WESTCOTT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of WVA open meeting: Thursday 21st February 2019
held at 1930 hrs at Holy Trinity Church, Westcott

Draft for committee approval

Attendees

WVA Trustees:

Tim Way (Chairman) (TW)

Bert Broom (Vice Chairman) (BB)

Sandra Ede (SE)

Andrew Copeland (AC)

Edwin Harland (Treasurer) (EH)

Guest speakers:

Dr Glenn Wylie (Chairman, the Hut Trustees) (GW)

Dr Vish Sagar (Dorking Medical Practice) (VS)

Mark Eshelby (Latchmere Properties) (ME)

Stephen Eshelby (Latchmere Properties) (SE)

Ted Wilde (EW)

Westcott village attendees: Approximately 50 people.

Introduction

Tim Way (TW) welcomed all those present, and briefly introduced the agenda as follows

1. Proposed new Village Association Constitution	Tim Way/Ted Wilde
2. The Hut Development	Glenn Wylie
3. Other Village Matters	All

1. Proposed new Village Association Constitution

Ted Wilde (EW) gave a presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. EW first explained that the old constitution had been written in 1975 and was badly out of date. Amongst other deficiencies:

- there was a lack of clarity about what the WVA could and couldn't do
- the committee members' responsibilities as outlined in the old constitution did not match the requirements of the Charities Act
- the use of technology, such as email addresses, was not covered.

EW then outlined the advantages of setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO").

EW explained that the draft of the proposed new Constitution was available on the WVA website, and said that many good suggestions for amendments had already been received. EW encouraged those present to come up with further suggestions while the consultation period was still open, i.e. until 12 March.

EW then offered to take any questions.

John Moss asked how the WVA correlates with a Parish Council. EW and TW explained that while they were different types of organisations, there were many similarities. The main difference was that a Parish Council would be able to institute a precept on rates. BB added that this would cost approximately £25-£30 per household, for little benefit.

In relation to the geographical area in which the WVA was allowed to conduct its activities, Murray Stephen asked if we could include the whole of Surrey, in relation to matters which would affect the wellbeing of Westcott residents. EW agreed that the Constitution should be drafted in such a way so that the WVA could participate in any matter, no matter where located, as long as it affected the wellbeing of Westcott residents.

Nick Lund asked if there was any downside to expanding the geographical area more widely. EW explained that a wider area could lead to an increase in requests for financial assistance, which the committee would be hard pressed to deal with.

Draft for committee approval

John Davey asked if the proposed new Constitution would allow the WVA to get involved in matters relating to Gatwick flight paths. EW confirmed that this would be possible, and indeed that the WVA was already actively involved in such matters.

Mike Flower asked how the proposed new Constitution linked in to the neighbourhood plan. BB explained that the neighbourhood plan sits alongside the existing Mole Valley structured plan, but that they are separate. TW stated that the WVA had taken over guardianship of the neighbourhood plan on behalf of the village, and he believed it was the intention of the trustees to continue that. EW pointed out that one objective contained in the proposed new Constitution was to encourage high standards in relation to planning, which was consistent with guardianship of the neighbourhood plan.

James Leaver pointed out that the WVA should be the first point of contact for the use of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds which enables monies to come back to the village.

Lisann Peppard queried if the proposed objective about protecting and preserving the charm and rural character of Westcott was not somewhat akin to "preserving the village in aspic". She suggested that an additional objective to enhance the viability of the village might be helpful. EW and others strongly agreed.

2. The Hut Development

Glenn Wylie (GW) started by explaining that Tom Guilder was expecting to be retiring in the middle of 2019, and that his surgery was scheduled to close in December 2020. The Hut was in a dilapidated state which would be uneconomic to repair. There was a need for a youth centre in the village as there was currently very little for young people to do. GW explained his vision for the Hut development which would help address all of these issues and would include the following elements:

- a community centre, which would do more than yoga and badminton
- a youth centre
- facilities which could be used by Westcott School and by the sports club
- a coffee bar open during surgery hours
- first-aid classes
- afternoon tea dances

and an event hire venue as before.

