

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING RE SUCKLEY SCHOOL

Held on Monday 29th APRIL 2013 at 7.30 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: Cllr A W Huband, Cllr J Green, Cllr C Luton, Cllr P Griffiths, Cllr A Grieve
Cllr L Devenish, Cllr A Lewis
Non-Council attendees (by invitation) Mrs Diana Holloway (Chair of Suckley
School Board of Governors) and Revd A Bullock (Vicar – Suckley Church)

Apologies: Cllr P Whatley

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk)

Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other Disclosable Interests falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct.

Cllr Mrs L Devenish declared “Other Disclosable Interests” as ChurchWarden of Suckley Church and a member of the Board of Governors of Suckley School. Cllr Anne Lewis declared “Other Disclosable Interests” as ChurchWarden of Suckley Church.

The Clerk had received Dispensation Requests from Cllr L Devenish and Cllr A Lewis relating to the above Disclosable Interests to enable them to participate and vote on all items relating to Suckley School at this meeting and any future meetings. This Dispensation to remain in place whilst remaining as a member of the Parish Council up to May 2015.

The Parish Council granted a Dispensation to both Councillors. Proposed by Cllr A W Huband and seconded by Cllr J Green.

The Meeting was adjourned for Public Question Time/Participation

No Public Questions

31/13 PRESENT SITUATION

Cllr A W Huband summarised the actions taken by the Council so far in their efforts to gather evidence of ownership of Suckley School. Worcestershire County Council had registered the site with the Land Registry in August 2005. This had not come to light until the School applied to become an Academy and was then granted a 125 year Lease from the County Council in July 2011. This alerted Cllr Huband who had seen a deed some years ago granting the ownership of the site from Mr Ockey to either the ChurchWardens of Suckley Church or Trustees of the School dated around 1874/5. Both he and Cllr P Whatley had visited the Hive in Worcester to search the school archives and had found and copied a draft/proposed deed from Mr Ockey gifting the school site to the Trusteeship of the Churchwardens dated 1871 (prior to the school being built). However, they had been unable to locate the actual deed which had been seen by Cllr Huband. Cllr Huband had also obtained from other sources references to the fact that the County Council did not own the school, dating back to the early and mid eighties when many small country schools were being closed down by the Local Education Authority.

32/13 OPTIONS/GENERAL DISCUSSION

The copies of documents relating to Suckley School were examined and it was agreed that put together these could form enough evidence to support the Parish Council's argument that the County Council did not own the School. Mrs D Holloway confirmed that personal Holloway records and files had been searched, and no deed relating to the school could be found. It was more likely that this deed would be held in Church records. There did not appear to be a Deed of Reverter (as there was with Alfrick School) in the draft deed, so the land would not be handed back to whoever might be the owner should the school ever close. It was, therefore, important that this asset of land and buildings remained a community benefit for the future, and consideration should be given to forming a Charitable Community Trust. The Revd Bullock believed that most of the Church records would now be held at The Hive, and he, together with the ChurchWardens would have to sign an Authorisation for anyone to inspect these records as otherwise the Hive might not release them. We also needed to find out what evidence the County Council had for registering the site and what research, if any, did they do at the time. Cllr A Lewis reported that Appeals had to be within 10 years for registered land and 12 years for unregistered land. This gave us until August 2015 to register an Appeal. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be the most appropriate body to take action, and it would represent all parties i.e. Church, School and Parish.

33/13 ACTION AGREEMENT

After the above discussion, the following actions were agreed:

- (i) Suckley Parish Council to challenge the registration of the School by the County Council without delay. The Clerk to investigate how this could be done and action as soon as possible. Proposed by Cllr L Devenish and seconded by Cllr C Luton
- (ii) The Clerk to draft out an Authorisation for the Revd Bullock and ChurchWardens to sign (to be printed on Suckley Church letterhead) to enable Councillors & Clerk to access Church records relating to Suckley Church and School. Proposed by Cllr A Grieve and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (iii) To collect as much information as possible to build our case (from as many sources as possible) A further extraordinary Council meeting would then have to take place prior to arranging a meeting with Worcestershire County Council Legal Department.