

Minutes of Meeting on 6th March 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, and Martine Ward.

Also Present: Mrs Baxter (clerk) and 4 members of the New Community Centre Committee. District Councillors Ann Wiggins and Gary Scott.

Absent: Cllrs Sarah Donaldson, Maxine Jeggo, Liz Richfield, Tony Sanders.

25/041 Chairman's welcome and notifications.

Cllr Gladwin welcomed everyone and let attendees know the meeting is recorded.

25/042 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jeggo and Sanders. Apologies were also received from County Councillor Guglielmi.

25/043 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests.

None.

25/044 Approval and signing of the minutes from 6th February 2025.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 6th February 2025 as true and accurate. Proposed: Cllr Hare, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

25/045 To receive an update about the progress of resolutions from the meeting above not covered in this agenda.

The clerk updated that the works to improve the surface of the car park are outstanding. She has spoken to a number of people and it's not clear what is the best material to use. The vinyl graphics will be installed on the Bromley Road speed signs (30mph limit). We are still in the process of getting the s106 funds to purchase the dog bin for the Charity Field open space. We sent our supporting comments for the crossing. The internal auditor has been booked for May.

25/046 Public Speaking

None

25/047 County Councillor report. To include where relevant an update on items in progress.

The report can be viewed at <https://www.elmsteadparishcouncil.org.uk/meeting-reports>. Although Cllr Guglielmi was not able to attend he did arrange for detailed design plans for the Colchester Road crossing to be sent to the council.

25/048 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 reported that £30k - £40k of s106 funds will be spent on play equipment for the Old School Lane play park.

Cllr Scott spoke against the planning application for the Elmstead garage at the TDC planning committee meeting, but it was approved. Essex Highways did say that they should put £25k towards the crossing, but officers felt that there was no evidence to support it. Officers said that there would be no increase in traffic, Cllr Scott responded that he did not agree, with all the changes to the business.

The environment agency objected due to the runoff of water from the car washing facility because it could run into water courses. They were also concerned about the fuel tanks

Signature

Date

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being underground. The environment agency asked for 6 conditions, but officers removed 5. Cllr Scott spoke against removing the environmental conditions. The committee agreed to reinstate them.

Cllr Scott spoke to the applicant to ask them to visit the location during the day to look at where traffic stacks up on the road when vehicles are waiting to get onto the forecourt. The new station will be more in keeping as a motorway service station, not a village station.

The car washing will be limited to 7am to 7pm.

25/049 New Community Centre and Open Space land.

i) *A report from the committee meeting of 27th February 2025.*

The minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

ii) *Land transfer update. To consider authorisation for the deeds of transfer for land allocated as public open space land and for the land allocated for a village hall.*

The above was resolved. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour. The clerk is to check whether our insurer needs to know about the land transfer.

iii) *To review the current funding.*

Council reviewed the current available funds.

iv) *A report from the funding working party.*

a. *To consider sending a letter to businesses for donations for a plaque.*

We've spoken about the sponsor a brick scheme, Cllr Sanders previously looked into options for a rugby club and plaques were cheaper. We could offer local businesses as a sponsorship idea. It would be better to look at this when we are further along as it can help close the final gap. We can research how it will work in the meantime.

b. *To consider submitting an expression of interest for a grant to Reaching Communities.*

This is the relevant lottery fund. The fund will be open as of the 1st April. The clerk will try to get the format of the questions so that we can get the answers ready to go.

It was resolved to submit our expression of interest as soon as possible after the 1st April if we have the information required, if not it will come back to the April PC meeting.

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

c. *To consider a survey.*

The lottery will want to see evidence of support for our plans so we need to do a public survey. If we need to consider a public works loan we will need to get public support for that too so we can ask about that. We can then align our plans with local needs and interest. For example for a scheme like lads need dads, men's sheds or a repair café. Ideas will need to be able to be accommodated within the building.

It was resolved to start work on a survey. To go on the next agenda.

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

d. *To consider the requirements for a public works loan.*

We would need to apply through EALC to get approval from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Once we have that we make an application to the Public Works Loan Board two weeks before the loan is required. We can get everything in place, in case we need it. We need to find out if there would be resident support for an increase in council tax. We could use it to bridge the gap between building the new community centre and selling the old one. If we took the proceeds and used it to repay the loan we may not need to precept for it.

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v) *To decide on the roof material.*

We have received an update from the architect which confirms that we would be able to span the hall using a timber frame and use artificial slate for the roof. The example slates we have been given are covered by a 20 year colour and a 30 year structural guarantee. Real slate would be more expensive. The council viewed pictures of the artificial slate on roofs.

It was resolved to go with the timber truss rafters and artificial slate, which was recommended to us as a more economical, simple and less risky solution than the zinc roof on a steel frame by our QS. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Brennan, all in favour.

The architect has also asked what was wanted for the external materials; bricks and cladding, and gave us choices for each.

Mr Fairweather did not like either of the 2 buff brick examples given (one was too orange and one was expensive) and asked for Forterra Leicestershire russet bricks. The pearl grey was the preference for the weather boarding, as it's darker it will be more practical. Mr Fairweather asked about the anthracite grey fascias, soffits and windows. He didn't feel it would be in keeping and would prefer white, the same as every other building over there. It was discussed that the gutters and soffits would be better dark as dirt and weathering would be less obvious.

The electronic front doors and large west facing doors will need to be powder coated aluminium.

It was agreed that a ceiling height of 3.6m was acceptable.

Mr Fairweather pointed out that laminate flooring would not be very practical. We'll ask for more details from the QS.

He also pointed out that the QS has not included the acoustic sliding wall in the costings. We'll check with the QS.

