

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA PARISH COUNCIL MEETING THAT WAS HELD ON ZOOM, ON FRIDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2021, 7.00PM

PRESENT: Chairman Darren Milward, Cllr Frances Milward, Cllr Jeremy Lea, Cllr Neil Cooper & Cllr Andrew Akhurst.

Also present: SCC John Field and the Clerk.

OPEN FORUM - None

1.2 APOLOGIES

a. Apologies for absence. Cllr Brenda Mitchell, Cllr Cassey Wooltorton, Barham Athletic FC representatives Kieran Beresford & Jasper Lea.

b. Consent/non consent to absence. Consent was granted to the above councillors.

2.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST APPROPRIATE TO ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations given.

3.2. TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF BARHAM PICNIC SITE

The Chairman advised that the deadline given to Barham Athletic Football Club, 31st January 2021 has now passed and that £5,000 deposit was not received. After 12 years the Parish Council have not been able to secure a viable use for the picnic site, it is now time to move on and come to an agreement for its future. He has 6 suggested options that he would like the PC to consider;

1. The Parish Council to make it back into a picnic site.
2. To get change of use to commercial/industrial.
3. Change of use to housing.
4. Give the picnic site back to Suffolk County Council
5. Have received an offer of £150,00 and will increase that offer.
6. Local businessman/land owner is willing to buy the site and use some for commercial use and willing to return part into a viable picnic site and give back to the Parish Council. He would reinstate/rebuild the toilets, a new information centre and café, car park and play area.

What are the views of the Parish Councillors?

SCC Field informed that he has not yet heard anything back from the District Council regarding change of use. Suffolk County Council who are the portfolio holders, have no objection for change of use. Advise that the PC approach our district councillors regarding change of use.

The County Council did have a legal constraint that the picnic site should be maintained for recreational use. But they may be willing to change and consider proposals of use. The County Council originally gave the picnic site to the PC for a peppercorn rent and they have an 80% overage, the PC 20%. So if the site was to be sold the PC would only get 20%. He doesn't know of any other SCC sites that have been converted to housing.

Cllr Cooper asked if the PC would still be responsible for running the picnic site area if the local business man took over the whole site?

The Chairman suggests that the PC could either lease it out or employ someone to run the coffee shop etc.

SCC Field advised that it may not be an option to give the site back to Suffolk County Council as they had passed the ownership to the Parish Council 12 years ago. There is no chance of negotiating less than 80% back to SCC.

Therefore, the Chairman would suggest that if ownership cannot be given back to SCC then the PC should consider getting change of use ourselves, the site would be worth more money with this. However, he would prefer that the site is sold to the local businessman or sold for housing. Bearing in mind with the new proposed development on Norwich Road, we would have a recreation area to offer new residents. The PC will need to pay for a valuation.

Cllr Cooper asked how a deal with the local businessman would work? Chairman advised that he would buy say 75% of the site and the PC would still own 25%, but he is willing to carry out the work needed to revamp the recreational part at no cost to the PC.

Chairman's initials.....

Cllr Lea agrees that the PC must do something and would suggest that the PC engage a professional agent to invite tenders, best offers and terms.

SCC Field would suggest that the PC goes directly to the district council (for a small charge) to discuss proposals and pre applications, this guidance would be cheaper in the long term. SCC would favour that the land should stay in public use. The PC will need to legally prove to SCC that all tenders are good value. The cost for the PC to get change of use could be at least £50,000, but would mean the land would then be worth at least £2m if then sold for housing. Or leave for a developer to get change of use themselves, less profit for the PC. He would be happy to help with the tendering process.

Cllr Lea recommends that the Clerk gets advice from SALC in the first instant regarding selling the land and what the options to the PC might be. He thinks that the business man should still be asked to present his tender.

Cllr Akhurst would like to see the site go to the local businessman, but is also attracted to the change of use by the PC.

Chair suggests that the PC could approach developers who might be interested in purchasing part of the site for housing, some social housing and that the PC keep part of the site as a picnic site. PC would control or lease out the part of the picnic site.

SCC Field would recommend that the Parish Council;

1. Seek advice from SALC in the first instance
2. Explore the use of the land
3. Do not forget that if the site is sold there is an overage clause
4. Explore the cost of going to the District Council for pre application advice for development or retain as recreational.
5. Consider going to developers for Tenders

The Chairman proposed that the above points are the best way forward, all are in agreement.

The Clerk to progress the points forward.

4.2 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 1st March 2021, 7pm on Zoom, to approve Statutory Documents which the Clerk needs done in this financial year.

Future meeting dates 12th April, 24th May AGM, 6th September 2021, 6th December 2021

The meeting ended at 8.05pm

Chairman

Date