

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

20 MARCH 2017 – 7.00 pm.

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

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

The minutes of the meeting of 20 February 2017 were confirmed and signed.

M138/16 Open Forum

(1) Possible residential development at Edwards Way, Manea

A parishioner referred to the recent public consultation exercise which had taken place in the village in respect of a proposal to erect 32 houses at Edwards Way, Manea and she expressed her concerns regarding the adequacy of the current highway arrangements to be able to accommodate safely such a development.

In addition, the parishioner mentioned that a development of this scale would need to include an element of social housing and she commented that she would like to see such properties allocated only to persons with a local connection.

Members decided that comments of the parishioner be noted.

(2) Manea Pit

A parishioner enquired as to the latest situation with regard to the Parish Council's decision to install "otter proof" fencing around Manea Pit.

With the consent of the Chairman, the Clerk provided an update on the current situation. The Clerk reported that he had informed the Environment Agency (EA), as landlord of Manea Pit, that neither the Wildlife Trust nor Natural England - the two organisations which the EA had asked Manea Parish Council to consult regarding the proposal - had any objections to the proposed installation of an "otter proof" fence around Manea Pit. In response, the relevant officer at the EA had stated that the EA considers such a fence to be a structure under the terms of the lease between the Environment Agency and Manea Parish Council and that he would respond as soon as he is able after 31 March 2017, to the council's application for permission to install a fence.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M139/16 Members' Code of Conduct

The Clerk reminded members of the need to inform the Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council, via the Parish Clerk, 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.

M140/16 Progress on actions from minutes of last meeting

(1) Community resilience (minute M126/16)

Members considered briefly how the council should proceed in terms of developing a plan or community support in the event of small-scale emergency situations in Manea.

Members are of the opinion that one of the key issues is to identify suitable assembly points that could be used in the event of any parishioners needing to be evacuated from their homes; one such venue would be Manea Village Hall.

Members decided that they would each give this matter further thought between this meeting and the next, to enable a more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

(2) Manea Pavilion (minute M127/16 (1))

The Clerk informed members that he had invited the contractor which submitted the lower of the two quotations received by the council to provide a revised quotation which excludes the items of work which members had agreed should be deleted for the purpose of that contract but, to date, he had not received a revised quotation.

Members decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the Clerk would pursue a response from the contractor which had been invited by the council to provide a revised quotation for works to Manea Pavilion;
- (3) Councillor Fielding would liaise with Mr S Payne (who had volunteered to undertake the work) regarding installation of the 20 bollards in front of the recreation ground.

(3) Annual Risk Assessments (minute M135/16)

The Clerk reported that he had investigated with the council's insurer the feasibility (and cost) of the council obtaining insurance cover for the loss of fish stocks and that the insurance company had stated, in response to the enquiry, that there is no provision within local councils' insurance policies for such cover; consequently, the council would need, if wishes to obtain such cover, to take-out a separate policy with an appropriate insurance company.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that the offer of the Chairman, to make enquiries of the operator of a local fishery regarding his knowledge of insurance companies which offer insurance cover for the loss of fish stocks, be accepted.

(4) Manea rail service (minute M136/16 (1))

The Chairman informed members that since commencement of the improved rail service for Manea, the number of journeys made by people travelling to and from Manea had exceeded 13,000.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M141/16 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) Erection of a single-storey rear extension to existing dwelling, involving demolition of conservatory, at 39D Westfield Road, Manea - F/YR17/0137/F (applicants: Mr and Mrs Doggett).

That the application be supported.

- (2) Erection of a three-storey 4/5 bed dwelling with integral garage at plot 3 on land north of 55A Station Road, Manea - F/YR17/0194/F (applicant: Mr Simon Connolly).

That the application be supported.

- (3) Erection of 4 dwellings comprising 2 x two-storey 4-bed and 2 x two-storey 3-bed with garages on land south-east of Williams Way, Manea - F/YR17/0202/F (applicant: Mr N Barrett).

That the application be supported.

- (4) Certificate of Lawful Use (Existing): Occupation of dwelling without compliance with condition 4 of planning permission F/90/0979/O relating to agricultural occupancy at Adventurers House, The Bank, Welches Dam, Manea - F/YR17/0204/CERTLU (applicant: Mr Clifford Carson).

That the Parish Council has knowledge that this property has been occupied by persons not engaged in agricultural work for at least the last ten years.

