

Gotherington Parish Council

Extraordinary Meeting Held on 2 March 2018 at 8.00pm

Venue: Rex Rhodes Building, Gotherington

Present: Howard Samuels (Chairman), Cllrs. Rodney Churchill, Caroline Ryman, Lewis Harmer, Ian O’Gorman, Bev Osborne

Attendees: 8 members of the public

2.3.18.1

Apologies for absence – Apologies from the clerk due to the snow – Cllr. Ryman agreed to take the minutes of the meeting. It was noted that Eddie McLarnon had resigned and that this would be a great loss to the Parish Council.

2.3.18.2

Declaration of interest – There were no declarations of interest and Chairman declared meeting was quorate.

2.3.18.3

Receive comments from members of the public – concerns over erecting a fence in the Freeman Field to allow dog walkers to let their dogs off the lead as it was an area used by children and could cause safety issues.

There was a need for the parish council (PC) to understand why the no decision came about and why support had been turned on its head since the original village survey, the PC should consider the reasons why people decided not to vote for it. Considered that the reasons were wider than just the parking and finances. Questioned whether the process had been done in the wrong sequence, leading to a high level of commitments for an aborted project. Cllr. Osborne explained that to get an accurate indication of costs the PC had to do a lot of work. This included undertaking extensive surveys and the appointment of a professional project manager to do the Invitation to Tender, then undergoing a formal tender process to understand the level of work and costs. When the original village survey was carried out the figures were based on estimates and since that time further work including the roof had come to light.

2.3.18.4

Parish Poll held on 1 March 2018 – Chairman and Vice Chair attended the count at Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) there were 397 voting slips, out of a possible 842, giving a turnout of 47.15%, which TBC said was a high turnout for a poll on local issues. There were 176 Yes votes and 221 No votes. So, the No votes had a majority of 45.

TBC said the last Parish Poll held in Gloucestershire was in 2004.

It had previously been agreed by the Parish Council that their decision would be in line with the majority vote, even though the results of the poll was not necessarily binding.

Cllr. Harmer – proposed that on this basis the Parish Council would not proceed with the purchase of the Church Centre (CC) Cllr. O’Gorman seconded, all other councillors agreed, except Cllr. Osborne who abstained.

Cllr. Ryman proposed a vote of thanks to all members of the working party who had worked so hard on the project, this was unanimously supported by all councillors.

Cllr. Osborne made an alternative proposal that PC could still purchase the CC using the PCC donation and we could then hold on to it until we had raised enough money to do the refurbishment. It was agreed that this was not feasible as it would be contradicting the results of the Poll.

Confirmed that the Chairman or the clerk would need to advise the owners of the CC, The Huntington Trust as soon as possible, also all other interested parties including KBW, Alder King – Phil Pratt, Harrison Clark Rickerbys, The PCC, TBC and Charles Church, also Tesco's bag for life, that the project was no longer going ahead.

The donation from the PCC would have to be returned.

It was agreed that the PC would also need to consider other possible projects for the S106 money that had been allocated to the CC to ensure it was not lost.

2.3.18.5

Flyers/Leaflets – It was agreed that the PC should consider what could be learnt from the process and understand why so many people changed their support for the project when responding to the original village survey. The support for the project was then 65% and the Parish Poll where the yes votes were 44%.

More importantly the dissemination of information to the village and stakeholder management, involving the village at an earlier stage.

Agreed that a separate one page flyer be inserted into Topics, advertising the Village Spring Clean for the weekend of 28/29 April. Also, a section regarding the outcome of the poll, thanking people for turning out to vote and confirming the decision of the PC not to proceed with the purchase of the Church Centre.

Cllr. Osborne had already written a draft which would require amending.

2.3.18.6

Fence around the Freemans Field – discussed and agreed unanimously this would not be appropriate because the field was widely used by children and was also a sports field. If dogs were allowed off the lead there would be a potential dog fouling problem. Agreed that the bye law of keeping dogs on leads on the playing fields should be more rigorously enforced

Meeting closed: 8.40pm