

Minutes of Meeting on 14th September 2023
Elmstead Parish Council – New Community Centre Committee
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Mr P Beard (Chairman), Mr R Fairweather, Cllr Adam Gladwin, Cllr M Hare, Mrs L Scott, Mrs D Stammers, Cllr Martine Ward, Mrs R Valentine and Mr S Wright.

Also present: Mrs Baxter (clerk) and 2 members of public.

Not present: Mrs Brock, Mrs J Grotier, Mr S Higgins and Mrs J Triscott.

23/046 Chairman’s welcome

23/047 Apologies of Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs J Grotier and Mrs J Triscott.

23/048 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

None.

23/049 Approval and signing of the minutes from the meeting of 13th July 2023.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting of 13th July 2023 as true and accurate.

Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Hare, all in favour.

Mr Beard shared the sad news of the passing away of Nick Bell, who gave an enormous amount to the village. It was agreed to hold a minute’s silence.

The committee held a minute’s silence in memory of Nick.

23/050 Public Speaking

A resident of Victory Fields asked what would be done to secure the field after the builders are off site. They think this might be in November. What will that security look like? Will the open space be useable before the community centre is finished?

It was responded that we’ll have to decide what we do going forwards. If it is seeded in a few weeks it will probably need doing again in Spring. We’d need to keep people off the grass until after then.

Go Homes are putting a low fence in along next to the road, so the only access would be through the car park which will be gated.

Mr Fairweather reported that Go Homes told us they’d be treating the weeds next week and then a local company will seed it about a month after. We told them that the specification said it should be turfed, they are going to check into it. If the weather holds and there’s no watering, then the grass seed will die.

Once we take control we’ll make sure there’s no vehicle access.

It was asked whether the residents would be notified about the new application for the community centre. The answer is yes, and they will be given a specified period of time to respond.

A member of public said that residents are not happy with the entrance to the community centre coming off their private road. It was responded that questions were previously raised about the access and we checked with TDC planning and were told that we do have the right of access. The outline planning and the deed of variation both include that access.

23/051 A report on any updates since the last Committee meeting to include if relevant:

i) *The status of the planning permission for the new community centre.*

The permission expired on the 24th August.

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ii) A report from a meeting with Shaun Hammond (Go Homes).

Mr Beard, Mr Fairweather and Mrs Baxter met with Mr Hammond. We discussed seeding versus turfing and Mr Hammond will look into it.

The weeds will be killed in the next 2 weeks. We don't know exactly when it will be seeded. When the land is transferred the ground will become the PC's problem. Mr Hammond asked about our preference for trees. One option is birch and Mr Hammond will get back to the us with the other option. We discussed what it is that we want the trees to do; be a sound buffer, create a nice visual barrier, look nice, offer shade on the field. They shouldn't affect the light for the houses as they are north of them. They are spread out, about 10 yards apart. They will be 4m in height when planted.

We'll let the residents know when we know what the other tree option is.

Our solicitors are now speaking about the transfer of land.

Go Homes will need to clear the compound in the next couple of weeks and clear the area.

We spoke about the border and that in areas it is questionable. Mr Hammond will send us some photos.

There are some people who think there is a "no mans land" between the Charity Field Land and the adjacent residents' land but there isn't. If anyone was to try and extend their property onto the field the council would need to challenge it. We'll keep an eye on it.

We asked if Go Homes didn't want to build the community centre. The answer was that they do want to build it.

Mr Hammond is waiting to get confirmation from TDC of official sign off on the open space plan they sent in, he will chase that.

Cllr Gladwin will chase that up if we don't hear from Mr Hammond.

iii) The status of the Charity Field development.

There are 42 out of a total 58 homes occupied. There are 6 unsold bungalows (out of a total of eight) and possibly 6 houses unsold.

iv) The status of the Church Road development.

The latest we heard there are no more sold. One more has been occupied. The houses are effectively finished. The allotments do not need to wait for the same trigger point as the money for the community centre and the transfer of that land to the council is already in hand. Once we get the money from Church Road then Go Homes has 100 days to give us their contribution.

23/052 Transfer of New Community Centre/car park land and Open Space land

An update on the land transfers.

It's with the solicitors who are communicating with each other. Our solicitors will contact us when they have something to share and will come and meet with us.

There was a discussion on timing, the council would like to have the land as soon as possible to ensure that we secure ownership of it. That may mean we'll have additional costs, but we'll have the safety of having the land in our possession and under our control. Our solicitor will be giving us advice on what should happen prior to transfer.

23/053 Actions for the future

i) Planning permission.

Cllr Gladwin spoke about the timing for when we apply for planning permission. It could be in the 100 day window between Church Road meeting the trigger point for its contribution and GO Homes having to give us their contribution. Or we could put in the same planning

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application as before for the time being.

We have asked Mr Hammond for all the drawings and details of the application they made.

We don't need to make a full application; we can make a reserved matters application on the approved outline application.

It was asked whether a reserved matters application can go to the planning committee. The answer is yes.

We need to decide how that planning application will be done.

ii) Drawings needed for the above.

If we want to make changes we will need to instruct somebody to do those new drawings for us. There may also be required changes for updated building regulations.

Mr Gladwin has done some research on the tender process and it doesn't work well with a design and build approach. We need to be able to provide a tender specification so that we can fairly compare builder's tenders, and in order to do that they need to be working from the same drawings, not also doing their own design. There is also the problem of timing on getting the planning permission with design and build. We could instruct someone but then not get planning permission on their design. We need to know if we have planning permission before we instruct a builder.

iii) Upkeep of the open space.

We have some good news in that we have an additional £40k plus to spend on the open space which is coming from a development of 15 houses on Tye Road.

We'll need to think about whether there is anything additional we would like to do.

If we think we'll need to water the grass we'll need to think about how to do that.

We could ask a farmer to help us or put in a standpipe.

Mr Hammond has told us that they never water the ground after they seed the grass.

iv) Any others?

Nothing else was raised.

23/054 Matters raised for the next agenda or for information only.

None. Members were reminded that if they want to add an agenda item to let the clerk know a week before the meeting.

23/055 Date of next committee meeting

12th October 2023, subject to whether it's needed.

The meeting closed at 8.11pm.

Minuted by Mrs A Baxter

Contact: elmsteadparish@gmail.com

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Signature

Date