

## **Inquiry Committee**

**Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern**

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 10:00 am**

Present: Rev'd C Attwood, Mrs J Campbell, Mrs L Deller, Mr T Musgrove, Mr B Pilcher (Chair).

In Attendance: Administrative Officer, Mr K Douglas, Mr D Street, Mr P Watson, Mr T Yapp, and 6 members of the public.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

The Chairman introduced members of the Inquiry Committee, the Administrative Officer and Mr K Douglas. Mr K Douglas outlined his experience gained as Strategic Director for Council Governance, and Director of Administration and Legal Services at Malvern Hills District Council. Mr K Douglas stated that he had been asked for advice regarding the governance and procedures of the MHC, but stressed that he was not a lawyer and that if legal advice was required it should be sourced externally.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Mr B Pilcher declared an interest as a Board member during the St Ann's Well Cafe events. Due to this Mr B Pilcher then declared that after providing the Committee with the Terms of Reference that the Chairmanship will be passed to Rev'd C Attwood.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

**These were agreed to be:**

Part i) To inquire into the events surrounding the renewal of the St Ann's Well Cafe lease due for renewal in 2010 and subsequent events leading up to the formation of this Inquiry Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

Part ii) That the Inquiry Committee make recommendations

- a) arising from the findings of Part i) (above)
- b) to ensure a more effective governance model for this Board.

On the proposal of Mr B Pilcher, seconded by Mrs J Campbell, it was **UNANAMIOUSLY AGREED** that Mr B Pilcher step down and that Rev'd C Attwood be appointed Chairman.

Rev'd C Attwood stated that the terms of reference are a headline banner to allow the Committee to have sufficient scope to conduct a full inquiry. Rev'd C Attwood confirmed that the Board had acknowledged that some costs may be involved in conducting a full inquiry, but that restraint will be exercised.

It was agreed that before the Inquiry Committee could decide who should be approached for evidence, that the members of the Committee read and re-read the paperwork already available and held by the Conservators. It was further agreed that any persons involved in the events surrounding St Ann's Well Cafe be invited to submit further evidence in a standardised format for written evidence. Verbal evidence may also be invited. However, attention needs to be paid to whether items fall under Exempt Information Under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (already circulated on pages 22-23 of the MHC Governance Handbook). Mr K Douglas stated that events surrounding the St Ann's Well Cafe's lease happened in the past and that exempt items do not necessarily have to be taken in committee. However if there is potential for damage to be done to people or firms items should be taken in committee.

#### **4. Timetable**

It was agreed that a timescale for the inquiry would be easier to ascertain after the Committee had completed the readings of documents held. It was further agreed that members of the Committee can exchange information outside the Committee but that no material decisions would be taken at such information sharing sessions. To aid members of the Committee it was agreed that the documents held shall be copied.

Reading of the leases will be part of the reading of the evidence.

It was **AGREED** that after members of the Committee have read the documents there will be an exchange of information session between members on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 11:00am, location to be determined. The next Inquiry Committee meeting is scheduled on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 6:00pm at Elgar Room, Priory Lodge, Malvern.

The meeting closed at 10:56 am.