

PUBLIC MEETING CALLED BY ED VAIZEY
MARCHAM SCHOOL
15 October 2009 – 8.00 pm

Notes – typed by Alison Lawrie

ED VAIZEY:

Just to explain context of meeting - went to see Ian and Neil because a constituent had written expressing concern – Ed wanted an update from the AT about plans – just want to say in that context had a very productive frank meeting – hope guys agree – yes – one thing took from that which he thinks is important is that these guys are doing a difficult job. Doing it out of a sense of obligation and trying to do the best job they can. Obviously proposals affect a lot of people – who want to have their say.

Suggestion out of that meeting to have a public meeting

Anson trust to set out where they are and people to respond to them – concerns or any other ideas. We have a problem – group of people trying to solve that problem and this is a very good way of getting everyone to hear what they have to say.

Mike Hoath is going to represent Anson Trust and say what stage they've reached then Jane Hanna – independent voice – can speak on her behalf – Nick Lawrie, Jane Mander, Frank Buckingham and Colin Trinder – allow presentations first, then we'll allow questions if that's OK.

Like to thank everyone for turning up and showing such an interest.

MIKE HOATH:

Thank you Ed. First would like to thank ... - meeting set up by NAF Group – “NO NO NO” (shaking heads) - asked to speak, volunteered not the right word! Proposals - not firm plans - nothing fixed in stone - and then will set out an outline of what we think may happen next. First thing - explain where we are now

3 main topics – Institute, Anson Field and investments

1) Institute – halls, rooms off it etc. Ex Servicemen's Club and Car park. Institute is currently closed.

In terms of money - Trust will be subsidising Ex Servicemen's Club by about £1,000 this year. Subsidy before closing the institute was from £5,000 to £12,000 per year. Substantial amount of money needs to be spent (about £100,000) to get the institute back to a basic state – need more income then to keep building up to scratch. If made usable – limited internal facilities, basic kitchen and no disabled facilities. Limited sports etc badminton – parking problems – near neighbours – 10:30 curfew - no access to open space – no disability access etc - against Charity Commission advice to have 2 facilities in a village of Marcham's size. See it as v. difficult to see how hall could ever be viable – putting up charges would mean less people would use it.

Institute closed – expensive – unsustainable – bluntly, not enough money to keep it going. Even if we did open it, would not have facilities we believe are needed.

2) Sports fields, Little Angels, central buildings (pavilion) etc – open space next door to building – major advantage over Institute. The pitches are below modern standards – batsman who can hit a ball into Packhorse Lane. Difficult to bring up to today's standards – (calls of "RUBBISH") – Spent just less than £3,000 on electricity this year (for pavilion) – need to make it energy efficient. Will need refurbishment in next 5 or so years. Some people will always be affected by the noise and the odd ball. Want to increase use of sports facilities but want to do it without upsetting the neighbours. Play wall – concerns re amount of disturbance to neighbours. Facilities subsidised by about £2,500 this year despite income from users of the buildings. Facilities only have limited attraction – difficult to attract new users. Don't want to charge more, will reduce use.

Field – in use, working, but not really suitable for development. Runs at a deficit – can't see a clear way of reducing it.

Investment - money is major driver for what we can and can't do. About £200,000 of funds – restricted by Charity Commission as to what we can do – interest can be spent on running costs but not capital eg to subsidise sports fields or Institute. Payments from the interest were financing the upkeep at around £13,000 per year but the current drop in interest rates has virtually eliminated this as a source of income (interest is now only £4,000 per year). Substantial change to balance of trust. Any investment we make must be sustainable. We must spend the money in such a way that we can be certain whatever we spend it on will be able to keep going. Not allowed to do it by the Charity Commission otherwise.

Summarise – as bluntly as possible

Hall - needs money spent, not viable even then

Sports fields – need upgrading but would be difficult

Sports hall – needs upgrading but not enough money to do all three

Action is absolutely vital for Anson Trust directors – option of doing nothing does not exist. Quite limited time to plan ahead and deliver new facilities – if not the Trust will need to be wound up.

Emphasise these are proposals – want as much feedback as possible –

Existing – sell Institute and car park for development – planning rules will restrict what developer can do.

