

Minutes of Berwick St James Village Meeting. Thursday 17th October 2019.

In attendance: Christian Lange (Chairman) Sarah Humphreys (Deputy Chairman)
Bill Hiscocks (Treasurer)
Kate Wood (Secretary)

Guests: Giles Dickinson – The Boot, Berwick St James

Total in attendance: 39

Summary of issues discussed and decisions made

Welcome & Introduction – Chairman

The chairman opened the meeting at 7pm and extended a welcome to new arrivals Simon Elwin and Jonathan Plows (Vicar).

Apologies for Absence were received from Jane Lock-Smith, Mary MacDermot, Nigel Rodgers, Dominic & Alice Ridley, Janey Campbell- Johnson, Rosie Gairdner, Kate Glynn-Owen and Darren Henry.

Boundaries

On behalf of Darren Henry, Christian informed the meeting that there was no change to the village boundaries.

Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed unanimously to be a true reflection of the meeting – proposed by Neil McDougall; seconded by Charlie Street.

Update on developments regarding sale of The Boot.

Giles Dickinson.

At the beginning of May 2018 Giles and Cathy were informed by Wadworth's Brewery of the impending sale of The Boot, together with 25 other pubs in the area. In September 2019 they were informed that The Boot had been bought by Red Oak Taverns (ROT) and they were informed by a representative of ROT of a

proposed plan for improvements and possible expansion plans. Giles was informed that ROT were willing to invest in these improvements but the conditions of the tenancy would change and, as a result, they felt unable to renew their tenancy. Giles and Cathy therefore made the decision to give up their tenancy of The Boot and will be leaving in April 2020, in the meantime new tenants will be sought. Giles expressed both his and Cathy's sadness at this decision after spending 12 happy years in Berwick running The Boot and all at the meeting expressed their sadness and disappointment at this outcome.

Giles welcomed any questions and James Hardy asked about ROT's business expansion plans, what they were and when they may happen. Giles explained that any plans for expansion would be subject to the appropriate planning approval and he had been informed by ROT's that these would be in 'phase 2 & 3'. Ann Hughes asked about the possible introduction of caravans to the site and Giles explained that he knew nothing definite about this proposal but Christian Lange explained that he had spoken to ROT about this and they had said it was 'a long way ahead' and again would be subject to planning permission being granted. Christian confirmed that he would call a village meeting should a planning application be submitted by ROT regarding The Boot.

Assets of Community Value (ACV's)

Neil McDougall

Neil informed the meeting that in July 2019 he had registered The Boot in Berwick as an ACV's with Wiltshire County Council (WCC) and the reasons for this are as follows :-

It enables the Community's right to bid if the business should come up for sale.

Lasts for 5 years.

Gives Berwick St James the opportunity to keep The Boot as a pub (should it otherwise be subject to a change of use).

However, Neil pointed out that it did not give the village the right of first refusal.

Once a moratorium was activated (initial &/or full) the present owner of The Boot (ROT) cannot proceed to try and sell the pub.

Moratorium doesn't apply if ROT decide to sell The Boot to another owner who intends to continue running it as a pub.

Registering The Boot as an ACV is intended to give Berwick breathing space (6 weeks) to decide if the village wants to keep the building going as a pub and if so, a longer period (6 months) to raise the funding required.

If ROT try to sell The Boot the local authority will inform Berwick that the ACV is for sale.

The community then have 6 weeks to decide if they want to be considered as a potential bidder (initial moratorium).

The community then have 6 months to come up with the funding (full moratorium).

Neil confirmed that no application has been made register the Farm shop as an ACV.

Village storage container and Marquee bags

Neil McDougall

The “one trip” storage container has arrived and is situated on John & Pauline Stephenson’s land. The overall cost was £3,032.00 which was made up of the following:-

Section 106 grant (WCC) of £1,726.00

Area board grant (Amesbury) £1,306.00

Amount required from village funds = £92.94 (a £500 contingency was approved at the previous meeting so there was no need for any further approval)

The effort involved in installing and fitting out the container was substantial and all concerned were thanked for their hard work. Jon and Pauline were thanked by the village for suggesting and agreeing that the container be placed on their land.

Marquee Bags

The bags used to store and transport the village marquee poles have developed holes. Neil has sourced replacements at a 50% discount and requested funding of £36.00 from village funds

The Precept fund presently has a balance of - £1079

Community fund presently has a balance of -£1482.39

Those present at the meeting agreed the proposal unanimously.

Reading Room update

Nicky Street

Nicky informed the meeting that work on moving the main entrance door to the reading room was now complete and a furniture cupboard had been created just off the entrance hall. The redecoration had also been completed and the window reveals had been repaired and there was now a plan to put a handrail along the approach path.

Ian Gibb asked if there was any plan to repair the cob wall on the street side and Nicky explained that tradesmen would be contacted regarding this, Keith Lovett said he knew a ‘cob man’ that he could recommend

John Stephenson enquired about the proposed source of contingency money needed for such repairs and Nicky explained that a reserve was being built up from various fundraising events. Sarah Humphreys added that the Reading Room was run as a charity. Neil McDougall asked if the possibility had been considered of replacing the thatched roof with tiles, Nicky answered that this had not yet been investigated but if there was anyone willing to volunteer to investigate that they

would be most welcome. Gill Brasher suggested a 'mind your head' sign for the entrance door and Nicky explained that both this and a 'Reading Room' sign for the front wall were being made.

