

Frodsham Town Council
 Minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting of
Frodsham Town Council
 Held on Tuesday 16 June 2015 at 7pm
 In the Main House, Castle Park, Frodsham



Present: Cllrs Warren (Chair), Sutton (Mayor), Pusey (Deputy Mayor), Ashton, Brown, Collins-Doyle, Fraser, Jones, Martin, Oulton, Pennington, Poulton, Reynolds, Wakefield, Jon Wild (Town Clerk). Anne Scriven (Office Manager) and 28 members of the public.

Cllr Pusey is a director of Frodsham Foundation. Cllr Wakefield is a member of the Frodsham Foundation Advisory Board. Cllr Pusey is a trustee of Frodsham Community Association and Chair of Sutton Parish Council & Love Frodsham.

Meeting 3

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45	Sale of Park Lane Play Area

Item	Action/Decision/Notes/ Recommendations
	<p>in deciding how to proceed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there any other way to raise funds? Yes there was, but selling Ship St – were that to be the way – would take time, there were Issues to resolve with CWAC about removal of the covenant. An initial discussion had taken place, but there was no offer on the table yet on which to negotiate. The Council had started the year with some excess funds, which might indicate we could afford to fund the work ourselves. But this figure had been artificially inflated, due to Churchfields and other money being carried over. The Council could only fund the work itself by raiding other budgets, which was not good financial management, Wind farm money might be available, but this would not be just for Frodsham, might not be enough, and could be some years away. • The question of loss of green space might arise. The Council had in fact purchased a further section of Hob Hey Wood, a much larger area than was represented by loss of the Play Area. • There was also the issue of the Townfield Lane lease. Clear indications had been given by the Feoffee's Trust that they would be happy to extend the lease, perhaps to 20 years. This would involve a change in rent, which had not yet been confirmed by them. This agreement would of course need to be firmly in place before any investment took place. • Lastly, there was the matter of public support for the sale. In the town wide consultation last year, 63% of a large response had indicated that they supported the sale, in order to invest in play and recreation. They had been clear they did not wish to pay for this through increased Council Tax. <p>The floor was then opened up to the public. Two requests had been received ahead of the meeting. A third person had meant to speak, but had withdrawn due to what they considered to be undue pressure from members of the public.</p> <p><i>Mr. A Villiers</i> stated that, in his opinion, the Park Lane play area was not well used and that the one in Castle Park was superior. He felt that as the Park Lane play area was already within a residential area, there should be no problem with using the land for housing and was disappointed that the discussions over the sale of the land had gone on for so long. Mr. Villiers also commented that the behaviour of some Councillors on social media had done little to help public opinion of the Town Council.</p> <p><i>Mr M Nield</i> stated was sorry to hear members of the public had been unable to speak due to public pressure: he felt he had also been insulted, by an ex-Councillor on social media. Mr. Nield said the intention of call residents had never been to keep the area as a play area. But he said that they were concerned that as the land had been purchased using local people's money, they did not want to see the green space vandalised by housing.</p> <p><i>Mrs. P Williamson</i> stated that she had understood that the Town Council had intended that the sale of Park Lane play area was to fund the new play facility at Churchfields only, rather than the Play Strategy generally. Mrs. Williamson went on to say that she would very much like to see the land used as a community asset for the Castle Park Ward as this would increase the community's strength and greatly improve the area as a whole. She said she wanted the Council to see both sides of the picture, and did not feel the Council had been truthful. She felt it was the case that the money from the sale had always been wanted for skateboarding.</p> <p><i>Mr. R Gleave</i> stated that he felt the land had been offered for sale without the knowledge of the people of Frodsham. He felt the land had been gifted to the</p>

Part A

Item	Action/Decision/Notes/ Recommendations
	<p>Frodsham people.</p> <p>Cllr Warren thanked the speakers and closed the public speaking time. In response to points made, he said it had always been to the case that the sale would fund the Play Strategy, of which Churchfields had, from day one, been the first priority. Without additional funds there was no money to go beyond Churchfields, in taking forward the Strategy. Small wheeled play was not part of the present plans for Churchfields. There were insufficient funds, and there had been some local opposition to it.</p> <p>There might be scope for any receipt from Park Lane to fund a community cohesion scheme.</p> <p>The Clerk reminded all at the meeting that an external audit that had been carried out at Councillors request about the legality and propriety of the work. done by Council officers. It had found our actions both legal and proper.</p> <p>Cllr Reynolds felt that there was nevertheless a moral case against selling the land. He cast doubt on the validity of the Play Strategy, and said that the community should be taken into account in decisions made.</p> <p>Cllr Pusey stated that the policy and the process of the sale of Park Lane play area, and indeed all land owned by the Town Council affected by the Play Strategy were separate issues. He felt that there should be a special meeting where all options for land the Council might wish to sell or develop under its Play Strategy could be considered. This should only happen when all information about all sites was available. This information would need to include clarity on all areas that might be sold or developed, including Salt Works Farm. The meeting should take place only when all information relating to all the play areas was available.</p> <p>Cllr Brown stated that she felt that the town wide consultation carried out in 2014 showed that the people of Frodsham agreed with the sale and their response gave FTC a mandate to sell the land. Cllrs Wakefield and Jones agreed with this opinion.</p> <p>Following discussion, Council agreed to vote on Cllr Pusey’s proposal and Cllr Pennington requested a recorded vote on the proposal.</p> <p>Cllr Pusey made the following proposal, seconded by Cllr Poulton:</p> <p>That FTC freeze the future sale of Park Lane play area, pending a decision being made on the Council’s approach all the land it held that might be sold or developed under its Play Strategy. Such a decision to be made after a meeting where all available information was to hand, on all sites,</p> <p>The proposal was agreed unanimously. The Chairman did not vote.</p> <p><i>(Clerk’s note – for names of those who voted, see above)</i></p>

Part B

46	Sale of Park Lane Play Area	Not required.
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Meeting closed 8.15pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____