**IDE PARISH COUNCIL**

**PARISH MEETING**

**8TH MAY 2017**

**SHOULD ROUND FIELD BE DESIGNATED “LOCAL GREEN SPACE” IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?**

**Presentation by Nick Bradley, Chairman of Ide Parish Council:**

Attended by 37 residents and 3 non-residents. (Electoral Register of 438 so 8% attended)

WELCOME

This is a Parish meeting, a public meeting for residents to discuss “parish affairs”, open to the public and press. The proceedings will be audio and video-recorded.

FORMAT – I’ll speak in a minute about how the Round Field, the 2016 Park and Ride application, and Ide Neighbourhood Plan relate. I’ll set out the arguments for and against treating Round Field as Local Green Space in the Plan; then open the meeting for contributions. We’ll finish by 8.30pm latest.

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING – Please understand how we are expected to conduct ourselves at a public meeting. When I invite you to speak to your raised hand, please stand up, say your name and whether you are a resident elector of Ide. The rest of the audience should listen and not interrupt. When you speak, please address the chairman. It is not acceptable to have a discussion across the room. And of course it is not acceptable to be abusive to or about anyone.

I will call for a vote before 8.30, on the question “Should Round Field be designated as Local Green Space in the Ide Neighbourhood Plan?” The meeting will then close.

Only registered electors of Ide can vote – those holding pink papers. The result does not bind the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the Parish Council , or the District or County Councils. But – and this is why I called the meeting – parish councillors and steering group members need to hear the arguments in open session, from the people for whom the Plan matters, to help them decide what weight to give to each point when debating amongst themselves later. There is more to this than the statement ‘Ide does not want a Park and Ride’. That question was settled last year, and is not what tonight’s meeting is about.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN has been four and a half years in the making and there are still three stages to go. Comments on the the latest stage in February this year asked for more on the history of last year’s village vote against the Park & Ride scheme and the withdrawal of the planning application; and the unsettling possibility of another application one day. Here was a once in 20 years chance for the village to “shape” its future in a legal document about planning. If there was a way of using the Plan to protect Round Field against becoming a car park for Exeter, then we should try, came the feedback. So the steering group looked at how and where it might fit in the Plan, given the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). We discussed the idea of adding it as a fifth green area to the Policy on Local Green Space. Advice from Paul Weston, the group’s independent planning consultant, and David Kiernan, Teignbridge’s Neighbourhood planning officer, was that it did not fit the guidance and risked rejection by the Assessor who has the final say. Because this is now the only contentious bit of the Plan, and an emotive topic for our village, we decided that the arguments should be openly aired before deciding how to proceed.

LOCAL GREEN SPACE – The Neighbourhood Plan policy on Local Green Space in Ide as it stands protects four green areas: The Victorian Orchard [1.57 hectares], The Hams, Coronation Gardens, and The Green.

Keep in the back of your minds, too, that the Plan has five other Policies which will benefit the village if accepted: on residential developments and Pynes Farm; car parking areas for the village; sport and recreational facilities and Weir Meadow.

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**THE ISSUES AND THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST DESIGNATION AS L.G.S**

**1. TEIGNBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN, MAY 2014.**

Neighbourhood Plans are not supposed to undermine District Local Plans. Would designating Round Field as Local Green Space do that?

FOR: Well, on page36, section S21 of the Local Plan, Ide is defined as a village – and ensures limited development which meets the social and economic needs of its residents and protects the local character of the village. This sounds consistent with preserving Round Field as a field: a car park for 556 cars could not be described as limited development; nor as meeting the social or economic needs of Ide.

AGAINST: There could be some social and economic advantages in terms of better bus services for villagers, improved cycling provision and road safety measures. And we know that at least 44 villagers were in favour of the Park & Ride.

FOR: But these spin offs would not be guaranteed just because they were in the application; nor are they the purpose of the Park & Ride, which is a car park for Exeter , not Ide.

AGAINST: But we understand that Devon and Teignbridge’ s policy is still for a Park & Ride Scheme, and they could re-apply at any time. That puts Ide’s NP in conflict with the Local Plan.

FOR: No, wrong. The Local Plan on page 113 [para 10.10] does indeed say it wants a Park & Ride scheme, but at Peamore, not Ide, located south of the A379/A30 crossing, not south of the A377 which is our road in to Exeter from Alphington Junction. And Ide residents have already set a position of conflict by objecting to Devon County’s application, which it then withdrew.

