

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF
HILPERTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, WHADDON LANE, HILPERTON
at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 27th October, 2008**

There were twelve members of the public present

PRESENT:	Mr. E. Clark (in the Chair)	Mr. J. Willis
	Mrs. S. Sawyer	Ms. P. Turner
	Mr. R. House	Mrs. J. Waring
	Mrs. K. Hayes	Mr. T. Carbin
	Mr. W. Jameson	Mr. V. Bielecki

The Chairman welcomed everyone and explained to the members of the public present why this special meeting had been called and the way in which it would be conducted, so that anyone wishing to speak would have every opportunity to do so.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. K. Jackson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL/PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

Mr. Jameson – prejudicial.

3. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION: THE POSSIBLE ACQUISITION AND FUTURE USE OF A PARCEL OF LAND ADJACENT TO THE LION AND FIDDLE PUBLIC HOUSE

The Chairman adjourned the meeting and threw it open to members of the public to speak. Firstly, however, he explained that the plot of land in question was outside Village Policy Limits, so the assumption could be drawn that it was unlikely to be used for residential use except for affordable housing, and even this would be unlikely, given that the site was land-locked and therefore inaccessible to vehicles.

A question and answer session then followed, with residents living in the proximity of the land giving their views on what it could be used for. The general consensus of opinion was that they would favour the Parish Council taking it on, although at the present time the site was not causing a nuisance to anyone.

The Chairman then formally reconvened the meeting and Mr. Jameson left the room.

The Chairman said that members needed to decide whether or not the purchase of this land was something in which the Parish Council should be involved. He reminded them that there might be an opportunity to purchase some land in another part of the village for use as allotments, and gave them details of the current financial position of the Parish Council. Mr. House also gave details of the sum any buyer would have to pay, in respect of a buyer's premium, legal costs etc.

A discussion then followed, with views given for and against the purchase of the land, and the possible upkeep costs and other financial implications facing the Parish Council if it was acquired. Mr. Bielecki proposed that the Parish Council should consider buying the land and this was seconded by Mr. Willis.

Discussion then took place on what the land should be used for if it was purchased by the Parish Council, and it was generally agreed that it should be a semi-wild, semi-managed copse where trees could be planted and wildlife encouraged (for example bird boxes, planting of wild flowers etc.) With the footpath running through it, it should be accessible for all people, with some seating installed for them to rest and enjoy the surroundings.

The meeting was adjourned again by the Chairman, so that members of the public could join in the discussion, and then reconvened it a few minutes later.

Mr. House informed members why the plot was being brought to auction. He said that the guide price was £10,000 but there was a reserve of £13,000 placed on it by the judge concerned, who had ordered that the land should not be sold for less than this amount. It was unlikely, therefore, that if this reserve was not reached the judge would be a party to the signing of any legal agreement.

To clarify the situation, the Chairman re-iterated the use to which the land might be put and this was agreed and a vote taken, with five in favour and four abstentions.

As discussion would now centre on the amount the Parish Council might be willing to pay at auction, the Chairman quoted Standing Order 68:– ‘*in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw*’. Members of the Parish Council agreed that the public should leave the meeting (eight in favour and one against - Mr. Carbin - who requested that his vote should be recorded) and members of the public then left the room.

Further discussion followed on the pros and cons of the possible acquisition of the land and the amount it might cost the Parish Council in terms of purchase and ongoing maintenance. At the end of this it was agreed that the Parish Council should be represented at the auction the following evening, and a bid should be made up to a maximum figure which was then agreed by the Parish Council. (Seven members voted in favour and two against, including Mr. Carbin, who requested that his vote should be recorded).

Mr. House agreed to represent the Parish Council at the auction and was given the necessary authorisation. (Seven members voted in favour and two abstained, including Mr. Carbin, who requested that his vote should be recorded).

The meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Signed

Date