

Minutes - Meeting with residents regarding Glebe / Scout project

Date/Venue: 11th October 2018 (8pm), Woldingham Village Hall

Attendance from Woldingham Parish Council (WPC) /Craigmyle Glebe (the Glebe)/The Scouts:

Matthew Quaife, Becky Rush, Marc Sculthorpe, Chris Higson, Scott Irvine, Michael Thurgood, Paul Lunn

Other Attendees: Jeff Jefferies (Village Hall), Nicki Howe (Village Hall)

Residents: 15+ residents mainly who neighbour the project

Introduction: Matthew Quaife Chairman of WPC gave an introduction in which he apologised for the lack of direct communication with neighbouring residents and disappointment caused by this. Matthew stated he would facilitate the meeting and that the focus should be on understanding the plan both in terms of what has occurred and most importantly what is going to happen and the views within the room on all elements of that.

Plan details: This is a collaboration between WPC, The Craigmyle Glebe and Woldingham Scouts (Hut Committee). It forms part of the WPC Crescent Regeneration programme delivering objectives 4 and 6 in the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan. The project covers the laying of a footpath from Slines Oak to the Crescent, connecting up village facilities. Beyond the initial scope of this project decisions regarding use of the Glebe/Scout land will be made by Craigmyle Glebe and the Hut Committee. Funding was half provided by Glebe and half WPC totalling ~£40,000. Village Hall involvement was regarding the part of the project that interacts with Village Hall land, mainly the boundary hedge.

Chris Higson, Chairman of The Glebe gave out documents and plan details. Marc Sculthorpe gave details of the project as per the document. The exact details of replanting were purposely vague as only once the land is cleared can marking out of the exact location of the path and new fence lines be done allowing for landscaping improvements be identified

Resident feedback regarding details of the project

- The screen along the wooden fence provided by the high hedges that have been removed has opened the neighbours of the land to the 1&2 Crescent and the shops. This causes lights to shine into their houses which was not the case before. The Woldingham Plan was sighted as to light pollution. It also means the view is now of all three storeys of the building instead of the top floor. - Photos were provided
- The residents view was that trees (other than the dead cherry tree) were removed
- The hedge that borders the residents right of way with the Glebe and scouts land has been removed. No work was done on the right of way itself or the residents back fences/hedgers. This was viewed as a security issue as the right of way could now be accessed from open land. A short discussion amongst residents regarding openness being more safe vs less safe ensued

- The view across the residents was that the playground extension is not the best use of the cleared land as use is low currently. Also they felt there was a risk of unwanted late night behaviour
- Residents asked for assurance that the area would not become additional parking for The Crescent
- The ownership of land was debated including the path. It was agreed that the Land Registry map was consistent with Glebe / Scouts but other views were put forward in addition
- A concern was raised regarding noise from the land once it becomes an area of enjoyment for the village. i.e. barbecues
- The context for all of this was set out. The development of 1,2 the Crescent had only recently finished having been going on for 4 years. The removed vegetation was the barrier to that development

Resident request regarding details of the project

- A new evergreen screen between the rear of 1&2 The Crescent + shops and properties in Slines Oak Road Ideally this would be high (20ft was suggested)
- Replacement hedge along the edge of the right of way
- No extension of the playground
- Prioritisation of requested elements over other elements
- Assurance of no parking
- A date by which the requests would be delivered
- Consultation on the details of any action taken

Resident feedback regarding communication

Their view was that the residents most affected by the project were not directly consulted and their input was not part of the plan

- The communication in the Village Magazine and at other forums provided were judged to be not clear as to the extent of clearance that would occur

Apology: Matthew Quaife agreed with the two points and apologised as Chairman of WPC.

Action to be taken: Whilst the land in question is owned by the Glebe and the Scouts the initial landscaping of the area does fall under the remit of the regeneration project. Next steps will be led by WPC:

- **WPC - Communication review:** At October 31st the Parish Council will review how projects are communicated before action is taken
 - o An excellent suggestion was made regarding detailed plans being publicly available (e.g. in the Village Hall), articles about the project can then reference this
- **WPC - Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Policy:** At October 31st meeting, the Chairman of WPC will propose an Implementation Policy to be adopted by the Parish

Council that details the steps taken before proceeding with major projects. This will include a consultation section that will recommend identifying stakeholders i.e. residents that will be most affected by any project and seeking direct feedback

- **WPC - Document detailing feasibility / study of residents requests:** By the October 31st WPC meeting the WPC will work with the Glebe and Scouts to detail the requests of the residents. This document will be made available to residents for feedback before the WPC meeting. Assuming consensus with Glebe / Scouts the WPC will vote on the various possible forms of action which should be actioned as soon as possible after the vote.
- **WPC/Glebe:** Assurance the area will not be used for parking. Assurance that the details of the use of the land and the wider plan away from the direct requests will be carried out with input from the residents.

Other points by WPC:

- Please note, the action taken above is not saying all requests by the residents will be fulfilled. Our view is that given the circumstances, the residents have the right to have their requests detailed and if implementable (with Glebe and Scouts agreement on details); put to a vote by the WPC. Key considerations will be: effect on wider villagers, cost, maintenance etc.
- The Chairman did not provide a date due to the process above being followed but assured residents we would work as quick as possible to come to a decision and implement any action

A post-meeting message from Matthew Quaife, Chairman of WPC

Thank you all for your time. We have digested the feedback and will act upon it. We will keep you informed of progress; you can expect to see a document from us before the WPC meeting such that feedback can be given. If I may just say a word about communicating; tensions were high in the room, things were said by everyone that could have been phrased better (including me). Things have not been considered, communication was not adequate but no one is lying, crooked or any of the other words used last night to describe the volunteers running the projects.

If we can also please keep feedback via one channel so it can be viewed by all parties rather than phoning / emailing individual councillors. That should be via the Parish Clerk: parish.clerk@woldingham.com. If you want to talk to me directly please request that via email, I will make myself available.

Thank you all. I learnt a lot last night and detailed multiple ways WPC can improve its work for the benefit of the residents of Woldingham.

Best regards,

Matthew

