

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

16 NOVEMBER 2015 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Emery, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Berry, Mrs Desborough, Drinkwater, Fielding, Ms Hookway and Risbridger.

Apologies: Councillor Cole.

The minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2015 were confirmed and signed.

M92/15 Ian Woodard

The Chairman referred to the death, on 5 November 2015, of Ian Woodard, who had served as a member of Manea Parish Council (and was a serving member at the time of his death).

All of those present at the meeting observed one minute of silence in his memory.

M93/15 Open Forum

- (1) Planning application F/YR15/0985/F (Change of use of land to motocross and recreational riding of motorcycles with siting of 2 storage containers, toilets, marshalling boxes, litter bins, waste skip and site cabin together with operational development including raised areas, race track, car parking, track fencing posts, railings and spectator fencing on land at Block Fen Drove, Chatteris)

A parishioner, who lives in a property in the vicinity of the application site, informed the council of her objections to this proposal, which would, she suggested, if granted planning permission, result in significant disturbance to those living within the vicinity of the site. She commented that the planning application proposes operation of this activity every week for six months continuously from 1 October to 31 March; that being 24 successive weeks and a total of 60 days on a repeating 2 weeks schedule.

The parishioner informed the council that the track was constructed in 2009 and since that time it had operated under permitted development; most years exceeding the 28 days allowed legally until the situation was investigated by Fenland District Council in 2015. She mentioned that numerous noise complaints had been made by residents living in properties near to the site, or from people enjoying the fishing, walking, and wildlife pursuits offered by the Ouse Washes area.

The parishioner mentioned that there had been three previous planning applications for this proposal, which she explained to the council; all of these applications had been refused due to noise issues.

The parishioner informed the council that local residents' objection to this proposal are:

1. the noise nuisance and the relentless level of use given the noise nuisance
2. that there is a basic conflict between the peaceful wildlife and associated existing recreational plans for the area, and with a noisy motocross track. There is existing planning in place requiring the land to be reverted for wildlife/wetland to create a fabulous local amenity and the County Council is actively pursuing this.
3. that there is no need for the track given the many other tracks locally and further afield
4. that the track places an additional cost burden on Fenland and East Cambridgeshire District Councils, in respect of both noise monitoring and enforcement action.

Residents' main objection to this planning application is the significant noise nuisance that the track generates and the resultant detrimental impact upon their enjoyment of life in a rural location. The parishioner commented that residents would not know that the track existed if they could not hear the noise generated by its use. All or most of the objectors live in the area surrounding the internationally important Ouse Washes which are prized for their tranquillity.

The parishioner informed the council of the objections which had been submitted in relation to the previous planning applications for this proposal. She requested the Parish Council to consider objecting to this application on the grounds of noise nuisance.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner be noted and taken into account when considering this planning application (minute M97/15 refers).

(2) Planning application F/YR15/0489/F (proposed anaerobic digester at Fengrain, Wimblington)

A resident of Wimblington explained to the council the campaign of objection within Wimblington to the planning application for the erection of an anaerobic digester at Fengrain in Wimblington. She commented that the applicant had provided very little detail of exactly what is proposed by way of the planning application and that Doddington Parish Council had lent its support to the objections which had been raised with the Local Planning Authority by the residents of Wimblington and by Wimblington Parish Council.

The resident of Wimblington made the point that this type of activity generates movements on the highway network by large commercial and agricultural vehicles (the maize which would be used to "feed" the digester is likely to be grown within a 10 miles radius of the site and 85% of that would be transported by lorries). She informed the council that although the formal consultation exercise in relation to this planning application had closed, it would not be considered by the Planning Committee at Fenland District Council until December 2015; she requested Manea Parish Council to raise objection, as both Wimblington and Doddington Parish Councils had done, to this application.

Like the Parish Councils of Wimblington and Doddington, Manea Parish Council is concerned about the adverse impact that an increased use by heavy traffic of the roads within these village areas may have upon those roads.

Members decided that the comments of the Wimblington resident be noted and that Manea Parish Council would inform the Local Planning Authority that it supports the community of Wimblington in its opposition to this development proposal, on the basis that approval of the application would result in a significant increase in the amount of highway movement by agricultural-related traffic using local country and village roads for the purpose of delivering agricultural produce to "feed" the proposed digester.

(3) Planning application F/YR15/0958/O (Erection of 4 dwellings (Outline with all matters reserved) on land south and west of Keswick, Station Road, Manea)

Members received a presentation by Mr A Faulkner of Maxey Grounds and Co. in relation to planning application F/YR15/0958/O.

Mr Faulkner explained that this application seeks planning permission for re-development of the garden land of the property named "Keswick". He informed members that , although the application is in Outline form, the intention is to erect four single-storey dwellings on the site.

Mr Faulkner mentioned that this application is the second attempt to achieve the residential development of this site; the previous planning application had been refused by Fenland District Council, for the reason that approval of the application would result in disturbance to an ancient orchard on part of the site. He informed the council that appropriate investigations had been undertaken and no evidence could be found to substantiate the existence of an ancient orchard on part of the application site and that the current planning application excludes that area of land from the application site.

Mr Faulkner expressed the opinion that the current condition of the application site is an eyesore and that approval of the application would result in an improved appearance. He made the point that, given the provisions of Fenland Local Plan Policy LP12, this planning application would be the subject of a public consultation exercise within the village; this would take place within the next couple of weeks.

Members decided that the comments of Mr Faulkner be noted and that they be taken into account when considering this planning application (minute M97/15 refers).

M94/15 Vacancy in the membership of the Parish Council

The Clerk reported that he had informed Fenland District Council (FDC) of the vacancy on Manea Parish Council as a result of the death of Mr I Woodard (minute M92/15 refers) and had requested FDC (as a mark of respect) not to publish formal notice of the vacancy until after the date of Mr Woodard's funeral (on 18 November 2015).

The Clerk reminded members that, in accordance with the notice of vacancy when published, given the opportunity would exist, under The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986, for ten local electors for the parish to call, within fourteen days of the date of publication of the notice, for the vacancy to be filled by way of an election. In the absence of an election being called, the Parish Council must fill the vacancy by co-option.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that, in the event of no election being called to fill the vacancy, the Clerk would advertise (via publication of a notice on the Parish Council's website and its notice boards) the vacancy, with the aim of filling this vacancy by co-option, using the process utilised by the council previously, at the January 2016 meeting.

M95/15 Members' Code of Conduct

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.

M96/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) New pavilion for Manea (minute M81/15 (1))

The Chairman reported that he had received from the council's planning agent six full sets of the approved plans and construction specifications for the building and that, following receipt of the results of the soil tests which had been undertaken last Friday, he would - for the purpose of providing cost estimates for submission with further applications for funding - obtain a minimum of three quotations from local building contractors for construction of a new pavilion.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Cranmore Lots allotments site (minute M81/15 (2))

The Clerk informed members that he had requested the council's solicitors to provide details and costs of the process of registering with HM Land Registry all of Manea Parish Council's land holdings and he read to members the response that he had received.

The response, as well as providing details of the fees which would need to be paid to HM Land Registry and those of the solicitors to undertake the registration process on behalf of the council, stated that there would be a need to obtain an approximate valuation for each piece of land.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that he would seek to obtain a quotation from a local land agent for the cost of valuing all of the council's land holdings; upon receipt of that quotation, the council would decide whether or not to proceed with the process of registering with HM Land Registry all of Manea Parish Council's land holdings.

(3) Parish street lighting (minute M81/15 (3))

The Clerk reported that he had received the information from Fenland District Council (FDC) regarding the column numbers and locations of the Category 2 street lights within Manea requiring replacement and that the Chairman had subsequently identified 5 lights to be examined as part of the survey; the Clerk had then forwarded that information to the Chairman of Doddington Parish Council, so that those lights could be part of the independent condition survey work.

Members decided that the current situation be noted.

(4) Allotments (minute M86/15)

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from Police Sergeant Lugg in response to the reports to the Constabulary regarding the actions of the land owner.

The Police Inspector explained, via the e-mail, his understanding of the situation and his conclusion, having considered all of the issues, that, as no damage had been caused to the access gate, no crimes had occurred; consequently, the incident had been de-classified as a crime and is deemed as a civil dispute. The Sergeant enquired as to whether action could be taken by the Parish Council to help mediate between all interested parties.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the Chairman would suggest, at the next meeting of the Manea Allotment Association Management Committee that the gates be re-located from the access track to the entrance to the allotments site.

(5) Parking in the vicinity of Manea Community Primary School (minute M90/15)

The Clerk informed members that he had written to the Headteacher of Manea Community Primary School, asking that school staff be encouraged to park their vehicles in the car park at Manea Village Hall instead of on the public highway in the direct vicinity of the school and that, in response, he had been informed that the Headteacher had relayed the content of the Clerk's letter to all staff.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M97/15 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) Change of use of office to two-storey 3-bed dwelling for manager's accommodation and office, including erection of a two-storey extension, involving demolition of existing outbuilding and continued siting of mobile home during construction, at Mount Pleasant Farm, Sixteen Foot Bank, Chatteris - F/YR15/0943/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Sutton).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of 4 dwellings (Outline with all matters reserved) on land south and west of Keswisk, Station Road, Manea - F/YR15/0958/O (applicant: Mrs V Fox deceased).

