

DOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2017 **IN DOLTON VILLAGE HALL**

PUBLIC SESSION :

The Public Session began with Cllr Martindale reading a statement which gave an update of the issues affecting Acorn Farm. The statement was as follows:

Acorn Lodges: Statement from Dolton Parish Council

1. Dolton Parish Council (DPC) have no statutory or enforcement powers with regard to the Acorn Lodge site, our role is to represent the views of the community and we have ensured from the start that Torridge District Council were aware of this development and of our concerns.

2. Torridge District Council (TDC), with their licensing and planning sections, hold the statutory, licensing and enforcement powers with regard to the Acorn Lodges development. The laws and regulations regarding Caravan/Lodges sites are complex and convoluted and seem to involve both the Planning process and the the Regulatory and Licensing process. Whilst the TDC Planning Enforcement Officer has been visiting this site from the early stages, it has been as this development progressed that DPC became concerned that there seems to be a gap in the TDC oversight of this development, including such issues as site layout, screening, traffic, noise, disturbance, anti-social working hours etc.

3. The ward councillor arranged a meeting with TDC and along with three members of DPC, visited TDC on 24/10/2017 and presented the full range of our concerns over this development. The TDC solicitor has consider these points and delivered a reply. In essence, whilst complex, the planning, regulatory and licensing matters with regard to this development are all considered to be within requirements. Whilst we are not content with all these responses, they indicate that there is no support for us from TDC and that being realistic it is debatable whether there is any practical purpose in pursuing any legal or regulatory challenges to this development which is now here to stay.

It would seem that Dolton is not the only community in the UK which, having an existing campsite, has found itself 'stitched up' and 'clobbered' in this way. There seems to be a fault with the laws and regulations that allow this sort of lodges development to go ahead in this way; a letter has been sent to our local MP on this matter.

4. On 30/10/2017 the same 3 members of DPC and the ward councillor met with the 3 Directors of Royale Group in a visit arranged by the ward councillor. This was a positive step and gave some insight into the rather puzzling business background as to why we are where we are and what happens next.

They confirmed that the Dolton site is set up as a separate Limited Company with its own financial charges and so it stands or falls on its own merits.

The development work is nearly completed and they expressed apologies for all the disturbance and indicated a strong commitment to work with the local community in the future.

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They also explained that the main business model for their group was to develop and run residential lodges site for the over 50's and they expressed a strong desire to widen the scope of the Dolton development to include residential units for the over 50's. Whilst they could probably relatively easily obtain planning permission for such a change, what they are seeking is community support for developing the site in this way.

5. Whilst it is easy to list all the problems, grievances, annoyances and objections to this development, nonetheless this site has now been developed and is here to stay and we need to consider what we can actually do now and what is the least worst option?
Some possible future actions are listed below:

6. We need to pursue the issue of screening, fencing and security, whilst it is worth double checking with TDC that they cannot impose any requirements, the most likely chance of success in this area might be by engaging with the developers and making this an issue in any negotiations with them.

7. It seems that come what may this site will, at the least, be going ahead as a holiday lodge site. Further to this, consideration needs to be given to the suggestion from the site owners of extending the use of the site to residential lodges for the over 50's. There are significant pros and cons to this possibility. Such an approach would fit with the main business model for this firm and they would give strong corporate support to make the site work on this basis. This may be an area where some professional advice may be helpful to ensure we are aware of all the significant aspects before any opinion is expressed.

8. Now we have contact details for the site owners and operators DPC needs to actively ensure that they follow up on the firms stated commitment to the community. We should seek to ensure that the firm liaises directly with the school to minimise disruption and ensure the safety of children entering and leaving the school.

9. The firm stated that they would be making good the approach road to the site past the Royal Oak, DPC need to contact Devon Highways to check who has ownership and responsibility for which parts of this access road with a view to ensuring that the whole access to this site through the square is made good.

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A lively discussion ensued where opinions were aired. These included:

- That it is now a fait accompli so the only thing that we can do is fight residential use
- Holiday use permission would preclude retirement homes
- A new planning application would be needed for residential use.
- If residential use was granted the community would benefit from the charges which would be levied, but the company would then have an asset to sell. Therefore the community should do everything to fight residential use. If residential use was granted the lodges could be sold to anyone. A 'crash sale' was feared.
- If residential permission was granted, the lodges would not count towards the Dolton quota.
- TDC can only refuse an application on planning grounds and they might accept residential use unless the community really fights it.

