

Minutes of Meeting on 9th May 2024
Elmstead Parish Council – New Community Centre Committee
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Mr P Beard (Chairman), Mr R Fairweather, Cllr Adam Gladwin, Cllr M Hare, Mrs C Brock, Mrs D Stammers, Cllr Martine Ward and Mrs R Valentine.

Also present: Mrs Baxter (clerk). Two members of the public.

Not present: Mrs Grotier, Mr Higgins, Mrs Triscott and Mr Wright sent their apologies.

24/033 Chairman's welcome

Mr Beard welcomed everyone and thanked them for their time.

24/034 Apologies of Absence

Mrs Grotier, Mr Higgins, Mrs Triscott and Mr Wright sent their apologies.

24/035 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

None.

24/036 Approval and signing of the minutes from the meeting of 11th April 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Ward, Seconded: Cllr Hare, all in favour.

24/037 Public Speaking

A member of public asked where the committee was in discussing environmental infrastructure such as solar panels and rainwater collection.

It was responded that there will definitely be solar panels. Heating efficiency will be very good but we're not sure how it will be heated yet. We haven't looked at water recycling yet. We will need to water the field so we should be using any collected water. There will be more discussion when we look at building regulations.

We're also looking at LEDs and automatic lighting.

It was thought that the planning application will be submitted in a couple of months.

It was asked if the plans being reviewed are the final plans. It was raised that the only natural light or ventilation for the main hall is at one end. Also, the main kitchen is at the opposite end. The public were invited to bring their points up at the relevant agenda point.

24/038 New Community Centre Planning Application

i) *A report from a meeting with Duncan Clark and Beckett architects.*

Mr Beard, Mr Fairweather, Cllr Gladwin and Mrs Baxter attended the meeting. We went over the last set of plans and our modifications from the last committee meeting. The architects were very helpful and it was a good two way conversation. For example we talked through the issue with the location of the toilets in detail to come up with a better layout.

A rough estimate of cost was given of £1.5 million.

ii) *To review the most recent set of plans.*

3 options for elevations had only just been received and the committee viewed the options on the screen. After a review of the options, and as option 1 was most similar to the plans that had already been made, it was agreed that that was the preferred option.

Option 1 was reviewed with comments below.

South elevation: The sloping roof on the right hand side does not look good. It was thought they've changed it because it would be void internal space, but it could potentially be useful. To change back to one slope.

West elevation: A door had been introduced to the new seating area, but it was agreed that a double window would be better for use of the space and security reasons.

There was a question over the location of the main kitchen and it being difficult to access the

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outdoors area/patio with provisions from the kitchen, for example if you had a summer event on. The main kitchen needs to service both halls and the majority of the use will be for the indoors areas. There is a serving hatch from the kitchen to outdoors so provisions can be brought around the outside.

The main double doors look overly complicated with the double windows over the top and should be simplified. Security was discussed with the use of CCTV and motion sensor lights discussed.

The apex roof windows are not wanted.

It was asked why there are solar panels on the west elevation. The south elevation would be more efficient, and has solar panels shown on the plan.

2 windows have been added either side of the large doors. Perhaps to improve the natural daylight to the hall. It was suggested that the side panels of the door could be made bigger instead of having the extra windows, so light is coming in higher up. However with side windows they could be opened without having to open the doors, for example if you had a toddler group in the hall. Although there will have to be mechanical ventilation so there should always be fresh air circulating anyway.

North elevation: To remove the ledge stepping out from the roof to the right. Or to square it up. To remove the apex windows.

East elevation: The kitchen hatch is lower than the kitchen window because it needs to be wheelchair accessible from the outside, whereas the window needs to be above the kitchen work surfaces. The kitchen worktop will be dropped at the hatch.

The updated floorplan was then reviewed. Mr Beard went through the changes and a bit of background to each room/area. It was asked about a bar. The current intention is not to have one. If you can't open it on a regular basis (due to bookings) then you can't have draft beer. Hirers can bring their own drinks to serve.

There's been a change to the layout of the entrance area. We've moved the toilets and created an area for the community café, which isn't in the way of access for the halls. This space can be flexible.

We're to ask for a hatch to be added to the small kitchen towards the seating area.

There's a concern over having the cleaner's cupboard in the small kitchen. Different options were discussed. It needs to be accessible when the halls are booked. It's to be moved to the north side of the seating area, with the kitchen to be moved down. With sliding doors it won't impede the use of the tables in the seating area. The size of the cleaning cupboard is to be checked.

24/039 New Community Centre/car park land and Open Space land

i) Any updates from TDC on drainage or landscaping.

Mr Pateman-Gee (TDC) says that a team will be checking on the drainage at the beginning of May and if it hasn't been done they will follow up. It was confirmed that the missing drainage connections haven't been installed. The clerk is to ask TDC what its next steps are.

