

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 18th JULY 2007 AT 9.00 a.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present : Cllr Mr L Abraham
Cllr Mr C Alford (*arrived at 9.15 a.m.*)
Cllr Mr A Barnett
Cllr Mr J Gaywood (Chairman)
Cllr Mr B Ramsay
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby

In attendance : Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Cllr Mrs J Burns
7 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mr M Harris.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Special Projects Committee held on 22nd June 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Cllr Mr C Alford arrived at the meeting at 9.15 a.m.

4. United Reformed Church

The Committee considered a report on a meeting with the Mr G Morfett the Synod Secretary of the United Reformed Church held on 9th July 2007, which set a number of possible options on the future use of the site. These included renting the premises to the Parish Council either on a restricted basis at a rent of £12,000 p.a. or on an unrestricted basis at a rent of £16,800 p.a. or redeveloping the site for housing. The Committee expressed some concern about the level of the rent proposed by the Church, particularly as the lease would be let to the Parish Council on a full repairing basis and the Parish Council would be responsible for all other outgoings, such as insurance and utility bills. This being so, the Committee felt that the terms attached to the lease would be too onerous and the level of the rent would be beyond the means of the Parish Council

The Committee examined two possible redevelopment schemes: (1) two storey 8 no., 2-bed units with off street parking and (2) single storey, 6 no 1-bed units with community hall and off street parking.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.35 p.m. to allow members of the public to express their views on the proposals.

The President of the Hartley WI, Mrs A Senneck, explained the current difficulties being experienced by the organisation in respect of declining membership and problems with recruiting younger members. She informed the Committee that the WI Hall was in good condition having recently benefited from repairs to the roof, refurbishment of the kitchen and works to provide a disabled toilet. In addition, the Hall generated a healthy income from its lettings to local organisations and private individual hirers. However, she felt that the Hall was increasingly becoming a liability to the WI and considered that now may be the time to consider very seriously the proposition of donating the hall to the community. Whilst this view was shared by other

members of the WI who were in attendance at the meeting, Mrs Senneck explained that this proposal had yet to be formally placed before the W.I., although initial exploratory discussions with other members of the W.I. on this proposal had been favourably received.

The Chairman thanked the President of the WI for her comments.

The meeting resumed at 9.50 p.m.

The Committee considered this was a very generous offer which should be explored further with the W.I. Furthermore, the Committee felt that the proposal would be well supported by residents and that the President should discuss the matter further with members of the W.I.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) a working group be established jointly with the Parish Council and the Womens Institute to further discussions on the proposal to donate the W.I. Hall to the community,

(2) the offer from the United Reformed Church to rent the church premises to the Parish Council be declined and,

(3) the Council welcome, in principle, the proposal to provide small housing units on the site of the United Reformed Church.

5. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: That, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of minute item 6, "New Burial Ground", on the grounds that the likely disclosure of exempt information would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Members of the public left the meeting at 10.00 a.m.

6. New Burial Ground

The Committee welcomed Mr Glover's support for the provision of the new Burial Ground on land at Manor Field, which was expressed at a meeting of the Council held on 9th July 2007 and confirmed in an e mail dated 17th July 2007. The Committee examined the existing restrictive covenants placed on the land when it was conveyed to the Parish Council in 1976 by the vendor, Mr B Richards, and discussed how the existing covenants could be amended to allow the land known as the "Orchard" at Manor Field to be used for burial purposes.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Council seeks legal advice on possible variations to the covenants on Manor Field.

7. Date of the next meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

