

Proposal to exchange playing field land for other land to facilitate school expansion

Disclaimer

This document presents the position of HPFA as regards the proposed land swap. Where it refers to the positions held by either Hanborough Parish Council (HPC) or OCC Education, we give our understanding of those and hopefully do it accurately. We apologise if we make any errors in that.

Background information

All the new housing developments in Hanborough bring new children that require primary school places and that means school expansion. For each planning application OCC Education were a statutory consultee and their comments can be seen in the various planning applications on the WODC website. In addition, there is a development in Freeland for which OCC also designated Hanborough Manor School as the school for additional children. The consequence of all this new housing is that the school needs to expand from one form entry (1FE) to 1.5FE.

A first step in enabling expansion was to relocate the preschool that was on the school site to the Vanbrugh Meadows development. With that space and by using the existing playing field on the school site it is possible to construct the new classrooms etc. However, the playing field must be replaced, and the approach accepted in the planning process was for the school to have a remote playing field on the land between the village playing fields and the footpath to Church Hanborough (aka Coffin Path). Although this was acceptable to OCC, WODC Planning, the Planning Inspectorate and the developers it was held in low esteem by everyone else. Following long discussions there is now an agreed proposal for a land swap which is a good deal for the parish. The Coffin Path field is out of the picture and what happens to that is not our concern.

Note 1: when Pye / Blenheim applied to build 169 houses on the north field opposite Hanborough Gate, OCC Education said this meant expanding the school to 2FE. However, that planning application was dropped by the applicant before going to appeal and although OCC Education now plan to increase only to 1.5FE they wish to ensure that a further expansion to 2FE would be possible in the future.

Note 2: Although Hanborough Manor CE School is part of the Eynsham Partnership Academy it is Oxfordshire County Council Education who have the responsibility to provide the infrastructure and that is why the negotiations have been with them.

Negotiating parties

The title to the playing fields land is held by the parish council but the area is managed by HPFA. Neither party can on its own sell the land but can work together to achieve this. As a result, there have been long slow discussions with OCC considering many options. With so much development happening the parish council is receiving S106 money for investment in sport and recreation, so they have the bigger picture in view which has heavily impacted on the negotiations. As part of this bigger picture another parcel of land became relevant which is the unused section of the Corpus Christi land behind Vanbrugh Meadows which was to be transferred to OCC as part of that planning agreement.

Steps along the way

Initially, the proposal was to exchange some playing field land for the coffin path field but that rapidly became complicated by arguments over freehold versus leasehold. Then the Church Road land became part of the picture and at one point it looked like the parish would gain both areas of land but then it got fiendishly complicated and was heading towards NO DEAL (to coin a phrase). From HPFA's perspective the offer for the coffin Path land was quite toxic because it offered no value to us, no long-term future and would have been a drain on our voluntary effort and limited finances because we had to maintain it for occasional school use.

Proposal

Happily, a reasonable and simple deal did arise which is a straight exchange of 0.37 hectares of playing field land (bright green on the plan) for 1.8 hectares behind the Vanbrugh Meadows development (hatched pink, labelled S106 land). It is freehold for freehold so no time limits. This land will be owned by the parish council.

The land lost to HPFA is not that significant in functionality as it only houses our tractor shed. Apart from use for mini football it has no other regular use in the year, but it does require a lot of grass cutting. On a few occasions in the year like fireworks night and the Hanborough Show it does supply overflow parking.

HPFA will have a new tractor shed paid for by OCC on the newly acquired land. As residents will already know, the parish council has the aspiration to provide a new community building that provides facilities now lacking in the parish and obviously this will have its own car park which HPFA will be allowed to use for the occasional overflow parking. Also, on this land it is intended to have some sort of junior sport pitch so mini football can transfer to there.

