

# Chedburgh Parish Council

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## MINUTES

of a Meeting held at the Erskine Centre, Chevington Road, Chedburgh on

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Mike Chester (Chair), Margaret Rickard, Pat Fisher, Teresa Landymore, Alan Noyes, Sam Parrett and Clare Varney.

**In attendance:** Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council)  
6 Members of the public.

### **61. Apologies**

There were no apologies as all Councillors were present.

### **62. Declarations of Interest**

- a. There were no declarations of Pecuniary Interests.
- b. There were no declarations of Other Disclosable Interests.
- c. Councillors Chester, Rickard and Noyes had declared a private interest in Item 69 but had been granted dispensations.

### **63. Minutes of the last meetings**

It was resolved that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th November 2018 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such.

### **64. County and Borough Councillor's Reports**

a. County Cllr Soons had submitted a written report which had been circulated to Members and was received by the Council. C Cllr Soons asked whether the Council would like her reports to include matters of wider County interest. It was agreed that if such matters had an impact on Chedburgh it would be helpful to be made aware of them but that otherwise it was more helpful to focus on local matters.

The issue of speeding along Bury Road was discussed and it was agreed to seek a review of the speed limit. Ian Leggett, Village Handyman, will send C Cllr Soons the speed analysis derived from the VAS.

The condition of Chevington Road was again discussed - work is to be carried out to certain parts but it was hoped that while the contractors were on site they would deal with all the problems.

b. Borough Cllr Mike Chester tabled a written report covering various issues and this was received by the meeting.

### **65. Public Forum**

A member of the Chedburgh Marquis Cornwallis Hub spoke in opposition to the planning proposal to be discussed under Item 68a, arguing that little if anything had changed since the previous identical application.

### **66. Decisions taken since the previous meeting under Delegated Authority**

The Clerk reported that he had authorised the purchase of a replacement printer as the old one had broken down and could not be economically repaired. The expenditure is reported for formal approval under item 71.

### **67. Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on correspondence from:

- ◆ *The Community Council*, expressing thanks for the grant received. This was noted and a vote of thanks to Dr Gary Dillon (Chair) and the members of the Community Council was proposed and carried unanimously, in respect of their continuing good stewardship of the Erskine Centre.
- ◆ *The Voluntary Network*, seeking funding. This was noted and it was agreed to place it on a future agenda for consideration.
- ◆ *Suffolk Accident and Rescue Service*, seeking funding. This was noted and it was agreed to place it on a future agenda for consideration.

## 68. Planning and Environment

### a. To consider responses to Planning Application Consultations:

**DC/18/2402/FUL - Marquis Cornwallis, The Street: Change of use from public house (A4) to 1 no. dwelling (C3) (Previous Application DC/18/1294/FUL).** In discussion it was noted that nothing material had changed since the previous application in identical terms. The Council **resolved to object to the application in the strongest terms** as it agreed that a change of use is neither justified nor necessary for the following reasons:

- ◆ The Pub (including associated land, which is not part of this application) is registered as an Asset of Community Value and there is substantial support for it to be retained as (the only) pub in the village. Change of use would lead to the loss of an important and valued community facility. Furthermore, the population of the village has grown significantly with over 50 new houses having been built in the village over the last two years, creating additional demand for community facilities.
- ◆ A Community Interest Group has secured pledges from local residents and other financial support to enable a bid and it has plans to re-open the pub.
- ◆ The applicant has sought to repudiate the objections to the previous application and states that no one has come forward to purchase the pub; this is untrue as the community Interest group has made a bid at market price (and above the price for which the pub was purchased approximately two years ago, despite the current condition of the building being considerably worse than at that time).
- ◆ The applicant also suggests that the village hall (The Erskine Centre) is licensed and could serve as an alternative to the pub. Although the hall is well used for activities such as Pilates classes, circuit training, a nursery etc, it is not open other than at specific times for such activities; it serves a very different purpose from the pub and it is not licensed.
- ◆ Although the pub was first marketed over a year ago, during the intervening time it has been presented in various formats and taken on and off the market. Furthermore, for much of the time there has not been a for sale sign on display and nor has it been find-able on internet searches. Most importantly it has been marketed at a price the Council believes would be unrealistically high even were the property were designated for residential use - as a public house the asking price bears no relation to the reality of the market. This is clearly demonstrated by market valuation obtained by the Community Interest Group which suggests a value of less than half of the current asking price.
- ◆ The owners of the pub (and applicants) have taken actions which, whether deliberately or not, have made the pub less attractive to buyers, having stripped out or destroyed all cellarage equipment, removed areas of floor, allowed the building to deteriorate and hived off an area of land included in the Asset of Community Value designation to a separate, but clearly related, company. Having done all this, the applicant, in the planning application, cites the condition of the building as a factor in favour of a change of use. Observers of all this struggle not to draw the conclusion that the owners have adopted a strategy calculated to bring about a situation that could be used to help justify a change of use.

