

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

14 FEBRUARY 2011 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Emery, Chairman; Councillors Archer, Buckton, Mrs Desborough, Jolley and Lockett.

Apologies: Councillors Cole, Mrs Palmby and Risbridger.

In attendance: Mr Alan Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council (FDC), in his capacity as FDC's liaison officer for Manea Parish Council - at the invitation of the Parish Council.

The minutes of the meeting of 17 January 2011 were confirmed and signed.

M116/10 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

(1) Open space at Station Road/Jolley Close, Manea (minute M103/10 (1))

The Clerk reported that the situation had not changed since that reported at minutes M67/10 (1), M79/10 (1), 91/10 (1) and M103/10 (1).

Mr A Pain, Corporate Director at Fenland District Council (FDC), gave an assurance that the Legal Services Team at FDC would continue its efforts to achieve a satisfactory resolution to this matter.

Members decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the support of the Member of Parliament be enlisted.

(2) Joint meeting of local councils (minute M103/10 (4))

The Clerk reported the receipt of an e-mail from the Clerk to Upwell Parish Council, stating that the structure and direction of the joint meeting of local parish councils was discussed at Upwell's full council meeting in January 2011. At that meeting, councillors heard responses to their proposals to change the format of the group from Welney and Manea Parish Councils and discussed the future functionality of such a group.

The members of Upwell Parish Council consider that it is important to meet and share experiences but felt that there needed to be a more productive outcome from such meetings and that the cross-county border nature of the current group did not best facilitate this. It was, therefore decided by Upwell Parish Council that, for the time being, it would step back from hosting future meetings and focus upon priorities which could be tackled by a group wholly based within Norfolk. Upwell Parish Councillors are keen to remain apprised of activities within the existing group and hoped that it would be possible to attend meetings if there was a particular item which they felt their input could have a real impact upon.

The Clerk reported an e-mail from the Clerk to Welney Parish Council, which had been sent in response to the e-mail from the Clerk to Upwell Parish Council. The e-mail states that Welney Parish Council will endeavour to arrange a new date for the next meeting of the adjoining Parish Councils and will communicate the details as

soon as possible.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

(3) Local council elections 2011 (minute M111/10 (2))

The Clerk reported that Fenland District Council (FDC) has now provided information in relation to the estimated cost of poll cards for a Manea Parish Council election.

FDC states that it is currently obtaining quotations for the cost of poll cards but estimates that each card will be in the region of 41 pence to 51 pence, depending upon type (ordinary or postal), for printing plus second class postage.

Members decided that the estimated costs of poll cards be noted.

(4) Water main renewal – Station Road, Manea (minute M111/10 (5))

The Clerk reported an e-mail from Anglian Water, informing the Parish Council that the commencement date of the water main renewal scheme for Station Road, Manea has been delayed; works will now begin on 21 March 2011.

Members decided that the information provided by Anglian Water be noted.

(5) School bus pick-up point in Westfield Road, Manea (minute M113/10)

The Clerk reported an e-mail from County Councillor Harper, in which he states that he has visited the site and can see the problem; he has undertaken to respond further following discussion of the issue with officers at the County Council.

Members decided that the content of the response from Councillor Harper be noted.

M117/10 Playing Field and play area issues

- (1) Dyke alongside the playing field – the Clerk reported the quotation received from one of the three contractors which had been invited to submit a quotation for undertaking the necessary dyke clearance works.

Members decided that the quotation received be accepted, subject to the contractor possessing the necessary insurance cover and operational policies, and that the contractor be requested to be undertake the works at the earliest opportunity.

- (2) Manea United Strikers – the Clerk reported a request from Manea United Strikers for use of the playing field and pavilion for its presentation evening (including a barbeque for the young footballers) scheduled for the evening of 11 June 2011.

Members decided that the request be approved and that no charge be made.

- (3) Future development of facilities – further to minute M95/10 (1), the Clerk reported that the planning application for the new pavilion has been submitted to Fenland District Council by the agents acting on behalf of the Parish Council and that a decision on the application is expected by early April 2011.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

- (4) Skateboard Park – Councillor Emery informed members that a temporary ramp which had been added to the skateboard park by local youngsters had been removed and that he had mentioned the matter to PCSO Marie Bailey, who, in turn, spoke with the youngsters.

M118/10 Planning application

Members considered the following planning application and decided to submit to the Local Planning Authority the comments set out (in italics) below:

Erection of pavilion and function room, including demolition of existing pavilion, at Manea Playing Field, Park Road, Manea – F/YR11/0075/F (applicant: Manea Parish Council).

Given that the Parish Council is the applicant for the proposal, members feel that it would be inappropriate to comment.

M119/10 Finance

The Clerk reported on the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting, as follows:

Income

George James & Son	Interment fee – V Newell	£140.00
Fenland District Council	Refund of part of planning application fee	£167.50
Fenland District Council	Recycling Credits: July to September 2010	£70.45
Total Income		£377.95

Expenditure

B J Short	Repairs to toilet at pavilion	£33.00
Manea Matters	Parish Council features in 3 editions	£90.00
Mrs P Smith	Expenses associated with Heritage Lottery Funding bid	£14.69
MHB Services Ltd	Replacement street lamp bracket – Westfield Road, Manea	£222.00
Manea Village Hall	Room hire on 17/01/11	£7.50
Mrs A Ryman	Wages and expenses	£75.48
T Jordan	Salary (less income tax of £85.64), Broadband and other expenses	£411.14
Total Expenditure		£853.81

In addition, the Clerk reported to members on the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 January 2011 (in the total sum of £40,630.22).

Members decided

- (1) upon a proposal from Councillor Archer, seconded by Councillor Lockett, that the income of £377.95 be noted and that the payments totalling £853.81 be authorised;

(2) that the levels of funding held within the Parish Council's bank accounts as at 31 January 2011 be noted.

M120/10 Manea Pit

Members received the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting of 26 January 2011.

Councillor Emery reported that the land adjoining the pit, which will be the site of the community orchard/woodland, has now been ploughed and is ready to be seeded in the near future. In addition, he mentioned that there had been one incident of shooting around the pit, which has been reported to PCSO Marie Bailey, who has taken the bullets which were found at the site.

At the Chairman's invitation, Mrs P Smith (a member of the Sub-Committee) reported on the outcome of the application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which has resulted in the sum of £7,700 being awarded to the orchard/woodland project, and the procedural issues that the HLF has put in place to ensure that the grant is spent appropriately to achieve delivery of the aims of the project.

The HLF's procedural issues include the submission of a completed "permission to start and payment request" form, to be signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council. When the HLF gives permission to start, it will release 50% of the grant funding to the Parish Council. Progress reports will need to be submitted periodically to the HLF; this will result in the release of the balance of the grant in two further instalments (of 40% and 10%).

Members supported the suggestion of Mrs Smith - upon which she had consulted the Clerk in advance of the meeting to ensure that such a suggestion would not give rise to local council procedural issues - that, to enable the project to be undertaken in a timely manner, authority be delegated to the Manea Parish Sub-Committee to allocate the Heritage Lottery Fund funding, provided that the work is within the available budget and the agreed aims of the project.

Mrs Smith informed members that the HLF will judge the success of the project against the aims detailed within the grant application. She reminded members of the aims of the project.

In addition, Mrs Smith circulated a draft press release in relation to the project and the successful application for HLF grant aid, to which she sought members' endorsement.

Members decided that

(1) the contents of the Sub-Committee minutes be noted;

(2) in relation to the community orchard/woodland project to

- note the project aims and the Heritage Lottery Fund processes
- agree to delegate authority to the Manea Parish Sub-Committee to allocate the Heritage Lottery Fund funding, provided that the work is within the available budget and the agreed aims of the project
- approve the press release relating to the award of the grant
- place on record their appreciation of the work undertaken by Mrs Smith in relation to the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

M121/10 Risk Assessments

Members considered, in accordance with the advice of the Council's Auditors that local councils should assess and take mitigating actions, the risks to the Parish Council.

Members are of the view that all of the risks faced by the Council are covered by the necessary measures, including:

- insurance policies in respect all assets and public liability
- an annual inspection by the Parish Council of all assets
- the Parish Sub-Committee considering, at each meeting, any health and safety issues relating to Manea Pit and its surroundings
- an annual ROSPA inspection of all play equipment
- monthly reporting by the Clerk of all items of income and expenditure and monies held in bank accounts
- all expenditure is approved at Parish Council meetings and cheques require three signatures
- the Clerk reports to members twice annually on the Parish Council's overall financial position
- Annual Accounts are approved by the Parish Council
- all activities are governed by Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- the Parish Council possesses a prudent level of financial reserves to be able to fund any unforeseen eventualities.

Members decided that appropriate risk management measures are in place currently but the situation be kept under constant review and considered formally by the Parish Council at the February meeting each year.

M122/10 Correspondence

- (1) Cambridgeshire Playing Fields Association newsletter: Winter 2010/11.

The Clerk reported receipt of the latest edition of this newsletter.

Members decided that the document be circulated amongst members of the Parish Council.

- (2) The Localism Bill and the County Council's budgetary position.

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Chief Executive at Cambridgeshire County Council, outlining briefly the impact that the Government's funding cuts would have upon its delivery of public services across the County and explaining, via a briefing paper attached to the e-mail, how The Localism Bill provides opportunities for different methods of delivering services to local communities. The point is made that Parish and Town Councils may be able to provide certain local services in cases where the County Council is no longer able to do so.

