

MARSH GIBBON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Cllrs I Metherell (Chair), R Cross (RC), P Evershed (PE), A Lambourne (AL), D Leonard (DL), and J Smith (JS)

In attendance: C Jackman (Clerk) and 12 members of the public.

The meeting commenced at 8pm.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr E Taylor (ET), who gave her proxy vote to another councillor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Chair, as a Tennis Club Trustee, and Cllr JS, as Chair of the Village Hall Committee (the Village Hall is the Tennis Club's Landlord), declared non-pecuniary interests.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public were present for agenda item 4.

4. VILLAGE HALL / TENNIS CLUB LEASE

Chair noted that the negotiators - Robert Webster and Liz Bruce-Kelly (Tennis Club) and Christopher Anstey (Village Hall) - were unable to attend this meeting.

Chair explained that the reason for this Special Parish Council meeting was to mandate the Parish Council's Village Hall Committee representative (Cllr AL) on how to vote at the forthcoming Village Hall Committee meeting to decide whether the Tennis Club should be allowed to erect court lights.

Chair asked councillors if they wished to comment:

- Concern was expressed regarding the threat of the Village Hall Trustees being sued and over the possibility that the Tennis Club may not survive if lights were not installed.
- It was suggested that perhaps the Tennis Club could purchase Court No 3 and erect lights on that court only. This would need the Trustees and Charity Commission approval.

Chair opened the meeting to the public and the following were noted:

Objections:

- A Clements Lane resident had originally objected to the lights and had not changed his mind. The main objection is that if flood lights are installed it would devalue their properties. A letter stating that approval from residents would be required had been sent by successive VHC chairs to residents and was featuring in solicitors' searches when properties were being purchased.

Tennis Club:

- Planning permission for the lights had been given by AVDC and expires in May 2019. The planners had taken into account any potential nuisance and the permission for lights was granted for the second and third courts. A deadline of 9.30 pm also was imposed.
- A survey as to whether it would be feasible for the tennis club to relocate to the recreation ground has been made; the result was not available.
- Flood lights are needed for the tennis club to flourish because it is losing members (seniors and juniors) to clubs who do have flood lights.

Village Hall

- The Village Hall is an integral part of the village with over 20 organisations using it.
- The Village Hall Trustees were not against lights but had taken seriously the threat of being sued by residents. If this happened it would be against individual committee members, as the Village

Hall is not indemnified against such legal action. It was suggested that the committee would resign, resulting in the closure of the Village Hall.

- A suggestion that the Parish Council could take on the ownership of the Village Hall was made; but this would be a lengthy process involving discussions with the Charity Commission.

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The Village

- Concern was expressed at the possibility that the village could become a place where there was little for young people to do; and that this issue could lead to a divided community if the opposition of a few people were given priority over the interests of the community.

Meeting closed to public.

A secret ballot was held and 6 Councillors voted in favour of the new lease allowing court lights, with one abstention.

Cllr AL was mandated to vote in favour of the flood lights at the Village Hall Committee meeting on Thursday 27 September and any subsequent meetings.

Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm

SIGNED:

DATE: