



Toppesfield Parish Council



Public Meeting Tuesday 24th June 2014 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield

Approx. 44 members of the public attended

Andrew Bull welcomed all those that had attended the meeting and explained that the meeting was to gain the views of the residents and ask if the Parish Council should proceed with a purchase of the land for sale behind the Green Man Public House and if so what would it be used for. The Parish Council are interested in proceeding but need approval & views of the public.

Alan Collard advised that the land for sale is approx. 6.325 acres and not 7. He also stated that the Parish Council could spend up to £15,000 on the purchase out of current funds. But would cost around £90,000 to purchase the whole of the land.

Solar Panels were suggested to be put on to the land – this would pay itself back over an approx.. 12 year period.

Ideas, Suggestions, Questions & Comments for the public:

If it isn't brought by the PC realistically is development a possibility? It is outside the village envelope so chances of unwanted development would be small.

What is the square metre cost? Approx. 15 per square metre.

£90K seems high – the PC would need to find out if this is a competitive price.

Would homes be developed and if so how many? – not yet but a possibility of 3 or 4 as a small ribbon development.

Problems with sewerage as the pump station is already at capacity.

The purchase cost is not outrageous – the PC are exploring all areas at present – should we look at purchasing is it priced on development price or agricultural prices. The cost is nearer agricultural prices.

The PC would ask a district valuer if Braintree DC still have one.

Would the PC get funds to fund it? – The Parish Council are looking into this. Grants would not cover the purchase but help towards projects on the land. If we seek funding it could restrict future capital opportunities.

If PC go for planning it would be easier than a commercial developer as the PC could go for multi uses. Would also need to look into any restriction clauses when purchasing the land. More details on this will be shared by the landowner if the PC are interested in purchasing.

Access may be a restriction – but it is suspected not. 40% death duties for farmers not applicable for PC.

How much do we need to raise – it would be a bearable loan.

Could we fundraise or have a share option?

Unhindered view, attracted people to the village. If a small housing development it would be low level.

What access from the village? PC would need to look at this.

Do the PC know if adjoining parties interested? Sally = approx. 70% of householders along Stambourne Road are. No investigation as to cost per plot yet.

Andrew Bull feels that the landowner is in no rush to sell but it is on the open market.

Who farms the land at present? Mr & Mrs Clark.
What did the landowner pay for it? Approx. £48k

Maybe interested but show us actual figures.

Andrew = what do we want to do with the land should be the first question. Proposal should we want to do X so could we purchase the land.

Alan = Find out views before formulating a plan. If only one resident wants to buy what would you do? PC needs assurances from residents they want to purchase plots.

Access to the field is where? PC doesn't think there is road access.

Want facts before a proper decision is made.

Why did the landowner write to each resident? Don't know possibly more beneficial to him in costs.

Any thought to make it a community value asset? PC starting to think about this but need to know what we would be doing with it.

Possibility of selling off pieces to neighbouring households – 6 x 15k would pay for the land. PC cannot assume residents would do it.

Irrespective if the PC purchase it someone will therefore could be here in 12 months re further development.

Should PC incur costs for the whole parish to pay for it?

Could create local jobs.

If loan agreed it would mean an extra £11 on a band A property £17 on a Band D and £34 on a band H on the precept each year.

Building probability low – what is the impact?

Should PC accelerate investigations and numbers and come back to another open meeting with more details and project ideas.

Show of hands in support of the PC pursuing this.

Result – overwhelmingly yes.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm