

MANEA PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 APRIL 2016 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillor Cole.

In attendance: Approximately 50 members of the public.

The minutes of the Annual Assembly of 2015 (held on 20 April) were confirmed by attendees and signed by the Chairman of Manea Parish Council.

MA01/15 Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Emery, expressed the opinion that the municipal year 2015/16 had been another busy and a positive year for Manea Parish Council, with the exception of the untimely death of Councillor Ian Woodard (who had made a meaningful and valuable contribution to the work of Manea Parish Council). Councillor Emery mentioned that the council has plans to install, at a suitable location around Manea Pit, a bench in Ian Woodard's memory; he added that, as a result of an election to fill the consequent vacancy, Richard Hirson had been elected to membership of Manea Parish Council.

The Chairman of the Parish Council made the following comments in relation to activities and achievements of the council, during the period since the Annual Assembly of 2015, other matters of relevance to the parish and the councils' plans for the future:

- residential development in the village continues and the level of growth had already exceeded the 15% threshold contained within Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan. As the development threshold had been exceeded, it is necessary for all proposals for new housing in Manea to be the subject of public consultation prior to the submission, to the Local Planning Authority, of a planning application for the proposal.
- four quotations for the construction of a new pavilion had been obtained by the Parish Council. Fenland District Council had approved the Parish Council's application for the sum of £100,000 from the District Council's Rural Capital Grants Fund, towards the cost of constructing such a building. The sale of the council's Cranmore Lots allotments site would provide an additional £150,000 towards the cost of constructing a new pavilion; the council is also anticipating being able to utilise Section 106 Planning Obligation monies to add to the funding available; on the basis of the quotations received, it is apparent that additional funding would need to be secured to be able to fund this project.
- maintenance work at Manea Pit is generally up-to-date and work parties (of volunteers from within the community) would take place during the forthcoming months to undertake the necessary work. Work to provide a pond dipping facility - funded through the Ouse Washes Landscape partnership project - had been completed and was "opened" at the Ouse Fest day in Manea in July of last year. This year's OuseFest day in Manea will take place on 23 July. The Chairman of the Parish Council mentioned some of the activities which would take place as part of the event.

- the condition of Byall Fen Drove remains a concern to local residents and, consequently, the Parish Council continues to liaise with officers of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) in an attempt to achieve ongoing repair and maintenance works. Unfortunately, the LHA does not possess sufficient financial resources to keep "on top" of the situation but it has undertaken some repair works recently and has plans to undertake a re-surfacing scheme of a large section of the carriageway during the 2016/17 financial year.
- both the cemetery and the playing field are in a very good state of maintenance; the council is fortunate to have a very conscientious grounds maintenance contractor.
- It had been necessary for the Parish Council to increase its annual Precept for the fourth time in six years; the increase for the financial year 2016/17 (from £36,866 to £65,063) was due to the need to make financial provision to replace, over a period of three years, the majority of the street lights in the village as well as providing the funding to keep "on top" of the maintenance of community facilities. The increase in the Precept equates to approximately £2.97 per month for a Band D Council Tax equivalent property. The Chairman outlined the parish street lighting replacement programme.
- the burial fees had been increased by 10% with effect from 1 April 2016; this is the first increase in three years. There would also be increases in allotment rents with effect from October 2017.
- the Parish Council continues to fund in full the cost of the County Council operating a youth club at Manea and provides funding to meet the accommodation costs of Manea Internet Club.
- the Parish Council continues to be supportive of any proposals for continued improvements to the rail service for Manea, as well as the provision of a car park for the railway station.

The Chairman of the Parish Council concluded that, in general, a very successful year with a bright future and a lot of hard work ahead. He expressed his thanks to every member of the Parish Council for their work in helping to make the village a better place to live; he gave a special mention to Councillor Mrs Desborough for her work as Vice-Chairman of the Council. The Chairman of the Parish Council gave his special thanks to the Parish Council Clerk, Terry Jordan, for his hard work, advice and dedication to the role.

Attendees noted the Chairman's Annual Report and Parish Council members endorsed his comments and sentiments.

MA02/15 Manea Internet Club

Mrs N Scott, Digital Inclusion Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council, gave an update on the Manea Internet Club.

Mrs Scott reminded attendees that the club began in December 2015, as the result of an action contained within the Manea Action Plan. She mentioned that the funding for the project had been provided initially by the Learning and Skills Service Cambridgeshire County Council but more recently by Manea Parish Council.

Mrs Scott explained the manner in which the sessions operate, assisted by a small number of volunteers, and mentioned that the club had attracted learners not only from Manea but also Chatteris and March. Generally, 8 to 10 learners attend each session. She made the point that in addition to the learners gaining skills in the use of computers and the internet, the club is assisting in addressing rural isolation.

Attendees noted the situation.

MA03/15 Annual Report from Manea Village Hall Committee

The Clerk read to attendees the minutes of the 2015 AGM of Manea Village Hall Committee, which took place on 22 April 2015 (and had been agreed as a correct record at the 2016 AGM held on 6 April 2016).

The minutes included the Annual Reports of both the Chairman and the Secretary/Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee. These reports contained details of some of the activities and events which had taken place at Manea Village Hall during the preceding twelve months. In addition, the Clerk summarised the Village Hall Committee's Financial Statement for the period 1 January to 31 December 2015, which had been presented to the Village Hall Committee's 2016 AGM; it shows that the committee held at 31 December 2015 financial balances of £23,278.37 (an increase of £2,200.19 over the position as at 31 December 2014).

Attendees noted the situation.

MA04/15 Annual Report from Manea Educational Foundation Trust

The Clerk read to members the Annual Report from Manea Educational Foundation Trust, which detailed the manner in which the Trust operates – i.e. awarding grants once annually (in June) to students in Further and Higher Education – and the number of individual grants that had been awarded since the last Annual Parish Assembly.

Attendees noted the situation.

MA05/15 Report of the Manea Allotment Association

The Clerk read to members the Annual Report of the Manea Allotment Association, which detailed a number of operational factors in relation to the allotments which it rents from the Parish Council, including:

- that, as a result of a proactive approach to attracting tenants, only 4 of the 42 plots are currently vacant
- the association has a committee of 8 members, which were elected at the recent AGM
- that the association held a very successful BBQ last summer to help develop the community spirit amongst tenants
- the issue regarding the location of the security gate to the site had been resolved through discussion with local farmers
- details of maintenance and enhancement works which had been undertaken by the allotment association
- the fact that the committee is of the opinion that the plots are a great community asset and, consequently, hopes that the Parish Council would also view them in the same way.

Attendees noted the Report of the Manea Allotment Association.

MA06/15 Report on behalf of Manea Youth Club

The Clerk to read to attendees a report on behalf of Manea Youth Club, the operation of which transferred from Cambridgeshire County Council to Young People March Ltd (YPM) in June 2015.

The report, written by Jayne Manders (Centre Manager at Young People March Ltd), states that each week the young people are able to participate in a number of different activities and that all opportunities for introducing new learning objectives and skills are pursued.

More than 20 young people attend the Youth Club on a regular basis and from June 2015 there had been 14 new members.

The youth club offers a variety of games, activities, music, arts and crafts; the arts and crafts and activities vary weekly but over the past 6 months there had been:

- bread making
- sewing
- deco patch art work
- creating and designing cloth bags
- tile decorating
- making Christmas decorations
- baking
- making and producing key rings
- jewellery making
- organising a disco with party food etc.

The operators of the youth club give the young people a chance to volunteer alongside YPM staff helping to set up, run activities and clear away after sessions. This has proved very popular.

Ms Manders expresses the opinion, through her report, that youth clubs are important in communities as they give young people a space that is theirs and they have a say in what they would like to do. They make new friends, learn new skills and feel part of their community. She also comments that the Parish Council should be proud that it provides a great place for young people to meet.

Attendees noted the contents of the report on behalf of Manea Youth Club.

MA07/15 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

Mr M Milner, Watch Commander at Manea Fire Station, informed attendees that the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is being required to reduce its budget by £3.3 million and that such budget reductions are likely to result in the closure of some fire station; it is possible that Manea Fire Station could close in two years time. He requested Manea Parish Council to continue to oppose any proposal to close Manea Fire Station.

Mr Milner mentioned that the Fire and Rescue Service is, once again, operating a campaign to recruit retained fire fighters and that a recruitment event would take place as part of this year's Manea Gala.

Mr Milner mentioned that there is need to restore and find a "home" (where it could be displayed for the benefit of the public) for the historic fire pump known as "Tilley", which is currently being stored in a building owned by a parishioner. He commented that he had suggested to Manea Parish Council some years ago that action should be taken to restore and display this historical community asset in the village but that, to date, this had not happened.

Attendees noted the comments of Mr Milner and the members of Manea Parish Council gave an undertaking to both oppose any proposal to close Manea Fire Station and give thought to restoration and finding a permanent "home" for the historic fire pump known as "Tilley".

MA08/15 Issues raised by parishioners

The Clerk read to members the following e-mails/letters:

- (1) from District Councillor Buckton, proposing that the Parish Council does not erect an "otter proof" fence around Manea Pit and that the council rescinds its decision to no longer issue day tickets for fishing.

The Parish Council agreed that the issues raised by District Councillor Buckton be considered at a future meeting.

- (2) from a resident of Charlemont Drive regarding the replacement of street lamps within Manea and enquiring as to any plans of the Parish Council to adopt unadopted roads in Manea. The Clerk reported to attendees the content of the response that that he had provided to the author of the e-mail.

Attendees noted the situation.

- (3) from a parishioner: seeking clarification regarding the decision of the Parish Council to install "otter proof" Fencing around Manea Pit; asking when the Parish Council and the residents of Manea had agreed that Manea should be a growth village ; commenting that the speed restriction signing in Manea is, in his opinion, inadequate. The Clerk reported to attendees the content of the response that that he had provided to the author of the letter.

Attendees noted the situation.

Meeting finished at 7.30 pm

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

Date:.....