

SUDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2020

Councillors Present	Jacqui Colbourne Robert Dixon, Jenny Innes (Chair) Angela McNally and David Neale
Also Present	11 members of the public and Sue Cook (Clerk)

20/026

There were no Apologies.

20/027

Vane Arms –

CLlr Dixon informed the meeting that he has spoken to Tim Ward, who is the Everards Director of Property. Mr Ward confirmed that they do wish to sell the pub but are not actively marketing it at present. They are expecting Aaron to leave "in the next month or two" and as they are not planning to put in an interim manager, the pub will then close unless somebody can be found to run it on an interim basis. They would welcome a bid from the Sudborough community and will be happy to work with us to help us achieve that outcome - provided we can satisfy them early on that a community purchase is realistic and that we are serious about bidding. Otherwise, they will be looking to actively market the pub through Fleurets once Aaron has left. They have very recently worked with the community in Tollerton (Nottinghamshire) to sell them their village pub. The process was pushed through in 8 months and the pub was only closed for 6 weeks. Mr Ward had put him in touch with the person who led the Tollerton bid and that person had provided some useful information about how their pub had been purchased jointly by their Parish Council and a Community Benefit Society which had been specially formed for that purpose. Mr Ward told CLlr Dixon that Everards have had the Vane Arms valued by Fleurets at £425,000 with vacant possession and that is the price they are looking for. Everards want the property to continue as a pub. They have no intention of selling it for any other purpose or use. They are gradually selling off their village pubs, as the opportunity arises, and have had reasonable success in attracting private buyers to run them as pubs. Although they aren't planning to install an interim manager once Aaron has left, they will be open to the idea of giving a short-term 'licence to occupy' to someone who would be willing to run the pub until such time as it is sold. This would be particularly helpful if a community bid is in the offing and there is likely to be a long delay before the purchase can go through. If we, as a community, know of anyone suitable who would be willing to take on this role, we should let him know and Everards will be happy to consider them. Mr Ward will be very happy to come and talk to us at any time.

Mr Mike Ringrose has been doing some investigating on behalf of the Parish Council as to how funds can be raised and reported to the meeting: his initial research has shown that there are a lot of ways to raise funds including the Parish Council owning and operating a CIC, more research is required. A bank may consider lending the Parish Council £100K which would be paid back over 20 years at £10K per annum. A commercial lender would want assurances as to who and how it would be run. Aaron was helpful in giving Mr Ringrose information about the pub's finances, it has a turnover of £200k – £250K per annum with a rent of £22K and makes approximately £30K profit per annum. The pub itself is rundown, damp, window frame are rotten, some of the thatch need replacing all these repairs will cost approximately £15K. One idea to make it profitable would be to turn part of it into a coffee shop and promote the

letting rooms more. Aaron has a lot of fixtures and fittings of his own which he will be taking with him when he leaves, this includes kitchen equipment. Mr Ringrose agreed to contact CAMRA to get their advice and involvement in the project.

A resident suggested that the tenants should perhaps be a husband and wife team and be give room to run it as a free house so that it can trade at what hours it likes along with the Coffee Shop.

Cllr Colbourne has drafted up a flyer to go out to all the Villagers via email, Sudborough Facebook Page and on the Parish Councils website. The wording of the flyer was proposed by Cllr McNally as "Please confirm if you would like The Vane Arms Public House to stay open? YES or NO? Furthermore, dependant on your responses, the Parish Council are looking at the feasibility of setting up a company which will acquire the freehold of the pub for a sum that is not yet known. It would not be our intention to the run the "actual" business but to find a suitable tenant. We believe it may be possible for a company to borrow £100,000 on a 20-year mortgage, however, further monies would be required for the freehold and repairs. Security might be available in the freehold to protect your investment; a return may also be available. We would ask for expressions of interest to arrive with us no later than the 23rd March 2020, this is due to the short time frame in which we have to operate. Please state below your donation and/or investment and we would ask that these are returned to the Parish Clerk via email:

sudboroughparishcouncil@gmail.com

Cllr Neale seconded the proposal and was agreed by everyone.

20/028 Date of the next Full Parish Council Meeting: Wednesday 25th March 2020

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Confirmed that the minutes are a true and accurate record

Chairman

Dated