

ELSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday November 15th 2023 at 7.30pm

in

Elsworth Sports Pavilion, Broad End, Elsworth CB23 4JD

PRESENT

Chair Peter Deer (PD)
Councillors Tim Hegan (TH), James Howell (JH), Margaret Stevenson (MSt),
James Witherow (JW)
In attendance Mrs E Sim Parish Clerk (ES)
D.Cllr Mark Howell (MH)
D Cllr Peter Sandford (PS)
C.Cllr Mandy Smith (MS)
5 Members of the public
Ms L Watts CEO SCDC (LW)

2023/11-1 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

D.Cllr Mark Howell (Late – attending Bourn PC meeting)
Richard Hyde (family commitments)

Absent: Lawrence Seifert

Public Participation Forum

Further to Minute 7.2 of the September 2023 Parish Council meeting and correspondence the Chair had with the CEO and with the Leader of SCDC concerning the trial of a 4 day working week for council officers, the SCDC CEO Liz Watts attended to discuss the matter further.

Ms Watts explained the rationale of the 4 day week trial: that it was set up in response to a recruitment crisis, the inability of the DC to retain staff and the rising cost of employing temporary staff. Now, some eight months into the trial, she reported that data relating to these difficulties was positive; staff well-being had improved; thousands of pounds had been saved on agency staff work patterns were more intensive and most staff preferred working the 4 day week.

The Government had issued a best value notice, requested specific data relating to productivity and value for ratepayers and asked that the trial be halted with immediate effect. Despite this the DC intended to continue. A large scale consultation was planned for January 2024 during which outside bodies, parish councils and ratepayers would be asked their opinions.

Cllr Howell advised that at SCDC only cabinet had authorised this trial and that the proposal had never been put to a vote in full council. MS Watts acknowledged that this was the case.

Parish Councillors raised the following points.

- A condition of the 4 day working week was that staff would attend the office periodically. Current training, management of staff and monitoring of staff productivity when working from home, was unclear.
- The ability of residents to contact staff was becoming increasingly difficult, time consuming and frustrating.

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- Responses to emails, requests for information and assistance, and planning matters were taking inordinately and unacceptable lengths of time.
- She acknowledged that she had proposed editorial changes to the Bennett Institute report on the trial.
- No consultation had been undertaken with ratepayers/parishes.
- What had the appearance of a 20% pay rise and additional day's holiday for staff was difficult to justify to ratepayers.
- Everything that had been relayed by the DC to date had been to the benefit of DC employees; little or no account appeared to have been taken of the service provided to residents and parishes.
- An assurance was sought as to whether staff would go back to working a 5 day week at the office if the trial was stopped. (this was confirmed by LW)

The Chairman thanked Ms Watts for attending. Ms Watts left the meeting at 20:00.

2023/11 -2 To receive declarations of interest & requests for dispensations.

- 2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda.
James Witherow declared an interest in Item 4.3. (EWR update) as a landowner.
- 2.2 Declarations of interest received, Councillors to inform the Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter at the agenda item prior to discussion. None.
- 2.3 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None.
- 2.4 To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate. None.

2023/11-3 To approve & sign the Minutes of the Council meetings dated 20th September 2023

It was proposed ^(JW, seconded JH) and unanimously **approved** that the Chairman sign the Minutes.

2023/11-4 Reports

- 4.1 **Cambridgeshire County Councillor**
- 4.2 **South Cambridgeshire District Councillors**

The Chairman proposed that the CC and DC councillors take questions from Parish Councillors as reports had previously been circulated.
Councillors noted that updates on the A428 upgrade were regularly received. Cllr Smith was asked to provide updates on outstanding issues with the village highways, (gully cleansing, tarmac damage and pothole repairs etc).

Cllr Howell left the meeting at 20:30

4.3. Chairman's update.

PD reported on the following:

East West Rail: Together with Geoff Clark (Chair, Knapwell) and PS on 28 September he had met with District Councillors Bridget Smith (Leader of the DC), Tumi Hawkins (Planning Lead) and Peter Sandford to discuss the implications, particularly for massive housing development, of the proposed route alignment and location of a station for Cambourne north of the A428; on 5 October he had attended a Local Representatives Group meeting led by the EWR engagement team who indicated they would be setting up 'Community Conversation' events to talk to various community groups about EWR in November and December; the National Audit Office were undertaking an investigation into the "economic and strategic" case for EWR; Anthony Browne MP had been appointed a junior transport minister in the latest Government reshuffle.

SCDC Corporate Peer Review: On 2 November he had taken part in one of the series of online sessions being led by councillors from outside the district as part of a corporate peer review. Issues raised by the parishes present included the trial of a 4 day week;

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difficulties in identifying and getting hold of relevant officers; a desire for more face to face contact with the DC. Attendees were surprised to be told that a DC Cabinet member had specific responsibility for relations with parishes.

FLNR: Louise Hanzi wished to stand down as the Warden at the end of year and the PC would need to identify a successor. The PC wished to record grateful thanks to Louise for her work as the Warden.

Chairmanship: As previously indicated, he would be giving up the chairmanship no later than March/April 2024 and consequently the PC would need to consider who would take on that role; agreed that it would also be apposite to try to recruit several new members to the PC.

Flood Group: Clearance work had been undertaken by Lattenbury Services in The Brook and Fardell's Lane; the PC was appreciative of Philip Sleightholme's oversight of this work.

JW reported that Lattenbury Services would not be able to complete works needed in other parts of the village until next spring as the ground was too wet. CCTV had identified a blockage in drainage pipes near the school. Sensors in the brook were still not functioning properly as there were issues with signals being received by the equipment on the church tower being passed on to the County Council.

