

MILTON ALLOTMENT HOLDERS' MEETING

THURSDAY 8th APRIL 2010 at 7.30pm

in

MILTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The chairman welcomed over 50 allotment holders and Parish Councillors to the meeting. To provide a brief background, Milton Parish Council (MPC) has been looking for recreation space for the village since recreation land was sold for Barnabas Court sheltered housing scheme ten years ago. Now more than ever there is a need for more recreation space as there are nearly 20 football teams in the village, three of which must play their home games outside the village. In addition, one cricket team also plays home games outside the village, as well as general pressure of use on limited recreation area. The meeting was called to discuss a range of land deals the parish council is currently looking into and the possible effects on the current allotment land. The chairman was eager to provide as much information as possible, mindful however that some of the land deals contained sensitive information which he would be unable to disclose as it might hamper ongoing negotiations.

STATUS OF LAND NEGOTIATIONS

URBAN RENAISSANCE VILLAGES (URV) RETIREMENT DEVELOPMENT, FORMER EDF SITE, ELY ROAD - MPC had an option to take roughly four acres of recreation space and a sports pavilion on a 125 year lease on land to the rear of this development or to take £200,000 to use on recreation facilities elsewhere in the village. The chairman updated the meeting on the time scale for deciding on these options, including news that URV may be considering selling the site, which would give the village more time to consider alternative sites. Timescale of decision is governed by Notice of Implementation from developers, which may be put back due to the current situation.

LANDBEACH ROAD LAND OWNED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL – MPC had obtained planning permission for recreation use on land off Landbeach Road. This was not an ideal site on the other side of the busy A10. (A young lad was killed in Huntingdon crossing a road to a recreation ground). Ian May chairman of the Colts Football Club felt that if this option were pursued then the adult football club would probably move to this site.

PARK & RIDE VENTURE – Land adjacent the Park & Ride site had been considered for a community stadium with possible spin-off for the village. This was not now considered a preferred option.

MILTON GOLF COURSE – MPC had registered an interest in this land. The lease was too inflexible and the freehold was not available.

PRIVATE LANDOWNERS – MPC had contacted various landowners without success.

COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA (CWA) – CWA contacted Council with a proposal for a land deal. MPC offered a straight land swap of the allotment and horse grazing land for CWA land on the eastern side of Ely Road. CWA Board of Governors has given the go ahead to proceed with negotiations. Any deal is still in very early stages and there is a question as to whether the allotments will need to be included.

THE WAY AHEAD

Council was well aware of its statutory obligation to provide allotments. The Allotments Acts 1908-1950 allowed for compensation for 'crop loss' if allotments are moved. The Milton Allotment Holders' Contract stipulates that "the tenancy may be terminated by either party to this agreement serving on the other a written notice to quit expiring on the 6th day of October in any year." In addition, the chairman hoped that a reasonable handover period would allow for work on old and new allotments simultaneously to ease the transition. It was important to keep lines of communication open, especially through allotment representatives who serve on the Parish Council Maintenance Committee.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

A survey of the allotment holders showed an interest in forming an Allotment Association – meeting scheduled for 27 April. Long term provision - demand for allotments will probably increase and extra land may be needed to cater for this demand. Allotments provide a long term value to the village – environmental, recreation etc.

Following considerations to be made:

- Proximity of trees
- Orientation of plots
- Quality of soil
- Drainage
- Security
- Protection against rabbits/deer
- Car parking
- Road safety
- Organic conversion

CONCLUSION

- The Parish Council has an obligation to look to the long-term best interests of the village as a whole.
- Allotment provision will remain within the parish.
- The chairman thanked all for attending and reiterated that the Parish Council would take **all** representations into account to make what is the best decision for the village.

The meeting finished at 9.45pm

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