

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Parish Council Zoom meeting Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 7.30pm.

PC MEMBERS

Chairman	Mr. R. Peirce
Vice Chair	Mr. M. Smith
	Mr. G. Botting
	Mr. S. Lawson
	Mr. R. Fletcher
	Miss. H. Booker
	Mrs. B. Hough-Robbins
	Mr. D. Booth
Parish Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

1. To receive apologies for absence
None. Mr. M. Aldridge not present.

3. **Public Forum**: Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise, with the permission of the Chairman.
Nine MOP present.

Chair asked if any members of the public wished to speak on any item other than the Draft NHP Plan or the extra item of the Pop up Bar & Grill. None did, he stated he would invite them to speak when these items came up.

The Chairman started with an extra item re the Pop Up Bar and Grill agreed in principle at PC meeting 3rd March 2021. To allow James Tomlinson to set up a temporary bar and food outlet on the village green. He stated that it was regrettable that this had to be discussed as first approached by James that he very much gave the impression that the Red Lion would be closed and would not be opening until 17th May. On that basis as PC were mindful of any conflict with the Red Lion our local public house, the PC accepted that statement and requested the outlines of his proposal. It has since been discovered that there was no consultation between Chris of the Red Lion and James over the question of opening date and it would be fair to say an assumption was made, but no discussion and that has been agreed by both parties.

The position is now that the Red Lion wish to open and possibly have to open because questions of their landlord and rent and they have position to service customers outdoors and make greater use of the rear car park. That is where we have reached. He asked both James and Chris to address the PC before trying to find a solution.

James Tomlinson shared a presentation showing what he intended to offer at the Pop Up Bar/Grill. 5 weekends Fri 16/4 to Sun 16/5. Offering a family friendly environment, fills a gap for families to safely enjoy the facility. Children can play on the green in sight of parents. Launched last week to friends 86 booked then on social media and 180, as of today 599 booked. He said that when he presented to the PC 2 weeks ago he had been told by other people that Red Lion was not opening and there was a social media post stating that, which has now been removed. He sent his proposals to PC showing Covid restriction and other information. Since then the Red Lion has said they are opening. Significant investment made and also licenses achieved and had amazing feedback from the local community. He stated he does not want to upset anyone and hopes that this can proceed to give something for the local community after Covid.

Chris from the Red Lion agreed that on 26th Feb the social media post did say they would not open, however on 3rd March on their own social media page saying they would open and also on village social media. They could not post on 26 Feb on this site as business posts on Fridays. He said the first he had heard of it was then. His only conversation was with Malcolm Smith until 22nd March. He said he is astonished that the PC thought he had any conversation with West Berks Brewery he has had no formal communication on this matter from the PC and he was frustrated and felt he was being presented a fait accompli. He felt the PC should make a serious effort to find out how and why they came to believe that he had a conversation with anyone on this matter.

James stated it is not West Berkshire Brewery they have no involvement at all, it is through a company called Cheers and this was made clear in his first documentation sent to the PC.

Chairman stated he regretted that James had not communicated with the Red Lion, and had accepted social media posts. However, the situation now needs to be addressed. The PC have received many emails in support of the Pop Up Bar, and others have been supportive of the Red Lion opening, its regular customers have been concerned about the new venture opening.

The Chairman put the following proposal to be considered, suggest that James moves from the original corner of the VG near the Zebra crossing, that is just to close in this situation now. Use the VG but adjacent to the primary school and play area. Has advantages that this is close to the car park and the play area, there may be other logistical challenges such as electricity and toilets, James would need to resolve these. The PC could agree to the VH toilets or a portaloo option that was in James previous presentation. This is not optimal but it does allow both venues to proceed.

The Chairman offered the Red Lion tables on the village green opposite the pub.

James offered his license for this to Chris and also that he would not open on Sundays for the first 3 weekends.

Chairman asked the councillors for their views;

Vice Chairman felt it was an unfortunate situation, but given the amount of work that James has done and the amount of bookings, he feels it would be wrong to not go ahead now, clearly to be close to the Red Lion was not ideal so the new location moving further away would help, and if Chris wants to take up the offer of tables on the green he would support this.

Cllr. Booker stated the PC made what they thought was the right decision at the time with information that the PC had but things have changed so this has to be reconsidered. There has been support on both sides, and both sides made valid points, so now the PC is in a position that they are damned if they do and damned if they don't at this point and have to find the best way forward.

She supports everything that has already been said by the Chairman and Vice Chair. She thanked James for his offer of compromise and hoped that this was something that made Chris feel a bit better.

Cllr. Fletcher agreed good idea to the new location, offer of some compromises is good and hoped that the parties could now get over this and repair the damage that had been done in time.

Cllr. Botting felt it had been unfortunate there have been misunderstandings, and there certainly has been strong support for both venues. Doesn't think at this stage it could be cancelled now. He stated that this is a one off event for post Covid and that this not an event that can be done again. He thanked James for dropping the three Sundays.

Cllr. Lawson felt it was a shame that the mis or lack of communication had led to this. Moving further away from the Red Lion makes sense and hopefully both operating will bring business for both of them.

Cllr Booth supported the proposal, it's a one off event, poor communications by all but to stop it would be the wrong move.

Cllr. Hough Robbins concurred with everything already said. Felt that it is not a lot of miscommunication, it was as we are in exception times and there are other considerations than there might usually be and there are other tensions and that is evident. There is a sensible compromise and that everyone seems to be being reasonable about it. She said James point on his overview is very important that there is room for everyone and for innovation and room for new thought and we should not be opposed to that.

Certainly in terms of it being a one off, she does not necessarily see it as being a one off, feels there are other things afoot that the PC need to address and other people's needs that need to be accommodated one way or another, that's been expressed. The support that James has had, shows there is room for everyone and everything without prejudice and room for collaboration, and thanked everyone for that.

The Chairman invited the public present to speak on this item, none of the public had anything to add and that it had all been said. One Mop said now all the facts had been presented and had the full story there was nothing more to add.

Chairman asked Chris from Redi Lion for his thoughts on the proposal, Chris said he was not overjoyed but under the circumstances the fact that it has come this far he is minded to accept the proposal that was on the table. Perhaps James could come back with more details and appreciated the moving away and dropping the Sundays. He pointed out that there is another pub in the village and asked if that pub had been consulted. He said he reluctantly will accept with reasonable grace the proposal.

Chairman confirmed that the PC look at this as a one off post Covid event. And that PC would not have agreed to an outside event coming into the village had they known that the Red Lion was going to be open.

He thanked James for what he had offered and felt that they needed to work out the detail between themselves. He asked James for a final word he said he would arrange to see Chris to chat, he apologised for not communication other than the social media post. He appreciated that to be so close to the pup was a bit close and he apologised for that.

The Chairman stated in conclusion felt the residents would be grateful that there would be hospitality opening up and that the two could offer different things and wished them, success and offered that the PC would be helpful to both if they required any facilities to contact the Clerk. Chairman finished with thanking both James and Chris for understanding the difficult situation and thanked the MOPs who had sat in on the meeting.

2. To Received Declarations of Interest.

Cllr. Booker in the Neighbourhood Plan Draft 2, will leave the meeting when this item is discussed.

5. Privacy Policy – Review addition to policy and Approve.

Vice Chairman had circulated the policy with addition. It was to cover more specifically the consultation for the NHP2 to make it clear that personal details will be collected to verify the entries but the personal details will not appear in any results they will be anonymised.

Members resolved to adopted the policy with the addition.

6. Finance

List of Payments made
between 19/03/2021
and 31/03/2021

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
25/03/2021	Healthy Buildings Int Ltd	TRANSFER	£238.80	Asbestos survey VH
25/03/2021	Our Woodcote Library	TRANSFER	£2,000.00	Annual Allowance Installation new goal
25/03/2021	ABA Construction Ltd	TRANSFER	£2,379.60	FollyF
25/03/2021	PC Technicians	TRANSFER	£40.00	Tech support PC
30/03/2021	British Telecom	DD	£106.83	Monthly line and BB
			£4,765.23	

Approved

4. Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan Draft 2 – Npag Group to present the plan to PC for review and Approval.

The Chairman said after many years of work since 2016 the Npag group had been commissioned to work on the second Woodcote NHP2. The draft plan is the culmination of their work, the plan is being presented to the PC to accept, modify and then approve so it goes out to public consultation. It has been in the public domain as a background paper to the agenda to the meeting, comments are required on the formal consultation through the process there will be a summary of the main points of the plan circulated to the village, it gives details of how to make formal comments during the 6 week consultation. It is open widely and at the end of the consultation, the PC with Npag will need to formally look at all the comments and consider them, then decide if the draft needs changes or whether it should stand. The Draft is then sent to SODC who have to formally accept that it conforms to the Local Plan and with National Planning Policy, it then goes out for a second 6 week consultation,

Comments from this will go directly to a Planning Inspector who is appointed to examine the plan who checks that it is in conformity with the SODC Local Plan and National Planning Policy. That Planning Inspector is empowered to make one of three decisions, he can say in his view the plan is sound and is fit to go to a referendum of all the electors in Woodcote, he can say that the plan is sound subject to any change that he may wish to put forward relating to its conformity with the SODC Local Plan or NPP, he does not have the power to change the content of the plan only to accept that it is in conformity, or the third option he can say the plan in his view is not fit to go out to public consultation if he feels there are serious flaws in terms of its conformity.

The Chairman invited the Vice Chair to speak who is Chairman of the Npag group to give any information that he feels might be needed before making the decision. He said it was the result of a lot of work and felt it reflected the views of the residents in terms of the sites selected. The amount of houses proposed is less than what was allocated in the SODC Local plan but there is evidence to show that the amount was not needed. He asked at this stage were members happy with it and could they proceed.

The Chairman stated in regard to the number of houses he had read the plan carefully and was very aware that Woodcote is surrounded by the AONB and any development had to conform to National Planning Policy.

There are significant statements in the plan endorsing this and that Woodcote cannot be treated like other larger villages due to AONB constraints, as had been the case in Goring who could not accept the number of houses allocated by SODC Local Plan for the same reasons.

Chairman asked if any questions to Vice Chair as Chairman of the advisory Group, Cllr. Lawson asked if the Inspector is independent, the Chairman stated that as far as he knew they are independent. The PC will discuss with SODC about the appointment of the Inspector for the plan and hopefully if he is still available there is a possibility that it can be the same inspector as last time. They are expected to be impartial and their brief is specific that the WNHP Plan is in conformity with the two tiers of planning, SODC Local Plan and NPPF

Cllr. Botting stated that the plan must be in conformity with the basic conditions the first one being the NPPF which at the moment places additional emphasis on conserving the AONB and it has strengthened since the first WNHP was made. Second one is the SODC Local Plan which echos that strong protection. Third one is sustainability appraisal, it must demonstrate sustainability, that plays to Woodcote and its position in the AONB, fourth thing is grey arear that it needs to comply with European law but not much has changed at the moment. These are the 4 basic conditions, and the group has had experience following the first plan.

The Chairman asked if any of the MOP had anything to say, none had anything to say at this stage.

The Vice Chairman stated that the basic conditions statement, part of it will be there for the consultation, the full document will be ready for the final submission and it needs to set out how the plan is meeting the conditions. There will be other supporting documents which will not be formally submitted as part of the plan but will be there available as evidence.

Cllr Botting stated that the pre submission consultation, which is formally examined, the third document that must be submitted is the consultation statement which has to show the response to every comment that has been received. It summarises all the consultation processes over the last few years culminating in the responses to the 6 week consultation and the PC response to them.

The Chairman asked if any member had any comments, he stated minor changes corrections will be addressed before it goes out to consultation. No further questions, he proposed that the Draft plan is adopted in order for it to proceed to public consultation, seconded by Cllr. Lawson. He asked for clear indication that members accepted the proposal, unanimous decision it was accepted.

The Chairman finished by thanking and acknowledging the immense amount of work that had been put in by the Npag advisory group into producing the Draft document, to Cllr Smith and Cllr Botting and all the other members of the Group. This would not have been achieved without the invaluable input from residents of the village who have contributed to this Draft plan 2.

Cllr. Botting asked the Chairman to send a personal email to all the members of the group expressing his thanks, he agreed to this.

The Chairman referred to a page with a map in the plan asking if it could now be made a full page map the Vice Chair advised that it had already been done.

Cllr. Lawson stated if following the discussions regarding the Pop up bar and the Red Lion, that both parties send clear detail of what they are planning to do so that no further miscommunication occurs, all agreed. Clerk to follow up.

7. To note date of the next PC meeting: Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 7th April 2021.

Meeting closed at 21.20 Signed.....Date.....