**Elsenham Parish Council**

**Minutes of New Community Hall Virtual Meeting**

 **via Zoom, at 8.00pm on Thursday 3 February 2022**

**Present:**

Dr. G Mott (Chairman GM), Mrs. B Donald (BD), Mr. A Hathaway (AH),

 Mr. P Jarvis (PJ), Mr. B Ogilvie (BO), Mrs. E Terry (ET), Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk LJ)

and

Mr. J Bennett (JB) UDC’s Principle Urban Designer

**Minutes**

1. **Apologies for absence.** Mr. P Johnson (PJJ).
2. **Declaration of Interests.** None.
3. **The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 were approved as a true record.**
4. **The orientation of the new Community Hall**

Mr. Jack Bennett, UDC’s Principle Urban Designer, gave the pros and cons of facing the building east, overlooking the playing field or west facing onto the street.

Mr. Bennett recommended that EPC engage a good architect. The architect should then do an ‘opportunities and constraints’ plan. Followed by several options with pros and cons of the building facing east or west and how they meet the requirements set out in the opportunities and constraints plan.

Mr. Bennett’s full report is at the end of these minutes.

ET said we must consider the residents living in Southfield Close, and how the new building will impact on them.

1. **Funding**

David Wilson Homes have paid their contribution to UDC.

UDC are still chasing Crest Nicholson for their contribution.

Vistry have still not signed their section 106 agreement. The draft section 106 includes a contribution to EPC for the community hall. The first payment before 50% of the houses are occupied and the second installment before the last resident moves in. As the development has not even begun it could be many years before EPC receive the full payment.

The payment from Bovis Homes is approximately £300,000 bringing the total with the payments from Crest Nicholson and David Wilson Homes to approximately £1,020,000.

It is unlikely, despite corresponding with the other developers in the village, that EPC will receive any further funding towards the new community hall.

In the past EPC have never been involved in the discussions with section 106 agreements, despite UDC’s policy that parish councils should be involved with issues such as infrastructure, amenities, and other matters. If UDC had followed their own policy and consulted EPC, funding to the new community hall may have been included in the Section 106 on the other large developments in the village, such as Dandara, Rush Lane and Bloor.

EPC had obtained costings from Whitworth and Wilby & Burnett which indicated that the project was going to cost in the region of more than £1.5 million. Both these costings are now out of date.

EPC will be short of funds, options would be either taking out a Public Works Loan or obtaining grant funding. It was agreed unanimously that a public work loan should be the last resort.

PJ is to make enquiries on grant funding from Sport England and the Football Association.

AH to enquire on Lottery Funding.

1. **Costings** 6.

BD said that running costs must be considered and how the building is to be heated,

EPC have asked Ray Gooding for a meeting, not as a county councillor, but in his role as a consultant engineer. In this role he has worked on the design and project management of a wide range of construction projects. One of the questions for Ray Gooding is, in his opinion is there anything that EPC can do to progress the project, even though all the funding was not in place? Ray Gooding could also give advice on underfloor heating.

BO said that there is an architect who lives in Elsenham who designed the Manuden Village Hall.

The utilities connections are on site.

UDC still hold the payment from David Wilson homes. UDC have stated that before any funds are drawn down, EPC need to demonstrate that the community hall is a viable project. However, UDC have not clarified what they consider to be a viable project.

EPC has already spent £3,469 on commissioning Whitworth and Wilby & Burnett to prepare cost estimates. EPC were told by UDC to submit these invoices and they would reimburse the money. The invoices were submitted on 19 October 2021, despite EPC chasing UDC, no money has yet been reimbursed.

1. **Transfer of land**

The land to be transferred from David Wilson Homes has a historical ransom strip.

There is a strip of land adjoining the Council’s recreation ground/open space land which is subject to a Land Registry title restriction in favour of Crest Nicholson. This secures Crest Nicholson’s entitlement to additional payment in the event of access or services to the Council’s recreation ground. Nigel Brown at UDC said that at a meeting on 9 November 2018, Crest Nicholson had stated they would waive their rights over the ransom strip, provided the land itself was transferred to UDC or EPC.

This matter is now with EPC’s solicitors Nockolds. EPC have instructed Nockolds to contact Crest Nicholson’s and David Wilson Homes solicitors and arrange for the land to be transferred to EPC with rights over the ransom strip.

PJ said that we need a firm commitment from Crest Nicholson that they will relinquish all rights of the ransom strips.

ECC Highways have now confirmed the new community hall will be classed as D1, therefore, the D1 parking standards will apply to the community hall. The parking spaces are calculated per sq metre, 600sq metres would require 21 parking spaces.

1. **Next steps**

Another meeting will be arranged at the beginning of March, Ray Gooding will be invited.

LJ is to chase Nockolds about the land transfer.

PJ to make enquires on grant funding from Sport England and the Football Association.

AH to enquire on Lottery Funding.

1. **AOB**

GM said that village organizations, that may use the hall, would be consulted as to what they would like to see in the hall before any architectural drawings were agreed.

AH asked if village organizations would be charged for using the hall. There would still be overheads to pay when any group use the hall such as electric and cleaning. So, although the hall could not run at a loss, EPC would not wish to make huge profit from hiring the hall to local groups.

The hall would need a hall manager and therefore an office would be required.

The meeting finished at 9.50pm.

**Mr Jack Bennett report.**

1. Get a good architect on board - I can recommend some good ones that specialise in this kind of building and will really help make the most of what is a really good opportunity. An average architect might deliver an acceptable building, but this is an important civic building with many great opportunities offered by the site which they should maximise.
>  2.  The architect should then do an 'opportunities and constraints' plan that will help the Parish Council agree the site conditions to which the building needs to respond such as: pedestrian/vehicular access, which is the public face of the building, which might be a quieter more private face, pedestrian access to the south and a welcoming face to the building, ditto pedestrian access from east, noise concerns from surrounding residents, how to 'give something back' to existing residents on the west side be it through an active frontage or small public green (space allowing after parking provided), etc. basically, mapping everything they already know, but on an agreed plan.
>  3.  Then the architect can do a number of options which face various ways, then the pros and cons of each option, and how they meet the requirements set out in the 'opps and cons' plan can be appraised, and possibly a community/parish council vote?
> The idea is a rigorous process which ensures opportunities for the building and site are maximised, with a clear and evidenced decision-making process.
2. Some good architects: Sands End Arts and Community Centre | Architects, urban designers and researchers ([mae.co.uk](http://mae.co.uk/))<<https://www.mae.co.uk/projects/sands-end>>, AOC Architecture ([theaoc.co.uk](http://theaoc.co.uk/))<<https://www.theaoc.co.uk/projects/the-green>>, Highbury Roundhouse - Sarah Wigglesworth Architects ([swarch.co.uk](http://swarch.co.uk/))<<https://www.swarch.co.uk/work/highbury-roundhouse/>>, The Weston - Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield. Gallery, restaurant ([feildenfowles.co.uk](http://feildenfowles.co.uk/))<<https://www.feildenfowles.co.uk/the-weston/>>, TNG Youth & Community Centre | RCKa<<https://rcka.co.uk/tng-youth-community-centre/>>, The Hithe | IF\_DO - Architecture & Design ([ifdo.co](http://ifdo.co/))<<https://www.ifdo.co/projects/the-hithe>>.

A note on parking, in design terms in this case I think it should generally be softened/hidden with structural landscaping and tucked away next to dead frontages so as not to impinge on active frontages and views to greenery. I think there should generally be enough overlooking from the building entrance, and from the existing homes to the west, to provide for security".