Sell just over ½ Anson Field for development – Football pitch, area with buildings and corner of south side of cricket pitch (4 acres) – rest would remain for foreseeable future as open space. Have already had a conversation with Parish Council about leasing this on a peppercorn basis to ensure it can remain as an open space (3 acres)

Purchase part of field north of Hyde Copse – playing fields, community centre and permanent fund. Would invite sports clubs to move, would invite Ex-Servicemen's Club to move, would invite Little Angels to move. Facilities would be available for use by anyone. Single development on edge of village like Anson Field – more space for expansion – can do this without disturbing those who live around the field or the Institute.

Fund would be big enough to pay for major maintenance – Charity Commission would insist on this anyway but we want to do it because by doing so it would allow charges to stay low. Those in outline are our proposals – emphasise again they are still proposals. Haven't sold Anson Field or bought new land – in process of negotiating.

First thing – ask questions and ask for proposals.

Second - detailed discussions on new facilities – ideas – have spoken to some people incl. sports teams – need proposals because easier to criticise than work on a blank sheet.

Thirdly – have to work out how to run them. Should be run by those who use them, not by Anson Trust – hope all user groups come together and run it jointly.

Fourth – have to work out how to consult going forwards. Planning permission when sought, will be a tight time scale – don't want people to get there and think they haven't been briefed well up front – want people to be pretty knowledgeable when process starts so they don't feel rushed. Comments as individuals, groups and so on.

Enormous number of hurdles – money – Charity Commission – do job they're supposed to do etc. Lot still to be done.

Have to take action – option of staying where we are doesn't exist. We believe proposals we're setting out will give Marcham the right facilities for the foreseeable future.

Look forward to your comments and to working with you all.

Thank you.

ED VAIZEY:

No axe to grind, don't live in Marcham – any questions will be exploratory – no agenda at all. But I do want to make this point because I do think it's important – Mike and his colleagues are all doing this voluntarily and I think you'll agree from the presentation, it's an enormous amount of work. And he doesn't even get paid his expenses!

JANE HANNA:

Firstly, really important to say this is such an important issue for Marcham it can't turn into a political issue in any sense – really important for the village that the outcome is the right one. Very aware of strongly held views and others who have not yet formed a view, which is why I set up a working group some time ago now so that when the time came when as District Councillor I would have a proper role I would be able to represent you to the best of my ability before the planning authority. Thank you MAD news for letting me know this was happening – I was able to contact the organisers two days ago to say I would come.

Process – very good to hear from Mike in the public domain about what the Anson Trust is proposing in terms of putting information in the public domain and engaging with the village long before it comes to a planning application – one of the aims of our group – to ensure that consultation is as broad as possible. Anson trust is a private charitable trust but I am really encouraged that they have said they are going to engage in that way.

When it comes to the planning process itself, how things happen is set down by government and normally the focus is on the applicant to set out the merits of the case – why it should be passed – but this is a special case because this is an application which you've all heard – incl. 2 years ago – because this will take away recreational land and will aim to replace it special rules apply. Also because a build on outskirts and taking away recreational land and substituting it, planning officers are going to be looking for the case to be made that there is significant support from villagers and significant benefit. I set up my working group because once all the information is out in the public domain then as a group we will be able to conduct an independent survey and hold a public meeting – when the time is right, we will conduct that survey asking for your views individually and I will represent the village at the planning authority with that information. Prerequisite to all of this is that there is enough information for everybody to be able to judge whether this is of significant benefit and we're not at that point yet.

I think Mike has made it very clear that that information is going to involve getting information from villagers. Have met a number of times – nothing different from what we've heard here – but have seen no business case or any development plan – detail hasn't actually been worked out. Necessary because what we don't want to happen is that we get some white elephant that doesn't meet the needs of the village and doesn't have the funds to keep it going. Quality of information is absolutely key – need to document the case when the time is right which actually sets out the evidence for the need and what is the financial plan, how is this going to be maintained. Timing is also crucial – timing on planning application is normally pretty short – normally 28 days – what my group is concerned to do is make sure we do have time to conduct an independent survey – so have asked the trust to publish things in public as early as possible so we have time to carry out a survey. Sounds like consultation will follow fairly shortly and will be quite a lot of time before any planning application so that's good news to hear.

Finally I think I can appreciate that there's so much interest in this and everybody would like to have an involvement to make sure the plan is right for Marcham. Remember that Marcham is fairly unique in that you haven't had a parish hall that has involved a payment by the villagers – in most other villages part of what you pay – precept - actually goes towards the parish facility – hasn't been the case for Marcham – does have consequences in terms of the level of involvement you've been able to have up to now. I hope that any discussion going forwards about a future facility will look at what the options are, including the role of the Parish Council so that villagers can feel they do have some part ownership really of the facility going forwards.

