

HEMPNALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 27th January 2010 at 7.30pm in The Nelson Suite of the Village Hall.

ACTION

Present

Chairman Geoffrey Moulton, Vice Chairman David Hook, Debbie Ashford, Kevin Cunningham, Richard Delf, Hamish Rose, Peter Workman and the Clerk - Ian Nelson.

Members of the public present

District Councillor Mr Michael Windridge, Mrs Julie Parker, Mr Paul Ellis, Mr Graham Smith.

Apologies

None received.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 6th January 2010 were approved and signed.

Public Participation

Mr Smith, a town planning consultant representing Mr Paul Ellis re the planning application for the proposed change of use of public house to a dwelling, gave background to that application, in particular that it was estimated that it would cost £300,000 capital spend to make the business viable. He requested the council's support of the application.

Mr Windridge stated that SNC will wish to see a period of 6 months elapse whilst the applicant fully markets the business. He also felt that the village deserves a village pub and he hoped that an entrepreneur would come forward, although he appreciated that this may be unlikely.

Mr Smith stated that Punch Taverns had marketed the tenancy for 9 months and the freehold for 6 months before Mr Ellis purchased the property.

Mrs Parker stated that she and her husband were supporting the change of use as the property was in such disrepair and had been for a long period of time due to lack of investment.

Planning Applications

New application since the last meeting:

Change of use of The Queen's Head PH

Mrs Ashford, an ex landlady of the pub, stated that she felt that if Punch Taverns had been willing to invest in the infrastructure the business would be viable.

Mr Moulton asked why Mr Ellis had not undertaken a viability study before purchasing the property. Mr Ellis responded that when he purchased it he was looking at it with a view to it being viable / community pub. He went on to say that his offer of 149k was less than the sale proceeds he was able to obtain for his previous property in Long Stratton and as he wished to move back to Hempnall it suited him to live there irrespective of whether the business turned out to be viable. Subsequently, having taken professional advice he is of the opinion that the business will not be profitable.

Mr Pointer suggested that councillors should look forward not back and that the best chance of keeping the pub is that offered now that it is freehold. The fact the pub has land which is an asset that could be sold to generate the funds to pay for its refurbishment may ensure that the cost of capital is reduced such as to make the running of the business

HEMPNALL PARISH COUNCIL

viable. In addition he felt that having facilities such as this in the centre of the village will become more important as transport becomes even more difficult in future. **ACTION**

Mr Hook agreed that a lot of work was needed to make the pub viable however he felt it was the last chance for the village to keep this central facility.

Mr Pointer asked if Mr Ellis's view would be different if it were possible to build, say 4 houses on the plot and use the money to refurbish the pub. Mr Ellis responded that he would like there to be a pub in the village however the professional advice he has received indicated that it is not feasible. If the scenario Mr Pointer outlined were possible Mr Ellis indicated that he would need to consider it.

Mr Moulton reminded the meeting of the difference between asset sales and the viability as a business. Mr Pointer commented that if the funding of the capital was in effect free via the sale/development of the non business assets the overheads would be lower and thus it would have a direct impact on the viability.

Mr Hook pointed out that not a single member of the public had attended the meeting to oppose the application. Mr Windridge stated that the reason people did not use the pub as it had been so poorly invested in. Villages may not wish to keep the Queen's head as it stands but may welcome an establishment that had been suitably invested in.

Mrs Ashford reported that many people had informed her that they would give custom to the pub if it served food.

Mr Rose stated that all of the above was about exploring all possible avenues before agreeing to a change of use.

Mr Workman stated that he did not feel that 6 mths marketing would result in a sale, especially in the light of previous marketing. Mr Moulton commented that the lack of sale may have been to price at the time.

Mr Smith stated that the submissions to SNC included a trading viability study and that in addition the pub could be used as offices or a shop without having to apply for change of use.

Mr Workman stated that he has seen figures of far less than £300,000 to turn it into a viable business. However he appreciated that in today's market it may never-the-less be difficult to make viable.

Mr Pointer stated that the applicant was basing the application upon the non viability of the business, however he thought that not all the options had been considered and the sale / development of some of the no business assets could help to make the project viable

Mr Hook read the planning officers guidance on the change of use.

Mr P Ellis, Queens Head, Mill Rd, Hempnall - Proposed change of use of public house to dwelling – Recommended refusal and that the viability be fully assessed taking into account further funding options, such as the sale/development of surplus property and that the property be marketed at a realistic price as a pub for at least a further 6 months. **IN**

Messrs Ellis and Smith thanked the councillors and left the meeting. Mrs Parker also left the meeting.

It was further agreed that councillors should meet with SNC planning to discuss the matter further before the planning meeting. Mr Windridge volunteered to arrange this meeting. **MW**

HEMPNALL PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Hook requested that the matter be placed on the parish council agenda in future until the matter was finalised. **ACTION**
IN

Subject to the outcome of the meeting between the parish council and SNC, Mr Windridge intends to conduct a survey of parishioners.

Other planning applications

Mr R Moore, 39A Alburgh Rd, Hempnall - Proposed single storey extension to rear of the property to provide a utility room and sun lounge – Recommended approval. IN

Mrs B Jeffrey, Lime Tree Cottage, The Street, Hempnall - Renewal of permission 2006/2754/LB proposed rear 1st floor extension – Recommended approval. IN

MKG Ltd, The Grove, Fritton - Change of use of existing glass fibre moulding and storage B1 & B2 use to vehicle storage and depollution facility – Recommended refusal and also express concerns over the potential extension of the site. IN

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.01pm.

Signed _____ Date 3rd March 2010