

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8th MARCH 2022 AT THE VILLAGE HALL, COTTAGE ROAD, SOMERTON AT 7.00 P.M.

Councillors present:

R Starling (Chairman)

R Walters (Vice Chairman)

T Jones

B Barker

D Crane

I Wright

J Clift

Minutes Taken by: B Barker

- 1) **Also present:** 7 Residents. **Apologies for absence:** T.Harper (Flegg Community Land Trust), and Sue Bolan (Enabling and Empty Homes Officer, GYBC) had sent their apologies.
- 2) **Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda:** None stated.

Chairman's Announcement:

The public are reminded that the time set aside at the beginning of the meeting is for public comment on the tabled Agenda items only. The public are kindly requested to raise new agenda items with the Chairman or Clerk (or interim replacement) in advance of the meeting so that the Council can give due consideration before discussing at the meeting. Therefore the Council won't be able to comment on any new agenda items raised at the beginning of the meeting. This is in line with the Standing Orders (also including other Parish Councils) and is intended to ensure that meetings are as productive as possible, and to allow for all members of public to have sufficient time to make respective points regarding agenda items. Parishioners are free to contact Councillors to discuss tabled Agenda items in advance of the meeting if they so wish.

- 3) To consider a motion to suspend the meeting to allow members of the public to inform the meeting. Public discussion - 15 minutes allowed.
- 4) **Flegg Community Land Trust:** To decide whether to agree in principle with the Land Trust's suggestions for Somerton. Questions and comments from the floor:
 - a) There was a query as to the type of organisation which would handle the land purchase. This was not known at this time.
 - b) Is there a backup to handle the property should FCLT disband in the future? FCLT will need to address this.
 - c) There was a concern that this small development would "open the door" to further development. Although FCLT would suggest 3 or 4 sites we may be seen to be giving approval for open development in the village.
 - d) It was suggested that FCLT have only achieved 10% response from the village which may not be enough to continue their report.

The public discussion was closed and the meeting resumed with the following input from the Parish Councillors:

T.J. - This scheme could be a wedge which could snowball into more development and therefore he would not support it.

J.C. - Young people need some social housing, which may not be on the open market. The usual planning permission would apply. It is the right thing to do. Therefore she would support the scheme.

B.B. – Villages need accommodation for younger people or they become retirement or holiday villages, lose their services and die. We have many young people who may want to stay here. If we control projects like this we stay in control of who lives here. If we do not, any developer can apply

for planning and we could get uncontrolled development. He suggested we support the project then decide, democratically, with village input, whether any, or none of the suggestions can proceed.

R.W. – FCLT should clarify if there are any over 55 age restrictions.

D.C. – While this is confusing, it is a fact that young people in the village have no chance on the housing ladder, and done properly this would help.

I.W. – Agrees with B.B. basically. Has concerns about why a young person would want to live in Somerton, but this is just a proposal for further discussion.

R.W. – Agrees with T.J that there is not much support from the village, and there is no guarantee against expansion. If FCLT identifies further sites, that may be a problem. It could then be taken out of our hands as the Parish Council only have advisory influence. Also, it would seem that the suggested site by the Village Hall Committee of Cottage Road may be their preferred site, and that the FCLT may be more effective in getting planning approval.

R.S.- FCLT would have to come back to the P.C. for any approval. He would, however, not support Cottage Road as a site.

T.J.- An example of unrestricted development is Caister Bypass, and is against using agricultural land for building, as there is no infrastructure to support it.

R.S.- The centre of Somerton may be ruled out as planning would probably only be allowed on higher ground.

Proposal: T.J. - To not support the scheme. Seconded: R.W. - 2 votes.

Proposal: J.C. – To support the scheme just to the next stage i.e. to identify the sites.

Seconded: D.C. – 5 votes. Motion carried.

5) Meeting closed at 7.28pm