

# BOXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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## Boxford Parish Meeting

Held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021 7.15pm in Boxford Village Hall

### DRAFT MINUTES

#### Present:

Cllr. P. Thompson (Chair)

Cllr. M. Hayes-Newington (Vice Chair)

Cllr. P. Harris

Cllr. J. Minchin

Cllr. P. Kilding

Cllr. J. Cole (Hungerford & Kintbury Ward)

Cllr. C. Rowles (Hungerford & Kintbury Ward)

75+ Parishioners

4 Presenting

#### Apologies:

Cllr. J. Wilcox

Cllr. D. Bennyworth (Hungerford & Kintbury Ward)



Cllr. Thompson welcomed all to the parish meeting and explained that as a Parish meeting no decisions were being made and the purpose was for parishioners to hear from the design team working on planning proposals for The Bell public house and provide initial feedback.

The new owner, architect, and The Woodspeen restaurant manager presented the difficulties with the defective construction and inaccessibility of the existing building and their proposals for a replacement building, reflecting on the characteristics and historic buildings within Boxford.

The new building, to be known as The Boxford, was presented as a single story substantial thatched building with a timber frame vaulted roof space. This front section being connected by a new flat roof building to the existing bedroom block at the rear of the site with the rear accommodating the kitchen and storage and office space. The floor space on the site will not be increased. The new design proposes an open and accessible space, providing a restaurant with a maximum seating for 60 people with an open kitchen and bar for around 24 people.

The business proposal was for an open all day community space offering somewhere to go for a coffee and cake, meet friends for a drink or dine in the Mediterranean style restaurant. It was made clear that although part of The Woodspeen family this would be a less formal dining offering with main courses in the region of £9 – 20.

An open session for Parishioners then followed. There were a number of contributions, with the majority expressing support in principle for both the building as proposed and the business proposition, a number of specific issues were raised as questions:

**Village Pub to drink in** – several concerns raised that this wasn't a place to meet just for a drink. The team disputed this, with a warm welcome for anyone wishing to drink at the bar or just pop in for coffee. As such, it was planned to be more than a replacement public house, and from a commercial perspective there did need to be a successful restaurant for it to be sustainable over the longer term.

**Accommodation** – the team confirmed that the plans did not include any overnight accommodation.

**Private events and weddings** – concern raised such events would strain parking facility; team confirmed these types of events are not something they were looking at.

**Opening Hours** – question on the intended hours was raised. Details need to be finalised, but proposal was working on 5 or 6 days a week open all day but would be looked at closer to opening.

**Acoustics** – suggested acoustics need to be considered with the large open building. Architect noted.

**Parking** – parishioner questioned parking allowance; the team confirmed that the parking proposed met requirements at one car per two people. Immediate neighbours indicated proposed new gravel car park surface was not ideal from noise perspective, architect to consider.

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**Drainage** – parishioner expressed concern over the drainage onsite, as heavy rain downfalls cause water to run off the junction through the pub car park and neighbouring gardens. Architect agree to investigate.

**Building sustainability** - the team confirmed that the design included a timber frame and sustainable energy sources were being considered. It was also noted that to improve the current building to meet the standards they required was not economical and thus retention of the existing building was not sustainable.

**Timescales** – Team confirmed they were keen to get on with submitting the planning application and the building underway once granted, with a open to be completed by Christmas 2022.

There was general positivity for the proposal with a thanks from the community for presenting initial ideas before proceeding with planning. Team reiterated that they hoped to really create something the village could be proud of. They thanked all parishioners for their input and hoped to get the planning application in shortly. Chair thanked all for attending the meeting and noted that this was the first time that owners of the public house had sought the views of the local community.

Once the planning application has been submitted and the Planning Officer has requested observations, a response will be agreed at a Parish Council meeting.

**Meeting Closed at 8.45 pm**

**Signed:** *S Youldon* – Clerk, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**The 2021 Parish Council meetings will be held:** 7<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Signed:** *S Youldon* – Clerk, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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