



Reed Parish Council

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Councillors Email:

Cllr. Ken Langley (Chair) - langley@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Caroline d' Ayala (Vice Chair) - dayala@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Peter Lawrence - lawrence@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Martin Higgs - higgs@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Appendix to Minutes of Reed Parish Council Meeting

**Annual Parish Meeting held on 30th May 2018 at 8 PM in Reed Village Hall
(following the Annual Meeting and monthly Parish Council Meeting)**

Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chairman), C d' Ayala, P Lawrence and M Higgs.

Dist. Cllrs. G Morris and A Hunter, County Cllr. F Hill.

Also in attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms and 25 members of the public.

Chairmans Report

It is with shock and sadness that Reed Parish Council has to record the untimely death of our long serving colleague, Tom Duke.

Tom was devoted to Reed and its well-being, and served our community with wise counsel and practical aid for many years. But he had sympathies and commitment to others that extended far beyond our little parish. And it is unspeakably tragic that he succumbed whilst exerting himself on behalf of those in Ethiopia whose lives he was committed to easing.

Our thoughts and fond wishes are with his family in their grief and loss.

I also wish to record with sadness the loss of Cllr. Howard Marshall, who died last Autumn. He was a diligent member of this Parish Council and, prior to that, of the District Council. He was devoted to Reed and served the interests of the village in many capacities over many years. The esteem in which he was held was eloquently expressed by the attendance – filling St Margaret's – at his memorial service.

I wish also to record the gratitude of the Council and the village to David Smith for his service for so many years as our Clerk, a position which he resigned in January. At the same time I am pleased to welcome Catharine Toms who we feel lucky to have been able to recruit as David's replacement.

I also wish to welcome our 2 new Councillors, Caroline d' Ayala and Martin Higgs.

Beyond these, the main events to report this year all relate to The Cabinet and the endeavours of villagers and their Parish Council to see it restored as Reed's village pub.

You will be aware that Reed Parish Council has applied to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for permission to borrow £400,000 in order to buy The Cabinet and re-open it as a pub. This followed consultation of parishioners by means of a public meeting in November 2017 and then a ballot of all adult parishioners in January 2018. On a 91% return (by households), 82% of villagers voted in favour of an application to seek permission to borrow to save The Cabinet as Reed's public house. Parishioners – so many of whom made the journey from Reed to Letchworth – will no doubt recall the evening last July when North Herts. Planning Control Committee rejected by 10 to 2 the current owner's application for change of use of The Cabinet from public house to domestic dwelling. The owner has appealed that decision and the ruling of the Planning Inspectorate is pending. I am pleased to be able to add the good news that the Ministry has now granted approval to borrow recognising the strong case put forward in the Business Plan of economic viability of The Cabinet and also the evidence of vigorous community support. We trust this will lead the Inspector to dismiss the appeal in November and create a situation whereby The Cabinet can be sold and re-opened as a pub.

Presentation by the Save the Cabinet Action Group (SCAG)

Mr Howes reported to Parishioners that since last July when SCAG was successful in persuading NHDC Councillors to refuse the application for change of use, the developer/owner of The Cabinet has appealed against this decision. SCAG successfully then campaigned for the appeal to be held as a Public Inquiry, which is to be held 6-8 November in Letchworth. SCAG also applied for and has been granted rule 6 status, which importantly means that they become a party to the Inquiry and stand as equals to both the owner of The Cabinet and the Planning Authority. However, this does present challenges in that it means they can and have appointed a Barrister and expert witnesses, but this comes at a cost.

The Parish Council successfully applied for and got approval to borrow £400,000 from MHCLG which showed a firm indorsement from Central Government as to the viability of the pub. This didn't mean that the Parish Council would buy the pub but simply will be an option as a backstop if no other purchasers came forward.

Mr Howes thanked everybody from Reed and the wider area for their continuing level of support for this campaign and thanked also the people involved in submitting the Business Plan and application for borrowing approval. He thanked the local Councillors and MP for their support along with the various experts that had become involved. There two ways for people to continue supporting, Financial - they did need to continue raising funds to cover the cost of making the best possible case at the Inquiry, and Practical – people did need to write in to the Inspectorate by 14th June, stating that they stood by their original objections and/or add new objections. People were urged to attend the Inquiry in November, to listen to the proceedings and make representations if they wished. A good attendance was going to be vitally important and could affect the outcome.