M142/16 Police matters

Although no representative of the March and Chatteris Policing Team was present at the meeting, both PCSOs James Cox and Dawn Rae had provided reports (covering the periods 1 to 28 February and 1 to 19 March 2017 respectively) detailing incidents of crime and disorder which had been reported to the Constabulary, as well as updating the Parish Council on other relevant matters. The PCSOs' reports mentioned that

- the most recent community engagement event had taken place at the Meat and Eat premises on 13 February 2017; one parishioner had attended and raised the issue of vehicles being parked facing the wrong direction at night (the parishioner had been informed that this matter is an advisory point within the Highway Code but such parking is not an offence)
- the next community engagement event is scheduled to take place at the Meat and Eat premises on 23 March 2017
- there had been no incidents of anti-social behaviour reported; PCSOs continue to patrol the car parks at Manea Pit and no inappropriate activity had been witnessed during any of the patrols
- with regard to crimes, there had been one distraction burglary, one theft from a van, one theft from a shed and two incidents of criminal damage to vehicles
- the local policing team continues to patrol the village during the daytime and in the evenings and, as the result of the patrolling, a Fixed Penalty Notice had been issued recently to the owner of a vehicle which had been parked illegally
- the local policing team continues to visit Manea Community Primary School once per week

- PCSO James Cox is the new local officer for the village and would attend meetings of Manea parish Council when on duty. He can be contacted directly by e-mail: james.cox2@cambs.pnn.police.uk; the e-mail address for the local policing team is march.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk.

The Chairman mentioned that "near misses" are occurring at the traffic calming "build out" in the vicinity of the Primary School because some parents are using that structure as a crossing point; he suggested that it be made clear to parents, via a message from the school, that the structure is not a crossing point and that parents are advised not to use it, in the interests of safety, in such a way.

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

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk, on behalf of PCSOs Cox and Rae, be noted;
- (2) the Clerk would request the Headteacher of Manea Community Primary School to provide the message to parents that the traffic calming "build out" in the vicinity of the Primary School is not a crossing point and that they are risking their safety if they choose to use it in such a way.

M143/16 Reports from District and County Councillors for the parish

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

District Councillor Buckton had, however, informed the Chairman in advance of the meeting that he had nothing specific in relation to the activities of Fenland District Council (FDC) to draw to the attention of Manea Parish Council.

At the invitation of the Chairman, one of the candidates for election as councillor for the new March South and Rural ward of the Cambridgeshire County Council - the ward which would include the parish of Manea with effect from the elections in May of this year - addressed the council briefly. He stated that if elected to membership of the County Council, he would attend meetings of Manea Parish Council and seek to ensure that the interests of the people of Manea are represented at the County Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M144/16 Public open spaces

- (1) Multi-use Games Area - further to minute M131/16 (1), the Chairman reported that the improvements to the lighting had now been undertaken by the electrical contractor

Further to minute M130/16, the Clerk informed members that he had enquired of the contractor as to when it would be possible for the surfacing and fencing works to be undertaken; the contractor states that it is anticipated that work could be commenced around 17 April 2017. The Chairman made the suggestion, with which there was concurrence by other members, that wood staining works around the Multi-use Games Area be undertaken, via a work party, in advance of the surfacing and fencing works being undertaken.

Further to minute M131/16 (1), the Clerk reported to members the quotation that he had received for pruning trees in close proximity to the Multi-use Games Area. The Chairman had taken the opportunity when he had met on-site with the contractor, to explain the tree pruning works required, to ask the

contractor to provide a quotation also for reducing to 8 feet the height of the conifers along the boundary of the playing field.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Chairman and the Clerk be noted;
 - (2) the quotation for pruning trees in close proximity to the Multi-use Games Area, in the sum of £325.00 (plus VAT), be accepted;
 - (3) the offer of Councillor Cole, to obtain an additional quotation for works to reduce to the height of the conifers along the boundary of the playing field, be accepted;
 - (4) a decision on whether to undertake works to reduce to the height of the conifers along the boundary of the playing field be made at the next meeting of the council.
- (2) Storage container - further to minute M131/16 (2), the Chairman reported that the works to install the electricity supply to the new container would be undertaken by the electrical contractor later this week.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

M145/16 Manea Pit

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee held on 16 March 2017, including the recommendations at minutes PMC54/16 (funding for the purchase of tree stakes and ties for the community orchard/woodland) and PMC56/16 (for the purchase of materials for general maintenance works and possible improvements at Manea Pit and its surroundings).

The Chairman commented that he is not happy with the manner in which the Manea Pit Management Committee had operated during the current municipal year and, consequently, he suggests that the Parish Council should consider either reviewing the current Terms of Reference and membership of the committee or disbanding the committee.

The Chairman commented that a number of the members of the committee have had concerns about the manner in which meetings had operated and the "heated" nature of many of the discussions at meetings. Concerns had also been expressed with regard to comments made by members of the committee on social media. He expressed the opinion that much good work had taken place since the council's acquisition of the pit in 2008 and that such work had resulted in the creation of a valuable community asset of which villagers should be proud.

There was concurrence by other members with the opinion expressed by the Chairman that the committee had grown in membership to an extent that it is no longer manageable and that constructive debate and decision-making had been more effective when the committee had comprised fewer members.

Members are mindful that, ultimately, the Parish Council carries the responsibility for operational management and development of the pit and its surroundings and are of the opinion that this could now be done by the council without the need for a specific committee for those purposes. Members can see no reason why the various interests, whether it be anglers, the group which maintains the woodland area etc or other community volunteers, could not still work to support the maintenance and development of the pit and its surroundings; however, they no longer see the need for a constituted body in that regard; the committee has, in the opinion of the Parish Council, served its purpose.

Members are happy for the Parish Council to receive written updates from the various interested groups (or individuals) on their activities at the pit and the community orchard/woodland and to consider any requests for funding for various types of works (such as the recent proposals for benches and bat and bird boxes) and necessary maintenance works.

Members decided

- (1) that the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee be noted;
- (2) to approve the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC54/16 refers) that a sum of £100.00 be allocated for the purchase of tree stakes and ties for the community orchard/woodland;
- (3) to approve the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC56/16 refers) that a sum of £500.00 be allocated for the purchase of materials for general maintenance works and possible improvements at Manea Pit and its surroundings);
- (4) that the Manea Pit Management Committee be disbanded with immediate effect.

M146/16 Financial matters

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

Income

Chatteris Funerals	Interment fee	£170.00
Total Income		£170.00

Expenditure

Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 20 February 2017	£10.00
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £150.90 and NI of £9.90), other expenses and allowances	£750.59
E.on	Electricity for village green (includes VAT of £0.66)	£13.92
E.on	Electricity for sports area (includes VAT of £0.54)	£11.39
E.on	Electricity for pavilion (includes VAT of £9.53)	£200.18
Mrs A Ryman	Pavilion cleaning	£72.00
Cole Properties (Manea) Ltd	10 tons of limestone for allotment roadway (includes VAT of £37.50)	£225.00
Richard Yardy (2002) Ltd	Lighting repair at pavilion (includes VAT of £12.00)	£72.00
Richard Yardy (2002) Ltd	Supply and install 4 floodlights at multi-use games area (includes VAT of £112.00)	£672.00
En-tout-cas Tennis Courts Ltd	Deposit for improvement works to multi-use games area (includes VAT of £400.00)	£2,400.00

H M Revenue and Customs	Clerk's Income Tax and NI (December 2016 and January and February 2017)	£516.57
Mr M Hindry	Reimbursement of the cost of purchasing materials for the construction of benches (includes VAT of £35.86)	£215.18
Manea School of Gardening	Pruning of fruit trees at community orchard (includes VAT of £10.00)	£60.00
Total Expenditure		£5,218.83

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 28 February 2017 (in the total sum of £253,053.42), together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2016.

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Fielding, seconded by Councillor Drinkwater, that the income of £170.00 be noted and that the payments totalling £5,218.83 be authorised;
- (2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 28 February 2017, together with the month-end figures for each of the preceding six months and as at 28 February 2016, be noted.

M147/16 Manea Youth Club

Further to minute M98/16 (2), the Clerk read to members a letter from Young People March Ltd (YPM) - the charitable organisation which had operated the village youth club since 1 April 2016 - enquiring as to whether the Parish Council proposes to continuing funding the provision of Manea Youth Club for the financial year 2017/18; YPM had confirmed that the cost of its delivery of Manea Youth Club in 2017/18 would be at the same level as that in 2016/17.

The letter from YPM provided details of the number of regular attendees at the youth club and the results of a survey of the parents of attendees; 100% of the respondents stated that they consider the club to be run well and provided a good choice of activities for young people. The letter was accompanied by a number of photographs and copies of some of the survey forms completed by parents; these were viewed by the members of the Parish Council.

The Clerk informed members that he had enquired of Cambridgeshire County Council as to the possibility of obtaining (as had been the case for the current financial year) funding under that council's Community Reach Fund as a contribution towards the cost of YPM's provision of a youth club at Manea; however, the County Council had responded stating that such funding is only available for new projects.

Members decided that Manea Parish Council would continue to fund the village youth club for the 2017/18 financial year, to be operated by Young People March Limited, in the sum of £5,498.64

M148/16 Annual Parish Assembly 2017 - agenda items

Members discussed possible agenda items for the Annual Parish Assembly arranged for 18 April 2017.

