

From the Desk of the Parish Council Chairman

January 2010

Proposed Retirement Village on Ely Road

We are nearing a critical phase in the development of a proposed retirement village on the former EDF site on Ely Road. As I mentioned in the last issue of this magazine, your parish council has negotiated terms for the construction and long-term lease of playing fields as well as a sports pavilion and car park on a section of the new retirement village. The developer (Urban Renaissance Villages) is obliged to provide these facilities as one of the conditions for gaining planning consent. However, the residents of Milton have a one-time option to decide to take a cash sum instead, which would be used to provide recreation space elsewhere. That is, we as a village can ask the developer to pay us a lump sum (£200,000 is the agreed-upon figure) in lieu of providing the playing fields, pavilion and car park.

Obviously, there are a number of considerations to be taken into account. First, some general information to keep in mind: it will be a 125 year lease; the playing fields can be used for a large variety of sports (excluding rugby) from dawn to dusk, while the pavilion and car park can be used from dawn to 10pm; the sports pavilion will be a purpose-built 200 square metre building with car park and cycle bays; and a management committee (made up of representatives from the developer, the parish council and Milton Community Centre) will be formed to oversee the facilities.

Pros & Cons for accepting the land/lease option

The reasons FOR accepting the land/lease option are:

- Provides much-needed recreation space for the village. At the moment, many teams, like Milton Colts Football, are struggling for space and the proposed playing fields will be constructed to Football Association standards.
- Pound for pound, it might be seen to be good value for money, as we would be getting playing fields, a sports pavilion and a car park for £200,000.
- Only peppercorn (i.e. very minimal) rent.
- Provides a pavilion and services (e.g. water, electricity) closer than would be available in any of the other fields near Milton.
- Management company 'on-site' will help with security.

The reasons AGAINST accepting the land/lease option:

- We as a village will not own the land; it will revert back to the developer in 125 years.

- The village ideally needs a larger recreation area; it is unclear how large the proposed playing fields will actually be as there is an issue about tree roots.
- Facilities will only be provided after the completion of 80 (out of a total of 101) dwellings. That is, the retirement village will have to be more than three-quarters completed before the parish sees any benefit.
- According to the terms of the lease, the parish is responsible for maintenance of the playing fields. The parish will also have to contribute to the upkeep of the road in the retirement village. Exactly how much is unknown; it will involve a sharing formula which will take into account how much the road is used by villagers going to the playing fields.
- The parish will be responsible for maintaining the pavilion, car park, cycle shed, etc.
- Yet another committee will be required to run the facilities.

Pros & Cons for accepting the cash alternative

Reasons FOR accepting the cash alternative:

- The parish could purchase or lease land for recreation space elsewhere in the village. The parish council's Land Group is actively looking into a number of alternative sites which would possibly provide a larger area of land, be more suitable and open up opportunities for gaining additional funding from outside sources (e.g. the Football Foundation).
- The parish could purchase land now elsewhere by taking out a loan and be reimbursed with the lump sum from the developer.

Reasons AGAINST accepting the cash alternative:

- The parish will have to wait to receive the money. Half (£100,000) will be provided at the completion of the 65th dwelling and half at the completion of the 80th dwelling.
- The money would have to be spent within 10 years or it will be returned to the developer.
- The money can only be used for the purpose of providing recreation facilities for use by the villagers of Milton.

(Please note: The considerations above are not meant to be an exhaustive list.)

In the coming weeks, the parish council will be consulting with Milton Community Centre and various clubs in the village to ascertain their views. This issue will also be on the Agenda at the Annual Parish Meeting in April. All residents are welcomed and encouraged to join in the discussion. You may do so by attending to Annual Parish Meeting or by sending us your

written comments by e-mail (to clerk@miltonvillage.org.uk) or by dropping off a note at the parish office. We'd like to hear from you! And if you would like to take a look at the updated plans for the proposed retirement village, please stop by the parish office.

Hotel Appeal Dismissed

The appeal of the decision against the building of a hotel on the field between the A14 and Tesco has been dismissed. The Inspector highlighted the need that this area of Green Belt land be maintained as the last natural boundary separating Milton from the city of Cambridge. Thanks to your parish and district councillors who attended and spoke at the appeal!

A14 Widening Scheme

This area of Green Belt land also figures largely in the proposed scheme to widen the A14. As part of the scheme, the Highways Agency will provide funding for offsite planting of trees and shrubs along certain areas of the roadside, and your parish council is actively negotiating for such planting to be provided along the Milton stretch of the road. Not only would this planting mitigate the visual impact of the road but, in time, would provide a natural sound barrier as well. Artificial sound barriers will not be in place here because they would be ineffective beyond 200-300 metres.

Thank You

Finally, I would like to thank CBS, who have graciously agreed to rent the parish office a photocopy machine at a greatly reduced rate. I would also like to thank Colin Nunn for helping me put up the Christmas lights. And thanks as well to parish councillor Jane Coston, who flew to Ireland before Christmas to pick up many historical photographs of the village which she is in the process of copying. These are an important part of Milton's history and we look forward to sharing them with you in the future.

Rob Chapman

Chairman Milton Parish Council