

Dear Resident,

We are all aware that the parish hall was sadly demolished after flood damage. The parish council retained the lease on the hall land whilst the flood bund plans progressed. It has now been confirmed that the land will not be required by the County Council for storage of equipment whilst the bund is constructed – they have other locations in mind. The current lease on the site ends in 2033 but the parish council has a window of opportunity to renegotiate or terminate the lease in summer 2025. The parish council has decided to consult residents about what they would like the parish council to do with the land – suggest uses or terminate the lease?

### **Current situation**

**What is the status of the committee that used to manage the hall?** The parish hall committee is an independent body with responsibility to oversee the charitable objectives and work involved in running a village hall. The charity and parish hall committee are separate to the parish council. With no hall to manage the charity is undergoing a separate consultation on its future.

**Could the land be used for a new community facility?** Unfortunately, the current owner is only willing to offer a 25 year lease while a minimum of 75 years is required to enable a hall to be re-built on this land using public funds.

**What are we not permitted to do with the hall land?** The terms of the lease do not permit the parish council to plant trees, a wild flower meadow or crops.

**Why do we need a 'use' for the land – why can't we leave it as it is?** Now that the county council do not need the site for storage, in order to be permitted to use public funds to pay the lease, the parish council has to find a resident approved purpose for the site. Keeping the status quo – where the land is unused other than for adhoc occasions or once a year fete parking – is not viable for insurance purposes and leaves the site vulnerable to vandalism and illegal overnight stays.

### **What will happen to the land if use is returned to the owners?**

If the lease is cancelled and use is returned to the owners, then the parish and parish council will have little say on what the land is used for, other than via the normal planning application system with the district council. Remember, the parish council cannot keep a lease going at public expense simply because of concerns about land use in the future.

### **What about resident access via the land?**

Thoughts about acquired rights are untested and have not been commented upon by the parish council. This would be a matter for resident negotiation with the land owners if the lease is cancelled. The parish council cannot continue a lease on this basis and this does not form any part of deliberations.

### **Can the land continue as a car park?**

It can in principle and the parish council is not averse to any suggestion like this, but the parish council must examine whether keeping the land as a car park is a good use of public funds. We have to think about things like 'on-going upkeep, site security, public safety, insurance and value for money'. If residents ask to keep the car park, there will need to be significant justification for this and not just from residents within Severn Stoke village itself.

### **How much is the annual lease currently?**

The cost of the lease and maintenance is in the order of £1,300 pa. This is in the context of the 2024 parish council annual income of £10,000 from your council tax. If residents propose ending the lease, then these funds would be redirected to other projects in the parish.

**What we need from residents please..... PTO**

This consultation is open to residents of the parish only. Please use this form to tell us your ideas for future uses of the demolished hall land and whether you want the parish council to continue the lease for the duration of any proposed project or whether you approve of the lease being terminated as soon as possible. One form per household is provided, but you can request additional copies.

**Deadline for responses please: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

A. Should the parish council end the lease as soon as possible?..... Yes / No

B. Should the parish council continue the lease until 2033 for a resident project? ..... Yes / No

C. Please suggest a resident project/s that you would support (Ideas will be costed and then proposed to residents via future correspondence)

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D. Please provide your **postcode** please for analysis of who has responded.

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E. Please provide your email address if you wish to be kept informed of results.

A copy of our privacy notice, explaining how we store your contact details and for how long, is available on our website or upon request.

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Please return paper copies to:

- The Rose and Crown, Severn Stoke
- The Royal Oak, Kinnersley
- Place in the box in the phone box at High Green
- Or, phone/email to arrange collection from your home. (Contact details below).

You may **email** your responses via the email address below. You don't have to use a particular template.

You may **text message** your responses to the parish clerk on 07950 256363. The Clerk is also on WhatsApp on the same number.

Mrs Lisa Stevens, Parish Clerk for Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council

c/o 9 The Limes, Kempsey, Worcs, WR5 3LG      07950 256363 / 01905 820956

[parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk) (please note our new email address, replacing gmail)

**ADVERT    Notice of Flood Bund Meeting**

County Councillor Martin Allen has called a meeting to be held on **Wednesday 29/01/2025 at 18:30 in St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke** to be attended by Worcestershire County Council, the Environment Agency, your district and parish councillors and residents, to understand where the County Council and the Environment Agency are now in the process of building the flood bund, and to ask for timelines. Martin will chair the meeting. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.