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- No-one here is an expert and we do not know the wider implications of whether holiday use is better or worse than residential use. We need to find out more from professionals.
- The TDC advisor does specialise in planning law.
- A West Lane resident said that he would be seeking reimbursement from the company if he had to buy screening himself.
- The screening might be carried out by the company next spring because it would be in their interests to have an attractive site.
- Levels have changed but TDC contend that they are within acceptable limits. If this is contested the village would need to engage legal help.
- The feeling in the room was that if legal help was sought this would be supported by the community.
- Our MP Geoffrey Cox should be involved and disappointment was expressed that he was not present at the meeting.
- The subject of publicity was discussed using the media to raise the profile.
- The whole community should pull together and get independent legal advice, fundraising to provide the funds for this. A residents group could be formed. It would be important to support the work that the Parish Council is carrying out on the community's behalf, not allowing a rift to occur.
- It appears that there are discrepancies, but licensing is the next step. In order to challenge the licence we need help.

The main meeting commenced at the end of the public session. Over 75% of the public left at this point.

PRESENT:

Cllr J Lock – Chairman; Cllrs Dunn, Giles, Grigg, Haynes, Martindale, Rendell and Walker.

Clerk L Morris.

54 members of the public.

Also in attendance Ward Cllr R Lock; C Cllr A Saywell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Members were invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting:

Cllr J Lock: matters relating to Dolton and Dowland Village Hall

Cllr C Grigg: matters relating to the Rams Head Inn

Cllr S Martindale: personal interest arising from a shared boundary with the Acorn Farm Lodges' site.

76 (17/18) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr J Rolls had sent apologies for absence.

77 (17/18) MINUTES:

- a) The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 2nd October 2017 had been circulated, agreed by all to be correct and were then signed as a true record.
- b) The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd October 2017 were reviewed, agreed by all to be correct and were then signed as a true record.

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78 (17/18) CLERK'S REPORT:

There were no matters not otherwise on the agenda.

79 (17/18) CORRESPONDENCE:

The list of correspondence received was reviewed. There were no matters not otherwise on the agenda.

Ref	Date	Correspondent	Content	Action
8/1	17/10	ROSPA	Play eqpt courses	Reading file
8/2	23/10	Devon Highways	Parish & Town Conferences	Reading file/email
8/3	23/10	D&T Wonnacott	Street Lighting	Reading file/email
8/4	30/10	Zurich Ins	LCAS	Reading file/email
8/5	1/11	R Fish	Water run off Beacon Road	Reading file
8/6	1/11	K Evely	Assistance with studies request	Reading file
8/7	2/11	D&S Fire & Rescue	Risk Management Consultation	Reading file
8/8	6/11	Transport Team	Conference Dates	Reading file/email
8/9	11	Recycle Devon	Awards	Reading file/email
8/10	11	Clerks & Councils	Magazine	Reading file
8/11	11	Healthwatch Voices	Magazine	Reading file

80 (17/18) TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) The proposed payments were scrutinised and approved for payment.

PAYMENTS					
Name	Item	Net	VAT	Total	Cheque Number
Dolton and Dowland Village Hall	Oct room hire	8.00		8.00	001002
Mr D Lock	Oct grass cutting	242.41		242.41	001003
Mr M Lock	Oct Caretaker/hedge	132.00		132.00	001004
DALC	Precept course	30.00		30.00	001005
L Morris	Home Office	10.00		10.00	001006
L Morris	Reimbursement ink	73.10	14.42	87.52	001007
		495.51	14.42	509.93	

Payments agreed: Cllr A Haynes

Proposed: Cllr Grigg, Seconded: Cllr Giles

Cheque Signatures: Cllr Dunn, Cllr Walker

b) The invoice payments were reported: no further payments due

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c) Statement of Accounts. The Clerk presented the statement of accounts with bank reconciliation.

Balance at bank 05/10/17 (September accounts)	£		
Current Ac sheet 164	48,729.68		
Reserve Ac sheet 59	7,148.45		
95 Day Ac sheet 43	41,425.46		
Less un-presented cqs at 5/9/17	704.78		
		993	8.00
		995	51.78
		996	16.59
		997	240.00
		998	16.00
		999	120.00
		1000	10.00
		1001	242.41
			704.78
Plus un-cleared credits at 5/9/17	0		
Total Balance at bank at 5/9/17	96,598.81		
Cash Book			
Opening Balance from accounts at 30/9/17	63,336.47		
Less payments in year to 30/9/17	13,141.35		
Plus receipts in year to 30/9/17	46,403.69		
Closing balance per cash book at 30/9/17	96,598.81		
Variance	0.00		
Funds at 30/9/17			
General account	39,176.04		
Community Car Park	57,422.77		
Air Ambulance Landing Site	0.00		
Total funds at 30/9/17	96,598.81		

