

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

22 MARCH 2016 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Desborough, Chairman; Councillors Cole, Emery, Fielding and Risbridger plus Mr C Carson, Mr A Clutton, Mr A Cooper, Mr I Fost, Mr R K Miller, Mr J Short and Miss M Williams.

Apologies: Mrs L Stevens.

The minutes of the meeting of 23 February 2016 were confirmed and signed.

PMC43/15 Open Forum

A number of parishioners, representing the group of volunteers which undertakes the maintenance works at the community orchard/woodland, attended the meeting to inform the committee of their concerns regarding the decision of Manea Parish Council to arrange the installation of fencing around Manea Pit to prevent access to the area by otters (minute M152/15 refers).

The parishioners stated that they had heard "on the grapevine" about this situation and wish to be made aware of the facts of the matter. They are particularly concerned that the installation of such fencing could result in a detrimental impact upon the volunteers' ability to maintain properly the community orchard/woodland area by preventing access to certain trees.

One of the parishioners commented that villagers are not aware of the Parish Council's proposal to install fencing around Manea Pit and suggested that it would be appropriate for the public to be consulted before such a decision were taken.

Councillor Emery, as Chairman of Manea Parish Council, responded to the comments of the parishioners and explained the rationale behind the decision of the Parish Council; in summary, to protect the fish stocks (which is an asset of considerable value (estimated to be in the region of £100,000)) in Manea Pit. He made the point that the decision had not been taken lightly but the council could see no other way of protecting the fish stocks and other wildlife habitats.

Councillor Emery stated that the Parish Council had considered four quotations for this work, which range from approximately £15,000 to £40,000. He made the point that the cost would be met initially from the Parish Council's general reserves, to be re-paid through income received from Carp Syndicate membership and other fishing fees; on that basis, there would be no opportunity to fund other development works at Manea Pit until such time as the "debt" to the Parish Council had been re-paid.

Councillor Emery showed the parishioners a photograph of the proposed fencing (of wire mesh affixed to wooden posts) and made the point that the necessary action would be taken to minimise the impact (both in terms of ability to maintain the area and the public's enjoyment) of the fencing upon both the community orchard/woodland and the pit.

With the consent of the Chairman, one of the parishioners asked Mr Carson for his opinion on the proposal to install "otter proof" fencing around Manea Pit. A summary of Mr Carson's detailed and informative response was that he considers that this is the only realistic option available to Manea Parish Council; not only to preserve the fish stocks

but also to protect otters from people who may otherwise wish to destroy them as a means of preventing their access to open waters.

The committee decided that the comments of the parishioners and certain members of the committee be noted.

PMC44/15 Decisions made by Manea Parish Council

The Clerk reported on the decisions made by Manea Parish Council since 23 February 2016 meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee in relation to matters affecting the operation and management of Manea Pit.

At its meeting on 14 March 2016 (minute M152/15 refers) the council had considered the recommendations of this committee at minute PMC39/15 with regard to the possible installation of fencing around Manea Pit to prevent access by otters and the associated changes to Carp Syndicate and other fishing fees. Consequently, the Parish Council had decided

- (1) to approve in principle the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC39/15 refers) that the Parish Council would undertake the installation of appropriate fencing around Manea Pit to prevent access by otters and that arrangements be made by Councillor Fielding for a meeting on site between the contractor which had submitted the lowest quotation for this work and certain members of the Manea Pit Management Committee to discuss the matter;
- (2) that the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC39/15 refers) that the proposals in respect of Carp Syndicate membership and all fishing fees, as set out at minute PMC39/15, be approved;
- (3) that, in response to an e-mail from a parishioner, expressing the opinion that the name of Manea Pit does not do justice to the site and that thought should be given to re-naming the pit to something such as Manea Lakes, Manea Parish Council would be considering, at its 18 April 2016 meeting, whether it feels re-naming of Manea Pit would be appropriate.

PMC45/15 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Miss Williams informed the committee that routine maintenance works continue and that the tree pruning works agreed at minute PMC27/15 had been undertaken. She mentioned also that 13 (Hazel and Oak) trees, which had been acquired from Manea Allotment Association, had been planted at the former picnic area and within the community orchard/wodland.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted.

PMC46/15 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC36/15, the committee considered the current situation regarding the maintenance of Manea Pit and its surroundings.

The committee is of the opinion that there are no immediate maintenance issues at Manea Pit, merely the need to keep "on top" of the general condition of the area.

Mr A Clutton informed the committee that Manea Street Pride group is happy to undertake tidying works to the former picnic area.

The committee decided that the situation be noted and that a work party would be arranged, following the acquisition of the necessary materials (minute PMC36/15 refers) and arrival of the lighter evenings and better weather.

PMC47/15 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Given the absence of Mrs P Smith from the meeting, no information was available regarding the progress that she had made in producing an updated version of the new management plan.

The committee decided that the situation be noted and that the Clerk would pursue, again, from Mrs Smith the provision of information as to how this matter could be brought to a conclusion.

PMC48/15 Manea Pit – Health and Safety

The committee considered whether there are currently any health and safety issues relating to Manea Pit.

The committee decided that there are no new health and safety issues at this time.

PMC49/15 Fishing and other pit users' issues

Mr A Cooper handed to the Clerk the sum of £1,080.00 in respect of the payment of (9) Carp Membership fees.

Further to minute M152/15, Councillor Fielding informed the committee that the contractor which had submitted the lowest quotation for installation of the "otter proof" fencing around Manea Pit would be able to send a representative to meet on site on 29 March 2016; there would be a cost for the visit of £200 but half of this sum would be deducted from any order placed with the company.

Councillor Emery informed the committee that the Froglife charity would be bringing a number of children to Manea Pit on one day next week to use the pond dipping area. In addition, he mentioned that, further to minute M139/15, a memorial bench for the late Ian Woodard, which would be located in the vicinity of the pit area, is in the process of being manufactured.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted and that Councillor Fielding would make arrangements for a meeting on site, involving a representative of the contractor which had submitted the lowest quotation for installation of the "otter proof" fencing around Manea Pit and certain members of this committee, to take place on 29 March 2016; the outcome of that meeting (and any revision to the contractor's original quotation for the work) would be reported to 18 April 2016 meeting of Manea Parish Council.

PMC50/15 Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

Further to minute PMC40/15, Councillor Emery reported to the committee on a conversation with Mr Mark Nökkert, the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership Programme Manager, with regard to provision to him of digital copies of all artworks/interpretation created for display in the interpretation panels; as a consequence of that conversation, Councillor Emery had arranged for Mrs S Woodard to take photographs of the content of each of the interpretation boards and forward to Mr Nökkert electronic images of that content. In addition, Mr Nökkert would be making arrangements to re-allocate the sum of £2,000 which had been set-aside for interpretation and partial adaptation of the current pavilion.

The committee decided that the situation in general be noted and that the Clerk would make application for Ouse Washes funding to meet the cost of the pond dipping nets which had been purchased by Manea Parish Council.

PMC51/15 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 26 April 2016, commencing at 7.15 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

Meeting finished at 8.40 pm.

Signature:.....(Committee Chairman)

Date.....