GW said that he was unable at present to disclose specific financial numbers as these were still being discussed, but he anticipated that the development would leave the Hut trustees with a substantial cash balance, such that it would not have to place too great a reliance on external hire revenues. GW was looking at setting up a trust for the village with the remaining funds.

GW said he had been asked if an AGM had been held. He explained that a "walk in" meeting had been held in October 2017 between 4pm and 7pm at the Prince of Wales pub. Approximately 85% of those

Draft for committee approval

who had visited had been in favour of the initial development which had given the trustees the mandate to talk to developers. From a shortlist of four, Latchmere Properties had been selected.

In relation to the holding of an AGM, GW said that he had been consulting the Charity Commission throughout the process, and that clause 12 of the Hut constitution stated that an AGM was needed, unless there was a good reason not to have one. GW stated that in the view of the Charity Commission, the current circumstances could well qualify as such a reason. However, in spite of this, GW was planning to hold an AGM in April or possibly May 2019, at which new trustees would be appointed and full transparent financial data made available.

Dr Vish Sagar (VS) then took over to explain the involvement of the Dorking Medical Practice ("DMP") in the plan. VS explained that for years there have been discussions concerning the merger of Tom Guilder's practice with the DMP. VS added that the DMP was small and unable to accept new patients. The DMP will still have access to Tom Guilder's premises following his retirement, up until December 2020. By this point, VS hoped that a new practice at the Hut would be complete.

VS explained that Westcott House has 70 patients, Bramley House another 20, and that the demographics of the Westcott residents meant that a dedicated Westcott practice was a necessity.

VS explained that the NHS have agreed in principle to the idea, however, the plans must take account of future needs, meaning that the proposed new development must be able to cope with 3,000 to 4,000 patients compared to the 2,000 which Tom Guilder currently has. VS explained that NHS rules also specified a minimum 278sqm area for consulting rooms and waiting rooms etc based on patient numbers.

GW explained that he would be sending a letter to all houses in the village, and welcomed feedback. GW then handed over to Steven Eshelby (SE) and his brother Mark Eshelby (ME) from Latchmere Properties.

SE explained that there had been numerous different plans and configurations for different sizes of community centres and surgeries, and different numbers of houses and parking spaces. These had been changed from the original proposals as a result of the NHS requirements.

The current plan, which SE hoped would be the final one, would encompass two buildings, a two-storey community centre with a total floor area of 160 m^2, a one-storey surgery, and six new homes with parking spaces. There would be a total of 28 parking spaces with 12 dedicated to the new homes, i.e. two each. The surgery was larger than in earlier plans as a result of the NHS requirements alluded to by VS.

Mark Eshelby (ME) then explained a little about Latchmere Properties, a Dorking-based family business. He also explained the likely timetable going forward which would involve the submission of two applications in May 2019, one for the community centre and housing, and one for the surgery. If successful this will be followed by drawings in August 2019, tendering and selection of contractors, leading to a potential start date at the end of 2019 or very beginning of 2020. ME anticipated a 52 week build, meaning that it could be completed by the end of 2020.

Draft for committee approval

Richard Bax asked who would actually have legal title to the new surgery. ME replied that it will be sold to the DMP or a third party. Richard Bax also asked if there would be a dispensary, which VS confirmed was an essential NHS requirement.

Robin Potter queried if 160 m² on two floors i.e. 80 m² per floor was enough for a community centre. GW confirmed that he was happy that it was ample for what was panned, but did acknowledge that the new facility was not being designed to support badminton, yoga, or other similar activities.

EW suggested that, if the Hut plot was worth perhaps £500,000-£800,000, who then at the end of the day would own what. GW confirmed that the freehold to the community centre would be owned by the village. He also confirmed that the land upon which the residential housing would be built was to be sold by the Hut to the developers.

