

## Cheddleton Parish Council

### XETRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE PURCHAS OF THE GARAGE PLOT IN MILL LANE, WETLEY ROCKS AT CHEDDLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE TUESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 AT 6.45 PM

**ATTENDANCE:** Chairman Councillor M Ahmad.

Councillors, S Beardmore, S Bagnall, M Cunningham, J Fernihough A Grocott, G Grocott, K Grocott, K Harvey, O Pointon, S Rogers, V salt, L Shaw, T Williamson and M Worthington.  
Clerk for the minutes Councillor V Cornes

Also present were several members of the public.

The Chair, Councillor Ahmad welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Councillor K Grocott to read out a statement on his behalf.

The statement referred to the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September, the Council had agreed that Councillor Ahmad should liaise with the vendors about a possible sale to the Parish Council. He spoke to the seller whom told him to make an offer. There was no legal pack available and offers were totally informal. Pre-auction offers had to be made before 29<sup>th</sup> Augus and Councillor Ahmad made an informal offer before that date. He received a letter saying that the offer had been accepted but that no contract could be entered into until a deposit had been paid. The offer is not legally binding and is only a price negotiation. No money has been exchanged and making the offer does not breach any of the Standing Orders that deals with public contracts. The estate agent advised Councillor Mahfooz not to disclose the price at that stage, because other buyers may use the information to increase the price. The seller has stated that a deposit has to be paid by 9<sup>th</sup> October.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:** -The purpose of the meeting is firstly for the Council to vote on whether the offer should be made public now or later so the decision can be taken properly. Secondly there will be a vote on whether Councillor Ahmad should proceed with the purchase. Councillor Ahmad went on the say that it had been James Barbour who had prompted him to buy the plot for the Parish.
2. **PROGRESS SO FAR:** - Councillor Ahmad had asked BJB Estate Agents for their advice and he had been told that the plot could fetch a large sum if it went to auction. Councillor Ahmad was asked by Councillor Harvey why the Council wanted the garages and he replied that Mill Lane needed the parking because it got congested when the school was let out. Also, the local community needed garage space. Councillor Rogers then challenged the Chair for making a comment relating to her persona;;y, and not relevant to the meeting. She also accused the Chair of not following proper financial regulations. Councillor Ahmad denied any wrongdoing because no contract had been made nor had any money changed hands. He said that he had asked the advice of Councillors Cunningham, Worthington and Williamson and he had also asked Caroline Lovatt what her thoughts were. Councillor Rogers stated that all Councillors should have been consulted. Councillor Cunningham reiterated that the discussion so far had been informal and non-binding because though an offer had been made, no money had been paid there was no formal agreement. He said that though he appreciated Councillor Rogers point of view, that local people thought it would be good for the local community.  
Councillor Cunningham also pointed out that too much prevarication could cause us to miss out on opportunities that would benefit the community. He stated that although it may have been considered that Councillors Ahmad and Williamson had been quick of the mark, that it

had been done with the best intentions to try and secure this asset for the Community. Councillor Grocott pointed out that though one or two people had had their say, most Councillors hadn't expressed an opinion. He suggested going round the table and asking each individual Councillor what they thought. Councillor Grocott said that Councillor Cunningham had a point that if the Council couldn't decide, the opportunity may not be there after another delay. He also said that under the Local Government act of 1972, Section 124, it stated that the Council had a right to vote on the acquisition of land etc. that would benefit the community. Councillor Geogia Grocott asked Councillor Ahmad if there was any paperwork that Councillors could look at to determine the value of the plot, Councillor Worthington then asked Councillor Ahmad if the offer price could be revealed so that a decision could be made.

Councillors were asked to vote upon whether the price should be disclosed. Councillor Rogers said that she had some questions from the public, 1. If the land was purchased, would it remain the property of the Parish Council, or would it be sold on for profit? 2. Are we sure that the property has not been sold to a third part already? 3. Is it being bought with private or public money? 4. Is this the best way of using public money? Councillor Ahmad replied that the money the Council spends on the plot, it will be an asset because the land will only increase in value. He stated furthermore that the plot is next to his property and people park there when dropping children off at school and picking them up again. He said that the village needed more parking. Councillor Ahmad insisted that as far as he is concerned the property would remain as the property of the parish Council and would not be sold on for development. Councillor Rogers said that she had a further question. Would the garages be sold on for profit? Councillor Ahmad pointed out that he had already answered this question.

There was more discussion relating to Councillors views. Councillor Rogers proposed to take up the Vice-Chairs suggestion that views should be given by each Councillor. The Chair stated that the proposal would be agreed. There were varying opinions on whether the garage plot should be purchased or not, on who would be given the opportunity to rent, on whether the money could be better spent and on who would administer the plot.

Councillor Worthington suggested that Councillors should vote on whether the garages should remain the property of the Parish Council in perpetuity. Councillor Rogers made a counter-proposal that Councillors should vote on whether to make the purchase price public and then to decide how the Council should proceed. Councillor Grocott seconded the proposal. 6 Councillors voted in favour of the price being made public and 4 voted against and there was 1 abstention so the motion was carried.

Councillor Ahmad revealed that the purchase price was £30k. Councillor Ahmad then proposed that it should be voted on if the purchase would go ahead, this was seconded by Councillor K Grocott. 6 Councillors voted for the proposal and 3 voted against it and there were 4 abstentions.

3. **FINANCE ISSUES**-Except for disclosing the sale price, there was no in-depth financial discussion.
4. **NEXT STEPS**-The Council voted with a majority to proceed with the purchase and Councillor Ahmad would let the agents know that he had the authority to go ahead with the purchase..
5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**- Residents had called for an election to replace Councillor Lovatt, who had resigned. Councillor Ahmad asked the Councillor if they wanted polling card to be sent out to residents to let them know the date of the election and where the polling stations would be. Costs were discussed and though the cards themselves would cost

£545 but the cost of postage would run into thousands, there would also be the cost of manning the polling stations. It was voted unanimously in favour of sending polling cards.

Councillor Ahmad invited the members of the public to comment. One gentleman stated that he thought that the meeting was illegal but did not say why, A lady member commented that some Councillors did not want to follow procedure,

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