

## **SHEPPEY PLAYGROUND**

### **MINUTES OF A PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING**

**19 MARCH 2010**

**Present:** PC Stuart Toms, CC Liz Ayre, Jacqui King (Chair Village Hall), Alan Hughes (Chair PC), Jane Segar (VH Committee and PC), Bob Annis, (V-C chair PC) Tom Meikle (PC), Liz Taylor (VH Secretary)  
All members of the public were asked to sign in – see attached lists.

**Apologies:** Frances Wilkinson (Charlton PC rep)

AH welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain views from the residents of Crophorne and Charlton with regard to the possibility of creating a play area for older children. AH introduced the people sitting at the table (listed above) and explained their involvement. He then asked Jane Segar to outline the proposals.

JS began by saying that the children of the villages had instigated the process, as they had complained that, once the old play equipment had been removed, there was nothing for children aged over about 7 years old.

JS had started the process by conducting a survey. Firstly this identified what was currently in use – where it became obvious that the skate park was not widely used. Secondly this identified what changes would be needed to persuade children to use the Sheppey. Over 90% replied that if there was more to do, they would use it.

JS had copies of the survey here with its conclusions. There were plenty of design ideas on the display boards for comment. There were no set plans in place at the moment, although a number of specific items seemed to be favourites. One major aspect was a proposed shelter which raised concern. JS had brought documents including case studies outlining positive benefits etc.

CC Liz Ayre then spoke. She explained that although she represented the community she was not part of this specific community and it was for the community to decide what it wanted. However, it was clear that play brought many benefits to children; health, an understanding of risk, social interaction, non-academic achievement, statistically more likely to participate in and contribute to society etc. LA also added that the play equipment was not necessarily just for young people, some could be used by all ages. For example, the shelters at Broadway were used by Mums & Dads picnicking, later by older children and teenagers.

Jacqui King was then asked to talk about the Village Hall. She explained that the aims of the hall were to provide multi-functional use for as many community groups as possible. A large lottery grant had been received last year but with a funding shortfall of £57,000 (now reduced to £40,000) work had been unable to start. Top-up funding was now accessible and had been applied for and a decision was due to be made very soon, with the possibility of work commencing in April. The play scheme had not been part of the refurbishment, simply because the funding comes from different sources.

Alan then opened the meeting for comments and questions.

- Paul Baxter supported the idea of a playground on the Sheppey. His issue was concern with the location. He requested that consideration be given to nearby residents. He did not like the idea of a shelter – he felt it was being shoved down our

throats. He also had a concern about the cost of ongoing maintenance and whether it would this be borne by the 2 Parish Councils.

- Rupert Segar asked if any plans had been adopted yet.

- AH explained that no plans had been adopted or proposed. Existing planning still remained for a Multi Use Games Area between the skate park and the Hall.

- Daniel Evans hoped that no development would interfere with the football pitches.

- Rob Cowley endorsed this comment. He congratulated all concerned for starting the process and stated that the Junior football club was well supported and established and needed to be maintained with 1 adult and 1 junior pitch. He raised doubt over the existing tractor's capabilities if any perimeter path was installed.

- Jane Segar said that she was aware of the football pitches and the objective was to keep the play equipment as close together as possible. The procedure after tonight would be to look at feedback, draw up plans, present at the Village Hall AGM and move on to planning. Charlton had received a survey and responses were coming in.

- Jacqui King had no comments to make regarding the cost of maintenance as the equipment had not even been decided upon yet – that was the purpose of the evening.

- Liz Ayre said that the maintenance cost at Broadway (a very large site) was £6,000 per annum.

- Bob Annis explained there were no precise maintenance figures at this time – but that this might be shared between Crophorne and Charlton. It would involve an increase in the precept.

- Alan Hughes commented that the PC currently pays £750 per annum towards maintenance of the field.

- Chris Watts asked how the litter would be cleared up.

