

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Separate Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee held remotely on
Wednesday, 26 August 2020 commencing at 4:00 pm**

Present:

Vice Chair in the chair

Councillor J R Mason

and Councillors:

G F Blackwell, M Dean, D J Harwood, E J MacTiernan, R J Stanley, M G Sztymiak and
R J E Vines

CON.5 SEPARATE BUSINESS

- 5.1 Following the resolution contained in Paragraph EX.35 of the ordinary Minutes of the present meeting, separate business was transacted as recorded in Paragraph CON.6 hereunder.

CON.6 CLEEVE COMMON LEASE

- 6.1 The report of the Head of Finance and Asset Management, circulated separately at Pages No.1-29, provided information about the golf club provision on Cleeve Common. Members were asked to consider the information provided and decide on the way forward.
- 6.2 The Head of Finance and Asset Management explained that currently the Golf Club was leased to The Share Club on a 25-year lease from 10 December 2011 leaving an unexpired lease term of just over 16 years at an annual rent of £50,000. The Council had a licence with Cleeve Common Board of Conservators which allowed golf to be played on the Common for an annual fee of £25,000. Both agreements had break clauses which allowed the contracts to end earlier and The Share Club had now utilised its break opportunity so that its tenancy would terminate on 31 March 2021. An independent report on the future of golf on Cleeve Hill had been commissioned to assist the Council in determining whether it wished to continue with the provision of golf or whether it should serve notice to terminate the licence with Cleeve Common Conservators. The report concluded that golf in the location was not financially viable and would require substantial investment and ongoing subsidy from the Council and it was therefore recommended to invoke the break clause within the licence. It was also recommended that, upon termination, the existing clubhouse was demolished to avoid further maintenance and security costs and ensure the health and safety of individuals. To support the continuing use of the Common for a range of activities, it was recommended that the site remain open as a car park and a further report would be submitted to Members on the costs of upgrading the facility along with potential commercial uses.

- 6.3 Attention was drawn to the report of the independent consultant which summarised the decline of golf nationally, the oversupply of golf courses in the Borough, the positive and negative aspects of the golf course on Cleeve Hill, the finances of the current golf club, the unviability of refurbishing or rebuilding the clubhouse and the risks of searching for a new tenant along with the likely level of rent. It concluded with a strong recommendation not to pursue the continuation of golf at the location. In terms of the demolition of the existing clubhouse, the Head of Finance and Asset Management felt this was essential to protect the authority as well as the Common. Initial estimates had been around £120,000 and that would be funded from the Asset Management reserve. That reserve would also be used to secure the car park in the interim until such time as a decision was made about what to do with the site going forward. It was felt there may be some commercial opportunities for the site that would satisfy planning colleagues and this would need to be considered as part of the next stage report to Members, along with the possibilities for car parking in terms of demand, what could be achieved in the remote location and whether charging would be in the interest of all parties. Some repairs would be needed, e.g. potholes filled, but initially the area of the clubhouse would be left clear for additional parking.
- 6.4 During the discussion which ensued, there was some concern expressed about how anti-social behaviour on the site could be avoided if the car park was not locked in the evenings and how staff could be supported through the redundancy process. In response, the Head of Finance and Asset Management reaffirmed that employees would be supported where possible with signposting to help them as required. In terms of the car park, there may be a need for the installation of CCTV for unauthorised uses; locking of the car park may be considered and that would be included in the report to be submitted in due course. CCTV could quite easily be added through the contract at the Council Offices; although that was a reactive approach and Officers would prefer to be proactive in preventing incidents from taking place – this would have to be considered carefully to enable it to be managed without detracting from the use of the Common. A local Member indicated that there was already a Warden who locked an existing gate so it may be possible for an arrangement to be made to lock the car park if this was a favoured option. The Head of Finance and Asset Management undertook to investigate that with the Cleeve Common Conservators. In respect of future uses, it was felt a commercial use would be more favourable but this would not preclude applications for residential development – the Council's development plan did not support residential development; however, any application would have to be considered on its own merits. Active use of the site had always been a deterrent to anti-social behaviour so if there was a viable use which could be encouraged that may be helpful in the longer term.
- 6.5 In respect of the facilities in the area, such as toilets, Members were reminded that the Council had stopped providing public conveniences in the Borough around 12 years ago so, whilst this could be looked at, it would be low on the list of priorities.

6.6 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the break clause within the licence agreement with Cleeve Common Board of Conservators be invoked in September 2020 thereby giving six months' notice to cease the provision of golf on Cleeve Common.
2. That authority be delegated to the Borough Solicitor, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Asset Management, to prepare the necessary legal documentation for the termination of the licence to play golf upon the terms agreed by the Head of Finance and Asset Management and such other terms as they consider reasonably necessary or desirable.
3. That £120,000 be allocated from the Asset Management Reserve to enable the immediate demolition of the clubhouse.
4. That £20,000 be used from the Asset Management Reserve to carry out works to the car parking facility to ensure its continued use during the transitional period.
5. That a report on the cost of laying out car parking facilities on site, the management of those facilities and the potential for temporary commercial uses of the site be submitted to a future meeting.

The meeting closed as recorded in the ordinary Minutes.