

ELMSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Thursday 21st November, 2013

Present:

Councillors: Cllr. Bell, Cllr. Beecham, Cllr. Fairweather, Cllr. Redding, Cllr. Brock, Cllr. Grotier, Cllr. Routledge,
Cllr. Gray

District Councillors: District Councillor Rosemary Heaney, District Councillor Fred Nicholls

Clerk: Mrs. A Baxter & Mrs. V Howard

Public: 8 members of public present

Meeting chaired by Cllr. Bell

Meeting Commenced at 7.30pm

1. Chairman's welcome

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Lloyd

3. Welcome to Mrs. Vikki Howard who will be our Clerk and RFO whilst Mrs. Baxter is on maternity leave.

4. Declaration of interests in items on the agenda.

Cllr. Bell item 13 non pecuniary interest – lives on Harvest Way

Cllr. Routledge item 13 non pecuniary interest – lives on Harvest Way

Cllr. Grotier item 13 non pecuniary interest – lives on Holly Way

Cllr. Redding item 15 non pecuniary interest – lives on Church Road and is directly affected by the Moto Cross activity

Cllr. Beecham items 19 & 21 non pecuniary interest in the noticeboards and posts on South Green

5. Police Report with general observations on the overall picture of the increase or decrease of incidents.

PCSO Les Barnes not present.

Cllr. Bell: Read out police report and stressed how important it is to report any incidents.

Public: There is a van which parks on Oatlands all day which causes an obstruction to traffic, especially at school drop off and pick up times.

Action: Cllr. Bell to check number plate and office to report to PCSO Barnes.

6. Comments from District Councillors

Cllr. Heaney: TDC will be voting on the draft local plan next week.

7. Matters raised by Members of the Public

Public (regarding the draft local plan development): Has anyone asked if the doctor's surgery/school can cope with the increase in population?

Cllr. Heaney: TD are told how many houses to build by the government, it's worth writing to make the point though.

Cllr. Grotier: The School is full but not only from the catchment area so it could cater for an increased local population.

Matter raised by owners of 44 Bowes Road Wivenhoe to be treated as an extraordinary item. Please see appendix B.

8. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting from Thursday 17th October 2013.

It was proposed that the Minutes of the Parish Meeting from Thursday 17th October 2013 be agreed and accepted as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr. Grotier Seconded Cllr. Beecham Carried

9. Clerk's Report

On matters from the last meeting. Any business requiring a decision is listed on this agenda.

Action: Arrange a meeting between Cllr. Redding and the Clerk(s) to go through the risk assessment.

Cllr. Bell: Regarding the survey for the Colchester Road Crossing, the manual count was actually a video count.

Action: Request a copy of the video from Mr. R Macdonald, Highway Liaison Officer of Essex County Council.

10. Financial

10.1 Finance Report prepared by Clerk

It was proposed that the Finance Report (copy distributed to the Council and attached to the Minutes) be agreed.

Proposed Cllr. Redding Seconded Cllr. Gray Carried

10.2 Grants for local organizations. Would Council be prepared to delegate the power to approve these grants to the Finance Committee? It would need to be subject to an overall budget and an individual limit for each grant. The budget for 2013/14 is £2,350 with a maximum limit of £300. The draft budget for 2014/15 is £2,250 with a maximum limit of £200.

It was proposed that Council delegate the power to approve grants to local organisations within the above budgets and individual grant maximum limits

Proposed Cllr. Gray Seconded Cllr. Grotier Carried

Cllr. Bell: It has come to light that a Parish Council may not give grants to churches.

Mrs. Howard: There is no power to enable a Parish Council to grant money to a church, however if the church has a room which is used for the benefit of the wider community (eg. A room used by a toddler group) then it is possible to grant money towards the upkeep of that. EPC needs to make it transparent that is what the money is for and request proof that it's what the money is spent on.

Action: Contact the Elmstead Churches to explain the above.

11. Communications

11.1 Cllr. Beecham suggests that rather than a quarterly newsletter a monthly newsletter should go into Upmarket so that parishioners can be kept up to date with current news. The Communications Committee should be given the powers to go to press with information already made public through the Council meetings.

It was clarified that Councillors cannot go direct to press themselves; this would need to come from the Parish Clerk/Council Office.

It was proposed that a monthly EPC newsletter should go into Upmarket.

