

## PEVENSEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Ethel Wood Community Centre, Coast Road, Pevensey Bay at 8pm

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**Present:** Cllrs Lowton, Beaney, Slater, Hills, Withey, Pursglove, Howard, Scott and MacKinnon

7 members of the public

### **Apologies**

District Councillor Clark  
District Councillor Dear  
Cllrs Beck, Rabbitts, Peasgood and Garrard

### **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Hills declared an interest in Item 6 on the agenda

### **Welcome**

Cllr Lowton welcomed members of the public and thanked members of Council for their attendance at this further Extraordinary Council Meeting. This had been unavoidable as East Sussex County Council had declined a request to extend their deadline for submission of business plans from 30<sup>th</sup> April until after the Council's May Meeting. They had also introduced a new element requesting a Guarantor. Cllr Pursglove felt that Council should write to the Chief Executive expressing serious misgivings at this appalling behaviour. Cllr MacKinnon asked if other libraries threatened with closure had been asked to provide the same guarantees. The Clerk was unaware of the answer. She also asked if any default on a guarantee would result in legal action being taken against Council or Councillors as individuals. Cllr Lowton felt that any guarantee would be the responsibility of Council. Returning to Cllr Pursglove's proposal to write to The Chief Executive this motion was seconded by Cllr Hills and carried unanimously.

### **Motion to Suspend Standing Orders**

Proposed Cllr Withey seconded Cllr Hills that Standing Orders be suspended. All agreed.

Cllr Lowton indicated that he would like to take item 5 first.

Chairman Peter asked if the Clerk could explain the content of his conversation with Stephen Potter, Head of Customer and Library Services at ESCC. The Clerk had asked for written "chapter and verse" in terms of the conditions of any guarantee, the amount, the length of tenure and an explanation of the circumstances under which any call on the Guarantee would be made. Mr. Potter

had suggested that a conversation would be more useful.

The Clerk then summarised the content of the conversation in a letter – paraphrased by him as follows;

- You indicated that it would not be possible to extend the timetable in order to avoid the need for an Extraordinary Council Meeting to consider the two grant applications.
- You indicated that it was your intention to sublet the premises to one or other of the two groups who have expressed interest in running a Community Library subject to the proposal being acceptable to ESCC
- You also indicated that following a 3/5 year period which was successfully managed the intention would be to assign the lease formally
- ESCC would therefore be in a position to step away from any liability for either uninsurable events or any unforeseen repairs necessary
- There is no intention for ESCC to carry out any structural inspection prior to the premises being sub let
- You were unable to provide me with any specific figures either in terms of amount of the guarantee , the timescale of its existence or the specific circumstances under which it may be called upon

The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer made it clear to Council that it would be untenable for him to recommend to Council that they enter into any such guarantee with an unspecified amount, no knowledge of how the circumstances would arise where the guarantee is called upon and indeed the duration of the potential liability.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk and immediately proposed that Council refuse to provide a guarantee on the basis of the RFO's submission. Seconded Cllr Beaney and carried unanimously.

Cllr Lowton moved to item 4 on the agenda – to consider two new grant applications.

He explained that there would be no discussion or presentation by either of the applicants; these were simple grant applications which have not been discussed at the Grants Committee as it would have had to then been ratified by Council and in view of timing issues that process would not have been appropriate.

For clarity Cllr Beaney wanted reassurance that the current applications were for an additional £3,000 to top up the £2,000 which has already been agreed.

He also was concerned that their submissions looked at further grants in future years. Cllr Lowton made it clear that these applications were on the basis of a one-off not year on year grant. Any further grants for future years would be considered on their own merits.

Cllr Beaney also indicated that although the groups seem to be reliant on a grant of from Westham Parish Council they had previously stipulated that the groups would need to raise some £29,000. Cllr Lowton pointed out that this was not a matter for PPC and no doubt the groups could approach the Westham Clerk to obtain clarification outside of this meeting. Cllr Beaney further asked if both groups would

be paying the ESCC Management Cost but FPBL will not.

He is also concerned about disabled access. Cllr Lowton pointed out that both groups had in previous submissions indicated that it would be a priority to provide access for all.

Finally Cllr Beaney asked if there was a cost involved in obtaining the correct security checks for individuals. Cllr MacKinnon felt that voluntary groups were excluded from any charge.

Cllr Slater asked if the Clerk could give an indication of Council's financial ability to make the grant payment.

The Clerk explained that since the calculation of Precept back in January the following additional income had been received

October to February Car Park Monies	£500	
Wayleaves	£102	
New Boat Berth let	£130	
Underpayment on H & B repairs	£2100	
Parish Maintenance under paid		
	£3,000	
Less grass cutting costs	£2,500	£ 500
		£3,332

The grant could be paid on this basis without a problem on current finances.

Cllr MacKinnon felt that monies spent on the library might be used in other areas of more benefit to a wider audience.

She asked the Clerk (as a member of the Grants Committee) if previous grants had been offered to new start ups – in his 15 years there have been occasions when a leap of faith had been taken.

Cllr Pursglove felt that the library was a worthwhile venture to support and was available for everyone; he also considered that ESCC should have been obliged to continue the library service as a legal responsibility.

Cllr Hills felt that the groups would be looking at a year on year grant from their submissions.

Cllr MacKinnon wondered whether it would be possible to stagger the payment over the year. The Clerk and RFO felt that this would be impracticable and if the commitment was made by Council then it should be paid and let the successful group move on without having to resort to further meetings such as this.

Cllr Scott felt that it was sad the ESCC had not continued the service but if the figures are broken down the additional sum represents less than a cup of coffee per year per household. He felt that the presentations were extremely worthwhile.

He then formally proposed that the additional £3,000 be paid making a total of £5,000 on the basis that the monies will be utilised to help fund the library in its current building, on a one-off not year on year basis. This was seconded by Cllr Pursglove.

This was carried 6/3 with Cllrs Beaney, Withey and Slater being the dissenters.

There was a short break whilst Cllr Lowton set up the laptop for the planning application.

Cllr Lowton thanked the public for their attendance and they left the building.

## Plans

WD/2017/2835/F The Olde Farmhouse, High Street New garage  
Pevensey

Cllr Hills declared an interest as the applicant and took no part in the discussions.

Cllr Lowton outlined the plans for the garage which will be reached down an access road . The farmhouse is Grade 2 Listed.

Cllr Beaney asked if the applicant required permission to use the access. Cllr Lowton pointed out that this was not a matter for Planning.

Cllr Beaney proposed that we offer NO OBJECTIONS seconded Cllr Withey. All Agreed

## **Motion to re-instate Standing Orders**

Proposed Cllr Hills, seconded Cllr Pursglove. All agreed

Before close of the meeting Cllr Slater expressed disappointment that our County Councillor had not attended the meeting and proposed that we write to him expressing that disappointment. The Clerk pointed out that all 3 District Councillors and the County Councillor had been sent the agendas for information only as they would not have had an opportunity to speak. He will be due to appear at the Annual Parish Meeting and the Clerk will write to him on that basis – seconded Cllr Pursglove. All agreed.