

**CONFIDENTIAL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
THE PARISH COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2014
7.30PM AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Bowell, Lloyd, Barling, Alexander, Ness-Collins, Toms, Muncey, Toomey, Muggridge, Hopkinson, Staines and Marshall.

Members of the public: none

Clerk: Rebecca Luckin

Minutes

1. **Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from Cllrs Willett and Rogers.
2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – Cllr Barling declared an interest as a WSCC Councillor and member of the Cricket Club. Cllrs Bowell and Muncey declared interests as members of the Cricket Club.
3. **CONFIDENTIAL** - due to the nature of the business the Chairman **proposed** that this item be taken under Standing Orders 1 d), **seconded** by Cllr Lloyd, **Agreed**.

To consider Counsel's advice regarding the rectification of Village Green status of the Memorial Playing Field and decide on the way forward.

The Chairman summarised the situation to date and referred to the issue of 'fettered access' and the impact upon the Parish Council application to place a skate park facility on the Memorial Playing Field:

- HDC's Counsel's advice had recommended rectification of the application for VG93 in order to remove the impediment to progressing the application to place a skate board facility on the Memorial Playing Field. Councillors were of the opinion that the application for village green status had been 'fast tracked' in order to prevent the planning application from being successful.
- Impact upon existing sports clubs (Village Green law does not allow clubs to fetter access) has been considered and advice taken regarding VG65.
- Councillors were disappointed by lack of support and lack of pertinent and timely advice from HDC and WSCC.

- Headley's Solicitors had provided Counsel's opinion regarding the process and likely outcome of an attempt to rectify the applications for Village Green status. VG93, as a more recent application, had a better chance of rectification, whereas VG65, granted in 1974 and originally requested by Steyning Parish Council, was less likely to be successfully rectified. Cllr Muncey noted that there was a 60% chance of success on VG93 and 40% on VG65 and it would not be advisable to spend public money with those chances of success.
- Cllr Lloyd noted that there was no mention in historic Parish Council minutes of Village Green registration, only Common Land registration. It is believed that the land (VG65) was inadvertently registered by the then Chairman as Village Green instead of Common Land.
- Discussions had taken place with Sports Clubs regarding the impact of Village Green status upon their activities. Steyning Parish Council, as landlord, is obligated to uphold Village Green law, with regard to sports club use of the MPF.
- Councillors were of the opinion that a mandate to provide a skate park existed, and that democracy was being undermined by the actions of the Friends of the Memorial Playing Field. Threats of litigation are intimidating.
- Councillors were also mindful that no issues should be left outstanding as the 2015 elections approached. Councillors expressed concern that litigation would be expensive if the application to remove village green status was lost, and none wished to expose a future council to unknown costs.
- With regard to the management of the Village Greens, Councillors would not wish to reduce the public enjoyment of the MPF. For example, a bouncy castle request could be allowed, provided that access was available to all.

Prior to proposals, Cllr Alexander asked for Councillors names to be recorded against their votes.

Proposals:

1. Cllr Lloyd **proposed** that 'this council shall not deregister VG65', **seconded** by Cllr Alexander. **Agreed unanimously.**
2. Cllr Lloyd **proposed** that 'no land swap of the land occupied by the clubs shall be considered, at this time, by this council', **seconded** by Cllr Hopkinson. **Agreed unanimously.**
3. Cllr Lloyd **proposed** that 'this council will not apply to the High Court for a rectification of VG93', **seconded** by Cllr Hopkinson. A vote was held, those **in favour** were Cllrs Barling, Muncey, Staines, Hopkinson, Toms, Marshall, Ness-Collins, Lloyd and Bowell. Those **Against** were Cllrs Muggridge, Toomey and Alexander. **Motion Carried.** Cllr Toomey **proposed** that this proposal should have an amendment 'this council will not apply for rectification since there is insufficient time for execution of the process of rectification', in the absence of a seconder, the amendment was **not carried.**

4. Cllr Lloyd **proposed** that 'at this meeting, decisions should not be made regarding the management of VG65 and VG93, but instead a meeting of a working party of the Full Council, should make a recommendation to Full Council', **seconded** by Cllr Barling. **Agreed unanimously.**

Councillors discussed communication. A leaflet / press release will be provided to all households. The Chair and Vice-Chair will draft a press release immediately and circulate a draft to Councillors prior to release. A document for delivery to all households will be ready for distribution within the week. Clubs and supporters will be advised in advance.

4. **Millennium Award for 2014**

Councillors considered nominations for the Millennium Award for 2014 and agreed that volunteers, rather than employees should be considered.

Cllr Barling **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that Jill Allen, Mike Warren, and Fiona Wright all receive the Millennium Award for 2014. **Agreed.**

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed: Date: 8th December 2014
Chairman