Really all I wanted to say other than having met with the Anson Trust a couple of times like Ed, it's quite clear they are working very hard – things extremely difficult because of financial crisis – one minute school is involved, next school is not going to be involved – simply hasn't been the readiness to put anything concrete in the public domain and once consultations have happened, Parish Council and I will make sure we gather your views.

ED VAIZEY:

Thanks Jane – agree, don't want to make this political...

NICK LAWRIE:

Thank you Ed – Nick Lawrie – talking on behalf of NAF Group – obviously affected – will leave it to your imagination – would like to thank Mike and Jane for very clear and concise presentations – one theme that came through strongly – consultation – the one thing we want to talk about tonight. Concerning consultation – it is on record – we have obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and it's very very important that you understand this – it is on record that the Trust will not consult on the fundamental premise, the basic ideas of what they are doing – have undertaken to consult on details but it's on record that they will not consult on any other alternatives – plan is going ahead, consultation will be on what size, how big, what colours. Will not encompass whether we the villagers want this or whether there are alternatives.

We must remember this is probably biggest event to happen to Marcham in the last century, possibly for ever. Difficult to talk about size – plans not really there – however if we do use those figures that are available on public record could be up to 100 houses or less – will impact village – our quality of lives – strains and stresses on infrastructure, pollution and all that – very fundamental concern we will not be consulted on that premise. There is a body whose constitution says its very purpose is to be here for the benefit of the village. So why not systematically consult on whether we actually want it before they consult on details? We do understand there is no statutory or legal basis for consulting us, but we believe there is a moral basis and would like that moral imperative to be exercised. To date, the only systematic consultation that has been undertaken - whether you value it or not – in 2007 a poll was taken of all the villagers in Marcham. 66% responded - of those less than 15% wanted this in the first place. That is out of date and we do

hope that the new consultation and the new poll will do this very fundamental thing and I really have to emphasise this - please ask whether we want this in the first place before asking should it be tall, short, broad and narrow.

In the spirit of this evening we have asked for questions to come later – however, to rebel, I have two questions – don't require answers immediately.

Business plan – we acknowledge this is a private organisation and that there's no specific imperative for them to share it with but it is of greatest importance because if it goes ahead we all want the warm feeling of "this has been planned and looks viable". We would therefore welcome some information about the business plan – a lot of information around at the moment, we acknowledge most of it is out of date and invalid.

Secondly, not expecting an answer right this minute – is the land expected to be sold with covenants in order to mitigate the disastrous impact on some people's homes and capital investments?

JANE MANDER:

I come from an ancient Marcham dynasty – born and bred in Marcham, lived here till I was 20 – back here now to live and die in Marcham. The previous 3 speakers have been excellent and there are things they've all said which I agree with and can see their points of view – speaking completely as an individual – my notes say "The Anson Trust – Who are they? What are they doing? How can we know those things?" I think quite a few answers have been given this evening but again the point made just now that consultation before decision-making is important and I think that's a problem that people who aren't members of the groups have a feeling of mistrust and that sets people against people which you don't want happening. Public consultation on a regular basis – at least once a year – wouldn't do any harm – Anson Trust should come to the village once a year and show their finances, plans etc. At the moment the situation is the Anson Mistrust that I feel we're dealing with. That is - I would say - the public perception of the situation and I think in my under 5 minutes it wouldn't do any harm to look at what it says here on the wall of the school hall – "Our value this week is Generosity" and that's what we need.

FRANK BUCKINGHAM:

Good evening – I'm afraid I'm totally confused – spent quite a while preparing my presentation but the sort of things I've heard have thrown me into touch. The Anson trust are sitting here out of sight – but who the hell do they think they are? I understood that the Anson sisters bequeathed the properties to this village and it's mine as much as it belongs to these guys here and I feel everybody in this hall should be consulted as to what to do. Why is there suddenly this rush – Institute not viable – what has suddenly happened? What makes them think some all-singing all-dancing hut stuck out in a field is going to be viable? I'll tell you how to do it – redevelop the Institute – in the centre of the village – height will allow you to have a second floor – additional space

