

Draft

WEMBDON PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF AN EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF WEMBDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2011

Present:

Chairman – Cllr Mike Solomon, Cllr Riddle, Cllr, T Thayer, Cllr S Burge, Cllr J Jackson, Cllr T Thake, Cllr N Harrison & Cllr T Brown

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Parish Councillors, Cllr Ann Bown, Cllr M Lerry & 85 members of the public to the meeting. The Chairman also welcomed Peter Reed, Chairman of The Wembdon Village Hall and Playing Fields Trust (WVHPFT). The Chairman informed all present that the purpose of the extra ordinary meeting was for the Parish Council to receive a presentation from the WVHPFT regarding their proposals for the Green Wedge. Members of the public would be able to ask questions regarding the proposals but it was requested that parishioners waited until the end of the presentation before asking them.

2) Apologies for Absence

These were received in respect of the Cllr D Bingham, County Cllr John Edney and District Cllr Ian Dyer.

3) Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda

No declarations were received from the Cllr's.

4) Presentation from the WVHPFT

Peter Reed thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to explain the current proposals for the Green Wedge.

A detailed explanation of the history of the project was provided by the Chairman of the WVHPFT & he explained that the Trust had superseded the Wembdon Recreational Development Group, which had, until August 2011, undertaken all the research, planning & feasibility studies on the proposals. There were currently 4 trustees. Eventually there would be a management committee elected by users of the facilities.

Meetings took place sporadically. These were not open to the public but the trustees were planning on holding a parish meeting.

The meeting was provided with a PowerPoint presentation outlining the current proposals, the land, which the WVHPFT hoped to develop & the progress to date in securing funding for the project.

Peter Reed explained that the land in question was currently owned by S Notaro Ltd. They were prepared to gift the land to the trust but only if they received planning permission to build 13 houses on the green adjacent to the Churchfields estate, known locally as the LEAP.

No agreement had been signed & to date Notaro's had stated they wouldn't be prepared to sign one until they had secured planning permission for the houses.

The trust had secured funding of £1,000,000 from Viridor & they were confident of securing about another £300,000. This additional was, however, dependent on both Wembdon Junior Football Club & Wembdon Cricket club being major users. Separately the trust had raised £1,200 from local events. Unfortunately there was a cash flow issue because before Viridor would release their funding the trust needed £100,000 from them. It was possible to pay this in instalments although the first payment required was £50,000.

The Chairman of the Parish Council invited questions from Councillors & the public. On behalf of Cllr Ian Dyer & herself Cllr Ann Bown read a written statement. Both District Councillors wished to make it clear that they were not totally against the scheme. They did, however, consider that the project was too large for a village the size of Wembdon & they also had serious concerns about how the proposals had caused a serious division within the village.

In response to questions asked it was noted that about 35% of the members of the football club were from Wembdon. No figures were available for the cricket club.

The number of football pitches in the proposals took account of the fact that the football club had 16 teams all of which played on small size pitches. The pitches for the 6-10 year olds can be accommodated within the pitches for the older children. The goalposts would be removed after each match. Pitches would be rested & regularly moved to minimise damage to the grass. Football matches would only take place at weekends. It was confirmed that the whole area of the Green Wedge would be open to the public at all times except the actual sports pitches when matches were being played.

It was confirmed that planning application for the Green Wedge would be submitted at the same time as the one for the houses. Concern was raised about the possibility of the houses being built but not the Green Wedge development.

It was confirmed that the village hall would be two-storey high, not unlike other village halls within Somerset, & that the building wouldn't be practical if it wasn't.

The feasibility study had indicated that the hall & the sports pitches could be run without the need for support from the parish precept.

It was noted that the planned access to the Green Wedge was off Homberg Way across land owned by another developer. This raised concern that they then may take the opportunity to develop their land as well.

Any noise bunds protecting Greenacre removed during the construction of the access road would be reinstated.

The Chairman of the Trust confirmed that the cricket club would run the bar at the village hall as they couldn't exist without that income.

Some residents highlighted the risk of vandalism to the facilities. Others were worried about late night noise etc.

In response to another question Peter Reed stated that there were no conditions with the Viridor funding. This view was challenged.

Concerns were expressed that the plans included land not owned by Notaro's & that no discussions had taken place with the owners of that land.

A number of residents made it clear that they wanted the playing field to remain untouched & did not want to see the hedge removed.

District Cllr Lerry was concerned about the loss of the green land by the Churchfields estate & wanted to know if those resident would be able to gain access from the western end of the Green Wedge. Additionally would this access be available during the building of the houses. It was confirmed that there would be a western access point but it could not be said when this access would be available.

The Chairman of the Parish Council was asked whether he or any 2 Parish Councillors were prepared to call a parish meeting with a view to a parish poll being held on the issue of the Green Wedge. The Chairman responded stating that it was not a decision he would take that night as he would wish to consult all of the Parish Councillors first.

The Chairman then formally closed the meeting