

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

18 JANUARY 2016 – 7.00 pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs Berry and Cole plus District Councillor Buckton.

The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2015 were confirmed and signed.

M118/15 Open Forum

(1) Byall Fen Drove

A parishioner mentioned to the Parish Council that a number of the users of Byall Fen Drove had suffered damage to their motor vehicles as a result of the poor condition of that road and enquired as to what action could be taken by local councils to persuade the Local Highway Authority that more frequent inspections of that road are necessary to ensure that it is safe for motorists. In addition, he enquired of the Parish Council as to the requirements which had been placed upon Mick George, through the grant of planning permission for the excavation works, in terms of the repair and maintenance of Byall Fen Drove.

The Chairman responded to the comments made and questions asked by the parishioner. He mentioned that Cambridgeshire County Council would closing Byall Fen Drove on 1 February 2016 for an estimated 6 weeks to allow essential carriageway maintenance works to be undertaken. Apart from those who need direct access off this road, motorists would need to use the signed diversion route which will put in place for the duration of the works. The works are to improve the condition of the road and to widen to a nominal 6 metres width. Whilst on site, the County Council would be preparing the road for future surface treatments and re-surfacing fully the entrance to the Mick George excavation site on 12 February.

Members decided that the comments of the parishioner and the responses of the Chairman be noted

(2) Garage site to the rear of Rutland Way

A parishioner informed the Parish Council that he and a number of other local residents had received from Fenland District Council a letter notifying them that the council proposed to sell an area of land, which is currently occupied by garages, to the rear of Rutland Way and he enquired as to whether the Parish Council is aware of any proposals for the future use of that land.

No member was aware of the situation and it was suggested to the parishioner the he raises the matter with District Councillor Buckton.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(3) **Planning application F/YR15/0670/F (Erection of a single-storey 2-bed dwelling on land south of 37 School Lane, Manea)**

The agent for this planning application referred to the comments which had been submitted by the Parish Council to the Local Planning Authority when considering this application previously (minute M69/15 refers) and the objections which had been made by the Local Highway Authority and he explained the amendments which had been made to the proposal to address those issues of concern. He expressed the hope that, in the light of the revisions to the proposal, the Parish Council would now support the planning application.

Members decided that the comments of the planning agent be noted and that they be taken into account when considering this planning application (at minute M122/15).

M119/15 Vacancy in the membership of the Parish Council

Further to minute M106/15, the Clerk reported that the Returning Officer at Fenland District Council had published, on 15 January 2016, the Statement of Persons Nominated for the election of a councillor to fill the vacancy in the membership of Manea Parish Council.

The Clerk informed members that the election would take place on Thursday 11 February 2016 - the hours of the poll being from 7.00 am until 10.00 pm - and that there are three candidates.

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

M120/15 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.

M121/15 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) **New pavilion for Manea (minute M109/15 (1))**

The Chairman reported that he had provided full sets of the approved plans and construction specifications for the building of a new pavilion to two further local building contractors.

The Clerk informed members that he had, to date, received a quotation from one of the local building contractors to which the Chairman had sent copies of the approved plans and construction specifications.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) **Cranmore Lots allotments site (minute M109/15 (2))**

The Clerk informed members that the estate agency which is dealing with the sale of this land is in the process of obtaining from the council's solicitors details of the council's land holdings, for the purpose of providing a cost for valuing all of those land holdings.

The Clerk informed members of his understanding that the legal process associated with the sale of the Cranmore Lots allotments site is progressing.

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

(3) Parish street lighting (minute M109/15 (3))

The Clerk informed members that the further meeting of Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks, being convened by the Chairman of Doddington Parish Council, to discuss further the situation regarding street lighting within Fenland parishes, had been arranged for 29 January 2016; both the Chairman and the Clerk to Manea Parish Council would be attending this meeting, to which District Councillor King had been invited (to respond to questions from Parish Council representatives).

The Clerk informed members of the suggestion that Parish Councils may wish to prepare questions to be asked of District Councillor King at the meeting.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that they had no specific questions to be asked of District Councillor King on 29 January 2016.

M122/15 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 single-storey 2-bed dwelling on land south of 37 School Lane, Manea - F/YR15/0670/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs R Lepla) = revised proposal to address concerns from the Highways Service and the Parish Council.

That the application be supported.

