

Minutes of Meeting on 6th February 2025
Meeting of Elmstead Parish Council
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Cllrs Adam Gladwin (Chairman), Amanda Brennan, James Chable, Michael Hare, Maxine Jeggo, Tony Sanders and Martine Ward.

Also Present: Mrs Baxter (clerk) and 4 members of public.

District Councillor Ann Wiggins.

County Councillor Carlo Guglielmi.

Absent: Cllrs Sarah Donaldson and Liz Richfield.

25/021 Chairman's welcome and notifications.

Cllr Gladwin welcomed everyone and thanked them for their help over the past few weeks.

25/022 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Donaldson and Richfield. Apologies were also received from District Councillor Scott.

25/023 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests.

None.

25/024 Approval and signing of the minutes from 9th January 2025.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 9th January 2025 as true and accurate.

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

25/025 To receive an update about the progress of resolutions from the meeting above not covered in this agenda.

The clerk reported that the works to improve the surface of the car park and vinyl graphics for the speed signs have not been progressed yet.

25/026 Public Speaking

No public present.

25/027 County Councillor report. To include where relevant an update on items in progress.

Cllr Guglielmi has sent information on devolution and ECC's budget.

It was reported that the Lucerne Road repairs Cllr Guglielmi put forward under the member's pothole scheme have been done well.

There is a long running issue with residents' complaints about speeding on School Road. The surveys showed compliance and the police have done speed checks with no-one caught speeding. The Local Highways Panel will put forward a scheme for village gates and review the signage.

There is a consultation for the road traffic order for the crossing on the agenda tonight. The design is not fully complete.

Cllr Guglielmi was asked about the situation for funding for PCSOs. Cllr Guglielmi understands that enough money has been found so that all the redundancies do not need to be made.

Lawford PC participates in a scheme called Operation Quasar where it funds 20 overtime hours per month for police time, and deploys them as and when needed. This has been used for speed checks, antisocial behaviour, for drugs blackspots etc. Cllr Guglielmi will be having a conversation to see how this can be rolled out.

Cllr Guglielmi has one more window for the pothole scheme this year and is hoping that the scheme will be renewed next year.

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25/028 District Councillor reports. Written report – to take questions on the report and provide any additional information not on the report.

The report can be viewed at <https://www.elmsteadparishcouncil.org.uk/meeting-reports>.

Cllr Wiggins was asked about the improvements to be made to the playground on Old School Lane. Cllr Wiggins will find out and get back to us.

25/029 New Community Centre and Open Space land.

i) A report from the committee meeting of 30th January 2025.

It was reported that only 3 members attended which meant that the meeting could not take place as it was not quorate. Mr Beard has since resigned as chairman and from the committee. The committee is not functioning well, with members not attending meetings. We will have to see what happens. In the meantime the council will have to get on with it themselves.

ii) Land transfer update.

The good news is that we received the completed paperwork today (the two TP1 Forms). We need to review and sign them. We are checking to see if this can be done by post. All the changes we discussed have been made.

iii) To review the estimate and current funding.

The Quantity Surveyor (QS) has provided an estimate, which we understand from the architect and the QS to be a highest end estimate/maximum so the cost should be less. The building works are £1.9 million, with preliminaries and contingencies it's £2.38 million. The clerk added other costs; works stages 4a and 4b costs, a ground investigation, project management estimated for the build, submission of building regulations, submission of planning conditions and legal fees for the build contract. This gives a total estimated cost of £2.5 million. We have £920k in the bank with another £200k held by TDC we can use towards the changing rooms. The QS said that inflation in the construction industry is low at around 3% and we are getting more than that on interest. This leaves a £1.38 million funding gap, which the clerk provided potential sources for including; grant funding (Awards for All and Enovert), the use of some of the Lanswood s106 contribution towards the car park and entrance road (would need a deed of variation), looking at what we can get for the current community centre (and the timing issue), removal of some of the solar panels and/or EV charging, reduction of the parking spaces, a Public Works Loan, and provided some guesswork examples at amounts.

We should be able to get grants for the EV charging points. We could also get a 3rd party to pay for the installation of the charging points and they then charge the customer. The infrastructure for the high capacity electric is expensive.

We won't know the actual cost until we put it out to tender. When the tender goes out the QS will put an estimated guide price on it, and he will have a better idea of it then.

iv) To discuss raising of additional funding. To consider the creation of a working party to investigate options for this.

The clerk had put some actions together for the working party and went through them.

It was resolved to constitute a working party with Cllrs Sanders, Brennan and Gladwin as members. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Sanders, all in favour.

v) To discuss the reduction of estimated costs, initially through a review of the current estimate and consideration of adjustments to the current project. To consider the creation of a working party to focus on this. To consider other options if this is not viable.

This was discussed under other sections.

vi) An update from a meeting with DCB, Brontide Consulting, Superstructures and the quantity surveyor on 27th January 2025.

Cllrs Gladwin and Brennan and Mrs Baxter met with DCB and the specialists. We got an updated timeline which was shared with the council. It shows the start of construction as early

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2026.

The clerk will circulate the cost estimate and the timeline.

vii) To review a list of questions from DCB.

The questions were discussed and answered where possible.

Materials: We know the external finishes/colours. There are different options for the metal roof. We were told by the specialists at the meeting that if we wanted slate tiles it would have to be artificial to compete with the cost of a metal roof, and that any savings made with the artificial slate would be easily eradicated by the additional cost of the steel and foundations you would need for the heavier roof. The advice we are getting is that from a cost perspective it should be a metal roof.

Public utilities; the clerk has obtained this information from Go Homes and forwarded it to DCB. The clerk will check what the committee decided for finishes, we think it's a buff coloured brick and cream render. The council agreed on a slate grey colour for a metal roof. Cllr Hare asked if we would then want the same colour for the windows to match.

The clerk passed on information from DCB that after we get our quotes back from the tender we can go through a cost reduction exercise with the builders (another community centre is currently doing it and has shortlisted 2 builders to do that process with). At that stage we might be asking the builder, for example, if he knows of a supplier who can provide a cheaper brick so the decision we make now doesn't have to be set in stone.

AV charging points capacity required: Do we want fast charging or not? With the costs as they are basic is best for now. Cllr Sanders said that the current capacity would dictate whether we can upgrade it in the future. The committee discussed this a long time ago and the intention was that the electric supply that the developer would install would be suitable for fast charging. The clerk will forward the utilities information to Cllr Sanders.

Preferred Energy Performance Target: With our cost restrictions we'll go to the minimum building regulation compliance.

Occupancy numbers: We think 150 for the main hall. We don't know for the small hall, possibly 60.

Kitchen – light or heavy cooking?: There was a discussion around commercial versus domestic and what electric loading will be needed. This will depend on how many ovens and microwaves we'll need. Cllr Chable advised that if you have domestic kitchens in a commercial premises they lose their warranty. For white goods that need certifications plumbers and commercial engineers won't test domestic appliances on commercial premises.

It was asked whether there would be any gas on site and thought that as it is going to be phased out we wouldn't.

For the majority of the current clubs it's no cooking or light cooking. Parties might have more cooking at the weekends. It's not consistent.

The clerk added that the committee has already designed the kitchen and thought it had 2 ovens and 2 hobs. It was added that it would be good to have facilities on both sides so that both halls can be serviced. There was a discussion on how many ovens would be required. A Rational electric commercial oven was recommended.

viii) Any other updates.

The structural engineer has informed us that we need to have a ground investigation survey and has provided a quote. This was for £3,875 plus provisional items if required of £335 plus VAT.

It was resolved to accept the quote. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

ix) Timeline.

Previously covered.

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- x) *To consider the addition of Cllr Sanders to the NCC Committee.*

There is a vacancy on the committee for a councillor (the terms of reference provide for 5 councillors and 10 non-councillors). It was resolved to add Cllr Sanders as a member.

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

- xi) *To consider a request to TDC to draw down s106 funds to pay for a dog waste bin on the open space. Does the council agree with the additional ongoing costs for emptying the bin?*

It was agreed that a dog waste bin is needed for the field. It will need to be agreed by TDC but a general location was agreed of on the far side of the path near the middle layby, so that the contractor can park in the layby. Metal versus plastic was discussed and it was decided that the Gladson plastic bin would be better than a bin which will rust. It is weather and vandal resistant. It was noted that all our dog bins are red which is easier to spot but that green would be less intrusive. We can do some planting around it to shield the view.