**2**. **National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.**

 Is the Neighbourhood Plan, using Local Green Space, the correct vehicle for stopping a Park & Ride at Round Field?

AGAINST: Certainly not. The NPPF says that Neighbourhood Plans are intended for communities to bring forward proposals to support, direct and shape development in their area (para 16, page 4). They are not for blocking development . It says most green spaces or areas will not fit the Local Green Space Designation, which should apply only to special areas.

FOR: Well, it also goes on to say at paragraph 76 that local communities using Neighbourhood Plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. What’s that if not Park & Ride?

FOR: A Neighbourhood Plan is for the community, and what it wants and aspires to. And it will need voting on at a referendum as the final stage, so it has to carry the community with it. Shaping involves adding and subtracting – it’s not confined to positive actions only. And Ide covers 1600 acres [647 hectares], for goodness sake. Round Field is just 2.9 hectares. The Orchard is 1.57 hectares, tiny percentages (0.44 % and 0.24 % respectively) of the total area. Ide is mostly agricultural land which is, quite rightly, not appropriate for this special designation.

FOR: And another thing - the NPPF says that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Round Field is in a designated Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

AGAINST: No, nice try. But this is not a matter for the Neighbourhood Plan, it’s for the existing planning procedures which take into account much more than just Neighbourhood Issues. Ide lies right at the edge of an expanding city with a serious traffic headache. It butts right up against the A30, and you have to understand that there are the interests of a wider public to be taken into account. Ide should wait until or unless a further application for Round Field comes in, then fight it again using the planning instruments already available.

FOR: But the Neighbourhood Plan is part of the planning system once formally made and adopted – a new part, emerging, and subject to challenge and legal precedent. But it confers new rights on communities, precisely so we can fight our corner against bigger interests. We’ve already had one example of the draft Plan contributing to the rejection of a residential planning application in Ide which proposed taking a piece of the grass bank in The Hams – Local Green Space.

FACT: The NPPF at paragraph 77 sets out three criteria for determining a designation for Local Green Space, and uses the word “should”, not “must”.

First green space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves. This is not defined.

Second, it should be demonstrably special to the local community and hold particular local significance, for example (but not exclusively) because of its:

 -Beauty

 - Historic significance

 - Recreational value

 - Tranquility

 - Or richness of wildlife

Third, it should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

**So first, is it close enough?**

AGAINST: No, of course not. Nobody can see it from where they live. Most people don’t regard it as being part of Ide, or even know where it is; and it’s hidden away cut off from the village up a track from a sordid lay-by. It’s disingenuous to say it’s in close proximity.

FOR: Believe me, it’ll feel close once there are 556 cars parking there. It is in the parish. It is adjacent to a bridleway leading to Alphin Brook, which people use to cycle or walk into Exeter. And it’s only 440 metres along the C50 from The Cummings at the foot of Pole House Lane; and only 320 metres as the crow flies from Springwell, John Tucker’s house. The only evidence I could find on councils’ attempts to define close was one which specified 400 metres and one 600 metres – and neither has been tested.

**Second, is it special enough? Is it historically significant?**

FOR: It’s not a civil war battle site, I’ll give you that. But there is a strong case for it being special in the recent social history of the village, with the historic vote and the withdrawal of the planning application. The designation would be rooted in a significant village event which led to a clear decision from the residents. This would protect that decision.

AGAINST: Oh come on, now you’re just being silly! You can’t be serious that last year’s events add up to historic significance. Anyway the NPPF talks of heritage and historic archeological sites, so it’s very clear what is meant. Nobody knew about Round Field before the Park and Ride. It’s a bleak field right on the edge of the village. You are trying to shoe horn the village’s objection into a set of criteria that don’t fit and were not intended for this kind of site.

FOR: The example of heritage is given just as one example of a criterion that could apply. The events of 2016 do add up to Round Field being demonstrably special. It forms the final barrier between Ide and urban creep which Ide would never get back.

**Is it beautiful enough?**

AGAINST: Who knows ? Nobody goes there or uses it, nothing happens there other than horses grazing. Hard to call it a beauty spot bang next to the A30.

FOR: You may say that, but it is already designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value, an AGLV, which is planning speak for beautiful, isn’t it? That alone makes it special. And sometimes, you don’t know how special something is till you lose it.

Is it tranquil?

