**IDE PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2018**

**Attended by:** Councillors Nick Bradley (Chairman), Barry Hookins, John Smart, Andy Swain, Chris Bishop, Mark Thomas

**In attendance**: Mel Liversage (clerk); two members of the public.

**Declaration of recording**: No recording took place

**Public participation time:** The chairman invited the members of the public present to give their views or question the Parish Council on issues on this agenda or raise issues to be considered for discussion at a future meeting at the discretion of the chairman. Two members of the public asked the council to ensure that the yearly trimming of the St Ida’s Close boundary hedge was continued under the Parish Council ownership. The chairman explained that there was quite a lot of reparation work to be done to all the fences and hedges of the site and that this item would form part of the negotiattions when discussing the terms of purchase with the Church Commissioners.

**1. Apologies** were received from councillors Pete Bishop, Sarah Tiley, Rachel Herbert, John Goodey (TDC), Kevin Lake (TDC), Alan Connett (DDC)

**2.** **Declaration of Interest**: Mark Thomas declared that he cultivates land on the disputed strip which forms the north east border of Pynes Orchard. The chairman deemed that this did not prevent him from taking a full part in the meeting.

3.1 The Chairman explained that the Parish Council’s offer to buy Pynes Orchard at a price of £17,000 per acre had been accepted by the Church Commissioners. The price reflects the fact that the Church regard the orchard as amenity land, not agricultural land. This was also the value estimated by Rendells Estate agents, who were instructed by the PC in February 2017.

He explained that the Church Commissioners have also agreed to sell land at Weir Meadow; and a price for that has been agreed, at a lower, agricultural value. But the issue of access across Weir Meadow by the tenant or owner of the fields to the north of Weir Meadow has yet to be resolved. Once this issue of agricultural access has been resolved, the Parish Council, with the help of its Weir Meadow Working Group, will be in a position to start fund raising in earnest for this project as well.

The councillors debated and voiced representations about the challenges of supporting two land purchases and funding raising for two large projects at the same time. They agreed how important it will be to avoid unhelpful competition between the two projects. It was agreed that the village had a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire land close to the village, for community use by residents. Councillors were candid that the task was potentially daunting, and not without risk; but, nevertheless, they felt that the benefits, if achieved, were so great that we should press on whilst remaining alert to potential pitfalls. The chairman said that he saw the two projects as complementary. The Parish Council is equally committed to and passionate about Weir Meadow and Pynes Orchard. Each piece of ground has different features, and different characters, and presents different challenges. And each will fulfil different, valuable functions. They will attract funding from different grant making bodies. The fund raisers on each working group are ready to go, and confident of raising the money. It will be important, the meeting felt, for donors to have the option to donate to a joint fund for these two green spaces, or to either project separately. This will be made clear in the prospectuses.

**The Parish Councillors then voted unanimously in favour of the three items presented on the agenda. They are:**

3.2 That the PC chairman and PCOWG chairman can act on behalf of the PC and visit the Church Commissioners in London to resolve the issues outstanding, in order to progress the purchase of Pynes Orchard.

3.3 The Clerk, as treasurer of the Council, will open a Parish Council bank account with the name Pynes Community Orchard, with Parish Councillors as the signatories.

3.4 The Chairman will approach Foot Anstey, an Exeter firm of Solicitors, to act on behalf of the PC to purchase Pynes Orchard.

END.