That the application be supported at this stage and will consider further when consulted again, following the public consultation exercise.

- (3) Erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling on land north of 1 Orchard Way, Manea - F/YR15/0973/F (applicant: Mr R Purser).

That the application be supported but the council would prefer the erection of a single-storey dwelling on the site, to minimise the potential for overlooking of existing neighbouring properties.

- (4) Erection of 57 dwellings with garages, comprising: 34 x two-storey 4-bed, 5 x two-storey 3-bed, 7 x single-storey 3-bed and 11 x single-storey 2-bed, with public open space incorporating balancing pond and water pumping station on land west of Teachers Close, Manea - F/YR15/0984/F (applicant: Matthew Homes).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Change of use of land to motocross and recreational riding of motorcycles with siting of 2 storage containers, toilets, marshalling boxes, litter bins, waste skip and site cabin together with operational development including raised areas, race track, car parking, track fencing posts, railings and spectator fencing on land at Block Fen Drove, Chatteris - F/YR15/0985/F (applicant: Mr R Halstead).

Object, on the basis that

- the noise nuisance and the relentless level of use would have a detrimental impact upon the amenities of nearby residents*
- there is a basic conflict between the peaceful wildlife and associated existing recreational plans for the area and with a noisy motor cross track. It is known that planning permission exists which requires the land to be reverted for wildlife/wetland, which is being pursued by the County Council.*

- (6) Change of use of land to travellers site, involving the siting of 3 mobile homes, at land south of Rosemary Cottage, New Road, Manea - F/YR15/1002/F (applicant: Mr E Smith).

Object on the basis that approval of this proposal would result in over-development of the site.

M98/15 Police matters

Although no representative of the March and Chatteris Policing Team was present at the meeting, PCSO Dawn Rae had provided a report detailing recent incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, as well as updating the Parish Council on other relevant matters, since the last meeting of the Parish Council. PCSO Rae's report mentioned that

- the next meeting of the Chatteris and Manea Neighbourhood Forum meeting is scheduled for 25 November 2015 (to commence at 7.00 pm)
- as there had been little "crossover" in attendance at the last few Chatteris and Manea Neighbourhood Forum meetings (i.e. Manea residents not attending meetings held at Chatteris and vice versa) and the fact that the issues in each area differ greatly, Sergeant Lugg is asking the two communities to consider holding, in future, separate forums for Chatteris and Manea, each held at six-monthly intervals
- both local PCSOs routinely spend time in Manea and always pass through the village on the way to Chatteris; the PCSOs had spent a day recently at the Manea Community Primary School, to engage with the pupils; they have spoken with villagers, who are of the opinion that there are no issues with parking in the vicinity of the school; the PCSOs had, however, issue tickets to the drivers of two vehicles last week
- the Constabulary would like to be made aware of any Christmas activities and events to take place in Manea, so that they can support them
- there had been no incidents of note in the village since the last meeting of Manea Parish Council; most of the incidents which had been reported to the Constabulary had been domestic in nature.

Members had no issues to raise, for reference by the Clerk to the local policing team.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk, on behalf of PCSO Rae, be noted and that the future of the Chatteris and Manea Neighbourhood Forum be not considered at this meeting of Manea Parish Council but at the next meeting of that forum (on 25 November 2015).

M99/15 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.

District Councillor Buckton informed the Parish Council that, further to minute M71/15, he had sought from officers at Fenland District Council (FDC) clarification as to the meaning of "thorough and proportionate" in relation to the undertaking of a pre-application consultation exercise by applicants in accordance with the requirements of Fenland Local Plan Policy LP12. Councillor Buckton mentioned that the draft guidance in relation to the implementation of that policy had been produced very recently but is not available for sharing with the public at this time.

District Councillor Buckton stated that he always e-mails FDC in relation to applications for new residential development in Manea, drawing the Planning Officers' attention to the provisions of Policy LP12.

Further to minute M71/15, Councillor Buckton reported that the public consultation exercise in relation to the District Council's Comprehensive Spending Review had achieved a response rate of 14%. The majority of respondents were from the older age group within the community. All of the members of FDC had been provided with details of the results of the consultation. There would be further public consultation on more detailed options.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M100/15 Public open spaces

- (1) Skateboard park - further to minute M72/15 (1), Councillor Drinkwater reported that the repair works had been undertaken and that he had requested the contractor to submit to the council a quotation for an annual maintenance arrangement.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the council would need to ensure that future years' budgets include financial provision for annual maintenance works to the skateboard park.

