



No 19 High Street Development Committee

Minutes of a Committee meeting held on
Friday 9th October 2020 at 19.00hrs. Meeting held with remote attendance

Present:

Chair: M Rowe.

Committee Membership: Councillors: J Buczkowski, J Johns, J Lockhead¹, K Haslett, L Knight¹, and M Smith.

In Attendance:

Town Councillor: Cllr E Andrews

District & County Councillor: Cllr J Berry

Officers: Joy Norris (Town Clerk)

3 Members of the public attended the meeting.

2 member of the press attended the meeting

Note: The Deputy Mayor took the Chair and presided over the election of the Committee Chair

HSDC 1. Election of Chair

This being the first meeting of the Committee, the election of a Chair was held

RESOLVED that Councillor Rowe be elected as the Committee Chair

Cllr Rowe took the Chair

HSDC 2. Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

HSDC 3. Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Knight and Lockhead.

HSDC 4. Declarations of Interests

No Declarations of interest were made regarding items on the Agenda at this point in the meeting.

HSDC 5. Public Participation

This agenda item allows members of the public present at the meeting to raise matters which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

¹Amended in accordance with Minute HSDC 12 (meeting 21 June 2021)

Speaker 1

The Speaker said thank you for keeping the public informed of meetings and that he would be willing to help the Committee if they feel he can be of any assistance. The speaker continued that whilst the site should not be bought at any price, whilst the interest rates are low the site could be purchased and kept as a wild garden until a decision was made on how it should be used in the future.

Speaker 2

1. The Speaker had thought the Committee was going to be a Working Group and was going to suggest that a prominent member of the public be asked to sit on the Committee so that they could give advice from a different perspective rather than just Councillors.
2. This is an important issue for the town, can this topic of the site be open to the public for a full debate – chaired by an independent person. The public needs to be involved from day 1 and everything needs to be open and transparent with proper written reports
3. Recently a complaint was going to be made about non-declarations of interest does that stand for this meeting?

The Chair asked the Town Clerk to respond and the following information was provided:

1. 19 High Street was originally being dealt with by a Working Group and then Council made the decision to change it to a full Committee so that it was open and members of the public can attend and agendas and papers are published.
2. Members of the public can sit on Town Council Committees however, they don't necessarily have voting rights, particularly if there are financial decisions to be made. This Committee does not have any delegated authorities – it makes recommendations to the Council.
3. It is up to the Committee if it wishes to make a recommendation to Council regarding having a public meeting chaired by an independent person.
4. The matter of Declarations of Interest being referred to the Monitoring Officer was raised at full Council and it would not be appropriate to comment further.

Speaker 3

1. The agenda says the meeting may go into part 2 (exclude the press and public) if finances are to be discussed; the finances have been in the public domain over the last six months so the meeting should not go into Part 2 as everyone already knows the price
2. Cllr Smith really should be declaring a pecuniary interest, he is part of the town team, part of the Council and part of this project.

19:22hrs

Cllr Johns said that being on the Town Team does not give one a pecuniary interest in the project and subsequently declared a personal interest as a member of the town team.

Cllr M Smith declared a personal interest as a member of the Town Team and stressed it was not a pecuniary interest.

Speaker 3

Supports the project and believes that the Town Team needs to be involved in this project and everyone needs to work together – the community needs to benefit in the long term.

District and County Cllr Berry decision and discussion need to be open, we've all got to work together for the benefit of Cullompton - one aim which is to acquire 19 High Street for the betterment of Cullompton.

HSDC 6. Acquisition of 19 High Street Cullompton

There was discussion regarding the feasibility of acquiring 19 High Street, Cullompton, taking into account the current information regarding negotiations, in order to improve the economic prospects for the whole town and make a recommendation to the Town Council.

It was stated that if financial matters e.g. a revised offer price and rents were to be discussed the meeting would consider excluding the press and public at that time.

Cllr Smith took the meeting through the updated business plan using the screen share facility.

19:57hrs

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders for 15 minutes to enable people other than Town Councillors, present at the meeting to contribute to the discussion.

Contributions and questions included:

- What effect would the proposal have on the precept?
- The possibility of using an independent person to scrutinise the proposed financial and governance arrangements
- If the Community Interest Company fails at some stage who picks up the project and the costs?

20:15 hrs

Standing Orders were re-instated and there was further discussion

20:20hrs

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public for this item or part thereof on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature (financial information and items subject to negotiation).

20:22rs

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes

There was discussion about a recommendation to council regarding the submission of a revised bid.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that a revised offer is submitted to Mid Devon District Council in the sum of £60,000 which could be increased to a maximum of £85,000 potentially to be funded from reserves but recognising the possibility that the Town Council may need to borrow the money and the potential impact on the precept

HSDC 7. Members Questions

This agenda item is to give Councillors an opportunity to ask questions which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

Funding of the site development – once the site has been acquired the CIC will develop the site and run the projects and this would not be a cost that falls to the Town Council

The Meeting closed at 21:27hrs

Agreed