



BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Bembridge Parish Council Finance & Assets Committee Meeting at 7.00 pm on the 1st May 2018 Village Hall, High Street, Bembridge

Present: Cllr R Weaver (Chairman), Cllr M Donlon, Cllr K Fagan, Cllr S Weedall, Cllr M Sullivan, Cllr G Stillman, Cllr M Curtis, Cllr R Widger, Cllr M Reeder, Cllr A Steane, Mrs E Goldring (Clerk) and Mrs J McDade (Assistant Clerk) **Public:** County Press and 26 members of the public

PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Resident – the document provided for this evenings decision is in my opinion misleading and incorrect, but with the three minute time restriction I can't go into detail. But I would like to comment on the fact that there has been no public consultation on this agenda item whatsoever. The simple maintenance option that myself and other parishioners have been asking to be included for debate has been totally ignored. The basics of this option would be to use the £30,000 earmarked plus the £25,000 in budget, totally £55,000. For the major repair work in the first year and carry on with £10,000 from precept each year until completion. No change to Nissan hut, no asset stripping and does not detract financially from other parish commitments. So why haven't sensible options like this been included for debate? Why has the tax payer been frozen out of discussion and decision making? And why on such an important issue to the village a poll has not been arranged?

Chairman - there are a lot of pros and cons in this report but would like to state that this is an excellent report by the Clerk.

Resident – hope there will be no restrictions on the length of time to debate this evening and the chairman will be impartial. No one should be victimised. So many signatures on the petition to save 5/7 High Street and electors voted in councillors to save the building. There should be a recorded vote.

Chairman – this meeting will be chaired as per our Standing Orders and each Councillor should give their individual judgements.

Resident – in 2012 the clerk comments 'should the Parish Council be investing in the High Street building if the future maybe to dispose of it'. It would appear that this has been an objective for many years and perhaps why so little maintenance has been done on the property. Is it to conveniently make the sell option more viable? Will parishioners be reimbursed their precept money taken for the roof if selling is the option chosen? Parishioners voted councillors for their principles they stood for, one of which was preservation of assets. I hope they will be honourable and remember the public support and petition.

Chairman – not aware of the document you are talking about.

Resident – this started by buying 5/7 building for £1 from the IWC in 2011, with no schedule or dilapidation report and very little planned maintenance. With £150,000 to £200,000 works required the argument is why not sell the parish office? After paying off the loan there would be no money to offset, so this is a non-starter. Keep hearing that it is an important building in the village, that does not mean the PC have to own it look at the butchers, Crab & Lobster they are important buildings not owned or run by the PC. The building does provide income but that does not make it an asset. When does an asset become a liability? Options 1&2 would leave no money for the Village Hall works plus large loans or increases in precept. Ring fencing monies for 5/7 would leave nothing else for War Memorial, Village Hall etc for which the PC has a financial responsibility. The decision to sell, with new leases and covenants in place would make money available to benefit all in the community. I believe the PC should not be commercial landlords.

Resident – Cllr Curtis will declare a pecuniary interest at the appropriate time but I believe other councillors would gain financially. Anything damaging the footfall in the High Street would be a gain to Lane End shops, so the owner would gain.

Chairman – completely out of context and disagree strongly

Resident – I would like to specifically address item 4 on the agenda and before doing so may I congratulate all those involved in producing the report that accompanies this item and in particular thank Emma and her staff for all the hard work that has obviously gone into preparing this information for us.

It is clear, concise, easy to read and to understand. It sets out quite precisely where we are now on this long outstanding problem and despite the inability of the Open Bembridge councillors to come forward with alternative practical proposals of their own, we now have three clear options to be decided tonight on an agreed way forward.

We are all aware that the first year of this council has been incredibly difficult and that in certain areas we have become the laughing stock of the Isle of Wight and as a consequence suffered the resignation of Marianne Sullivan as Chair of the Council but fortunately she remains as a councillor.

That most of these problems can be firmly laid at the door of Open Bembridge is not in doubt, nor is the inability of its wholly inadequate and incompetent leadership to come forward with proposals that look to the future rather than just blaming the past.

Well I say to them specifically and to all other sitting councillors that tonight is make you mind up time, ending the prevarication that has been dominant over the last 12 months. It has been incredibly difficult for those councillors wishing to take us forward but we now have a clear agenda which takes us in the right direction and I wish all councillors well in their deliberations. My hope, which I feel will be shared by many in this room, is that a reasoned debate will take place on all sides and that any resulting decision will be respected and accepted by all elected councillors. I also hope that once a decision is made that we will not have to suffer from trial by social media from those who may not agree with what has been decided. We are a democratic council where majority decisions decide the day and I urgently request that all councillors and their respective supporters respect this.

