

Tutbury Old School Community Association

Minutes of a meeting of Tutbury Old School Community Association held on Thursday 26th March 2009 at the Tutbury Institute, High Street, Tutbury at 7.30 pm

Present

Joanna Woodberry, Jane Taylor, Jill Page, Caroline Stringer, Malcolm Watson, Councillor Bob Fraser, Bill Crossley, Boyd Casswell, Pete Steadman, John Roots, Arthur Tipper, Graham Lowther, Duncan Austin and Tim Spencer Smith.

Apologies

Trevor Hathaway, Liz Staples, Malcolm Wardle, Carolyn Coxon, Di Needham, Josie Jones, Dave Kennedy and Pat Harvey.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd February 2009 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

The possibility of applying for a listing for the building will be on the next Tutbury Parish Council agenda. The pros and cons of listing will be fully investigated before any application was made. Tutbury Parish Council and TOSCA might have different reasons for listing the building. Councillor Fraser thought it unlikely it will be sold and houses or flats built. However, the site has been identified as a site with potential for housing; one of three sites in Tutbury.

Report from Councillor Bob Fraser and Community Asset Transfer

It was established that Joanna Woodberry had received an acknowledgement of her letter from Peter Traves, apologising for the delay and offered a substantive reply in the near future. This reply has not yet been received.

There followed some discussion about the forthcoming County Council elections, to be held on June 4th, as effectively the last full meeting of the council had taken place involving the current members. The elections will inevitably mean new members from all the political parties, as some members will not be standing in June. Councillor Fraser is confident that the delay will not harm TOSCA's chance of succeeding in acquiring the old school. However, the resident user groups, in particular pre-school, are getting increasingly nervous and need to know what it to happen. Joanna's letter had specifically requested a meeting to find a way forward but as yet there is no answer.

There then followed a discussion about the way the council operates and the difference between officers and members.

Jill Page asked if it was worth getting more vocal about the situation; it was agreed any publicity would be good. Councillor Fraser agreed it could help but it must be born in mind that it is not worthwhile addressing it at the council at the moment for reasons explained earlier.

There then followed a general discussion about housing.

A reply had been received from Baroness Andrews to the letter sent by Janet Dean MP on TOSCA's behalf. The letter gave details of websites of which Joanna was already aware but in addition mentioned the Asset Transfer Unit. Joanna spoke to someone at the ATU, who confirmed that councils are not obliged to make community asset transfers. The impression given was that it was not exciting enough just to preserve an asset but the use has to be innovative and creative. Stoke on Trent are quite keen on asset transfer, often agreeing a long lease and low rent.

The vulnerability of pre-school as a business and employer was discussed again.

Business Plan

After some discussion, it was agreed that the business plan needs to be finalised and sent before June. The business plan was invited in December so it needs to be completed and presented but not with an offer. More letters of support are needed. Tutbury Parish Council will send one.

Joanna had attended two workshops about demonstrating how facilities could be put to other uses and making the best use of facilities for instance with events, parties, holiday clubs and internet cafes. The importance of being proactive and creative was stressed. John Roots suggested approaching village organisations to ask if they could make use of the old school.

Joanna and Jane had visited the youth club on the Tuesday and Joanna on the Thursday, before the family fun night to invite the young people to get involved. They had found that the feedback about TOSCA had been negative and the youth workers not very interested. There seemed a general lack of communication about what TOSCA is trying to do.

It was agreed to hold the next TOSCA meeting on a Thursday or Tuesday at the old school when youth club are meeting.

A completion date towards the end of April was proposed. John Roots suggested that the business plan should be structured in the sense of policy, organisations and rules. It was agreed that the business plan does need to have a different format that the one initially presented.

Review of Family Fun Night

The event went well with plenty of people attending.

and event. Thanks go to everyone who contributed to the evening; Bill's research, Dave's display boards and schoolroom, Sue Fraser for the loan of items from Sudbury, Pauline Wood for arranging the loan of items from Tutbury Museum, Sue

Adams for doing the refreshments, pre-school for the cakes and the scout group leaders for running the skittles.

Scouts have an event planned for 4th July which will be a barbecue and disco with the Tutbury Horticultural Society show at the old school.

Tutbury Christmas Festival committee may also do an event at the old school, to raise money for the 2009 event.

Correspondence

Letter from Janet Dean MP, with copy of letter from Baroness Andrews

Letter from Peter Traves

Letter from CASES with membership application form

Letter about GuideStar UK website

Any Other Business

Bill Crossley has expressed an interest in having Mr Reg Pye's book 'A School Intended and Since Built; reprinted. Arthur Tipper told the meeting the sad news that Mr Pye had died on early on the previous day. Arthur offered to speak to Mr Pye's son to ask if he thought his father would have approved of a reprint.

Jill Page had been encouraged to approach Richard Wakefield School to ask if pre-school could re-locate. However, Jill explained that the preference was to stay at the old school; a move to the school would mean a loss of all the funding for 3 year olds and consequent loss of staff. The move to the school is a backup plan which they felt had to be considered of the worst came to the worst.

Pete Steadman had heard a rumour that a team from Tutbury Tigers FC is going to play at the old school. Bill Crossley confirmed that they have asked if they can play at the Cornmill Lane playing field, which is rented out by Tutbury Parish Council to a number of teams already.

Arthur Tipper had noted the Deputy Leader for Regeneration showing off car parking in the borough and so had written to compliment him on the car parking at Uttoxeter and had taken the opportunity to mention car parking in Tutbury.

Joanna had expected some new faces at the meeting who had asked her about the future of the car park but she had made it plain that TOSCA was concentrating on the building rather than the car park. Councillor Fraser confirmed that nothing had happened since ESBC had put in a very low offer and now ESBC had no money for the car park anyway.

Duncan Austin had invited the Chairman of the South Derbyshire Badger Group to the old school to examine if there was evidence of a sett. There was no evidence but there may be a sett in the adjoining field. Someone suggested asking Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to survey the area to see if there were any endangered or special species, as bats had been spotted during the summer.

The Heritage Lottery fund has money for preserving old buildings, which the old school undoubtedly is, as well as a venue for the resident groups.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 28th April to be held at Tutbury Old School, Cornmill Lane, Tutbury at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm