

WENDOVER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

26th March 2024 at 8:00pm

Wendover Community Library, High Street, Wendover HP22 6DU

Present: Councillors Ballantine, Goodall, Lloyd-Evans, O'Donnell, Porter, Thornton, Wales, Williams (Chair) and Worth.

Clerk: Andy Smith

Members of Public: 6

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

PC23/312 There were no apologies noted

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

PC23/313 None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PC23/314 A member of the public was present to talk to the motion on the use of the Hampden Pond and it was agreed that we would take their contribution when we reached that agenda item.

4. OTHER ITEMS

a) Library

PC23/315 The comments from the public consultation were noted and would be taken into account when making the decisions on each of the options.

PC23/316 The Chair reminded Council that there was a great deal of power in a resolution of the Council and they advised the Council that if it made a resolution without enough information we would be held accountable to that decision, even if the parameters changed. There is always the option to defer any decision until it was right for the Council.

PC23/317 An amendment to consider the paper in parts was **RESOLVED** and each of the options in the paper would be considered separately.

Option 1 -To commit to fund the shortfall between the current proposed refurbishment and the original designs and plans. This amount would be approximately £230k

PC23/318 The Chair of Finance was invited to comment given the significant financial impact of the decision. The view was expressed that the risks are the level of funding and that we do not control the asset in which we will be investing. This is a risk not just to the Council but the parishioners' money. It was noted that Bucks Council are selling offices in Amersham and County Hall as a part of achieving a balanced budget.

PC23/319 Councillors wanted to know about the risks posed by borrowing the money. If this loan was called in it would effectively be one full year's Precept income. There is a further concern that we are becoming the lender of last resort in this arrangement.

PC23/320 It was considered that the value added for the money is not immediately apparent.

PC23/321 It was noted that it was a shame there was a deadline and that we could not go back to the start and talk to the volunteers, FOWL and Community Library Trustees.

PC23/322 No Councillor felt the Council was able to decide at this time and the motion had no proposer. The motion was considered withdrawn and a vote was not required to be taken. Should there

be any further developments and additional information then it would be possible to put this back on the agenda. However, the Council would not be progressing this option.

Option 2 - To commit to fund the external landscaping works to increase the profile and impact of the Library. This amount would be approximately £45k

PC23/323 The loss of car parking space was a concern, and it was not clear what the benefits were to Wendover residents. It was noted that this project is annexed and is being considered independently. It was discussed that we could come together as a community to make the space more inviting. There was support for external work on the frontage in general but not the project that we were being asked to consider.

PC23/324 The motion had no proposer. The motion was considered withdrawn and a vote was not required to be taken. Should there be any further developments and additional information then it would be possible to put this back on the agenda. The Council would look to support any community led initiatives to make the space more welcoming.

Option 3 - To move the Parish Council office into the Library and provide £20k of funding to facilitate this move.

PC23/325 The clock tower was a big consideration for the Councillors and was an iconic part of the community. Concerns included losing control of our office space and that we will still have the costs of the clocktower if we moved. We are doing councillor surgeries in the library and this seems to be working as a part of our engagement. It was considered that there is no pressing need to move out of the clock tower.

PC23/326 Another option could be to consider contributing to the refurbishment of the current police room so that we could perhaps use the space as a private meeting place. There are also other ways we could support the library such as moving meetings to the Library and financially supporting the Library in other ways.

PC23/327 The motion had no proposer. The motion was considered withdrawn and a vote was not required to be taken. Should there be any further developments and additional information then it would be possible to put this back on the agenda.

General

PC23/328 It was noted that our ambition was to evaluate if we could support this local community resource and as a Council we have done that. We have considered what the best option is for Wendover residents.

PC23/329 The Clerk was thanked for the work to bring together the proposals in such a short space of time and with changing information.

PC23/330 It was noted that we should continue to build relationships with the Library and look to support each other where possible. The strategic planning steering group should look at engagement with the library as a part of our ongoing plans.

b) St Mary's Church use of Hampden Pond for a heat pump

PC23/331 A member of the Church Committee thanked the Council for taking the agenda item at short notice and talked through the process. It was noted that the project was a part of making St Mary's an example Church for achieving net zero emissions. As a part of that the Church would receive funding support.

PC23/332 It was noted that this is a multi stage process and that what is being currently requested is an in principle agreement to be able to use the pond. The next stage would be a project feasibility study. Once this is produced the Parish Council would be asked again for consent to proceed.

PC23/333 Concerns from Council around impact to wildlife, the varying levels of the pond, impact on other works at the pond and whether this usage would give ownership of the pond to the Church were all considered. It was noted that these questions would be addressed after the feasibility works and that Council would have an opportunity at this stage to decide if it would like to proceed. In principle the Council felt that this was a worthy project that should be supported if practical. It was noted that the project was being managed and funded by the Church and diocese and the Parish Council was not being asked to fund or undertake any of these initial investigations.

PC23/334 It was **RESOLVED** that St Mary's Church could continue with the feasibility studies and undertake the investigations required to deliver the project. It was noted that the Church would bring back a proposal to proceed on the basis of the outcomes of these investigations.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

PC23/335 To note the next Parish Council meeting **Tuesday 2nd April 2024**. Agenda is now closed.

6. CLOSURE OF MEETING

PC23/336 As all business was transacted the meeting was closed at 8:48pm

Signed by
Chair to the Parish Council

Date: