

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting held in The Old School Community Centre  
at 7.00pm on Wednesday 9 December 2015**

Present: Cllrs. Paul Bishop, Margaret Godwin, Phil Gryce, Gayle Mallows, Chris Marchant, Alan Parsley, Loveday Perceval-Maxwell, Bob Verguson, Clerk - Claire Ebeling, RFO Maureen Smith, Cllr. Mary Evans, Cllr. Alaric Pugh and 4 members of the public

Cllr. Bishop opened the special meeting and explained that it was a single agenda item meeting to consider applications for the two Clare Castle Country Park Trustee positions to be nominated by Clare Town Council.

- 1 **Apologies for absence** None.
- 2 **To receive declarations of members' interests and consider requests for dispensation**  
Cllr. Kimminau declared an interest as one of the applicants.

*Section of the meeting open to the public:*

- 3 **Public Participation**  
A member of the public asked how many of the current trustees have re-applied. Cllr. Bishop responded that one of the applications to the Town Council was from a person who is currently a Trustee.

*End of public section of meeting*

- 4 **To consider applications and approve the nomination of two (Town Council nominated) Trustees for the Clare Castle Country Park Trust**

**Applicants: Derek Blake, Stephen Kimminau, Keith Mison**

Cllr. Bishop named the applicants and explained the running order for the meeting – 5 questions had been prepared in advance, following suggestions from Councillors. Each question would be put to each applicant to answer. The order in which the applicants would be asked to respond would alter for each new question.

Cllr. Kimminau was asked to join the applicants in the public area.

The applicants were asked to summarise their application.

Derek Blake summarised his reasons for applying: The Country Park is a fantastic asset, long neglected by Suffolk County Council. Mr Blake wrote the risk of ownership risk assessment prior to the Town Council taking ownership of the park. He believes the trustees have done a fantastic job so far and sees the failure of the recent HLF bid to be a blessing in disguise. Mr Blake feels he can make a difference to work with all organisations in Clare to allow the park to meet its full potential as part of the town.

Keith Mison stated that he likes to get on with things as he has been doing since before the park even became a park.

Stephen Kimminau summarised his reasons for applying: An interest in local history and the railway and is keen to move things forward and to make full use of the assets in the park to use as an educational resource. He believes the community should be totally integrated with the park. Mr Kimminau is currently a CHOC Trustee. He stated that he would be delighted to work with either of the other applicants. He concluded by saying that the Town Council was very lucky to have three candidates applying.

Cllr. Bishop read the first question: *The Trustees have laid out eight areas of business activity they need to cover. Please expand on your knowledge, skills and experience of the role you were asked to identify and tell us how you can see that role developing in the future, in the area you wish to lead.*

Mr Blake responded that he had applied for the Activity Planning role, which ties up with the HLF bid because there is so much scope for things to do: the park has such fantastic assets, including the buildings, which could be used in so many ways to benefit the community and visitors. There are also opportunities for lots of different activities for families and visitors, such as guided and self-guided walks and the development of the railway. Recreational and educational activities will help to enhance a

visit to the park. In Mr Blake's view there are lots of small steps that are achievable in the short-term. Mr Mison responded that he had applied for the Green Space role – he stated that he has been involved in very similar roles involving the park for many years and wishes to continue. Mr Mison expressed his concern that more than 5 years of neglect has meant that there is a great deal of work to be done to get the park back to the condition it ought to be in: work on the ponds, the railway walk, the clearing of the motte. There are also opportunities for the creation of hides for birdwatching and there are currently 27 active volunteers to help with this work. Mr Mison stated that his heart is and always has been in the park.

Mr Kimminau explained that he did not specify a particular role, comparing the role of a park trustee with the trustee role with CHOC, who do not specify the requirements. He stated that he is not an expert in any particular area but has an interest in heritage and green space.

*Question 2: What experience do you have of working on the boards of public, private or voluntary bodies?*

Mr Mison described previous roles with the scouts, youth club, a school PTA, is currently a Stour Valley volunteer and a Trustee of Clare Castle Country park. He has also carried out previous work in health and safety. He stated that he is not a 'paperwork person' but likes to get things done.

Mr Kimminau stated that he has 30 years' experience in business, is a CHOC Trustee and a Town Councillor.

Mr Blake explained that his previous roles include being on the Board of a print factory for 8 years, Deputy Chief Executive of an educational establishment, Director of Young Enterprise East of England, Chairman of Sudbury & District CAB, Governors of 2 schools and Director of Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds for 6 years.

*Question 3: A trustee has an obligation to do what is right and proper for the trust of which they are part. They are in turn accountable for their actions and decisions. Personal integrity is a necessary quality of being a trustee. Trustees may have to make difficult and complex decisions in the future. How will you respond if you are unhappy with a particular decision?*

Mr Kimminau explained that in this situation he would expect there to have been a full and frank discussion but once a decision was made he would fully support it. However, if he did disagree, he would put up a hard fight.

Mr Mison stated that as a Trustee you are part of a team and must do what is best for the Trust.

Mr Blake stated that if he felt strongly that something was not right he would work hard to change the minds of those in disagreement, but if he was not able to, he accepts that cabinet decisions stand in this situation. If it was such a fundamental disagreement and he could not persuade his colleagues he would resign his position.

*Question 4: Budgeting will form a great deal of the business of trustee meetings. What is your experience in that area?*

Mr Blake summarised that he has lots of experience in lots of organisations including Bank of England.

Mr Mison stated that he had run his own business since 1988 and had been treasurer of 3 organisations in Clare.

Mr Kimminau stated that he is not a details man and normally deals with large amounts of technical data and has run his own business.

*Question 5: What has been your involvement with the park in the past and what are you currently doing in support of the park?*

Mr Mison explained that he had been involved in working in the park for many years – even before it even became a park and has recently been involved in every work day with the volunteers, including sourcing trees (free of charge) and planting.

Mr Kimminau explained that he had been involved in about half of all the volunteer work days in the park; is interested in the railway heritage and has been running the miniature railway.

Mr Blake stated that he had been involved as part of the Town Council in supporting the negotiating team and for the last 12 months has been working on the HLF bid.

Cllr. Bishop thanked all the candidates for being part of the process.

Cllr. Bishop invited and comments from councillors.

Cllr. Marchant wished to know how the applicants intended to utilise the park's assets to ensure its survival.

Cllr. Bishop stated that the questioning part of the process was already complete but that the question should be noted.

Cllr. Gryce stated that he believed the selection of Trustees should be based on the specification and job description and successful knowledge and experience.

Cllr. Bishop asked each Councillor to vote for two applicants.

The Clerk counted the votes and the RFO verified them.

The votes were as follows: Derek Blake: 8 votes, Keith Mison: 7 votes, Stephen Kimminau: 3 votes.

Derek Blake and Keith Mison were nominated as the Town Council trustees for the Clare Castle Country Park Trust.

Cllr. Bishop asked the successful applicants to contact Geoffrey Bray following the meeting.

Cllr. Bishop stated that the decision on the Town Council nominations and those made via the public route will be ratified at the next Town Council meeting.

**6 To receive agenda items for next meeting**

See minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

**7 To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm