

Presentation by DCF to Foxearth & Liston Parish Council Electors Meeting on Saturday 5th May

Thank you Mr Chairman and Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is David Fahie and I am here at the invitation of the Paris Council. I speak as an elector and a Partner in the Brook Hall Farm Partnership (BHFP)

Agenda item “Forward Planning for Housing Needs in Foxearth”

.....is a rather grand title you may say but please hear me out as I believe it is in all our interest that there should be a plan for the future which I am setting out in first draft before you and which I am sure will be improved and modified in discussion and debate in the weeks and months ahead.

In common with our councillors vote in March 2016, **I believe it is in the best interest of the village that there should be some land available for the organic expansion of the village over a period of time in order to provide well designed and affordable homes for local people .**

The land which could be available is known as Glebe Field next to Glebeside on School Lane and is outlined in green on the plan before you. It is about two and three quarters acres.

If this project goes ahead please accept that it is a given that any development will have to be visually very attractive, reflecting the eclectic nature of the better buildings in the village and their pallet of traditional materials. It should be both beautiful and useful and nestle effortlessly into the landscape.

The advice from Letting Agents suggests that the present and future demand in our Area is for 2 and 3 bed dwellings built to high standards with low outgoings which are available **to rent, to buy or for shared ownership.**

If this mix is applied to a small development in Foxearth it should appeal to the widest spectrum of people in the local communities of all ages and abilities.

Their arrival in Foxearth should add vitality to our village.

In a little more detail we are talking about a project which has the following broad characteristics:

IN TERMS OF SCALE

We envisage a first phase of 12 to 15 dwellings with generous gardens and some public open space. If, subsequently, the demand were to exist this could rise over time to a maximum of say 21 being a ratio of around 7 dwellings to the acre. Commercial Housebuilders typically seek 14 to the acre.

TYPE OF DWELLINGS.

A mixture of medium size and smaller 2 bed and 3 bed houses and also some bungalows which of course appeal to many, notably those with limited mobility. They should be Energy efficient, Low cost-in-use dwellings and all with strong references to Stour Valley Vernacular architecture.

It would be intelligent to reserve some blank space on the canvas for some as yet unidentified future village use.

We have a sketch scheme for joining up the existing Public footpaths across our land by creating the missing links. These are dotted blue on the plan and take pedestrians all the way to Liston off the busy Rodbridge road.

TENURE.

The mix of dwellings might be held as :

- Privately owned open market rented
- Owner occupied
- Housing association owned and let on Affordable rents (in this case limited to Local Housing Allowance)
- Housing association owned for shared ownership

Get the mix right with the size, type and tenure and the result will be attractive to;

- (a) those with limited means at the start of their young lives together and also
- (b) to those in their mature years wanting to downsize and remain in the district with family and friends.

Downsizers are important in the whole merry go round of mobility as they free up larger properties for those with growing families. I'm told it's called "Right-Sizing"

So if that is the vision. How might it be delivered in Foxearth?

My view is that a Private land owner cannot achieve this ideal on his own (unless you are the Prince of Wales.)

This interesting mix can only really be achieved in a Joint Venture between the land owner and a Housing Association. My current ambition is to achieve this on terms which suit the Housing Association and allow us, through investing further capital, to create an income for the Farm Partnership to replace the anticipated withdrawal of the single farm payment support in 2020 following our exit from Europe.

If it goes ahead this project will be my legacy to the village and to my family which will retain part ownership of the project with the Housing Association. I assure you that I intend it should be a success for all in the short but also the long term.

There are all sorts of financial constraints on Housing Associations and there is no magic money tree. A commercial balance has to be achieved including the Land owner accepting the reality that the land price will be well below market.

The sort of agreement I describe is rare. I think it can come about as the result of pragmatism, flexibility and original thinking resulting in the marrying of **con** verging interests between a village, a housing association and a land owner who retains an interest in the ongoing development.

SO WHAT ABOUT PLANNING PERMISSION?

Whatever newspaper you read there is widespread acceptance that we have a housing crisis nationally. This may not affect directly the individual electors here in this room already comfortably housed in Foxearth but it does exist and will exist for those who come after us and so it is worthy of debate and preferably a solution.

Braintree clings bravely to the hope that its massive Garden Cities will solve the problem. Not a brick has yet been laid.

In the meantime Braintree remains consistently opposed to developments on unallocated sites on the edges of villages such as Foxearth unless there are **proven benefits**.

Braintree will require evidence that this project is a response to an **identified local housing need**.

Anecdotes and wishful thinking by the applicant are not sufficient. (and here it gets into technical “Planningspeak”) **A Housing Needs Survey** is required to be undertaken by a **Rural Enabler** which is a not-for-profit, independent organisation called **Rural Community Council for Essex** . It conducts detailed surveys of housing need on the one hand and also the present and future supply.

I think Foxearth should have an opportunity for future organic growth in proportion to its modest size as a village. The first step of the Planning Process required by Braintree is to conduct this independent Housing Needs Survey.

And so I ask PC for its support to commission such a Survey and most particularly I would appeal to all the villagers to engage with the process by completing the survey when it comes through your door and to participate at each consultation stage of the planning application.

In summary there are three points to register:

- Support the Housing Needs Survey by responding to it
- Engage with us when we come forward with a scheme which reflects those identified needs
- Become a BIMBY and demand Beauty in my back yard.(and not a BANANA Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone)

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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