

NOTES FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING
TUESDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 7.30PM
ST PETERS HALL
FUTURE OF JUBILEE PARK

In attendance were: David Clarke (Chair), Amanda Bushell (Clerk),
Elspeth mace (Vice Chair)
7 Parish Councillors
2 District Councillors and 191 members of the public

David Clarke opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He commented that the great attendance was a good show of community spirit.

David Clarke gave a power point presentation which started by explaining the purpose of the meeting:

“The Parish Council with ELDC support are proposing to take Jubilee Park into community management at the end of the 2010 season”

He then spoke about the aims of the project, the caveats and how the project would be achieved by setting up a community based legal framework to take over management of Jubilee Park.

He provided the public with some background information and explained the events that had led up to this meeting. He told the Council what had been going on since the Parish Council found out on 4th August that ELDC were reviewing their leisure facilities and Jubilee Park was vulnerable; and explained why the information had to be kept confidential up until now. He also spoke about the current situation and the £1.54 million investment which was unlikely to happen, along with the fact that ELDC needed to reduce their expenditure profile.

The meeting was told about the 3 options that the Parish Council had considered, these were: Press to test – Demand the whole £1.54 million; Do Nothing and hope for the best; or Do Something. David explained the 3 options in detail and why the Council had chosen the Do Something option.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council had met with the Chief Executive, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism from East Lindsey District Council and presented to them the proposal of community ownership/management. David spoke about how productive the meetings had been, and how helpful ELDC had agreed to be in assisting the community with this project.

The public were provided with further details of the aims:

- Take Jubilee Park into community management
- Develop Caravan site as income stream
- Develop Café as income stream
- Refurbish pool
- Generate additional income streams from Park

The caveats:

- Manage risks
- Protect assets
- Minimise liability

And how it would be achieved:

- Set up community based legal framework to take over management of Jubilee Park
- Community Investment Company with shares (favoured option)
- Separate pool, caravan site, café and grounds into separate companies under single holding company

Factors which will need to be taken under consideration were announced. These included the pool being loss making and a lot of work will be needed to make it less loss making, even profitable; but it was stated that it is very difficult to make a swimming pool profitable. Whereas it appeared that the caravan site could be made more profitable, but the complication that other caravan sites nearby had been granted planning approval was mentioned. The café would need to be turned into an income source which it is currently not and it would also need an immediate face lift and medium term refurbishment.

David emphasised that it was vital to retain ALL income streams.

The arrangements with existing clubs would need reviewing and concerns addressed.

An innovative marketing strategy would be needed for the park to encourage more and better use of the parks facilities.

The project structure must be community run and controlled, the Parish Council will set up and co-ordinate initial activities, but it cannot and will not be run by the Parish Council.

The initial deadline for the business plan to be submitted to ELDC was agreed as summer 2010. ELDC will manage the park for the 2010 season and the caravan site will remain open subject to Executive Board approval in November 2009.

To ensure that the park remains open and popular during the 2010 season the Parish Council will be involved in the end of season review and marketing and planning for the next year. It has set up a marketing and planning group.

The Parish Council had set up a steering group which currently consisted of 3 Parish Councillors (David Clarke, Jo Nelstrop and David Hill) 1 District Cllr (Craig Leyland) and 1 member of the 'Friends of Jubilee Park'. Two/three other members would be required and it would be beneficial to the group if these were individuals with legal, accounting or business experience. Anyone present at the meeting was encouraged to contact David or the Parish Clerk if they felt they could assist. The main role and duty of the steering group would be to determine the corporate framework for the project, to co-ordinate the development of a business plan, to liaise and co-ordinate with the marketing and planning group and to report back to the Parish Council.

David went on to speak about the role and duties of the Corporate board (when set up), the Parish Council role in this project in the future and additional support needed from other sources.

In order to make the project succeed Community Involvement would be necessary. This ranged from encouraging the public to submit ideas for the Park, to just supplying their contact details so they could be added to a mailing list.

