

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Amenities Committee held on Thursday 3rd November 2011 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road, Royal Wootton Bassett

PRESENT: Councillors: Susan Doyle, Linda Frost, Owen Gibbs, Sue Hughes
Mike Leighfield, and Jenny Stratton.

Also in attendance: Councillors: Peter Roberts, Audrey Wannell and Chris Wannell.

Officers in Attendance: Johnathan Bourne, Town Clerk, Michelle Temple, Administrative Team Leader, Kalpesh Patel, Council Accountant and Emily Maiden, Administrative Assistant.

23. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mary Champion and Steve Walls.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007.

RESOLVED to note that no Declarations of Interest were made.

25. PRESENTATION

To receive a short presentation from Guy Bailey and colleagues, about the redevelopment of the Beaufort Brewery.

Guy Bailey of RPS, supported by colleagues including Ian Sullivan of Ian Sullivan Architectural Design Ltd, gave a short presentation about the possible redevelopment of the Beaufort Brewery site. Architectural drawings were circulated.

The presentation covered the following points:-

- The area surrounding the Beaufort Brewery building is being developed by David Wilson Homes and Persimmon Homes, who are now about halfway through the project. Originally, the Brewery building was going to be used by a local art group, however this didn't happen and the building was transferred back to the developer, in this case, David Wilson Homes.
- An interest was expressed to develop the building for both residential and retail space. The main building will retain as much of its original character as possible, whilst to either side of the building, two 'wings' will be built to replace the poor quality buildings which are currently in place.
- The idea of the proposal is to keep an 'industrial' feel to the area, in order to preserve the historic connection to the site. The 'wings' will not compete with the main building, and instead look to complement it. There will be a green area plus tree planting to ensure the area is pedestrian friendly and geared towards those who will visit the retail area on foot.

At this stage, planning permission has not yet been sought, and the developers wished to present to Members to gauge the general opinion of the architectural drawings, as well as answer any concerns.

The main concerns put to Guy Bailey and Ian Sullivan are outlined below.

- Many retailers in Royal Wootton Bassett High Street are closing their outlets. With this in mind, it is hard to see what is driving the need for retail units at the Beaufort Brewery site. Guy Bailey and Ian Sullivan explained that a feasibility study undertaken in 2004 showed that retail was an appropriate use for some of the units in the proposal. Despite there having been economical issues nationwide since this study was published, the site will serve 400

new residential units on the St Ivel site, so demand will be generated in that respect.

- Parking and pedestrian access were discussed, as there were some concerns that some people using the site may think it feasible to park on Station Road. By making the retail units accessible by walkways, and placing benches in the area, it is hoped that people will be encouraged to leave their vehicle at home. The planners were interested in the idea of installing a new pedestrian crossing in the vicinity, and are looking to raise this issue with Wiltshire Council's Highway Department.

The planners believe that the project represents a commitment to a historical building in the town, which can be preserved for the future. It was felt by the committee that the building had been neglected for too long, developing the site is therefore a good idea.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bailey for his team's presentation.

26. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- The Chairman extended her thanks to all those involved in making sure that the Ceremonial Appreciation Event on October 16th 2011 went well, including all the Office staff, and the Councillors who helped with the printing and distribution of the programme.
- The Exhibition of Appreciation Gifts in the library will now run until Saturday 12th November 2011. A volunteer to man the exhibit was needed for two hours between 2pm-4pm on Wednesday 9th November 2011. Councillor Mike Leighfield volunteered to cover this slot.

27. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED to confirm and sign minutes of a meeting of the Amenities Committee held on Thursday 8th September 2011 (A/3/2011-2012). Copy previously circulated.

28. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Committee was asked to consider making recommendations to the Revenue and Resources Committee for its budgetary position in the 2012-2013 financial year. Copies of the draft estimates will be circulated at the meeting and both the Town Clerk and the Council's Accountant were available to discuss the figures with Members.

There was an opportunity to go through the numbers slowly and thoroughly, in the form of a workshop.

The reason that the budget was handled in this way on this occasion was due to Annual Leave commitments following the Event on the 16th October 2011, which had not allowed adequate time to prepare the budget prior to the production of the Agenda.

Members were reminded that the draft estimates represent ongoing commitments and service provision at current levels. Changes have only been incorporated where there is a clear intent by the Council to undertake change following discussion with the Chairman.

Members were also asked to note that to avoid the problems previously experienced, all recharges have been set to zero for budgetary purposes only.

The Committee was asked to consider the draft budget for the 2012-2013 financial year and make recommendations accordingly.

The budget process was explained to Members in order to understand where we are in the cycle. Although the Royal Event of October 16th 2011 has led to a slight delay in the first stage of the budget process, the cycle will be back running to schedule by the time of the Revenue and Resources meeting of 24th November 2011. The Revenue and Resources Committee will then take the budget onwards to Full Council, where the precept will be set before Christmas. The precept figures don't need to be taken to Wiltshire Council until late January 2012, so the Council has allowed plenty of time in case anything needs to be looked at again.

The Committee then considered the budget figures for Amenities, as proposed in the document for 2012-2013. Points of note were:-

- A reduction in the budget for bench seats. This is due to the fact that the Council project of gradually replacing the seats has almost vanished. Virtually all have been replaced with very durable, very hard to vandalise bench seats. This project can therefore be scaled down.
- Having sold our interest in the Ballards Ash site, the figures under this heading will look different for the 2012-2013 budget. Several items under the Ballards Ash heading, such as ‘Subscriptions’ and ‘Telephone and Fax’ will not be passed onto the Rugby Club yet. One of the reasons for this is that the Town Council will be keeping a Member of Groundstaff on to help with the transition. A telephone is therefore essential as a piece of health and safety equipment.
- The Civic Centre figures have been calculated in a ‘business as usual’ fashion. This means that any changes over the Civic Centre situation will place the Council in a better financial position.
- The Council is receiving income from Floral Display Sponsorship, thanks to the hard work of the Accountant.
- It is hoped that some money can be saved at this year’s Christmas Lights Event, as David Wilson Homes are looking to sponsor a part of the day.

Overall, the precept is set to stay stable. The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and the Accountant on behalf of the Committee, for the thorough explanation of the figures.

RESOLVED to adopt the figures to take to the Revenue and Resources Committee meeting on November 24th 2011.

29. PRESS RELEASES

The Committee was asked to consider whether it would like any Press Releases issued in respect of the Committee Agenda items.

RESOLVED not to issue any Press Releases

The meeting closed at 9pm