



The Tythe Barn, High Street, Stock, Essex. CM4 9BU

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Minutes

of Meeting
held at the Cricket Pavilion, Stock
on Wednesday 3rd August 2022
at 7.00pm

Attending Councillors: P Fenwick, J Walter, J.Millenas, M Taylor, M Rolph, I Grundy

- Welcome by Chairman

P. Fenwick welcomed everyone to this special meeting which had been arranged to review the potential sale of ground in Mill Lane that is currently utilised by Stock Football Club. Over 50 village residents attended the meeting.

- Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from S.Porter and M. Gray

- Declaration of Interest in Agenda items (Councillors)

P. Fenwick asked if any Councillors had a pecuniary interest in any of the Agenda items. No Councillors declared an interest.

- Review of Land for sale in Mill Road as used by Stock Football Club

Members of the public will be invited to air views on the sale in order that Councillors may determine the best course of action.

P. Fenwick reported that it had come to the Council's attention that the land in Mill Lane currently utilised by Stock Football Club has been put up for sale. Initial enquiries have revealed that the Estate Agent "Barney Estates and Auctioneers, London" have advertised 12 plots of some half acre each for sale by auction on 18th August 2022. Each plot apparently has a reserve of £45,000 or £650,000 for all. (Members of the public attending had made similar enquiries with inconsistent information being given on number of plots and expected purchase price [eg. one plot is being auctioned at £20k](#)). The Estate Agent has stated that there is much interest in the land, and that pre-auction purchases can be negotiated. It is believed that the land is owned by the Lister Trust.

P. Fenwick stated Planning Permission for any of the plots purchased is unlikely as the land is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. P Fenwick is liaising with Chelmsford City Council to confirm the

Green Belt status and the lack for potential development. The intention is to use all media means to make prospective buyers of the plots aware that any Planning Permission is unlikely.

At this point in the meeting, Geoff Tully, Chairman Stock Football Club asked permission to make a statement. He advised the meeting that the Club was founded in 1908 and had played on the land since that time. [The Club is registered with the Football Association](#). A 3 year rental agreement was taken by the Club in 1947 and renewed after each term since then. [SFC was has never been allowed to negotiate a longer term in case the landowner wished to sell](#).

Barney Estates has informed the Club that the current rental agreement ends on 3rd November 2022 and will not be renewed. Stock Football Club have objected to the short notice (10 days ago) and not being given first refusal to purchase the Land. The Club strongly wishes to continue to utilise the land for its football matches. [The SFC Chairman has tried to contact the Trustees of the estate but has not received a response](#).

The Club has taken legal advice with a property specialist lawyer (Nigel Mason). A 3 point action plan has been agreed and the Club now asks the Stock Parish Council to endorse these actions as follows:-

- 1). SPC to apply to Chelmsford City Council for an ACV to apply to the land - an Asset of Community Value. [NM advised that it usually takes 8 weeks to obtain an ACV](#).
- 2). SPC to raise a petition amongst the residents of the Village to protest the displacing of the Club from the land.
- 3). SPC to organise a "crowd funding" platform in order to raise funds for the outright purchase of the land.

The Councillors were all in agreement to support the proposed Stock Football Club action plan.

Further, based on the support from Stock Parish Council, Nigel Mason (Lawyer) will write to Barney Estate Agents and to the Owner of the land on the morning of 4th August 2022 advising them of the wishes of the Stock Football Club, the Stock Parish Council, and the residents of Stock village that no sale of land is completed until Stock FC has had an opportunity to make a bid to purchase the land. Should the Landowner and Barney Estate Agents not respond to this request within 7 days a further letter will be sent to them advising them that they are selling Green Belt land that cannot be developed and that the Village of Stock will continue to protest the sale, making prospective purchasers aware of the limiting factors for development and the disquiet of residents. The Chairman (PF) suggested the letter from Stock Football Club to Barney Estates Agency and Lister Trust should disclose the possibility of planning permission on metropolitan green belt and an existing sports facility would be highly unlikely and the letter to be sent immediately as time is of the essence. [He added that the site is outside the Stock Conservation Area but it is possible that some Tree Preservation Orders may exist on the land](#).