FOR: No, it’s noisy. Can’t argue with that!

**Is the wildlife rich?**

FOR: There are bats and dormice there as well as other animals, and they appear on the wildlife report.

AGAINST: Yes, and you’ll say there are lots of rabbits next, I expect. The conclusion of the report in the application is that the impact of the scheme would be neutral and that mitigation can be made to lessen effects on wildlife.

FOR: Yes, and that was written by Jacobs the planning consultants commissioned to submit the application, not by an independent wildlife assessment.

AGAINST: But the Wildlife resource maps and species information provided by the BioDiversity Records Centre this year did not designate Round Field as a county wildlife site.

**Has it got recreational value?**
AGAINST: Surely you are not going to say you want to play football on Round Field one day?

FOR: Hmmm – probably not!

**Is it small and defined enough?**

FOR: Round Field is 2.9 hectares, just under twice the size of the Orchard. It is by its very name circumscribed and delineated. Extensive is not defined. But in Bristol a parish council was turned down, understandably, for having a laugh and trying to get tracts of land sized 19 and 32 hectares designated as LGS. Round Field is a defined landscape parcel, not an extensive tract of land. It’s easy to identify, easy to protect; and it’s easy to see why Ide wants to.

AGAINST: It’s a random field, in the middle of nowhere, much bigger than any of the special areas around the centre of the village; and this is not what was meant when the NPPF was drawn up.

**3. Are there risks in putting it into the Neighbourhood Plan?**

AGAINST: Yes, this is wasting valuable time in an already long process. We could be ambushed by developers until the Plan is properly adopted. The Church Commissioners could lose patience, and press ahead with Pynes Farm without the protection of the NP, and lose us CIL money for community projects in the process. If it is rejected by Teignbridge and the Assessor, we will lose time, money, and possibly the whole Policy on LGS.

FOR: The NP is in draft consultation form, and as such already carries weight. The Church Commissioners are unlikely to get planning for Pynes Farm without the NP, as it lies adjacent to the building line. It’s more important to get this right – we only have one chance.

AGAINST: If Ide puts the Round Field in as LGS, Teignbridge will probably advise against at the next stage. If Ide persists right up to the Independent Assessor stage, there is a risk that we could lose the whole of the LGS policy, along with the other four green space areas. This devalues the credibility of the other sites which are valued and accepted as LGS.

FOR: There is no real risk at this stage. The worst that can happen is that Teignbridge advise against including it at the next stage. At this stage at least the risk of a knock back and delay is modest compared to the benefits. And the fact that Ide is making something of this is likely to be a factor if Devon CC re-applies. Maybe the assessor will accept it. Neighbourhood Plans are new and need testing.

OK – now it’s over to you for discussion.

**Presentation by Chris Bishop (Chairman, Ide NP Steering Group)**

Following approval by TDC to proceed with our Neighbourhood Plan in May 2013, and the co-opting of 2 extra members to the team in August 2013, we have been working hard to formulate a plan that reflects parishioners’ wishes through 2 public exhibitions and many consultations for our vision of Ide future via the plan’s 6 policies.

IDE01 Residential Development

IDE02 Pynes Farm

IDE03 New Car Parking Areas

IDE04 Sports & recreational facilities

IDE05 Weir Meadow

IDE06 Local Green Spaces

The Pre-Submission version of our NP of April 2017 was our 4th/5th version containing information about the Park and Ride scheme. It was thought that the text about this scheme with the strength of feeling against it needs to be enhanced/toughened, and we as a group will respond to this at our next meeting, asking our Planning Adviser, Paul Weston, to rewrite it. This will be published in June’s Ide Times and will form the text in the Pre-Submission version.

Policy IDE05 Local Green Spaces.

The separate requirements for designation of the Round Field have been fully represented by our Chairman.

All I would like to add is that:-

1 Our Neighbourhood Planning Officer at Teignbridge, David Kiernan, has advised us that it would be a great risk to include the Round Field as a LGS and that the Neighbourhood Plan was about exploring future development and cannot be used to prevent development, and that this would be seen as an attempt to do this.

2 His advice is backed up by the National Planning Framework, Teignbridge’s Local Plan Guidelines and his experience, with him currently dealing with 5/6/ NPlans in the area.

3 Talking to him today, (8/5/17), he said that if the Round Field was included, DCC, TDC and an independent adviser would certainly reject it as a LGS, jeopardising the Plan’s progress to the final stages.