Proposed Cllr. Beecham Seconded Cllr. Brock Carried

Action: Cllr. Redding to speak to Upmarket about how a monthly insert might work, which retains the identity of an EPC newsletter.

12. Planning

12.1 New Planning Applications Received

None so far

12.2 Decisions in the Month

13/00787/FUL Forres, Clacton Road. Alterations and extensions to existing garage building (to facilitate conversion to residential annexe). Full Approval

13/01004/LUEX The Pool House, Shaftesbury House, Clacton Road. Use of the Pool House as a single dwellinghouse. Lawful Use Certificate Granted

13/01109/COUNOT Park Farm, Colchester Road. Change of use of agricultural building to Class B1 for light industrial/office use. Determination prior approval not required

Any Others
None

13. TDC Local plan

13.1 Any update?

Cllr. Heaney: TDC will vote on this next week and there will be a consultation in January. The major change for Elmstead is that the development will be split over two sites. Cllr. Heaney was not aware that the developers for the land behind Meadow Close are now proposing that the access for the land be through Meadow Close. In the past Mr. G. Guiver (TDC planning) has said that they would not put access through Meadow Close. Cllr. Heaney will call Mr. Guiver in the morning to ask about this.

Cllr. Heaney emphasised the need for individuals to write in separately with any objections they have to the plan.

13.2 The residents of Meadow Close have objected to Mr. G Guiver regarding the Meadow Close access for the proposed development behind Meadow Close and have requested that Elmstead Parish Council does the same. Does Council wish to decide and provide an opinion to Mr. Butcher and/or TDC?

It was proposed that Elmstead Parish Council write a letter to Mr. G Guiver to inform him that EPC are opposed to road traffic access through Meadow Close for the local plan development.

Proposed Cllr. Bell Seconded Cllr. Redding Carried (all in favour)

Cllr. Brock apologised and left the meeting.

14. TDALC Standards Committee

Please refer to letter from Robert Taylor, Chairman of TDALC

TDC are going to put a recommendation at their 26th November meeting that the Standards Committee would have a Sub-Committee for dealing with complaints against parish and town councillors to consist of three members of TDC and three parish/town representatives who would take full part in the consideration of each case of complaint against members or Clerks of Parish/Town Councils. The formal decision and any sanctions to be applied would be determined by the Sub-Committee by vote by the three TDC members. TDALC recommend this approach to us.

TDALC suggest that the three parish/town representatives be appointed by TDALC at a TDALC meeting from names suggested by Parish and Town Councils and ask us to consider the matter and let TDALC know if this approach is acceptable to us.

Cllrs agreed that the above approach is acceptable to Elmstead Parish Council.

15. Moto Cross Activity in Church Road

An update on any action taken by TDC.

Cllr. Nicholls: TDC have served a notice on the owner and received a response. Cllr. Nicholls will follow this up. TDC have not sent an officer out to check the noise levels but Environment are in the discussion about this activity along with Enforcement.

Cllr. Redding thanked Cllr. Nicholls for his helpful involvement.

16. Old Post Office

An update from Cllr. Nicholls regarding his meeting with the owner of the old post office and Gary Ashby of TDC.

Cllr. Nicholls: English Heritage have no objection in principle to the demolition of the building provided a survey is undertaken. Sheila Stone (EH) is coming to meet Mr. G Ashby, Cllr. Nicholls and the owners at the site within 3 weeks. She will suggest a suitable type of design for the replacement building. Cllr. Nicholls will keep us updated.

17. 19 Holly Way

Any update from Cllr. Heaney?

Cllr. Heaney: An enforcement officer has taken photos at the address and seen the cars and the rubbish piling up. He will discuss this with his colleagues. Cllr. Heaney will look into how many trees are part of the overgrown hedge outside as if it's 3 they could possibly it cut get down.

18. Market Field School

Cllr. Bell and Mrs. Baxter met with Mr. G Smith, headmaster of Market Field School. Mr. Smith advised us that the School will be looking to renegotiate the lease on Market Field to take it over as of September 2014. The field will be securely fenced to enable the students to use the field safely. However there will still be a football pitch available to the teams who currently use the pitch outside of School hours for as long as necessary. In addition the village events may still be held on the field (the School summer fete and the fireworks display). Is there anything in addition we would like to ask for as a condition of the lease being renegotiated and do we agree in principle to support this?