Chris Lange thanked Nicky for the update and praised the efforts of all involved in the improvements that had taken place on the Reading Room over the last 10 years.

Village Diary

Nicky informed the meeting that the Macmillan coffee morning at the Farm Shop on Sunday 6th October raised a total of £167.37p.

The Art appreciation evenings were planned for 21st November (doors open 7.15pm)

30th November the Christmas coffee morning to be held in the Reading Room.

12th December Art Appreciation evening in the Reading Room

The Village candlelit carol service would be held on 15th December in the village church.

Community Speedwatch

Marie Perry.

22 sessions were carried out from June – Oct 2019 (17 hrs) 1015 vehicles were counted.

There were 32 speeders (3.2% of vehicles) 37 – 50 mph mainly at the northern end of the village.

On a recent session one motorist became abusive to volunteers and was reported to the Police.

A persistent speeder and dangerous driver (in a blue car) was reported to the Police.

Marie ran through slides of the statistics in relation to speeders in and out of the village and the dates spotted (slides are available to see on the village website).

A303 update

Julian Glynn-Owen

The public examination ended on 2nd October 2019 and the examination authority will submit recommendations to the Sec. of State on 2nd Jan 2020. The Sec. of State's decision is due on 2nd April 2020.

Preliminary works are due to start in spring 2020 and continue through to autumn 2020. The main works (i.e. the tunnel) will start late 2021.

Julian pointed out that various 'misinformation' had been circulated such as "the tunnel would run directly under the stones", "there's no money /funding for the road, so it won't happen" and "contractors will cause pollution during construction" and advised the meeting to disregard such rumours. Julian also presented other

slides relating to the proposed layout of the new road development and these are all available to see on the village website.

Village Communication – How much & When? + Frequency of Village meetings.

Christian spoke on behalf of himself and Sarah and asked the meeting about the frequency of information emails – how regularly would they like them, would they be better put altogether in a newsletter instead approximately every 2 weeks, or ‘drip feed’? – at a show of hands all favoured every 2 weeks. It was agreed that E-mails requiring immediate action would still be sent individually.

In answer to the questions – should we put a summary of the minutes of each meeting on the notice boards or the full minutes? – all agreed to full minutes.

Chris also drew attention to the amount of information on the village website for all those able to access it. The website address is www.berwickstjames.org.uk

The meeting was also asked to vote on the frequency of village meetings, whether they should continue quarterly or reduce to 3 per year – The majority favoured continuing with quarterly meetings.

Various responsibilities relating to activities/roles in the village are delegated as follows:-

Church Wardens - Steven Bush & Bill Hiscocks

Reading Room - Nicky Street + committee

Village Marquees and bookings – Neil MacDougall assisted by Julian Glynn-Owen

Flood Warden – James Hardy assisted by James Whatley

Neighbourhood Watch – James Hardy & Neil MacDougall

Community Speed watch – Marie Perry & Gail Lovett

Welcoming new residents – Neil McDougall and Janey Campbell-Johnson

Website –Neil McDougall, Christian Lange and James Whatley

A303 issues – Julian Glynn-Owen, Greville Bibby, Anika Lange & James Hardy

Storage container – Neil MacDougall

Photo competition – Neil MacDougall assisted by James Whatley

Assets of Community Value – Neil MacDougall

Clothes Bin – Bill Hiscocks (Bill informed the meeting that 1 storage bin had been removed and only 1 bin remained).

Chris also informed the meeting that role specific emails would be created and, following a question form Maurice Lange regarding adding new names to the email list, he said this would be organised.

Village photo Competition

Neil McDougall

This is the 3rd of the four seasons photo competition depicting the various seasons as we see them, the 3rd period (autumn) started on 1 Sept and finishes on 30th Nov 2019, the Winter period is from 1st Dec – 29th Feb 2020.

As from the beginning of the next season's photographic competition (Winter) which starts on 1 Dec '19, the area permitted for competition photography will be enlarged to incorporate all five parishes who contribute to our parish magazine. In addition, the residents of these five parishes will be also able to enter the competition as well, and the relevant information for their guidance will be published in the December edition of the Parish Magazine. People should contribute no more than 3 entries per season, all given a title and then emailed to Neil in full resolution.

James Whatley will be helping Neil to run the photo competition

Neil encouraged as many as possible to enter.

Fund Raising Ideas

Chris asked for suggestions regarding future village fund raising ideas. No ideas were offered but Johnathan Plows said he could talk to other parishes in the community and see what ideas they had. Carolyn McDougall asked if there was a fund 'goal' and Chris replied that no amount had yet been discussed.

Any Other Business

Charlie Street addressed the meeting regarding recent incidents of Hare Coursing and asked all to be vigilant in watching out for this and reporting any suspicious sightings to the Police as soon as possible. Chris explained that this was regarded as a "crime in progress" so any sightings should be reported by phoning 999.

The next meeting will be held on 9th Jan 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Christian Lange

Chairman Berwick Parish Meetings