4 The Ide Campaign Group are a strong group who have succeeded in the past in helping to prevent this Park & Ride scheme which gives hope for the future. Including the Round Field as a Local Green Space is not the way forward.

Chris Bishop May 2017

**The following Statement from Peter Hayes was read out by Richard Sharman:**

**My apologies for not being able to attend tonight. The date was set after I had already left for my holiday.**

**Ide Neighbourhood Plan will be a blueprint for the future of our village. Teignbridge District Council, Devon County Council, commercial developers and individuals who submit plans sited in our parish will be legally obliged to take our plan into consideration.**

**Neighbourhood Plans give direct power to communities and enable them to develop a shared vision for construction and growth where they live.  Government Guidance on Neighbourhood Plans describes them as providing a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right type of development for their community.**

**The one policy that we know has the support of both our community and the parish council concerns the Park and Ride at Round Field. We don’t want it. Both villagers and parish councillors voted overwhelmingly against the proposal.**

**At the very least, Ide Neighbourhood Plan must highlight these facts as a policy, because that is what this is: the settled policy of Ide community.**

**It is not enough to state, as is being proposed, that Ide “would only support parking schemes within the Parish which provide car parking for residents" and that it "would not support any parking schemes designed to meet the needs of Exeter.” That is far too vague.**

**Government guidelines say the following:**

**"A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous."**

**So we must specifically refer to Round Field.**

**Highlighting our position regarding the proposed Park and Ride scheme is the minimum requirement. Far better would be to put into the Neighbourhood Plan that Round Field should be designated a Local Green Space.**

**The National Planning Policy Framework lays down the following criteria for the designation of Local Green Space:**

**"Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.**

**Round Field is already classified an  Area of Great Landscape Value, so what could demonstrate how special this green space is to Ide villagers better than the fact they voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to stop development there? Round Field is the only delineation between rural Teignbridge and the urbanisation of Exeter and its environs. In addition, you will have read of the importance of Round Field to wildlife, especially bats and dormice.**

**The Neighbourhood Plan Group asked for advice from Teignbridge District Council's Neighbourhood Planning Officer, David Kiernan. Mr Kiernan is employed by Teignbridge Council, who are extremely anxious for the Park & Ride scheme at Round Field to go ahead.  Unsurprisingly, he  advised them not to ask for Round Field to be designated a Local Green Space. When I tackled Mr Kiernan about this he immediately backed off and said “it was only advice.” In other, words, we can take it or leave it.**

**When Devon County Council submit a revised application for a Park & Ride, as we know they will, the first thing they will do is study Ide Neighbourhood Plan. Unless we have made clear, specific and detailed opposition to any such development, in the Neighbourhood Plan they will legitimately claim that overwhelming opposition to a Park & Ride and Parish Council Policy regarding this opposition was not registered, and nor was any view expressed regarding the future of the Round Field site.**

**We urge this meeting to vote in favour of Ide Neighbourhood Plan including a policy that Round Field should be designated a Local Green Space. Also that the result of the Ide Parish Referendum, and the resulting policy of Ide Parish Council regarding any such development should also be clearly registered.**

**Peter Hayes, on behalf of the following 55 people:**

**Richard Sharman Liz Sharman**

**Angela Wakinshaw Robin Wakinshaw**

**Margit Upham Sue Penrose**

**Barry Penrose Bill Ahl**

**Wendy Ahl Susan Hayes**

**Damon Rew Maddy Rew**

**Marie Macfarlane Andrew Williams**

**Anna Armitage Mark Armitage**

**Carol Whitehart Natasha Whitehart**

**Rob White  Gemma Strong**

**John Ffoulkes Jane Ffoulkes**

**Sue Donnison  Colin Strachan**

**Chris Goldsmith  Andrew Ash**

**Charlotte Ash  Sue Parkinson**

**Chris Parkinson Ceri Lawson**

**Adrian Rees Sue Rew**

**Kevin Rew David Blight**

**Nick Irving Andrea Irving**

**Paul Hornsey-Pennell   John Waddington**

**Alison Waddington Mark Nightingale**

**Joanna Nightingale   Joanna Jeffries**

**Dean Jeffries**

**Ben Venables Kate Venables**

**Elizabeth Sharman Holly Borne**

**Jake Dane Peter Skinner**

**Julie Skinner Ann Barrington**

**Colin Barrington Ann Boyce**

**Phil Willcock Sharon Willcock**

**A summary of comments from the floor:**

Marie MacFarlane: Has anyone asked for advice as to why Round Field was defined as an Area of Great Landscape Value. Surely if it is defined as such, it should then be defined as an area of Local Green Space?

