

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Uppingham Town Council held at the Town Hall, High Street East, Uppingham, Rutland – 7.00pm Monday 3rd July 2017.

056/17 1 - Chairman's Opening Remarks: Alec Crombie welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting would be recorded and subsequently made available for listening to members of the public. First and foremost I'm extremely pleased to welcome our guest. I'd like to thank the councillors who supported me on my Mayor's Walk.

Alec Crombie stated he does not propose to suspend standing order 2.3.10 (standing to speak) on this occasion. **Resolution:** The Chair proposed that the last two items are merged so that Mr Badley can contribute to the debate, seconded by David Ainslie and unanimously agreed.

057/17 2 - Attendance Register: Alec Crombie (Chair), David Ainslie, David Casewell, Claire Crowley, Christine Edwards, Sam Findlay, Miranda Jones, Peter Rees, Richard Reeve, Mark Shaw, Ian Salt and Ron Simpson.

058/17 3 - Apologies for Absence: Received from Stephen Rozak who was on holiday. Proposed by David Casewell these be accepted, seconded by Sam Findlay and unanimously agreed.

[The Clerk forgot to mention in the meeting apologies offered by Peter Rees who had a family commitment].

059/17 4 - Declaration of members' interests and requests for dispensation: None received.

7:04pm Mr Badley joined the meeting.

060/17 5 - Democratic 15 minutes – an opportunity for the public to speak.
Resolution: See below items merged as per 056/17

061/17 6 - To consider, and if appropriate progress, an offer of land within Uppingham to build a number of homes for local young people.

The Chair invited our guest to speak after which he would say a few words and then ask the proposers of the motion to address the meeting.

Mr Badley – I didn't actually come here to make a speech, but the situation as I see it is this; my family has been associated with Uppingham for many, many years. The Badley family now in Uppingham has all but died out. I was Mr Toon's last apprentice, I no longer live in Uppingham, I live in Stafford. In his will Mr Toon bequeathed to me a small parcel of land on the Seaton Road. This is now called The Orchard Garden. It's been in existence since 1882 when it was first made into a Victorian Garden by the then Bank Manager of Barclays Bank. Having said that, over the years that I have been coming back and forth to Uppingham because my family are rested in the church yard here and I like to pay my respects every so often. I'm also part of the Ted Toon Charitable Trust which gives out the Christmas presents to the elderly of the Town every Christmas. It was during one of these meetings that it was suggested that the young people in Uppingham were disadvantaged. The fact to buy a property or to get a foot on the property ladder or rent a property in Uppingham is getting past most peoples' ability certainly to buy and even find it difficult to raise the rent. To this end I offered the small plot of land on the Seaton Road to build affordable housing for the benefit of the young people of Uppingham. I also ask that one of the properties be retained in the name of

Badley and should be mine in perpetuity, although I may fall off my perch next week. I'm no spring chicken as you can see. That property I would like to use for a newly-wed couple, born and bred in Uppingham to live in it rent free for three years to give them the opportunity to put together a little nest egg which they could then use as a down payment on a property or house. The only thing I would expect them to pay are the overheads and council tax. This I would like to see last for three years and then it rotates. After 12 years perhaps you good people could look at it again as I don't anticipate being here in 12 years time, but that's the situation as I see it. That is the Badley's gift to Uppingham Town which as a family we have enjoyed for many generations.

The Chair thanked Mr Badley for the offer and for travelling some distance to come and speak to us.

7:09pm Cornelius Vincent-Enright joined the meeting.

Alec Crombie: Can I just say at this point that I was privileged to know Ted Toon over quite a long period of time, professional as well as our neighbourly relations lasted upwards of 30 years and I'm quite sure that Ted would very much approve of the project we are discussing tonight. Speaking personally I commend this to Council for serious consideration.

The land in question probably has negligible value and if we were to proceed albeit not through the traditional route there is the potential to create a social asset of some considerable importance and throughout our discussion tonight I would ask us not to lose focus on the word homes and the term young people. Having said that, there are quite significant and far reaching implications financially, resources hence I jotted down a small handful of questions I would welcome help with from the proposers of the motion. (These were handed at the start of the meeting to Cllrs. Ainslie and Simpson and are below).