- (2) Change of use from garage/workshop (B1) to 1-bed annexe ancillary to existing dwelling at 90 -92 Charlemont Drive, Manea - F/YR15/1081/F (applicant: Mrs M McEwan).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of a single-storey extension to front and a porch to the side and alterations (to include: extending the roof overhang; changes to the doors and windows; arrangement of existing dwelling) at Knyverton House, Wisbech Road, Manea - F/YR15/1121/F (applicant: Mr M Balaz).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Erection of a single-storey rear/side extension to existing dwelling at Lady's Acre, Langwood Fen Drove, Chatteris - F/YR16/0014/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Edwards).

That the application be supported.

- (5) Erection of a farm office building and 1.5 metres high (max. height) post and rail fencing (retrospective) on land north-east of The Woodlands, Days Lode Road, Manea - F/YR16/0020/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Fowler).

That the application be supported. The Parish Council does, however, have concerns as to whether the building will be used for the purpose for which planning permission has been sought.

In addition, the Clerk reported that planning application F/YR15/0973/F (which proposed the erection of a two-storey 3-bed dwelling on land north of 1 Orchard Way, Manea), which had been considered at minute M97/15, had been withdrawn by the applicant.

The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council's response to the Local Planning Authority's consultation on this application (at minute M97/15) had been "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".

The Clerk read to members a letter from the planning agent who had submitted the application to the Local Planning Authority, explaining the reason for withdrawal of planning application F/YR15/0973/F (that being the requirement to undertake a public consultation exercise in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP12) and asking for the Parish Council's comments on the proposal.

Members decided that the planning agent be informed that Manea Parish Council remains of its previous view (as set out at minute M97/15) at this time and would await to be consulted formally by the Local Planning Authority on any "replacement" planning application before expressing any further views on a proposal for the residential development of the site north of 1 Orchard Way, Manea.

M123/15 Police matters

Although no representative of the March and Chatteris Policing Team was present at the meeting, PCSO Joanne Ford 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 Ford's report mentioned that

- officers had continued to patrol Manea and the rural areas since the last meeting of the Parish Council.
- there had been no major issues either reported or witnessed in the village.
- PCSOs had participated in an engagement activity in Manea, using the New Horizons outreach vehicle, with representatives from Fenland District Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office; no member of the public had raised any issues or concerns with the PCSOs.
- PCSOs would continue to monitor the anti-social use of vehicles, including illegal and inconsiderate parking and take appropriate action
- If the community has any concerns or would like to speak with the local PCSOs, it is suggested that contact be made via the local policing team's e-mail address: march.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk.

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 Ford, be noted

M124/15 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

Neither Councillor Connor, the County Councillor for the electoral division which includes Manea, nor District Councillor Buckton was present at the meeting.

However, District Councillor Buckton had provided to the Clerk a report on matters which he wished to draw to the attention of Manea Parish Council, as follows:

1. Planning matters - an update on the progress of planning applications which had been considered by the Parish Council and where there had been significant community opposition:
 - The erection of four houses on the site at 48 Station Road, supported by the Parish Council, had been refused planning permission, in accordance with the recommendation of planning officers, by the Planning Committee at Fenland District Council on 9 December 2015.

- The change of use of land to a motorcross track at Block Fen Drove, objected to by the Parish Council, had been refused planning permission, in accordance with the recommendation of planning officers, by the Planning Committee at Fenland District Council on 13th January 2016.
 - The change of use of land to a traveller site with the siting of three mobile homes on Byall Fen Drove, objected to by the Parish Council, would be determined by the Planning Committee at Fenland District Council. It is anticipated, depending upon the provision of information requested from the applicant, this would be considered at the March 2016 meeting of the Planning Committee.
2. Comprehensive Spending Review - District Councillors had met last week to identify cost reduction initiatives for further scoping, to enable decisions to be made as to how future savings could be achieved. One of the options considered was phasing-out the Concurrent Functions Grant provided currently to Parish Councils. The decision of councillors was not to progress this as an option but to review the distribution model to ensure that the funding is distributed fairly among parishes. The less good news is that it is likely that the Council Tax Support Grant paid currently to Towns and Parish Councils would cease. Once all of the identified options for savings have been worked up into full business cases, further public consultation would take place.
3. Road repairs - Byall Fen Drove would be closed to through traffic for a period of six weeks from 25 January 2016 to enable repair works to be undertaken. Throughout the closure access would still be provided for people living on the road and for Mick George lorries to avoid the need for them to travel through Manea. These are major repairs with parts of the road being reconstructed so that further damage can be avoided. There would be a further short period of road closure in March 2016 for re-surfacing works to be undertaken.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M125/15 Public open spaces

No member had any issue to raise in relation to the operation and maintenance of the open space areas within the village.

