

DEBENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Finance, Employment and Planning meeting held on Monday, February 9th 2009 at Dove Cottage.

Present: Councillors F Winrow-Giffin, G Baxter, R Blackwell, L Cockerton, S Dalison, J Farthing, K Voller, Acting Clerk Mrs C Williamson, Acting RFO Mrs D Bedwell, County Councillor E Alcock, Mr A Smith of The Caldecotte Group and three members of the public

1. Apologies for absence: Councillors R Walters

2. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda and additions to register: Cllr Blackwell, Item 8.

3. Cherry Tree Public House site: presentation by Aaron Smith of the Caldecotte Group, with discussion to follow

3.1 A copy of drawings had been supplied beforehand by the Caldicotte Group.

3.2 Mr Smith had met Cllrs Dalison and Baxter along with Mr Grant –Adamson of the Debenham Society, at the site earlier that day. He explained that his company worked with Punch Taverns to optimise the uses for premises which were under-used or had ceased trading. At present they were actively seeking new tenants for the Cherry Tree. The bowling green had been out of use for about thirteen years and they were considering it as a building plot for eight properties, three of which would be low-cost. They were at the feasibility stage now and there would be no planning applications in the near future. Properties would be of cottage proportions and in keeping with the pub itself and other buildings in the village, sited at an angle to the road. A topographical survey still had to be carried out and a solution found to the difficult visibility of the access. He was aware of the Visibly Important Open Space status of the bowling green and Mr Smith asked the council what its views were on retaining it. If not, what sort of development would we like? Cllr Baxter said that the road presented a blind bend and alterations would have to be made, perhaps by moving the access up the Ipswich road. The bowling green was used for the air ambulance (three times last month) and an alternative would have to be found. Cllr Cockerton said that the site seemed high – any houses there may look overbearing. Would it affect Broad Meadow? The site is outside the flood area but the road is within it.

3.3 Members of the public were invited to ask questions:

3.3.1 **Mr and Mrs Stott** of Cherry Tree Cottage asked for reassurance that the pub car park and/or garages would not be used for storage of building supplies for construction of the proposed dwellings etc. Mr Smith said that there would not be problem with this. They were also concerned that the Shulver's garage site (anticipated 5-7 dwellings) might be developed at the same time as the Cherry Tree site, causing a lot of local nuisance and dust. This would have to be addressed nearer the time.

3.3.2 **Mr Grant-Adamson** stressed the importance of the site – the design considerations were very important – part of the setting of the pub, a listed building, and right at the entrance of the village. Mr Smith reassured him that for these reasons they wanted to present a soft edge to the buildings ie place them at an angle, not build a terrace or straight line of houses and perhaps even position them further back from the road.

3.4 Mr Smith said that if the scheme progressed, we would be asked for comments on further plans. He was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

4. 7.52 p.m. Suspension of standing orders: *Meeting open for 10 minutes to allow members of the public to speak*

4.1 Mr Grant-Adamson had looked at the information board outside the resource centre (see Item 7) and had noticed several inaccuracies as there was now more historical information available. Due to time constraints he agreed if possible to forward any new information to the temporary clerk by the end of the week.

4.2 Cllr Alcock asked council's permission to speak on Suffolk County Council matters and this was given.

4.2.1 He updated the meeting on the position regarding the **unitary authority proposal**. Any decision had been postponed until July 2009 as the Boundary Committee would be carrying out further consultation to ensure that it complied with the judgement made over Devon's changes in their governing structure. If the situation was not resolved by this summer, it was more likely that things would stay as they were at present or that there would just be one authority for the whole county.

4.2.2 He also provided information on the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 which could offer a way forward for the intentions Cllr Baxter had for the **Irvine Martin** site. Local groups including parish councils had the opportunity to put forward proposals which would enhance local community, social and environmental wellbeing. SCC would be obliged to work with the local group to progress plans and would then be obliged to fund it, if money were available – if not, the government were obliged to provide funding. The deadline for this is July 2009. He was thanked for the information and then left the meeting.

