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COLD ASHBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Wednesday 6th April 2022

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 6th April at 7.30 p.m. in the Sports Pavilion

Present: Councillors; Bailey (chairman), Peel, Roper, Taylor, Williams Rd, Williams RI; the clerk; Mrs C Ware (representing UC Harris); 11 residents.

Interests: Members' attention is drawn to the need to disclose pecuniary interests not already registered before any relevant agenda item.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr. Harpham – work related. Apologies accepted
2. **Minutes:** minutes of the meeting of the Council on the 02 March, 2022 were approved
3. **Matters arising:** the chairman reported that the illegal scrambling activity had been added to the police watch list following his intervention. Residents could report noise pollution to Environmental Department at WNC (Daventry).
4. **Open forum:** there was an extended open forum session devoted largely to the question of the status of the public house and the need for enforcement of the current planning status. A summary of the points made (some more than once) is set out below. There was an attempt to hold a three-minute silence in respect of the war in Ukraine which the chairman ruled out of order and reminded the meeting that respect had been shown, recorded and widely publicised at a previous meeting. The resident in question continued to stand in silence, was dealt with politely and eventually desisted.

The following is a summary of the points made in respect of the Black Horse. It should be noted that these points are opinions expressed by residents and they were not accepted by the pub owner, who was also present. He objected particularly to the suggestion that the attempt to provide a safe space for refugees was insincere.

- A group of villagers felt strongly enough to organise a successful campaign to designate the pub as an 'asset of community value.'
- There is a widespread belief that the current owner does not intend to open the premises as a pub at any future point.
- Camra advice is clear that the pub is currently in breach of regulations and that enforcement action must be taken.
- Residential occupation of the pub must be ancillary to its main use, not its sole or primary purpose.
- It is irrelevant to the point above that the residential use is confined to certain areas of the building.
- The intention to house refugees is a device to prevent the pub being re-opened.
- The village lacks the amenities to make it a suitable destination for refugees, who would be isolated in the village without shops or transport etc.
- There has been an increase in visits to the village from the police as a result of disturbances. (The origin of the disturbances was not specified).
- Some female residents have recently felt unsafe in the street after dark. (The reason for the fear was not specified).

- The issue and the way it has been used has divided a once united community and this is reflected in the local 'Facebook' group.
- The refugee issue is an (origin unspecified) attempt to exploit the sympathy of local people.
- CCTV is believed to be in operation at the pub and is capturing images of local residents in the street. The PC was asked to clarify the position on private use of CCTV. (NB The PC has circulated a document from the ICO which deals with this issue. The PC is not authorised to issue advice on the legal position of issues such as this.)
- For all the above reason the Parish Council was urged to press the planning authority to pursue the enforcement of use of the Black Horse primarily as a public house.

Following the discussion, the resident who had earlier asked for 3 minutes silence described unspecified people as 'bigots and snakes who should be removed from this place'. Since only councillors can be removed it was suggested (and not denied) that the insult was directed at them. The chairman asked that the comments be minuted verbatim.

Christine Ware representing Councillor Harris gave the meeting information (now delivered to every household) on the 'Shopper Hopper' bus service and urged its use. She spoke about the possibility of making personal pledges on sustainability on the WNC website.

5. **Accounts:** Members **approved** the attached accounts and **authorized** the payments contained in them. The accounts for March containing the final figures for March and therefore 2021-22 were approved for use formally at the annual meeting in May.

It was resolved: to approve the end of year accounts for use in audit papers 2020-21.

6. **Annual return to external auditor:**

It was resolved: to complete the **statement of governance 2021-22** in the manner presented to the meeting and to authorise signature by chairman and clerk.

It was resolved that the figures for 2021-22 in the section 2 **statement of accounts** and certified by the clerk represent an accurate statement of the Council's end of year financial position in 2021-2022 and are approved for use in the new audit system **and can be signed as such by the chairman.**

It was resolved: to agree signature by the chairman of the certificate of audit exemption for 2021-2.

7. **Complaints procedure.** Following the March meeting, the Clerk received an email from a resident concerning the conduct of the council. The clerk investigated the email as a complaint and found it to be without substance. The complainant has been informed of the decision.

The Council's complaints procedure is now almost 10 years old and it would be sensible to review it at the AGM. The Council **endorsed** the actions of the clerk (including the closure of the complaint) and agreed the May review.

8. **Black Horse Public House.** Residents have continued to express concern (in emails to the chairman and others) about developments at the Black Horse public house and their belief that planning regulations are being ignored or deliberately evaded. These

concerns surfaced again strongly in the open forum (see above). Councillors made the following points, amongst others:

- The pub is a pub and not a community venue. It has a PH licence.
- If it is not to be used as a pub, there must be an immediate application for change of use.
- A third community venue is not needed.
- The pub is advertising itself locally and more widely as a 'community venue'.

It was resolved: The council is aware of substantial concerns many residents have expressed about the future of the Black Horse as a public house and the potential loss of an important facility in the village. In response, the council has asked the clerk to urge the appropriate authority to undertake enforcement action to make possible the restoration of the Black Horse to use as a public house.

9. Code of Conduct Training: NCALC is offering a training course for Councillors on 'The Code of Conduct in Practice' on 28th June at 7-9 p.m. by zoom. Councillors expressed a wish to attend.

10. Verbal reports from other bodies: Councillor Rd Williams undertook to attend the next J18 meeting on 15 June if available. RS asked if she could attend the Friday MP meeting on traffic issues. **Agreed.** In preparation for the next traffic meeting with the MP and others it would be useful to collect traffic accident statistics. This would be pursued.

11. Post: leaflet on new waste collection services from WNC



Graham Jones 8.4.2022