

MARLDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting of a Special Meeting of Marldon Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th January, 2009 at 7.30 pm on the future for the Council-owned land at Broomhill Field, Five Lanes#

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cllrs: Pennington; Benney; Danby; Palk; Mrs Cox; Mrs Clarke; and Thorp.

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk to the Council: David Eeles; and 19 members of the public

The Chairman prefaced the meeting by reminding members and the public of the reasons the field was purchased, which was primarily to ensure it could not be developed by its previous owners, Torbay Borough Council, thereby preserving the "green belt" between Marldon and Torbay.

1(1.09) APOLOGIES

Cllr Webber

ITEM 1 At this point members AGREED to suspend standing orders to allow proponents of the concepts that had been put forward to make their presentations:

1. Pembroke Park Residents Association Concept

The first presentation was by Mrs Baggett , secretary of the Pembroke Park Residents Association, who spoke on behalf of their Committee but not necessarily all of the residents of the Park.

The first point made was the concern residents had at the impact any development would have on the Park. There was a preference for the field to become a nature meadow, perhaps with small allotments for children and a nature trail, to make place nice to walk, relax and enjoy the seasons in. Pathways would be low maintenance and kept natural, with logs for seats. Trees or shrubs could be memorial plantings but not ashes. There would need to be a gate alongside the existing large gates, and suitable defences against travellers. Dogs would be kept on a lead and dog bins provided. The area was not suitable for ball games. There was concern about security, as there had already been drinking parties and bonfires on the site. Access was poor and there was no easy parking, and the field floods, making its use for anything more than a meadow problematical.

2. Cllr Mrs Cox's Concept

Cllr Mrs Cox spoke as a Councillor with a particular interest in matter green. She reminded the audience that the field had been called Great Broomhill since at least 1600, and that the

nation was losing meadows by the score. Accordingly she felt the field should be revamped and preserved as a typical English meadow. It should be cut in March and September to rejuvenate the land, where there some rare species. School children could be involved, and part of the field could be an orchard. English Nature had suggested it should be managed extensively for casual recreation, perhaps with assistance from the Coast and Countryside Trust. There could be a mown path around the outside which MEG might be able to maintain. The site was an obscured one so that if there were activities for children parents would have to be in attendance.

3. Marldon Recreation Group's concept

The Chairman of the group, Mr Harrington, presented this concept. He described the background to the setting up of the group, and the questionnaire they had administered which had received 156 replies, which they regarded as a good response. The recreational facilities requested by respondents, in order of popularity, was for an adventure playground, an arboretum/ picnic area of an environmental nature, tennis (though this was not a consideration for the Broomfield site), and skate-boarding. The age group most in need of more facilities was 8-16 according to 73% of the respondents. Mr Harrington said that children need recreational facilities for healthy growth and development, and that there was evidence that this would reduce anti-social behaviour and produce greater social cohesion. Mr Harrington then gave several examples of local areas where play areas and skateparks have been installed, and suggested that funding could be found from SHDC and other sources for such developments.

There were a number of question to Mr Harrington from the floor. Concerns were expressed that if higher level recreational activities were permitted there would need to be supervision in the evenings; that the installation of a skatepark at Kingsbridge had led to many local residents complaining and the park being suspended; that materials used should be timber to be compatible to the environment; the extent to which such facilities might attract youngsters from outside the area; that Jubilee meadow was usual meeting place for young people and perhaps that would be a better place for such developments. There was acknowledgement that kids were already skateboarding and that they needed somewhere to go. The Chairman noted that there already were basketball, football and cricket facilities.

At this point Cllr Danby withdrew his concept in favour of that to be presented by Mr Woolgar.

Mr Woolgar's Concept

Mr Woolgar emphasised that although he was a resident of Pembroke Park he was representing himself and not the Residents Association. He began by reminding everyone that the field was designated as an area of Great Landscape Value and contained many wild

flowers and interesting flora and fauna, including cirl bunting nearby. His proposal was to create an environmental meadow to encourage the diversity of flora with a natural path made accessible to disabled people including those with impaired vision and in wheelchairs. There could be bird feeding stations with willow fencing with viewing openings to allow observation and perhaps small allotments. Children and schools should be involved in the planting and observing wildlife.

The Chairman noted that while Cllr Danby had withdrawn his proposal it should be noted that it had been a little different from Mr Woolgars in that it included the possibility of some low key recreational activity and an arboretum. Cllr Danby responded that he had introduced his concept to kick start discussion which it had succeeded in doing, but he felt his proposals were so similar to Mr Woolgars that he had decided to support the latter.

A discussion ensued where the following points were made: there were already plenty of green areas in the vicinity and the excellent Ocombe Farm was nearby; recreational activity would probably attract more cars and there was nowhere to park and roads that were already dangerous; wheelchair access would probably mean a tarmac path which would probably require planning permission; alternatively chipping paths with chicken wire to make non-slip areas would be adequate.

ITEM 2

The Chairman then proposed that the meeting return to standing orders and this was duly seconded and CARRIED. Cllr Thorp thanked all the presenters for their efforts. Cllr Clarke proposed that the land should be partly environmental and partly used for an adventure playground as the area was big enough for both. This proposal failed to find a seconder. Members discussed the extent to which any recreational activity might need warden supervision and the alternative of padlocking the gates at night which might be ineffectual. Cllr Danby proposed that Mr Woolgar's concept should be adopted and Cllr Cox seconded this. Members voted 5 in favour, one against and the Chairman abstained, the motion accordingly being CARRIED.

Cllr Cox suggested a working party be set up but the Chairman said that there could be a sub-committee of the Public Grounds Committee which would have the power to co-opt other members if it wished.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed (Chairman Cllr. JT Pennington) 9-2-2009