and a little bit of TLC and the place – I can see you sitting there laughing ... (intervention by ED V: the point I'm making Frank is I'm on everybody's side and I don't want this meeting to become personal) – well tell the Anson Trust members because they're sitting there sniggering – they're hiding ... (ED V: let's let Frank finish) ... the Institute can be made perfectly viable by adding the second floor and it's not going to cost anywhere near as much as the new plan. Put the houses in the new field – going to stick houses on a cricket field – no, a football – I'm sorry I'm getting mixed up but the Trustees are legally obliged to administer the properties for the purposes specified and I cannot for one minute imagine they were specified to become building sites or the Institute as a warehouse – as the Anson Trust are using it for at the moment. This legally binding job they took on they should do it and administer the properties for the purposes that were specified. We are going to make the Ex-Servicemen's Club homeless – the finest institution in the village – does great good in the village (organising pensioners' outings etc) – it's a private club – not (as someone close to the Trust when speaking to me called it) "an evil drinking den".

(Anson Trust offered to introduce themselves at this point)

ED VAIZEY:

Everyone is free to say what they want to say – just don't want it to become personal. Will try and stick to the agenda – after Colin has spoken will introduce the Anson Trust.

COLIN TRINDER:

I could echo some of what Frank said because a lot of what I've written down has already been said ... but will continue anyway. First a personal note – I don't know Mrs Mander but my mother was born and bred in this village – 1922 and when I moved here in 1971 she was quite pleased to see our new house in Tower Close – son you've got a good place here, the Anson Field – it will never be built on. She'd turn in her grave. Interested to hear Mike's original statement – certainly first time I've heard a lot of what's going on – always avoided consultation so it's nice to know they're doing it now. I understand the trustees have a difficult job – not necessarily the fault of the individuals tonight but most of their problems are self-inflicted - closing down Institute, selling portfolio of property over the years etc but that's history. Refer to meeting in Institute Oct 2002— first talks of problems with finances in the Institute. Decision that night of residents was that we did not want to lose the Institute. Happy to have houses built in car park, raise funds for repairs to Institute and to pavilion on field. Don't know why but these proposals were shelved and late in 2006 Trust produced proposal to sell Institute overlooking the fact they had tenants in the Institute until 2010. Committee of concerned residents was formed – Neighbours Around the Field, referred to as NAF – after several requests for a survey, NAF produced one – results amazing – 66% (responded) - for Trust proposal 12%, undecided 19%, against 69% – does appear the Trust has taken no notice of that – several requests since then – at least take their own survey – what funds left spent on architects, legal fees etc. Eventually acknowledged they would consult with residents but only once planning application had been made – shutting stable door. Would

refer you to the Oxford Mail 2007 where they as owners promised not to sell the land for housing without consulting with local residents. We are all fed up with asking for information – secrecy surrounding the Trust .. would remind you that Trust was set up by the Anson sisters for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area. Admit the Trust's proposals tick their own boxes but they have completely overlooked the damage it will do to the village – one large housing estate – I don't relish it. Do the villagers have to put up with the Trust's imposing their plans on the village? Consultation after the application – seems pointless to me. New facilities - have Trustees genuinely proved a need for all these new facilities – I don't think they have, I don't think anybody can, and can a village this size sustain it? Have provided all the answers to their own self-inflicted problems but who's to say we won't lose more of the field in years to come? The field is a gathering point for young and old and is heavily used. We don't need your proposed facilities, we don't want your proposed facilities and losing the field is far too big a price to pay.

Thank you very much.

ED VAIZEY:

Anson Trust – introduce themselves

Colin Bough

Neil Rowe

Mike Hoath

Louise Butt

Ian Blellock

Absent:

Gordon Bendall

Hugh Logan

James Allan

ED VAIZEY:

What has emerged is a desire to be involved and know what the proposals are and to be involved perhaps one stage before to discuss various options – good opportunity tonight.

BOB HALL:

40 years in village – have you done a survey on what the new facilities need? what the villagers need? I don't believe you have and are you going to do a survey before you put in a planning application because from what I've heard the villagers don't want your facilities

MIKE HOATH:

Have done some initial soundings for budgeting purposes – for details we need to start consulting now and I'm hoping this meeting will kick it off. Crudely – replace what we've got plus a bit more – which is where it gets elastic.

If it became absolutely clear that the village didn't want it, we would not have a business plan to put forward and the plan would fail. It's as simple as that. We have to put a business plan to the Charity Commission in Taunton that they have to sign off before we can do anything. Yes, we'll do all that.

BOB HALL:

You haven't said what you would do if the village rejected it? Would you refurbish the Institute?

