

MINUTES of a meeting of Wellington Heath Parish Council held on  
Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at 7.30pm in The Memorial Hall, Wellington Heath

Present – Cllrs. R, Hurley (RH – in the Chair) P.Adams (PA) M. Low (ML) J. Jones (JJ) V. Leeds (VL and W. Hill (WH).

Also attending – The Clerk and six members of the public.

Apology – An apology for inability to attend the meeting had been received and was approved from Cllr. Carl Attwood.

Minutes – The Minutes of the meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda – none declared.

**Public Question time** – attending the meeting were Mr. & Mrs. G. Jones, Mr. & Mrs. A Leigh, Mrs. R. Adams and Mrs. S. Eversham. Mr. G. Jones advised they were unhappy about how the Parish Council had gone about acquiring The Farmers Arms and was of the opinion that the opportunity to vote should have gone to every house in the Parish, and more particularly, he was unhappy about the effect on individual Council Tax bills whilst the pub remained empty both for themselves and other senior members of the public.

A lengthy question/answer session took place and the Chairman went to great lengths to advise the members of the public how the Parish Council had looked into the question of funding the possible purchase of the pub following a meeting with the public held in February 2013 when there appeared to be very clear support about the proposal. Following on from that, an independent Group were formed to investigate, in the first instance, whether the Council could even consider acquiring the pub at all due to the fact that the Parish Council lacked "Quality Council" status. Once ascertained that this was possible, all avenues including how to fund the purchase were looked into as no grants were available and numerous other funding opportunities were investigated with the only real option being a Loan from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB).

The Chairman further explained the position regarding the appointment of a Tenant in the event of the Council obtaining the pub, who would then be free of any tie to a Brewery Co. thus assisting with making the venture more profitable, but it was agreed that the pub would require more than just local support and whilst it was appreciated that there was a certain element of "risk" attached to the project, given the overall support indicated by many people in the Parish at meetings which had taken place, the Council felt that they should pursue the proposed Loan putting them in a position to bid for the property should the opportunity occur.

The Chairman finally offered to have a meeting with Mr. Jones to go through the Business Plan with him if he so wished after which five members of the public left the meeting.

**Progress Report** –

- 1) The Farmers Arms – The Chairman advised that he had that day delivered to HALC the application for funding and had gone through the Business Plan with the Chief Executive of HALC Lynda Wilcox. Lynda Wilcox had advised him that due to a proposed change to the amount to be borrowed and the type of loan, under the Rules of the PWLB it would be necessary for the Parish Council to pass a resolution to this effect.

RESOLVED – It was proposed by PA that following information which has come to our knowledge it is felt that a Loan of £300,000 would not be sustainable and that the borrowing should be reduced to £275,000 with an Annuity Loan rather than an interest only loan for the acquisition and refurbishment of The Farmers Arms. This was seconded by VL and carried.

Copies of e-mails and letters were handed to all Councillors and how to reply to these was discussed. The Chairman said that now the papers had been lodged, the Group would meet and discuss how to proceed, when to make a bid, how much etc. and once these had been finalised an Extra Ordinary meeting would be held in August to finalise the arrangements.

- 2) Pool Piece – The presentation at the meeting had been a success and thanks were recorded to David Darwood for his hard work and the actual presentation. Some Quotations had been received, varying in price and it was hoped a decision could be finalised and reported at the Parish Council meeting in September.
- 3) Cluster Group – PA advised nothing to report.
- 4) Welsh Water Work Progress – Whilst the work was affecting everyone in the Village it was generally felt that this was going well, the area being kept tidy and access to properties being affected as little as possible. WH advised that there had been no success in obtaining a smaller bus during the work in progress, but it was confirmed that the bus is managing to turn around half way down The Common.
- 5) Parish Plan – The Chairman asked ML and VL to see if they could locate the twelve missing Questionnaires to enable ML to complete the downloading and it was hoped to hold a meeting in September.

**Item for consideration –**

Footpaths – meeting arranged for 1<sup>st</sup> August to see how the budget of £500 could be spent this year. The Chairman asked members to report any items they felt needed attention at the next Parish Council meeting in September.

Financial – The Clerk advised that the following Accounts had been received for payment –

- HMRC – PAYE £56.00.
- Ledbury Fencing at Pool Piece £50.00.
- M. Smith, report on Farmers Arms £250.00.
- Viking Direct, ink jets £56.95.
- Lengthsman various duties £38.00.
- Clerk 4 months expenses/allowances £103.27.

RESOLVED – On a proposal by WH seconded by JJ and carried the above Accounts were approved for payment and cheques signed accordingly.

Correspondence – Numerous letters and e-mails regarding the Parish Council proposal to bid at the auction for The Farmers Arms which were copied for each Councillor.

Literature – Clerks & Councils Direct magazine and letter from Bill Wiggin MP asking Parish Council and the media of North Herefordshire to encourage everybody to do what they can to mark next year's special anniversary of the First World War , funding for which was available if appropriate.

Councillor Reports – WH wished to have a discussion about the benefits of HALC at the next meeting and PA announced that he proposed to retire from the Parish Council at the end of November 2013.

Items for next Agenda to include Farmers Arms, Pool Piece, P3 expenditure, Cluster Group and the usual updates.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at approx 9.20.

Signed..... R. Hurley ..... Dated..... 30/09/13 .....  
 Chairman.