Members decided that

- (1) the agenda for the 2017 Annual Assembly would contain the items which featured on the agenda for last year's meeting, with the exception, because the Parish Council's receipt of progress reports throughout the year, of a report on behalf of Manea Youth Club;
- (2) publicity for the event be given via posters in the village, a notice on the Parish Council's website and mention in a local newspaper.

M149/16 Correspondence

(1) Financial donation to the council

The Clerk read an e-mail from a parishioner - which, in accordance with the request of the parishioner, had been forwarded to all members of the council in advance of the meeting - regarding the Parish Council's decision (at minute M134/16) to ear-mark a financial donation for the purpose of meeting the cost of installing "otter proof" fencing around Manea Pit.

The e-mail from the parishioner reads:

"I understand a near £15,000 donation was given 'to benefit the people of Manea' – I firmly contest that building the otter fence with this money is not for the benefit of the people of Manea, fisherman yes, Manea no. The money was given to benefit 'the people' not a select few much favoured by certain members of the council.

The majority of carp club members do not live in the village and do not contribute to Manea through council tax and now have had their proposal for a reduced subscription agreed in return for work they do in any event. We heard at the talk concerning KHV given by CEFAS the speaker's surprise at the low cost of fishing the pit, he suggested a figure of £500 pa would be nearer his expectation, this puts a value of £400+ on the work done by each carp club member... and you now offer a discount from the previously agreed subscription.

One of the reasons stated for purchasing the lease to the pit was to prevent it being fenced as I understand it. The pit is not just a fishing venue, it is a wildlife area as well and is much enjoyed by many as a recreation and educational area. Fencing the pit will effectively result in the whole area becoming a preserve for the fisherman alone, you will have robbed the village as a whole of one of its best, some would say only natural amenity.

Councillors, you claim that the fence is to protect your assets, the fish. The carp are dying and diseased and will continue to reduce in numbers, otters or no otter. The asset you should be protecting is the 'pit' area itself for the benefit and enjoyment of the whole village.

Despite advice to the contrary, the PC overstocked the pit with carp resulting in the loss of grant support. CEFAS pointed out that stressed fish were and are more susceptible to death from KHV. The parish council as a whole is neither representing nor acting for the village as a whole on the issue of the fence, it is focused on the demands of a vocal minority.

Although being received by way of donation, the donated monies are nevertheless public money and must be accounted for. I would remind you all that ill-advised or misuse of public money is actionable at law.

The council were proposing to loan money to build the fence repayable over time by the fishermen, the current proposal looks to me more akin to a grant, there being no obligation to reimburse the council, benefitting only a minority of villagers whilst potentially denying freedom of access to the pit area to the many.

It has been said that the council wishes the village would engage more with the council, perhaps the council could try engaging more with the village as a whole first".

With the consent of the Chairman, the Clerk commented upon some elements of the e-mail from the parishioner. The Clerk stated that, as the council's Responsible Financial Officer, he would ensure that all of the council's income and expenditure would be accounted for and that such accounting and governance would be subject to proper scrutiny as part of the annual audit of the council's accounts. He commented that at no time was the Parish Council proposing to provide finance to a third party, either by loan or grant; any money spent by the Parish Council on the installation of "otter proof" fencing would be direct spending by the Parish Council on a council-owned asset.

The Chairman made the point that the lease between the Environment Agency (as landlord) and Manea Parish Council (as tenant) in relation to Manea Pit requires the council to provide fishing and, therefore, the council needs to take whatever measures it deems appropriate to preserve that situation. In addition, the income received from fishing activities not only meets the full cost of maintenance works to the area but also generates a "profit" which helps to fund other activities within the village, such as Manea Youth Club. He commented also that as Manea Parish Council is not operating a commercial fishery, but a community asset, it does not need to charge fees at commercial levels. He also made the point that the installation of "otter proof" fencing would not prevent access by the community to that area but if the Parish Council had not decided in 2008 to acquire Manea Pit and that, consequently, it had been sold to a private individual or business, there would now be no public access to that area.

Councillor Fielding commented that the reason for installing "otter proof" fencing is not to preserve fishing for the Carp Syndicate but because of the need to protect a community asset. He expressed the opinion that those who oppose the proposal are viewing the situation with "tunnel vision".

Members decided that the content of the e-mail from the parishioner and the comments of the Clerk and some of the members of the council be noted.

(2) Manea United Football Club

Further to minute M122/16 (1), members considered a letter from Manea United Football Club (MUFC) in response to the letter from the Clerk sent in pursuance of minute M122/16 (1).