MIKE HOATH:

No, we're not allowed to spend it on that. The Charity Commission have made it absolutely clear that a capital investment of that size must be supported by ongoing income. If we spent £100,000, we might be in the same position in five years' time.

SIGRID GRAWERT:

13 years in village – Abingdon Road – do understand that the consultation so far was regarding user groups? – do not exactly know where these user groups are, who they are, I have a figure of about 23 but would like to make the point that put together, they make only a small percentage of the whole villagers. Come back to the fact that you said you will ask the whole village for their views – can we put that down on the record? We have obtained through the Freedom of Information Act that one person from the Anson Trust on 30 September – less than 3 weeks ago – said they would consult on items within the facilities but they would not consult on whether we want it or not in the first place.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

Family been here 11 years – no money? What have you done in fund-raising events?

When will the trust hit crunch time?

Anson Trust running out of a reliable source of continuing money – more about what is now. Can Mike explain if he was unable to come up with a sustainable plan and Trust went into receivership, what would happen?

RUTH ATKINS:

Mike – climbing wall on Anson Field – you said you didn't want to upset the neighbours – my house is at the edge of the field but I wasn't asked – want to know how that decision was reached. Jane – who is your working group please?

JANE HANNA:

Parish Councillors with no involvement with Anson Trust

Dave Walton

Margery Evans (not here)

Dave Hutchinson

Ian Charles

Tony Bradley

– people from the village who are not on the Parish Council but do not have any declared views on this

Want to make sure it's neutral

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Question for first presenter – have Trustees discussed winding up the Trust with the Commissioners in Taunton or not?

What are options?

How long and what happens?

MIKE HOATH:

Not certain - current estimate towards end of 2010. Depends on some intangibles like our income, maintenance bill etc. It's that tight. So we have to be certain that in the next 4-6 months we can have a way ahead. Can apply to the Charity Commission to borrow some of our trust capital – which will only be given if they are certain it can be replaced.

If wound up: Have considered that – on MAD News website is a full letter from solicitors – extract:

If the directors reach the view that the objectives of the charity can no longer be achieved, may possibly:

- 1) amalgamate with another charity which has assets
- 2) reorganise charity by directing that assets should be sold – best terms commercially available

If the Trust were wound up the Charity Commission would do their best to go back to the original trust deed set up by the Anson sisters and try to achieve that trust – by amalgamating, selling etc. This would not necessarily involve any consultation whatsoever.

ED VAIZEY:

What about the “muddle along” option?

MIKE HOATH:

Just simply not viable, not enough cash coming in. Subsidising – quite a significant amount of cash going out this year – well in excess of our income currently.

COLIN BOUGH:

Secrecy of accounts? – No, all available on MAD News website since 1999. Most recent accounts (will be added as they become available)

ED VAIZEY:

What about going back a stage – consultation on a range of different options as opposed to a proposal.

MIKE HOATH:

Number of options considered – straight refurbishment of Institute doesn't stack up. Next option to sell Institute plus car park and use income to rework the facility on the field and upgrade that to give you a chunk of the village hall – couple of issues with that – one legal, the lease with the Ex-Servicemen means that if they're in the Institute they're in the car park so it has to be sold as a package. We would have to negotiate very hard with the Ex-Servicemen

in order to get vacant occupation of both – tied together. If we did sell that we estimate the income from that would be enough to build or extend the existing hall. The income would use – think in terms of £400,000 – about £200,000 on the hall, would leave us about £200,000 and again we'd have to run on the interest – would generate about £8,000-10,000 a year - very very tight and in our view unviable in keeping that upgraded hall maintained. Very restricted - lot of late-night dances would be very difficult. Trouble as you know during the summer with youths on the field - undesirable - our expectation is that there will be about 50 houses and no more on the field.

COMMENT FROM FLOOR:

Building all those houses will cause a lot of mess, a lot of noise, a lot of cars ...

MIKE HOATH:

For those who are really interested we'd like to go through the maths of that option – would like to talk to you and see what you think about it. Putting up a proposal, haven't locked out every other option but keep on feeling it's the only one that stacks up.

ED VAIZEY:

Feeling that Trust hasn't done enough in terms of detailed consultation or surveys, user groups only, climbing wall etc

MIKE HOATH:

Climbing wall – money was in part to come from Parish Council – who asked us to stop – exactly where it came from I don't know – apologise for not making it clear it was them.

