level; he commented that the estimated cost of constructing the building in the way that he is now suggesting would not be significantly more than the cost of the current scheme. He expressed the view that such a facility would result in the Parish Council providing an integrated leisure area (including the playing field, sports area, skateboard park, the pit and the orchard/woodland) for the community.

Councillor Jolley repeated the comments he had made at minute M84/13 (3) regarding the absence of need for sports halls in Fenland and, consequently, the difficulty that the Parish Council would face in obtaining grant funding for the proposed new pavilion if it were to include a sports hall. He also challenged Councillor Fielding's view that a sports hall would generate sufficient income to make it a financially viable proposition.

The Chairman reminded members that planning permission exists for the current proposal and that any changes to the design of the proposed pavilion would involve the need to engage the services of an architect, to produce new drawings, and to submit a new application for planning permission.

Members decided that the Parish Council would proceed with the provision of a pavilion on the basis of the approved plans and that Councillor Jolley would update the business plan for the proposal.

**(4) Station Road, Manea (minute M84/13 (4))**

The Clerk reported to members the response that he had received recently from Fenland District Council (FDC), as Local Planning Authority (LPA).

FDC had written to the owner of 48 Station Road, requesting that contact be made with the LPA to discuss the steps necessary to bring the building and surrounding area back into a reasonable condition. As a result of the letter from FDC, an agent appointed by the owner has informed the LPA that it is the owner's intention to clear and develop the site by submitting a planning application between January and February 2014. FDC has undertaken to keep the Parish Council updated on the situation.

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

### M97/13 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 single-storey side extension to existing workshop at 65 Charlemont Drive, Manea – F/YR13/0855/F (applicant: Mr N Usher).

*That the application be supported.*

- (2) Erection of part single/part two-storey rear extension to existing dwelling at North House, East Street, Manea – F/YR13/0867/F (applicant: Mr and Mrs McCormack).

*That the application be supported.*

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

- (3) Erection of 5 dwellings, involving demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings, at 35 Westfield Road, Manea – F/YR13/0882/O (applicant: Mr S Wilson).

*Object to the application, on the basis that, if approved, the development would set a precedent for other proposals of a similar nature, which would lead to an inappropriate change in the character of the area.*

*(Councillor Cole declared his pecuniary interest in this application, by virtue of a member of his family's ownership of land adjoining the application site, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)*

Further to minute M85/13, the Chairman referred to the fact that Councillor Archer, in his capacity as the District Councillor for Manea, had requested that planning application F/YR13/0833/F (for the erection of 26 dwellings comprising of 14 x single-storey 1-bed, 8 x single-storey 2-bed with detached garages, 2 x single-storey 2-bed with attached garages, 1 x two-storey 2-bed with integral garage and 1 x two-storey 3-bed with integral garage on land west of 49 – 49A High Street, Manea) be referred to the Planning Committee at the District Council for determination, so that he could speak at the meeting to oppose the grant of planning permission.

The Chairman reminded members that this application had been supported by the Parish Council at minute M85/13 – particularly because of the inclusion of 14 x single-storey 1-bed properties - and commented that the need for this type of development in Manea had been demonstrated through the data obtained to inform the new Manea Action Plan. Consequently, the Chairman suggested that a member of the Parish Council should attend the February 2014 meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee to express Manea Parish Council's support for this application.

Members decided that the Chairman (or Councillor Jolley, if it subsequently proved difficult for the Chairman to attend) would attend the meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee to speak in support of planning application F/YR13/0833/F.

*Councillor Cole, the applicant for the proposal covered by planning application F/YR13/0833/F, was absent from the part of the meeting at which this matter was discussed)*

### **M98/13 Police matters**

No member of the March and Chatteris Policing Team was in attendance at this meeting of the Parish Council.

However, PCSO Sam Dyer, of the March and Chatteris Policing Team, had provided a report detailing recent incidents of crime and disorder within the geographical area covered by Manea Parish Council, which the Clerk read to members. PCSO Dyer's report stated that only one crime had been reported since the last meeting of Manea Parish Council. The crime was the attempted burglary of a shed on the allotments; the shed door had been damaged but nothing was stolen. In response, PCSOs have undertaken additional patrols; there have been no further reports of incidents affecting the allotments.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk, on behalf of PCSO Dyer, be noted.

### **M99/13 Proposed solar power development at Lynford House Farm, Manea**

Members considered a pre-application consultation from a planning agent in relation a proposal to use land at Lynford House, Manea for the installation of ground-mounted solar panels; the panels would provide sufficient electricity for the farm operations and produce a surplus which would feed back into the national grid.

The information provided by the planning agent included plans of the area, a photograph of a similar solar panel installation elsewhere and an artist's impression of how the proposed development at Lynford House Farm would look.