DEMAND - Please can you define "Significant public interest" as referred to in the briefing paper?

VALUE - How do you see UTC's possible involvement adding value to the project?

LAND - How will UTC's ownership of the land facilitate the project?

UPPINGHAM FIRST - What will the interface between UTC and Uppingham First look like?

That all I want to say at this point. Do you want to speak to the motion?

Cllr Simpson: *In one sense I need to declare an interest when we get to partnerships as I'm a director of Uppingham First, I will put that to the end if I may as I have been involved with this project to some degree already. I've known Mr Badley for some years through the Teddy Toon £50 Trust which you are familiar with. That has no connection with this project. The question as I see it is does the Council want to get involved in the business of providing housing for young people, and the answer may be no. One of the purposes of tonight is to clarify whether Council is minded to look in principle or not. Your questions about significant public interest, the question was in the first draft of the Town Centre Plan and there is significant evidence of support for it and interestingly not a single voice against having checked the files. I can't find any evidence saying they weren't happy with the proposition where they were very quick to say about one or two things they were less happy about. It would, however, be appropriate and you made the relevant point Chair; the starting point after the Council decides to get involved if it so*

does is to say is there a demand for this and that is the first thing we need to do, go to the community as it were and identify, hopefully with the help of the County Council and others there is demand. In terms of the Council's possible involvement, my view is it is as much or little as the Council desires. So I'm conscious that sometimes Ian will say to me "can the Council do this and why is Uppingham First doing this and so on?" So what we have done in this instance is come to the Council first and say would the Council like to get involved and to what extent. If it says no, others will try and move the project on but I think this is the proper thing to do in bringing it to the Council as colleagues have talked in the past about coming up with some effort or initiative to look at the provision of local housing. It's interesting because some of the qualifications Gerald wants to put in it you can only do that legally through a housing trust. Those of you that have been involved in housing association homes, they are now obliged to bring people from other towns to fill those homes if there is no local demand. It's difficult to say these are just for Uppingham folk as it could be considered discriminatory now. It can be done in a housing trust created specifically for the purpose there is a body of knowledge on that we can go into if appropriate Chair. So the answer to your second question about the Town Councils involvement could be minimal in a sense will it help move the project on, could be a little more involved through the creation of a housing trust and have seats on the trust. In theory the Council could say 'yes' we'd love to deliver this project alone. So I think what we are trying to find out tonight is to what extent the Council would like some involvement or not?

Mr Badley can correct me if I'm wrong, I understand his intent, he's made the point we are all getting older. I think his intent here is to try and find a safe haven for the land while the work creating the trust is undertaken, which will take a little while. So as I understand it and he can correct me later, I think the idea is he's giving the Council the first opportunity to take what may be the permanent ownership of the land or temporary ownership if it choose to pass it on to the trust at a later date, but the Council is being asked in the first instance. In terms of the relationship with Uppingham First if we go for a housing trust Uppingham First is a voting member of Locality. Locality are the experts on this and I have had the good fortune to visit a number of housing trusts and is the reason for my last question on the paper written for members. It may be that members want the opportunity to look how other people have done it before making a firm a decision. So I think I have answered your questions Chair.

The questions posed on the paper were simply trying to create an order of activity;

Is the Council interested in principle in getting involved?

If it is, clearly there needs to be further work done to explore the implications for the Council? Even taking temporary ownership of the land as you quite rightly point out has implications, financial and legal.

Is the Council interested in being part of a housing trust, or help bring that about? Some parishes have done around the country.

If members are interested in moving the thing along a path subject to all the checks and balances and ultimately funding, questions are how might we proceed? It may be a working party is appropriate for example it would be sensible to have the Chair for Neighbourhood Planning involved in that, other members might be Chair of Planning plus one or two other key members it would make good sense to have involved because of the different angles on it. But critically housing will be a new function if we decide to get involved in this Chair. It will be a new function and it seems appropriate to ask those points of principle to begin with before we get into the detail.

