

## Draft Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Teffont Parish Council held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 in the Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs Blamey, Deane, Fisher, Graham, Johnson and Worth

**In attendance:** 14 members of the public

Tim Barter. Estate Manager for the National Trust

Anna Russell. Assistant Director for the National Trust

The Chairman opened the meeting at 17.30.

She welcomed members of the public and two representatives from the National Trust.(NT)

The meeting was opened with a question and answer session about the proposed lease of Philipps House in Dinton.

Tim Barter, representing the National Trust stated that the property had been vacant since 2015. The NT have considered all possible options for the house and grounds and consider a private tenant who will restore the house is the only option. The suggested acreage around the house is proposed not definite. The NT are happy to discuss area of acreage and boundaries with residents and Parish Councils.

Questions from members of the public.

1. Could the boundary be moved so access to the North West gate is maintained?

Answer: Yes, this can be discussed.

2. Would disabled access be retained?

Yes that is the hope as the park is open to anyone.

3. Do you know the numbers visiting the park?

No, we did put up counters on the main access but there were no staff to collate the results. There are many access points to the park so it is difficult to get an accurate number.

4. What will the fencing be like?

It will be discrete plain wire and post fencing, electrified to keep cattle under control.

5. Will footpaths and vantage points be maintained for all?

The plan is to keep the park open to wander as it is now. There are no designated footpaths controlled by the NT.

6. The proposed boundary leaves an area with a funnel-like effect, gathering cattle, dog walkers etc together into a narrow opening. This is dangerous.

We will look again at that area.

7. Do you have a prospective tenant already?

We cannot answer that question.

8. Previous tenants say they had 5 acres around the house and were never offered more.

They feel this new lease is unfair.

9. Will the 21-year lease be renewable?

Not at 21 years but before that, during the lease it could be renegotiated.

10. Will the significant parts of the house be maintained, such as the staircase and library?

NT will oversee all restoration of the house and grounds and will maintain significant features such as those suggested, nature conservation, and land management to keep both sides of the boundary looking the same.

11. Why consult over the summer holidays? This has not been well handled.

Tim Barter apologized for the bad management of the discussion period and hoped things would improve from now on, hence why they were attending the meeting. They appreciate all feedback and will continue to consult residents and Parish Councils moving forward.

Cllr Worth thanked the public for their questions and opened the meeting up to Councillors for their questions and views.

It was pointed out that Dinton Park is important to Teffont residents as there is no open space in Teffont to safely walk. There is easy access along the coffin path into the park.

Cllr Fisher said that in her recollection Dinton School have accessed the Park for over 40 years using the same footpath and this proposal would block that footpath. Tim Barter pointed out there were no designated footpaths controlled by the NT; access is to the park as a whole. Cllr Worth read a statement from the resident of Hyde's House, whose family gifted Phillips House and the park to the National Trust which said that public access had been permitted from the mid 1990s. Cllr Worth requested that Cllr Fisher clarify this contradiction.

A question was asked about the marketing: how will it be handled and when would it begin?

Tim Barter stated that they will probably use an estate agent, followed by a 'beauty parade' and would hope to be ready to advertise by spring 2022. They want to maintain a sustainable property so a private tenant would be ideal. They would not consider a hotel, golf course, theme park etc. They hope for a minimum amount of impact on the park whilst creating a privacy buffer for the house.

Councillor's comments:

Some Cllrs believed a deal was done, that there probably was already a prospective tenant and TPC could merely request some changes as suggested.

It was agreed TPC would make its own comments to NT, not just support those of DPC.

Cllr Worth summarized comments and proposed writing to the NT with the following points:

- They were disappointed in the consultation process to date. However, the Council welcomed the presence from the National Trust of Tim Barter and Anna Russell and expressed the wish that from now on communication would be much improved. Tim Barter and Anna Russell stated that it would.

- The Council support the tenancy of Philipps House, along with the preservation of the house and contents.
- The Council opposed the suggested acreage of parkland attached to the tenancy and request it should be reduced.
- The boundary itself should be considered with respect to access, safety, for example, the pinch point that will be created on the eastern side with people, dog walkers and cows converging into a small area and vantage points.
- The Council is grateful to The National Trust for the opportunity for 2 Councillors to walk the site with the National Trust at a date to be determined.

Cllr Worth thanked Mrs Wacher for standing in for the Clerk.

The meeting was closed at 19.05.