**Ide Parish Council**

**Weir Meadow Working Group**

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 2 December 2019

at 7pm in The Hub

**1.** **Present:** Stuart Brooking (Chair), Rich Cloke, Nick Bradley (Chair Ide PC), Pete Skinner, Jess Paine, Doug Bell, Phil Willcock, Richard Cottle and David Howe.

**2.** **In attendance:** Mel Liversage (Parish Clerk)

**3.** **Apologies** received from: Mark Thomas, Cheryl Haddy and Tony Stearman.

**4.** **Minutes** of the meeting held 28 October 2019 were approved and will be published on the website.

Action : NB and Mel

**5.** **Instructing solicitors.** David Howe, a partner at Michelmores solicitors and resident of Ide, was welcomed to the meeting. David had kindly agreed to act for the Parish Council in the purchase of Weir Meadow and the Northern Fields, free of fees. NB thanked him warmly on behalf of the group and Parish Council.

Action: NB liaise with DH over formal instructions.

NB seek Parish Council formal approval by email

**6.** **Planning permission application**.

Pete Leaver (David Wilson Partnership architects) had re-drawn the layout plan as agreed at the last meeting. Copies had been circulated to members of this working group and parish council. The updated layout plan was presented at Nov 20th Parish Council meeting and approved subject to clarification of the construction of the hard surface car park spaces: Pete Leaver has explained that tarmac road planings are to be used, and that a waffle surface would not be suitable in the winter. The working group was keen to ensure that the tarmac and its base were environment friendly, and suggested recycled crushed stone. The wildlife report is still to be received; the flood report is to be produced; and further detailed drawings are in hand.

NB again thanked Stuart Brooking and Julian Perrett for their valuable contributions in providing arboreal and wildlife reports respectively for the planning application, both free of fees.

Submitting the planning application will trigger bills for TDC’s planning fee (£1,014 – parish councils pay half standard fee) and for the next stage of work undertaken by David Wilson Partnership (£1500). A discussion followed on funds available to pay these costs. With the help of a recent donation there are sufficient monies available for the planning application.

Action: NB liaise with architect.

**7. Public information and consultation.** The group again discussed the best time for a public meeting to further explain, discuss and consult on the project with village residents.

Update following the meeting: after discussion with other Ide Parish Council working groups, SB and NB decided to book two dates in late February 2020 for public meetings, before finalising the planning application.

Action: NB to find suitable daytime and evening sessions when hall available. At time of writing, these dates will be either Sat 22 Feb at 13.30 or Sat 29 Feb at 10.30; plus Wed 26 Feb at 19.30.

**8. Option Agreement for Weir Meadow and** **Northern Fields.**

The proposed Heads of Terms were received on 1 Nov 2019. NB, SB, RC and NB, and our response to them, are with Strutt and Parker. David Howe has seen and discussed them in detail with NB. We await a draft Three Year Option to Purchase Agreement with site plan to consider.

We expect the Church Commissioners’ fees for the Option to Purchase Agreement will be c£800 for their surveyor’s costs, and c£2,400 for Farrers’ (their solicitors) fees. NB will ask DCC and TDC about possible grants for this preparation work.

The group discussed ideas for fundraising.

RC indicated that the Cricket Club may be able to contribute to these costs; and SB said that the Footballers might also be able to make a contribution.

Action: NB contact TDC and DCC about possible grants for fees.

**9. Possible funding methods for buying the land**

NB outlined the three main potential sources of funds: private donation through local appeal; grant giving bodies and trusts (eg National Lottery Community Fund); and borrowing (eg from Public Works Loan Board at preferential rates).

NB reminded the group that the first aim must be to acquire the land as phase I. Funding the development of the land with car parking, play area, MUGA, paths, BMX track etc will be for Phase II, and the subject of further funding effort.

The group agreed that the community would be likely to want to see a proper effort to raise the money by donation and / or grant, before turning to borrowing, by devoting, say, Year One of the three year option period to local appeal and grant applications; then taking stock.

NB met with Cara Stobart, the **Devon Association for Local Councils (DALC)** County Officer, on 18 Nov 2019, for further advice about taking a loan. DALC has to support a parish council’s application to the Secretary of State for permission to borrow money. The key requirement for such an application would be strong evidence of community support (note: a formal referendum is not needed), because a proportion (perhaps half) of the money to be found for repaying such a loan is likely to come from increasing the precept (Parish Council precepts are not capped if supporting evidence is sufficiently compelling). And increasing the precept would mean a (modest) increase in our council tax: very roughly, an extra £1 a month for a Band D council household (more for higher bands, less for lower), if we were to borrow £120k. We would expect the other half of the money for repayment to come from income from the land (eg rent paid by Cricket Club, match fees by Football club, agricultural rent or Stewardship income from the Northern Fields).

Action: include this information in the public meetings presentations NB.

**10. Prospectus.** It was also agreed that a prospectus similar to the one prepared for Pynes Orchard needs to be prepared.

Action NB/ML will circulate Pynes Orchard draft prospectus for info.

**11.** **Next meeting** on Monday 24 February 2020 at 7pm, The Hub, Ide Congregational Church.

Action: SB book The Hub

NCAB 12 Dec 2019

WMWG minutes from 2 Dec 2019

Approved at meeting on 24 Feb 2020