

## **Minutes of the Shotley Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 (7.30pm)**

**Present:** Cllrs R Wrinch (Chairman), B Powell (Vice-Chairman), C Mills, R Green, R Bareham, J Briscoe, M Williams, D Davis, T Ingram and Mrs D Bedwell (Parish Clerk).

**County and District Councils:** County Cllr D Woods and District Councillor D Davis.

**Public gallery:** Four members of the public.

**Public participation at meetings:** A MOP made representation on the matter of the Ganges swimming pool which followed on from previous comments made. Council was informed that an online petition had been organised seeking support to stop the developers from demolishing the swimming pool. There had been some 1606 signatories, 160 of which had been international, and 673 of which were registered in IP postcode addresses.

At that stage, no monies were being asked for and it could well be that the cost of refurbishing the pool was beyond means, but the MOP insisted that this was not known for certain because there had not been a recent survey to establish exact costs. Nor had there been an appraisal to check such projected costs.

The MOP asked whether the Parish Council, whose opinion carried some weight with the planning authority, would consider giving its full support to stopping the Ganges swimming pool from being demolished, in light of the level of support received from members of the public for retaining it, and would approach the developer with such a proposition.

Council clarified that the developer had already been approached, as requested by the MOP at a previous meeting, regarding the demolition of the pool and their response had indicated that there was no intention of retaining it.

The member of the public re-visited the decision made by Council in 2017 and suggested that Council may wish to do the same due to the apparent lack of public consultation or appraisal, and that this may support a challenge to the developers and an insistence in halting the demolition process.

As part of the Council's closing statement, the member of the public was informed that the Parish Council had done what had been required of it at the time and had tried to inform the public as best as it could. This had followed a long process over a number of years, during which public representation had not been received to the contrary and all possibilities had been extinguished. Due democratic process had been followed and there was nothing else the Parish Council could have done.

Further challenges were received from the MOP but as considerable time had been taken on one subject matter, the debate was brought to a close.

A second member of the public stated that fundamental marketing questions did not appear to have been asked and answers sought by those interested in saving the Ganges pool, such as the number of users needed and the availability of such numbers within the peninsula radius. Such markers would need to be established before any money was spent and that could be done by consulting with neighbouring swimming pools.

A member of the Council stated that they had approached a number of organisations but had not received any responses to date.

A third member of the public asked if a member of the Council could be appointed to act as direct liaison between the Council and MOPs on the swimming pool matter. It was agreed this would be considered under the appropriate agenda item.

**SPC/20/98: To receive and consider any apologies for absence:** There were no apologies for absence.

**SPC/20/99: To receive declarations of interest with regards to items on the agenda:** Cllr C Mills declared a pecuniary interest on item SPC/20/102 d). The item was for noting only and no discussion or voting process were due to take place, therefore there would be no need for exclusion.

**SPC/20/100: To note County and District Councillors' reports:** Both Councillors had provided the Council with written reports. Cllr D Woods provided the meeting with an additional brief verbal update.

It was noted that a large amount of correspondence had been circulated on the day of the meeting, which made it difficult to assimilate all the data in order for members to be able to make informed decisions. It was agreed that Sunday before the meeting should be the cut-off point for meeting papers, unless they were of an urgent nature or the Clerk felt they were important enough to be circulated, even at a late stage. If members felt at any point that they had not had sufficient time to consider late correspondence, they may opt for deferring the matter to the following meeting.

**SPC/20/101: To receive and consider any further information regarding HMS Ganges- swimming pool, including correspondence from MOP asking "Will the Parish Council provide support and work towards stopping the developers from demolishing the HMS Ganges Swimming Pool":** Correspondence received from MOP's had been circulated before the meeting and further comments had been received during the open session. Councillors re-iterated a number of concerns with regards to a potential involvement of the Parish Council with such a project, at this stage:

- Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council had confirmed they were not in a position to offer any financial support
- Although an online petition had secured over 1600 signatures, there were still only four members of the public in attendance at the Council meeting
- According to the information available to the Council, the project's financial viability continued to be questionable
- Crown pools had a significantly larger number of residents supporting it and continued to make year-end losses - if they were unable to support themselves financially, how would a local swimming pool do so, with the limited numbers of peninsula residents
- One Councillor challenged that the lack of actual figures was what was being queried by MOPs, as that had affected the decision supported by the Council previously

