

**Elsenham Parish Council**

**Community Centre Committee Meeting.**

**Held at 7.30 pm at Old Frank's,  
on Monday 17 February 2025**

**Present:**

Dr. G Mott (Chair, GM), Mr. A Hathaway (AH), Mr. P Jarvis (PJ),  
Mr. B Ogilvie (BO)

**Members of the public: 0**

*The minutes were taken by GM in the absence of the Parish Clerk.*

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Mr. B Burlton (BB), Mr. R Gooding (RG), Mrs. E Terry (ET) and Mrs L Johnson (Parish Clerk LJ).

It was noted that the meeting was non-quorate, but it was agreed to go ahead on a discussion basis.

- 2. Declaration of Interest:** None.

- 3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025 were signed by GM as a true record, and will be delivered to LJ.

- 4. Actions following the meeting held on 20 January 2025**

Included below.

- 5. Meetings with UDC Planning.**

- a. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2025 - **circulated**

GM reported that these have been forwarded to UDC, without response. UDC are proposing a 'light touch', without micro-managing.

GM said that there is an issue as to how the tenders should be appraised. There will be only three this time, rather than the 39 on the previous occasion. UDC had suggested that Essex Procurement Services should appraise, and EPC could 'add weight'. If we did not like the result, we could withdraw and go out to tender again; GM felt that would be a recipe for disaster. Members present were of the view that in order to avoid any possibility of the recurrence of the previous challenge, it would be preferable if the appraisal was in the hands of EPS. It was agreed that the issue should be discussed further at a full meeting of the Committee.

GM said that UDC's model appeared to be that S106 funds should be used for defined phases of the project, with funds raised by EPC by way of grants and loans for the remainder; but it was pointed out by EPC that that would not work in view of the extended time-frame for the availability of S106 contributions.

- b. Issues for forthcoming meeting - **circulated**

GM said that there is an issue as to whether we would prefer to seek advice on the revised Invitation to Tender from Essex Legal Services rather the Essex Procurement Services. We now have a channel of communication with ELS, who have knowledge of the project; however, this is a matter which we would need to agree with UDC.

- c. Draft of Questions for Essex Procurement Services, for agreement with UDC - **circulated**

GM said that the question of The Procurement Act 2023 (see 6. below) needs to be included.

- d. Money/time graph to be updated - **outstanding**

GM has sent revised estimates of availability of funds from S106s to BB, who will update the graph. We might be able to get a better estimate now of outgoings.

- e. Memorandum of Understanding. To be drafted by EPC.

**Outstanding**

GM has a hazy recollection of a suggestion that an existing Memorandum somewhere might be used as a template. It was agreed that, if it exists, RG is the most likely source. BB has offered to produce the first draft of the Memorandum.

## 6. The Procurement Act 2023

Takes effect on 24 February 2025.

GM said that clearly the revised Invitation to Tender will be subject to the new Act, rather than The Public Contracts Regulations 2015. GM and BB had attended an online course on the new Act. It was not greatly helpful, but it did establish that the existing thresholds of £30,000 and £214,904 remain. GM has explored Government websites and cannot find any changes which might affect us, but clearly this is a matter on which professional guidance is needed.

## 7. Business Plan

**Pending.**

## 8. Funding

- a. Interest on funds held by UDC.

Contact details of Counsel provided by Richard Buxton Solicitors.

Decision on whether to instruct Counsel.

Unresolved with UDC.

Included on the issues for discussion with UDC.

GM noted that the PC meeting on 2 December 2024 authorised payment for Counsel if necessary, to be decided by GM, BB and LJ.

- b. Grant funding application with EYFC to the Football Foundation.

Need to advise Essex FA of delay to tender procedure. Action BB.

Need to start negotiations for grant post-2025.

Community engagement.

**Pending**

- c. Public Works Loan

- i. Contact with Public Works Loan Board, by BB

- ii. EALC needs to be consulted. Action BB
- iii. Contact with those who have secured and managed loans (Didcot PC has been contacted). Action BB
- iv. Documentation required.

