Heytesbury, Imber and Knook Parish Council
Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Raymond Trust Fund Charity Trustee

Registered Charity no: 305523

Meeting Details

- Date: 18th February 2025
- Time: 6.30 pm
- Venue: Hospital of Saint John

Attendance

Members of the Trustee:

1. Nick Williams **NW**
2. Vanessa Sturmey **VS**
3. Caroline Barker Bennett **CBB**
4. Loiuse Morris **LM**
5. Jo Sneddon **JS**
6. Patricia Fellowes **PF**
7. Ben Coombes **BC**

Attendees:

8. Alex Morris (Chairman HRGT)
9. Michael Hutchings
10. Judith Dando
11. Roly Rickcard
12. Christopher Newbury (Unitary Councillor)
13. Andy Frost
14. Justin Wagstaff
15. Kath Oxborrow
16. Karen Riggs
17. Danny Boath
18. Ross Boath
19. David Bond
20. Mark Burtton
21. Peter Mann
22. John Gerring
23. Ginnie Sincock
24. Marlene Gerring
25. Den Der Pictor
26. Derek Hiscock
27. Doug Wheeler
28. Sarah Wheeler

1. Apologies

Sue King

1. Declaration of Interest

None

Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the extraordinary meeting and informed them that an audio recording of the meeting would be made. He outlined the purpose of the meeting which was so members of the Trustee could consider the best way forward in light of the recent placing of the land to the North of Park Street and to the East of Mantle's Lane onto the open market.

The chair reminded the meeting that it was not a meeting of the Parish Council and that the attendees must make their decisions in light of the purpose of the Trust and the regulations laid down by the Charity Commission. He also reminded the guests that it was not a general open debate and only questions through the Chair would be taken. The Chair explained the structure of the Trust's financial assets and the opportunities and restrictions involved.

The chairman outlined the discussion order as follows:

1. Alex Morris and Michael Hutchings would present HRGT's purpose and goals, followed by a QCA with the Trustee.
2. Fifteen minutes of statements from the floor.
3. Each Trustee member would have the opportunity to discuss options, with the Trustee aiming to agree on a resolution.

The RTF Trustee Chair invited the Chair of the Heytesbury Recreation Ground Trust (HRGT) to make a short presentation on their aims and progress to date. *A transcript of the presentation is available from the Clerk on request.*
The main points being:

1. The HRGT established to acquire (particularly the plot north of Park Street.
   land for recreational use and to administer it,
2. It opposed any development of housing or general community facilities on the land.
3. It was currently in a campaign to raise funds and had received a number of pledges.
4. It was looking to the RTF for funding and initial a pledge to underpin future fund raising.

There then followed a discussion on whether the RTF could support the ambitions of the HRGT. In summary the meeting considered the flowing issues:

1. **Land Sale Opportunity:** Discussion on the potential purchase of land to benefit the community, with an emphasis on understanding Trust restrictions and compliance requirements.
2. **Trust Funds:**
   - Capital account: £112,192 (restricted to registered objectives like purchasing land/buildings for a Village Hall).
   - Second fund: £98,771 (general benefit of the community, subject to Trustee approval).
   - Bank balance: £9,000.
3. **Charity Commission Approval:** Any changes to the Trust's objectives require Charity Commission consent and must not hinder the Trust's ability to meet its goals.
4. **Land Packages:**
   - Lot 1: £315,000 (sub-lots 1a: £125,000, 6.06 acres; 1b: £190,000, 6.13 acres with a dilapidated barn).
   - Lot 2: £90,000 (4.0 acres off Mantle's Lane).
5. **Community Approach:** Discussion on combining financial assets for potential land acquisition. Target is to announce the community approach at the Village Meeting on March 11th.
6. **Trust Role:** Decision on whether to lead the acquisition or participate in a community bid. Use of the Capital fund requires alignment with the Trust's objectives (e.g., obtaining land for a Village Hall, but not sports facilities).

Members to the trust were invited to express their views, and two proposals were suggested and a recorded vote taken on each. A summary of the discussion is below.
A full transcript of the discussion is available from the Locum Clerk

The chairman invited the views of each trust member present:

- BC suggested that the opportunity has arisen and it is time to move forward and proposed that, as a trust, we should, subject to legal advice and further meetings between HRGT and RTF, agree tonight to pledge an agreed amount of money and vote on it.
- CBB suggested buying part of Parkland instead of the whole, as it might be more feasible with the Trust's budget and because it's closer to the village, making it a better location for community facilities.
- JS noted that we may be losing the opportunity and urged quick action. She proposed the RTF pledge to support an initiative that will ensure future children in this village have a place to play.
- LM suggested that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for all to come together. The community can unite to buy the land, which most people will support. The RTF could quickly facilitate this without excessive bureaucracy from the Charity Commission. While pledging capital might require more effort, a commitment to income could kickstart the process immediately.
- VS brought up the main issue again — first of all, to make contact with the owner. The income pot is about £95,000, which is over £200,000 short. Negotiations with the owner for more time to raise the rest are needed. RTF does not have enough information to proceed. More discussion is required to finalize details and conditions before RTF can make any firm decisions. She noted that the group needed to ensure all necessary information regarding buying the land is reviewed. She is content with the pledge of the income portion. However, the trust needs a discussion after the meeting to address legal conditions and determine an appropriate amount.
- PF addressed another ongoing issue, which is the neglect of this end of the village in favour of focusing on the other end. No decision has been made regarding this matter. She had a discussion with the Heytesbury FC representative, who confirmed that returning is not an option for them. This situation is unfortunate. He offered his small shack, sited on the grounds, which has water and electricity. PF stressed that the time was not right to make any pledges. More research is needed before committing to anything. And proposes that the RTF concentrate on securing lot 1A immediately or as soon as it's possible.
- NW pointed out that regarding the conditions of the pledge, it was important to act swiftly. Making a quick pledge would allow the recreational fund to make an offer. Subsequently, we can quickly evaluate the conditions of that pledge and determine its legal obligations. The key question was whether HRGT have sufficient funds to make an offer, and if so, what the next steps would be.

Conclusion

Chairman informed the meeting that theTtrust would need to finalize the proposal for a vote, ensuring they agree on the pledge first. The Trust must clarify the conditions and determine how much to commit from the revenue or capital. It's crucial that the pledge protects the objectives of the trust. There is no other way around it. A pledge will be made by the RTF, subject to legal support

Proposal:

1. Subject to further advice and further meetings between the representatives of the RTF and the HRGT, the RTF initially pledges £50,000 to help support the purchase for land in Heytesbury, as soon as possible, by the HRGT.
   Number of votes cast:
   For: 4, Cllrs Coombes, Morris, Sneddon and Sturmey.
   Against: 3, Cllrs Fellows, Barker Bennett and Williams
   Motion accepted.

2. Subject to further advice and further meetings between the representatives of the RTF and the HRGT, the RTF initially pledges £80,000 to help support the purchase for land in Heytesbury, as soon as possible, by the HRGT.
   Number of votes cast:
   For: 3, Cllrs Coombes, Morris and Williams.
   Against: 4, Cllrs Barker Bennet, Sneddon, Fellowes and Sturmey.
   Motion rejected

Next Steps: The Chair suggested further discussion and clarification was required before any firm decisions are made.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm