

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS OF LEIGH PARISH HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH MARCH 2019 AT 1900 TO HEAR AND DISCUSS VIEWS ABOUT A PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSAL TO PURCHASE 4.03 OF LAND IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A VILLAGE GREEN.

Present: Cllr A Bennett (Chairman); Cllrs Bugler, Read and Vincent;

- 16 parishioners; 1 Member of the public (DCC/WDCS Cllr Penfold).

Background.

The Chairman welcomed those attending and for showing interest in the proposed initiative for a Village Green for Leigh that had been under consideration for some 3 years. He provided a summary about past considerations; this had led to the holding of a formal parish poll on the issue in June 2017. This showed the concept was strongly supported; however, the owner at that stage did not want to sell the land that the PC had its eye on: the 4.03-acre field adjacent to the Village Hall (and now relocated Play Park).

However, it transpires the owner is now prepared to sell the field, subject to conditions regarding its future use. A provisional offer (£30k for a 99 year lease) has been accepted. On completion of the purchase, c.2 acres of the field would be converted to a village green, with the rest remaining as agricultural.

Village Consultation 19 March 2019.

Outline plans had been published in the March 2019 Wriggle Valley Magazine, the village website and the published Agenda for the next Leigh PC meeting. This meeting was to permit face to face discussion in the light of the potential purchase, which would require the parish council entering into a loan arrangement (£40k for 20 years) in order to purchase the land on a 99 year lease. The taking of this loan for the purchase would not require any associated increase in the Parish Precept.

Questions from the floor.

A number of questions about maintenance and access were answered in outline; details would be finalised should the purchase be successful. No buildings were planned. The top (south) half of the 4.03 acre field would be leased (as it was now) for agricultural purposes.

The issue of noise and preservation of privacy for the properties around the field was raised. It was recognised that on occasion village green activities might cause some minor, temporary disturbance; should they wish, property owners might mitigate any impact via their creating a more substantial hedge or boundary fence as they deemed necessary.

There was no requirement to raise the parish precept as a direct result of taking on the loan. As the Play Park committee had been so successful in raising funds for its relocation and refurbishment, and Cllr Scutt had been so successful in obtaining grant funding, the current precept (increased 3 years ago to fund the Play Park relocation project) already had sufficient capacity to service and repay a £40k loan over 20 years for the Village Green project.

Proposal.

The matter was to be formally discussed and decided in the Parish Council meeting that immediately followed. The Chairman described the general way ahead, subject to the Council's agreement. Finally, while making it clear that the Council would not be bound by it, he asked the voting parishioners present for an informal show of hands about whether they supported the Council's proposals as described.

- 14 in agreement with the Proposal, 2 abstentions and nil against.

The Chairman thanked those present for their engagement, and closed the meeting at 1923.