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# Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Group Parish Council held on Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 7.30pm in Risbury Village Hall

Present: Cllr Alan Bathurst  
Cllr Kenneth Bemand  
Cllr Michael Hubbard  
Cllr Peter Lefroy-Owen  
Cllr Rodney Thompson (from Minute 114/13)

Cllr Mrs Margaret Bemand  
Cllr Mrs Jane Hinton (to Minute 119/13)  
Cllr William Jackson (Chairman)  
Cllr Richard Thomas (to Minute 119/13)  
Cllr Mrs Stephanie Wilson

with: District Cllr Jeremy Millar  
and: 15 members of the public (to minute 114/13e)  
Officer in attendance: Mr Philip Brown (Clerk)

### 109/13 Apologies for absence

*Received:* apologies for absence from Cllr Mrs Jenny Ellerton.

### 110/13 Declarations of interests and dispensations

- (a) No declarations of interest were made.
- (b) No applications for dispensations under Standing Order 25 were received.

### 111/13 Minutes of the last meeting

*Resolved:* to approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2013.

### 112/13 Matters for report arising from the minutes of 25 September 2013

- (a) First World War Centenary (minute 105/13):  
*Reported:* that no further information or ideas had been received.

### 113/13 Chairman's announcements

None.

### 114/13 The Lamb Inn

*Under Standing Order 8, participation by members of the public took place under this agenda item.*

- (a) *Received:* a report from the Working Party (Minutes Annexe 114/13) which was read out by the Clerk. In summary: contact had been made with the new owner indicating the Council's wish to purchase the pub as a community asset; the owner had intended to develop the site, but had been advised by Herefordshire Council that this would not be permitted; on 14 November 2013 the pub was marketed for £195,000, excluding the garden; the Council considered the garden to be an integral and important part of the pub's business and also a community asset, and planning policies (bolstered by recent appeal decision) would prevent change of use for any of the site; the Working Party recommended that the Council's strategy should still be to acquire the whole site, and should write to the owner's solicitor through a local solicitor stating the Council's position, and also make an offer for the whole site.
- (b) *Noted:* Comments and questions from members of the public covering: the planning status of the site; the practical difficulties of any development on the garden site with drainage, access and TPOs; negotiations which the Working Party had had with the owner's representative; recent deterioration and damage to the pub; and support for the Council's strategy of attempting to purchase the whole site.
- (c) *Resolved unanimously:* that the Council, through a solicitor, immediately write to the owner's solicitor, putting on record what has already been told through the owner's agents: that we believe permission would not be given for housing development on any of the site, that this has been bolstered by recent planning appeal decisions in Herefordshire, that we would oppose any development, and we wish to acquire the whole site as a community asset.
- (d) *Resolved unanimously:* that the Council immediately make a formal offer for the whole site, using a local agent in negotiations, and that the offer figure be agreed in the absence of members of the public for reasons of commercial confidence.
- (e) *Noted:* the thanks of the members of the public present for the Working Party's quick response to these recent developments.
- (f) Members of the public left the meeting.

- (g) *Noted in discussion*, that: VAT would be payable on the purchase price (probably 90%) and this could be reclaimed within a few months, once the Council had registered for VAT; the PWLB loan was still available to draw down - the interest rate had gone up to 4.38%, which would increase the loan costs to the Council but the business plan had not taken into account inflation over the life of the loan; considerable expenditure on repairs and refurbishment would be needed both in the short- and long-term, and supplementary fund-raising through 'Friends of The Lamb' would be important; the Council would have to appoint a tenant or form a company to cover any immediate short-term tenancy.
- (h) **Resolved, unanimously:** to offer **CONFIDENTIAL** for the whole original site of The Lamb Inn, using an agent for negotiations.
- (i) **Resolved, unanimously:** to appoint Humfrys Symonds to act for the Council in immediate correspondence and in any purchase, and to appoint Bill Jackson to act for the Council as agent in negotiating a purchase.
- (j) *Noted:* that in the event of the offer being accepted, an Extraordinary Council Meeting would be called urgently to consider authorising the necessary actions to complete the purchase.

### 115/13 Clerk's report

- (a) *Received:* a report from the Clerk (Minutes Annexe 115/13) covering: consultation of parish councils about amendments to planning applications; notification and advice about future planning applications; the proposed supermarket sites in Leominster; progress on the Neighbourhood Development Plan; Lengthsman work; the Winter Maintenance scheme and salt-grit bins; highways maintenance and repairs; diversion of HU2 near Risbury Mill; a proposal to improve SP9/10 with kissing-gates; the HALC Conference and AGM; development of the Council's website.
- (b) *Noted:* The Clerk had obtained an estimate for professional development of the website; he would liaise with the Chairman and bring other estimates and a proposal to the January meeting.