- (2) Village green - further to minute M85/15 (6), the Chairman informed members that the "spare" Christmas tree provided by a parishioner had been planted.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

- (3) Highway matters - further to minute M85/15 (8), the Clerk informed members that he had reported to the Local Highway Authority (LHA) the two highway maintenance issues which had been raised at that minute (one relating to need for the clearance of overgrown vegetation along the footpath which links School Lane and Annabelle Avenue and the other relating to the re-fixing of a "chevron" sign on the approach to Westfield Road) and that the LHA had undertaken to arrange the necessary remedial works.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M101/15 Manea Pit

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee held on 3 November 2015.

Further to minute PMC20/15, Councillor Fielding informed members that the Community Payback Team had undertaken the maintenance works to pathways around the pit - they had exhausted the supply which had been provided to the council - and they would be able to attend the site on a future occasion to undertake, as required, trimming works to trees and bushes at the site.

Councillor Risbridger expressed his interest in filling the vacancy on the Manea Pit Management Committee, which had resulted from the death of Mr I Woodard (minutes M92/15 and M94/15 refer).

Members decided that

- (1) the contents of the Manea Pit Management Committee minutes and information provided by Councillor Fielding be noted;
- (2) Councillor Risbridger be appointed to membership of the Manea Pit Management Committee.

M102/15 Financial matters

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

Income

Turner and Son	Interment fee	£154.00
Kent Memorials	Cemetery Memorial	£154.00
P Lawrence	Allotment rent	£550.00
Manea Allotment Association	Allotment rent	£300.00
C Howell	Allotment rent	£200.00
B Fletcher	Allotment rent	£200.00
Turner and Son	Cremated remains plot purchase and interment fee	£242.00
Total Income		£1,800.00

Expenditure

Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 19 October 2015	£10.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£55.60
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £132.97), Broadband and other expenses	£590.74
Brian Elmore	Notice board (includes VAT of £140.00)	£840.00
E.on	Electricity for pavilion (includes VAT of £1.00)	£20.94
E.on	Electricity for village green (includes VAT of £0.37)	£7.78
E.on	Electricity for sports area (includes VAT of £0.43)	£9.00
I Fost	Reimbursement of the cost of purchasing nets etc for pond dipping	£229.90
March Electrical Supplies Ltd	Installation of defibrillator at Rose and Crown public house (includes VAT of £57.73)	£346.38
P Lawrence	Refund for over-payment of allotment rent	£125.00
Fenland District Council	Provision of one waste bin and one dog waste bin at Scholars Close, Manea	£462.54
Public Loans Works Board	Loan re-payment	£95.39
DVD Builders Ltd	Repairs to skateboard park (includes VAT of £221.00)	£1,326.00
Manea PCC	Hire of room for Internet Club	£90.00
D Rowe	Reimbursement of cost of sign for notice board (includes VAT of £5.94)	£35.65
Total Expenditure		£4,244.92

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 October 2015 (in the total sum of £71,234.50), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2014.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Mrs Desborough, seconded by Councillor Mrs Berry, that the income of £1,800.00 be noted and that the payments totalling £4,244.92 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 October 2015, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 October 2014, be noted.

M103/15 Correspondence

The Clerk informed members that there are currently no items of correspondence for reporting to the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M104/15 Parish Council staffing

Members reviewed the contractual terms and conditions of employment of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Manea Parish Council.

Members are aware that the Clerk's current contract of employment had not been reviewed since the time of being issued, upon his employment by the council in September 2008.

Members considered the number of contractual monthly working hours, other forms of remuneration and payment of allowances covered by the Clerk's current contract and reviewed these matters in the light of the changed circumstances since September 2008.

As had been requested by the Chairman, the Clerk had undertaken recently a "benchmarking" exercise in relation to the appropriate number of contractual monthly working hours by a Clerk for a local council of the size of Manea and also allowances which ought to be paid to such an employee. This information, together with the financial implications of implementing the recommended changes, was provided to members by the Chairman

Members consider it appropriate for the Parish Council, as a public authority, to ensure that all employees are provided with appropriate contractual terms and conditions and are remunerated at a rate which reflects accurately the level of responsibility and time commitment for the respective post. Ensuring that the Parish Council is remunerating staff at the correct rate would stand it in good stead in terms of both the retention and recruitment of staff.

Members decided, unanimously, that

- (1) having regard for the information presented by the Chairman, the contractual terms and conditions of the post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Manea Parish Council be revised (to include an increase in the monthly contractual working hours and an improvement in the allowances paid to the holder of that post);
- (2) in future, a review of the contractual terms and conditions of employment of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Manea Parish Council be undertaken on an annual basis.

(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))

M105/15 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 14 December 2015, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.05 pm

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

Date:.....