

DEEPING ST JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

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Parish Clerk: Steve Ashby

Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of Deeping St James Parish Council held on **Tuesday 22 November 2011 at 7.15 pm in The Institute.**

Present: Councillors Barber (arrived 7.50 pm), Baxter, Blessett, Coulson, Dilks (Chair), Gamble, Lindfors-Windsor, Pagella, Pelling, Stevens, Thompson and Wallis along with the clerk and 18 members of the public including representatives of The Deepings School, CfBT Education Trust, Deeping Bowling Assn., Deepings Rugby Club, Save Lincolnshire Schools, Deeping Arts Community Assn. and Bourne & Deeping Hockey Club.

The meeting commenced with an open forum when members of the public in attendance were invited to give their comments on item 99.12 below.

- Mr C Beckett spoke on behalf of the school – the school is in the process of converting to an academy in line with LCC policy they are working with CfBT. They had decided to convert during the summer with a target of 1/9/11 but issues with land, playing fields and leisure centre have delayed the issue. The field is complex – mostly owned by LCC with the PC owning part. The school would like the PC to lease its land to the school for playing field use so it can continue its current usage – there are no proposals for change. The school has an excellent relationship with the Rugby Club and would like to support them for the future e.g. club house and long term security. The Dept. for Education prefers all leases for land to be under the Academy trusts but the move to academy status will not be stopped if they do not have a lease for the land.
- Ms A Gale suggested that part of any lease should be that the PC land is only used for education purposes.
- Mr J Theobald – governor of the school – indicated that the draft lease was for school and leisure use as it is under the existing agreement.
- Mr Beckett indicated that the school wishes to work with the community and the land would be purely for education and playing fields and there are no proposals to change the use – any future building will not be on the playing fields.
- Mr N Cook asked about the long term future of the Bowls Club and Mr Beckett stated that the Bowling Club has their own area with separate access and there were no changes envisaged. Mr Theobald said that the Bowling Club lease would not be with the school at all and would remain with LCC and DSJPC.
- Mr M Owen spoke for the rugby club – they have spoken with the school and have a good relationship. They are looking at their long term future and need to build long term and they need a long 99 year lease to get assistance from the RFU.
- Mr Bennett spoke for the hockey club – they need facilities too, these are the only astro turf pitches in the south of the county, they are second rate pitches with 3rd rate changing facilities and are an embarrassment for this sport. There has been no money spent on the astro turf for 10 years, there are holes in the fence and the lights are not all working. At times the playing fields are nothing short of a dog latrine. He suggested that a proper rent should be charged for the benefit of DSJPC.
- Ms J Downs spoke on behalf of Save Lincolnshire Schools when she read extracts from an open letter to County Councillors Bradwell and Hill. This is available at www.savelincolnshireschools.org.uk and calls on LCC to stop the move to academy status across Lincolnshire.
- Cllr Dilks stated that he welcomed the comments but that the PC was unable to change LCC policy and that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the PC land.
- Mr A Dodd spoke on behalf of CfBT and explained their background namely an education Charity which has existed for 40 years originally called the Centre for British Teachers and originally set up for training teachers in the 3rd World but it has gradually expanded its sphere of operations to the UK and abroad. It has a turnover of £120m p.a. and is the only trust used by LCC at the moment. The Chief Executive is Neil Mackintosh – formerly of VSO and Shelter and most workers are from the education field. CfBT was approached by the school and have had a long standing relationship with LCC for over 10 years. LCC have now adopted CfBT as their preferred partner for Academies. They are involved with academies in Lincoln and Stamford plus others outside Lincolnshire. They also carry out Ofsted inspections. They are a non-profit organisation – working

with Local Authorities, the Government and overseas – any profits are channelled back towards its aims.

- Cllr Baxter wanted to know who owns the land between Linchfield Road and the Open Door Church and what is the status of the leisure centre, Astro Turf and Changing Rooms.
- Mr Beckett said that the bigger picture is not just the Astro Turf but is about facilities in the Deepings as a whole – they are not up to much and their continuation is only down to the local clubs who keep things going. There are no aspirations to change the management of the leisure centre which will be run by SKDC unless SKDC decide to change. The Leisure Centre is a separate issue due to the existing arrangements in place between SKDC and LCC – those issues will still exist with or without the school seeking academy status.
- Cllr Dilks explained that the Parish Council used to be on the Management Committee of the Leisure Centre and have always pushed for improved conditions.
- Mr Bennett suggested that someone should take SKDC to task over the perceived differences in investment between the north and south of the district.
- Mr V Evans of the Bowls Club queried whether the acquisition of the Parish Council Land is actually a barrier to achieving Academy Status Mr Dodd explained that most cases were neater than this but there are 3 local authorities involved here at all levels of Local Government. If all the land is not all bundled up the Secretary of State may think that the process has not been transparent and that all required resources have not been acquired. The school would never own the land only have a lease.
- Mr J Theobald – School Governor – said that for the school the land is not essential, if they only had the LCC land the school would operate but the rugby club would be badly affected as the school could not provide them space. If the school did not have the lease then if the lease remained with LCC the schools insurers would not allow its use therefore a physical barrier would be required.
- When asked if there are any other barriers to achieving Academy status, Mr Beckett's response was yes in part as the school wants to accommodate the rugby club plus whatever happens with the leisure centre but this will be an issue whether an academy or not. The last thing the school wanted is a barrier around the field, this would make it hard to accommodate the rugby club as they need 2 pitches.
- Mr J Tate from the hockey club said that the condition of the hockey pitch facilities are very important to the club and school. At present the pitches cannot be used for the top level of hockey due to their poor condition.
- Mr Becket reminded the meeting that there is no direct link with the hockey club as they book the pitches through the Leisure Centre when they need them.
- The Bowls club suggested that the Parish Council should have it paramount in their minds to support the clubs on site.
- Mr Theobald suggested that there could be an option in the lease for termination of the lease if the rugby club left the site.
- Mr Becket said that as a school, and trust, they wanted to tie down SKDC to know what hasn't been done before and to get them to improve facilities.

