

**Notes of the Public Meeting for the Community Land Project
Wednesday 3rd February 2016 7.30pm Poringland Community Centre**

Attendance: John Ellis (Chairman)
Lisa Neal (Councillor)
David Hewer (Councillor)
John Henson (Councillor)
John Overton (Councillor)
Tim Boucher (Councillor)
Jane Pratt (Councillor)
Catherine Moore (Parish Clerk)

40 members of the public

John Ellis welcomed guests to the meeting and briefed on the findings of the public consultation day. He noted that the most requested use of the land was allotments. It was noted that discussion about the Community Land Project was taking place at Framingham Earl High School.

The following questions, issues and discussion points were raised.

(Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment)

Q: Where have the figures for 'no wanted' come from?

A: This was information volunteered on the form.

Q: Where will funding come from? Funds are already being raised for the Village Hall.

A: It isn't known how much will be needed, so grants haven't been explored. Any development is likely to be phased. The feasibility study for The Vision has suggested a substantial amount of money, with other organisations competing for the same pots. More will be known once the chosen project outline is priced.

Q: Assuming funding is achieved, where will the ongoing costs be funded from?

A: Again, this can't be answered until it is known what will be involved. It is hoped that these costs would be self-funding.

C: Allotments would generate income which would pay for a caretaker and would improve the land.

Q: What is the core objective of the land? There could be a lack of return, and the Council has diminishing resource.

A: The Council wants to provide a facility for the use of the community at large, ideally self-sustaining.

C: The public cannot decide what they want until they know what the ongoing cost will be.

C: A wildlife garden would be a positive asset, and would fit with allotments. As more housing is introduced, there is less space for wildlife.

Q: What is the quality of the land? There are known drainage issues.

A: At the moment, we are just asking for ideas. These will then be assessed for suitability in terms of what the site itself can achieve.

C: Norfolk Homes would be happy to help with tests on the land, however this is normally done after the use has been decided.

C: The land has been destined for the Parish Council for 15 years, and will undoubtedly have interesting geology.

Q: Could the land testing be carried out now, as this could halve the list of proposed uses?

A: The Council really needs to know what is being proposed first.

C: It is not a case of what the land is like now, but what needs to be put in to mitigate the issues, including drainage. There are proposals in place for boardwalks through the wetland to the community woodland.

Q: To what extent to the west does the River Chet source extend? It may not be possible to drain the land.

A: Noted.

Q: Can we see the previously produced plans?

A: These will be obtained and published.

Q: Will there be a buffer zone in place between the land and the residential development?

A: This is unknown, and would form part of the business plan and planning permission.

C: The land between the spine and the community land will belong to the Parish Council in due course.

Q: What would be the cost of providing a parking area for 10 vehicles?

A: No costings have been carried out as this has not yet been needed.

Q: The request for allotments in a pleasure and a surprise, does the Council have a requirement to provide these?

A: Yes, the Council has an obligation to consider providing these, but they could be anywhere in the village.

Q: Has dialogue been opened with the younger generation?

A: The 6YC is engaged in the process and there will be plenty more opportunities for comment.

Q: When will the Council be acquiring the land?

A: It is ready to be handed over, however Norfolk Homes have agreed to hold on to it and continue maintaining it until the Council is ready to receive it. Consultation is expected to continue for many months.

Q: Have other organisations been consulted about their usage of the facilities?

A: The Council needs to put together proposals then consult potential users.

Q: Can photos of the land be displayed on the website?

A: Yes, this can be done. It is not possible to allow access to the site.

C: Antisocial behaviour may be a problem, as it already is at the youth shelter. A skate park may attract the wrong sort of behaviour. Consideration also needs to be given to what this teaches people.

Q: Once acquired, can the Council sell the land?

A: There is likely to be mechanisms in place to prevent the land being anything other than public space. Building can take place, but it must be public.

C: The Council needs to be mindful not to downgrade the area through the provision of facilities.

Q: Could the land be sold to a private enterprise?

A: A more likely solution would be to lease if that is the model that the Council wishes to use.

C: The facilities need to be sustainable and earn the Council money.

Q: Who does Heath Loke Farm belong to and is it likely to be developed?

A: This is unknown, it is outside the development boundary.

Q: What will happen to the existing football facilities?

A: The playing field would remain as recreational space.

Q: Can the public access the community land?

A: It can be seen through the fence, but cannot be accessed as it belongs to Norfolk Homes. They will be asked to provide a topographical survey and photo schedule.

Q: Could a drone flyover be arranged?

A: This has been arranged (information from a member of the public, not the Council).

Q: Is the intention to level the land?

A: The land will be handed over in reasonable condition, and this will depend on the work needed for the chosen facilities.

Q: Should the Parish Council consult on the use of all land it owns?

A: John Overton briefed on the history of The Vision project, and noted that the playing field next to the primary school was a war memorial and would remain as recreational land. Problems with drainage had been overcome when the Community Centre was built, and the objective for the Community Land Project was to design a facility that the community wanted. Modern facilities would generate income and it would be developed in bite-sized chunks. There had been the demand for a skate park for 20 years.

C: Motorbikes in the fields is currently an issue, a more constructive solution was needed, together with communication.

C: Lisa Neal noted that everyone was concerned about anti-social behaviour, and hopefully by giving young people something to do this would be reduced. The facility needed to be for the benefit of the whole community. It would be inclusive for all and multi-functional.

C: John Henson noted that the critical matter was the management of the facility, and that the issues previously raised when the Community Centre was being planned had not been experienced. The Centre was paying for itself, and the Parish Council could demonstrate good management of facilities. The consultation was looking to find out what the top priorities for the community were.

C: Three criteria were key: low entry cost; low maintenance cost; maximum usage.

Q: How will decisions be made?

A: Final decisions will be made by the Parish Council, taking on board public comments.

Q: The land is a large space, the Council needs to get indicative costs for what would fit, as well as timescales to achieve.

A: This will form part of the decision making.

Q: The Council has no money for the project?

A: The Council may look for grants or lease to an investor to develop.

C: Lisa Neal noted that South Norfolk Council had contributed £25,000 for the feasibility study and public consultation, and may support further. Money was available, however applications can't be made until a blueprint is available.

Q: Does the Council feel it knows what the public wants?

A: An open day had been hosted, and the meeting formed the second part of the consultation. An action plan would then be developed, together with business models.

C: People had been negative about some aspects of the proposals, however this wasn't explicitly asked as part of the questionnaire.

C: The graphs show what is supported and therefore likely to be used, the Council should look down the list, and not focus on what hasn't got support.

C: Comments could still be emailed into the Parish Clerk to be added to the project.

C: Everyone had the opportunity to come to the consultation. There was a much higher turnout than statistically expected, at around 10%.

C: The graphs did not show a final list, and this may change. The project was in very early days.

Q: What are the next stages?

A: A Parish Council working group will develop an action plan, and the community will continue to be engaged in a two-way dialogue.

C: This has been a very good exercise with interesting figures.

Q: Is there the potential to provide more than one of the facilities suggested?

A: Yes, it is hoped to put as much as possible on the land, which is twice the size of the existing playing field.

C: Thank you to the Parish Council and to Norfolk Homes for the proactive approach.