The Clerk had forwarded to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the letter from MUFC.

The letter from MUFC asks a number of questions of the council; these questions and the council's responses are set out in the table below:

Question from Manea United Football Club	Response of Manea Parish Council
1. How many football pitches does the council think that the football club uses?	1. Two.
2. What facilities are there for the football club to use and, therefore, pay hire for?	2. the pavilion (including showers, changing rooms, kitchen and meeting space) and football pitches).

3. Could you please confirm the date that the power supply into the pavilion was fixed?; we can then demonstrate how long the showers were not functioning correctly.	3. The Chairman of the Council is unable to recall the specific date but is able to state that the issue had been reported to him on a Monday and that the necessary electrical work had been undertaken on the Thursday of the following week; he had informed the Secretary of MUFC on the intervening Saturday that the works were planned for the following Thursday.
4. You state the council meets significant costs in the provision of the football pitches and pavilion, including cutting pitches - once again we ask how many pitches does Manea UFC use and, secondly, are you stating that if no football is played at the park, the grass would not be cut? Are we correct in stating that this is the village park and is used by residents daily?	4. MUFC uses two pitches. The grass is cut weekly because of the need to maintain the football pitches in suitable condition. Yes, the recreation ground is potentially used by all residents; that type of informal use would require the grass to be cut at less regular intervals.
5. Could you please confirm when the pitches were last aerated and at what cost?	5. November 2015. £350.
6. Cleaning of pavilion £15 per week; is this every week?	6. Yes. In addition, the council meets the cost of electricity use at the pavilion, which is of the order of £750.00 per annum.
7. You state that Manea UFC is the primary user; how many games do you believe we actually play? We play only 12 home games per season and possibly 2 cup games.	7. Parish Council feels that usage figures quoted by Manea UFC are correct.
8. If Manea UFC is the primary user, would you not wish to consult more with the football club about the intentions for modernisation of the pavilion?	8. The Chairman of the Parish Council has discussed with the Secretary of Manea UFC the Parish Council's proposals.
9. Having consulted other local clubs with regard to the facilities that they have and the costs they pay, Manea UFC requests Manea Parish Council to review the charge that it levies upon Manea UFC.	9. The Parish Council is of the opinion that the current level of charge, which has not been increased for many years, is appropriate.

Members decided that the above table be forwarded to Manea UFC as the response from the Parish Council to the club's letter.

(3) Manea Girl Guiding

The Clerk informed members that he had been led to believe, from being copied-in to correspondence which had been sent to Councillor Hirson, that Manea Girl Guiding would be submitting a grant application, for funding towards its operating costs, for consideration at this meeting of Manea Parish Council; however, no such application had been submitted to date.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(4) Local Highway Improvements 2017/18

Further to minute M81/16, the Clerk reported on the outcome of the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) 2017/18 bidding process.

The Clerk informed members that the district area assessment panels (comprising County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the district) were asked to consider bids and make recommendations to the County Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee on how the budget should be allocated in respect of the scheme bids submitted.

The assessment panels operated a simple scoring system with a maximum of ten points per scheme. Using this assessment system, the scheme submitted by Manea Parish Council (for re-surfacing works to the footpath along Station Road, Manea) had scored 0.13 points out of a maximum of 10; the bid was ranked in sixteenth place out of the seventeen submitted throughout Fenland. The County Council had decided that the top thirteen ranking schemes in Fenland would be allocated funding.

However, the bid which had been submitted by Manea Speed Watch Group (minute M98/16 (1) refers) had been successful (it had scored 2.88 points out of a maximum of 10; being ranked in ninth place out of the seventeen submitted throughout Fenland).

Members decided that the outcome of the 2017/18 LHI bidding process be noted.

(5) RSPB Ouse Washes Reserve

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Senior Site Manager of the RSPB Ouse Washes Reserve, requesting from Manea Parish Council a letter of support concerning the RSPB's application for funding from Grantscape, to make improvements (i.e. new doors, roof insulation, heat source, eco lighting, drinks machine, access path upgrade, new interpretation) to the RSPB visitor centre at the Welches Dam Reserve. The e-mail stated that the key reason for these improvements is to keep the centre operational in challenging and changing times, with a view to making it available to local user groups, not necessarily connected to nature.

Members decided that Manea Parish Council would provide a letter of support for the RSPB Ouse Washes Reserve's funding application.

M150/16 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council had been scheduled for 18 April 2017, following the Annual Parish Assembly, which commences at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

Meeting finished at 8.25 pm

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

Date:.....