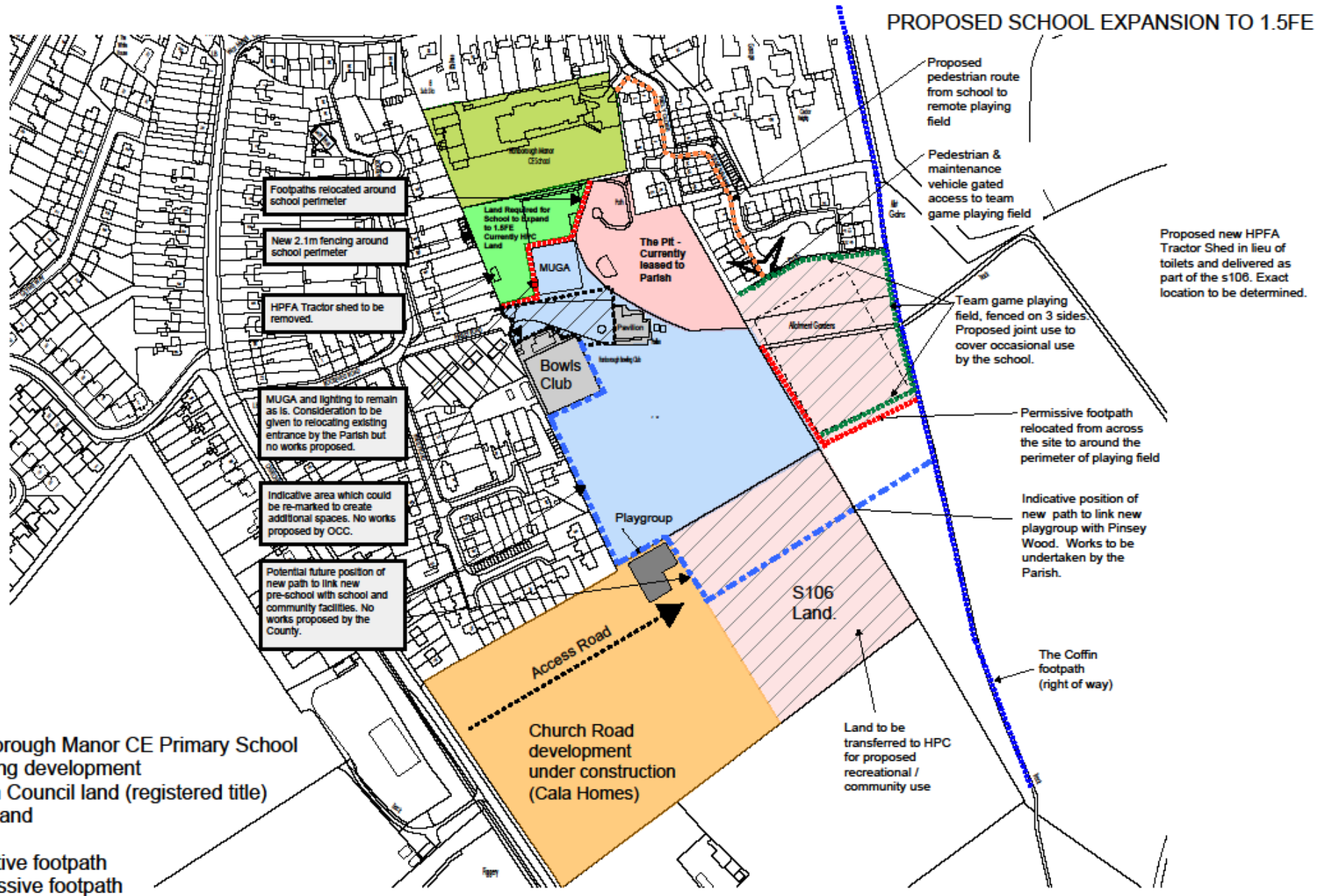
Conclusion

This is unquestionably a good deal for Hanborough. As a community we give up only 0.37 hectares of land to gain 1.8 hectares. The recent race to develop housing in our parish shows clearly how valuable land is and by this deal the parish has a net gain of 1.43 hectares. Perhaps even more importantly, our local school has the land it needs, where it needs it

HPFA 7/10/2019

LONG HANBOROUGH

PROPOSED SCHOOL EXPANSION TO 1.5FE



AS PROPOSED SITE PLAN
Option 6C - Not to Scale

