

Village Hall Working Party Committee meeting - VHWC – 21th November 2018 – 7pm – (following Village Hall AGM)

Attendees from the working party:

Christine Ingham – CI

Mike Hole - MH

Richard Hurrell – RH

Julie Pryke – JP

Alan Christie – JR

Paul Leaves – PL

John Whitefield - JW

Other attendees:

Barbara Kitson – BK

Jane Ranner – JR

Sylvia Pettitt – SP

Sarah Christie – SC

Jessamy Saltmarsh – JS

Celia Holt - CH

Apologies

John Gale

Ian Harding

To Action

Time Frame

AC opened the meeting to discuss the plans as drawn up by MH in relation to the possible siting of the new village hall and to further discuss the options of development on the pocket of land for sale to partly pay for the new village hall.

MH believes that after consideration there are 2 options, rather than the 1 shown at the open meeting. The new option would be to put behind/on the play park . The planners will be looking at shadows and views through the

site and noise to residents access etc.

JR did question if that meant the play park had to go, but MH felt there was some flexibility

MH also mentioned that with the presented option we should bear in mind that there may be a need to move the crease and boundary of the cricket area.

MH told us that the planners will want to keep an open access to the current view and so if we moved to the rear of the paly park we would keep the open vista.

MH has not done a cost difference analysis, but it will not hugely increase or do anything like double the cost.

JR notes that the plot to sell would be between a cemetery, car park and have a village hall behind and so could we sell it for the money that we need for the hall.

BK also asked where the cricketers would park? AC mentioned the pub again as being a possibility and JW pointed out that when the ground is hard we can still park on the other side close to the woods.

JW did mention the area behind the cemetery, but it was thought by BK,SP that this land was possible 'overflow' for the cemetery.

SC suggested the use of the car park as the plot , but MH felt that to dig up that car park, and create a new one would make the costs too high

AC said that apart from those possible parking issues, it looks like this is our preferred option.

A query was raised asking if the car park spaces had to relate to the size of the hall. MH thought we were OK with this although some adjustments would probably need to be made to bring the spaces 'up to date' i.e. disabled spaces.

BK asked about the Recycle Bins, what do we do with them? A suggestion was made that they could possibly be located in the pub car park?

SC, RH both commented that the view from the proposed new location would be attractive and good for a wedding party, and possibly attract more interest.

BK raised a concern about the pavilion, and AC said that the location for this would be answered through the whole process

AC summarised by confirming that we feels that for planning an usability and whilst having less impact on the surrounds; it appears to be the better option. All caveated by the value of the proposed building plot.

The siting of the New Village Hall was agreed

JR had 3 documents that had been in the Village hall committee's possession and that these had been shown to a solicitor. Below is the findings from the solicitor concerned;

The first document that I looked at was a Licence dated 1998 whereby the Parish Council were granted a Licence determined on one years notice and personal to the Council to use the smallish area of land adjoining and to the East of the main site at the Village Hall as a playground for children. I assume that this area is not part of the area that you hope to sell off as it not the Councils to sell. If part of the main site is sold I assume access would remain to this playground.

Secondly I looked at the Conveyance of 1954 when the large area of land was conveyed to the Parish Council by way of gift to be used as a recreation ground and Village Hall. This is subject to a covenant not to use or permit the use of the land other than for these purposes. This covenant is made by the Council with Cyril Winthrop Mackworth Praed then of Kent House Telegraph Street London. I have Googled him and it appears that he died in 1974. As the covenant does not appear to have been for the benefit if any land remaining in his ownership it should be classed as a personal covenant and died with him. The Parish Council received the land for these purposes however and would be unwise to pursue changing its use unless the residents of Ousden agreed although the residents probably could not prevent the sale on the basis of the old covenant as it has almost certainly come to an end with Praed, s death as I said

The third document makes the position more difficult because as this involves the Charity Commission. A Scheme was drawn up in 1965 involving the Parish Council, Parochial Church Council, Methodist Chapel, Women's Institute, Primary School, British Legion, Flower Show, Whist Club and Youth Club. They all agreed to the provision

and maintenance of the village hall and playing field. I feel that all of those bodies would have to agree to a piece of land being sold off and then the Charity Commission would have to be approached for their consent. The Charity Commission are not renowned for their speed unfortunately and would have to be satisfied that the proposal is sound and that everyone involved agrees to it. A firm of Solicitors would have to be instructed by the Parish Council to approach the Charity Commission and as you know the Legal Profession are not cheap.

