

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

14 APRIL 2014 – 7.30 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Berry and Jolley.

The minutes of the meeting of 17 March 2014 were confirmed and signed.

M150/13 Open Forum

(1) Charlemont Drive, Manea

A representative of the Charlemont Drive Residents' Association, firstly, invited Parish Councillors to attend the association's AGM (to take place on 15 May 2014), and, secondly, raised the following issues:

- a. dog fouling at the estate
- b. the need for directional signage at the Station Road/Wimblington Road junction, indicating that traffic heading for Charlemont Drive should turn left at the junction when heading into the village (to avoid HCVs which are looking to deliver to the commercial premises at the estate travelling into the village unnecessarily)
- c. concerns that the new development off Williams Way would have a "Charlemont" address, which would cause confusion.

Members decided that the comments made by the representative of the Charlemont Drive Residents' Association be noted and that

- Charlemont Drive could be included within the District Council's Dog Awareness campaign (minute M152/13 (4) refers)
- the Clerk would raise with the Local Highway Authority the possible installation of directional signage at the Station Road/Wimblington Road junction
- the residents of Charlemont Drive should note that the new development off Williams Way is to be named Cox Way (minute M127/13 refers).

(2) Planning application F/YR14/0113/F (Erection of 3 dwellings, comprising 1 x two-storey 4-bed with detached double garage/workshop/store, 1 x two-storey 4-bed with attached garage with store above and 1 x 4-bed with attached double garage and formation of public car park for rail users, on land south of Bungalow, Station Road, Fodder Fen, Manea)

The resident who had addressed the Parish Council at its last meeting on this planning application (minute M135/13 (1) refers), firstly, enquired as to whether the council had received any information from Fenland District Council (FDC) on the Planning Committee's consideration of this application and, secondly, she informed the Parish Council of her opinions relating to the debate that she had witnessed at the Planning Committee meeting.

The resident explained that the FDC Planning Officers had recommended refusal of this planning application (and she outlined the reasons for refusal recommended by those officers (relating mainly to highway safety concerns)) and that following the Planning Committee's consideration of a number of councillor proposals and votes, it was decided that a decision on the application be deferred for the receipt of further information.

The resident expressed the opinion that the members of the Fenland District Council Planning Committee do not have the interests of Manea residents at heart when considering proposals for new developments in the village. She reiterated the objections to this application that she had detailed at the last meeting of the Parish Council (set out at minute M135/13 (1)).

Members decided that the comments of the resident be noted.

(3) Manea Action Plan

Further to minute M107/13 (1), Ms D Rowe, a member of the Manea Action Plan Implementation Group (MAPIG), expressed the thanks of MAPIG to those members of the Parish Council who had attended the open meeting held on 31 March 2014. She expressed the view that the event had been very successful and that, consequently, MAPIG proposes to hold a similar event on an annual basis. Ms Rowe informed the Parish Council that a number of issues had been raised at the event and that feedback in relation to those issues would be included in a future edition of the Manea Matters publication.

Members decided that the comments of Ms Rowe be noted and to express their appreciation of the work of MAPIG in delivering such a successful event.

(4) Determination by Fenland District Council's Conduct Committee

A local resident made reference to a letter that he had written to the Cambridgeshire Times newspaper in relation to the recent hearing by the District Council's Conduct Committee (minute M161/13 refers). In that letter, he had made the statement, when commenting upon the photographs used by the newspaper when reporting on the outcome of the meeting of the Conduct Committee, that, with regard to local councillors, "the press builds them up and then knocks them down".

The resident read to the Parish Council a response that he had received from the Editor of the Cambridgeshire Times newspaper, explaining that there was no intention to "build up and then knock down" the councillors; the newspaper published the only photograph of Councillor Emery that it possesses.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted.

M151/13 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.

M152/13 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) New pavilion for Manea (minute M137/13 (1))

The Clerk reported that he had no updates to report in relation to this matter.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Memorial to RAF Halifax bomber crew (minute M137/13 (4))

The Chairman reported that he had now been able to ascertain the exact location of where the bomber came down.

Members gave further thought to identifying an appropriate location for the installation of a memorial plaque in the village.

Members decided that the Chairman would arrange for the construction of a brick plinth and affixing of a metal plaque at a suitable location upon the village green.

(3) Manea War Memorial – addition of names (minute M144/13)

The Clerk reported the quotation that he had received from the local stonemason for the addition of four names to the Manea War Memorial.

The quotation, on the basis of a cost of £5 for each of the 53 letters, is £265 (plus VAT). The stonemason, however, makes the point that the existing names on the memorial are coupled with the individual rank/title of the individual. He therefore, enquired as to whether the Parish Council wished to consider, before reaching a decision on the quotation, including such information in relation to the additional names; the associated engraving work would, obviously, increase the cost.

The Chairman reported that no information is currently available regarding the rank/title of these four additional officers' names.

Members decided that

- (1) the quotation for the addition of four names to the Manea War Memorial be accepted;
- (2) if the ranks/titles of these officers "come to light" at some future date, further inscription work would be undertaken to add that information.

(4) Dog Order Awareness campaign (minute M148/13 (1))

The Clerk informed members that Fenland District Council (FDC) has noted the areas which the Parish Council considers would benefit from this campaign. FDC proposes to hold the event on 16 April 2014 (at 2.00 pm).

As part of the campaign, FDC would also undertake a series of enforcement patrols in the area; where anyone is seen committing an offence under the Dog Control Orders, he or she would be issued with an on-the-spot Fixed Penalty Notice of £75. Furthermore, the "problem" areas would be monitored routinely by FDC's Street Scene Officers when out in the village.

FDC is hopeful that the campaign as a whole will change the behaviours of the minority of dog walkers who spoil the enjoyment of the community's open spaces.

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

M153/13 Planning applications

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

- (1) Erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling, involving demolition of existing offices, at Old Weighbridge, Fallow Corner Drove, Manea – F/YR14/0168/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs F Simpson).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Certificate of Lawful Use (Existing) – occupation of dwelling without compliance with condition 1 of planning permission of TP2723 relating to agricultural occupancy – at Crane Farm, Fifty Road, Manea – F/YR14/0216/CERTLU (applicant: Mr K Catling).

That the Parish Council is of the belief that this property has not been occupied by persons engaged in agricultural work for at least the last ten years.

- (3) Erection of 5 dwellings, involving demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings, at 35 Westfield Road, Manea - F/YR14/0244/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*
- *the construction of 5 dwellings on this site would constitute over-development*
- *the access to the site is inadequate to serve the proposed development.*

M154/13 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 two crimes had been reported since the last meeting of Manea Parish Council. One of the crimes related to a person possessing a firearm or imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence (the person was arrested) and the other related to theft of jewellery from a property which was undergoing refurbishment works.

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

M155/13 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Councillor Connor, the County Councillor for the electoral division which includes Manea, was not present at the meeting and had not provided any information for the Clerk to report to the Parish Council on his behalf.

Councillor Archer, the District Councillor for Manea, informed members that although he had nothing to report which relates specifically to the parish of Manea, he is able to report that the final version of the Fenland District Core Strategy had been published after being declared "sound" by the Government's Planning Inspectorate. The strategy would now be discussed by the District Council's Cabinet on 24 April 24, followed by full Council on 8 May 2014 for formal adoption as the new Local Plan for the district.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M156/13 Public open spaces

- (1) Playing field toilets – further to minute M114/13, the Clerk informed members that work is about to commence on installation of hand basins at the two public toilets; it is anticipated that the work would be completed prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

- (2) Annual RoSPA inspection reports – the Chairman informed members of an e-mail that had been received by the Clerk from the inspector who had undertaken the annual RoSPA inspections of the play equipment and the skateboard park; the e-mail recommended that urgent action be taken by the Parish Council to remove the swings and chains on the 1955 swings and to secure the open electrical boxes at the sports area. The inspector is of the view that both of these issues are “accidents waiting to happen” and are, consequently, deemed to be high risk items in terms of the RoSPA inspection.

The Chairman informed members that he had arranged for a local electrical contractor to undertake works to secure the electrical boxes and he sought their views in relation to addressing the issue relating to the swings.

Members decided that the information reported by the Chairman be noted and that he and Councillor Cole would remove the swings and chains.

- (3) Playing field – further to minute M114/13, the Chairman reported that the contractor engaged to undertake improvement works required to the surface of the football pitches would be carrying out the aeration work next month and would be contacting the Clerk to arrange purchase of the necessary materials for the seeding and top dressing works.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

- (4) Overgrown vegetation at Westfield Road, Manea – one member mentioned the existence of overgrown trees and bushes on land at Westfield Road, which is causing difficulties for parishioners in using the footpath which adjoins the site.

Members decided to accept the offer of Councillor Cole to contact the owner of the land upon which this vegetation is situated, with a request that action be taken to cut back the vegetation.

M157/13 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee of 1 April 2014.

Councillor Archer informed members that Manea Pit had been classified as “Outstanding” in the “Its Your Neighbourhood” category of the 2013 awards issued jointly by the Royal Horticultural Society and Anglia in Bloom.

Members decided that both the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee and the information reported by Councillor Archer be noted.