An e-mail address has been set up to allow people to send their ideas in and this is jubileeparkgroup@tiscali.co.uk, alternatively for those without internet access drop in boxes will be provided at the library and Council Offices.

David finished his presentation by summarising everything that had been said and then he asked if anyone had any questions.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

Q A caravan site has recently been approved on a field next to Jubilee Park. What affect will this have on the Jubilee Park caravan site and will it help attract more tourism to the park?

A *2 caravan site applications have recently been approved within close proximity to the park and if the sites can all work together it should have a positive affect by bringing in more tourists. With a better marketing strategy it will hopefully not have a significant affect on the caravan site at Jubilee Park.*

Q There is already a lack of parking spaces in the village. What will more tourism mean to Woodhall Spa?

A *The business plan will not only need to include the strategy for keeping the park viable but also look into what affect the extra tourism will have on the whole of the village. It will be necessary to look at traffic and parking issues within the village.*

Q Could the Parish Council raising the precept be an option for maintaining the park, as it would be a contribution from everyone in the village?

A *This is a project being led by the Parish Council initially, but the Parish Council will not be running the Park. The Parish Council is currently in the process of applying to use a new power, which is the power of Wellbeing. This will give the Parish Council the opportunity to give money to individual businesses which it has not been able to do in the past.*

Q If the pool is privately owned, will the government initiative of free swimming for over 60's and children still apply?

A *This has been considered and it will be something that will need further investigation into what is involved in joining this initiative. The company running the park may feel it more advantageous to offer it's own similar scheme. Nothing has been decided yet.*

Q If the pool is losing money can we do without the pool?

The majority of the public said NO to this.

A *Although it is apparent that the pool is important to the park and it is not a route we want to go down by choice but one that we must consider. The organisation that will be running the park will be done in a way to ensure the park as an entity doesn't get dragged down by the pool. Each part of the park – swimming pool, caravan site, café and gardens will be run by separate businesses so that if one went down it would not threaten the rest.*

Q Have you considered putting a roof on the pool?

A *Yes, this is an idea that has been suggested and it will be necessary to look into sources of funding to get a roof.*

Q Where will income be coming from if both the pool and caravan site are non-profitable?

A *Currently the marketing strategy undertaken by ELDC has been poor, so a better marketing strategy will be used to try and make the park profitable. It will be necessary for the organisation running the park to ensure it can break even. This will be achievable during the early years by receiving a subsidiary from ELDC, but the business plan will need to demonstrate that this can be done after ELDC stop subsidising the park.*

Q The bowling green, tennis courts and cricket club have not been mentioned?

A *The existing clubs interests will be protected.*

Q A lot of the pools regular swimmers come from Lincoln, Newark and elsewhere. How will you attract local people to use the pool?

A *Amarylis Midgley (Parish Councillor) stood up and spoke about all the ideas that had been received to promote the park. These ideas included: BBQ's and evening parties, season tickets, building a database and sending out brochures & timetables, encouraging the schools to use the park more, ensuring that there is more continuity of staff than there is at present, offering pool time to the Lincoln Vulcans, connecting the cycle routes so they link into Jubilee Park and there are many more ideas.*

District Councillor Craig Leyland thanked David for his presentation and informed the meeting that both the District Cllrs would go back to ELDC and express their support. He spoke about the potential of the project and asked for the public's support.

District Councillor Mick Harness seconded the comments made by Craig Leyland and also spoke about the work that had been going on behind the scenes. He added that ELDC will realise from this meeting that the village is enthusiastic about issues that affect it.

Two ladies who were not locals stood up and informed the meeting that they were regular users of Jubilee Park, in particular the caravan site, and they spoke about how much the park meant to them. They thanked the community and offered their help and support.

David Clarke asked the meeting if there was support from the proposal. The majority (99%) were in support.

David Clarke thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that community interaction was important and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.