

Lighthorne Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held at Lighthorne Village Hall at 8.00pm on Tuesday 4th August 2015

1. **Present:** Cllr Archer, Cllr Ryan, Cllr Daniel and Cllr Steele. Numerous residents.
To accept apologies for absence: Cllr Dick.

2. **15/02546/FUL – Village Hall Application to build an extension to the existing hall.**

A leaflet drop had been done of the village to advertise tonight's meeting – as well as posting on website, FB page and notice board as well as email circular.

Cllr Daniel indicated that he would play no part in the meeting, being a close affected neighbour.

Cllr Archer set out that there had been a lot of emails/written comments/oral opinions made to LPC. Tonight we want to hear the views of those in attendance. The meeting was not to decide yet what representations LPC would make, but to give local residents an opportunity to express their views. LPC would decide upon their representation at the next full LPC meeting Tuesday 11th August, to allow as much time as possible for residents to express a view. LPC would make representations based on the views of residents. (Views from tonight, emails, letters, reps received)

The planning application notice was sent to LPC in a letter dated 21st July. LPC comments were due by 11th August.

Cllr Archer noted that LPC had expected Noel Hunter to attend a LPC meeting to discuss prior to any planning application, but despite trying to arrange his attendance some months ago, LPC had heard nothing since, noone had attended and the receipt of this application came as a surprise.

Numerous emails and representations on SDC web page were noted – both supporting and opposing the application.

Residents in attendance then stood up and expressed a view one by one – names and addresses given and a note of the same held by LPC. Summary below. Not all who attended spoke.

- 1) In favour of the plan to increase the size of the hall but has two concerns, first that the soil excavated from the hall is planned to be replaced at the far end of the playground, this gives major concerns for the stability of the area and adjoining houses (resident is an expert in this field), second, the design of the profile of the roof gives potential concerns regarding leakage issues.
- 2) Reps on behalf of Lighthorne Drama Group were that they were in favour of the application. They are the largest user and single contributor to the hall and believe that the proposals will enhance their usage and attract more audiences.

The consensus of their group is that they are in favour. Regarding the internal layout, this is not relevant to the application, only the the outline of the hall is an issue

- 3) A local parent was concerned that the first they had heard of the application was the day before this meeting, and was not alone in not having heard about any plans for the VH. They had received no information whatsoever before that. Concerns regarding the application were: Playground; this is the only safe facility for children in the village, it should be protected, not taken away; Parking – it is already very bad for the immediate residents and surely this enlargement of the hall will only make matters worse; Budget; there is roughly £65,000 available, is that for the extension alone, will they pay for soil movement and new play equipment to replace that removed? *It was pointed out that the budget was not a planning issue but one the VHC must resolve for themselves.*
- 4) Points out number of pros and cons to the scheme – In support: It provides storage for chairs/tables; it provides a separate bar area away from the kitchen; it provides more room to move around at functions; it provides direct access to the playground from the hall; it is a nicer area for all users to sit in – Against: there is loss of playground area; do we really need a room as big as the one being proposed? He personally does not think that we need a room that big; Is there scope for compromise to develop on a smaller scale? Can we do something to bring the community together and not divide it?
- 5) Agrees with comments above about compromise and a smaller scale plan all can agree. We want to improve the hall, but the concern is that the proposed size of the development and the fact that we would have to lose **SO** much of the playground is a great shame. Parents in the village have worked very hard to improve the playground through years of fundraising.
- 6) Emails had been received also suggesting that the application should be withdrawn and more consultation take place to find a plan which everyone can agree.
- 7) A member of the VHC had not been aware that there were objections. He agreed that cost was an issue. Regarding land to replace the land to be built upon, the owners of the garages had been approached (orbit) but they were not planning on selling any of them.
- 8) His concern was that there should not be factions within the village, and we should not be 'at each other'. We need some extension and we need some playground. The VHC will finance 'making it right' re: the playground. We want to find a middle ground.
- 9) View was expressed that VHC should withdraw the application and sit down with all groups and agree something.
- 10) Local resident found out last night about the plans. Happy for the village hall to be improved, but is there any scope for doing it without squeezing an already small playground even smaller? This impacts on the only safe area available for children to play and to exercise – both play and exercise are so important to our children (especially when child obesity becoming an issue). It seems unfair that their only space is vastly reduced so that a bar can be built!
- 11) Resident has lived in the area since 1954. When the hall was originally built there was loss of amenity as the land was an orchard, but the village gained an

amenity. He urges the village to pull together to do something good for everyone.

- 12) This is a one off opportunity to extend the village hall. We must compromise and make the best of both. The extension room may provide space for children to play when it is wet outside etc. Lets get on with it and build this extension.
- 13) Somethng should be done with the money very kindly donated or noone will donate money again! It would be appropriate to make use of the bequest while people still remember him.
- 14) Question asked that if VHC wanted (e.g.) to reduce the size of the application, would they need to apply again? *Advised, yes, if they apply for this scheme then this is what they will have to build. If they wish to change or reduce any scheme they would have to apply to vary (if granted) or apply again from scratch.*
- 15) Can there be conditions imposed regarding promises made re: playground? *Not really planning conditions, so doubtful.*

There was some general discussion around the floor about compromise and all groups agreeing any extension etc. If there was agreement possibility of combined fundraising to achieve everyone's goals.

3. Date for the next meeting.

Tuesday 11th August 2015 at 8:00pm

Meeting closes at 9:00pm

Lighthorne Parish Council's new website now up and running:

www.lighthornepc.uk