

Laverstoke and Freefolk PC Extraordinary Meeting 8 Aug 2023 Minutes

Public Time

- a) David Ellis welcomed members of the public. He opened with a brief summary that concerns had been raised in the community regarding the pub and there was a proposal to list it as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) with the Borough Council, under the Localism Act. This would give the community the right to bid for it in the case that it is put up for sale.
- b) Diccon gave background as to why this had been raised. In L&F the Watership Down Inn is the only pub in the community and it has many supporters. Hospitality, like many industries, currently faces financial pressures and ACV would be a safety blanket for the community. It had been successful in Longparish but less so in Whitchurch.
- c) The Watership Down owners began the public discussion explaining they have taken over 12 months ago with reasonable trade, with 4 garden letting rooms & customers from Bombay Sapphire, Highclere and the community. However, the past year has been shocking and risky for hospitality with influences outside their control such as the economy and big resource shortage (village rather than city location) and poor summer weather. Although difficult to predict the short term, they assured the meeting that they are not property developers and want to make a viable business - not turn the pub into something else. They have upgraded 2 bedrooms, have new front of house staff and head chef, with new menu coming shortly, are focussing on things they can control e.g. service, quality and food and encouraging people to sample their wares. Pressed for space with only 1 very small office upstairs, they had applied for planning permission for more storage in place of old sheds earmarked for demolition. They felt that use of caravan stock photo, as they had been advised, had caused an issue for both PC and another consultee who objected due to risk of nitrates filtering into Test.
- d) A member of the community raised there was a feeling amongst the residents of a gap between what the pub was like in the past and now. The owners explained that one of them had been brought up locally so they knew the area and pub. It hadn't been the pub or previous owner's fault that things had changed over time – covid & cheap supermarket beer were an issue. More marketing is now required as it takes more effort to get people out. The addition of rooms, fancier food and enhanced beer gardens were all important. The resident expressed the desire of the community for the pub to be successful.
- e) Another resident asked how they can support the pub and were pleased to talk with the current owners. This led to discussion about communication and marketing ideas such as using calendar events like Mother's Day and other occasions as an opportunity to hold community events and activities. Attendance at the PC meeting 2 or 3 times p.a. was suggested. Submitting info for newsletter was requested. **Action:** Owner to provide contact details to clerk.
- f) The owner outlined the risks of ACV. They are committed to making a success of the pub or to sell it as a going concern. If there was a downturn, there is a risk that the building would be empty for lot longer as external buyers would think twice about bidding on a pub with a listing and if a loan is needed it needs to be declared to a mortgage company. They added that current planning processes mitigate against any threat of development so ACV adds limited value. They would rather work with the PC and community than have a 'shadow' cast over the pub.
- g) Diccon summarised the discussion and arguments, weighing up risks of damage to the pub business model and protection for the community in the event of a downturn and the pub being sold to another owner. On balance for the time being it was felt that the owner had

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made a good case that they wish to make a go of the pub. Diccon therefore proposed amending the motion to 'Review the listing of the pub as an ACV in 6 months' time', Andrew seconded and all agreed.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Jim Marsh

In attendance: David Ellis, Jo Probut, Jayne Hudson, Andrew White, Diccon Harvey, Julia Chedghey

2. **Declarations of interest** - David: PCC, Millennium Green; Diccon: archery club

3. **Signature & approval of Minutes 4 July 2023** - approved and signed

4. **Proposal to list Watership Down Inn as Asset of Community Value** - Moved to top of agenda by chairman with public allowed to comment

5. **Maintenance items including:**

5.1. **Cutting back hedges at Marsden Court – Action:** communicate with residents

5.2. **Garden waste tipping** in rough car park **Action:** Julia to speak to resident

6. **Agree updated Standing Orders and Finance Regulations** – David explained these have been updated and previously circulated. In particular in Finance Regs, the limits have increased to account for inflation such as RFO/chair sign off increase from £250 - £300 and amount the RFO can move between deposit and current account. David proposed and Jayne seconded both the Standing Orders and the Finance Regulations.

7. **Community Site Updates:**

7.1. **Pavilion - WC arrangements**

7.1.1. Discussions have progressed with TVMS. Drains still need to be sorted out and it is becoming clear that only north side will probably be usable. Andrew will help with getting quotes. In the meantime, we have installed a temporary disabled portaloo at £60 per week. David proposed and Andrew seconded that this be supported through to at least the next PC meeting where continuation would be reviewed in light of drain repair status.

7.1.2. An asbestos survey revealed no change in safe status of water tanks.

7.1.3. PC is also currently exploring options with licencees.

7.2. **Lady Rose Hall** – toilet lintel will need to extend across 2 rooms **Action:** ask PJB to quote & may need others.

7.3. **Tennis & archery area** – Archers have made a request again for an archery shelter. This is for storage of equipment while shooting and protection of visitors whilst watching juniors and beginners. Andrew, Nicky & David have met with archery secretary and are now awaiting a proposal and designs. **Action:** include in Sep meeting agenda and encourage attendance.