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d) Any other financial matters

- i) Community Grants 2017. It was agreed to publicise the 2017 Community Grant on the website, on the Parish Council noticeboard and in the Diary. The deadline for applications would be 1 December for decisions at the December meeting.
- ii) Precept Planning. A working group comprising Cllrs Haynes and Giles with the Clerk to prepare a draft budget for the December meeting
- iii) Online banking. The clerk reported that online banking was not possible at this time because the bank was unable to correspond with a non-signatory, and the Clerk cannot be a signatory. Clerk would continue to explore options but in the meantime set up Direct Debits for the Utility invoices to avoid late payment charges.

81 (17/18) TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS

- a) Applications to consider:- 1/0955/2017/FUL (update) South Woodtown. Cllrs had considered this and had no objections.
1/0988/2017/LBC The Cranny, 1 Chapel Street, Cllrs had no objections
1/1106/2017/OUT Rams Head, South Street. Cllrs had no objections
1/1107/2017/LBC Rams Head, South Street. Cllrs had no objections
- b) Applications granted: 1/0846/2015/OUT. Land at Fishleigh Park, Aller Road. Ward Cllr Lock agreed to check the situation in respect of Section 106 funds.

c) Applications refused – none

d) Any other planning matters - Acorn Farm Lodges. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Martindale for presenting the position to the community. It was thought that the licence application was imminent. A licence would be needed before the lodges could be used.

Agreed Actions

- Clerk to post a copy of the Statement by Cllr Martindale at the start of the meeting on the website.
- Ward Cllr Lock offered to try to fix a meeting between Cllrs and the Licensing Officer.
- The Clerk to contact DALC for advice on caravan sites.
- The Clerk to write to Royale Homes confirming that the Parish Council will liaise about times/dates, facilitating the least disruption to the school. Also to request discussions regarding screening, particularly the north and south boundaries.
- The Clerk to write to Devon Highways (copying in C.Cllr Saywell) asking what needs to be in place for Royale Homes to make good the affected roads and establish the boundary between the highways and the site.
- There has been conflicting and confusing information given to the Parish Council from TDC. Cllrs need to consider whether independent advice is necessary in respect of the legal position, licensing and the pros and cons of holiday use versus residential use.

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82 (17/18) PARISH GROUNDS. Matters Relating to:

- a) Village Hall Field : Car Park. Cllr Haynes explained that the Parish Council needs to submit its lighting intentions to TDC. Two companies have advised and quoted for the work. Both quotes were very high. Following discussions with a local contractor it was suggested that 4 LED lights would be erected, shining from the Village Hall to provide cost effective, efficient lighting which registers 2 lux at the end of the car park. It was agreed that Cllr Haynes would submit the plan to TDC.
- b) Football field. Nothing to report.
- c) Dennis Cross Nothing to report
- d) Memorial Garden. The gardens and the surrounds had now been listed.
Arrangements for the Remembrance Service were agreed.

83 (17/18) Maintenance and Traffic Issues.

- a) Flowers – half barrels. Clerk would write to Andrew Caverly confirming the arrangements for the half barrels for one year (following years' costs will be dependent on funding and sponsorship). Clerk to write to those who had expressed an interest in sponsoring a barrel to confirm.
- b) Snow Warden. Mr Paul Middleton had expressed his intention to step down from this. Thanks expressed to Mr Middleton. James Kendrew offered to take on this role and the Parish Council accepted, with thanks.
- c) Drainage/gullies at Halfpennyland. Concerns had been expressed about the water on the road at Halfpennyland. The concern will be passed to Cllr Saywell who agreed to raise with Highways.

84 (17/18) TAP Fund – Update

£846 had been received and would be passed to the Carnival Committee as part payment for the no parking cones and road signs. Thanks also to elected representatives for their donations.

85 (17/18) Village Lighting

A resident had raised the issue of lighting at the Rectory Road/Brook Road corner. This might be due to overhanging trees or there may be a need for an additional light. Cllrs agreed to consider what actions might be taken.

86 (17/18) Verbal reports from meetings attended.

Cllrs Lock, Haynes and Martindale had met with TDC and Royale Homes. The Clerk had attended a Precepts training course.

87 (17/18) Items Brought Forward by the Chair for information only.

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

The Date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 4th December 2017.

Signed Date