

Meeting Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Parish Council held on Wednesday 15th July 2020 remotely via Zoom at 7:30pm

Attendees: Councillors – Cllr. Turner (Chair), Cllr. Woodward (Vice Chair), Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Shufflebotham, Cllr. Owen, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft, Cllr. Spooner, Cllr. Sherratt, Cllr. Flunder (SCC), Cllr. Lea (SMDC) Cllr. Porter (SMDC) and 2 members of the public. Minutes recorded by Mrs. D Wheat (Clerk)

1. Chairman’s Welcome and Announcements:

Cllr. Turner welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting.

2. Apologies:

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| Cllr. Corbett | Working Away – Internet Connection issues |
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3. Parishioners Opportunity to ask a question to the Council:

A resident reminded the Council that the call to a meeting is a summons to attend and not an invitation. He requested that Councillors take their role seriously as that is their duty when elected. Cllr. Lea asked for it to be minuted that she had requested dispensation for her period of absence due to illness recently. It was suggested that an attendance register is kept. It was agreed that this item is put on the agenda for the next meeting.

The resident then asked how a member of the public can ask a question about a Confidential item. The Chairman responded that as the business had been concerned with financial negotiation, this is why the meeting had a confidential item and the Clerk had checked with the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association to make sure proceedings were correct. Any decisions however were made public.

Another resident asked if approval had been granted from the Secretary of State to purchase the land. The Chairman assured the members of the public that no money had been spent and the negotiations have been purely to source funding before the project proposal can be brought forward for public consultation. Currently the Council are waiting for advice from SMDC regarding this.

The first resident said he would have preferred the cards to have been laid on the table before negotiations started so that the public could comment on the initial idea.

The second resident said he agreed if it was financial negotiation it must be conducted as confidential.

4. Declaration of Interest:

Cllr. Spooner declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in The Holly Bush Inn. She was asked by the Chairman to withdraw from the meeting but could still listen to the proceedings as a member of the public.

5. The Holly Bush Inn:

a) Report on Negotiations:

The Chairman explained the events which have led up to the current negotiation. The current owners of the Carpark have been measuring up the site and are potentially starting work. At the request of the Council, Brown Edge Parish Council have appointed RJS commercial solicitors to act on their behalf.

The Clerk arranged a remote meeting for the Chairman Cllr. Turner with CEO of SMDC – Mr. Stokes, the Chairman of SMDC/County Cllr. Flunder, County Cllr. Ward who has successfully completed a project similar to this in Caverswall at The Auctioneers Arms, and District Cllr. Lea who has been in talks with the leader of SMDC Ms. Ralphs to gain support for Brown Edge to be able to undertake a project like The Holly Bush Inn through the Community Asset Value route. Cllr. Turner submitted a draft business plan to SMDC who in return have expressed their support for the project subject to SMDC Committee agreeing to the loan. For Brown Edge Parish Council to secure the whole Holly Bush site it will require the continuation of a tenancy as a public house and for Brown Edge Parish Council to support the Community through the Neighbourhood Development Plan to invest

in the site for a community /business hub with the additional opportunity to rent car parking space. SMDC have said they will value the property for due diligence. A Parish Council cannot run a pub, but with the right Community framework of people willing to invest in shares, a Community owned establishment could be set up. The Carpark does currently have planning permission for three houses, but the Community Asset Value has expired. Any development would have to go through the Neighbourhood Planning Committee and a decision made through referendum made by the Community voting to go ahead with the proposal.

Cllr. Hargreaves asked what the next step is to be? The Chairman replied that when a letter of comfort is received from SMDC, the solicitor can then be instructed to proceed with the necessary administration to secure the purchase subject to contract if this is what the Council decide.

b) Decision whether to purchase The Holly Bush Inn and Car Park:

The Chairman asked the Council if all were in agreement to purchase the whole premises if funding can be secured through SMDC. The Council agreed to the purchase with a unanimous show of hands.