8. **Finance**

8.1. **Finance report July 2023** – see table at end of minutes

8.2. Items over £100:

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Laverstoke & Freefolk Parish Council

Items over £100

Reporting Year: Year to 31 March 2024 (4 of 12)
Month: July 2023

Supplier	Description	Months	Total
British Gas	Electricity	Jul	£(256.32)
Clerk	Clerk salary	Jul	£(396.18)
Overton Black Arrows	Archery Field hire	Jul	£ 1,110.00
	Archery wildflower cut cor	Jul	£ 335.00
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	S106 Grant	Jul	£ 4,535.80
Scofell	Grounds maintenance	Jul	£(670.00)
HMRC E VAT	HMRC VAT	Jul	£(244.74)
Brandon Elliott	Hall hire	Jul	£ 112.50
PJB Carpentry & Construction	Manhole repair	Jul	£(246.33)
	Wall & steps repairs	Jul	£(4,535.80)
	Door frame & weatherbar	Jul	£(457.53)
	Door keycode lock	Jul	£(134.22)
Wellers Hedleys	Professional fees	Jul	£(1,550.00)
	Hall hire & deposit	Jul	£ 100.00
Fireskills	Fire Risk Assessment	Jul	£(295.00)
Euroloos Limited	Portaloo	Jul	£(300.00)
	Hall hire deposit	Jul	£ 100.00
Walker Fire UK Ltd (T/a S Fire Protection)	Fire alarm service	Jul	£(189.99)

8.3. Approval of Payments over £250 given for:

Cowans (structural eng) £295

9. Correspondence – none

10. Planning - none.

Next PC meeting: 12 Sept at 7.30pm in Lady Rose Hall.

Laverstoke & Freefolk Parish Council

Income and Expenditure Statement (Cash basis)

Reporting Year: Year to 31 March 2024 (4 of 12)

Month: July 2023

All E	Parish Council				Community Site				Total		
	Month	YTD	Full year Budget	Budget Remaining	Month	YTD	Full year Budget	Budget Remaining	Month	YTD	Full year Budget
Precept	-	5,000	10,000	5,000	-	-	-	-	-	5,000	10,000
Grants	-	512	340	(172)	-	-	-	-	-	512	340
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hall Hire - Nursery	-	-	-	-	-	2,243	9,635	7,392	-	2,243	9,635
Hall Hire - Other	-	-	-	-	163	666	1,900	1,234	163	666	1,900
Hall Hire deposit	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	200	-	-
Cost Recoveries	-	-	-	-	1,686	1,686	4,356	2,670	1,686	1,686	4,356
Site Rent	-	-	-	-	1,110	1,110	1,943	833	1,110	1,110	1,943
Other Income	-	-	9	9	370	370	-	(370)	370	370	9
Interest Income	51	78	-	(78)	-	-	-	-	51	78	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income	51	5,590	10,349	4,759	3,528	6,075	17,834	11,759	3,579	11,665	28,183
Contribution	-	-	850	850	-	-	(850)	(850)	-	-	-
PC/CC cost charges	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers	-	-	850	850	-	-	(850)	(850)	-	-	-
Salary/Newsletter	(416)	(1,638)	(5,056)	(3,418)	(44)	(179)	(550)	(371)	(460)	(1,816)	(5,606)
Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance	-	-	(299)	(299)	-	-	(2,807)	(2,807)	-	-	(3,106)
Professional fees	-	(488)	(757)	(269)	-	-	(14)	(14)	-	(488)	(771)
IT costs	(37)	(346)	(313)	33	-	(58)	(64)	(6)	(37)	(404)	(377)
Grounds Maint.	-	(513)	(1,477)	(964)	(670)	(670)	(872)	(202)	(670)	(1,183)	(2,349)
Street Lighting & Furniture	-	(294)	(598)	(304)	-	-	-	-	-	(294)	(598)
SID Management	-	-	(732)	(732)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(732)
Utilities	-	-	-	-	(2,371)	(3,446)	(4,815)	(1,369)	(2,371)	(3,446)	(4,815)
Bldgs Repair/Maint.	-	-	-	-	(434)	(1,024)	(7,850)	(6,826)	(434)	(1,024)	(7,850)
Bldgs Planned Maint.	-	-	-	-	(563)	(639)	(837)	(198)	(563)	(639)	(837)
Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	(21)	(600)	(579)	-	(21)	(600)
Cleaning	-	-	-	-	-	(14)	-	14	-	(14)	-
Other expenses	(8)	(362)	(374)	(12)	(5)	(20)	(566)	(546)	(13)	(382)	(940)
Total Expenses	(461)	(3,641)	(9,606)	(5,965)	(4,087)	(6,070)	(18,975)	(12,905)	(4,548)	(9,711)	(28,581)
Grants Made	-	-	(900)	(900)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(900)
Project costs	-	-	(600)	(600)	(2,254)	(3,654)	(5,000)	(1,346)	(2,254)	(3,654)	(5,600)
Net Vat	94	(82)	-	82	(543)	(884)	-	884	(448)	(966)	-
Net cash Movement	(316)	1,867	93	(1,774)	(3,355)	(4,533)	(6,991)	(2,458)	(3,670)	(2,666)	(6,898)
Reserves/cash b/f	6,967	4,785	5,147	362	65,567	66,745	63,459	(3,287)	72,534	71,530	68,606
Reserves/cash c/f	6,652	6,652	5,240	(1,412)	62,212	62,212	56,468	(5,745)	68,864	68,864	61,708

Sign.....Date.....