

Porlock Recreation Ground Management Committee
Charity no. 304615

Minutes of meeting held at Porlock Recreation Ground Pavilion Thursday April 13th 2017

Members present

Keith Green, YoungSook Joh, Steve Spurrier, Russell Vowles, Nic Vowles, Terry Gable, John Healey

Apologies

Jane Thicknesse, Ivor Jones, Andy Woodcock

Minutes

1. Propose and elect a Chair for the duration of this meeting

YoungSook Joh proposed Russell Vowles as Chair, seconded by Terry Gable. John Healey proposed Keith Green. It was agreed that the Chair could be shared between Russell and Keith for this meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting 29th March 2017

Amendments

There were no amendments and the Minutes were signed as a true and correct record.

3. Report by Keith Green and John Healey following their meeting with Mike Lynch

i. Keith and John met with Mike Lynch on 5th April to discuss his decision to resign from the committee and attempt to clarify any misunderstandings.

ii. Keith reported that in his opinion, Mike's emails were sent in haste and the second email, which contained 'conditions' for his return considered by most of committee members as unreasonable, was not worded well. In his opinion (seconded by John), the email did not consist of conditions that were non-negotiable and there was room to compromise.

iii. It had been explained to Mike that he had in misinterpreted the meeting of 20 March and also the committee's concern that his plans and vision for the evaluation of possible projects and eventual use of the legacy funds had not been shared with the full committee prior to his resignation email. It was suggested therefore that Mike should present his plans to the rest of the management committee and he had agreed to attend this meeting for this purpose.

iv. Keith and John expressed their view that Mike had a clear plan for how the legacy ideas should be evaluated in an independent manner. Because of this and Mike's abilities they hoped that Mike's presentation would result in the committee accepting him back as Chairman of the committee and/or of the legacy sub-committee.

4. Presentation by a member of the public – Mike Lynch

i. Mike Lynch joined the meeting at 20:40.

ii. He passed a number of quotes relating to the possible gang mower and aerator purchase to Russell Vowles.

iii. After apologising if he had misinterpreted the 20 March meeting of the committee regarding the legacy funds, Mike went through his proposals for how the committee should proceed with the evaluation of the possible use of the legacy funds.

iv. In summary, Mike believes that the next step of the legacy process should be a rigorous, independent evaluation of the ideas resulting from the initial letter and questionnaire sent to local residents last month. He also mentioned that the evaluation should investigate the possibility of match funding and also if this type of grant would be affected if a proportion of the legacy was invested for the longer term. Once the independent evaluation is complete, the results (including costs and options) should be sent out as part of a questionnaire to the local community.

He believes very strongly that the evaluation 'sub-committee' should not include anyone currently on the Rec Management Committee (presumably excluding himself if he was to return and chair this committee, as per his email to the committee of 24th March), due to possible 'bias'.

v. He remains of the opinion that the committee has somehow misled the community by sharing the estimated size of the legacy in the initial letter to residents due to his continuing belief that the committee has already decided, prior to any evaluation of possibilities, that a large proportion of the legacy will be invested.

This suggestion met with disagreement and some bafflement from the committee as to what other figure could have been shared, and also to his continuing assertion that decisions have been made that most certainly have not, despite being informed of his misconception by many people on multiple occasions. All on the committee agreed that no decision has yet been made regarding what proportion of the funds (if any) should be invested. Mike still appeared to not accept that this is the case.

vi. Once his presentation was complete, the committee asked some questions regarding his actions since the meeting of 20th March.

Russell Vowles asked if Mike had some people in mind who could form the "independent" sub-committee, considering that it presumably would include people from the village who arguably would be no more independent than individuals already on the committee. Various local people were named as having a wide skills and knowledge base. Russell pointed out that anyone living within Porlock was likely to have some prior connection with or interest in the Rec, making Mike's assertion that current committee members would show 'bias' a little hard to understand. Russell stated that in this context 'bias' was another word for opinion and we should value the opinions of local people including those currently involved with the Rec.