- Another Councillor stated that regardless of it, refurbishment costs would be in the region of £2M, followed by revenue expenditure at a level that would not be sustainable for the Parish Council, and that the public had not presented the Council with any alternative figures to prove otherwise
- It was also suggested, as before, that a group should be formed to look at the relevant costings and financial viability; that such a group should look into the appeal information provided by another Cllr at a previous meeting without delay if the building was to be saved and that until such an initiative was in place, the Parish Council would not be able to get involved
- A dual-hatted councillor was also asked for their views, and they stated that the matter was no longer down to Babergh District Council; that the Clerk had written to the developer and the response had been clear (demolition to go ahead but alternative community space with the possibility of a smaller pool could be considered at a later date)

Furthermore, had the Parish Council had the liability of the swimming pool for the past seven months, it would potentially now be facing financial ruin due to the loss of income for that period. There was a need to remain realistic and pragmatic and it did not look as though there would be any way of saving the swimming pool.

In response to the question asked by the MOP which formed the agenda item, a vote was taken and it was resolved that the Council was not able to provide the support being requested or work towards stopping the developers from demolishing the HMS Ganges Swimming Pool.

With regards to a further question put forward by a MOP during the open session, it was agreed that Cllr J Briscoe would act as liaison with the public for swimming pool matters, supported by Cllr C Mills and the Clerk.

**SPC/20/102: Planning matters (including neighbouring parishes):**

- Application: DC/20/04345 - Charity Farmhouse, Wades Lane**- Erection of single storey linked extension (following demolition of existing single storey extension). Erection of first floor rear extension (resubmission of DC/19/04951): It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- Application: DC/20/04346 - Charity Farmhouse, Wades Lane**- Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single story linked extension (following demolition of existing). Erection of first floor rear extension (re-submission of DC/19/04952): It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- Application: DC/20/04232 - 2 Diamond Cottages, The Street**- Erection of a single storey rear extension: It was resolved to recommend the approval of this planning application.
- Decision: DC/20/03451 Land Adjacent to Frogs Alley, Frogs Alley**- Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/00873 - Condition 5 (Agreement of Materials): Approved.
- Decision: DC/20/04282 Barn at Shotley Hall, Church Walk**- Non-Material Amendment to B/16/00659 for amendments to barn doors: Approved.

**SPC/20/103: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 September 2020:** It was resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting held.

#### **SPC/20/104: Finance and Administration**

- a) To consider and approve the accounts for payment and note receipts/bank balances: It was resolved to approve the accounts for payments as per schedule circulated ahead of the meeting.
- b) To agree Finance WG meeting date in order to carry out initial review of first and second quarter accounts and internal audit, followed by their approval by full council: Meeting date and time agreed- November 5<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm.
- c) To approve purchase of Remembrance Wreath (£85) and note arrangements re. service: It was resolved to approve the purchase of a remembrance Wreath. Cllr C Mills volunteered to represent the Parish Council on Remembrance Sunday.
- d) To approve expenditure for Christmas festivities (£150-200 for trees and lights): It was resolved to approve the Christmas expenditure at a maximum of £200.00.
- e) To consider adopting a social media platform (subject to terms and noting guidance received): The Clerk had circulated guidance from the various advisory bodies with regards to the possible adoption of a social media platform. Following a brief debate, it was agreed to trial a Facebook page, which would be used as an information sharing platform for Parish Council matters only, and that it would be managed by the Clerk, with Cllr C Mills as additional administration.
- f) To consider Parish Council preparedness in the event of a “lockdown” and agree any actions needed: During the first national lockdown, which had been very sudden, due to the fact that a number of councillors had had to self-isolate or shield, the adopted system of delegation had meant that the Clerk had carried out a considerable number of tasks and responsibilities, including local support initiatives.

There were now various agencies which were organised and able to deal with most of residents’ needs. There were also various Good Neighbours’ schemes which were able to offer help. However, the Parish Council should continue to be able to support individual needs which, for one reason or other, may slip the organisational nets. This had been the case for residents who had been unable to access the system for a period of time, or where there may have been delays in their entitlements coming through. It was also the case that some residents did not feel comfortable approaching external agencies for help and would rather appeal to someone more local to them.

In the event of a second lockdown, it was agreed that members would be available to support the Clerk in her endeavours should that be necessary, which was much appreciated.

- g) To receive any further updates on ongoing matters: The Clerk provided members with a report which included the following points: Improvements to cleaning regime of the bus stop on The Street; Tree matters within the Heritage Park; Grass verge maintenance opposite Whinny Queech (planned for January); Changes to the public liability insurance (inclusion of work on land owned by a third party subject to conditions) and the completion of repairs carried out on the foreshore footpath by a local volunteer group.

#### **SPC/20/105: Open spaces and amenities:**

- a) To receive the play areas annual inspections and agree any further action: The play areas inspections had been circulated to Council and there were no risks which needed to be addressed at this point.

As the play areas were in the process of being renovated, expenditure on existing equipment would remain limited to minor repairs for the time being.

- b) To note repair works carried out within the Heritage Park: Recent works on some of the signage, fences and steps were noted.
- c) To consider quotes for the felling of a number of trees affected by Ash die back and trim back Oak tree opposite properties on Stourside: It was resolved to approve the quote received from "High Cutz Tree Maintenance" and works would be scheduled as soon as possible due to health and safety concerns associated with some of the trees' proximity to footpaths, neighbouring properties and the carriageway.
- d) Allotments:
  - Bollard-update: There continued to be some concern that because the bollard was still not being used as intended, it was not serving its purpose and vehicles continued to be able to access the rear of nearby dwellings. There was neither right of access to the rear of the said properties nor right to park by residents or allotment holders, for any time longer than that needed by a tenant tending to their plot.  
  
It was agreed that a system would need to be put in place to ensure the efficacy of the existing bollard and establish the limitations of access and use for tenants and neighbouring residents alike. Clerk to draft strategy for consideration at a future meeting.
  - Report of inaccurate association of allotment plot with property listed for sale recently: The sale particulars of a nearby property had been misinterpreted and had appeared to include entitlement to an allotment plot. This was clearly not the case, therefore no further action was needed.
- e) SPS CIC- To receive update and consider request to pay for annual insurance premium from remainder of allocated funding: It was resolved to approve the payment of just over £99 for the SPS CIC annual insurance out of previously allocated funding.
- f) Appointment of a Parish Council Tree Warden- Update and further actions: Deferred.
- g) To approve Installation of safety buoy at the bottom of Bristol Hill, including expenditure: Following a brief debate, it was agreed to purchase one life buoy (cost up to £150) and install it at the bottom of Bristol Hill, on the sea wall near the Bristol Arms. Permission from the landowner had been secured.
- h) Shotley Community Orchard- To consider quote from Anglia Water for outdoor tap and agree terms of use: This matter continued to be pursued by the Clerk but no figures were yet available for consideration. Deferred to the next meeting.

**SPC/20/106: Correspondence:**

- a) Correspondence regarding registering interest in Community Funding for Quiet Lanes: Following due consideration, it was agreed not to take any further action.
- b) Correspondence regarding building materials disposed of on Whinny Queech: It was reported that the clearance of the said materials was imminent, therefore there would be no further action.

- c) Correspondence regarding wildlife corridors: Following a brief debate, it was resolved not to take any further action on this matter with regards to the two main sections of common land.
- d) Correspondence regarding managing grassland road verges: Noted.

**SPC/20/107: Reports from Councillors/requests for addition on future agendas for consideration:** A number of streetlights around Kingsland which were not working were reported to the Clerk.

It was noted that a number of vehicles parked in the dedicated bus stop parking bay at the opposite end of Great Harlings, which caused the school bus to stop on the main carriageway. This represented a risk for the children exiting and crossing the road at that point. Although reporting the matter to the appropriate authority was considered, it was agreed that two Councillors would speak with neighbouring residents and ask if they would refrain from parking their vehicles there instead.

**SPC/20/108: Date of next meeting:** November 16<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm; Finance Working Group November 5<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm.

**SPC/20/109: To consider the temporary exclusion of press and public:** *That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission at meetings) Act 1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed:* Not necessary due to deferral of next item.

**SPC/20/110: Staff matters:** Deferred.

With no further matters to be transacted, the meeting ended at 9.45 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_