### 116/13 Planning Committee and Planning issues

- (a) *Received:* the minutes of the Planning Committee of 30 October 2013 (unconfirmed).
- (b) Application 130615, Old Cobblers, Risbury: Consultation on amended plans  
*Noted:* Minute PC37/13c & Clerk's Report para 1.1, concerning lack of consultation on amended plans.  
**Resolved:** that the Clerk reply to the Planning Officer to ask that the Council be consulted on all significant amendments to plans received before a decision was made.
- (c) Pre-application notification and advice  
*Noted:* Minute PC37/13d & Clerk's Report para 1.2.  
**Resolved:** that the Clerk prepare a proposal for the Planning Committee to act as a public forum for an applicant to present and answer questions about a future application, but not to give any advice or comments on the future application.
- (d) Proposed supermarket site in Leominster  
*Noted:* Minute PC37/13e and Clerk's Report para 1.3; that a request from a developer of one of the two proposed supermarket sites in Leominster to discuss this with the Council had been declined.

### 117/13 Neighbourhood Development Plan

- (a) *Received:* Minutes of the Steering Committee Initial Meeting held on 18 October 2013 and unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013.
- (b) **Resolved:** to amend the membership of the Committee (Terms of Reference para 3) to five councillors, and to appoint Cllr Alan Bathurst as an additional member of the Committee.

### 118/13 General Financial Matters

- (a) *Received:* a report and financial statement from the RFO (Minutes Annexe 118/13).
- (b) **Resolved:** to increase the payment for production costs of the Parish Pump to £110 per issue, backdated to October 2013).
- (c) **Resolved:** to authorise payments as detailed in the RFO report section 4.

### 119/13 Draft Revenue Budget and Precept 2014-15

- (a) *Received:* a draft budget for 2014-15, prepared by the Clerk on the advice of the Finance Working Group (Minutes Annexe 119/13).
- (b) *Agreed in discussion:* the Council's general reserves should be increased to £4000 to cover unexpected costs, including possible delegation of functions from Herefordshire Council and to include up to £1000 as a minimal budget for the Neighbourhood Development Plan should grants not be obtained for this; the proposed increase in the Lengthsman spending from the precept should be reviewed; additional

provision should be made for professional development and maintenance of the website; in view of the Council's much-increased role and many future uncertainties, the precept would have to rise considerably for 2014-15 in common with many other parish councils.

(c) (The Clerk withdrew for this item.)

*Agreed:* that the Council should increase the Clerk's salary to £2000 per annum from 2014-15 to pay the minimum wage for the minimum hours required for routine council administration and functions; also the Clerk should be paid an additional £250 for 2013-14; the Council thanked the Clerk for all his work.

(d) *Noted:* The Clerk would incorporate the above matters into a revised final budget proposal, for consideration by Council at its January 2014 meeting.

### **120/13 Stoke Prior Village Hall Lottery application**

(a) *Reported:* the Village Hall Committee Chairman had requested a letter of support for their application for lottery funding. The Committee was re-considering this application and the options for the Village Hall.

(b) **Resolved:** the Clerk to send a letter of support for an application on request from the committee.

### **121/13 District Councillor's report**

(a) *Received:* District Councillor Millar's reports for October and November 2013 (Minutes Annexe 121/13).

(b) *Noted:* Herefordshire Council faced losing 44% of its income over a 4-year period because of reductions in government grants, despite as a rural area having higher costs; it therefore had to cut back to providing those services required by law, and the proposed 2014-15 budget reflected this. (Police and Fire & Rescue services were not the responsibility of Herefordshire Council.)

(c) *Noted:* A Ward meeting of Parish Council chairmen and clerks would be held on 27 November.

### **122/13 Consultations**

(a) Herefordshire Council budget 2014-15

*Received:* Consultation on draft budget for 2014-15 (Minutes Annexe 122/13/a)

**Resolved:** that the Council's response be delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman.

(b) Hereford & Worcester Fire Service consultation

*Received:* Consultation on H&WFS Community Risk Management Plan (Minutes 122/13b)

*Noted:* no comments had been received from councillors other than the Chairman, who would submit these personally.

### **123/13 Matters for information and future business**

*Noted:* circulars sent to the Council:

(i) Herefordshire Empty Property strategy 2013-16 (circulated 03/10/13).

(ii) Childrens' Wellbeing event 15 November (circulated 04/11/13).

(iii) Invitation to meetings with Balfour Beatty on 21/26 November (circulated 07/11/13).

(iv) Invitation to 'Let's go Digital' workshop 5 December (circulated 11/11/13).

(v) Winter Gritting in Herefordshire 2013-14 (tabled).

(vi) CPRE *Countryside Voice* Winter 2013 (tabled).

(vii) Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service leaflet (tabled)

(viii) Stoke Prior Community School Profile 2012-13 (tabled).

### **124/13 Dates of meetings**

(a) *Noted:* dates of future meetings (all at 7.30pm):

Wednesday 15 January 2014 (Risbury Village Hall).

Wednesday 19 March 2014 (Risbury Village Hall).

Wednesday 21 May 2014 (Annual Meeting) (Stoke Prior Village Hall).

(b) *Noted:* the following proposed dates for meetings:

Wednesday 16 July 2014 (Stoke Prior Village Hall).

Wednesday 24 September 2014 (Risbury Village Hall).

Wednesday 19 November 2014 (Risbury Village Hall).

The meeting closed at 10.25pm.

Signed (Chairman) ..... Date .....