- ◆ In any event there is certainly clear evidence that nothing has been done to make the pub an attractive going concern for at least the past two years and, contrary to planning requirements, no proper financial or business information has been submitted to support the assertion that the pub is not economically viable.
- b. Update reports on applications considered previously  
**DC/18/1018/FUL - Land At Queens Hill:** (i) change of use of site from agriculture use (*Sui Generis*) to equine educational establishment (Class D1); (ii) conversion of existing agricultural storage barn to stables, tack room and storage; (iii) 1no. manège; (iv) 1no. rural worker's dwelling and (v) 1no. classroom building. **Approved.**
- c. Brocket Park Development - The pavements are still not finished and the Public Open Space has been fenced off. Enforcement action is awaited.
- d. The Handyman's report had been circulated and was noted by the Council. Arising from discussion:
  - ◆ It was noted that Wayne Horridge maintains the path from The Green to the Brockett Park development as a volunteer. A vote of thanks was proposed and carried unanimously.
  - ◆ It was noted that grain store vehicles (Bury Road) are again making the path and road around the church slimey and dangerous. It was resolved that the Clerk would write to the owners pointing out that it was a condition of planning permission for the store that the condition of the path and road was not adversely affected by use of the store by lorries and that ongoing provision must be made. The Clerk will ask them to advise what provision is in place.
  - ◆ The ditch in Queens Lane has not been attended to by the responsible house owner. The Clerk will write (with photographs to be provided by Cllr Chester) again pointing out that this neglect can cause flooding and stating that if the work is not carried out, the Council will undertake the work and charge the owners.

**69. The Marquis Cornwallis Pub /Community Interest Group** (Chedburgh Marquis Cornwallis Hub - CMCH)

- a. The Council noted the written update from the Chair of CMCH and invited him to address the meeting. Mr Plowman highlighted the key issues, principally that there is a chicken and egg situation whereby enthusiasm and funds are only likely to be generated if there is a realistic prospect of acquiring the pub, but acquiring the pub can only become a realistic prospect once funds are raised.

In the light of this dilemma, and following discussion, the Council resolved to urge the Borough Council (and /or its successor, West Suffolk Council) to offer an expression of willingness to compulsorily purchase the Pub and associated land comprised within the Asset of Community Value, once sufficient funding had been garnered on the part by CMCH.

- b. The Council had received an additional, confidential letter from the Chair of CMCH. Mr Plowman asked the Council to consider setting an additional meeting to consider further detailed proposals. It was resolved to call a meeting for the 4<sup>th</sup> February and due to the commercially sensitive nature of the business the matter will be discussed under the rules for Reserved Business.

**70. Roundabout for the Play Area Project**

The Clerk gave a verbal update, informing the meeting that Ian Leggett had kindly offered to act as fundraiser. It was agreed that this was a helpful and logical step, given that he had already achieved cash or promises of over £1,350. In addition, Karen Soons had indicated that £1,000 could be available from her locality budget and a formal application is in preparation.

With the £3,505 already granted, donated or allocated there is a total of £5,850.00 already raised or promised which is more than the cost of the roundabout itself but still £2,177 short of the delivered and installed cost, together with soft surfacing, of £8,000.00. Ian Leggett pointed out that eighty villagers had already expressed support for the idea by contributing to the funds raised and that about a further twenty had recently expressed verbal support.

It was agreed to make a final decision on whether to move forward with the project at the March meeting, following further consultation.

**71. Finance, including the 2019/20 Budget**

- a. Council received and approved the Bank Reconciliation for the third quarter of 2018/19 and Cllr Noyes (a non-signatory on the account) certified the accuracy of the bank statement figures. To receive financial statements for the third quarter of 2018/19;
- b. The financial statements for the third quarter of 2018/19 were received following brief discussion.
- c. The draft budget for 2019/20 was discussed briefly, the indicative budget having been discussed in more detail at the previous meeting, and it was then resolved to approve the draft as the 2019/20 Budget.
- d. The Council resolved to raise a Precept of £9,752 for 2019/20.
- e. The schedule of receipts and payments was received and it was resolved to approve the payments.

**72. Speed Prevention Stickers**

Councillors agreed to meet to distribute the stickers on Saturday 19th January at 10.00am.

**73. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas**

There were no reports or agenda items but the Chair announced that Cllr Fisher had intimated her wish to retire from the Council prior to the elections in May, following 29 years of service. A vote of thanks was proposed and carried and was marked by a round of applause.

**The meeting closed at 9.35pm.**

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council:

..... Chair

..... Date