User groups – we will go wider – this is part of the process we're doing now.

Fund-raising – we haven't, that's deliberate – don't see it as our purpose as a public organisation to raise funds...

(COMMENT FROM ORIGINAL QUESTIONER:

That's a cop out! ...)

MIKE HOATH:

We take an annual fee from the Sports and Social Club and they raise their own funds. We feel it's the proper way for us to provide the structure and users to raise their own funds. We are actually in an odd position - most village halls there's something on the rates that goes to the local village hall - if we did that, we could.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Why can't we do that then? Perhaps it would have been better if we could have run our village as a normal village is run – perhaps we wouldn't be in this situation. Why can't we revert to that now?

MIKE HOATH:

Very good point, but a legal opinion is on the website. Charity Commission consider it as an asset – can't donate it – could sell it to Parish Council at market rate but they don't have the money. If Parish Council ran it, they would be responsible for subsidising it, running etc. We can't pass the buck in that way.

COMMENT FROM ORIGINAL QUESTIONER:

Why can't YOU raise the funds?

...

JOHN KINCHIN:

Born Marcham 1938 – I believe when this all started you put the hall up for sale and I'm led to believe that a buyer came forwards, offered you the price you were asking and was prepared to leave the Ex-Servicemen there and they would have been paying rent all this time – is that true or not?

BRUCE RIDDLE:

Observation – It's all about the money

Question – Have you considered the option of being able to sell shares in the company, is that a viable option? Appears that at this stage it's time for the village to start putting their money where their mouth is.

MICHELE ANDERSON

Living here since 1993 – concerning bankruptcy – trustees would be forced to sell properties – as I understand it, they're actually designated as local facilities and can't be sold unless similar ones are provided, which would tie the hands of the Trustees. I work for CAB - a charity – we fund raise. Have to fund raise otherwise we can't survive. Shares - village isn't a community - would be a way of forging it together as opposed to separating it as this issue has. I'm sure many of us would be prepared to put in and join together and help create something – you're shaking your head, but we would.

MIKE HOATH:

Not shaking my head, trying to work out the maths actually.

ROY HOBART:

43 years in village – if people are worried about losing the field – sounds like with good reason – could they not apply for the field to be given town green status which would protect the field from misuse for ever – certainly eligible in that the public has had use for well over 20 years – think the village hasn't done enough to help the Anson Trust – should help with the cost of looking after the playing field – have sat back and had everything for free – ought to see whether Parish Council, parish rates, tax – we ought to help them because they've had a very difficult job to do. OK, it's a thankless job but if we lost the heart of our village - the field - it would be a very sad day for Marcham and we'd never be able to recover from it.

COMMENT FROM THE FLOOR

Should put some sort of agenda, discussion ...

Been here 23 years today – from Swansea – it seems that the answer to the equation is put it to the people to expand it – some very very valid points raised here tonight.

ED VAIZEY:

Could people buy shares?

Town green status?

COLIN BOUGH:

Historical point – was Institute for sale – described person as local benefactor – we undertook a marketing exercise but the Charity Commission would also have to be satisfied – more than one offer – one you refer to was not the highest – would need to represent market value – advice was that it was not market value – quite clearly – that's why that sale didn't proceed. But I would like to stress that wasn't the highest offer anyway.

SIGRID GRAWERT:

But by closing the Institute and not maintaining it, it's losing value and losing money so you're not maintaining best value.

COLIN BOUGH:

Not losing as much money as we would have been – a fact.

MIKE HOATH:

Shares - A company limited by guarantee but I really would like to sit down and talk is the answer, if you've got some ideas. That's come completely ... well can we talk about it is the answer.

After we've done a bit of research we might have to go back to the Charity Commission.

LAURA HARKNESS:

If the majority of villagers decided they did not want the Anson Field to be sold for housing would the Anson Trust be bound by democratic vote?

MIKE HOATH:

Legally not bound by it, but in practice yes – Business plan to Charity Commission would have to make clear it didn't have support so would not be passed – also same for planning permission

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR

Not totally convinced Anson Trust have considered every possibility – have they considered trying to obtain external funding?

MIKE HOATH:

Yes – there are 2 types, capital funding and running funding. Virtually no sources of ongoing funding. Limited things for particular exercises – can get

funding to start a user group – youth group – etc. Capital funding – eg Lottery – not a lot of money because Olympics are gobbling it all up. Mainly sports money we're after – large grant category and limited. Marcham not deprived area, not inner city – right at the bottom of the list and the money isn't available for us. If we do get any it will be for improving facilities, not building from scratch.

