



Parish of Castle Hedingham

Mrs Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)

25 Bayley Street, Castle Hedingham, Essex CO9 3DG

07845 056597 castlehedinghamparishclerk@gmail.com

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON MONDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2015 AT CASTLE HEDINGHAM CLUB AT 7.45PM

Present: Cllrs Higgins, Hood, Moffat, Pewter, Philp, Scrivens, Southgate, Toocaram, Worley
In the Chair: Cllr Southgate
Clerk: Claire Waters
Also Present: One parishioner

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from District Cllrs Beavis and Johnson for absence due to a conflicting meeting at Braintree District Council.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 23rd November 2015 were approved as a correct record of events.

Proposed: Cllr Scrivens Seconded: Cllr Moffat Signed by the Chairman

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. CASTLE HEDINGHAM PLAYING FIELD

Cllr Southgate asked that the excellent work done by the clerk following the meeting of the Playing Field Committee with Mr & Mrs Lindsay and Braintree District Council on 11th December be noted in the minutes. Through contact with the Monitoring Officer at Braintree District Council and the Chief Executive at the Essex Association of Local Councils, the Parish Council's legal position has now been clarified. EALC have also offered further legal advice to the Parish Council.

- Since the clerk was not able to give Councillors at least 3 clear working days' notice of the decision which was proposed at the meeting on December 11th, no decision could be made at this meeting.
- The maximum commitment the Parish Council is able to make in return for a lease on Site C is to support the principle of development at Site A, but to reserve the right to comment with regard to the detail of any plans. Anything else would be putting the Parish Council at substantial risk of predetermination, which is an offence in common law.

Cllr Southgate explained to Councillors the details of the meeting held on December 11th and a written report was given to each Councillor. A full discussion ensued including:

1. The decision by BDC to include their land by New Park together with Site A, the current playing field site owned by Mr & Mrs Lindsay, as a submission for development in the new Local Plan (due to be finalised in 2017). Disappointment was expressed at the lack of support from BDC.
2. The determination of Mr & Mrs Lindsay not to issue a new lease on Site A, but to offer a lease on Site C in return for support from the Parish Council for development at Site A in the future. It was noted that Mr & Mrs Lindsay wish to co-operate with the Parish Council and have a positive relationship with the village in the long term, as well as protecting their assets for future generations of their family.
3. Has the Parish Council been as assertive in negotiations with Mr & Mrs Lindsay and Braintree District Council as it could have been? Good open space is an integral part of the village and it will be a lesser place without.

4. The need to accept that times change and progress is inevitable – examples include the building of Bowmans Park, New Park and Nunnery Street in the past.
5. The possibility of the Parish Council purchasing land – this seems to be impossible if BDC is not prepared to co-operate. BDC approves the inclusion of any land on the Community Asset register. The value of development land is far greater than open space, and the Parish Council finances would not be sufficient to purchase land of development value.
6. Consideration of the planned development of the Primary School and possible availability of land for a play area nearby – this land is also privately owned.
7. The possible existence of a restrictive covenant on the land acquired from Hedingham Castle by BDC when New Park was built. This could be requested from BDC under the Freedom of Information Act.
8. The expiry of the lease on the Memorial Hall and Castle Hedingham Club in 2051 and the possibility of discussing a lease on the whole site together to secure an integrated recreation area in the long term.
9. The commitment of the Parish Council to ensuring that the village is consulted at the appropriate time and involved in any plans for development of a new recreation area.

Cllr Hood as Chairman of the Playing Field Committee summarised the possibilities:

- a) To request that the Parish Council carries on using Site A as a play area until any actual development is proposed. This would mean the existing equipment stays where it is, and Mr & Mrs Lindsay continue to have the site maintained by the Parish Council pending a decision on the Local Plan in 2017. It would also mean that if site C is developed in the meantime to meet the needs of the village, there may be less local opposition to any future development at Site A.
- b) To ensure that any proposed development in the future at Site A includes some area for play. This was supported by James Cleverly MP during his visit to the village in November, and was not rejected as a possibility by BDC representatives at the meeting on December 11th, although they expressed some surprise that the Parish Council wished to have two recreation areas in the village.
- c) Accepting that the pressure on BDC to find land for development is very strong, it is important that the Parish Council does not underestimate what could be achieved as a long term solution for the village.

Action: Cllr Southgate asked that all Councillors take time to reflect on the situation and the options available to the Parish Council before the next meeting.

5. VILLAGE MAINTENANCE OPERATIVE

Since the position was advertised on 7th December, 10 people have contacted the clerk to request an application form.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- To be confirmed

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS:

Ordinary Parish Council	Monday 25 January 2016	7.45pm
Ordinary Parish Council	Monday 22 February 2016	7.45pm

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN)

DATE