

# BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, 6pm, Zoom

Present : Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Olivia Collier, Athena Cripps, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson, Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Jonathan Strong (Chair), Richard Stubbings. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).

## 1. APOLOGIES

No apologies.

## 2. FORMER PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDING

The site is to be auctioned, online, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February. KB, AC, MD and JS had visited and viewed. A number of developers and private buyers have shown an interest. The guide price is £480,000 - £500,000.

The building is Listed Grade II as being of architectural and historic interest and is in the Benenden Conservation Area, and was built for the Earl of Cranbrook. All Trustees agreed the importance of the building for the village and the desire to keep it within the "public domain".

- The building provides a large amount of space with the potential to house the Pre-School, a Social Club, village archives, youth facility, sports facility, community centre, office space.
  - There is possibly scope for selling the rear section as a separate self-contained property, which could help to recoup costs.
  - If the Trust bought the building and any plans proved not feasible, the site could be sold on again by the Trust.
  - There would likely be some grant and other funding available.
  - The Trust could borrow to carry out any renovations/conversion.
  - St George's building could be sold to fund a new building.
  - If the Pre-School agreed, it could be relocated to the new site relatively quickly, releasing St George's for conversion into residential lets and generating income.
  - Any future development by the Trust at the Village Hall/Recreation Ground may incur similar levels of cost and will require village consultation and support.
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- Any costs involved in the purchase and refurbishment of the building, and of St George's, are immense.
  - Running costs and ongoing structural repairs are an unknown.
  - The Trust needs to maintain a prudent amount of money to run the assets which it does have.
  - Any conversion could take 2-3 years.
  - Trustees have a duty to look after the Trust's existing assets.
  - Trustees are discouraged from taking high stake financial gambles.

The risks regarding costs, unknowns and reputation outweigh any benefits or desires, and Trustees unanimously agreed to not make a bid on the building/site.

Meeting closed 6.40pm

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Chairman..... Date..... Page 1/1

*These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.*