



MINUTES of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Friday 8 November 2019**

Present: Roger Cartwright Town Mayor
Anne Eves Deputy Town Mayor

Graham Allen
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Emma Coe-Gunnell White
Matthew Cornish
Peter Chapman
Robert Duggan
Robert Eggleston
Lee Gibbs
Janice Henwood
Simon Hicks
Tofojjul Hussain
Joseph Foster
Sarah Lawrence*
Sylvia Neumann
Max Nielsen*
Kathleen Willis

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

(18.00)

60. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Nil

61. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Nil

62. **LAND SALE**
Cllr Eggleston explained the reason for the matter to be considered as confidential. It involved the sale of a piece of land on auction which the Council may be interested in. The Council could not discuss its strategy in open forum as this would tip off any other potential bidder. The minutes of the meeting would be open to the public.

Cllr Eggleston set out the reasons to consider the purchase of the land which was a bridleway in Oak Hall Park. These were:

1. It is a well maintained spoke of the Green Circle and a useful corridor which the Town Council could consider maintaining.
2. The future is unpredictable and should this piece of land fall into private hands it could be lost to the community if that person decided to close it or use it for his own uses.

Concern was expressed that a PROW can be moved under certain circumstances and there is therefore a potential risk that it could be lost to development. The Council should consider protecting it. There is also the possibility of a land swap.

Cllr Barrett-Miles explained that it is a Public Right of Way (PROW) and would therefore be difficult to develop. WSCC maintained the actual footpath (surface). He pointed out that there were a large number of trees which any owner would have to maintain. A PROW is protected and can only be moved in certain circumstances eg if it was in the centre of a field and it was moved to the side. To close it would require permission from the PROW committee of WSCC as well as planning permission. A PROW has the same legal status as a highway. To buy this piece of land would result in the Council taking on a liability. There would be no benefit to the Council. It is protected in law and in terms of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Concern was expressed that it could be made into a road and people could sell their backyards. As it is a bridleway no vehicles are permitted on it, only walkers, cyclists and horses. There is no way that any owner would get the necessary permission from the PROW committee or Planning Committee to use it for vehicular access. Any development would be against the Green Circle.

There is no benefit to anyone who might want to acquire it. With regard to maintenance, every PROW is inspected at least every 15 months and the necessary maintenance done and landowners contacted to carry out maintenance where appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That no further action be taken to acquire the piece of land in Oak Hall Park which is a public bridleway.

63. Meeting terminated at 18.35.