

WOODPLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY REMOTE MEETING
HELD ON 27th APRIL 2020

CHAIRMAN'S INTRO, SOUND CHECK, MUTING AND VOTING INFORMATION

The Chairman 'hosted' the meeting and ensured that all Members could be seen and heard.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present so there were no apologies for absence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the meeting held on 20th April 2020

MIN 162 Members **resolved** that the Minutes of the 20th April meeting were a true record.

They will be signed at the next face to face Council meeting in accordance with LGA 1972 sch. 12 Part VI para 41 (1)

TO ACCEPT DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public were given the opportunity to request a weblink from the Clerk. There were no requests to participate.

Purchase of Land in Woodplumpton

At the 20th April meeting, Members considered a proposal to submit a bid to purchase land for sale in Woodplumpton. During the meeting it was clarified that the proposal was to bid for one of the 2 plots of land with the intention of creating an ecologically sustainable, natural, green space that would include wild flower meadows.

Members discussed the pros and cons of the purchase and an amendment was put forward proposing that the Parish Council uses the next 10 days (before the 30th April closing date) to find out more information about the bidding process and **to establish whether a submitted bid would be legally binding**. The amendment was carried as detailed in the 20th April Minutes.

The Clerk contacted the Surveyors and forwarded their reply to Members. The reply stated that a bid would not be legally binding - but if it was accepted, the purchaser's Solicitors would be instructed and the sale / purchase contract will be prepared. To facilitate this, details of the purchaser's Solicitors are requested on the bid offer form. With that in mind, the Clerk contacted 3 Solicitors and established that Solicitor's fees are likely to be around £4,000.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Clerk stated that as a bid can be withdrawn without penalty, it is not legally binding and may be submitted in accordance with the amendment but stressed that it is a Member decision and when considering their decision, Members are advised to consider why they wish to submit a bid if the intention is to withdraw it before the closing date and in a similar vein, Members should also consider why they are submitting a bid if they do not intend to purchase the land if the bid is successful.

If a bid is submitted, it will be deduced that the **intention of the bid is to purchase the land**.

Not only does this raise residents' expectations that the land will be purchased if the bid is successful – it also means that when making their decision, Members may take into account that the Council will need to engage a Solicitor and incur legal costs. In addition, Members may also give weight to the points discussed on the 20th April with regards to the cost impact on the traffic calming schemes, future use, maintenance etc. The Clerk also reminded Members that whilst the City Council has agreed the purchase cost could be an appropriate use of CIL monies, the City Council has been unable to advise on the intricacies and legalities of CIL money moving forwards.

Members considered the above points and expressed concerns that the Council is unable to predict how much CIL money is due and by going ahead with the purchase now, it would take finances away from the traffic calming schemes which residents have already been consulted on.

It was also stated that Members had been unable to visit the site due to the Coronavirus lockdown and were unable to judge the suitability of the site in terms of parking and longer-term maintenance.

A view was expressed that the longer-term maintenance could be put on hold but the Clerk referred Members to the Surveyors reply regarding the Restrictive Covenant which will take into account the buyers long term ability to maintain the land. In general Members felt that more time was needed to assess the maintenance costs and carry out due diligence checks.

It was stated that the Council still has decisions to make regarding the traffic calming schemes as currently it does not have the money to progress both schemes – however it does have the money to submit a bid for the field at no cost to the Council if the bid is unsuccessful. It was also stated that given a choice, residents would vote for the creation of a natural green space rather than the traffic calming schemes in both villages.

Members disagreed stating that the traffic consultations were positive and well attended and requests are still coming in to expand the scheme to include Tabley Lane and other areas of the Parish.

It was acknowledged that everyone was entitled to their views and given time, the land may become a good community asset, but due to the time constraints on the land purchase, it was not possible to carry out any further checks or consult the public first.

The Chairman checked that everyone had had an opportunity to consider and speak on the matter and requested that Members now vote on whether or not a bid should be submitted for the land. In accordance with the LGA 1972 Sch.12 13(2), Cllr Walker requested a named vote.

Those voting **against** submitting a bid :-

Cllr B Dalglish,	Cllr M Entwistle,	Cllr P Entwistle,	
Cllr M Greaves,	Cllr B Probin ,	Cllr M Stewart,	Cllr S Yates,

Those voting **for** submitting a bid :-

Cllr G Walker.

Min 163 It was **resolved** that a bid would not be submitted for the land for sale in Woodplumpton.

Date of Next Meeting – 18th May 2020 at 7.00.

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held on Monday 18th May and it is likely that this will also be a remote meeting.