



BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk to the Council,
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Minutes of **BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL** Extraordinary Council meeting on **16th October 2018 at 7.00pm** in the Village Hall, Bembridge

Present: Cllr K Fagan (Chairman), Cllr M Sullivan, Cllr S Weedall, Cllr R Widger, Cllr M Donlon, Cllr L White, Cllr R Weaver, Cllr G Stillman, Cllr N Maclean, Cllr M Curtis, Cllr A Steane and Mrs J McDade (Clerk) **Public:** IW Cllr B Tyndall, County Press and 46 members of the public

PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Resident: Is T Millington still a Councillor and if so when does he cease to be one as has attended only 4 out of 18 meetings?

Chairman: Would no longer be a Councillor after 6 consecutive months attendance with no apologies accepted.

Councillor: He works for Wightlink

Resident: I would like to ask two simple questions in relation to tonight's agenda through the chair but directed at the RFO. I feel that the council may have acted unlawfully in their decision to sell 5/7 High Street, because they had much more reasonable and feasible options open to them. Have you advised them of the potential pitfalls if this is the case. Yes or No? As the RFO have you supplied the Councillors with a financial risk assessment outlining the correct net benefit for the parish if they decide to accept an offer on 5/7. Yes or No? if the answer is no to either these two questions, should you be discussing agenda item no7?

Resident: Agenda item 4 129/18

1) In light of the public statement made by a senior Parish Council Employee at the previous Council meeting and the subsequent statement and press release issued by the BPC raising allegations of Bullying and intimidation do Councillors think the handling of this matter makes the Council Fit for purpose?

2) Can the Council please announce what steps will now be taken to Investigate and eliminate Bullying and Intimidation in all Council affairs?

Agenda Item 7 132/18/5/7

1) To ask if all Councillors are satisfied that due diligence has been applied to all stages of the sale of 5/7 High Street?

2) To ask all Councillors and Council Staff to confirm that none of the prospective purchasers are personally acquainted or known to them?

3) Does the Council agree that it is important to avoid any suggestion that the Council has acted in an "Ultra viris" way over the sale of 5/7?

Resident: After three calls to stop the sale of 5/7 and a vote of no confidence, do you have the creditability to represent Bembridge, shouldn't you step down and elect a Parish Council the residents would trust?

Resident: I want to know if any of the prospective purchaser of 5/7 been privately advised or known by any Councillors or their representatives? I understand that the figures will not be in the public domain but believe we should know a ballpoint figure, knowing that A is better than B and giving criteria for the

reason bid was accepted. I consider names of persons or companies should be released into the public domain. We should know why accepting one bid over another and if it's good for the village. How are you going to judge each bid and justify them?

Still waiting replies to my emails.

Chairman: Decisions are not made by the Chairman they are made by Full Council, and when offers come in Full Council will decide and set the parameters with no hidden agendas as said or rumoured

Resident: Firstly I would like to congratulate Jacqui on her promotion to Parish Clerk. However I would like to ask her why she was willing to take on the job if her friend and predecessor was bullied as has been stated in both the Clerk's resignation report and a statement from supposedly Parish Council. This is the main reason to have a full independent investigation into these accusations of bullying by Open Bembridge Councillors and their followers. Also to investigate the secrecy, ignoring petitions, polls and a vote of no confidence in the Clerk and 7 names Councillors. Secondly I and the majority of Bembridge Parishioners would like to see a Business Case to understand the reason to sell 5/7 High Street. This asset belongs to the Council Tax Payers of Bembridge and our wishes must be adhered to. We also demand a full business plan of all the proposed work from start date to finish date. Staffing costs, building costs. Time delay. Increased costs and in addition a full plan of where the money is coming from and full explanation of how the mortgage on the council office is going to be paid. Seeing there will no longer be any income from tenants of 5/7 High Street. We also need to see the proposed spend of the money received from the sale. This should all incorporated in the business plan. I wait in anticipation.

Resident: Prospective buyers probably will be known by Councillors that's the Island. Halifax decided not to be Prime Minister but Churchill did.

Resident: A large number of Councillors did not attend the Parish Meeting, cowardice not an excuse. I was assured I would receive a written reply to question and posted a note through office door but no response?

Chairman: We have 20 working days to respond. We have nothing to hide.

