

Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council

Community Right to Bid & Assets of Community Value

At the Parish Council meeting on 12th January 2017 the Parish Clerk was instructed to gather information on the process to nominate Assets of Community Value with particular reference to some sites suggested within the three parishes.

The Parish Clerk then met with the Parish Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and Jenni Livingstone from the Neighbourhood Planning steering group to consider the information obtained and the relevant legislation. The findings of this meeting are:

1. Assets of Community Value are designated under the Community Right to Bid section of the Localism Act 2011. The legislation is designed to permit the local community to bid to purchase an asset if the owner wishes to sell it and it introduces a moratorium period for the community to put together a funding bid. The legislation does not protect the particular use of an asset. Thus an owner can cease the continued use of a premises designated an Asset of Community Value but if the owner does not then try to sell it the designation does not protect the usage.
2. The process for designating Assets of Community Value is very exacting and bureaucratic. There should be a reasonable expectation of raising the finance should the asset be offered for sale.
3. The meeting examined the sites which had been proposed for possible designation as Assets of Community Value and makes the following recommendations:

Site	Description	Recommendation
Bowling Green	This is privately owned and at this time has no members resident in the three parishes	Does not require designation as an Asset
The Green	Owned by the Somerleyton Estate. Surrounded by Listed Buildings and is used by Suffolk County Council as the school playing field. A sale by the Estate would not discontinue the current use	Sufficiently protected at this time, do not designate as an Asset
The Pond	Owned by the Somerleyton Award Charity, a registered charity, one of whose objects is the provision of a watering place. The Charity Commission would prevent the disposal of the Pond except to another charity	Sufficiently protected, do not designate as an Asset
The Dukes Head public house	Freehouse is owned by the Somerleyton Estate, which the meeting believed would be unlikely to try to sell	None. Parish Councillors to discuss possible designation at next meeting **
Somerleyton Village Hall	Owned by Somerleyton Community Association, a registered charity. The Charity Commission and the Local Plan would prevent its sale unless alternative premises were provided	Sufficiently protected, do not designate as an Asset
The Playing Field	A small part is owned and the rest is leased from the Somerleyton Estate by Somerleyton Community Association, one of whose objects is the provision of a playing field. The lease runs until 2072 and there are no break clauses.	None. Parish Councillors to discuss possible designation at next meeting **
The Allotments	Site is owned by the Somerleyton Estate. Currently planning law requires that if allotments are forcibly closed they must be replaced. This site is within the Somerleyton Conservation Area and any development here would impact on the general countryside views and the views of the listed buildings around the Green. It is unlikely the sale of this land would result in its development	None. Parish Councillors to discuss possible designation at next meeting **

** Should the Parish Council resolve to seek designation as an Asset of Community Value it will be necessary to find a group of volunteers to undertake the process.