M126/15 Manea Pit

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee held on 12 January 2016, including the recommendations at minute PMC28/15 (that piping of a short length of the dyke at the vehicular entrance to the pit area be undertaken) and at minute PMC31/15 (that fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for 2016/17 be not increased from the 2015/16 level).

Members noted that approval of the recommendation at minute PMC31/15 recommendation would result in fees for 2016/17 remaining at:

- £120.00 for annual membership of the Carp Syndicate
- £27.50 for an annual fishing season ticket
- £16.50 for a concessionary rate annual season ticket
- £5.00 for a day fishing ticket.

The Chairman reminded members of the discussions of the Manea Pit Management Committee at minutes PMC4/15 and PMC12/15 regarding the possibility of installing post and rail fencing at a specific location in the pit area and proposed that this matter be now progressed; other members agreed.

Members decided

- (1) that the contents of the Manea Pit Management Committee minutes be noted;

- (2) to approve the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC28/15 refers) that piping of a short length of the dyke at the vehicular entrance to the pit area be undertaken and that Councillor Cole would obtain quotations for that work;
- (3) to approve the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC31/15 refers) that fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for the 2016/17 be not increased from the 2015/16 level;
- (4) that, further to minutes PMC4/15 and PMC12/15, post and rail fencing be installed at a specific location (as explained to members by the Chairman) in the pit area.

M127/15 Manea Youth Club

Members considered the quotation provided by Young People March (via the Youth and Community Co-ordinator (Fenland) at Cambridgeshire County Council) to operate Manea Youth Club, with no support from Cambridgeshire County Council, from April 2016.

The quotation, which had been circulated by the Clerk to all members in advance of the meeting, provides for: 46 weeks of club sessions; three staff to cover sessions, including on-costs and management costs. The management and mileage costs in previous years quotations were match funded by the County Council; hence, the cost to Manea Parish Council of operating Manea Youth Club would (if it were to accept the latest quotation) increase from approximately £4,700 in 2015/16 to more than £7,000 in 2016/17. The quotation does not include venue costs and resource costs as these would be met through fundraising and subscriptions.

Members are concerned about being able to fund/justify paying the increase in cost but are prepared to make available £5,000 for 2016/17.

Members decided that the Clerk would seek to ascertain, via the Youth and Community Co-ordinator (Fenland) at Cambridgeshire County Council, what Young People March could deliver in terms of a youth club in Manea for the financial year 2016/17 for the sum of £5,000 (perhaps, say, either fewer than the current 46 weeks or a reduced staffing level).

M128/15 Financial matters

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

Income

Fenland District Council	Concurrent Functions Grant - second half	£1,300.00
Various (via Mr I Fost)	Sale of fishing tickets	£72.50
Total Income		£1,372.50

Expenditure

Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 14 December 2015	£10.00
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£65.67
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £149.40 and NI of £9.00), and other expenses and allowances	£718.42
E.on	Electricity for pavilion (includes VAT of	£169.85

	£8.09)	
E.on	Electricity for village green (includes VAT of £0.65)	£13.74
E.on	Electricity for sports area (includes VAT of £0.49)	£10.25
Cambridgeshire County Council	Manea Youth Club - Quarter 2 of 2015/16	£1,168.12
Manea Village Hall	Hire of hall for Golden Age Event on 17 November 2015	£40.00
Anglian Water	Water for cemetery	£15.22
Anglian Water	Water for playing field	£88.24
DVD Builders Ltd	Repairs to skateboard park (includes VAT of £132.00)	£792.00
M Short	First half-year Caretaking wages	£425.00
Total Expenditure		£3,516.51

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 December 2015 (in the total sum of £64,254.77), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2014.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Desborough, seconded by Councillor Fielding, that the income of £1,372.50 be noted and that the payments totalling £3,516.51 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 December 2015, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 31 December 2014, be noted.

M129/15 Parish Precept 2016/17

Members considered the level of Parish Precept for the financial year 2016/17.

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the Parish Council's income and expenditure for 2014/15 and as at 31 December 2015, the financial position as at that date, estimates of income and expenditure for 2016/17 and various notes to aid members' deliberations regarding the level of Parish Precept to be set, including the facts that

- the difference between the estimated expenditure and estimated income for 2016/17 is £65,063.00. If the council were to set a precept of £65,063.00, this would increase the current Precept by £30.87 per Band D (of Council Tax) equivalent property in the parish. This would mean that, on average, each Council Taxpaying property would pay an additional £2.97 per month (or £0.59 per week) to Manea Parish Council in 2016/17.
- the Manea Parish Council Precept for 2015/16 was 36,866.00 (to which was added £1,451.00 by the District Council in Council Tax Support Grant).
- the level of Council Tax Support Grant which has been allocated by Fenland District Council to Manea Parish Council for 2016/17 is £1,357.00.
- the Parish Council was awarded a Concurrent Functions Grant by Fenland District Council of £2,607.00 in 2015/16. The estimated receipts figures show Concurrent Functions Grant income from Fenland District Council (FDC) at the same level as that paid in the current financial year (as has been promised by FDC).
- there has been no indication from the County Council that its payment to local councils in relation to verge cutting will be reduced for 2016/17.