ALAN CRIPPS:

Procedural query concerning ongoing maintenance costs – is it possible for the village to pay on the Parish precept money to the Parish Council and for the Parish Council then to give the money to the AT?

MIKE HOATH:

Not the right person to ask – we don't believe it's the case, but not sure legally.

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR:

Could Parish Council rent the institute at a commercial rate?

MIKE HOATH:

Previous discussions with Parish Council indicate that sort of length of commitment would be beyond them. Will certainly discuss it again.

BOB HALL:

Anson Field – could you not sell part of the field to the village – to us – and use that money to refurbish the Institute?

GRETA GOULDING:

Colin gave a rundown of meetings – one that came out of the blue some years ago – we were invited to view a set up of planning boards with pictures – every house given a glossy brochure – first learnt – bolt from the blue – October 2006 – a picture of a hall in there – seemed state of the art, way beyond what we probably need. Sports and Social Club – very generous in letting the cafe and others use it – not fit for purpose, providing 80 meals a week – if we refurbished Institute and sold off land, would be nowhere for parking – incredibly inconvenient for people living in North Street – I just wasn't clear Mike when you were talking about why you didn't think it was viable to refurbish the Sports and Social Club with money from sale of Institute. Gob-smacked to hear we were still being held to ransom by the Ex-Servicemen's Club – I think you were saying that we were still being held up by that – I thought it was due to end in 2010 – why? I hope you haven't renewed it for another year!

ADAM McRAE:

3 months in village. House backing onto field, gate that backs onto it. Deeds – piece of land bought from Anson Trust late 60's, early 70's - every sort of covenant preventing me from building – just an observation – I can't build, I don't feel you should be able to build.

JIM ASHER:

Lot of problems for Trust - headache of how to maintain buildings – if we were to think of a solution where they focused on ownership of land and as a village we thought of ways to raise funds to build a hall but it needs commitment from the village to join together in a venture to build this type of facility and if necessary make the rental arrangements required by charity law and I think we should be doing this as a village rather than skirmishing separately.

COLIN BOUGH:

People haven't considered future – children and grandchildren, what facilities are they going to have? Really need to think about this – I think the village needs facilities and it can't go on as it is and we should think about getting better facilities. I think it's very sad,

Building, sports pitches, space ...

SIGRID GRAWERT:

Completely agree – village seems to be prepared to put in a lot of effort and even money to keep field as it is – if we had had this meeting 3 years ago, maybe the Anson Trust might not have had to spend I think about £100,000 on legal, consultancy, architects fees and whatever? And I truly believe that we should try to keep the field going and Colin you said the future needs better facilities – nobody doubts that but why don't we have better facilities on the existing field?

COLIN TRINDER:

Question – If things should go ahead on the football field etc would those living adjacent to the affected areas either be compensated financially or with land or would there be consideration for green corridors etc.

MIKE HOATH:

Could all be considered – tend to be in planning process – developer, people round field and us.

MIKE BLANCH:

Funding through parish precept?

MALCOLM DENTON:

Parish Council wants to represent everybody's views – precepts – yes, will certainly look into that if that's how the village wants to move forward. Very supporting of raising funds – no issues with that. Tremendous opportunity here – have facilities that are beyond sell-by date – maybe hall isn't in right place but we all have to be very open-minded about it. If we work together as a good village – and I know this is a good village – I think we can all come through it.

ED VAIZEY:

Anson Trust is represented by ordinary people who live in and around this village who have come tonight to explain their thinking and processes. The

gentleman (over) there; when you said the village should work with the Anson Trust, I thought you put it so eloquently - let's not forget our Parish Council, District Councillor, County Councillor.

- 1) There is a feeling that people want to be able to participate in the debate on all the options – don't want to feel their only participation is "where shall we put that house"
- 2) Village wants to play a role in supporting the Anson Trust morally with goodwill but also potentially financially so I think that puts other options on the table – village taking on running of Institute if feasible – also fund-raising role – also very interesting ideas like Anson Trust keep land and we'll focus on building facilities

(Ed also stated that the Trustees were voluntarily doing a difficult job and thanked them for their hard work - although their public relations could be improved)

Hope you've found it useful and productive – strength of feeling and passion, and goodwill is demonstrated by the amount of people who've given up their Friday night to come and participate ... Thank you.