

Paper 2

Update from the Weir Meadow Working Group (WMWG) and Joint Projects Fund Raising Group (JPFRG)

Since the last update (12th July) one further meeting of the WMWG and JPFRG has taken place (18th July) and some significant milestones and decisions have been reached – more below!

Fundraising and Borrowing

At the meeting Nick Bradley reported that the first 6 monthly repayment on the PWLB loan is due on 16th December. Along with the transfer of some funds from the Orchard fund and once the £8,000 VAT is reclaimed post the land purchase of Weir Meadow and the Northern Fields, the Recreation Ground account will have approximately £20,000 in it to kick start the next phase of developing Weir Meadow.

Northern Fields Tenancy

Following advertising for the agricultural tenancy for Northern Fields, two tenders were received by the deadline of the 15th July. Peter Skinner presented his report on tendering at the meeting on the 20th July. The pros and cons of the two tenders submitted (both for growing arable crops on Northern Fields) were discussed at the meeting. The views of members of the working group who were unable to attend were sought and taken into account at the meeting.

The group was pleased to have a choice of two experienced and successful farmers, and was content with either tender sum. Members paid particular attention to the advice given by Peter Skinner who had spoken to both applicants. Members had reservations about both tenders, with regard to the different aspects of access in each case. Members agreed that if access arrangements via Weir Meadow could be managed and that a shorter term tender was viable (than that proposed in the tenders) then one of the tenders received was preferable. Pete Skinner made further enquiries with one of the tenderers and gained agreement over the duration of the tender and the need to ensure that any access required via Weir Meadow to the Northern Fields would be pre-arranged with the Parish Council.

Based on this, the Parish Council resolved at its meeting on the 20th July to instruct Peter Skinner to offer a two year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) to the preferred tenderer.

Subsequently, the Parish Council instructed David Howe to proceed with exercising the option to purchase agreement for Weir Meadow and the Northern Fields. The letters and forms have been duly submitted and it is expected that purchase and transfer will be completed on the 23rd September 2022!

The next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG is scheduled for Monday 12th September 2022, 8pm via Zoom.

From Richard Cottle, Chair WMWG – 31st August, 2022.