

**Little Smeaton Parish Council 22 June 2023
Community Rooms, Kirk Smeaton.**

Present: Cllr G Ivey (Chair), Cllr C Atkinson (Vice Chair), Cllr A Hancock, Cllr J Howdle, Barbara Smith (Clerk)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the public were in attendance. Apologies were received from Cllr Iain Carpenter. Cllr Carpenter's absence was approved.

2. Declarations of interest.

2.1 Cllr Ivey declared a personal (but not pecuniary) interest in the subject under discussion, due to her property being close to and overlooking Hillside Cottage.

2.2 An application for dispensation to remain in the meeting was received and read out by the Clerk from Cllr Ivey. Councillors unanimously voted that Cllr Ivey could remain in the meeting.

3. Public Forum. Questions and concerns raised by the public

3.1 Questions were put by the public to the Councillors about the potential future of Hillside Cottage. An example of these included:

Q. Who is the owner of Hillside Cottage and the plot of land that stands on.

A. It was confirmed that the council is the owner and records show they have been carrying out maintenance work on the property for over 100 years.

Q. What is the area of land covered by the plot.

A. A map with the property boundary was shown to attendees.

Q. Questions were asked about what would happen to the money if the property was sold, and in particular there were concerns that it was not frittered away.

A. It was confirmed that money received from a sale could only be used for Capital projects and that this offered a degree of protection against it being spent on non-tangible expenses. Councillors confirmed that potential future projects had not yet been considered.

Q. It was asked about re-letting it for social housing or re-developing as a village hall.

A. Councillors expressed concern that neither of these options were financially viable under the council's current financial model.

4. Hillside Cottage

Councillors reports on information gathered by Working Group in order to consider the next steps to be taken with regards to Hillside Cottage. This was due to the tenancy on the cottage ending on the 17 May 2023.

4.1 The Clerk reported that she had submitted a repayment request of the deposit to the Tenancy Deposit Scheme on the 1 June 2023. This is to be followed up 30 days after the request if the tenants do not respond.

- 4.2** Councillors reported on the estimated costs obtained by the working party to enable the cottage to be brought up to standard to re let it. It was also reported the impact the new Energy Performance rules, to be brought in in 2025, would have on landlords, to meet the criteria they set on all lettings to be energy efficient. There would be a huge cost to the council to bring the cottage up to the expected energy performance standard for it to be let out legally.
- 4.3** Councillors reconsidered the 2023-24 budget in light of the loss of rental income and the impact of any cottage related expenses on existing funds. Councillor Atkinson presented and proposed a revised budget. Seconded by Cllr Howdle. All agreed.
- 4.4** In response to the above costs and its implication on the budget for 2023/4 and 2024/5 for the council, a summary was presented, supported by a detailed handout, informing of the financial impact on the budget, outlining the viability of short and long term rental, of the cottage and the option to sell Hillside Cottage and all or part of its land.
- 4.5** After considering the merits of letting or selling Hillside Cottage, Councillors resolved to sell the cottage with garden area, boundaries yet to be decided. The Council to retain the land between Hillside Cottage and Glengarth, to prevent overdevelopment of the site. Proposed by Cllr Ivey. Seconded by Cllr Atkinson. All agreed.

Actions:

- Plot and mark out the boundaries of the cottage to be sold. **All.**
- Choose and appoint an Estate Agent to take care of the sale. **All.**
- To cut the grass around the cottage in preparation for marketing the sale. Budget, spend and pay agreed for up to £150 to cut the grass. Proposed by Cllr Ivey. Seconded by Cllr Atkinson. All agreed.
- Update finance sheets to show revised budget. **CA.**