It looks like some of the weeds have gone from the land. There's been a tractor on the field, levelling it off.

The Parish Council can't take the land until these issues have been resolved.

ii) A report from a meeting with our solicitor and any update on the land transfers or boundary issues.

Our solicitor said that Go Homes had been slow to get back to him with the utilities and drainage but that could have been because of the missing drainage connections. There are

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outstanding issues with the transfer documentation that he is trying to resolve with Go Homes. One is the lack of access over the land, so he's asked for access rights to be included. He's also asked for rights over the utilities.

We also discussed the potential encroachment with the solicitor. The difference shows up on the topography surveys. The solicitor suggested that for simplicity we let it go. The solicitor suggested that the way we handle that is to change the outline of the land being transferred to the PC so that it doesn't include the encroached land. This land would stay in the developer's possession until their holding company closes and the land would then revert to the crown.

This was discussed by the PC and it was thought that if it wouldn't hold the transfer up then we should try and get the fences moved back to the actual border. Mr Beard added that the council should follow up with those residents that he visited with Mrs Baxter as they will be waiting to hear further.

The solicitor did say that we could do the transfer if needed but with the drainage and landscaping still outstanding it's best to get those resolved first.

iii) Facilities for disabilities.

Mr Wright asked for this agenda point but was absent. This is regarding the outside facilities and is a good point to raise but can be looked at a later stage.

24/040 A report on any updates since the last Committee meeting not included in agenda items above. To include:

i) High interest bank account.

The council has agreed it will open a high interest bank account for the s106 amounts that the council will be holding. The clerk is researching options to take it back to them for a decision at the next meeting. Each account is only protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme so we will need to look at more than one account to manage the risk.

ii) Tender process.

The planning application may take 2-3 months but Mr Fairweather thought we should start with the tender process now.

We looked at early engagement for procurement from some procurement training the clerk attended and it was suggested to have a procurement event to engage with the market. This is a way to warm up the market to an exciting opportunity and understand what the market can provide. We'll need to plan an open day and decide how to advertise. This will go to council for agreement.

We can also out a Prior Information Notice onto contracts finder to encourage market engagement.

In order to go out to procurement the architect will write the tender documentation. At that stage they will engage a quantity surveyor.

It was asked whether we need to wait until the planning application has been approved to go out to tender. We tender once we have the drawings and specification needed which could be before the planning decision. That tender has to go onto contract finder, and so we will need to ask interested parties to sign up to contracts finder.

Mr Beard will be able to use his experience of contracts and tenders to help with this process. Cllr Hare left the meeting.

iii) Current funding.

The committee viewed the current spreadsheet. We will need to get more funding.

The s106 money from the Church Road development was paid to TDC but there was an error with the indexation figure used and an amount had to be repaid.

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The clerk contacted TDC about how much interest has been earned on the s106 contributions they are holding and they have said that they don't pay interest anymore. We raised this with our solicitor who is looking into it.

We looked at the figure Lanswood paid to TDC about 2 years ago. With the interest rates over the past 2 years that is a lot of money that TDC will be keeping rather than adding to the contributions.

It was suggested that we ask Mr Guiver (TDC) about the interest.

If Go Homes build the community centre then there is a contingency of £50,000 that could be paid, but if they don't build it we won't get that contingency.

iv) Additional funding.

Concerns were raised that the situation is getting worse, we're not going to get the interest on the s106 contributions, we might not get the £50,000 contingency. Cllr Gladwin shared that the council has been approached by a builder who wants to build houses in the village on a small site. Instead of building affordable housing he wants to contribute a sum to the new community centre. Mr Beard asked that the council keeps an open mind as the new community centre will benefit so many people and we don't want to see it fail.

When we first went out to the National Lottery many years ago they were very positive and asked how much it would cost. We still don't have a price though. Once we've decided on a plan with the architect they may be able to put together a price, with help from a surveyor.

It was discussed whether we need a working party to go back out to potential funders. We could start making a short list. Mr Fairweather offered to look at funding and will speak to members about helping him. Mrs Brock will borrow a friend's file on funding opportunities.

It was asked what will happen to the current community centre. There are no definite plans. The council did apply for a Neighbourhood Development Order for affordable housing on the site but it looks as if we may need to withdraw it.

When we got the site valued a few years ago the cost of clearing the site reduced the sale value of it. If we do sell it then we have the issue of the timing of receiving the proceeds and paying for the build of the new community centre, which will have to happen first.

Cllr Gladwin is to add something to his next communication with the architect to ask how we can go about getting a costing.

24/041 Matters raised for the next agenda or for information only.

None raised.

24/042 Date of next committee meeting.

13th June 2024.

The meeting closed at 9.18pm.

Minuted by Mrs A Baxter

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Signature

Date