**Pending**

- d. 50 dwellings south of Bedwell Road.  
Approved under the S62A procedure, 27 November 2024.  
S106 includes £100,000 for the Community Centre, with conditions.  
Note with Addendum, sent to UDC Planning, 2 February 2025 - **circulated**  
The S106 and the Inspector's Decision are in conflict. For discussion with UDC.
- e. 40 dwellings, west of Robin Hood Road.  
Note sent to UDC Planning, 2 February 2025 - **circulated**  
Struck out by the Appeal Inspector. For discussion with UDC.
- f. Bloor Phase 2.  
Bloor information was that Phase 2 would commence c. Jan 2025.  
First instalment, 50% X £596,154, index-linked, due before commencement.  
Noted.
- g. UDC Local Plan, Regulation 19 consultation.  
Bloor, Phase 3, included for 110 dwellings.  
EPC representations include request for substantial contribution.  
Noted. There will be a long delay before any possible contribution is forthcoming.
- h. Gladman, application for 240 dwellings north of Bedwell Road.  
Meeting held between UDC and three parishes, 25 September 2024.  
Substantial amount requested for Ugley Parish Hall and CC.  
Discussion with UDC will continue at the meeting with UDC Planning Officer on Thursday 20 February.

**9. Transfer of land.**

- a. Land (David Wilson Homes).  
Transfer document signed at PC meeting 2 September  
20 January, Nockolds say there are issues still outstanding.  
14 February, Nockolds report 'radio silence'.
- b. Ransom strip (Crest Nicholson).  
Advice from CN, 23 September: solicitors will be in touch shortly.  
24 September, CN's solicitors were given Nockolds' details  
31 October, CN's solicitors chased Nockolds on 27 Sept and 11 Oct.  
31 October, LJ email to Nockolds: on leave until 5 November.  
4 December, LJ contacted again, and asked for costs to be kept separate.  
17 December, LJ contacted once more.  
18 December, Nockolds, 'slight delay', may 'slip' till after Christmas.  
20 January, Nockolds report CN solicitor 'coming in a little blind'

14 February, Nockolds report 'radio silence'.

It was agreed that UDC should be expected to pay costs from their own resources, not from S106 funds.

#### **10. Pedestrian access from Leigh Way**

GM said that many residents would approach the new Community Centre via Station Road and Leigh Way. He felt that lighting would be needed - the access road is dark and has bends. Also, the most direct route would be via the diagonal path to the corner of the Memorial Hall, alongside the Memorial Hall and then adjacent to the car park, and continuing straight across the playing field; a worn path would soon become established across football pitches.

BO said that lighting the access road would encourage pedestrians to use the road, with safety issues. A better solution would be a footpath on the playing field, keeping well to the left to avoid any encroachment onto football pitches. GM said the best route might be a footpath starting from the diagonal path alongside the children's play area, then over the access road and near the left boundary of the playing field.

It was agreed that this is an issue for another day, and that meanwhile it would be useful if members visited the playing field in order to consider the matter for themselves.

#### **11. Buy-in from the local community and generating interest.**

- a. Meeting with village groups.
- b. Publicity (café, changing rooms, child care).
- c. Clubs in the village.
- d. School book-bags.
- e. Tesco.
- f. *Elsenham News*. Suspended
- g. Page on website.
- h. Questionnaire distributed through knocking on doors.
- i. EYFC offered to include on their website

#### **12. Next steps.**

Retained for reference purposes

- Appoint architects.
- Business Plan
- Costing programme (helped by architects).
- Public Exhibition - produced by architects.
- Referendum - after Public Exhibition and Consultation, small booklet in the *Elsenham News*.
- Public Works (or other) loan - needs Business Plan and Referendum.
- Detailed Planning Permission.
- Go out to tender for contract.

#### **13. Next meetings.** Normally the third Monday of the month.

The next meeting will be on Monday 17 March. GM noted that the third Monday in April, 21 April, is Easter Monday. It was agreed that it should be moved to Monday 14 April, giving a four-week gap after the March meeting, with a five-week gap before the next meeting on the third Monday in May, 19 May.

**14. AOB**  
None

**Public asked to leave the meeting.**

**In accordance with section 1 of the Public Bodies (admissions to meeting) Act 1960,**

**The public and press will be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

**15. Invitations to Tender for Architectural Services**

Revised documents - **circulated 4 February 2025**

No feedback had been received until detailed suggestions from BB earlier that day. GM will consider, with a view to issuing revised documents.

**16. Outstanding query from tenderer.**

It was agreed that the draft as circulated should be sent.

**17. Confidentiality.**

GM said that minutes of recent meetings had been reserved as confidential, but he would prefer them to become public as soon as possible. It was agreed that those present would consider whether these minutes could be made public.

The meeting finished at 8:40 pm.