Terry Gable pointed out that Mike, as Chairman of the committee, received the information about the legacy in advance of the rest of the committee, but had not shared any detail about how the funds were made up. She questioned him about the decision to put Susan Taylor's property on the market without first discussing this with the committee. Mike maintained that he made the correct decision and didn't appear to take on board her point that it was his lack of communication regarding many aspects of the legacy that was the issue.

There was some discussion between Terry and Mike about the pros and cons of keeping the property to generate an income. Russell agreed that this was an important topic but considering it was late, not a topic for tonight.

Terry Gable asked Mike why [by resigning after the first meeting] he reacted in a such a destructive way that was clearly not in the best interests of the Rec, rather than finding a positive constructive way forward. Perhaps he could have called another meeting to explain his worries and ideas. Mike's answer to this was not clear but he did state again that it was clear to him that the committee had decided on investment ruling out what he thought was best.

Steve Spurrier asked what, personally, Mike thought should be done with the legacy. Mike seemed uncomfortable answering this. After being asked the question three times, he said that he thought a sports hall and swimming pool would be the best outcome.

Russell Vowles asked under what circumstances Mike would wish to come back to the committee – as Chairman, Evaluation Sub-Committee Chairman or co-opted committee member. Despite asking more than once, the question was not really answered. Mike did however say that he should set the terms of reference for the evaluation team. Terry asked if this would include evaluation of the investment options. The answer to this was unclear as Mike chose to repeat that investment would rule out larger projects.

vi. The committee thanked Mike for his time and for agreeing to attend part of this meeting. Mike then left.

5. Discussion regarding whether to accept Mike Lynch back as Chairman of the MC

i. During the discussion, Steve Spurrier had to leave the meeting – he handed a proxy voting form to Nic Vowles prior to leaving.

ii. After listening to Mike Lynch, and some discussion by the Committee a vote was taken on the motion:

“Should we accept Mike Lynch back as Chairman of the Rec Committee”.

The vote was 6 to 2 against this (including proxy votes from Steve Spurrier and Jane Thicknesse). The committee resolved not to accept Mike back.

iii. Some discussion took place as to whether the committee would accept Mike L back as chair of a legacy sub-committee or evaluation team, but no vote was taken as Mike had not made it clear he would be happy to do this.

iv. John Healey left the meeting.

v. Some discussion took place as to whether the committee would accept Mike L back as a committee member. No one present had any objections but no official vote was taken.

6. Discussion and vote on a new Chair

i. Russell read out an email forwarded to him by the Honorary Secretary, from Mike Dyer, offering to re-join the management committee and to step in as Chairman if the committee wished him to. A separate email from the Honorary Secretary explained that she supported Mike Dyer returning as Chair. She also stated that she would step in as temporary Chair if no one else was able to volunteer.

ii. The committee voted on the motion:

“Should we accept Mike Dyer’s offer to return to the committee and to be Chairman.”

All five members present plus Jane via her proxy vote, voted in favour of the motion. At this stage John and Steve were not present. Nic did not exercise Steve’s proxy vote on this motion.

It was agreed that Keith would inform Mike Lynch of the decisions taken and that Russell would follow up after to collect documents and keys in Mike’s possession.

Russell also agreed to contact Mike Dyer to inform him of the committee’s decision.

7. Country Fair

It was agreed that this was in hand and further action could wait until the next committee meeting.

8. Football Festival

John Healey has volunteers lined up for the first weekend, but not for the second. Nic and Russell can help with car parking and clear up on the second weekend. Terry will be around for both weekends.

Kitnors have confirmed that they will bring their caravan kiosk down prior to the first weekend.

9. Any other business

Russell updated the committee on refurbishment of the playground equipment – Allerford Forge have been given the go-ahead and have confirmed they will provide the necessary safety fencing. Start date TBC. Action: Russell Vowles

10. Next meeting

The next meeting, to include Mike Dyer, will take place once the Honorary Secretary has returned from holiday. Date TBC.