

**Minutes of Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025**  
**Elmstead Parish Council – New Community Centre Committee**  
**Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET**

**Present:** Mr R Fairweather, Mrs J Grotier (Chairman), Cllr M Hare, Mrs R Valentine, Cllr M Ward and Mr S Wright.

**Also Present:** Mrs A Baxter (clerk).

**Not present:** Cllr A Gladwin, Cllr L Richfield, Cllr T Sanders, Mrs L Scott, Mrs D Stammers and Mrs J Triscott.

**25/014 Chairman's welcome and membership update**

Mrs Grotier welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

**25/015 Apologies of Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Gladwin, Cllr L Richfield, Cllr T Sanders and Mrs J Triscott

**25/016 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests**

None.

**25/017 Approval and signing of the minutes from the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

It was resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 as true and accurate. Proposed: Mrs Hare, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

**25/018 Public Speaking**

None.

**25/019 Land transfer update**

*Land transfer and any other updates from our solicitor.*

The Parish Council now owns the land. There is a backlog at land registry though for the register of the title, and it could take 6 months. Our solicitor will try and fast track it as it could cause us financial hardship if we are unable to obtain funding for the building until the land is registered.

Mr Fairweather asked for the solicitor's cost. We haven't received the invoice yet, but one of the land transfer costs will be paid by the developer. The cost for the other transfer will be taken from an earmarked reserve the council has.

**25/020 Work stages 4a and 4b and pre-commencement conditions.**

*An update.*

There are two pre-commencement conditions that require our input. One is a scheme to reduce waste. It will be difficult to show a reduction for a new building. It may be that they are looking for recycling, at the current community centre all the waste is thrown away. There is new government policy which means that the community centre will need to arrange for the collection of the core recyclable waste streams, and RCCE has advised us that the deadline to do so will be 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.

The clerk is to share the RCCE information with Mr Fairweather.

There was a discussion on sorting at source versus paying for sorting, and needing separate bins for recycling. We'll need to have the space ready for the sorting bins, and plan an efficient way to do the recycling in the kitchen design. The idea is to minimise general waste. Mrs Valentine has contacts regarding recycling and is experienced in recycling streams and can help.

The clerk will look for examples of strategies to share.

Cllr Hare noted that in the Quantity Surveyor's detailed costing the internal walls are low

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insulation, they could be insulated. Timber walls might be cheaper than the blockwork included. Blockwork is better for strength, fireproofing and soundproofing. It could be required for building regulations.

Mrs Valentine shared that the Colchester Anti-Loo Roll Brigade has built a centre with facilities in a few years. Mrs Valentine will contact them and ask about their experience.

Mr Fairweather asked who the architects are talking to about what is going into the building regulations. It was clarified that the QS details were done before the decisions were made about the roof so it doesn't reflect that it's artificial slate.

Mr Fairweather asked if anyone has spoken to Lanswood. The clerk has contacted them several times but they haven't got back to her. We need to speak to them about changing their s106 contribution.

Cllr Hare suggested that we put the tender out to get the structure built first and do other works such as the car park later.

Mr Fairweather said there were items in the quote that are not necessary. The clerk will go through that list with Mr Fairweather.

There was a discussion on whether blinds would be needed for the large window in the large hall. Some groups need it blacked out so it will need curtains, however if you shut the curtains to keep out the glare you are going to lose all natural light. It was suggested the best blinds would be the ones between the panes. This can all be decided later though.

Mr Hare asked what the difference between the stage 4a and 4b drawings would be. 4a is for the building regulations and 4b is for the tender. The clerk will check.

It was clarified that the cost of the QS estimate was included in the QS's quote as agreed.

The other pre-commencement condition we need to supply is on sustainable travel modes. We need to send TDC the information that we have to display in the new hall about sustainable travel. This will include bus timetables, the cycle bays available at the community centre, walking connections. The clerk will try to find an example.

**25/021 Funding update**

*i) To review the current funding.*

The committee reviewed the latest update. Some members felt that we should build the community centre without making a lottery application. Once we get our tender quotes back we'll know more about whether there is a funding gap. We can then do an affordability exercise to reduce the cost.

The committee reviewed a breakdown of the costs spent so far. It was noted that the building regulations work is supposed to be done by the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

There was also a discussion on the valuations on the current community centre done by 2 local estate agents. They did say there would be interest in purchasing it as a commercial property. If it's bought for development then the builder will have the cost of knocking down the community centre.

It was reported that the Hope Learning Community Trust are interested (for Market Field School). There's also a current community centre group that has expressed an interest to Mr Fairweather. The committee viewed the site plan which shows where the car park is split between community centre land and ECC land.

The sale proceeds could fund costs on the new committee centre that don't need doing in order for it to open.

It was asked if the Lanswood s106 could be used for the build and then use the current building proceeds to buy the open space facilities. The clerk thought not as it's under an open spaces designation. She will check.

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*ii) An update on potential additional funding.*

At the last council meeting it was agreed that we would submit an expression of interest in making a lottery application after the 1<sup>st</sup> April (when the applications will be available after a change in their funding strategies). There are also other grants available such as from Enover.

*iii) Public survey.*

This will be needed for the lottery application and so the council has agreed to do this. It's to find out what there is a need for and then investigate what is viable. For example a food bank to help tackle financial inequality or something like a men's shed/lads need dads. It was raised that there is not a lot for men in the village. This will need to go to every household but will have an on-line option for a response. It's also a good opportunity to give people an update. Mr Fairweather reminded the committee that the timetable is almost full. We could potentially utilise the community café area though.

*iv) Trees and hedges. Does the committee wish to look into the option of siting some of the required additional trees and hedges on the open space rather than on the community centre site? To review an option for free trees and hedges and the available supply.*

The clerk shared that Woodland Trust are giving away trees and hedges so we might be able to save on the costs for purchasing what we need to plant for the biodiversity requirement. The trees and hedges are currently planned for the community centre land, but the clerk suggested putting them on the open space land instead. TDC says that you can put it on other land you control, and as we now own it we should be able to do this. The application for trees closes in August and we'd get them in November. Should we try to get them moved to the open space and apply before August?

There was a concern over the space required for the football pitch and touchline. The committee looked at the options available. The clerk has matched them against the trees on the landscape specification. There are 3 types missing so she can ask DCB if they can be changed. We'd need to buy spirals to protect them. The clerk will check what size they are and if that will meet the requirements. We'd need a pack of 105 trees and 3 packs of the hedging to cover the 20m required.

**25/022 Any other updates**

None.

**25/023 Matters raised for the next agenda or for information only**

Mrs Grotier will do some wording to advertise on social media for interested members to join the committee.

**25/024 Date of next committee meeting**

24<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Contact: [elmsteadparish@gmail.com](mailto:elmsteadparish@gmail.com)

Telephone: 07907 610381

Signature .....

Date .....