

HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL
LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION COMMITTEE
EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2012 AT 7.30 PM
HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Mr M Baker, Mr Bowdler, Ms Bowdler, Mrs Clark, Mr Hart, Mrs Holmwood, Mr Newnham, Mrs Plant (Chairman), Mr Taylor and Mr Woodhouse.

The Clerk was in attendance.

19 Members of the public together with three representatives from the Heathfield and Waldron Rugby Club and a representative from the Cross-in-Hand Lawn Tennis Club were also present.

Before inviting members of the public to speak, the Chairman set out the background to the proposed Licences to Occupy and gave responses to some of the comments made by local residents at the last meeting. She explained that the usual 15 minutes allowed for public speaking would be extended to 30 minutes in view of the number of people present and to allow everyone to have their say.

Local residents expressed concern that land was being given away and public would be prevented from using it, inconsiderate parking during rugby matches, noise during matches, proposals to fence the rugby pitch, possible stands for spectators. 50 years was considered too long, it should be 5 – 10 with a formal review every 5 years. There were no restrictions on times of use and public would be unable to use grounds during those times, residents not consulted, concerns about people having to pay to use the ground in future. It was also stated that permission to hold community events should be sought through the Parish Council, not the Association and there was a query as to whether the land would be used as collateral to obtain funding.

Mr Hunt and Mr McCloud from the Rugby Club responded to some of the comments, stating that the Club did a lot for children and young people and recently a disabled children activity had been started. Mr Hunt reiterated that the Tennis and Bowls Clubs would also have Licences to Occupy which would enable them to give evidence of security of tenure to funding bodies. He stated that the ground was available for public events and land owned by the Rugby Club, the Cypress Field could also be used. Plans to fence the pitch were for the safety of spectators and players and would be along the sides of the pitch only and would be subject to planning approval. Stands were not proposed. There were hopes in the future to extend the Clubhouse to accommodate separate male and female changing rooms, which was not easily achieved at present.

The Meeting commenced at 8.05 p.m.

12/42 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Chambers, Mrs Mackie, Mr Smith, Mr Waterhouse and Mr Wood.

12/43 **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

It was noted that Mr Newnham, Mrs Plant and Mr Baker had personal interests in respect of the Licence to Occupy as residents of Cross-in-Hand and Mr Taylor disclosed a personal interest as his son plays for the Rugby Club.

12/44 **LICENCE TO OCCUPY - HARDY ROBERTS PLAYING FIELDS**

A report had been circulated to Members, giving responses to some of the concerns of local residents and including the revised draft Licence and plan which had been amended to exclude the car park from the Rugby Club's area, apart from an area needed for emergency access to the field.

Mr Newnham congratulated local residents for attending and asked what benefit a term of 50 years would have for the Council. He felt the wishes of local residents were not being taken into account.

Mrs Holmwood stated that the needs of future generations should be considered and the Rugby Club provided an excellent facility for children. Use by the community was not being restricted and community events were not being prevented.

Mrs Clark said that young people in rural areas were sometimes disadvantaged and there needed to be local facilities for them.

Mr Bowdler said he had walked round the field that day and it looked fabulous. Fencing would not be an issue, the training area would still be unenclosed. He felt 50 years was too long a period but understood the reason for it.

Mr Taylor suggested a periodic review be carried out during the term of the Licence. Mrs Plant reminded the Committee that the Parish Council have the ability to foreclose the Licence and stop a Club using the ground if conditions were breached. If approved, the Licence would be used as the template for all the Clubs using Parish Council land.

Mr Woodhouse suggested a review every 5 years. Mr Hart said that his experience at Broad Oak Village Hall was that users of the grounds were issued Licences, including the Scouts. Security of tenure was important. Mr Baker felt that the Licence period should be 10 years and that loans were granted based on an ability to pay. Ms Bowdler said the Rugby Club made great use of the ground and felt that the Licence should purely be looked at on a 5 year basis. Mr Newnham stated that he took the Chairman's reassurances about use of the land but the Licence should be for 5 years, as 50 years would commit 10 future Councils.

It was then Proposed by Mrs Holmwood that the Licences to Occupy be accepted as drafted with the inclusion of a review every 5 years.

An amendment was Proposed by Mr Newnham that the Licences to Occupy be issued for a 10 year term with a review at 5 years.

A further amendment was Proposed by Mr Taylor that the Licences to Occupy be issued for a 30 year term with a review every 5 years.

A vote was taken and the amendments to the Proposal were defeated. The Proposal was carried and it was, therefore, **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Licences to Occupy for a period of 50 years with a review every 5 years.

12/45 **CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 SECTION 17**

There were no implications arising under the above Act.

12/46 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

To consider effects (if an) arising from items on the Agenda

There were none.

12/47 **DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Committee meeting would take place on Tuesday 31 July 2012 at 7.30 pm, in the Meeting Room, 73 High Street, Heathfield

The meeting closed at 8.36 p.m.

Signed:

Chairman

Dated: