

## CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF

1st February 2016

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe

PRESENT: Cllr Dunbar Dempsey (Acting Chairman) Cllr Brass  
Cllr English Cllr Shonfeld  
Cllr Ward Cllr White

ATTENDING: District Councillor Philip Ede, A Stevens (Clerk) and forty two members of the public were also in attendance.

Cllr Dunbar Dempsey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any discussions about The Lamb but remained in the room contrary to the advice given by the Clerk. The public session was then chaired by Councillor Ward. Councillor Ward explained the Parish Council can only formally comment on any Planning Applications for The Lamb once an application has been received.

110. PUBLIC SESSION – Mrs English asked what action can be taken to ensure the Lamb Public House remains a pub. She said;

- she has heard rumours and understands that The Lamb is being sold for development.
- there is considerable passion in Ripe to keep the site as a public house and she wants to see how many people feel the same way. She appreciates the villagers have been unable to buy the pub but said it could operate successfully as a free house.
- residents need confirmation that there will be no change of use.
- she believes the brewery scuppered any chances of the pub succeeding.
- the brewery has received several offers which were close to the asking price from people wanting to keep it as a pub.
- she has written to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), the Prince of Wales and local councils and as a result, a representative from the South East Division of CAMRA pledged CAMRA's support.
- she wants to humiliate Shepherd Neame into accepting a genuine offer to run it as a pub. A Facebook page has been set up and she encouraged everyone to spread the word.

Cllr Ward read from a letter sent to Mrs English from Jonathan Neame, Chief Executive Officer from Shepherd Neame in which he said;

'I know the Lamb well. Despite investment and the best efforts of our licensees, I am as disappointed as you that the pub has not succeeded and we have decided to sell.

As necessary, with an Asset of Community Value, we allowed time for a proposal to materialise from the local community, but since no group came forward with adequate funding, the pub was put on the open market for sale.

A variety of offers have come forward and we are now close to finalising a sale. The pub is being sold on an existing use basis and I have no reason to believe it will not continue as such. If the purchaser chooses to make any future planning application - either as a pub or for change of use - then that matter will be determined by Wealden

BC and local residents will have the opportunity to make representations in the normal manner.

I have no knowledge of the intentions of the purchaser nor control over their future actions, but I, like you, would be delighted if it continued as a pub.

Whilst I appreciate that there is considerable debate within the local community about the future of the pub, it is not appropriate for me to disclose the name and details of our prospective purchaser. No doubt they will make themselves and their intentions known in due course.

I received a similar enquiry from Cllr Philip Ede and spoke to him last week to update on this status and promised to advise him when the sale takes place'.

In answer to Councillors questions, District Councillor Ede confirmed;

- the pub is listed as an asset of Community Value and as such he understands that any permitted development rights will be withdrawn. Change of use could therefore be refused.
- three or four interested parties have spoken to Wealden but Wealden has no way of knowing if any of them are the buyer mentioned in Mr Neame's letter.
- any applicant wanting to change the use of the pub would need to apply for Full Planning Permission. There is no known time limit as to how long a business has to cease trading before planning permission can be applied for.
- Wealden District Council has not had any pre-application meetings about the future of The Lamb, enquiries have been by telephone or email.
- he will ask Wealden to contact Shepherd Neame and remind them of the brewery's maintenance obligations under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act.
- if a Planning Application is received by Wealden District Council, residents must write in and put in a good business case for it to remain a pub because it may sway members.

Mr Wright who was Chairman of the Community Group who were hoping to buy the pub said the brewery received offers very early on but that £300,000 is a more realistic value if there is any chance of it succeeding as a pub. Councillor English agreed and said the building is only worth £300,000.

Councillor Ward added that the Lamb will remain in a Conservation Area under the new Conservation Area Review.

Councillor White said Shepherd Neame has a responsibility to its shareholders to accept the best price it can get and suggested the best way forward would be for residents to write to the Shareholders via the Company's Registrar. He will find out how many shareholders Shepherd Neame has and report back to the next meeting.

Twenty members of the public remained, the rest left the room. Cllr Dunbar Dempsey chaired the rest of the meeting.

Cllr Dunbar-Dempsey said that Cllrs English and White are attending a Protocol Meeting about the Old Coach House on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February. She described the planning position to date and asked if anyone had any views Councillors English and White could take to the meeting.

Residents agreed;

- they were disappointed not to be invited to the meeting despite having been told they would be.
- That six properties is too dense because it changes the scene and it is in a conservation area.
- six properties affect the street scene and has a greater impact on neighbouring properties.
- this application feels like a knee-jerk reaction to the proposals in the new Local Development Framework.

Councillors Shonfeld, Brass, White and Ward agreed that six properties is too many and that two would be more appropriate, Councillor English agreed this is a knee-jerk reaction and Councillor Dunbar Dempsey felt that only the Old Coach House itself should be developed.

Councillors also asked why the Planning Officer, Mr Robins, is encouraging developers to put more housing on this site to which District Councillor Ede said Mr Robins is encouraging sites to be used to optimum and then seeing what the Parish thinks.

Ms Bartter;

- offered to be a Community Champion and work with EE to find sites for their cabinets within Ripe. This offer was duly accepted by the Parish Council.
- thanked members for telling her that BT Infinity is available here but added that there are only a hundred slots.
- said traffic is still damaging the verges opposite Curl's Barn and asked how we can protect the verges. Councillor White reported this to ESCC via 'Fix My Street' after the last meeting but was wrongly directed to the District Council. A wall was also knocked down by a lorry but this is being dealt with through the driver's insurers.

The meeting then opened.

111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Parish Councillor Webb. Apologies for absence were also received from County Councillor Bennett.

112. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS - The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were read, approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

113. CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING – All matters arising were included elsewhere on this agenda.

114. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST: There were no disclosures of interest nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests other than those disclosed by Councillor Dunbar Dempsey in the public session.

115. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE MEETINGS – There were no reports from outside meetings on this occasion.

#### 116. PLANNING APPLICATIONS –

- i: No planning applications have been received.
- ii: Councillors looked at the reasons why the appeal for application WD2014/1429F was allowed and compared the Inspector's comments with their own. They noted that Wealden agreed with their comments but the Inspector had a different opinion and as it was just a difference in opinion there was nothing more to learn.
- iii: The Old Coach House Protocol Meeting – this was covered in the public session.

117. EE PLANS TO IMPROVE MOBILE COVERAGE – The Parish Council is aware of one offer to host a cabinet for EE. The cabinets are the same size as a four drawer cabinet. No rent is paid by the Company.

Anyone who would like to host a cabinet is asked to contact the EE's Community Champion, Sharon Bartter on [sbartter@aol.com](mailto:sbartter@aol.com).

118. CHEQUES FOR PAYMENT – The following cheques were approved for payment;

Wealden DC – Election Expenses - £327.77  
A Stevens - Salary

Cheque number 100923  
Cheque number 100924

#### 119. QUESTIONS FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS –

Councillor White asked for an update on the Parish Council's request to place Tree Preservation Orders on the Millenium Trees. Councillor Ward will chase Wealden for an update. Councillor Dunbar Dempsey said the trees also need cutting back so she will take this up with the landowner.

There being no further questions from Parish Councillors, the meeting closed at 9.05pm.