M158/13 Financial matters

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Recycling credits	£86.57
Kent Memorials	Additional inscription	£88.00
Various (via I Fost)	Fishing tickets	£245.00
Carp Syndicate	Membership fees (£1,320.00) and guest tickets (£15.00)	£1,335.00
Manea Allotment Association	Allotment rent	£300.00
E Barnes	Allotment rent	£200.00
Total Income		£2,254.57

Expenditure

Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 17 March 2014	£10.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£53.97
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £127.19), Broadband and other expenses	£572.99
E.on	Electricity for village green (includes VAT of £0.56)	£11.70
E.on	Electricity for sports area (includes VAT of £0.67)	£14.05
E.on	Electricity for pavilion (includes VAT of £7.18)	£150.82
E Mason & Son (Farmers) Ltd	Grounds maintenance work: February 2014 (includes VAT of £17.70)	£106.20
Magpas	Financial support	£50.00
Manea History Group	Donation towards the cost of World War One commemoration event	£100.00
Fenland District Council	Non-domestic rates for Manea Cemetery	£193.11
Anglian Water	Water for playing field	£79.77
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£18.14
Haine Tree Services Ltd	Tree works at playing field	£800.00
Mr M Short	Petrol for lawn mower	£12.00
Total Expenditure		£2,172.75

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 March 2014 (in the total sum of £44,324.60), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 March 2013.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Archer, seconded by Councillor Fielding, that the income of £2,254.57 be noted and that the payments totalling £2,172.75 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 March 2014, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 March 2013, be noted.

M159/13 Traffic on East Street, Manea

Councillor Mrs Desborough informed members of a concern raised by a resident of East Street regarding lorries turning left, in error, at the bottom of that road; as a result, they cause damage to fencing when trying to correct the mistake.

Members decided that the Clerk would enquire of the Local Highway Authority whether appropriate signage could be installed at a suitable location to prevent inappropriate lorry movements along East Street.

M160/13 Jubilee arch at Pump Corner

Councillor Woodard informed members that a parishioner had asked whether a commemorative plaque could be installed at the new Jubilee arch at Pump Corner and that the parishioner had offered to make a contribution of £50 towards the cost of such a plaque if the council had spent the whole of the grant (of £1,000) that it had received from Fenland District Council (FDC) for commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2013.

The Clerk informed members that the cost of manufacture and installation of the Jubilee arch and purchase of the commemorative coins given to the pupils at the primary school had resulted in the entire grant provided by FDC being spent.

Members decided that Councillor Woodard would contact the parishioner, asking for his suggestions for the wording of a commemorative plaque and informing him that the Parish Council would be happy to accept a contribution from him towards the cost of such a plaque.

M161/13 Correspondence

Determination of the District Council's Conduct Committee

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Chairman of Fenland District Council's Conduct Committee, setting out the committee's determination, at a meeting on 2 April 2014, of a complaint lodged by Councillor Archer in relation to the conduct of Councillors Emery and Jolley in their capacity as Parish Councillors.

The letter states that the Conduct Committee determined to accept the findings of the investigation into the complaint, which concluded that

- Councillors Emery and Jolley had failed to treat Parish Councillor Fielding with respect
- Councillors Emery and Jolley had not bullied Councillor Fielding
- Councillors Emery and Jolley had not intimidated any person in relation to the allegations
- Councillor Emery, as Chairman of the Parish Council, had conducted himself in such a manner as to bring his office and the Parish Council into disrepute. This allegation was found not to be proven in respect of Councillor Jolley
- Councillor Emery, as Chairman of the Parish Council had used his position to confer an advantage or disadvantage for himself or any other person. This allegation was found not to be proven in respect of Councillor Jolley.

The "sanction" imposed by the Conduct Committee upon Councillors Emery and Jolley was that this letter be sent to the Parish Council and for its content to be reported to this meeting of the council.

Councillor Mrs Desborough commented that, although the Conduct Committee consisted of six members in total, its constitution allowed only four of those members to cast a vote and that although four of the members considered that

Councillors Emery and Jolley had no case to answer, the result of the vote was two in favour of the recommendations of the Investigating Officer and two against; the Chairman of the Conduct Committee then used his casting vote in support of the recommendations of the Investigating Officer. On that basis, Mrs Desborough feels that the "real" outcome of the investigation should have been a "not guilty" verdict.

Councillor Archer commented that the District Council's Conduct Committee had followed due process and had used an independent solicitor to undertake the investigation on its behalf. He made the point that the members of Manea Parish Council had signed-up to a Code of Conduct and that those councillors should not conduct themselves in a way which breaches that code. Councillor Archer stated that the recommendations of the independent investigator, which found Councillors Emery and Jolley had breached by the Manea Parish Council Code of Conduct, were agreed by the Conduct Committee. He went on to express the view that both Councillors Emery and Jolley were equally guilty of the allegations made through the complaint and should both have received the same verdict.

Councillor Archer expressed the view that Councillor Emery should have stood-down as Chairman of Manea Parish Council for the period of the investigation and should now resign his membership of the Parish Council; he suggested that Councillor Jolley should also resign from the council.

Councillor Emery stated that he had not breached the Manea Parish Council Code of Conduct, as the allegations made in the complaint were untrue, and that he had no intention of resigning his membership of the Parish Council; he added that, whether or not he should be a member of the Parish Council is a matter for the local electorate and not Councillor Archer.

Certain other councillors made comments about Councillor Archer's motivation for lodging of the complaint.

Members decided that the content of the letter from the Chairman of Fenland District Council's Conduct Committee be noted.

M162/13 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for 12 May 2014, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.10 pm

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

Date:.....