

Marston St Lawrence Parish Council
Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 8th December 2015 in the Village hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr's Richard Gale, Daniela Carletti, Stephen Goodwin, Mick Scott, Chris Skermer and Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and 8 villagers

08.12.15 Apologies

Cllr Tims

08.12.16 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests to declare.

08.12.17 To approve the minutes of meeting held on 29th September 2015

The minutes of the meeting of 29th September 2015 were agreed and signed, proposed by Chris Skermer and seconded by Mick Scott.

08.12.18 Matters arising (for information only)

Village leaflet – This is underway.

Work to Bus Shelter – To carry forward to the next meeting.

Special Constable Starter Pack – A poster was sent with the starter pack but the village name was spelt wrong. The Parish Council have not been sent a new poster to replace the first one.

08.12.19 Open Forum

Mr Barber wrote a letter to the Parish Council asking if the current speed limits can be moved further out of the village. This followed a recent incident in the village where a car taking part in an unofficial competitor rally collided with his wall and demolished a large part of it. One 30mph limit starts outside his house (Kytile Farmhouse). There have been water problems outside his property which have now been addressed. HS2 will present major changes to roads and traffic over time and the Ponds Lane will become a rat run as people move between villages. The Chair agreed that the lane is getting used more and this subject has been discussed in the past. The Parish Clerk has experience of another village asking for speed signs to be moved. In that case the cost was huge and had to be paid for by the Parish Council.

Cllr Scott noted that delivery drivers do drive fast through the village but a form of enforcement is important and that would be difficult to achieve. There are other things to consider such as a change in road surface to slow vehicles down or putting in gates at each entrance. There seems to be a speeding issue from the Thenford side but drivers cannot speed by entering the village through the other end. Speedwatch could be carried out but volunteers would need to come forward.

Mr Barber noted that there is budget for HS2 and a pot of money for impacts on communities. It will be the biggest infrastructure project. Cllr Goodwin noted that a new roundabout is being built on Welsh Lane by Northants Highways and not HS2.

The feeling of the meeting was that it would be a good idea to get a traffic survey done before HS2 and after HS2. Mr Barbour said he would be happy to get involved with looking at traffic to get statistics and evidence.

Action: The Parish Clerk to write a letter to NCC Highways about moving the existing 30mph signs further out and to get more information on Speedwatch/a speed survey.

08.12.20 To receive a progress report on the new parish website

The new website should be up and running soon. A grant of £850.00 was received so the first year has not cost anything. All papers relating to future Parish Council meetings will be online. Account papers for the year ending 31st March 2015 will be available online.

08.12.21 Planning

One application had been received since the last meeting: *S/2015/2462/FUL, Conversion of existing public house to two residential units with associated amenity and parking areas at The Marston Inn.* Objections have been raised by the Parish Council.

A summary from the Parish Council response was then read out.

- The Marston Inn has been an Inn for centuries.
- The Marston Inn has been a successful business when hard working, imaginative, entrepreneurial tenants have been in place.
- The Inn was the first building in South Northamptonshire to be registered as an Asset of Community Value. Nothing has changed since that listing was made.
- The Parish Council emphatically disagree with the assertion that “the public house was rarely used as a public venue.”
- The Parish Council do not believe the applicant has any basis on which to state “there is no evidence that the social wellbeing of the community has been materially disadvantaged by the abandonment of the former use.”
- The Parish Council do not agree that the function as a public house and public venue cannot provide the essential viability.
- The site is “moribund and forlorn” only due to the complete lack of even basic maintenance by the owners.
- The property has suffered from inadequate investment in recent years.
- The Parish Council do not believe that the application demonstrates that the loss of the business use has been justified.
- The Parish Council believe that “To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs” (National Planning Policy Framework Para 70) this application should be refused.
- In support of the Parish Councils belief, they are in discussions with the owners and outside bodies to try to find a way of re-opening the Marston Inn as a community venture.

A decision is due by South Northants Council by 24th December. 23 households have made general comments about losing the pub. The Chair spoke to the SNC Planning Officer and he was not keen on giving permission.

For the benefit of those present, the Chair outlined the history to the application. The Parish Council are currently in discussions with Hook Norton Brewery. If the brewery get permission to put houses on the land, they may be prepared to put a significant amount of money into the proposal. The Parish Council are not against this approach and approved the first application. However it was refused by South Northants Council. If permission is given this time, it will not address the state of the land at the back. Another publican has offered to help councillors with the figures for the business plan.

From the floor, a villager asked if the Parish Council had looked at having the village boundary amended? The Chair replied they had not yet applied but they could use their powers to look into it.

Cllr Scott feels quite strongly that everyone is going round in circles. Either Hook Norton Brewery or the Parish Council have got to give and break the circle. Hook Norton Brewery will only invest money if the business is viable. All conversations with them have been positive to date. Councillors are doing this work in their spare time which is time consuming. The Parish Council would like some control over the running of the pub and it be of benefit to the village. It is not a realistic expectation to buy the pub.

Action: Cllr's to continue working on the business plan.

08.12.22 Finance

To agree and set the precept for 2016/17

A budgetary sheet had been circulated to councillors showing income and expenditure for this year and proposed costs for 2016/17. The Parish Council paid for a baby changing unit for the village hall and donated it to them. A grant of £850.00 has been received for funding the new website. There may be additional costs associated with work on the pub. An estimated end of year balance at 31st March 2016 is £4409.00 and at 31st March 2017, £4250.00.

Chris Skermer proposed that the precept be set at £3000.00 for 2016/17 and this was seconded by Cllr Carletti. All councillors voted in favour.

The following payments were approved under statutory powers

- £5.00 to Northants CALC (part payment for Chairman's training course)
- £39.00 to South Northants Council (election costs)
- £170.13 to EON (electricity)
- £94.50 to The Glimpse (donation)
- £0.05 to Lady Richard Wellesleys 1987 (rent for children's play area)
- £332.54 to Zurich Municipal (insurance)
- £110.00 to Parish Clerk (hours)

Proposed by Cllr Goodwin and seconded by Cllr Skermer.

The payment to Lady Richard Wellesleys estate was raised. The question was asked if the Parish Council should be liable and paying 5p for a play area that is hardly used? There is a separate sum of money for the play area but a lot more money would be needed to make it better. Cllr Scott noted that although the area is hardly used, it is looked after by the estate and there are no other costs associated with it. Villagers said that as there are more children in the village, should the Parish Council be thinking about making it nicer? A nice popular play area can create other problems such as parking. There are risks attached with the concrete on site and liability costs.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact the insurers to ask about liability.

08.12.23 Correspondence

From

Adam Simmonds, Police & Crime Commissioner
Northants CALC, Budget Information 2016/17

08.12.24 Date, time and place of next meeting, Annual Parish Meeting and Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 3rd March 2016 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Meeting finished at 8.25pm