Elmstead Football Club Chairman, Paul Beard said that it concerned him a little that Elmstead would no longer have a field.

He raised the following concerns:

- Access to the field if it was fenced off.
- Would a key be needed? If so, would he need to collect it from someone?
- Goal posts have to be solid holes – if they move the pitch will have to put new ones in for health and safety reasons – would be an issue for them.
- Bonfire and pitch could not be close together. Health and safety issues.

It was mentioned that Mr Smith would be happy to answer any questions people may have.

Market Field School are looking to renegotiate the lease to be solely in their name – this means that:

- Elmstead Parish Council will no longer have Market Field as a recreational space
- Lease runs out 2017 but Market Field School want to become sole lease holders from September 2014 meaning that Elmstead Parish Council will lose 2-3 years of remaining lease.

Cllr. Redding asked if the Parish Council has any say in the matter?

It was suggested that the Parish Council should keep in contact with Mr Smith and keep him up to date with thoughts – dog walkers, football club etc.

District Councillor Rosemary Heaney suggested that the Parish Council write to ECC about their concerns.

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19. New Notice Boards

An update and agreement on the additional expenditure required for the posts for the Notice Boards. Also, does anyone have any suggestions as to alternative locations or should they remain in the same locations?

Cllr. Beecham: the notice boards are too big to go into the bus shelters.

There are no alternative sites for the notice boards.

Cllr. Bell requested a meeting with Cllr. Beecham to discuss alternative sites for the notice boards

It was proposed to go ahead and buy posts for the notice boards.

Proposed - Cllr. Grotier Seconded.- Cllr. Routledge Carried

20. Dene Park

Any update on the suggestion of allotments?

In principle Wivenhoe Town Council have agreed to the use of Dene Park for allotments. We would need to look into the change of use and the provision of water and fencing.

Cllr. Redding: is there a public right of way?

Cllrs Bell and Fairweather are to push forward with this.

Clerk to follow up on whether people from Elmstead will be willing to travel to Wivenhoe for an allotment.

21. South Green

Cllr. Beecham suggests that permission be given to the South Green Residents to put posts on the edge of the green next to the bollards in line with the bollards. This is to prevent vehicles driving up on to the green to get around the bollards, as Cllr. Beecham has witnessed, and therefore avoid damaging the Green.

It was proposed that we monitor the situation to see if this will be a regular occurrence before any action is taken.

Proposed Cllr. Bell Seconded Cllr. Gray Carried

22. Village Plan

Any update?

Not at this time.

23. December Council Meeting

A discussion of any ideas for the December meeting. Do we wish to have Christmas drinks and food after the meeting?

It was agreed that there would be drinks and nibbles after the December meeting and Cllrs would each contribute something.

24. Matters Raised by Councillors for the next agenda or for information only

Cllr. Grotier requests that dog mess be on the next agenda. School children use Elmcroft for Forest School and are stepping in the dog mess left on Elmcroft.

25. Confidential Matters (In Camera) Public are to be excluded from the following discussion as the discussion of quotes for work to be provided is of a confidential nature. See appendix A

There being no further business Councillors were thanked for their attendance.
Meeting closed at 9.48pm

Date of next Parish Meeting: Thursday 19th December, 2013
To be held in the Community Centre, School Road CO7 7ET

Minuted by Mrs. A Baxter
21st November, 2013
Contact: elmsteadparish@btconnect.com
Telephone: 01206 827139

Appendix to the original Minutes:

Appendix A

Council are asked to agree expenditure for the following: Elmcroft – Cut hedges around car park and boundary hedges. Undercut trees on Elmcroft, North Green and South Green to enable the mower to cut the grass. Trim branches on a tree on South Green which are interfering with a telephone line. Quotes to be provided.

It was agreed to investigate the possibility of Mr. A Dingwall, our handyman, attending a course to use a chainsaw and doing the above work as an employee of the Council.

Appendix B

It came to light on the sale of 44 Bowes Road that there is an entry on the title to that property which EPC have the benefit of and is preventing the sale of the same.

It was proposed that EPC give authority to our solicitor, Mr. Edward Worthy of Gepp & Sons to release the contract and unilateral notice on the title to enable the sale to proceed.

Proposed Cllr. Beecham Seconded Cllr. Bell Carried

Finance Report prepared by the Clerk.

All other relevant correspondence has been circulated prior to the meeting and available upon request.