

**OWSLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
28th APRIL 2016  
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM IN OWSLEBURY PARISH HALL**

**PRESENT.**

Parish Councillor John Chapman (in the Chair).

Parish Councillors: Mark Egerton, Paul Phillips, Roger Page, Gerry Tull.

**IN ATTENDANCE.**

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): Michael Cleary.

15 members of the public were present.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Parish Councillor Paul Bowes.

Parish Councillor Will Martin.

At the outset of the meeting the chairman explained the primary purpose of the meeting was to consider matters in relation to the proposed disposal of the leasehold interest in The Ship Inn.

**70/16 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS.**

No councillor declared an interest on the agenda items.

**71/16 APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

The approval of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 was deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

**72/16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.**

The Chairman asked the Clerk to summarise, for the benefit of the public present, the Council's understanding of the current position. The Clerk noted:

- The Ship Inn had been listed by WCC as a Community Asset, at the Council's request in 2014. Proposed disposals of the freehold or leasehold (of a lease 25 years or more at inception) would give rise to community rights to put forward a bid to the owner. The community had an initial period of 6 weeks to decide whether it wished to put forward an 'expression of interest' (ending in the case of The Ship on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016) and if it did so, a subsequent period of 6 months to prepare and submit a bid ;
- the Council had been informed by WCC of the proposed transfer of the remaining lease (believed to be less than 18 months) and had until 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 to determine whether to submit and expression of interest;
- the Council understood from Blake Morgan that in subsequent negotiations between the current lease owner, the brewery and the proposed purchaser, the transaction had been structured in such a way as to be outside the Community Assets legislation, and hence not give rise to community rights under the legislation;
- a parishioner had undertaken some limited research work, at the request of the Council, on the prospective purchaser and reported, amongst other matters, there was a positive endorsement from people with knowledge of the individual and his plans;
- the negotiations were well advanced and expected to complete 'shortly', but not before the Council had to determine whether to submit an expression of interest to WCC;
- the Council had no desire to interfere with a commercial transaction which would result in The Ship re-opening. However, the Council faced a dilemma in that in the event the Council decided not to submit an expression of interest, the community would lose its rights under the legislation to put forward a bid to the lease owner, should the current proposed transaction fail to be legally completed.

The Chairman invited comments and questions. The points raised during the ensuing discussion included the following:

- there was wide support for the village to have a pub;
- some parishioners had undertaken some research work of their own on the proposed purchaser and he appeared to have wide experience in the hospitality industry;
- parishioner wanted assurance the prospective purchaser was 'in the loop' and the Council was supportive (confirmed by the Chairman);

- there was some concern that whilst the village wanted a pub, it may not want a 'boutique/gastro' pub;
- the Council's submission of an expression of interest to WCC before the deadline of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 was more akin to an insurance policy or safety net in the event the current transaction failed to complete.

The Chairman thanked those present for their comments.

**73/16 THE SHIP INN.**

The Chairman noted the Council had determined at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 that whilst it would not wish to interfere with the current commercial negotiations involving the brewery, the current leaseholder, Watchstone plc, and the proposed purchaser, Joe Fox Inns Ltd, it should consider protecting the rights of the community should those negotiations falter. It was unfortunate completion of the negotiations would straddle the deadline of 2nd May for the Council to submit an expression of interest to WCC. After further consideration of the issues involved, the Council **Resolved** unanimously to instruct the Clerk to submit an 'expression of interest' to WCC before 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016.

**74/16 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING.**

The Chairman updated the Council on his recent discussions with the Chairman of Upham Parish Council in relation to the proposed Eastleigh Local Plan. A pressure group had been informed involving local residents and neighbouring parish council to require, amongst other matters, a thorough assessment of the traffic implications for the area arising as a consequence of the thousands of additional homes planned under Options B and C. In addition there was great concern as to the environmental consideration of a proposed new relief road. In any event, the proposed road would do little to help the traffic congestion in the area around Fair Oak, Colden Common and Twyford, with the consequent use of Owslebury as a cut-through. The matter would be considered at the Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**75/16 DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING.**

It was agreed the next Council meeting (Annual Parish Council Meeting) would be held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 commencing at 7.30pm in the Committee Room.

The meeting closed shortly after 8.15pm

Chairman.....John Chapman.....Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016