Members expressed the opinion that the proposal would have no adverse impact upon anyone; the site is well screened and the solar panel installation would not be visible from outside of the site. Furthermore, it is acknowledged by the Parish Council that production of energy by means such as this will become increasingly likely and, unless proposed for unacceptable locations, should not be resisted.

Members decided that

- (1) the proposal be supported in principle and they indicated that they are likely to give favourable consideration (when consulted by the Local Planning Authority) to a formal planning application for this proposal;
- (2) the Clerk would inform the planning agent of the Parish Council's views on this proposal.

### **M100/13 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish**

Neither Councillor Archer, the District Councillor for Manea, nor Councillor Connor, the County Councillor for the electoral division which includes Manea, was present at the meeting. On this occasion, Councillor Connor had not provided any information, for reporting by the Clerk, on County Council-related issues. Councillor Archer had, however, informed the Clerk, in advance of the meeting, that he had no District Council-related issues for reporting to the Parish Council at this time.

Councillor Jolley, in his capacity as District Councillor for the Wimblington ward, informed members that

- Fenland District Council is likely to reduce the amount of Concurrent Functions Grant it pays to Parish Councils by 50% in the financial year 2014/15 and to withdraw the grant completely in 2015/16;
- The County Council is considering, as a measure to reduce expenditure, switching off street lamps at midnight; however, Town and Parish Councils are likely to be given the opportunity to meet the energy costs if they wish to keep lamps on beyond midnight; he commented that the Clerk should receive details in due course.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

## M101/13 Public open spaces

- (1) Playing field – further to minute M89/13 (1), the Chairman suggested that he would enquire as to whether the local electrical contractor would be able to manufacture and fit protective grilles to the floodlight bulbs.

The Chairman informed members that, to achieve an urgent resolution of the issue, he had engaged a local contractor to remove a fallen tree from the fence of a property which shares a boundary with the playing field.

Further to minute M76/13, the Chairman reported that he is aware of a local person who would be able to provide advice in terms of the improvement works required to the surface of the football pitch and sought members' views as to whether they would like to meet with this person.

Members decided that the information reported by the Chairman be noted and that

- he would enquire as to whether the local electrical contractor would be able to manufacture and fit protective grilles to the floodlight bulbs;
- his actions regarding the tree removal works be endorsed;
- he would arrange a meeting between members of the Parish Council and the local playing field adviser to discuss the necessary improvement works to the football pitch.

- (2) Village Green – further to minute M79/13 (3), members made very positive comments regarding the display of Christmas lights at the village green.

Members decided that Manea Gala Committee be informed of how pleased the Parish Council is with the Christmas lights in the village and that the committee be thanked for its work in that regard.

- (3) Playing field toilets – members considered an offer from a local resident to install a hand basin in both of the public toilets at the playing field; the resident is happy to undertake the installation work if the Parish Council would meet the cost of the materials.

Members decided that the local resident's offer be accepted; the resident would obtain prices for the sinks (china and stainless steel types), taps, waste pipes etc for consideration by the Parish Council.

- (4) The annual RoSPA inspection reports – further to minute M64/13 (1), the Clerk reported a quotation received from a local playground equipment supplier to undertake the repair works recommended by the annual RoSPA report, in the sum of £507.00 plus VAT.

Members decided that the quotation for repair works to the play equipment at the Park Road recreation ground be accepted.

- (5) Allotments - further to minute M64/13 (2), the Chairman informed members that he had met on-site with representatives of the Manea Allotment Association regarding the planting of hedging along three sides of the allotments site; he showed members on a plan of the exact nature of the planting proposals; Manea Allotment Association would provide and plant the hedging and undertake its ongoing maintenance.

Members decided that the information reported by the Chairman be noted and that the planting proposals be agreed.

## M102/13 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the informal (because of its lack of quoracy) meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee of 3 December 2013.

With regard to minute IMC2/13, it was noted that a number of pupils of the Manea Community Primary School would be participating tomorrow in the planting of trees at the community orchard/woodland.

Members considered the request, at minute ISC6/13, that an annual programme of purchasing a small number of Carp be introduced; they supported the suggestion of Councillor Jolley that no consideration be given to further purchases of fish until after the Chairman of the Manea Pit Management Committee had received from the Secretary of the Carp Syndicate a list of syndicate members.

Members decided that

- (1) the contents of the minutes of the informal meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee be noted;
- (2) there would be no consideration by the Parish Council of requests to purchase fish until after the Chairman of the Manea Pit Management Committee had received from the Secretary of the Carp Syndicate a list of syndicate members.

## M103/13 Financial matters

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

### Income

I Woodard	Funding raised originally for the purchase of lighting tokens for skateboard park	£111.00
Anglia Memorials	Additional memorial inscription	£88.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£199.00</b>

### Expenditure

Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 18 November 2013	£10.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£64.34
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £110.76), Broadband and other expenses	£497.49
E Mason and Son Ltd	Grounds maintenance works: June to October 2013 (includes VAT of £1,164.90)	£6,989.40
E.on	Electricity for village green (includes VAT of £0.35)	£7.34
E.on	Electricity for sports area (includes VAT of £0.47)	£9.94
E.on	Electricity for pavilion (includes VAT of £1.58)	£33.25
Artistic Metalica	Supply and install Jubilee replica arch (including VAT of £120.00)	£720.00
HM Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax (September,	£359.26

	October and November 2013)	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£8,691.02</b>

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 30 November 2013 (in the total sum of £58,803.42), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 November 2012.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council would be setting, at the next meeting, its Precept for 2014/15 and suggested that members give thought to any schemes or projects for which budgetary provision would need to be made in that financial year. He reminded members that they had decided to consider making financial provision in 2014/15 for undertaking improvement works to the surface of the football pitch (minute M76/13 refers) and providing a proper surface to the car parking area at Manea Pit (minute M53/13 refers).

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Emery, seconded by Councillor Mrs Desborough, that the income of £199.00 be noted and that the payments totalling £8,691.02 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 30 November 2013, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 30 November 2012, be noted.

#### M104/13 Correspondence

- (1) Victim Support - financial donation.

Further to minute M79/13 (1), the Clerk read to members a letter of thanks from Victim Support in relation to the financial donation provided by the Parish Council.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

- (2) Certificate in Local Council Administration.

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Society of Local Council Clerks, informing him that he had awarded the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and makes the point that obtaining this qualification is a notable achievement. He explained that this means that Manea Parish Council now has a Clerk who possesses the recognised national qualification for this role.

The Clerk informed members that, in accordance with the Model Contract for Parish Council Clerks, adopted by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks and used by Manea Parish Council, obtaining the CiLCA qualification entitles the Clerk to one additional salary scale point. The additional annual cost to the Parish Council of this salary increase would be approximately £200.00

Now that the Parish Council benefits from having a qualified Clerk, it is eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he be congratulated on obtaining the CiLCA qualification;

(2) the Clerk would provide information to members on the General Power of Competence, to enable the Parish Council to decide at a future meeting whether to adopt that power.

(3) Purls Bridge Road, Manea.

Further to minute M119/12, the Clerk reported an e-mail from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) explaining the latest situation regarding the LHA's proposals to repair, subject to a successful bid for funding, the drought-damaged sections of Purls Bridge Road, Manea.

The LHA comments that it is now likely that some funding would be made available to meet the costs of undertaking repair works to Purls Bridge Road; therefore, the LHA will be undertaking the tree cutting and removal works explained to members at minute M48/12 (7).

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

(4) Manea Youth Club.

Further to minute M83/13, the Clerk read to members a letter of thanks for the donations made personally by some of the members of Manea Parish Council towards the cost of the Manea Youth Club Christmas Party.

Enclosed with the letter of thanks was a copy of the Manea Youth Club Newsletter, which was circulated among members of the council.

Members decided that the content of the letter and the newsletter be noted.

#### **M105/13 Fodder Fen, Manea**

Members discussed the problems being caused recently at Fodder Fen/Station Road by vehicles depositing mud on the road; they feel that some sort of proactive action is needed to prevent this happening, rather than trying to provide a reactive response on the occasions when this situation occurs. Members feel that the starting point to achieving an appropriate approach is for council members to meet with representatives of the agencies/organisations which have a role to play in this matter.

In addition, members supported the suggestion of the Chairman that it would be appropriate for a street name plate bearing the words "Fodder Fen" to be installed just past the railway gates on Station Road.

Members decided that the Clerk would

- (1) seek to arrange a meeting (in January or February 2014) involving the Parish Council, the local PCSOs, County Councillor Connor and the relevant officer of the Local Highway Authority with the aim of devising an approach to addressing the issues of mud on the roads at Fodder Fen/Station Road;
- (2) request Fenland District Council to install, just past the railway gates on Station Road, a street name plate bearing the words "Fodder Fen".

#### **M106/13 Dates of meetings for 2014**

Members decided that meetings of the Parish Council in 2014 (all commencing at 7.00 pm and taking place in Manea Village Hall) be held on the following dates: 13 January, 17 February, 17 March, 14 April (including Annual Assembly), 19 May (Annual Meeting of the Council), 23 June, 21 July, 18 August, 15 September, 20 October, 17 November and 15 December.

Meeting finished at 8.50 pm

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

Date:.....