

Findern Parish Council
Clerk: Mrs Clare Orme
Findern Parish Rooms, Lower Green, Findern, Derbyshire. DE65 6AD
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**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FINDERN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30TH JULY 2015 AT
FINDERN VILLAGE HALL COMMENCING AT 6.30PM**

Present:

Cllr M Goodall (in the Chair)

Cllr B Goodall, Cllr R Brook, Cllr S Brook, Cllr Smith, Cllr Williamson, Cllr Harrison and Cllr Johnson

There were 51 members of the public in attendance.

AGENDA

PART I – NON EXEMPT INFORMATION

1. Minute Number 1725/15 - To receive apologies for absence

There were no apologies of absence.

2. Minute Number 1726/15 - Variation of the Order of Business

There were no Variations to the Order of Business.

3. Minute Number 1727/15 - Declaration of Members Interests.

There were no Declarations of Members Interests.

4. Minute Number 1728/15/A - Public Speaking – (10 Minutes)

Minute Number 1728/15/A – Police Representatives Report.

There was no Police Representative present at the meeting and there was nothing to report.

Minute Number 1728/15/B – District Council Representative Report

There was no District Council Representative present at the meeting and there was nothing to report.

Minute Number 1728/15/C – County Council Representatives Report

Cllr Ford gave his apologies, there was nothing to report.

Minute Number 1728/15/D – Public Speaking

The Chair read out her report as follows:

Following the construction of the A50 an area of land between the canal and the new road, known as Stanhope Wood and Stanhope Hole, was left which was no longer suitable for agricultural use. An agreement was drawn up between the landowner, Findern Parish Council and Findern Footpaths Group allowing the group to develop this land into a managed environmental area. This has been very successful resulting this year in the first sightings of the White Letter Hairstreak Butterfly, which is an endangered species, the first year that the Grasshopper Warbler has been heard, a rare species and an increase in sighting from one bee orchid in June 2012 to more than 20 this year.

This success has been achieved by the Footpaths Group due to sustained management of the site.

Educational visits from children of Findern Primary School have taken place and the Group are planning to extend these visits.

Sadly the landowner died in 2011 before a new lease could be drawn up.

The new landowner has been reticent about renewing the lease allowing work to continue and members of the public access to roam mainly due to having experienced problems with other Footpath Groups. He is in fact very interested and active in conservation, something we discussed at length with him when Heather and I met with him earlier this month. We had a very interesting and amicable meeting with him and found him to be a very pleasant gentleman.

This meeting culminated in me asking him if he would consider selling this land to us. He agreed to us having a professional valuation and we employed Eaton and Hollis to undertake this task and their valuation is £14,000.00 to £17,000.00.

If it is agreed tonight that the Parish Council should proceed, we will employ Eaton and Hollis to act on our behalf. The cost of this would be £500.00 plus VAT and the service of a solicitor approximately £1,000.00 plus VAT. (we would be able to reclaim the VAT).

If the Parish Council acquire this land the ongoing maintenance costs will be no more than they have been for the past 12 years, as all the work is carried out by volunteers.

Our existing Public Liability Insurance will cover Stanhope Hole and Stanhope Wood and we will be covered for a sum of up to £60,000.00 for street furniture, i.e. benches.

In summing up I hope you can see how important this land is to the village, not only because of all I have talked about, but because it is such a beautiful place for all of Findern Residents to visit.

Resolved: At the chairpersons discretion Public Speaking was extended to allow members of the public to have their say or to make any comment on the Parish Council's proposal to purchase Stanhope Hole and Stanhope Wood.

Members of the Public made the following comments:

- The Parish Council were asked how they would raise the finances to purchase the land – The Parish Council's reserves were reported at this stage.
- It was explained that the Parish Council originally held a 10 year lease agreement for the land but this had ran out a few years ago.
- If this land has no agricultural value and cannot be used for anything else, then surly it is worthless – It was explained that if the land had been valued as agricultural land it would have been a lot more expensive. It was also reported that everything has some kind of value no matter what it may be.
- It was reported that the land is very beautiful.
- Mr Cox would have given the land to the Parish Council.
- The land has a lot of value to the people that use it.
- Not too long ago an allotment on Common Piece Lane was sold for £5,000.00 and this was a lot smaller piece of land, the valuation received seems like good value for money.
- If the Parish Council owned the land would this be able to attract grant funding in the future for the maintenance of the area – It was reported that this would allow the Parish Council to tap into further grant funding in the future as the landowner.
- The Footpaths Group over the last 12 years have achieved some great work over the years and it is amazing to see what they have developed and we should be proud of the Footpaths Group.
- There is a public footpath that runs alongside of the land.
- It would be an excellent asset for the village.
- The Parish Council had been informed by the Police that this area was widely used by people, and this was known from the cameras that were installed on the land by the Police.
- The Parish Council were expecting the value of the land to be a lot higher than it has been valued for.
- It was reported that the land was roughly just under 7 acres. The land on Heath Lane which is a lot smaller was up for auction last Friday and the starting value was £10k. The Parish Council were informed that this land went to tender.
- It was thought that the landowner had already had the land values himself and it had come to roughly the same as the valuation received by the Parish Council.
- It was agreed that the Parish Council buy the land or the village will lose the land and the right to use it.
- It was reported that Stanhope Hole and Stanhope Wood was the first site that the Footpaths Group had developed some 12 years ago. There are memorial trees on the land that people have paid for. If we lose the land what will happen to the memorial trees. It is a great asset to Findern.

The Chair asked the members of the public for a vote of what they would like the Parish Council to do as follows:

Resolved: All members of the public in attendance were unanimous in the agreement that the Parish Council should purchase Stanhope Hole and Stanhope Wood on behalf and for the benefit of the village.

Resolved: Members of the public were happy to leave the negotiations to the Parish Council members to try and obtain the best deal for the village.

5. Minute Number 1729/15 - Proposal to purchase Stanhope Wood and Stanhope Hole – Power to acquire land - Local Government Act 1972 ss.124,126,127

Resolved: The Parish Council agreed that Stanhope Wood and Stanhope Hole would be an asset to the local community and the surrounding area.

Resolved: The Parish Council agreed that they should purchase the land for the local community.

Resolved: The Parish Council agreed to start the negotiations from £14,000.00.

Resolved: The Chair was given delegated powers to continue to correspond with Eaton and Hollis and a Solicitor with a view to purchasing the land.

Signed.....Dated.....