

Ide Parish Council

Weir Meadow Working Group and Ide Joint Projects Fund Raising Group

**Minutes of a combined meeting of the two working groups held remotely on Zoom
on Monday 18 July 2022 at 6 pm**

1. Present: Richard Cottle (Chair), Mel Liversage, Peter Skinner, Peter Cloke and Nick Bradley.

2. Apologies: Mark Thomas, David Howe, Charlotte McGregor, Rich Cloke, Stuart Brooking, Rachel Herbert, Cheryl Haddy and Phil Willcock.

3. Draft minutes of combined WMWG and JPFRG meeting held 13 June 2022 were approved.
Action: Mel to post on website.

4. Action points from last meeting:

4.1 Football Club: No further report to date from Stuart B about the FA website.

Action: SB interrogate the FA website as soon as possible

4.2 National Lottery Community Fund. Planned application on ice until we own the land.

Action: R Cottle to keep item alive and on the agenda.

4.3 Forestry Commission. No further updates to report.

Action: R Cottle keep in close touch w Forestry Com.

4.4 Tenancy of N Fields. Actions all complete – see item 6 below.

5. Funds and borrowing

The PWLB advance of £152,228 arrived in IPC's account on 16 June 2022. The first 6 monthly repayment is due on 16 December. PW has kindly prepared up to date statements of donations and spending. ML & NB reported that they intend to recommend to IPC that £10,000 (of the £16,500 moved across) be moved back to the Recreation Ground account from the Orchard account, leaving £7,000 in the Orchard account; and, once £8,000 VAT is reclaimed post the land purchase of MW & NFs, leaving £19,900 in the Recreation Ground account to kick start the next phase of developing Weir Meadow.

6. Northern Fields.

6.1 Peter Skinner presented his report on tendering for the tenancy of N Fields. To honour the commercial sensitivity of the tenders, these minutes refer to applicants as farmer A and B, and do not record the sums tendered. Two tenders had been received, both to farm the land by growing arable crops. One requested a term of five years, the other six. The tender sums were within 10% of each other. Farmer A set a condition that the fenced entrance at point C on College Lane be opened to provide a 24 feet access gateway. Farmer B would, we understood, require access via Weir Meadow, which we would be able to strictly control and monitor.

6.2 Three absent members has expressed a view from reading the tender report: two favoured farmer A's tender, one favoured Farmer B's. Discussion followed, teasing out the issues raised: replacing existing entrances with new ones, and closing off the existing ones; the need to seek additional planning consents; the supplied professional CVs and local ties and experience of the applicants; the need to get on and buy the land so as not to lose a farming season, a year's rent, and a season preparing Weir Meadow; the risks of allowing access across Weir Meadow against the new control we can assert by fitting a locked gate, and requiring Peter Skinner's approval and permission on each and every episode of access by the tenants machinery, and dictating the route along the eastern border of WM.

6.3 The group was pleased to have a choice of two experienced and successful farmers, and was content with either tender sum. Members paid particular attention to the advice given by Peter Skinner who had spoken to both applicants. Members had reservations about both tenders, with regard to the different aspects of access in each case; but on balance favoured farmer B's bid. In order to manage the risks of compliance with the strictures we will require regarding access, it was decided:

a) that PS will double check whether farmer B could use College Lane for access if a wider gate entrance was provided

b) if a) above is not possible, that PS would offer farmer B, conditional on the Parish Council's final decision, a two year Farm Business Tenancy with controlled access via Weir Meadow to see how arrangements for access via Weir Meadow work out.

Action: PS will aim to report back to NB on 19 or 20 July.

Action: if farmer B accepts, NB to recommend to IPC on 20 July that we accept the tender from farmer B and proceed to exercise the option to purchase agreement.

Post meeting update: Farmer B will certainly need access via Weir Meadow. He accepts the new controls he will be subject to; and a two year FBT.

Ide Parish Council resolved on 20 July to instruct Peter Skinner to offer Farmer B the tenancy; and to instruct David Howe to proceed now to exercise the option to purchase agreement on Weir Meadow and N Fields.

7. Next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG: Monday 12 September 2022, 8pm on Zoom.

NCAB 21 July 2022
Approved 12 Sep 2022