

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE ADDISON V.C ROOM ON 17th MARCH 2015

PRESENT: Cllrs. Veitch (in the Chair), Bancroft, Fermor, Summers, Swann and Rook.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Bunyan and Bob Butler.

Members who have a personal or prejudicial interest, whether direct or indirect within the meaning of Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000, or a personal or prejudicial interest defined by the Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's Code of Conduct, in any of the matters appearing on the agenda are invited to declare that interest at this stage. Alternatively, personal interests can be declared at the time when a specific item is being discussed, if a member wishes to speak on an item in which they have a personal interest.

No interests were declared.

70/14: Planning Application:

Cllr. Veitch informed the Committee that the application had been considered at a recent meeting of the Parish Council Planning Committee and that our comments had been submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

71/14: Access Permission:

Cllr. Veitch referred to the article on the front page of the Courier from 27th February, which she considered to be well written, this was echoed by other Members. She had been updated on a recent meeting between David Candlin and Lorraine Theobald (the new Property Estates Surveyor) of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Darren Nelson-Hall and his successor James Carter, the Regional Property Portfolio Manager for the Co-Op. She had not been privy to the details but had been advised that it was a positive meeting with sensible discussions and that TWBC were now in the process of drawing up a draft 'Head of Terms' for the Co-Op to consider.

Cllr. Veitch advised the Committee of a recent development concerning the neighbouring Cranbrook Engineering site that would have a significant effect on the viability of the Community Centre being built on Wilkes Field. David Rivers, the Project Manager for the Cranbrook Engineering development joined the meeting at the invitation of Cllr. Veitch and was introduced to the Committee Members. Mr. Rivers suggested to the Committee that because of a letter sent to the Principal Planning Officer at TWBC – Ruth Chambers, from Mr. Tim Kemp a local Architectural Consultant, the development was now under threat. The letter had detailed his concern that insufficient archaeological surveys had been completed and that should the demolition go ahead, important historical evidence would be lost forever. TWBC has now served a 'Building Preservation Notice' that prevents any demolition on the site. David Rivers explained the serving of the notice would at the very least cause costly delays and at worst, if the buildings were subsequently 'listed' it would halt the development completely. Although the Community Centre and Enabling Houses project on Wilkes Field was technically separate from the Cranbrook Engineering site they were intrinsically linked so if the buildings are 'listed' he felt it likely that, although he would not want to, Guy Johnson may walk away from the entire project. Cllr. Veitch tabled a copy of a letter dated 1st November 2012 to Cllr. Kim Fletcher from Guy Johnson that confirmed the offer of the land providing the project was in his opinion financially viable.

Cllr. Veitch informed the Committee that she had spoken to Helen Grant's office as she is the Minister for Sports and Tourism, and an offer was made to meet with Guy Johnson and to help in any way. The Clerk will be investigating the procedure of due process connected to the Building Preservation Notice. Mr. Rivers expressed his frustration, he had previously had lengthy discussions with John Kaye, the predecessor of the current Conservation Architect for TWBC who had been instrumental in the resulting scheme. English Heritage has a statutory obligation to decide whether the buildings should become 'listed'. In Mr River's capacity as Project Manager and to comply with an archaeological planning condition he had commissioned a report from C.A.T. (Canterbury Archaeological Trust). The report contained many photographs and would remain a permanent record of historical evidence detailing the medieval street scene. They would continue to document and photograph every scrap of evidence during the demolition process. He stated that he had a letter from Wendy Rogers – the Senior Archaeological Officer for KCC, indicating she was happy for the demolition to go ahead.

A discussion followed as to whether the Parish Council could help in any way. Cllr. Veitch proposed that a letter be sent to David Jukes – Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council raising our concern on this matter and the impact this delay would have on the Community Centre project, this was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed. Cllr. Fermor suggested we also compile a press release so the issue is kept in the forefront of everyone's mind. Mr. Rivers agreed to document his experience with the planning department that Cllr. Rook agreed to take to the next Parish Chairman's meeting. Mr. Rivers stated that he had written a letter to the Courier that was to be published in its entirety. Cllr. Veitch offered to contact Peter Mellor – Chairman of CCAAC, to see if she could be invited to their next meeting scheduled for 25th March where she could gauge any support we may expect from them.

72/14: Consultation Process:

Members decided that no further discussion on the consultation process was necessary until we could be confident the project would go ahead in its current form.

73/14: Fundraising:

Cllr. Veitch informed the Committee that she had attended a recent seminar on fundraising which had been very informative and as a consequence she had become an 'Associate Member of the Institute of Fundraising'. She suggested that although the current plan had been put in jeopardy, we would eventually have the need for a 'Fundraising Strategy' and asked Members for assistance in compiling one. Cllrs. Swann, Rook and Fermor agreed to help.

74/14: Items for Information:

Cllr. Rook stated that he was aware that local resident Martin Wilkes was concerned that a 'Right of Way' he had agreed with Guy Johnson did not show on the planning application, he had been advised to take legal advice on this issue.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 21st April at 2pm.