8.02 p.m. standing orders resumed

5. RFO's report

5.1 Mrs Bedwell provided us with copies of her report,(attached) the 2007-08 Annual Return, the external Auditor's report and instructions. In future, dates and minutes of risk assessments would be required, also a current assets register was recommended (Mrs Bedwell refuted the auditor's comment that there wasn't one and would contact the auditor), and a note for anyone reading the accounts should state that the comparative figures had to be restated because of the VAT problems. The fidelity insurance was insufficient so Mrs Bedwell would get a quotation.

5.2 Mrs Bedwell had had to do a manual reconciliation as the previous accounting method deleted some figures. However there was a new accounting package especially for small councils and it was agreed that this would be considered at the March meeting. It was agreed that some other comparable councils should be asked which accounting method they used.

5.3 A review of the internal auditor might be considered in the future.

6. Planning matters:

6.1 Approvals: none

6.2 Refusals: none

6.3 Applications: from Suffolk County Council re Debenham High School: additional 1st floor classroom accessible from new two-storey extension: the plans were scrutinised. Cllr Winrow-Giffin proposed, seconded by Cllr Voller, all in favour, that subject to the neighbours being in favour, the council supported the application.

6.4 Planning Correspondence

6.4.1 Cllr Cockerton had noticed that the advertising board for the Starburst Dental Surgery had been moved to the side of the building, at 90 degrees to the road. The temporary clerk would make enquiries with the Planning Department.

6.4.2 The clerk was asked to find out whether planning permission was needed or had been obtained for the side extension of Chesters, Low Road.

7. Information board at Cross Green – to suggest or approve alterations: see Mr Grant-Adamson's comments in Item 4. It was agreed that the addition of the river was acceptable, and that the Hoggs Kiss and Hoppit Woods and lake should also be included if possible, also the recreation ground and the footway from the Aspoll Road car park through to the cemetery and woodland.

8. DLC- update from working group: Cllr Blackwell had declared a prejudicial interest and apart from answering

questions, took no part in the debate.

8.1 The temporary clerk said that SALC had advised that NALC's findings would be available to us the following day. Meanwhile she recommended that the matter should be discussed assuming a positive outcome.

8.2 The working group had decided upon a list of conditions which were discussed and it was agreed after discussion that they should be amended as follows:

Re 2.1: Re DPC representation on DLC Board as a voting member/trustee: two people selected by DPC

Re 3.1: Quarterly meetings and accounts and monthly reports from DPC representative or DLC Director

Re 3.5: for clarification, to read: The 2009/2010 donation of £15,000 to be made in four quarterly installments from 1 April 2009 subject to DLC meeting all criteria

Re 5.2: Future funding may be considered from precept subject to satisfactory performance during first year (*DPC to review prior to budget setting 2010/11*)

8.2 Cllr Blackwell was asked for DLC's constitution and he said that he was not aware that there was one, only the Memorandum of Association.

8.3 Cllr Winrow-Giffin proposed, seconded by Cllr Voller, all in favour (one abstention) that the amended list should be forwarded to David Hughes at DLC for his information and would then be finally ratified at the meeting on February 16th.

9. Employment matters: agreed to move this to confidential discussion.

10. Chair's urgent business: any items not on this agenda but of such urgency as to merit, in the Chair's opinion, immediate action: none.

11. Any other business: information exchange only

11.1 Cllr Blackwell requested that the sign for Clover Court be moved to stand alone as its present location caused confusion with Vicarage Gardens – the temporary clerk to make inquiries.

11.2 It was agreed that a new list of Committees and Working Groups should be drawn up.

11.3 Cllr Cockerton asked for the following future agenda items:

Cemetery charges review

Risk assessment

Review of internal auditing arrangements

Mark Sillett's new rates of pay

12. Date of next meeting: February 16th 2009

13. Temporary exclusion of press and public: *That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the Meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed concerning legal issues; potentially sensitive personnel content.*

The meeting finished at 9.45 p.m.

.....Chair.....Date

