



HADLEY AND LEEGOMERY PARISH COUNCIL

Hadley Community Centre, High Street, Hadley, Telford, TF1 5NL.
Telephone/Fax: 01952 245501

Email: Clerk@hadleyandleegomery-pc.org.uk

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council held on the 23rd July 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor Eileen Callear (Chair)
Councillor Amrik Jhawar
Councillor Phil Millward
Councillor Carol Hughes
Councillor Jasmine Bennett

Councillor Andrew Benion
Councillor Jared Callear
Councillor Jordan Keeble
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Shaukat Ali
Councillor John Snell

IN ATTENDANCE

Clerk Jane Lees
Deputy Clerk Rebecca Cowie
seventeen members of the public
Two Police Officers

WELCOME

C24/073 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. U. Ahmed

Cllr. P. Millward proposed, Cllr. C. Hughes seconded, all in favour to note the apologies.

C2/074 PUBLIC SESSION

One member of the public asked if the revenue from the sale of the Lodge will be spent on capital or non-capital expenditure? The Clerk replied that she would respond to him fully in writing.

A member of the public spoke about the speeding in Hadley Park Road, the noise is unbearable. Cllr. E. Callear replied she has spoken with Telford and Wrekin Council Highways department and there should be three raised pedestrian crossings installed this summer, however prices have skyrocketed for this kind of work, and it costs £40,000 now to have one built. The first will be installed by the Gurdwara and two others proposed if budgets allow.



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A member of the public noted the sale of the Lodge was discussed in private, can the Council confirm any further sale of assets will be discussed in public? Cllr. E. Callear stated that the Council are not intending to sell further assets at this time, however consulting is not always possible. Councils make decisions and whenever possible will consult, however Councillors are elected to make decisions and that is how all Councils work.

A member of the public asked why the revenue from the sale of the Lodge has not been included in this year's budget, and what is this money going to be used for?

The Clerk responded that the Budget can only be drawn up with existing funds, it would be irresponsible to draw up a budget with funding we do not have, and it may take some time to sell the Lodge, therefore that money is not yet available for spending. Cllr. E. Callear replied there are projects in all Wards that the Council would like to complete, and the Castle Farm Community Centre needs a lot of work done to improve and maintain it. The Council are applying for Grants for much of this.

A member of the public asked why didn't the Council consult on the sale of the Lodge. Cllr. E. Callear replied that the discussion on the Lodge was connected to an employment issue which is confidential. The Cemetery Manager role is no longer in place, which means the Council can make a considerable saving. If this matter comes to Council again in public session, consultation still may not be possible.

C24/075 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None

C24/076 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Cllr. A. Jhawar proposed, Cllr. D. Brown seconded, all in favour to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd of July 2024.

C24/077 PARISH POLL

Cllr A. Jhawar noted that the mandate was given at the election for councillors to make decisions, although they will consult if appropriate and legal to do so. Cllr A. Jhawar takes Ward walks every day to make sure the Parish is tidy and safe. Cllr. J. Snell offered to take concerned residents around the Cemetery to discuss any issues.

Cllr. A. Benion said the Poll was a very emotive issue, and it has cost the Parish a lot of money to hold it. Cllr. Benion thanked the Chair for the explanation given tonight for the reasons for not consulting. Cllr. Benion stated that in future if no consultation is offered, the Council must give residents the reason why. Cllr. E. Callear replied that the Council had explained the reasons on multiple occasions, for instance there were two Press releases published regarding this issue.



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Cllr. C. Hughes reported she had been a Councillor for many years and Councillors do care and are looking for the best way to serve residents. Cllr. C. Hughes asked residents to be positive and understand that Councillors are doing their best. If the Lodge is sitting empty we have to sell and the money will be used for the good of the whole Parish.

Cllr. P. Millward stated that the sale of the Lodge was discussed in private as it was connected to an employment matter, therefore could not be legally discussed in public. The Lodge has cost the Parish £127,715 over the last twenty years. As it is no longer needed and is empty the Council had to decide what to do with it. Renting out the property would take many years to recoup the money spent, he feels the Councillors acted with integrity, and is confident the correct decision has been made.

Cllr. J. Keeble stated that if a consultation is to be held then all information must be made public to enable residents to have the full picture before deciding on their vote. If the Council cannot share some information with the public, then it is not a true consultation. The Councillors were aware of all the facts before making the decision.

Cllr. E. Callear stated that although she has only been Chair of the Council since May, she has been the victim of personal attacks on social media. It is not acceptable to make personal attacks on individuals, all decisions in Councils are made as a collective. Social media has endeavoured to make a conspiracy surrounding the decision to sell the Lodge, citing the changing of the Financial Regulations the year before. However, when this change was made, Cllr Callear stated, ten of the Councillors who made the decision to sell had not been elected.

Cllr. E. Callear noted that even though the wording of the Financial Regulations had been changed, the need to consult with the public had not. Councils have to consult on Planning and open spaces, but in other issues a decision to consult has to be made. When consulting, you have to decide what do you want from the consultation, can you afford the consultation, and would the consultation change the outcome? Cllr. E. Callear stated In this case it would have been no.

Cllr. E. Callear said that although she was not Chair when the decision was made in private session, the previous Chair was correct to do so.

Cllr. E. Callear read out the guidelines on consultation from the Local Government Association:

Councils do not need to consult if:

- a decision is subject to strict direction from Government***
- a decision on the matter has already been made and nothing would be gained from further work***
- there are more efficient ways of gathering the data you need***
- you already know the answer (and consultee' comments will not add to the process)***



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the council's room for manoeuvre is so limited (for example by statutory or budgetary restrictions) that any consultation would be meaningless.

Cllr. E. Callear stated that the wording voted on at the meeting to hold a Parish Poll was different to the wording at the Poll. The wording at the meeting was:

Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council have removed the requirements to consult with residents. Should the Council consult with residents for sale of assets in future?

The Poll question was:

Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council have removed the requirement to consult with residents on the sale of assets from their Financial Regulations. Should the council consult with residents on the sale of Hadley Cemetery Lodge and on the sale of other assets such as the community centre in future?"

Cllr. E. Callear noted the wording of "should" not "must" consult.

Cllr. E. Callear said that in the future, if it is legal and useful to consult then the Parish Council will consult.

Cllr. D. Brown stated that the Parish Council came to the correct decision to sell.

THE PARISH COUNCIL NOTE THE RESULT OF THE PARISH POLL.

C24/078 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT AGENDA

C24/079 DATES FOR NEXT MEETINGS

Full Council meeting Tuesday 3rd September at 7pm.

Events Committee Tuesday 17th September at 6pm

Finance and G. P. Committee Tuesday 17th September at 7 p.m.

Personnel Committee To be arranged.

C24/080 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cllr. D. Brown proposed, Cllr. C. Hughes seconded, all in favour to exclude the Press and public.

C24/81 VEXATIOUS RESIDENT

This matter was discussed and noted.

Chair closed the meeting at 8.20pm



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Signature of Chair.....



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