Resident: What covenants and caveats are in place to protect the building and public from future development of 5/7 High Street and has the potential purchaser been made aware of them? Please may I have a copy of them?

Resident: If I write to the Parish Council private and confidentially, then I would expect it to remain private and confidential. Not all Councillors honour the words private and confidential, and believe they can publish where they like due to the Nolan Principles. Please let us know that private and confidential will be respected by all Councillors or we may find our information in the public domain.

Resident: Private and confidential does not override the Nolan Principles

Resident: How are the questions raised to be dealt with? No confidence. Need to respond and engage with residents. PC should have an open communications policy. Decisions shouldn't be taken in secret.

Chairman: No decisions are made in secret, but some need to be in private eg tenants. All decisions and accounts are on the website or you can visit the office. Everything is open and transparent. We are a £550 per day budget Council which has 3 audits a year, monthly bank reconciliations, a huge number of services and hide nothing.

Resident: All plans for sale, financial endeavour. People of Bembridge do not want this to happen.

Chairman: There have been a number of debates and consultations. We have two buildings that need substantial works. The Council already has two PWLB loans, and do not want any more. The priority has to be the Village Hall which benefits 100's of residents and not just 2 tenants at 5/7 High Street.

Resident: Openness and transparency. I have attended meetings for the last 18 months. All the information required is on the website or it is easy to pop into the office. All the financial justifications

were set out in a paper in May this year, all very clear. This EGM was requested by two Councillors, yet one is not even present.

Resident: 1,300 people signed a petition, 600 voted on poll, 140 voted no confidence, are they all wrong?

Chairman: The poll and petition were centred around the fish shop being closed. This is not good for the tenants and their business. The Parish Poll is on the agenda.

Resident: Why respond in 20 days should aim for minimal amount of time. Councillors should declare a pecuniary interest if they know individuals wanting to buy 5/7.

Resident: How will questions be answered?

Chairman: Written response will be given

Resident: Purely financial selling 5/7. Village Hall would pull on the heart strings, people will fund raise.

Chairman: Last time there was public awareness of the funds required for the Village Hall, but there was a huge shortfall and the PC had to take out a PWLB loan.

1. 126/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence
Non-attendance of Cllr Millington

2. 127/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

127/18/01 To receive declarations of pecuniary or other interests relating to items on agenda
None received

127/18/02 To consider requests and grant dispensations if appropriate
No requests

3. 128/18 PARISH MEETING 5th SEPTEMBER 2018

128/18/01 To discuss and agree a response to the Vote of No Confidence

RESOLVED: Acknowledged vote of No Confidence

7 in favour 4 against

128/18/02 To consider Sir Paul Kenny's letter of 21st September 2018

RESOLVED: Agreed not to discuss further

7 in favour 2 against 2 abstentions

128/18/03 To consider and agree how Parish finances could be made more transparent and user friendly for parishioners

Look into making the website more user friendly

128/18/04 To consider and agree how Parish Council business and decision making could be made more open, transparent and engaging for parishioners

RESOLVED: Consider including narrative from committees for recommendations being brought to Full Council

4. 129/18 INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

Following a public statement by the Clerk and some Councillors making allegations of a serious nature to agree to a full independent investigation with an agreed Terms of Reference by an independent person agreed by all Councillors into behaviours within the Council since the May 2017 election

RESOLVED: Agreed to take no action and wait for time limit to expire before discussing further

9 in favour 2 against

5. 130/18 PARISH FINANCES

To discuss and identify how the loss of rental income to the Council would be met following any sale of 5/7 High Street

The loss of income would be mitigated against the loss of maintenance liabilities. The budget for 2019/20 is being discussed by the Clerk and Staffing & Finance Committee, who will bring it to Full Council for discussion and agreement.

Cllr Curtis left the meeting

6. 131/18 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To resolve that in accordance with s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public will be excluded from the following items, having due regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

RESOLVED: that in accordance with s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public will be excluded from the following items, having due regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

9 in favour 1 against

Some members of the public refused to leave the hall, so the meeting was moved to the small hall to continue the business of the Council

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders 3W to extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes

The Chairman reiterated that the following item was strictly Private and Confidential

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 20th November 2018, 7.00pm in the Village Hall

Meeting Closed: 9.30pm

Signed:

Dated: