

HERNE & BROOMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes the Parish Council Meeting of Herne & Broomfield Parish Council held at Herne Mill, Wootton Room, on Thursday 15th March 2012 at 7.30pm, for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Present: Cllr Day, Cllr Davis, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Brealy, Cllr Moore, Cllr Tobin, Cllr Robert Jones, Cllr Tracey Jones, Cllr Sargent and Cllr Taylor.

074/12	To receive apologies for absence and approve reasons. Cllrs Blatherwick and Hobbs who had a previous engagement. Cllr Taylor reported that Cllr Nicholson was unwell. These reasons were approved. City Cllr Peter Vickery Jones has a prior engagement.
075/12	To receive declarations of interest on items on Agenda. Cllr Day as a member of the HAT committee
	ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA. (ANYTHING ELSE AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION) 4 members of the public attended along with County Cllr Marsh and City Cllr Sonnex.
076/12	To discuss the future of the Upper Red Lion. The chairman told members that as Tesco had now withdrawn from leasing the Upper Red Lion he wanted to give members a chance to discuss what they thought the building should be used for, if parish council should take forward looking for ideas etc. It had been suggested that the parish council should consider purchasing the building for community use. Cllr Day asked the clerk to go through the items for consideration that she had put together. The clerk pointed out that the Community Centre consultation has not yet been completed and it is not yet known what the cost of this project will be. The parish council is committed to carrying out whatever the residents have indicated they want for the Community Centre. Costs for the Upper Red Lion could realistically be in the region of £500,000 if not more, this is the maximum that can be borrowed in a year. This amount over a 30 year period would cost almost £30,000 per annum in repayments. With the change in legislation it is likely that if the precept is significantly increased next year for the cost of purchase etc, this will trigger a referendum. This would cost about £5,000 and could result in residents saying no. Members are all aware the people who come out to vote are generally those who are against something, or feel very strongly about something. There has to be a majority of those voting in favour of the increase. It is currently unclear as to how big that majority has to be, it is thought that 50% of voters must be in favour. Therefore no purchase could happen until April/May 2013 after the results of any referendum have been announced. Obviously residents need to be consulted on what the building should be used for in the future, if the parish council was to purchase it, there may not be agreement among residents as to what they would like to see it used for, and there are constraints as to usage, as has been demonstrated by the Tesco application. Would the parish council be looking at a business use i.e. something that would cover the cost of the loan repayments? There is not just the cost of purchase but those of consultation and refurbishment, surveys etc. Finally the parish council needs to consider whether they have the capacity to run two large projects side by side. Following this Cllr Robert Jones, chairman of the Finance & Resources committee, confirmed that any borrowing needs approval via KACL from the Secretary of State who would need to be convinced that the amount being borrowed could realistically be repaid. Cllr Day told members he hoped that the parish council could be involved in possible

	future uses, he stated that it was unlikely that the parish council would be in a position to purchase until April/May 2013. That would be the earliest the precept increase could be put in place to cover the cost. He opened the discussion up to the rest of the members. There were various discussions around what the building could be used for, this is somewhat limited due to the planning officers stating that they would not allow anything which significantly increased traffic movements. Cllr Day told members that HAT, (now Herne After Tesco), were intending to look at possible ways to raise funds to purchase and possible uses. Members discussed options such as the church purchasing but their funds are known to be very limited. Some thought a new business in the parish would be good for the area, others that a joint venture with the HAT group could be the way forward. Several members stated that they thought as the Community Centre was a large project that the parish council was already committed to that they should not looking at taking on another high cost project. Some members stated that residents that they had spoken to would support a large increase in their precept, others that they were not necessarily the majority. It was stated that if the outcome of the consultation for the community centre was do nothing, then the £25,000 earmarked in the annual precept could go towards the Upper Red Lion and that if it had a business use it could possibly generate an income to offset the loan repayments. Cllr Davis pointed out that there were other financial considerations that needed to be added to the purchase price, management plan, feasibility study, structural survey, legal fees, management fees and domestic and business rates. Following these discussions Cllr Brealy put forward a motion to ‘Support HAT in their investigations into the potential purchase of the Upper Red Lion’ The motion was carried. Following this the chairman adjourned the meeting again to ask if anyone else had any comments on what had been discussed.
077/12	The next meeting of the parish council will be held on 12th April 2012 at 7-30pm at the Wootton Room Herne Mill, Mill Lane.

Meeting closed 8-30pm