- the estimate for the Clerk's costs for 2016/17 reflect the outcome of the review of terms and conditions of this post (minute M104/15 refers). As there is currently no indication as to whether local government employees will be awarded a "cost of living" pay award with effect from 1 April 2016, no such provision has been made within the estimates of income and expenditure for 2016/17.
- the Community Support expenditure figure is based upon average spending during recent financial years (and includes continued funding for operation of the Manea Youth Club (at the increased cost (minute M127/15 refers)).
- allotment rents were increased by approximately 10% in October 2011 (minute M42/10 refers) and could not have been increased again until October 2014; to increase rents from October 2014, the Parish Council would have needed to give notice to tenants in October 2013 but no decision to that effect was taken at that time or since. The opportunity does exist to increase these rents with effect from October 2017, provided that notice is given no later than October 2016.
- burial fees were increased by approximately 10% with effect from 1 April 2013 (minute M161/12 refers). The previous increase had been in November 2010. No increase was made for the 2014/15 or 2015/16 financial years. The council may wish to increase such fees for 2016/17.
- according to the Practitioners' Guide to Local Council Governance, it is recommended that a local council should possess, as general reserves, a sum equating to three to twelve months of its usual gross expenditure; in the case of Manea Parish Council, that would be a sum (in addition to any ear-marked reserves) of between £12,500 and £50,000.
- in accordance with minute M109/15 (3), provision has been made in the 2016/17 estimates of expenditure for year two costs of replacing the Category 2 street lights (£22,000) within the parish. The Manea Parish Council budget for 2015/16 includes a sum of £10,000 for year one costs, which, unless spent by 31 March 2015, will be carried forward as an ear-marked reserve. The year three costs would be met from the inclusion of a further sum of £22,000 in the 2017/18 budget estimates.
- playing fields expenditure includes contingency provision (of £500) for annual skateboard park maintenance (minute M112/15 refers).

Members decided, unanimously, on a proposal by Councillor Fielding, seconded by Councillor Drinkwater, that

- (1) the Parish Council's income and expenditure for 2014/15 and as at 31 December 2015 and the financial position as at that date be noted;
- (2) the estimates of income and expenditure for 2016/17 be noted and approved - subject to increasing the financial provision for street lighting (of £22,500) by £15,000 - as the basis of the Parish Council's budget for 2016/17;
- (3) being mindful of the current economic circumstances, the Parish Council's financial position and its desire to be able to continue to meet the needs of the community, the level of Parish Precept for 2016/17 be set at £65,063;
- (4) the annual rent for agricultural allotments be increased (from £100 per acre) to £125 per acre with effect from October 2017 and the annual rent for the garden allotments site be increased (from £600) to £700 with effect from October 2017;
- (5) all burial fees be increased by 10% with effect from 1 April 2016.

(Councillors Mrs Desborough, Drinkwater, Emery, Fielding, Ms Hookway and Risbridger declared their respective pecuniary interest in the setting of the Parish Council Precept, by virtue of having a beneficial interest in a domestic dwelling within the parish, but had been granted a dispensation to speak and vote in this matter)

M130/15 Correspondence

(1) The Queen's 90th Birthday

The Chairman reported a request from Councillor Mrs Berry for the Parish Council's support for an event (possibly a "street party" in the car park of the Royal British Legion Club) to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday (on 21 April 2016).

Members decided that the request for the Parish Council's support for an event to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday (on 21 April 2016) be approved and that the council would consider, closer to that date, the nature of that support.

(2) Manea Action Plan

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Manea Action Plan Implementation Group Co-ordinator, in which questions were asked as to the Parish Council's awareness of the current situation regarding:

- a proposal for the construction of a scheme of "sheltered" residential accommodation
- the possible provision of a bus shelter
- highway maintenance concerns, particularly Byall Fen Drove.

Members decided that the Clerk would forward to the Manea Action Plan Implementation Group Co-ordinator the information reported and views expressed in relation to the questions asked.

M131/15 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 15 February 2016, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.15 pm

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

Date:.....