



## Purchase of the Playing field A new heart for the village.

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As you will be aware the Parish Council has been in negotiation for the purchase of the 'Playing Field' on Squires Lane. We are pleased to announce that this is now in its concluding phase.

Following the surveys done of every household in the Parish, as part one of the 'Neighbourhood Plan' both written and face to face on the consultation days in the 'Tin Tabernacle' it became obvious that the overwhelming request being received was for some sort of Village Hall/Community Facility.

Of those that expressed an opinion:-

**Over 77% expressed a wish for this.**  
**80% wanting more community groups.**  
**Only 4.5% wished for more housing.**

At present we cannot even hold Parish Meetings in our village having to hire facilities at Edwinstowe. This is costly and some villagers complain, quite rightly, that they cannot attend.

The Neighbourhood Plan consultants and local knowledge identified the 'Playing Field' as the only obvious position for such a facility. They also identified it as prime development potential for housing.

However we were prevented from moving forward with the Villager's wishes. The 'Playing Field' was leased on a rolling 1 year lease from Welbeck Estates. With no security of tenure the lease could be terminated, with three months notice. The terms of the lease prevented any development at all. This fact alone has prevented us providing a facility suitable for meetings/events etc., and we could, at any time, be asked to remove our existing substantial wooden building at considerable expense. Welbeck Estates could have disposed of the site in any way they thought fit.

Once we became aware that the offer to purchase was on the table, things changed. With ownership many revenue streams become open. Lottery Funding, Grants, Government Loans etc. As does the ability to generate income from the resource, something the lease also prevented. Indeed as a council we have been approached by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties wishing to hire the 'Field'. This was something we could not even consider.

Whilst the intention to pursue this was given in public meetings, negotiations were of necessity somewhat confidential. A lowering of the original asking price of some £20k was achieved. We have applied for and been granted borrowing approval by the Public Works Loan Board. Contracts have been agreed and signed. In the event that it is sold in the future then any profits are split 50/50 with Welbeck. This was a condition of the sale.

**Following an entirely speculative article in the press we would like to answer the questions raised.**

### **Why are we borrowing the whole amount ?**

The answer is simple. Were we to use the Parish Reserves then we would have no money left to move forward with Villagers' wishes. Essentially we would own the field but have no cash to do anything with it.

We need to put services i.e. Drainage, Water, Electricity etc. onto the site. Before we can consider a building. This costs money. This money has already put by in anticipation of obtaining ownership.

### **Will Council tax be going up to pay for it ?**

The Loan will be serviced from the existing 'Parish Precept' i.e. the money we receive via Council Tax and Central Funds. We have not applied for an increase in funding to pay for this.

It is intended that any further funding needed for development of a facility will be paid for by our Reserves, Fund Raising, (such as that which paid for the existing building), Grants etc. Something we hope will be supported by the whole Parish.

In conclusion we will have gained ownership of a valuable resource. With ownership comes the ability to achieve what villagers say they want. We have prevented the disposal of the site for Housing/Commercial development, again something which villagers were vehemently against.

### **The Neighbourhood Plan.**

Shortly we will be commencing the statutory consultation period. A news letter about this is being prepared. This will be circulated to every dwelling and business in the Parish, giving details of the open days at the 'Tin Tabernacle' and where the plan can be viewed.

**Kings Clipstone Parish Council**  
**20/09/2017.**