



Gnosall Parish Council

(Including the wards of Moreton & Knightley).

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Gnosall Parish Council

held on Monday 29th January 2024 at 7.00pm in the Grosvenor Centre

Present

Cllr G Gregory (in the Chair), Cllr K Ingram, Cllr G Payne, Cllr M Holmes, Cllr C Haycock, Cllr G Symons, Cllr L Pearson, Cllr M Sullivan, Cllr D Webb, Cllr S Powell, Cllr P Alker, Cllr T Simkin, Cllr M Booth, Cllr M Nicholls along with J Cooper, Clerk.

Public Open Forum - (10 minutes)

There were no members of the public attending.

24/012 To Receive Apologies and Record Absences.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr A Mills. It was noted there is a vacancy following the recent resignation of Cllr D Stredder.

24/013 To Record Any Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Simkin declared an interest as a family member is a member of Council staff.

Cllr Alker declared an interest in any discussions regarding the website.

To exclude members of the press and public whilst confidential legal matters are discussed.

There were no members of the press or public to exclude.

24/014 To discuss legal matters following meetings/communication with the Council's solicitor :

a) The sale of land owned by Severn Trent Water

Following a report shared with Council at a meeting held in July 2023 at which it was confirmed that Severn Trent Water own the track from the A518 to the allotment site and the field beyond, Severn Trent Water had informed the Clerk that there are plans to include the land in a forthcoming auction. An anomaly had been raised in which plans retained by STW do not correlate with how the land is defined by existing boundaries. One small piece of land that STW have in their possession according to plans, is within an allotment plot and has been for many years. Another small piece of land STW do not own but has been for many years beyond the fenced boundary and in STW's field. The two areas of land are very similar in size. The Clerk had suggested to STW via the Council's solicitor that the two parcels of land are swapped to ensure a straight edged boundary but this had not been accepted by STW who wished to sell the northern piece of land (currently in an allotment plot) to the parish council for £250. Severn Trent Water has also requested the Parish Council cover legal costs, which arose because GPC believed the land in question belonged to them and had had legal advice substantiating

this point but STW subsequently produced very old evidence never before seen to prove beyond doubt that they, in fact, owned it.

This was discussed and the following was agreed:

1. Hand Morgan & Owen to be asked whether there is an option for the small triangle of land that has been part of an allotment for many years, to be retained by the parish council under adverse possession.
2. The Parish Council, via HMO, to enquire with STW if they wish to purchase the lower triangle of land from the Parish Council to straighten the boundary. Council felt a straight edged boundary would be more attractive to a potential purchaser. If STW would like to buy the land, the fee would be identical to what STW is asking GPC to pay for the northern triangle ie £250.
3. That each party cover their own legal fees.

It was further agreed that:

- 1) the Clerk would review the council's reserve funds and report to council at the next meeting to allow council to make an informed decision as to whether to join the auction to bid for the land.
- 2) To check the council's insurance policy to determine what legal cover is included.
- 3) To have further discussions with Hand Morgan & Owen should Severn Trent Water make further demands on the council to cover their fees.
- 4) Consider mediation or contacting an ombudsman.

b) An update on land registration

It was noted that registration of council owned land is progressing, albeit slowly, with Land Registry.

c) A response to communication regarding the parish council

Cllrs received copies of extracts from social media sites where two separate posts made on local sites on 24th and 27th January contained libelous comments made by the same person about the parish council. This was discussed and it was agreed to take legal advice before further decisions were made.

24/015 To confirm the date and time of the next meeting.

12th February 2024 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