On a purely personal view, having spent the last 12 months listening to all the arguments, I have no hesitation in supporting option 3. Not only does it represent the best financial option for all parishioners but in addition to new secure leases being granted to the two tenants prior to sale it also gives them the opportunity to further protect their own future by being involved in a purchase of the property if they so wish. It also releases funds for urgent work needed on the Village Hall and does not incur further debt loading on all parishioners merely to benefit two people. A clear win-win situation as I see it.

Leaseholder – talk about tenants having secured new leases, is this the case? We have received a letter offering a new lease, when are the council going to do this?

Clerk – the lease renewal process has started. Landlord's inspections have taken place and will come before Full Council next month. Mark Willey has been appointed to work on the new leases. Negotiations will then take place.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence
Apologies from Cllr Millington

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- To receive declarations of pecuniary or other interests relating to items on agenda
Cllr Curtis declared a pecuniary interest in item 4.
- To consider requests and grant dispensations if appropriate
None received

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

To receive for approval minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee meetings held on 13th March and Extraordinary Meeting held on 13th March 2018

RESOLVED: Approved minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee meetings held on 13th March and Extraordinary Meeting held on 13th March 2018

7 in favour 1 abstention 2 against

4. **5/7 HIGH STREET**

To consider Committee report and agree one of three options for 5/7 High Street:-

Option 1 – To implement a 10 year maintenance programme

Option 2 – To redevelop the property and increase the rental income by possibly £16,200pa

Option 3 – To dispose of the property and generate a possible capital receipt of £180,000

Point of Order was raised stating this item breached the Standing Orders 7a, 7b and 9

7. Previous resolutions

a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

b. No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

We cannot make a decision tonight as it is within the 6 months since the last decision was made. Do not believe this is a motion? So debate should not take place.

This committee has to make recommendations to Full Council if a loan is required or the property sold as terms of reference do not overrule the law.

The point of order was not upheld

Points raised in discussion:

- Hard hitting factual report
- 5/7 is a commercial asset not a community asset only serving 2 business not the community
- Can preserve the building with covenants
- Village Hall is the community asset that needs a project as used by numerous people
- Options 1 & 2 will cost money better spent on other assets
- Right to change mind, with leases and covenants in place we need to move forward with the Village Hall works for all generations to use.
- Need to look at all the assets especially with St Luke's Cemetery coming to the PC
- With the costs 5/7 is a liability not an asset
- Lots said that are not facts
- No consultation, contrary to what has been said with community or some councillors
- Decision last June to rescind sale of 5/7 High Street
- Correction decision to rescind was taken by the previous council in March last year
- Last year agreed 10 year maintenance plan, slow refurbishment which would be without loans or increase to precept.
- Correct no agreement to a 10 year maintenance plan last year or this
- One tenant does not have a secure lease as previously stated
- Consultations and information days have taken place
- Selling for £180,000, how do you expect to get that amount? Will maintenance have to be done?
- Professional valuation was taken
- Danger selling the family silver to make a quick buck
- Income from rentals covers loan on the parish office and maintenance of the toilets. Is the biggest income for the PC
- Is an asset not only for the 2 tenants but people who use shop

- The eco system that is the High Street will be affected if 5/7 sold, which will be bad for everyone. Stopping people using the High Street, like when the garage and bank were lost.

Point of order raised

Standing Orders 13 c 'Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.' Do you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the High Street as landlord of Boots, Flower Shop and Vegetable Shop? Monitoring Officer said not please do not smear my name

- Report clearly shows that the loss of income will be covered by the loss of maintenance required
- Need to invest in real parish assets
- Costs to develop against return not good for the PC

RESOLVED: Recommend to Full Council that Option 3, to dispose of the property and generate a possible capital receipt of £180,000 be agreed

7 in favour 2 no votes

Method of Sale report required to go forward to Full Council

5. RESOURCES

- To appoint a Planning Consultant
- To appoint a Property Manager
- To seek quotes for a Lettings Agent

RESOLVED: Agreed to defer this item

7 in favour 2 no votes

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Confirmed Tuesday 5th June 2018, 7.00pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed 7.50pm

Signed: Dated:.....