

Save The Bluebell

Public Meeting held at Stoke Ferry Village Hall
19th February 2020
7pm

Chair: Stephen Ward

Minutes – Sandra McNeill

33 people in attendance

Welcome

- Stephen Ward chaired and explained a small group of people had got together following the last meeting to try to get the ball rolling and it was the aim of this meeting to get a consensus to move forwards and for others to come forward and get involved.

Update since last meeting

- A recap confirmed a private buyer was still the preferred option. Some people asked whether Andrew Wright had come back with any more concrete plans and the answer was not yet (so far as we know) but that we will keep in touch with him.
- A show of hands confirmed overwhelmingly that those present still supported the parallel option of pursuing a community-owned approach.
- An update was given concerning the appeal lodged by Oxygen 56 Ltd, the current owner of The Bluebell. The application has been called in by the Secretary of State. Stephen had spoken with the Planning Department who confirmed that objections must be lodged by 20th March but that a decision was unlikely to be made until July/August.

Next Steps

- The committee will circulate via the mailing list and local social media platforms details of how to object with some example of relevant material considerations. All present were willing to write in with objections as private residents as well as us objecting as a group.
- The chair updated in respect of support we can get from The Plunkett Foundation. As well as the possibility of a grant, it provides various practical support including a model survey to consult with the wider community. It was agreed that a survey would be circulated as soon as possible. It was agreed we will progress and set up a Community Benefit Company.
- Discussions were held around different ways to raise finance to buy the Bluebell and included ideas for crowdfunding as well as pledges and possibly 'debt funding' options. A show of hands confirmed a very high level of support in the room to pledge money.
- Questions were asked about the safeguarding of people's investments. It was explained that there are legal safeguards in place and that full details will be available as we progress.
- Discussions were held on awareness raising events such as 'pop-up pubs' with various themes/music etc (e.g Rock Choir). It was agreed the first 'pop-up' would be held in March.
- People were given the opportunity to sign up to help in various ways and we had 20 volunteers sign up to join the committee/help organise and run pop-ups/help deliver and collect surveys and to be called upon to help in any way on an ad-hoc basis.
- Overall there was recognition that it will not be an easy road, but the all were positive, encouraging, optimistic and there was lots of enthusiasm amongst people ready, able and willing to get involved.

ends