

Minutes of Meeting on 6th June 2024
Meeting of Elmstead Parish Council
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

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

Also Present: Mrs Baxter.

District Councillors Gary Scott and Ann Wiggins.

Absent: Cllrs Sarah Donaldson and Gill Williams.

24/120 Chairman's welcome and notifications.

Cllr Gladwin welcomed everybody.

24/121 Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs Donaldson and Williams sent their apologies.

24/122 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests.

None.

24/123 Approval and signing of the minutes from 16th May 2024.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 16th May 2024 as true and accurate.

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

24/124 To receive an update about the progress of resolutions from the meeting above not covered in this agenda.

The clerk reported that she had contacted the signwriter who might be able to update the Chairman's board and he will come and view the board.

We've arranged a meeting with Cllr Guglielmi for next week.

The e-mails about indexation and interest on s106 monies were sent to Cllr Scott.

Cllr Chable reported that the issue with the school's windows was thermal stress (raised during a discussion about the large doors for the new community centre).

The solicitor has been asked about the white line on the map on the supplemental deed to the deed of variation for the community centre and he is reviewing it.

The opening of the Redwood bank account is in progress.

A presentation from CCLA has not been arranged yet.

We asked O'Neill Homer for a quote to do the changes to the referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan. This was provided and as it was less than £500 the expenditure was approved by the clerk and chairman.

We withdrew the Neighbourhood Development Order.

We appointed A Clarke Memorials to do the re-lettering of the war memorial. This work has been started.

The reduced invoice has not been sent to Reed Hall Sentinels yet.

We've renewed the council insurance.

We've let Lanswood know that we will not be able to cut the grass at their site.

Cllr Gladwin has been in communication with Hill's developers.

24/125 Public Speaking

None.

24/126 County Councillor report.

The County Councillor was not present but we will be meeting with him next week to catch up on outstanding issues. It was asked if we could speak to Cllr Guglielmi about the streetlights and lit signs on Clacton Road which are not working.

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24/127 District Councillor reports. Written report – to take questions on the report and provide any additional information not on the report.

Cllr Wiggins read through the written report. This can be viewed at

<https://www.elmsteadparishcouncil.org.uk/meeting-reports>.

Cllr Scott raised the issues with buses not stopping for people at the Cabinet Meeting.

Issues with school places were also discussed.

The Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee has had to put its consultation on the Local Plan back to August/September because of the election.

24/128 Independent Examination – Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community Plan.

To discuss a statement about the hearing result.

Cllr Gladwin has been speaking to residents and is worried that information about the hearing has not got out to the public. Cllr Gladwin proposed that he writes an update to be ready by the next meeting that will summarise what happened at the hearing, what happens next and highlight the issues we have with the Garden Community. Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

24/129 New Community Centre and Open Space land.

i) *To discuss the community centre acceptance notice.*

The deed of variation for Charity Field states that this must be issued later in June. Go Homes' solicitor is being slow at getting back to our solicitor. We have been in communication with our solicitor and we have asked for more clarity.

ii) *To review any new changes made to the plans.*

The council reviewed the latest plans onscreen. The layout of the car park has been changed, it is now in a crossroads format and is a bit bigger. This will make it easier for vehicles to turn around and for bin lorries to access the car park. There are more regular and disabled spaces.

iii) *Any other updates?*

Go Homes have done more groundworks. They have not done the drainage but there are markings on the ground which look like they will be for those works. The field has been seeded. There are still some very wet patches.

The potential incursions in the corner were discussed. The clerk has tried to see if land registry can check the borders but can't see any means to do that. Cllr Hare has said that we'll need to get a chartered surveyor to confirm whether their fence lines are over the boundary. A surveyor is to go on the next agenda and we'll try and get an idea of cost. The clerk has tried to find out if TDC will pay interest on the s106 monies they are holding and has received an e-mail to say no. However we were told that we could transfer the money from the Church Road development from TDC's account to our own interest bearing account straight away. Cllrs Scott and Wiggins spoke to Mr Guiver at TDC about interest being paid and he said it would. Cllr Scott will ask for meeting with Richard Barrett to ask about s106 funding.

We have discovered that we are unable to make a reserved matters application as the appeal conditions stipulated that the reserved matters be submitted within 3 years, which would have been 2019. We therefore need to make a new application. The architect suggested that we get all the matters dealt with now rather than have reserved matters to deal with once the application is approved. We therefore need to have the below 3 surveys done and the architects have provided quotes. It was agreed to go with those providers that the architect has used before.

iv) *Biodiversity net gain fee quote.*

Signature

Date

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It was resolved to use Ecology Essex at a cost of £1,550 plus VAT. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

v) *Hard and soft landscaping scheme fee quote.*

It was resolved to use Andrew Hastings at a cost of £725 plus VAT. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

vi) *Tree survey fee quote.*

It was resolved to use Tree Planning Solutions at a cost of £460 plus VAT. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

vii) *Charity Field swale.*

The swale in the corner fills up and drains regularly, it drains the road junction. It's steep sided and is next to the pavement. There are concerns regarding children getting stuck in there.

It was resolved to send a letter to Go Homes to share our concerns.

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

24/130 Neighbourhood Plan.

Any update on the Neighbourhood Plan.

O'Neill Homer are working on the changes. TDC has put the referendum back to September because of the General Election.

The clerk is to query the timing of the referendum with the timing of the meetings that the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be approved at first.

The clerk is to circulate the map of approved building developments for members to check if any are missing.

24/131 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) *To consider banking options for the council's current account.*

The clerk reported that it is very difficult with Barclays to keep signatories up to date. The current signatories agreed and added that it's very difficult to get online access even once you have been added. This is interfering with the running of the council.

Unity Bank is highly recommended by other councils. It's easy to set up and get signatories authorised, and the clerk can set up payments so that the signatories only need to sign off on payments. It costs £6/month but if you open an instant access savings account at the same time, the differential on the interest with Barclays would more than pay for the £6/month fee.

The clerk recommended keeping the Barclays account open, to keep the Unity account from going into the next tier of charges with the large payments that are due to be paid into the PC account.

It was resolved to open a current account and instant access savings account with Unity.

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

24/132 Annual Internal Audit

Mrs J Stobart has completed the internal audit for 2023/24 and this has been circulated.

To review recommendations. Any questions to be discussed.

The recommendations are highlighted in blue. The clerk went through these. Mrs Stobart has noted that care needs to be taken with the general reserve, and in monitoring actual expenditure against budget.

It was asked if a councillor signs the payslips. It was responded that the payslips and timesheets are provided to the bank signatories. They review and sign them when they do the payroll banking.

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The clerk was congratulated on a good audit.

24/133 Annual Governance and Accountability Return

- i) *To review for approval the Annual Governance Statement (Annual Return Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24).*

The clerk read through each statement on Section 1.

It was resolved to approve Section 1 with all statements agreed as “yes”.

Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Chable. All in favour.

- ii) *To consider for approval Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24.*

It was resolved to approve Section 2. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Brennan. All in favour.

- iii) *Signing of the Governance and Accounting Statements by the Chairman.*

Cllr Gladwin signed the statements.

24/134 Speedwatch

To discuss what to do about Speedwatch.

It was discussed that it's been difficult to get volunteers. The number of volunteers needed to go out has been increased to 3.

It was agreed to pause Speedwatch for now and inform the co-ordinator.

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

24/135 Events.

- i) *The social hub.*

Cllr Richfield reported that the volunteers have not decided on what they are going to do over summer. They will continue to the end of June and then may stop for 2 months. The decision will be made in the next couple of weeks.

- ii) *Halloween.*

Cllr Jeggo is sending e-mails to stall holders for item ii) and iii) with the council account details so that they can pay a deposit.

- iii) *Christmas.*

- iv) *Walking Group.*

Mrs Ward, who is a member of the working party, will put together a risk assessment.

24/136 Annual Grants

Timing and to consider whether to delegate the decision on grants to the Finance Committee.

It was resolved to delegate the decisions on the approval of grants to the Finance Committee, within the budget limit set for grants. This will make the grant approval process more flexible.

Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

24/137 Hills Development.

An update if available.

The planning application is being progressed. The next step is the pre-application with TDC. They are getting a surveyor to figure out how much a s106 contribution to the new community centre could be in lieu of affordable housing.

Cllrs were concerned about potential changes that could be made after the application has been submitted. The council has not committed to its view on this future application and can decide formally once it's submitted and out for consultation.

24/138 Tree survey for Elmcroft and the Greens

To consider quotes if available.

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We have one quote but need to get 2 more.

24/139 Items for the next agenda or for information only.

Allotments for the next agenda. It was asked what's happening with the land transfer. The clerk reported that she had asked TDC to incorporate other items into the deed of variation such as proper fence, to cover all of the legal costs, and a water supply. We aren't getting any money with the land transfer and we don't have the reserves to do extra works. However TDC's response was to say we should negotiate the developer. As the developer has left the site we'll have to take the land as it is. It's covered in weeds. The clerk will try and call the planning officer for advice.

There's a discussion to have with the school about the allotment land. The clerk will have a look through the old minutes to see what the agreement was regarding giving an allotment to the school.

It was asked about Byway 10 (Stinky Lane). This will be raised with Cllr Guglielmi at the upcoming meeting.

It was asked what will happen about the dead end to the footpath from the allotment land to Elmcroft. We don't have the allotment land yet.

24/140 Next meeting.

The next meeting is due to be held on the 4th July 2024. However due to elections being held on the same day it will need to be rearranged.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on the 27th June.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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

Minutes written by Mrs. A Baxter