

NOTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2014 IN WELBOURN VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM

PRESENT

Mr. J.R. Storer, (RS)

Chairman

Councillors: Ms Sarah Brown (SB), Mrs Maureen Lunn (ML), Mr Robert Cross (MC), Mr John Lucas (JL), Mr Stephen Short (SSt), Dr Adam Paxton (AP). Mr Robert Gibson (BG) Mr Stephen Spedding (SSg)

Mr Malcolm McBeath

Parish Clerk

Residents of nos 27 and 33 High Street, nos 2 and 4 Old Mulberry Court, Mr W Goodhand.

09E.01.00	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Nil	<u>ACTION</u>
09E.02.00	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> Nil	
09E.03.00	<u>PUBLIC FORUM</u>	
09E.03.01	Mr & Mrs Riley described the background to their insurance company's application to fell the beech tree at no 33 High Street and demonstrated the impact of the cracks in their house at no 27. Their position was based on the insurance company's report which relied on their specialist assessor's report which maintained that the cracking was caused by clay shrinkage due to water abstraction by the beech tree which had caused part of the building to move which in turn had affected other parts of it. The subsidence was a relatively new event, first noted in 2009, which had got worse over recent years. Repair works had been unsuccessfully attempted so felling the tree seemed the only solution. Mr & Mrs Riley stated that the effect of traffic in the access way beside the building had previously been taken into account and acknowledged that they had not considered this contingency when they bought the house.	
09E.03.02	Mr G Marchington drew attention to the risk from falling branches. It was observed that if the remedial work carried out had been unsuccessful then it might be the case that it had not been done well enough and that felling the tree was very likely to cause further ground movement as the water balance in the soil adjusted itself in consequence. Mr & Mrs Welburn-Cowell pointed out that the degree of cracking was only rated at 3 on the BRE scale which meant that it was more cosmetic than structural. It was noted that that the tree had recently been inspected by a specialist and had been found to be healthy. Subsequent recommendations for crown lifting to 3 metres above ground level, removal of dead branches and pruning back of the lower foliage at the southern edge had been made and approved. This work was scheduled to be carried out the following week.	
09E.04.00	<u>COUNCIL DEBATE</u>	
09E.04.01	It was established that the house is Grade 2 listed and there was a consensus that a house is worth more than a tree but it was considered that	

09E.04.02	<p>felling the tree was an extreme action from which there would be no recovery and that more emphasis should be put on improving the foundations of the house, notwithstanding the tree. It was agreed that the Insurance Company report did not take sufficient account of the other factors but seemed subjectively written with the sole purpose of removing the tree.</p> <p>It was agreed to point out the other local factors to the Tree Officer and to oppose the application on the grounds that the case was unproven, and to suggest that the less destructive, alternative option of improving the foundations should be considered and the loss of the tree was therefore unjustified.</p> <p>The Clerk was to draft a response accordingly</p>	Clerk
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There being no further matters to discuss, the Chairman duly closed the meeting at 9.pm.

Copies to: All PC Members, Parish Website.