

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

13 JULY 2016 – 7.30 pm.

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

Apologies: None (all councillors were present).

M31/16 Open Forum - New pavilion for Manea

A number of residents of the village made comments in relation to Manea Parish Council's proposal to provide a new pavilion /community building at the Park Road playing field.

One parishioner commented that villagers had been excited some years ago at the thought of the possibility of a new multi-use community building (in essence, an improved village hall) being provided in the village; however, in his opinion, that is not what is proposed by way of the Parish Council's proposal. He expressed the opinion that the Parish Council had failed miserably in its efforts to consult the public and community groups with regard to their needs and aspirations for a new community building. The parishioner suggested that the council should "draw a halt" to its current project and "go back to the drawing board" to develop a proposal which would meet the needs of the village, be "future-proof" and accord with all of the legislative requirements for people with disabilities. He reminded members of comments which had been made by a parishioner at minute M17/16 (2) in relation to specifications for changing rooms etc.

Another parishioner alleged that there had been no consultation with Manea United Football Club in relation to this project and expressed the opinion that the location of the proposed new building would have a detrimental impact upon the football pitches. In addition, he suggested revisions to the changing rooms element of the proposed building, including 2 changing rooms for sports officials (one each for males and females). The parishioner suggested also that the proposal ought to include an internal storage facility (for sports-related equipment etc) and an external storage facility (for goal posts etc).

Former Parish Councillor Jolley, who had taken a leading role during his time as a member of Manea Parish Council in the development of this project, explained the background to the current proposal. He mentioned that the Parish Council had explored with Manea Village Hall Committee the possibility of a joint venture but the committee had rejected such an idea. In response to comments regarding the lack of consultation/communication with parishioners, he mentioned that the plans for the new pavilion/community building had been displayed at all but one of the Manea Galas since they had been produced.

Mr Jolley expressed the opinion that the current pavilion is no longer fit for purpose and, consequently, a new building is required. He made the point that the Parkfield Sports Centre building at Wimblington is similar in design to that of the proposal for Manea and that no problems are experienced with the changing rooms at the Parkfield Sports Centre. He commented that the needs and aspirations of communities do change but funding is not easy to

come by. In his opinion, the Parish Council is seeking to deliver a project for the benefit of villagers.

Members decided the comments of the parishioners be noted and taken into account when discussing the proposal at minute M32/16.

M32/16 New pavilion for Manea

Further to minute M19/16, members considered the future of the project to provide a new pavilion/community building for the village.

The Clerk had received written representations from five parishioners in relation to this project, which he had circulated to members of the council in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council is in possession of all of the permissions and consents needed for the construction of the proposed new building and that the necessary soil tests had been undertaken. He reminded members also that the council had obtained four quotations for the construction works, which ranged from approximately £389,000 to approximately £429,000.

Councillor Cole commented that there had been community consultation within the village, including with users of the current pavilion at the time of producing the designs for the proposed new building, and that the approved plans had been displayed at all but one of the Manea Galas since they had been produced; in addition, there had been discussion in relation to this project at every meeting of the Parish Council for around the last four years. He stated his surprise that no member of the public had raised any concerns regarding the proposal until the last few weeks.

The Chairman stated that he shared Councillor Cole's surprise that no member of the public had raised any concerns regarding the proposal until the last few weeks and commented that the council is now at a stage where construction work could commence in the relatively near future - planning permission had been approved on two occasions; Building Regulations consent is in place; the majority the funding required had been secured. However, if the people of the village no longer wish to see such a development, the Parish Council could "pull the plug" on the proposal.

Councillor Hirson commented that he could see no need for an additional community building in Manea; the majority of the facilities that would be provided by way of the new building are already available at Manea Village Hall, the Royal British Legion Club and the Rose and Crown public house; the construction of a new community building would, in his opinion, have a detrimental impact upon the financial sustainability of those existing facilities. He commented that he would like to see a plan for a joined-up approach, involving the Parish Council and the Manea Village Hall Committee, for a replacement village hall.

Councillor Ms Hookway expressed the opinion that the proposed new pavilion would not provide facilities for the community as a whole; it would be used mainly by sportsmen as changing rooms and a post-match relaxation area.

In response to a question from Councillor Ms Hookway, the Clerk outlined his understanding of the funding that is available to date to deliver this project; that being:

- £100,000 from Fenland District Council's Rural Capital Grants fund
- £150,000 from the sale of the council's Cranmore Lots allotments site
- £16,000 of Section 106 Planning Obligation monies reserved in the parish council's accounts
- £36,000 approximately of Section 106 Planning Obligation monies held by Fenland District Council (FDC) (currently allocated for general leisure and recreation provision in Manea but it is anticipated that FDC would be prepared to release this money to contribute towards the cost of the new pavilion/community building project).

In addition, the Chairman mentioned that he is aware of a company which operates in the area which would be prepared, as part of its social responsibility, to make a financial contribution towards this project.

The Chairman, after commenting that the council has a simple decision to make, whether or not to proceed with this project, invited each member of the council, in turn, to express their opinion on the matter. In summary, the majority of members expressed the opinion that the current proposal no longer appears to be what is wanted by the community and that it would, consequently, be inappropriate to continue in that regard.

Members decided that Manea Parish Council would not proceed with the project to provide a new pavilion/community building for the village.

Meeting finished at 8.35 pm

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

Date:.....