

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - CALVER

Minutes of the Calver Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall, Calver on Thursday 20th April 2017 at 7.30pm.

Present - Calver Parish Councillors:

Councillors Jonathan Harris (Chairman), Judith Canty, Beatrice Carman, Marlene Denton, John Hearnshaw, Pat Howard, Ron Marshall and Patricia Wootton.

Also in Attendance:

Simon Oldham (Clerk), Councillor John Tibenham (DDDC) and 25 local parishioners.

Apologies:

Councillor Kath Potter (PDNPA).

2017.1 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 21st April 2016

Approved as a correct record.

2017.2 Chairman's Annual Report 2016/17

Having circulated copies of the Chairman's annual report, Councillor Jonathan Harris drew attention to some of the salient points of his annual report.

2017.3 Issues to be raised by Parish Electors including the opportunity to put forward suggested local projects to be funded by the Council during 2017/18

The Chairman gave a brief introduction to discussions that the Parish Council had undertaken with Pryormarking Limited, the owners of land off Main Street (behind the collapsed wall and on the other side of the road behind the Methodist Chapel formerly known as the Bird garden). He outlined the unique opportunity that existed to acquire one or both pieces of land from Pryormarking on very favourable terms, with a view to bringing them back in to some form of community use. He also outlined that the purpose tonight was to seek local residents views on whether or not this was viewed as a realistic proposition as the Parish Council was not in a position financially to take over and manage this land. Some form of Community Trust was deemed a more appropriate option which would require local volunteers to get involved to offer their own time as well as bidding for resources such as Heritage Lottery monies to take forward and manage such a project.

As a consequence, the Chairman sought the views of those present as to whether this would add value to the life of the village. A range of views were expressed including the following comments :-

- I think it's a great idea. It could perhaps include an orchard or perhaps a play area for children
- Its admirable that the Parish Council wants to do something with these pieces of land but there ought to have been prior consultation with the immediate residents who were likely to be affected by it. Additional fencing might help in protecting their interests. Its not just about clearing the land, but ongoing maintenance which will attract costs. If you bought both pieces of land what would you do with the second piece of land, return it to its former use as allotment land?

- Where would access to the Bird garden piece of land be? The access at the side of the Methodist Chapel is the access route to three private properties, including my own and I don't want this to become a common thoroughfare. This proposal could attract youths, anti-social behaviour such as drinking and smoking. Is there any access at the rear part of the garden?
- There is a fire risk on the Bird garden site, it is so dense and there is no immediate access for emergency vehicles. Will the site be locked by gated access at night as it would be a magnet for youths and potential problems late at night?
- What are Pryors plans for the land in future if the Parish Council choose not to acquire it? Would they look to develop on it which would have an even more detrimental effect on neighbouring properties?
- I think the proposal to develop the Bird garden site is a fabulous idea. The garden was an inspiration to me as a child and I know Mr Pryor would have approved of this proposal. I am willing to chip in and help
- Pryors in the past on more than one occasion have tried to get a development built on the Bird garden and been refused permission. In addition, so too have the Methodist Chapel who were looking to extend down one side. It was explained that Pryors offer of the land on favourable terms was on the proviso of the land being for "community use" and hence this would protect against any future development proposal
- We have two very busy roads on either side of the village, so a community use proposal for a piece of land in the middle of our village which children could enjoy in a safe area would be an excellent idea
- I am not against development but security of the site and ongoing control of its use is an important consideration. The trees on site are also important and care would be needed as to which were cleared/retained
- The state of the wall on Main Street bordering one of these pieces of land is hazardous and this should be the landowners responsibility to deal with it
- Any immediate neighbours of the Bird garden ought to get involved with the project/Trust if this goes ahead and play an integral part in shaping what is required. The site access and security also requires a lot of careful thought
- A lot of drainage runs in to the bottom end of the Bird garden site. I know because it runs via my property and I actively dig trenches for this to flow in to, three or four times during the year. This would need to continue and I would want to be involved
- Funding and cash will be required to take any proposal forward and the likes of lottery funding would be required. Volunteers would need to get together to form a Group to apply for funding and be properly established as a form of Charitable Trust. Pryors see this as fitting within their goals of the land being used for charitable/community purposes. Therefore, volunteers would need to come together to take this to the next stage
- The Head of Curbar Primary School has also expressed interest to get the School involved in any nature reserve type project
- What is the Parish Council's extent of financial commitment to this project and with regard to the likely maintenance perspective ?
- Has a figure been quoted that Pryors want for the land? It was confirmed that confidential discussions had taken place with Pryors and all that could be disclosed at present was that the terms were very attractive

- The wall and the other piece of land on the other side of Main Street were in greater need of tackling at the moment and should be given higher priority than the Bird garden. The area was extremely overgrown and the impact of tree roots were causing a health and safety hazard
- What is the aim of tonight's meeting, to make a decision or simply to discuss the matter? Confirmation was given that the aim was to get a cross section of views of local residents to enable the Parish Council to gauge whether there was any merit in attempting to take this further
- Do the two pieces of land come as a package or might Pryors be prepared to dispose of one site only? Confirmation was given that there was no restriction on acquiring one or both pieces of land
- A play area sited on Main Street might be more beneficial than the Bird garden site as it was more open
- Prospective clearance of undergrowth in the Bird garden site would be very substantial
- Is there a map of the project or the Bird garden that could be distributed? The Chairman confirmed that he had a document/map dating back to the 1980's when the Bird garden was last in use, which he would arrange to upload to the website
- Could you arrange a physical walk-round of the site for interested residents

In drawing the meeting to a close, the Chairman gave a brief summary of the conclusions reached from tonight's discussion:-

- That there was broad support for developing the Bird garden site and potentially the second piece of land on the other side of Main Street
- Clearly there were issues requiring further careful consideration, not least access in to the site, site security and ongoing maintenance implications
- A further public meeting could be called if after consideration by the Parish Council that based on observations made at tonight's meeting, there was merit in progressing a project and after further negotiations with Pryors on the precise terms for acquisition
- Such a follow up meeting would enable further feedback to be given to residents and consideration of a formal mechanism such as a properly established Charitable Trust that would need to be set up to be able to take a project forward. This would be independent of the Parish Council but could include those Parish Councillors interested in volunteering their time in support of the project.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8.43 pm.