

NOTES FROM THE DEER PARK MEETING
HELD IN ODIHAM PARISH ROOMS
ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 7PM

PRESENT: CLLRS JOHN HALE (OPC), JAMES ROBINSON-GIANNASI (OPC)
 & MARK FAULKNER (OPC), GILL WARSOP & PAM VERDON
 (NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN), GRAHAM BELL (BELL CORNWELL) &
 RICHARD REVELL (LANDOWNER)

ALSO PRESENT: UNA TILT (DEPUTY CLERK OPC)

The purpose of the meeting was a constructive information gathering exercise for individual Cllrs.

There were brief introductions from everyone.

Richard Revell (landowner) and Graham Bell (Bell Cornwell) gave a summary of the current vision for the Deer Park.

Richard Revell has owned the land since 2001 and after being approached by town management in 2005/06, decided he would like to try and restore the Deer Park for the greater community. His aim is to put the Deer Park back to how it used to be and to encourage local people and attract visitors, to come to a central community area in the village. Richard has spent two years putting a plan together and has worked closely with David Whitby from Petworth, who has a great deal of knowledge on the finer details on deer parks. He has also spoken with John Fibbs from Dubois Group who has historical knowledge and links with English Heritage and Liz Lake from Liz Lake Associates, who specialises in landscape planning and restoration and has first-hand knowledge from work with deer park land.

From looking at local historical evidence and other historical sites, the plan is to use the centre part of the land for fallow deer and to put a perimeter of mature oak trees in as an outer boundary. Park railings would be used to keep the deer in which will in turn create an inner sanctum for the deer which the public would be able to look into. The plan is also to reinstate 5 acres of orchard, which historically was used to encourage the deer to feed. Fishponds, which again were originally on the land, would also be reinstated by way of access off the stream. This would help to reduce current drainage problems on the land and one of the ponds would become a balancing pond. Measures would also be taken to re-ditch and reinstate drainage into the stream to help prevent flooding, further enhancing the flow of the stream.

The plans will involve extinguishing one right of way and diverting two others across the land and also creating two new ones. Scattered trees would be placed throughout the deer park and a bluebell wood, to include oaks, would be introduced as well.

There are also plans to acquire two other fields, which back onto Richard Revell's land from another landowner.

Additionally, there is the plan to put in more parking for the village, open up an area as a community hub, plus provide an events area. The car park itself would be very natural/soft in style. The plan would also include opening up more access on the land by way of cycleways. Picnic benches and various vistas would also be put in for the benefit of the public. If a further community building was required by the village this could also be built, but again the plan would be to build a softer style building to fit in with the surroundings.

The approximate cost of the whole project was mentioned. The plan is to do this through enabling development. Having selected a good quality developer, the plan would be to develop 12 larger single properties, 11 of which would be along the edge of the North

Warnborough field. These 11 properties are anticipated to be marketed at the high end of the housing market. Access would come in from Dunleys Hill – Richard Revell has managed to negotiate to buy a strip of land from a property at the top of Dunleys Hill. Property no. 12 would be a reinstated park lodge in the middle of the land, which would be for the sole use of Richard Revell and his family. The formal plans for the park lodge are yet to be completed, however, are recognised as requiring to be in keeping with the park and will be a focus of community approval.

QUESTIONS:

Cllr Jon Hale - What is going to protect the land from being developed in the future?

The plan is to gift some land to the village – this would be on a lease term, of which the tenure is to be agreed. There is also very limited access overall to the land itself which would prevent a developer getting in.

Graham Bell confirmed that current building constraints will not allow further development on the land. This would be a one off enabling development and planning policies are there forever.

Richard Revell also confirmed that he would consider a covenant on the land and is happy to give whatever he can. He recognised that this question of future protection was a crucial area for the community and would provide further consideration in finalising his plans.

Cllr Mark Faulkner - How big is the total area of land?

Approx 106 acres.

Pam Verdon - Will existing footpaths be made smaller?

No, there will be as little as possible fencing on the land. The only fencing will be just to retain the deer so the public will have the freedom to wander. Richard Revell will consider allowing public access through the Deer Paddock. Dogs however, will need to be kept on a lead through the area where the deer are living, for everyone's safety.

Gill Warsop – Would it be possible to change the size of the houses being built to benefit the community more ie: smaller homes which are currently needed?

Graham Bell confirmed this wouldn't be possible due to the density of numbers not getting through planning. As few as possible, high quality properties are what is required. Density of numbers would also not be in keeping with what is being planned for the land.

Gill Warsop - Sizing of the Park Lodge. Her view is that historically it would have been a small property but on the plans it looks like it will be large so there is concern it won't be authentic?

Graham Bell confirmed that research done on the size of Park Lodges does vary across the country and scale and position will obviously be taken into consideration. They are very aware of this but equally it must be understood that if Richard Revell and his family are going to live in it, it cannot be a '2 up, 2 down'.

Richard Revell also confirmed that he will manage the land himself either with the help of part-time staff he already has in Dogmersfield or on his own. This will mean that there won't be the need for park ranger staff to live on site.

The size of the deer herd planned is approx. 2 or 3 deer per acre. Richard Revell said he would need to confirm at a later date whether this is a starting number or finishing number per acre but there will be the need for an optimal herd. There will also be a deer shelter built so the deer have somewhere to refuge and feed during winter months.

Pam Verdon – Consultation?

Pam confirmed that it won't be possible for the Neighbourhood Plan to do the consulting on the Deer Park, they are extremely busy with other projects. Both Richard Revell & Graham Bell confirmed they were happy to do their own consultation with the community. Pam

Verdon gave the dates for Neighbourhood Plan's consultation period which will be between 13-24 January 2015.

Graham Bell said that the timescale of their engagement would depend upon several factors. They are currently deep in talks regarding overall costings of this project. They are keen to explain portions of the land in more detail and are also looking at planning approval. It was therefore unlikely that they would be ready for a consultation period until after the end of January. They will therefore wait until the Neighbourhood Plan have completed their consultation.

Cllr James Robinson-Giannasi – How are we sure that this would actually happen?

Graham Bell confirmed that legal documentation must all dovetail together and there would be a line around everything. Community safeguards will have to be all put in place via paperwork and visuals as well.

Cllr Jon Hale – Will the community area be paid for?

Yes there will be a pot of money for this. The community can decide what they want to have on that area of land and if there is a surplus of monies for whatever reason, then this money can be used elsewhere for the benefit of the community on a different site.

Cllr Mark Faulkner – Are the Enabling Accounts going to be transparent?

Graham Bell confirmed that they will be. There is a blueprint for enabling which will be followed accordingly.

Cllr Mark Faulkner – If the project over-runs – what will happen?

This will be solely the developer's problem and will include protecting any monies for the community.

Cllr Jon Hale – Who would control the car park?

Once the car park is built, the land will be offered to Odiham parish council first. If the parish do not want to take control, then Hart DC will be offered the land and finally Richard Revell's management company.

Graham Bell concluded the meeting by saying that planning applications come with contributions and he is keen for everyone to know that the pot is flexible and open for discussion. Graham also confirmed that he would like the Parish Council involved in the engagement process.

The meeting was drawn to a close by Cllr Jon Hale who explained that he had various other questions to raise that had been posed by Cllrs who were unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that these would be emailed to Graham Bell directly for his response.

Meeting finished at 8:30pm.