

MCG OPEN MEETING ON 24 APRIL 2012

SUMMARY OF JIM ASHER'S PRESENTATION

Jim Asher welcomed all to the Open Meeting. He presented an overview of the two previous Open Meetings held in November and February, the issues facing MCG with regard to the planning application recently submitted by the Anson Trust (AT) and Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire (TWO) and the considerable amount of work MCG had done within the community to provide input to the design specification.

Since the last Open Meeting in February, MCG had held further meetings with potential user groups and had submitted a Feedback Document to AT/TWO. (To see the document visit www.marcham.org and look under 'latest news'.) Key issues identified by MCG were: youth club provision; storage; large kitchen area; and specific proposals for additional storage to the south of the building and creating space by reducing the foyer area.

The full planning application was lodged by TWO on 11th April 2012. TWO had opted for a single submission – to build a community facility on land at the edge of the village behind Longfields / Hyde Copse, and build 51 houses on the Anson Field. As well as a replacement Cricket Pitch and Football Field, a Multi-User Games Area / Multi-Activity Play Area (MUGA/MAPA) was also shown on the plans. With regard to the Community Hall, the current plan did not allow for public use of the upper floor, and is shown as storage.

MCG's view on the community hall layout plan submitted was that while there was some response to the earlier feedback, there were still areas that needed to be addressed. With this in mind a User's Group Meeting is being held on Wednesday 9th May in the Board Room at Manor Farm to develop suggestions for changes to on the layout TWO had submitted to the Vale, keeping within the proposed footprint.

In the meantime, the chairman encouraged all present, both members and non-members to email MCG with any feedback / views, as well as the Vale of White Horse.

MCG had prepared a toolkit to help anyone wishing to write directly to the Planning Committee at the Vale. It was stressed that this was not a template, merely reference to the appropriate planning policies that would provide assistance in framing any feedback to the Planners "in their own language".

The deadline for comments to the Vale is Wednesday 16th May 2012.

At this point, the chairman opened up the meeting to a Q&A session:

NOTES ON THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Responses from Andy Cattermole (AC) Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire (TWO), Chris Hillier (CH) Anson Trust (AT), Colin Bough (CB) Anson Trust, Jim Asher (JA) MCG Chairman.

Q1 – How much will community building cost?

AC – Building plus groundwork and access and plus fees (but without land) £2.4M.

Building itself £1.2M.

But see Q8 below.

CH – AT would have endowment to underpin new facilities but AT are keen that this could also be used for other charity finding.

Q2 – Comment on MCG’s ‘toolkit’. Institute facilities will be replaced by proposed new facilities. IHSP (Interim Housing Supply Policy) target will require new houses in Marcham. Other developments would not give same community benefits. Application includes proposals for two new classrooms for school.

AC – TWO has proposed to the County Council that TWO builds two new classrooms for Marcham Primary School, which would be done during the School Holidays. The hope is that this will be accepted by the Oxfordshire CC if planning permission is approved. .

JA – Confirmed that whilst the proposed new facility did replace the Institute’s facilities, the view of the Planning Officers was that this was “irrelevant” in formal planning terms. However, the Planning Committee may take a different view to their Officers. He also encouraged all present to feedback to the VWDC the importance of how the School would be impacted if planning permission were granted – whether people were for or against the Plan, it was vital that the Planning Committee took note of this concern within the village.

With regard to the IHSP which relaxed the planning rules to enable the Vale to meet its house building targets, meaning that Marcham has been “allocated” 62 houses, Jim Asher stressed that this policy has only been passed at Cabinet Level within the Vale, and has yet to be passed by Full Council.

He reminded the meeting that Banner Homes would be holding an exhibition next day on their proposed Kings Field Development.

Q3 – Did TWO give AT a choice on how to create a replacement facility? Why retain ‘kink’ in building which people do not like?

JA – confirmed that there was more or less a 50/50 split views on ‘kink’

CH – As volunteers the AT could not compete with TWO’s experience and ability to obtain contractors’ services at a far better price.. AT was building in a series of checks and balances to ensure overall control of the project

CB – TWO will be building to a fixed price. If TWO goes over the budget, AT would not be liable for the overspend.

JA also commented that MCG would also be monitoring the build.

Q4 – Will houses built under proposed development count towards Marcham’s quota of about 60 houses under the IHSP?

AC – Understanding is that it would (but only an understanding, not definite) the IHSP applies to houses built after April 2012; TWO had screened Anson Field proposal through IHSP prior to submitting the full planning application in April. IHSP expected to be adopted by Council on 16 May (see above).

Q5 – Has sufficient regard for the impact of both the proposed new housing and community facility on utilities been taken into account – i.e. water, sewerage, road infrastructure etc?

AC – confirmed that the planning application covered flood-risk assessment and drainage documents. There was capacity to accommodate both developments for all service providers and the required improvements will build in additional capacity for future requirements as well. TWO would undertake the work. Details in application documents that anyone would view.

Q6 – Those directly affected by the Housing on Anson Field had received letters asking for comments by 7 May although public deadline on website was 16 May. He encouraged all to send in comments by 7th May (Bank Holiday Monday) as he had been advised by Stewart Walker (planning officer) that planning department would begin to discuss changes to the plans. He also encouraged all present to reject the proposal.

Q7 – Could the affordable housing shown on the plans be reserved on the same basis as the Longfields Development, i.e. priority for Marcham residents or for people with a connection to Marcham?

AC – Part of S106 agreement. Criteria set out for affordable housing give preference to Marcham residents or with a history relating to Marcham. The affordable housing would be managed by outside company and remain affordable after first occupants move on and this system would continue in perpetuity.

Q8 – Community Building had been enlarged in latest plans to increase size of nursery. Why was village money going into a private business?

AC – the money for the increase in size for the nursery does not form part of the £2.4m budget for the facilities. The additional 60sqm was being funded by way of a ‘mortgage’ from AT to Little Angels.

Q9 – Is AT really providing a mortgage to a private business out of its endowment fund?

CH – Clarified that mortgage was not the appropriate term Little Angels will pay rent for the extra space. AT proposing putting in an extra c.£100 K into building to get additional rental income, which would pay back the cost of the space over a 20 year period. AT and Little Angels were still in negotiation over the exact terms.

Q10 – Didn't owners of Kings Field say they would give a grant towards a community building?

JA – There were no definite proposals, just an informal indication; Banner Homes, who are proposing the Kings Field development under the IHSP, have spoken only of S106 money and made no promises or commitments

Q11 – How will proposed new facilities be run? Under what principles? Will there be exclusivity?

JA – MCG had had very preliminary discussions with AT and Parish Council. MCG's view is that how facilities managed would be managed should be community based.

CH – no formal discussions yet. Will take place during next 18 months. AT perceive MCG as a body to be involved along with a number of User Groups.

JA – reminder to members that membership numbers are important. MCG subscription renewals will be due from July 2012. MCG represents an increasingly large part of the community. Should the proposed facility be given planning approval, MCG would welcome involvement in its management; the view of MCG is that there should be as little exclusivity as possible, preferably none.

Q12 What is the Present Planning Status?

AC - The land for the proposed new Community Facility is classed as Agricultural Land – and outside the village envelope – under the IHSP, this would be open to development.

Q13 – One of the questions members were being asked to vote on was the principle that MCG might put its own funds into the community building. This question was premature. We should wait until there was a specific proposal and then put that to the membership.

JA – reasoning behind the 'in principle' question was that (if members agreed) it might be useful in responding to the planning application and proposing changes to the layout of the community building. But no specific proposals would be made without coming back to the members first.

Q14 – What will happen if planning permission refused and if AT gets into trouble again?

JA – TWO would appeal the decision of the Planning Committee. If that appeal is rejected, AT would be in severe trouble and the Charity Commission would get involved.

CH – No other development would give the village the same benefits and asked that village support the planning application.

Q15 Is the 2-year time-frame realistic?

AC? Yes if planning goes ahead, work on the new facilities would start in November.

JA – House building would be phased in, but not before facilities have been built.

Comment from the floor that it is a planning requirement that new facilities have to be built.

Q14 – How finished would community building be?

CH – Useable but not fully kitted out.

Q15 Who would own facility if built?

CH – AT

Q16 – How much flexibility to make changes if planning permission granted?

JA – Understand that internal changes possible but not the external footprint.

Q17 – What happens when affordable housing sold?

AC – Intention is to make it affordable in perpetuity.

Q18 – What happens to remaining green space on Anson Field?

CH – It remains in Trust ownership. AT has approached Parish Council suggesting ways of making it community land in perpetuity. AT wishes to retain this as a village green space within the envelope of the village.

Q19 – What is logic for including 4-bedroom houses in social housing?

AC – VOWHDC sets the building specification for social housing.

Timing for considering application

AC - Normally 13 weeks but extended to 20 weeks in this case. Officers review application and comments received and may ask for revisions to application during this period.

VOTING RESULTS

Questions put to the meeting on the proposals submitted by Taylor Wimpey for a community building.

1. Do you think this is now the right proposal in principle for Marcham?
2. Do you agree broadly with the internal layout?
3. Do you agree with the principle that MCG funds be used for agreed additions to the proposed facility to give the right options for the future?
4. Do you wish MCG directors to make comments to VHWDC reflecting the majority MCG view?

Voting Results

<u>Members</u>				
Question No.	For	Against	Abstain	Totals
1	36	19	2	57
2	36	15	5	56
3	34	20	4	58
4	45	4	9	58

<u>Non-Members</u>				
Question No.	For	Against	Abstain	Totals
1	24	0	3	27
2	18	4	2	24
3	<i>Non-members did not vote on this question</i>			
4	12	0	11	23

Jim Asher brought the meeting to a close by encouraging everyone to:

- Look at the submitted plans
- Ask more questions
- Give MCG their views – and respond to the Vale
- Submit comments by email to both MCG & Vale
- Join MCG and help us to make an increasing impact

He reminded everyone of the Annual Parish Meeting on 2nd May, and the Banner Homes Exhibition at Denman College on 28th April.