

**Minutes of the public meeting held in West Halton Village Hall Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
**18.30 regarding the future of the Butchers Arms Public House**

28 members of the community attended along with Parish Councillors Mr John Clough, Mrs Janet van Der Westhuizen, Mr Ian Williams, NLC Ward Councillor Ralph Ogg, Mr Charles Dent (Parish Council Chair) and Parish Clerk Mrs Frances Altoft.

Mr Charles Dent welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the objective of the meeting was to outline the current situation with regards to the Butchers Arms. The Parish Council have registered the public house as a community asset in 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021. By taking this action, if the owner decides to put the freehold up for general sale, it provides the community with a moratorium period during which a community group can be established with the view to purchasing the property. The freehold of the Butcher Arms was put up for sale 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The first moratorium period is of 6 weeks as from the date of initial sale advertisement – in this case 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Within this time frame, if there is interest in forming a community group, (CG) a letter expressing an interest must be sent to North Lincolnshire Council by the first moratorium end date.

Mr Dent explained that he has been liaising with the vendor's agent with regards to the exact area that is being offered for sale. This is, at present, unclear and needs urgent clarification as the documentation in the sale advertisement uses the plans from the housing planning application. Mr Dent will pursue this matter.

The area registered under the community asset is outlined as a pink shaded area (on the attached presentation). When the community asset was registered, there was a caravan on the land at the back of the pub, therefore NLC would not register this portion as a community asset as someone was resident on the piece of land in question.

Cllr Clough clarified that any grant application must include proposals for uses for the building other than a public house, such as a Post Office, small shop, library etc. The funding groups need to see that the building will be used 'for the community', not just as a drinking establishment, to provide essential services that are currently absent from the village.

**Questions raised by residents.**

- **Does the owner have to sell to the CG?** – No, he is not under any obligation to sell to the group. The group could form a committee, secure the funding, put forward an offer and the owner could still refuse to sell to the group.
- **The community do not use the pub at the moment, so why would forming a CG and having a community pub encourage people to come to the pub?** – By forming a community owned asset, a feeling of mutual ownership would be created, more people would want to come as they would feel that the pub 'is theirs'. The CG could have more choice over where products are purchased (not tied to one brewery for example), allowing the group to obtain the best value for money for their sale products, thereby possibly allowing a more competitive pricing structure.
- **What evidence do we have to provide, at this moment in time to NLC, to show that there is an interest (names, numbers etc)?** - A letter must be sent to NLC confirming

that there is interest in forming a 'community interest group' – no numbers / names are necessary at this stage

- **Can the CG be the Parish Council?** – No – the Parish Council cannot be the 'community group'. The CG must be formed as a separate entity, comprised of residents, with an elected chair, secretary, and constitution. Parish Councillors may join the group, as any resident may. More information will be available in documentation provided with the minutes
- **The building does require extensive renovation work. The asking price of the pub is £230K, so surely this must reflect the current market price?** – The asking price has probably been decided by the agent/ owner. Offers could be negotiated by the CG
- **Surely the community would be silly not to show an interest at this point in time. We may as well use the moratorium period to its full extent?** – Yes – we need to use the time period on offer effectively. There will be a lot of time effort and research put in to forming a CG. The outcome could be a positive one with the pub continuing to trade; the negative side is that after all the time and effort funding may not be secured and the pub could close/be sold to another party/left to go derelict/owner may not agree to sel to the CG
- **Will the owner ever get planning permission to build houses on the land at the back?** Chair response – unlikely. There is already a refusal in place against the first application and the PC and local residents would fight any future application.
- **Isn't the key to the success of the pub as a community asset the land at the back. Without the land the pub would not be a viable proposition?** – This is a valid point. Without the land outside social events would not be possible; parking would be restricted, with vehicles parking on highways, thereby causing possible inconvenience to residents.
- **How does the community group find information on grants etc?** – There are organisations which can assist. The Clerk will forward information to interested residents after the meeting.
- **Who can we talk to regarding the pro's and con's – pitfalls etc?** – The Clerk suggested that the CG contact and visit a successful community pub. There are several – listed on the presentation and the Clerk will research some more examples
- **Who makes the decisions on how the community pub is run?** – The committee decides. There are several models which can be used to set up the CG. Limited company, shareholders etc. Under the shareholder model, regardless of the number of shares a person has, each member only has one vote.

At the end of the meeting, the Chair called for a show of hands to propose the following actions.

To send a letter to NLC to request for the 6 month moratorium period – 20 votes

Residents expressing an interest to form a CG – 11 votes

**Actions**

Mr Dent to pursue information with regards to the exact land included in the sale

Clerk to send letter to NLC

Clerk to send minutes and information to interested parties.

Residents to form a CG

The meeting closed at 19.15

Accepted and signed as a true record of business transacted

Signed.....

Date.....

Position .....