- Alan Hughes said that he had spoken to Bishampton PC and they pay their lengthsman to litter pick.

-Jane Segar discussed the running track or perimeter path and said that this had been suggested by children. Currently there was no disabled access to the Sheppey and this track would make the field more accessible. Jane also said that she would be continuing to fund raise and apply for grants.

Concern was raised regarding the shelter.

- Gigi George said she would like to use a shelter and thought it was a good idea.

- Tom Meikle had looked back at the Parish Plan (which had received a 70% response rate). One of the questions asked if you would use a shelter. 48 said yes and 28 said no. Many people had cited school parking as an issue and felt that parking at the Sheppey would be preferable. A path along the Sheppey might then assist in walking from the Sheppey to school. Other comments in the Parish Plan asking what people would like were; tennis courts, meeting place, skirmish site. The

things liked least about the village were; no shop, not much to do, nowhere to go, no beach.

- Jo Cowley said that Elmley Castle First School had build an outside gazebo and the children loved it and worked hard to take care of it.

- Tim Hardy said that if shelters caused such trouble, perhaps PC Storr could comment.

- PC Storr commented that he was unaware of any problems anywhere with shelters.

- Paul Baxter said that at the PC meeting, Liz Ayre had said there were 2 sorts of shelters for adults and children.

- Liz Ayre disagreed – she had said there were 2 shelters at Broadway but everyone used both. She also pointed out that Broadway often has 400 youngsters at weekends and there is not a big litter problem.

- Jennifer Ayliffe asked why there was such concern over youth shelters – surely if young people were going to cause trouble they would do it with or without a shelter.

- Tom McDonald pointed out that Broadway is not the same sort of community as Cropthorne where the age range using the Sheppey might be greater.

- Jane Segar said that the PC had visited a number of village playgrounds, including Bishampton, whose shelter was used by all members of the community.

- Chris Watts said there was already a big litter problem.

- Rob Cowley explained that football coaches picked up litter and the Junior Football Club worked hard to ensure litter was not a problem.

- Tom Mickle endorsed Tom McDonald's point that litter is dropped everywhere. We all had a responsibility to clean up.

- Rob Cowley felt that if young people were engaged in a project they would respect it more.

- Sally Martin agreed. All children respond to their environment and all children at Cropthorne were taught not to litter.

- David Brown thanked JS for putting the information together. He also commented, that, as an assistant with the junior teams he had never seen litter dropped and did not recognise there to be a problem. He was pleased to hear that the objectors were full in agreement with the project and the project needed to be devised first before maintenance could be discussed.

- Chris Watts said he was not lying about the litter and would collect it up to prove that litter was dropped.

It was commented that litter was more likely dropped by the adult football teams and supporters.

- Emily Ballin suggested more litter bins may improve the situation.

- Carol Swanson spoke with her 'accountant's hat on' to say that she remembered the skate park being installed yet no-one uses it. If you ask people if they want something then they tend to say yes, but we must ensure that whatever equipment is installed it is actually what is wanted.

- Jacqui King commented that at the time the skate park was quite controversial; funding and planning had been difficult and we had ended up with a toned-down version of what had been wanted.

- Jo Johnson asked if anyone had any concerns over lighting and what the general views were.

- Jane Segar said that lighting would improve usage as in winter it gets dark around 4.30. In South Littleton they have lighting and the play park is much closer to houses than is being proposed here and there have been no complaints. South Littleton had also reported lower noise levels and reduced littering. They use auto timers and sensors etc.

- Rob Cowley suggested that the people who live opposite might get involved when the subject of lighting is discussed.

- Paul Baxter had no problem with lighting, just didn't want a ~~playing field~~ park outside his front window.

- Jane Segar commented that young people want lighting as it makes them feel safer. They want to be seen but don't want to be watched.

AH drew the meeting to a close. He thanked everyone for their helpful comments and thought it had been a very constructive meeting. He summed up some of the main points to have come up during the course of the evening and thanked everyone for attending.