It was resolved to request to TDC that we draw down the funds to purchase the 50l Gladson "Retriever" bin at a cost of £315.65 including below ground fixing post. The council will incur a £105.08 annual fee for a weekly emptying of the bin. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

25/030 Current Community Centre

- i) *To consider getting a valuation.*

It was agreed to approach commercial estate agents to see if we can get a free quote.

- ii) *To consider getting it registered with land registry.*

It was resolved to get it registered using Ellison's solicitors who quoted £750 - £800 plus the £230 land registry fee. The registration will need to include the lease that the Community Centre charity holds.

- iii) *To consider a working party to research options for the site to potentially contribute towards the new community centre cost.*

It was resolved to constitute a working party with Cllrs Sanders, Brennan, Ward and Gladwin as members. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

25/031 Colchester Road crossing

- i) *To consider a response to the proposals for a Puffin Crossing - A133 Colchester Road, Elmstead as circulated by Traffic Regulation Orders and Consultations.*

It was resolved that the council fully supports the proposal. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

- ii) *Any other updates?*

Cllr Guglielmi reported that internal conversations are ongoing and that he expects it will be installed in the first quarter of 2025/26.

Cllr Guglielmi left the meeting.

25/032 Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community

- i) *Any updates?*

It was noted that there have been articles in the press regarding the funding of the link road since it was discussed in Parliament. We asked our MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin, to raise that the Garden Community shouldn't go ahead without the link road being fully funded, which he has done. We have also heard from another MP and know that MPs are discussing it. Some of the things the press is saying are not substantiated.

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- ii) *To consider a press release/public statement.*

Cllr Gladwin is drafting a press release and it was agreed that this would be circulated before being released as a general release. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Brennan, all in favour.

25/033 Planning

- i) *An update from the planning committee held on 14th January 2025.*

Cllr Brennan reported that two applications had been discussed. There were a lot of public present with objections to the application for 79 dwellings in front of Beth Chatto Gardens. As the application was in contradiction to Neighbourhood Plan policies and there were concerns about the safety of the location of the proposed entrance road it was decided to object and request that it be called in if the officers are minded to approve it.

The other application was to do with the construction schedule for the link road and no comments were returned.

- ii) *To consider the addition of Cllr Sanders to the Planning Committee and the updating of the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee to "membership shall comprise of 5 members".*

The above was resolved. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

25/034 Allotments

Any updates?

No updates, the clerk will chase.

25/035 Playing Field

- i) *Any update on the new Joint User Agreement for the use of the playing field by Reed Hall Sentinels?*

No updates.

- ii) *An update on arrangements for the calling off of games for bad weather, and pitch conditions.*

RHS called Cllr Brennan on Saturday to say that the field was churned up after the football played that day, and that they would have to play on it on the Sunday. They took photos of it before and after. Cllr Chable has before photos and will get after shots.

The caretaker didn't call Cllr Chable on the Friday to say the games should be cancelled. Cllr Chable will tell both the school team and RHS that they can't play this weekend. It was raised that the school played on two pitches when it was thought they should play on one.

Cllr Chable thinks that weedkiller is being used to mark out the pitches, we will ask RHS to stop doing this.

It was agreed for Cllr Brennan and Mrs Baxter to meet with the headmistress and speak about the school team only using one pitch. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

- iii) *Permission has been requested to plant willow tree alongside the hedgerow on the field to assist with drainage. A charity run business would carry out the planting and after care maintenance so there is no cost to the council or Market Field School. Also to plant additional Hawthorn bushes in the gaps in the hedgerow. Site plan to be circulated.*

Cllr Chable explained that it will all be done through grants, which will also pay for some of the aftercare.

It was resolved to give permission as requested above. Proposed: Cllr Chable, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

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25/036 Events.

The social hub.

Cllr Ward reported that it is going well and three new members attended the last hub. They are planning for a Valentine hub next week.

25/037 Finance.

i) *To look through the finance report and approve payments. See appendix 1.*
The finance report was approved. Proposed: Cllr Chable, Seconded: Cllr Brennan, all in favour.

ii) *An update on banking (accounts and deposits).*
Council reviewed the balances in the accounts.

iii) *Auditor*
See next agenda item.

25/038 Internal Audit 2024/25

To consider appointing Mrs Jan Stobart for the 2024/25 internal audit.

The above was resolved. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

25/039 Items for the next agenda or for information only.

25/040 Next meeting.

6th March 2025

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

There being no further public business councillors were thanked for their attendance.