Proposed – Cllr. Owen – Second Cllr. Hargreaves – Motion Carried

County Councillor Flunder, who is also the Chairman of SMDC, asked to comment and said the Holly Bush is an exciting, brave move by Brown Edge Parish Council. He said there will be a lot of hurdles to cross, but that he would support the Council in whatever way he can. The Council now needs to market the idea to the community and to form a Community team who will work together and be committed to the success of the project and who believe it will happen, and work hard to drive through any setbacks with determination to see the finished result a success.

Cllr. Spooner re-joined the meeting

6. Financial Matters & Governance:

a) **Policy review - Financial Regulations** – it was agreed to adopt the National Association of Local Councils Financial regulations 2019 – to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2021.

Proposed – Cllr. Owen – Second Cllr. Hargreaves – Motion Carried

b) **Policy review - Risk Assessment** – The Clerk asked for some additional information from the Councillors about assets in the Parish which could cause a risk and need listing. The Parish Council Assets are listed in the financial report and these can be added into the risk assessment. Cllr. Lea also reminded the Council that the Neighbourhood Plan had compiled a list for the Village Plan which can be included in the Risk Assessment. Cllr. Shufflebotham mentioned the Insurance Policy has a list for insurance purposes. The Clerk will keep adding items to the Risk Assessment throughout the year and a review of this policy will be done at the Annual Meeting in May 2021.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020

a) **Bank Reconciliation** –The Council checked the Financial Statements for the financial year ending 31st March 2020 which previous Clerk Mr. Bourne had prepared. The Clerk would like to thank Mr. Bourne for completing the accounts so that they were ready to be audited before handing over to her in May.

b) **Internal Audit Report 2019/2020** has been audited by Mr Chris Neufeld, a new auditor to Brown Edge, no problems were identified.

c) **The Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020** was read out by the Chairman. The Council formally approved each statement after consideration and some discussion. The Chairman signed the document.

d) The Accounting Statements for 2019/2020 were then formally approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

(Due to Covid-19 restrictions these documents will be collected by the Clerk and signed thereafter as Responsible Financial Officer before being submitted to the External Auditor). The Accounts will then be available for inspection by the public from 1st September for four weeks thereafter. The Clerk will publish a notice to this effect on the Notice boards and on the Website.

8. Other Matters to be discussed:

Community Volunteer Litter Pick - Saturday 18th July – 10am, Marshes Hill and Knypersley Pool. Cllr. Porter encouraged everyone to come along and asked for the Council to promote the event on Social media. The new local PCSO is coming along. Any litter collected on the day will be left at Marshes Hill Car Park for collection by SMDC. Cllr. Owen suggested including the Playing Field in the Litter pick as this is a problem area. Cllr Woodward suggested taking the opportunity to look at signage on the common.

9. Matters Pertaining to Issues in the Parish for the Next Agenda

- a) Cllr. Woodward: Footpaths and Hedgerows – many weeds are growing. It is becoming an issue all over the village including the triangle at New Lane and the footpath by The Lump of Coal.
- b) Cllr. Turner: Council needs to think about getting outline planning permission together for the New Cemetery. The Wildflower meadow needs to be planned – planting, cutting, sowing etc...
- c) Cllr. Hargreaves: Suggestion to send the retiring Clerk a thank you for all his service to the Council. Clerk to check with interim Clerk to see if this had been done. The Chairman said it was good that Mr Bourne is continuing as an employee of the Council as the Cemetery recorder.
- d) Cllr Wright has spoken with Mr Bourne who is in the process of sorting all the old archival paperwork to hand over for storage. Clerk to check he is not disposing of any historic or legal items.
- e) Cllr Turner: Fireproof cabinet to store Village Archive at the Village Hall

Meeting Ended at 20.39

I hereby state this is a correct account of the monthly meeting held by Brown Edge Parish Council.

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| Signed: (Chair) | Councillor | Date: |
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