

Elsenham Parish Council

Minutes of New Community Hall Virtual Meeting

via Zoom, at 10.30am on 10 March 2021

Present:

Dr. G Mott (Chairman GM), Mr. P Clear (PEC), Mr. P Johnson (PJ), and
Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk LJ).

Minutes

- 1. Apologies for absence.** None
- 2. Declaration of Interests.** None
- 3. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2021 were approved as a true record.**

4. Matters arising from the meeting on 22 January 2021.

4.1. Business plans

PJ had circulated the business plan for Cottenham Village Hall. Using this document as a guide, as some of the issues related to Cottenham did not apply to EPC, PJ had prepared part of a document to see how EPC's business plan could develop. PJ is to circulate this as a starting point for a discussion.

4.2. Public Works Loans

PJ had circulated spread sheets of public works loan rates and estimated repayment costs. If EPC borrowed £800,000, which hopefully would be more than sufficient, this would increase the precept by 50%.

In the Cottenham business plan it states that under Local Government Finance rules, all the funds for the entire project must be available before committing to the project.

5. Matters arising from the meeting with Whitworth on 12 February 2021

5.1. Car park cost

Parking for the community hall requires further investigation.

UDC currently uses the Essex Parking Standards 2009 Design and Good Practice which identifies numerous different building types and groupings and assigns a Class Use to each group. There is still uncertainty as to what group a village hall is classed, UDC put it in D2, while ECC planning suggested D1.

600sq metres would require 21 parking spaces if classed as D1 and 30 spaces if classed as D2.

Access and exits must also be provided within the car park, and whether the access/exit is from Isabel Drive or Southfield Close.

EPC may be able to include the current parking facility within the playing field, however, this would depend on UDC's planning officer who may see the parking on the playing field as existing parking for the playing field use only and therefore could not be included in the calculation for the new hall.

Both the W&B and Whitworth costed estimates appear to underestimate the possible demand for parking spaces. The car park is going to take up a significant part of the total site area and will influence the final building location and orientation within the site.

EPC may need to get expert advice as to the best position for the hall which would allow all the required parking spaces.

One possibility that was discussed was to erect the hall on what is now the playing field car park, facing towards the Memorial Hall with all the car parking behind it. PEC did not agree to this idea and preferred the parking for the playing field to be left as it is.

The parking standards are currently under review by ECC and a new updated set of parking standards could be published later this year.

In the Whitworth costings they had only allowed for phase 1 which was half the car park. EPC therefore should add on £92,250 to allow for the whole car park.

5.2. Cost of fitting out

The cost of fitting out the hall is excluded from the Whitworth estimate. This would include tables, chairs, fridge, cooker etc. This would need to be budgeted for between £50,000 - £100,000.

5.3. Pre-application (scoping) contract with UDC

Whitworth had suggested that EPC make an initial contact with UDC. This was agreed to be a good idea. PJ had found two documents on UDC's website, a 'pre-discussion application' form, which give general pre-application advice, and 'planning advice from the council' which gives a list of fees; however, parish councils are exempt. At the very least for a pre-application UDC would require the style, type and size of the building, and the site details, this would generate advice from UDC on parking and if the style of building would be appropriate. PJ said he would phone UDC's planning department to ask what information they required.

5.4. Any other matters

The office space in the new building should be large enough to house two desks, as EPC may, in the future, employ an additional assistant parish clerk.

6. Transfer of the land

6.1. Crest Nicholson

Three issues outstanding.

Transfer of the ramson strip.
Contribution to the community hall.
Transfer of the allotments.

PJ had contacted Arwen Blackery at Crest Nicholson on 26 January asking where matters stood regarding the ramson strip. Arwen had replied saying that she had passed it on to Carl, their land director. PJ said he would phone Arwen to ask for any update, and to mention the outstanding payment towards the community hall of £330,000.

EPC are waiting for UDC to issue a letter of satisfaction before the allotment land can be legally transferred over.

6.2. David Wilson Homes

Three issues outstanding.
Registry of the play area land with land registry.
Transfer of the community hall land
Contribution to the community hall
Chris Webber, from David Wilson Homes had copied EPC in on an email to Nigel Brown where he mentioned the payments for the hall and the play area.
LJ to contact Chris Webber regarding the transfer of the community hall land.
The section 106 is a legal document between UDC and the developers.
EPC should not have to chase developers.

6.3. Bovis Homes

LJ is to write to Bovis Homes to ask if they anticipate bringing the Hall Road site forward for development in 2021, and to ask if they have any comments to make on EPC's response to the section 106 agreement that EPC forwarded to them.

7. Funding

GM had corresponded with the developers asking for contributions to the community hall.

A S106 agreement is agreed before a planning decision is determined. If EPC engaged in discussion it is done without prejudice of any position EPC may hold of opposing the planning application.

EPC strongly oppose any further planning applications in the village but recognise there is a possibility that the application may be approved, and if it is, the village should get something out of it. It is then better to hold discussion on a provisional basis early rather than later.

7.1. Fairfield

Sent back a promising response, but this application is pending due to Henham PC's action, who are appealing against the Inspector's decision.

7.2. Gladman (north of Bedwell Road)

Seemed to be willing to make a contribution. When EPC have a business plan, this could be sent to Gladman as a reminder of the request.

7.3. Wallace (west of Isabel Drive)

EPC emailed them on 5 January 2021 but have not received a reply. A follow up email could be sent with the schedule of accommodation and the business plan, stating that funds were needed for a new community hall and would they like to make a contribution.

7.4. Pegasus (south of Bedwell Road)

Sent EPC a response to the representation made to UDC. EPC have replied to that response which is now on UDC's website. EPC sent the prices and the schedule for the new community hall. The business plan could be sent once written with a reminder for a contribution to the community hall.

7.5. Phillip Planning (Rush Lane)

EPC had received contact from Matthew Homes, who are looking at buying the land and said they would contact EPC once the purchase is complete. EPC could then make a request for a contribution to the community hall.

7.6. Osprey Homes (Oak Lane)

GM to contact Sean Harries asking for a contribution.

8. Making Whitworth costing available to developers

EPC to contact Whitworth and ask if they had any objections if their proposed sketch plans and the proposed visualisation were forwarded to the developers with EPC's requests for a contribution.

9. A Commemorative plaque recording contributions

A commemorative plaque could be placed in the hall with all the names of the developers that contributed to the hall. Developers will be informed of this when EPC request donations.

10. Presentation at Annual Parish meeting, 22 April 2021

PJ said he would do the presentation, with some PowerPoints, on the new community hall at the Annual Parish Meeting. PJ would mention the shortfall in funding and the effect a public working loan would make on the precept. GM said he would ask for a show of hands on whether residents would be agreeable to EPC taking out a public works loan which may increase the Parish Council's element of the Council Tax by up to 50%. This year for a band D household, residents were paying £60 to EPC, if this were increased by 50% it would relate to approximately 0.50p extra per week. EPC would have to hold a referendum to increase the precept by 50%.

It was agreed to ask if any members of the public wanted to join the New Community Hall Working Group.

11. Any other business

PJ said he had sent round the draft business plan to date. The text in black related to Elsenham PC, the text in red was the continuum of the Cottenham business plan.

The meeting finished at 12.04pm.