Cllr. Pete Bishop (Ide PC Planning Committee Chairman) – The AGLV designation was for block coverage of agricultural land around the village, and Ide PC have objected to Planning Applications made for development within this area. From experience with dealing with planning applications, an AGLV has a low status.

MM – disagreed with this.

Robin Wakinshaw: Feel strongly that the results of last year’s referendum and Parish Council decision against the Park & Ride should clearly be registered. Should reject advice not to include the site as LGS – it is just advice.

Nigel Walsh: asked for clarification – designating the other four areas as LGS is partly to prevent unwelcome development was against advice we have received

Cllr. Chris Bishop: – The Round Field is a completely different area than the other four. It has to satisfy **all** the criteria.

Although as a group, we will go along with the vote when we meet as the Parish Council. If it is the wishes to include it, the likelihood is that it will be rejected.

Andy Bragg: As a farmer, I would be against the proposal. I can’t see how it meets the criteria, it doesn’t do anything in terms of beauty and richness in wildlife; The more species-rich a site is, the more wildlife would be encouraged; it is basically a pony paddock, which has been relatively trashed.

Cllr. Andy Swain: There is development going on all along the Ide Gap, against which Ide PC have objected. Shouldn’t we be trying to save all the land along the C50? When the Round Field site was first proposed as a P&R, it was one of five sites considered. Most residents were not aware of the field’s existence - hidden from view by hedges, with no public access and adjacent to the A30. It was considered to be the “least bad” site for a P&R. If we provide specific protection to Round Field, one possible outcome could be that Devon CC could go for a worse site for a future P&R.

Cllr. Pete Bishop: Can see how it could be conceived as special significance for Ide. Looked at protecting green spaces, has referred to advice from the Open Spaces Society who state that the land must meet the criteria laid down.

Marie Macfarlane: As an AGLV it has been seen to have particularly scenic value and is therefore afforded a degree of protection – the way forward is to consider it. Shouldn’t cave in now – would give DCC the opportunity to proceed with another application for this site.

Richard Sharman: Concerned that our N/Plan should be constrained by advice. It is OUR N/Plan. Pointless if we don’t put in what WE want.

Margit Upham: the advice was given with “menacing undertones”

Mark Armitage: obviously Round Field doesn’t meet all the criteria. Round Field should have these things and the more development that encroaches on the area, the less we have of this. Important that the threats of not getting the NP through should stop us making this a designated site. Important not to be pushed around by TDC or DCC in this respect.

Chairman Nick Bradley: clarified that the second advisor is completely independent and paid for by Ide PC.

Cllr. Andy Swain: not aware that there were “menacing undertones” in the advice received.

Peter Satterly: Positive way to make the site a facility – plant an arboretum.

Chairman Nick Bradley – We don’t own the site!

Margit Upham: Concerned about level of air pollution – the more green space we can keep, the more chance we have against increased air pollution.

Cllr. Andy Swain: Completely agree but this argument applies to all green space along Ide Straight.

Cllr. Chris Bishop: We would be trying to earmark a site that doesn’t belong to us. We could designate it as a LGS and would then have to go to the owners for their permission.

Chairman Nick Bradley: the owners have had notice served on them. You can apply for planning application on someone else’s land.

Cllr. Sarah Tiley: still don’t understand what the disadvantage is of putting it in.

Cllr. Chris Bishop: The N/Plan is at the pre-submission stage –as it stands we could put it forward to TDC to have a look at, but it isn’t ready yet. The risk is that TDC will see it as just trying to stop the P&R.

If we insist on keeping it in, against advice, it will go to an independent N/Plan advisor, who we can choose. If he rejected it, we would lose the whole LGS policy.

Chairman Nick Bradley: If Round Field is included in the N/Plan it shows the village feels strongly about it and that in itself would deter a further application for a P&R.

Robin Wakinshaw – The risk is in not saying what we want. Wouldn’t be upset or surprised if it is turned down.

8.35pm - A vote was taken by show of hands:

Should Round Field be designated as Local Green Space in Ide Neighbourhood Plan?

For = 25

Against = 12

This decision will be taken to the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 17th May for further discussion.