The Open Forum ended at 8.00.

96.12 To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gilbert and Pearce due to prior engagements, Cllr Shinkins due to work and County Cllr M Exton.

97.12 To receive notifications of interest, if any.

Cllr Baxter declared personal interests as his spouse is a hockey player, he is a member of Open Door Baptist church and father of children who use the facilities. Cllr Lindfors-Windsor declared a personal interest as her husband is a hockey player.

98.12 To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting

Approval was proposed by Cllr Gamble, seconded by Cllr Pagella and agreed.

99.12 To discuss and decide whether the lease of Parish Council land currently used as Playing Fields should be transferred from Lincolnshire County Council to the proposed Deepings School Academy

A lengthy discussion took place with concerns being expressed about costs being met for a new lease by Cllr Pelling (the Clerk advised that the solicitors for CfBT had indicated that they would meet reasonable costs)

A draft lease had been prepared mirroring the existing lease and adding details about the rugby club.

Cllr Baxter indicated that he was against assigning a new lease.

Cllr Dilks said that the rugby club have only until 2013 – when that time is ended they will have to go.

Cllr Blessett thought supporting the rugby club was an interesting option but CfBT could refuse them a lease. (CfBT advised that the PC lease could state that if the rugby club did not use the land the PC could have the right to cancel the lease. Both rugby pitches would be on the PC land.

Cllr Baxter questioned whether there could be a single use facility shared between the rugby club and hockey club. This did not seem to be likely though even though there was an option for sharing facilities.

The consensus of the meeting seemed to be that the land should be reassigned. The details of that was then discussed but it was stated by Cllr Dilks that it was unusual for a parish council to provide a school playing field especially with no return for it.

The question over who was responsible for fences etc. should be clear within the lease as the current clause is ambiguous.

The terms of the lease in addition to those existing were discussed and agreed to be included in the resolution below.

The question of whether a rent should be charged was discussed. A proposal to charge £500.00 per year to recognise the PC giving up land originally acquired for future use as public open space was made by Cllr Wallis. This was seconded by Cllr Baxter. When put to the vote this motion was lost 4 for, 6 against.

The term of years of the lease was considered.

The proposal was for a lease of 125 years. This was proposed by Cllr Thompson and seconded by Cllr Barber

An amendment was proposed for a lease of 30 years. This was proposed by Cllr Blessett and Seconded by Cllr Baxter

A second amendment for a lease of 99 years was proposed by Cllr Stevens but was not seconded.

A vote was taken on the above proposal and amendment for a lease to include the following conditions.

1. To ensure security for all existing tenants unless DSJPC agree otherwise.
2. DSJPC reserve the right to use the land for events they deem in the village interest, free of charge other than legitimate expenses incurred in respect of caretaker, security etc. where this is not in conflict with educational use of the land.
3. There would be no building on the DSJPC owned land without resolution by a majority at a full meeting of the Council.
4. All maintenance of the land and fences etc. is the tenants responsibility once handed over.
5. The Parish Council to have a place on the governing body of the Deepings Academy to recognise the PC giving up the land originally acquired for future use as public open space..

The amended proposal for a lease for 30 years with the 5 above conditions was lost with 1 vote for and 10 against. Cllr Baxter asked that it was recorded that he voted against this proposal.

The original proposal for a lease of 125 years with the above 5 conditions was then voted on. The motion was passed with 9 votes for and 2 votes against. Cllr Baxter and Blessett asked to be recorded as having voted against the proposal.

Cllr Dilks thanked everyone for attending and then closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

Thursday 24/11//2011 Full Council 7.30 pm at the Leisure Centre. This will be preceded by a tour of the centre at 7.00 pm.

Saturday 26/11/2011 - Craft Fair in aid of In Bloom, 9.30 -12.30 Priory Church Hall.