Jackie Moss asked if theatre facilities would continue to be available at the Hut. GW confirmed that there would be a withdrawable stage, with sound and light equipment.

A resident asked if there was a risk of ending up with the houses sold but no community centre. GW said a contractual clause would ensure that the community centre has to be finished before the houses can be built and sold.

Nancy Lund commented that the timescale seemed tight, and asked what the alternative was if, for example, the construction project overran. VS replied that there was plenty of time unless the NHS was unduly slow. He said that letters of support would undoubtedly help, but acknowledged it was a valid concern.

Nick Lund queried the number of spaces for parking. GW confirmed the current plan was for 28 spaces, including 12 for the houses. GW stated that this was a compromise. BB asked how many of Tom Guilder's current 2,000 patients lived more than 500 m from the Hut. BB's concern was that many lived in villages outside of Westcott, and would be unable to park at the proposed new surgery, especially given the plans to grow the patient numbers from 2,000 to 3,000/4,000. VS said he didn't have these numbers.

VS then responded to Nancy Lund's question about a "Plan B". VS said that the potential alternatives were:

- Stay at Tom Guilder's practice for an extension period post December 2020
- NHS Portacabins
- DMP site in Dorking

GW said that the need for a surgery was paramount, and believes he would have sacrificed the community centre if this had been needed to make the surgery happen.

Andrew Copeland asked what the plan was if the NHS refused the current plan. GW said that there would then be a larger community centre with social housing. VS stressed that approval was "nearly

Draft for committee approval

there", and he was optimistic it would reach a positive outcome.

EW said that the proposal sounded wonderful, but did wish to raise a note of caution. He observed that in due course contractual documents and HM Land Registry would require GW and his trustees to confirm that he had the authority to enter into the proposed agreements. EW queried whether GW did in fact have this authority, there having been no AGM for a long period to re- elect Glenn and others as trustees, their appointments only lasting for one year. Glenn thought the last AGM was about two and a half years ago and notice thereof in the Newsagent window. EW suggested that any contract signed without authority could be treated as void and set aside. GW responded that the Charity Commission was fully on board with the proposed way forward.

Mike Flower asked if an online petition supporting the surgery would be helpful. GW welcomed this as a very good idea.

Libby Witt asked how the coffee bar etc would be staffed. GW said that there was already somebody interested in running the bar on a commercial basis, and that the Citizens Advice Bureau and Help the Aged were also interested. In short, he envisaged a mixture of volunteers and commercial staff.

3. Other Village Matters

Lisann Peppard asked if there was any news on the housing development proposals. TW explained that as stated in his March newsletter, proposals for consultation including a draft plan for the whole district were scheduled to be issued on 26 June 2019. TW has already booked Guy Davies from Mole Valley District Council to speak at a subsequent WVA open meeting. TW stressed nothing will happen until the Council has evaluated the different sites which have been put forward. EW reminded those present that a third site in Deerleap Road had also been proposed.

A resident asked if the Green Belt Boundary would be changed and the village curtilage extended. TW said that if no new development was agreed then it would not.

Mike Flower asked if there was an update on the proposed parking restrictions in Westcott Street. TW explained that he and HW had visited residents affected by the proposals, and the matter had been discussed at the last WVA meeting on 10th January 2019. It had been agreed that the WVA would write to all those affected urging them to respond to the consultation. This closed on 24th January and it will take a couple of months for the results to be known. TW stated that he thought the majority of the WVA trustees did not support a change to the current parking arrangements.

Nick Lund stressed the importance of absolute transparency in relation to the proposed Hut development which he felt was currently lacking. TW said that the WVA was working hard to promote the interests of all residents and would work with the Hut Trustees, but that the WVA had no authority over the Hut trustees, only influence.

The meeting concluded at 21:05 hours

Draft for committee approval