Alec Crombie: *Thank you very much.*

Dave Ainslie: *I'm not sure I can add to that. I think your initial introduction is extremely balanced and puts the argument very well for what we are being asked to consider tonight. I think Ron has given an equally balanced answer. I think what we need is some debate around how interested are we as a Council in providing some sort of social housing and as Ron says there is a spectrum from not very much to we'd like to do the old fashioned council houses and all points in between. I think we need to have that debate and say are we interested and to what degree and that leads on to the questions Ron has put in the paper about how we might technically achieve some of that. I won't go on anymore and I feel we need to ask people how they feel about it Alec?*

7:23pm Lindsay Cooper joined the meeting.

Members contributed to the discussion and posed questions which were responded to by Mr Badley and the proposers of the motion.

Alec Crombie: *I detect a lot of interest and quite a bit of caution. Obviously the proposers of the motion are liberty to put the motion here and now. I jotted down a slight alternative or form of words if I may offer this to you?*

That the Council is resolved to investigate building of homes for local young people facilitated by an offer to donate land in Uppingham. Now that is slightly different to the motion as put and it is a different emphasis as you can see, but perhaps that is not going to suit one or two people that have spoken recently.

David Casewell; *I understand the concern people have around the table about the resources the Council has to do this initial work, we have a Clerk who is working flat out to keep the Council running as it is and I'm not sure we have the resources. However, I think if we have a working party set up which is not necessarily a Town Council one then I think it is probably essential that some members of the Town Council sit on that. We have a capacity issue at the Town Council at the moment.*

Ron Simpson: *Chair I don't really see the problem, this is being done elsewhere. I was happy to second your motion Chair. My recommendation would be if we were minded to form a group of people would they agree to a visit of some kind and would the Council help facilitate this and that might clarify a lot of the issues and members can then come back and report to Council. So if the Council is going to do anything, let's agree to have a visit to one of these projects and I will try and help with Locality to find one as close to the idea that Mr Badley has as possible.*

Alec Crombie: *Thank you very much, so maybe we can tweak what I just read out to you by saying; that this Council supports Uppingham First to investigate building of homes for local young people facilitated by an offer to donate land in Uppingham and is happy to co-operate with the proposal in paragraph 6 of the proposing paper. Richard Reeve: I second that.*

Ron Simpson: *Because we have this tricky thing of the partnership of Uppingham First, as long as members are happy that I have declared an interest, there is no pecuniary interest in the thing. If the Council is willing to organise a visit I'm fairly confident the partnership will be quite happy to help organise the working party.*

David Ainslie: *If you are going to involve Uppingham First I will need to declare an interest as well.*

Miranda Jones: *Can I just say that I can't help but feel the proposal is falling a little foul*

of perhaps a few times that Council have been brought things to approve in principle and there has been a lack of substance behind it. I think we are all a little bit more cautious and I really hope that if this working group gets together we are next time presented with a definite plan and ideas and proposals of substance so that we can make a decision.

Lindsay Cooper: I think this is really interesting but has been brought to us too soon.

Ron Simpson: *Chair, it is sometimes hard work in this Council, I'm sorry. Mr Badley has made an offer which the press and others are waiting to hear what we have decided. The majority of the community in Uppingham have said what a fantastic idea, can you pull it off? There are all sorts of hurdles, there are all sorts of issues, the land is not necessarily in the best place but is the Council minded to be positive and do something for its young people. Or do you want to leave it to other people to do the work, it doesn't matter. Mr Badley has offered the Council the first opportunity, I'm quite relaxed about that and I'm happy to do a lot of the work but it's sad to hear members who have been elected by the community not even willing to explore the possibility. It is very disappointing.*

Mr Badley: *I'm a retired prison governor and I've attended more meetings than I care to admit. If members around this table want a fully costed, plans drawn up for the property called the Orchard Garden it is going to cost you hundreds if not thousands of pounds to get those here. We are only asking for a principle decision.*

Alec Crombie recapped the motion he proposed and was seconded by Richard Reeve: This Council supports Uppingham First with a view to investigating the building of homes for local young people facilitated by an offer to donate by Mr G Badley land in Uppingham and specifically will further the aim of 6f of the briefing paper. Vote 10 in favour and 3 abstentions (Ron Simpson, David Ainslie and Mark Shaw abstained due to a disclosable interest).

The Chair thanked Mr Badley for travelling from Stafford and his kind offer.

Meeting closed at 7:50p.m.