4.4. Clerk's Update

Defibrillator and CPR training session.

The training/refresher session that was held in September had been very well attended. Attendees expressed thanks to the Community First Response team for the excellent session. The session had highlighted the need for mobile phone contact for quick access to help. Several attendees commented on the extremely poor mobile coverage in Elsworth and expressed concern that this might hamper their ability to access speedy assistance.

Christmas Tree.

The date for switching on the lights on the Christmas Tree would be Friday 15th December. The tree is kindly being supplied by the owners of The Mill and Neil Kenny and Tony Sim will erect it by the community shop. The pavilion had been booked for the social evening.

2023/11-5 Finance

5.1. Payment of accounts.

The following payments were approved unanimously ^(Prop JW Sec MS)

31.10.23	£216.00	General Village Maintenance	MG Tree Surgery Ltd
		Elsworthvillage.com domain	Richard Milns (Guava Design)
26.10.23	£30.00	name	
22.10.23	£410.00	Verge Cut	Neil Kenny
17.10.23	£11.49	Phone and Internet	HP Inc UK Ltd
16.10.23	£214.41	Phone and Internet	BT
16.10.23	£30.00	Elsworth Times	Andrew Pope
04.10.23	£100.00	Donation	Parish Council
04.10.23	£75.00	Elsworth Times	Pendrill Publications
02.10.23	£676.35	Clerk's remuneration	Parish Council
26.09.23	£272.00	Elsworth Preschool	Parish Council
26.09.23	£378.00	External Audit	PKF Littlejohn LLP
26.09.23	£93.71	Stationery	Viking
18.09.23	£16.49	Computer equipment	HP Inc UK Ltd
18.09.23	£410.00	Verge Cut	Neil Kenny

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18.09.23	£480.00	General Village Maintenance	Neil Kenny
15.09.23	£83.95	Clerk's postage and mileage	Parish Council
01.09.23	£676.35	Clerk's remuneration	Parish Council

5.2. Receipts

31.10.2023	£31.15	Interest PC savings a/c Nat west
01.10.2023	£18.36	Interest Santander account
29.09.2023	£20.83	Interest PC savings a/c Nat west

5.3. Audit 2022-2023

The Clerk reported that the audit for the PC accounts for the year 2022-2023 had been signed off in September by the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn.

2023/11-6 Village matters

6.1. LHI application for 2024-2025.

Councillors agreed unanimously to submit a proposal for funding for the installation of double yellow lines along stretches of Boxworth Road near junctions of Orchard Close, Roger's Close, Duncock Lane and the entrance to the George and Dragon pub. County Highways had advised that an alternative proposal to make pedestrian access to the ABP safer by a pedestrian crossing over the existing traffic calming table and a further footpath on Smith Street would be prohibitively expensive.

6.2. Village Maintenance. To receive a progress report from the Maintenance Working party (TH & JH).

Council had previously agreed to use contractors for the maintenance required. The Clerk would send copy of the spreadsheet showing details of works needed to two possible contractors and request quotes.

6.3. The Elsworth Times. To receive an update on proposals for future publications. RH reported that a publisher had been identified to take on production of the ET after the retirement of the Dobsons.

2023/11-7 PC matters

- 7.1. To form the Parish Council's response to the SCDC Electoral Services' consultation on the *review of polling districts in the area*. No Comment.
- 7.2. To form the Parish Council's response to the Greater Cambridge *Statement of Community Involvement* consultation. No Comment
- 7.3. If thought necessary, to make a response to Childerley Orchard's licence consultation. No comment.

2023/11-8 Planning

8.1. Planning Applications considered.

- 23/1309/TTCA
Oak situated in neighbouring property at 20 Brook Street, Elsworth, Cambridge CB23 4HX
Reduce canopy overhang to client's garden by 2 to 2.4ms to lesson shading to thatched roof. Thin remaining crown over client's garden by 10% *PC recommendation Support*
- 23/1285/TTCA 24 Brook Street Elsworth Cambridgeshire
Proposal: T1 - Dawn Redwood – fell T2 - Deodar Cedar - Fell
PC recommendation: Support with comments

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8.2 Applications determined/closed by SCDC

- 22/04519/CONDA 15 Cotterells Lane Elsworth Cambridgeshire CB23 4JR **Discharge Condition in Full.**
- 23/0923/TTCA Elsworth Rectory 6 The Drift Elsworth Cambridgeshire CB23 4JN **Have No Objection To.**
- 23/0961/TTCA 41 Brook Street Elsworth Cambridgeshire CB23 **Have No Objection To.**
- 23/0953/TTPO 6 The Drift Elsworth Cambridgeshire CB23 4JN **Granted Permission.**
- 23/03328/PRIOR The Avenue Business Park, Unit 8 Brockley Road Elsworth Cambridgeshire CB23 4EY **Prior Approval Refused.**
- 23/02228/HFUL Elm Lodge Meadow Drift Elsworth Cambridgeshire Extensions and alterations to the existing bungalow and construction of a new **Granted Permission on 23 October 2023.**

Dates of Parish Council meetings in 2024.

January 17 th	Parish Council Meeting
March 20 th	Parish Council Meeting
April 17 th	Annual Parish Meeting
May 15 th	Parish Council Meeting
July 17 th	Parish Council Meeting
September 18 th	Parish Council Meeting
November 20 th	Parish Council Meeting

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:16

Signed _____ (Chairman) Date _____