Before undertaking any of the above the Parish Council would need to be fairly certain that planning consent would be granted. It is difficult because obviously the Council would not want to go to the expense of obtaining planning consent unless they were fairly certain that the Charity Commission would agree and not be involved in expense with Charity Commission only to find planning consent would not be granted.

There is no easy solution to this but the Parish Council and residents need to be on the same side so the views of those living in the village should be sought in the first instance. If a large proportion of the village are against it then I assume that they would try to make it very difficult for it to proceed by objecting to planning application and application to Charity Commission. I wish you all luck. If any member of the Parish Council is a Solicitor or has a friend who is he or she could give you their views but you have mine to pass to whoever you like

Thank you JR for your assistance with this

AC summarised that we need the permission of the clubs named, Charities Commission approval and in parallel we need to press ahead with planning as well as engage a solicitor to deal with the Charities Commission

The new siting of the hall needs to go to the public

So full plans and a public meeting

It was commented that The Parish Council are the benefactors and as such they will have a lot of work, but AC commented that they can nominate us to the New Village hall working committee to carry it out on their behalf

PL made mention of the fact that he had a conversation booked with the planning office for the 22nd November

AC felt he could see 2 issues 1. The Charity Commission and therefore sitting down with the Parish Council and going through it which he was prepared to do but asked for help and JP has agreed to do this with him

2.The parallel planning permission and we need to seek village approval for the new location and hold a public meeting

CH asked if the size of the hall was based on the number of residents, MH said loosely yes but also for the one permanent user , the bowls club (and they are expanding!)

The development of the plot for sale, was discussed and MH feels that the detached house approximately 300sqm would be the most cost effective for a developer as it will cost less to build one house than two and so makes the cost of the site more attractive.

The plot could be used for 2 smaller detached houses, approximately 140sqm each and MH felt that would probably still go to one developer.

MH still needs to speak to his agent contact to gauge the plot value and also for their view on the two house vs one detached house sale value

MH

Next meeting

SP mentioned again the affordable housing scenario, but MH felt this could potentially take years

JW feels that Havebury could be asked if they have any interest in the plot

JW

Next meeting

AC said 'yes', let's address the question

SC added that if a resident is feeling very strongly about the affordable housing question, then they themselves could buy the plot and develop as they wish

PL raised the concern about Brexit and current values and the fact that we need to be careful

AC said that we should do those actions

JW to approach Havebury

CH raised the a point that there had to be another way to vote on the issue, with most people having e-mail etc.

RH raised the issue of GDPR and the fact that someone has to agree to be approached and that then someone from the committee has to 'hold' the data and frustratingly, something so simple starts to become complicated and has implications. The best way was an anonymous vote, but then the question is, would that be open to question? It was agreed that we probably need to sit down and think of a sensible way to do this without compromising GDPR and having a solid voting system.

AC did point out that we can put plans on the Parish Council website perhaps under the village hall section, Ousden News, in the Pub and we can deliver again.

BK pointed out that if we sell less land (i.e. the 2 detached dwellings according to MH plan) then the pavilion can stay where it is but MH pointed out again that the 1/3 acre plot is actually more marketable.

AC reiterated that the working committee mandate is to sell the land and rebuild the village hall.

JP wanted to come back to the issue of play park, some comments had been made about the loss of the play park and that it was nearing the end of its life anyway. JP feels that anyone that feels strongly could fund its rebuild separately and there could be a separate committee for this function and separate to the Village Hall.

AC again pointed out that we are building a new village hall, this is the New Village Hall's mandate, and a message can go out to those concerned that maybe they would like to look after its future

AC/CI are continuing to look at funding bodies and their various bid documents

SC has said that in the budget the government has said it is assisting village halls, but SC was unable to find any info and wondered if they are waiving the VAT on certain items/repairs

JW who has spoken with Clive Pollington,, in his position as chair of Lidgate Parish Council, has said that there may be some additional funding to be spread across the villages that he represents for village projects and the Parish Council could raise this directly with the council.

JW also mentioned that the Sport England approach will need to be made when we are further on in the project

SC will try to find something out about the budget/ VAT on the village hall. JP wondered perhaps if the Parish Council can claim the VAT back on the village hall.

MH wonders if there is a chance that we could receive funding from the council to demolish the village hall.

SP has suggested inviting Gemma from the West Suffolk Council that can give us advice regarding fund raising.

Structural engineer report/survey was mentioned for the existing village hall. It was noted that 3 years is left to run on the latest survey, but any structural reports/repairs and up to the Village hall management

committee rather than the New Village hall working party.

Management Committee meeting followed.

The next meeting is 17th January Thursday – (In the pub!)

DRAFT