Other actions in the meantime include advising media of the implications the sale of land has on Stock Football Club (BBC Look East, BBC Essex, Essex Chronicle etc. - Councillor M. Taylor - [SFC Chairman offered to supply Club memorabilia photos that could be used by the Press](#).) and setting up a special village Facebook site so that residents can be updated with actions and reports - Councillor J. Walter). [PF stated that any useful photos should be sent to Stock Parish Council by contacting clerk@stock-pc.gov.uk or the Facebook site](#).

[A resident queried if the Trustees of the estate had sold the land to an investment company. This is a common occurrence. The Auction catalogue can be reviewed on-line.](#)

[It was also reported that Barney Estates may have already sold 5 plots. Another resident stated that the whole site had been offered to him in April 2021 for £100,000. He confirmed that he would provide a copy of the letter to PF.](#)

An attendee, Paul, declared that as owner of Bishops Stortford Football Club he too was facing a similar situation and is now looking for an alternative ground for his Club. He recommended that SPC and SFC contact Sport England who will not allow the sale of land that football clubs have used on a longstanding basis as there is currently a shortage of land for such purpose in the Country. It was agreed that all such avenues of preventing the sale be followed including informing the Minister for Sport of the matter. PF confirmed that he is speaking speaking Chelmsford City Council Planning and Sports Councillors.

PF stated that an awareness should be created aimed at potential buyers to inform them that any plots acquired cannot be developed on the green belt land. This was agreed with reference to local resident and media actions including the printing of a banner "Save our Football Club".

One resident stated that the St.Peters Way footpath runs through the land. Planners must keep this open.

Nigel Mason suggested that Barney Estates be sent a letter insisting that a Disclosure of Information concerning Green Belt land, Sports England etc.

J. Walter asked the residents attending if anyone had experience of crowd funding. One resident agreed to contact JW to assist on the project.

The Chairman SFC requested that minutes of the meeting confirming SPC support of the proposed action plan be posted by the morning in order that Nigel Mason can send his legal letter to Barney Estates and the Trustees. MR in function of Temporary Clerk agreed to have a pertinent abridged set of minutes ready for that purpose.

This Agenda item was closed at 8pm and all but 4 residents departed. MT departed at 8.10pm to attend another appointment.

• Village Information Exchange

- PF confirmed that an independent security company as previously presented at a Council meeting earlier this year will be commencing a one month free trial of services. The Company will patrol the Village on an adhoc basis, but has been directed to certain locations of concern.
- PF confirmed that a resident has been engaged to repair a number of benches around the Village. Councillors requested that the resident also be approached for taking on duties of "Village Handyman". Response to be reported.

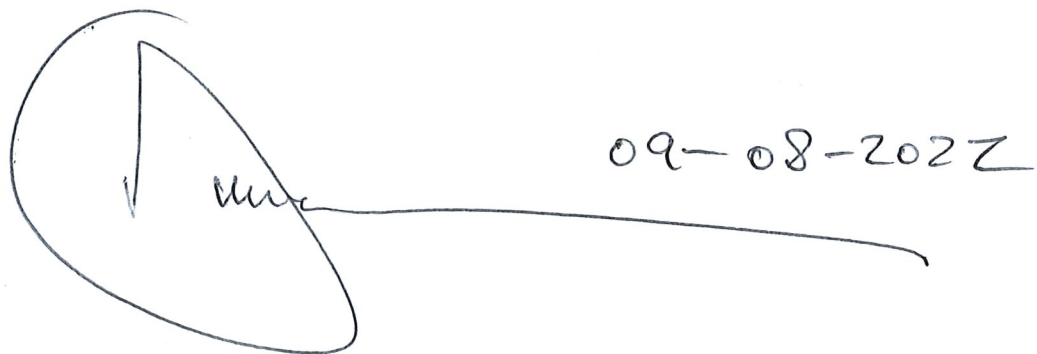
• Date of Next Meeting

The next general meeting will be held at 7pm on 12th September 2022 at the Village Hall. It is likely that interim meetings may be held to review the sale of the land utilised by SFC specifically.

Meeting closed 8.40pm.

MAR

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A handwritten signature, possibly 'MUR', is written in blue ink. To the right of the signature, the date '09-08-2022' is written in blue ink. The signature is enclosed in a large, hand-drawn oval shape.