The e-mail states that, because of budget reductions, the County Council will, among a series of measures, be

- reducing the level of grass cutting to minimum standards
- phasing-out subsidized bus services; moving towards a greater emphasis on community transport
- transforming the way in which library services are delivered
- reducing services for children and young people; for example, moving from the provision of a universal youth service to providing a service which targets areas of greatest need.

The briefing paper on The Localism Bill makes the point that "Parish Councils, as the most local tier of government, are well placed to respond to the localism agenda, together with their communities. Parish Councils represent their community, provide services to meet local needs and play a central role in improving quality of life and community well-being."

The briefing paper summarises each of the six key announcements within The Localism Bill, namely to:

- Lift the burden of bureaucracy (including abolition of the Standards Board regime)
- Empower communities to do things their way
- Increase local control of public finance (including the introduction of Council tax referendums instead of the current "capping" regime)
- Diversify the supply of public services
- Open-up Government to public scrutiny (including a requirement for local authorities to publish every item of expenditure over £500)
- Strengthen accountability to local people.

Members decided that the information provided by the Chief Executive at Cambridgeshire County Council be noted.

(3) County Council's Village Maintenance Budget.

The Clerk reported a letter from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), informing the Parish Council that, as a result of reductions in Government grant to CCC, the County Council's grass cutting budget would be reduced by approximately 12% in the financial year 2011/12. This equates to a financial reduction of around £200,000 across the County.

The effect of this budget reduction is that Parish Councils will receive 75% of the grant paid to them by the County Council in 2010. On that basis, Manea Parish Council would receive £593.74, instead of £791.65, towards its costs of undertaking this service (£824.25 in 2010).

Members decided to note the implications of this budget reduction and to consider whether to meet the additional cost of continuing to provide the same level of village grass cutting or to reduce the level to accord with the reduced funding available.

(4) Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) – request for financial assistance.

The Clerk reported a letter from FACT, seeking a financial contribution towards the cost of the new Kidz Connected initiative (minute M81/10 refers). The financial assistance sought would be to meet the cost of providing a youth worker to accompany the youngsters on their journeys and during the events to which they would be travelling on the FACT vehicle.

When this initiative was explained to members at minute M81/10 there was no suggestion that the Parish Council would be asked for a contribution towards the operating costs.

Members decided that, with the budgetary pressures being faced at this time, Manea Parish Council is unable to give financial support to this initiative.

M123/10 Winter Service and the Localism Agenda – Opportunities for Third Party Working

Further to minute M100/10, the Clerk reported that the Local Highway Authority had arranged a meeting for 24 February 2011 (2.30 pm at Shire Hall, Cambridge) to discuss, with the Clerk and any members of Manea Parish Council who could attend, the proposal in greater detail and the most practical way forward.

Attendees have been asked to take to the meeting a clear understanding of the resources available within the parish (such as volunteers and salt bins) to deliver this service and the locations which have the greatest need for footway/cycleway clearance.

Members decided to note the current situation regarding this initiative and to inform the Clerk whether any of them would be able to accompany him to the meeting on 24 February 2011.

(The Chairman agreed to this item of business being discussed as a matter of urgency because of the date of the meeting arranged by the County Council)

M124/10 Items for Press Release or news stories

Members considered whether there are currently any matters affecting the parish which would benefit from the issue of a Press Release or the production of a news story.

Further to minute M112/10, Councillor Buckton circulated a draft article (the theme of which is the Parish Council; the way that it operates and the fact that the next election of councillors will take place on 5 May 2011) for the next edition of the Manea Matters publication, together with an open letter from the Parish Council (reminding local people of some of the achievements in the village and highlighting some of the anti-social behaviour that has taken at the playing field and other locations in Manea).

In addition, Councillor Buckton reported that Manea Matters will publish, on its website, the dates of future Parish Council meetings and also arrange for a link to be provided from its website to that of the Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) no matters have arisen since the last Parish Council meeting that would benefit from being the subject of Press Release or news story for public attention;
- (2) subject to some minor revisions, the draft article and open letter produced by Councillor Buckton be approved for publication in Manea Matters.

M125/10 Open Forum

Land south of Rosemary Cottage, New Road, Manea

Two local residents expressed their concern in relation to a planning application which has been submitted to Fenland District Council for change of use of land, at this site, for the siting of 3 mobile homes, 1 static caravan and erection of a day room, store and stables.

The residents requested that, when consulted by Fenland District Council, the Parish Council recommends refusal of this planning application.

Members decided that they would have regard for the views of local residents when formulating the Parish Council's consultation response, to Fenland District Council, in relation to this planning application.

M126/10 Highway issues

Members mentioned the need for cutting back of a tree at 74 Station Road and damage that is being caused to the grass on the highway verge at the junction of Wimblington Road and Station Road, Manea.

Members decided that these issues be brought to the attention of the Local Highway Authority.

M127/10 Next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Parish Council has been scheduled for 21 March 2011, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Village Hall, School Lane, Manea.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm

Signature:.....(Council Chairman).

Date:.....