



Minutes of the “extra” ordinary meeting of BLETSOE PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 20th June 2024 at 7.30pm in Bletsoe Village Hall.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Clare Goduti (Chair), Mark Abraham, Alison Field-Foster, Peter Margrave, Claire Woodward, David Brough (Clerk).

1 **Public Open Session:** No members of the public were present.

2 **Apologies for Absence accepted:** Cllr Binks (Unwell).

3 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None.

4 **To approve the minutes of the annual parish council meeting** held on 28th May 2024.

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record.

5 **Closed session**

It was **resolved** that, under Section 1 Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business due to the personal data involved in the below item.

6 **Special Motion – Pre-emption right on a property sale**

Part 1

Proposal by Cllrs Goduti and Cllr Margrave: To consider nullifying the decision made in the 28th May 2024 parish council meeting to turn down a request to remove the future pre-emption rights on a property (garage) within the parish. A lengthy and detailed discussion followed that resulted in the above proposal not being carried. Below is a summary of what was discussed:

- From investigation, it was discovered that the pre-emption restriction was originally put in place to retain a form of parish council control to stop anyone from outside Bletsoe buying one of the garages on Captain's Close, but also of building up ownership of the whole block – potentially also giving the opportunity to change its use.
- The pre-emption has not caused an issue with multiple previous sales and the councillors would be interested in communicating directly with the lender to discover why this is an issue for them. Other than a potential 3-month delay for the parish council to decide whether to purchase the garage, the lender still has the equity in the property. If it is because of a change in lending rules/processes then it may well be an issue for all sales going forward, which the council may consider – but potentially this has just been an issue for this single lender in this particular chain.
- The councillors would be interested to know of there was an alternative solution than removing the pre-emption through a Deed Of Variation that would satisfy the lender.
- As an aside, it was noted that there would be a conflict of interest for the current solicitor representing the sellers in creating the Deed Of Variation and therefore it's likely there would be legal costs from instructing an independent solicitor. This would then require some form of contract to ensure the parish council was reimbursed, which complicates matters.

Part 2 (Not considered due to the motion in Part 1 not being carried)

To consider a request to remove the parish council's pre-emption rights for future sales of a property within the parish via a Deed Of Variation.

Date of next meeting: 23rd July 2024 – Bletsoe Village Hall