



MINSTER LOVELL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE HALL WORKING GROUP MEETING WITH DAVID MASON AND REV. WHITE, MONDAY 29TH MARCH 2021 AT 7.30PM VIA ZOOM

Present: Cllr. Jean King (Chair), Cllr. Colin Alderman, Cllr. Jonathan Stowell, Cllr. David Haley, Cllr. Chris Jones, Rev. Hugh White (St Kenelm's Church PCC), David Mason (Oxford Diocese), Alexandra Molton (Clerk).

Apologies: None

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr. King thanked Rev. White and David Mason for meeting with the working group and introduced herself as the Chair of the working group. All Councillors introduced themselves.

Cllr. King confirmed that the working party was set up to look into the possibility of the Parish Council investing S106 monies into St Kenelm's Hall. The Parish Council has been allocated s106 monies due to the new development being built in the village and the Parish Council want to invest this in a project which will give a benefit to the future for the village.

Cllr. Stowell confirmed that whilst St Kenelm's Hall remains a church hall the Parish Council is not able to allocate any money to it.

David Mason introduced himself as the Director of Glebe and Buildings at Oxford Diocese and confirmed that the Diocese are only custodian trustees of the Hall and not the beneficial owners. His understanding is that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are the beneficial owners of St Kenelm's Hall. David Mason confirmed that PCCs legally cannot hold a title to property so the Diocese acts as custodian trustees to hold the title but have no involvement in the day to day running of the hall. Mr Mason confirmed that he would have to take back any suggestions from the Parish Council to the relevant committee at the Diocese for discussion.

Mr Mason asked Rev. White to confirm that this is the current situation and Rev. White reiterated that St Kenelm's Hall is a local church asset and the PCC would have to come to an agreement with the Parish Council in order for the project to redevelop the current hall to move forwards.

Cllr. Haley asked if the working group should meet with the PCC rather than the Diocese in order to discuss the project. Rev. White confirmed that there would have to be a formal resolution from the PCC to enable the project to go ahead and he is aware that there are some members of the PCC that might be wary of taking the step of giving over management of the hall to the Parish Council.

Mr Mason asked if the Parish Council have looked into the possibility of setting up an Albermarle lease with the PCC in order to rent the hall on a long lease rather than purchase the hall. Cllr. King asked Mr Mason if he is able to provide further details about such a lease. Mr Mason confirmed that there is an Albermarle lease currently being established in a village just outside of Bicester where the Parish Council wants to invest in the hall and the PCC were happy to grant a long lease at a peppercorn rent in order to give the Council the legal interest that they needed to invest. Mr Mason

suggested that this would be an alternative option to the PCC giving the Council the freehold to the hall. Cllr. King agreed that this could be to the benefit of both parties.

Cllr. Stowell suggested that the Parish Council using the lease option with the PCC would mean that the Council could not knock down the existing hall and rebuild it. Mr Mason confirmed that this is not necessarily an issue as an Albermarle lease is similar to a ground lease in that once the lease is granted the freehold owner is no longer responsible for the building on the land; the leasee then takes on responsibility for the building, whether this is the existing structure or a new one.

Cllr. Stowell asked if there are any restrictions on the length of an Albermarle lease and Mr Mason confirmed that this can be set for a variety of terms. Cllr. Stowell confirmed that the Parish Council wants assurance that it can own and manage the property over a longer time in order to make the investment in the building worthwhile. Mr Mason confirmed that it is likely therefore that it would not be possible to purchase the land in this generation, but a lease of 50 years might give enough of a change in the PCC to allow this to happen in the future.

Cllr. Jones confirmed that the Parish Council has decided that the site where the current hall stands is the best location for a possible new hall due to its location, at the centre of the village.

Cllr. Haley asked Mr Mason and Rev. White for their advice on the best next steps for the Parish Council to take. Cllr. King asked Rev. White to confirm whether it would be best to set up a meeting with the PCC and the Parish Council next, or for him to take the idea back to the PCC first. Rev. White confirmed that he would like an outline plan to take back to the PCC rather than organise a meeting without a plan set out. Some members of the PCC might need to see these plans to be able to see more clearly how the project would benefit the village and the PCC.

Cllr. Stowell asked Rev. White if he is familiar with the terms of the Trust on the hall, in terms of what is allowed to take place within the hall, which can be very restrictive with a church hall. He reiterated that if the Parish Council takes on management of the hall it would mean that a wider variety of events could take place in the hall. Rev. White confirmed that the PCC have considered having services in the church hall as they recognise that this is in a better location than St Kenelm's Church and is a more suitable building for church events.

Rev. White asked for the working group to put together a briefing paper outlining the suggested project for him to circulate to the PCC in order for the PCC to understand exactly what the Council are proposing in advance of any meeting with the Parish Council. Mr Mason offered to attend a meeting with the PCC to assist.

Cllr. King asked Mr Mason if the working group might have contact details for the church near Bicester which is currently investing in an Albermarle lease and Mr Mason confirmed that he will ask the church if they are happy for him to pass this information on.

Cllr. Stowell asked Mr Mason to confirm again the difference with an Albermarle lease compared to an alternative lease and Mr Mason confirmed that it is often used as a way for Parish Councils to offer to take on management of a church hall which is not performing in order to assist the PCC to make the most of the hall.

Cllr. King pointed out that the current hall will need some investment in order to keep it in good condition, and reiterated that the Parish Council would take on this maintenance on if it took on a lease of the hall.

Rev. White asked the group to confirm that if the Parish Council takes on management of the hall it would be possible for the Church to reserve space in the hall at certain times for church activities. Cllr. King confirmed that the Council would be willing to add this into any agreement which is made. Rev.

White pointed out that this is an incentive which it would be good to put into the briefing paper for the PCC.

Cllr. Haley confirmed that the Parish Council is not in a rush to get the project moving forwards but it will start to have access to the s106 funding at some point soon and would like to have plans in place to spend this.

ACTION: Clerk to find out from the developer of Dovecote Park when they anticipate that the site will be finished and the 75th house will be sold.

ACTION: Clerk to confirm to the working group when the Parish Council are likely to start to have access to the s106 monies and how long it has to spend this.