It was agreed that black gutters next to the dark grey roof would be best, so to have black gutters and dark grey soffits and white windows and doors.

vi) *Any other updates.*

Mr Wright asked if we have any details on heating, but we are still waiting on that from Brontide.

vii) *To consider where to invest the £200,000 plus interest which will mature from the Unity 6 month fixed term account on 17th March 2025.*

It was resolved to open another 6 month fixed term account with Unity. The fixed rate is now 4%.

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

25/050 Current Community Centre

i) *Valuation update.*

Cllr Brennan reported that we met with 2 estate agents, Fenn Wright and Nicholas Percival. One was more enthusiastic than the other and said that a business or developer could be interested, particularly with the growth in the village. We are waiting to get valuations in writing. A builder's offer would likely be subject to planning. There were questions around whether there would be enough parking.

ii) *Registration update.*

The clerk needs to send the original documents and valuation to the solicitor.

iii) *Any other updates?*

No other updates.

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25/051 New councillors needed.

To consider sending leaflets to new developments. Any other suggestions?

We used to have so much information go out in Upmarket about vacancies, so we spoke about targeting newer areas on the outskirts. It was suggested that we start with Lanswood, the Grange and Tye Road. We'll need to do flyers for those houses. Cllr Brennan will put some wording together. We could perhaps do a drop in at the Shed Café.

25/052 Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community

Any updates?

The press statement Cllr Gladwin drafted has been circulated and everyone is happy for it to go out on the PC website and on social media. If we want to, in the future, we can send the press a link to it.

Cllr Gladwin asked Cllr Scott why it has been so quiet when we should be hearing from the Planning Inspector on his report. Cllr Scott wasn't sure if it could be linked to devolution. The Local Plan consultation is now live and they are proposing more garden communities. Tendring has to build 1,034 houses every year.

25/053 Allotments

Any updates?

The land transfer has still not taken place. The solicitor who we originally instructed, but who didn't respond and was eventually dis-instructed has been in contact to see if we still want their services. There was no proposal that the council should do so, the clerk is to let them know it's a no thank you.

25/054 Playing Field

An update on the new Joint User Agreement for the use of the playing field by Reed Hall Sentinels. An update on issues with the condition of the ground and the use of the field when conditions are not suitable.

Cllr Brennan reported that she's been getting complaints from RHS about the field being played on on Saturdays. We have a meeting next week with the school and RHS. The meeting is also to go through the joint user agreement, with Lambert Smith Hampton. Cllr Chable has also been getting phone calls at the weekend but doesn't work for the school any more so is not there to be able to check the ground conditions. The school needs a decision maker to let the clubs know whether to play or not.

25/055 Events.

i) The social hub.

Cllr Ward reported that in general it is well attended with about 30 people.

ii) VE Day 80. To consider how to mark the occasion.

Cllr Brennan has purchased bunting and a flag (as a donation). Mr Fairweather will put the soldier out. Cllr Brennan will make a VE Day 80 sign.

25/056 Finance.

i) To look through the finance report and approve payments. See appendix 1.

The finance report was approved. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

ii) An update on banking (accounts and deposits).

Council reviewed the balances in the accounts.

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25/057 Governance

To review the following governance documents:

i) Standing Orders.

The NALC template for standing orders hasn't changed. The clerk suggested an update to the reference to the Public Contract Regulations as they refer to 2015, and they have been updated since. It was resolved to approve the Standing Orders with that change.

Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Chable.

ii) Financial Regulations (to consider the adoption of the NALC 2024 model).

The clerk has completed these with the same council specific information as the previous regulations. The clerk went through some changes; in the previous version she had emergency powers to spend up to £500. It's been changed so that the clerk can authorise spend for any items under £500, and a separate amount of £2,000 for an emergency spend.

It was resolved to adopt these financial regulations with the clerk spend limits as given above. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Gladwin, all in favour.

iii) Risk Assessment.

Separate risk assessments are done in addition to this more general risk assessment. Mrs Wards does them for the PC events, Mr Dingwall does it for the work he does and for the litter pick. The clerk pointed out that the RA states that the RFO will produce bank recs, a budget update, receipts and payments for each PC meeting. This doesn't happen but the Finance Committee meets quarterly and reviews these. It was agreed to change the reference to be reviewed at the quarterly finance committee meetings.

The clerk has added a scheme of delegation to help with the continuity of council business between meetings. This will need to come to a future PC meeting for adoption. The clerk also pointed out that the village working party hasn't met in a long time, and Mr Dingwall has asked if a tour could be organised soon.

It was resolved to approve the updated Risk Assessment.

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

iv) Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements.

The NALC templates have now separated the above into two policies, a disciplinary policy and a grievance policy. It was resolved to adopt both policies. Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

v) Equality Policy.

It was resolved to adopt the equality and diversity policy. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour. The policy refers to a dignity at work policy so this is to be included on the next agenda.

It was agreed that unless changes are made to the template documents or there is a need to do so sooner then policies for items iv) and v) will be reviewed in 4 years' time.

25/058 Annual Parish Meeting

In recent years the Annual Parish Meeting has consisted of a Chairman's annual report and a Finance Report and has been held directly before the May Annual Parish Council Meeting. This meeting must be held between 1 March and 1 June. It must not start before 6pm. It is a meeting of local electors and can include business to be transacted to be voted on by the electors present. It can also include presentations and displays etc, for public interest and/or participation. To discuss the timing and format for this year's meeting.

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held at 7pm half an hour before the Annual Parish Council meeting and it would be an event to share

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information about the new community centre. Proposed: Cllr Gladwin, Seconded: Cllr Chable, all in favour.

25/059 Items for the next agenda or for information only.
Strategy Plan (Cllr Ward).

25/060 Next meeting.
3rd April 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

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