

Minutes of Stocking Pelham Parish Council Meeting held on 7th March 2019 Village Hall at 7pm

Present: Cllr Robin Whitefield (Chairman), Cllr D Nicholls, Cllr M Hutchins, Cllr P Lucas
In attendance: Mrs R Berthoud, Parish Clerk, and two members of the public

- 19/012 Apologies**
To receive and accept apologies for absence
Cllrs R Banks, A Brown
- 19/013 Interests**
a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
None
b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests; and
None
c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate
None
- 19/014 Minutes**
To confirm the Minutes of Stocking Pelham Parish Council Meeting held on 30th January 2019 as an accurate record of proceedings
Resolved. Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and duly signed by the Chairman.
- Report on ACV Tribunal Briefing**
A briefing took place on 7th February to prepare the Parish Council and witnesses for the Tribunal on 8th February. Dale Ingram described the process of the tribunal and the role of J Lucas, Parish Clerk, and Colin Berthoud and Bill Bampton as witnesses. Present at the briefing were Dale Ingram, Cllrs R Whitefield, M Hutchins, P Lucas as well as J Lucas, R Berthoud, C Berthoud and B Bampton.
- Planning Application 3/19/0171/FUL, 3 Mapleside
It was agreed that the SPPC resolution to application 3/19/0171/FUL, 3 Mapleside should be to comment on the proposals in writing. The agreed SPPC comments were to identify mismatches between the new application and the current construction and to express concern at the further increase in the size of the property.
- 19/015 Public Issues**
Members of the public can raise matters of concern. (This item is limited to 15 minutes)

A resident wanted to know how the parish council proposed to meet payments on the proposed pub loan. It was explained that the parish council would act as the landlord, leasing the pub to a tenant and thus deriving an income sufficient to cover loan payments. Full details are available in the Business Plan on the SPPC website.

See also item 19/016 a) 3. regarding a 'what if' scenario.

Another resident proposed making an offer for the leasehold on behalf of the Save the Pub Action Group because under the terms of the loan SPPC is only able to make an offer on the freehold.

19/016

Planning

a) Cock Public House planning update

1. To decide next steps following ACV Tribunal result in favour of East Herts Council and SPPC

Cllr P Lucas has been in contact with Geoff Williamson (member for Little Hadham ward) who has made some enquiries on behalf of SPPC and has reported that EHDC will give serious consideration to the possibility of Compulsory Purchase once the Public Works loan has been approved and all negotiated settlements have proved impossible.

The current status of SPPC negotiations is that the owner has rejected the SPPC offer of £140,000 for the freehold and considers £850,000 to be an acceptable offer. It is unclear if this is for freehold of the unfinished pub or of a completed pub (Cllr P Lucas has asked for clarification on this).

The owner of the pub has invited SPPC to suggest terms for a long lease, presumably in the form of a tenancy, as he has previously suggested. SPPC has explained that the terms for securing a government loan mean that the Parish Council itself is unlikely to be able to either, enter into a tenancy agreement or to purchase a leasehold. The freehold option remains the only possible option for SPPC. The Save the Pub Action Group will explore further the Leasehold option – Ref minute 19/015 above.

Resolved, proposed Cllr P Lucas, seconded Cllr R Whitefield for the Parish Council to enter into a back to back agreement with EHDC to commence CPO procedures once the Public Works loan has been approved and all possible avenues for a negotiated settlement have been exhausted. **Unanimously agreed.**

2. To consider publicity in the press following ACV Tribunal **Action:** Cllr M Hutchins to circulate a draft press statement and then contact the press to publicise the ACV Tribunal result.

3. To consider a 'what if' scenario in the event that SPPC purchase the Cock as a community-owned pub

As Stocking Pelham is a small parish and the loan being applied for is a substantial sum, Parish Borrowing have asked SPPC how it intends to afford loan repayments in a 'what if' scenario, eg if the required income is not generated by the pub and the contingency

fund is insufficient to cover a shortfall. The SPPC business plan indicates that the annual contribution to the contingency fund is expected to be £20,000. With an annual loan repayment just under £26,000, SPPC may need to consider increasing the precept from £2,000 to £8,000 to cover a possible shortfall. Such an increase would be equivalent to an increase of approximately £75 for a Band D household. A statement explaining this possibility has been posted onto the SPPC website so that residents have an opportunity to feedback to the council.

Resolved, proposed Cllr P Lucas, seconded Cllr R Whitefield that, in the unlikely event of a 'what if' scenario, it may be necessary for SPPC to increase the precept from £2,000 to £8,000 so that there are sufficient funds to meet loan repayments. **Unanimously agreed.**

b) Other planning

3 Mapleside (3/19/0171/FUL). EHDC has already identified that the building work has exceeded permitted development and has recommended the submission of a new planning application. SPPC have commented on this new application, expressing concern that the current construction does not match the new proposals and that the proposed first floor extension is excessive and out of keeping with the adjacent properties.

19/017

Village Hall

To receive reports from Cllrs R Whitefield and M Hutchins regarding quotes for pruning/height reduction of trees outside the village hall.

Resolved, proposed Cllr M Hutchins, seconded Cllr R Whitefield to have the trees pruned to half height and take all growth away for £650 plus VAT.

Unanimously agreed.

19/018

Finance

a) To consider moving to online banking

Resolved, proposed Cllr R Whitefield, seconded Cllr D Nicholls to continue with current banking arrangements with Lloyds Bank who do not offer a multi-authorisation online facility. **Unanimously agreed.**

b) Cllr P Lucas reported that he has the SPPC cheque book and that he and Cllr D Nicholls are now the authorised joint signatories.

19/019

Next Meeting

To suggest agenda items for the next Meeting of the Parish Council on Thursday 11th April 2019

- Management of common land

Meeting closed at 7.30pm