

Notes on the Open Meeting of 1st November 2013

Following various discussions over the state of the Car Park for the Recreation Ground and Village Hall at both Village Hall meetings and Parish Council meetings over the recent years, it was decided that an open meeting should be held to consider options.

In order to work from real figures, a firm of contractors costed a number of options and these were presented at the Open meeting chaired by Mark De Pass (Chairman of the Parish Council) with some 50 villagers present.

Prior to the meeting, which was advertised throughout the village by leaflet drop, those with concerns over the project were approached by either Mark De Pass or Cedric Hollinsworth (Chairman of Easton Royal Village Hall Committee) so that these views could be brought to the attention of the meeting. Immediate neighbours to the Village Hall were unable to attend on that particular evening.

Options considered all involve green sand being removed and a proper base laid with a geotextile membrane to prevent the mixing of soil with the sub base and hardcore over this: (All costs are before VAT but the Parish council recover this element.

- Grasscrete - concrete blocks allowing grass to grow through **£11,100**
- Asphalt using a similar material to the present access **£6,475**
- **Hoggin** is a compactable groundcover that is composed of a mixture of clay, gravel, and sand or granite dust that produces a buff-coloured bound surface. With heavy rain, because of the clay content, this can churn up and produce an uneven surface and less durable. **£3,400**
- **Gravel.** Although a possible option, this surface was ruled out because the gravel could be picked up on tyres and shoes and transferred to the recreation ground. This would cause serious problems with the mowing of the grounds so has been **ruled out.**
- **Scalpings** – limestone material from local quarries but this also contains various amounts of clay and other unsuitable materials and would have to be covered with a fine limestone dust. Issues with heavy rain can create a mud slurry which is unsuitable for a car park so **ruled out.** **£2,800**
- **Recycled Road Planings-** produced when contractors remove the top layer of a road surface before re-surfacing. Usually 20mm down in size and compacts very well but also allows good drainage with a greyish finish. Parish Council and Village Hall are looking at this option because of both cost and durability. **£1,898**

All of these surfaces would be retained by curbing (square profile) and a fall of the surface away from the road and from Forge Cottage with no risk of flooding from this surface because of its porous surface.

Questions from the floor

- Is there a need for additional parking? And is it for the Village Hall?

Answer- this will allow more vehicles to park off the street allowing emergency vehicles easier access to the properties below the Village Hall. Last winter (2012/13) the car parking area was closed off from parking for three months. This caused access problems for those wishing to bring items into the village hall for events. All year round access to the village hall for those organizing events and more importantly for those with limited ability can still have access to the hall. Those hiring the village hall from outside the village are often unaware of the parking issues and have left vehicles in in-appropriate places.

- How will this be funded?
- Answer- the funding will be shared between the Parish as part of the precept and the other part by fund raising activities through the village hall. A grant is not available and Village Hall believe that they can match fund.
- Concern was raised that the area was not really large enough for parking, more for turning. Issues raised by the nearest neighbours over the size, were raised and the possibility of the play area being moved was raised. Enlarging the car parking area would have an impact on the neighbours. It was also mentioned that there needed to be a grass area nearer the play area in line with the stairs from the village hall to allow for teas and BBQ. Larger functions tend to occur during the summer months but the ability to pull about 20 cars off the street during the winter months would dramatically improve access to the village. It was felt that the impact on Forge Cottage would be minimal.
- Costs of Grasscrete were raised and it was agreed that this was far too expensive unless a benefactor within the village could be found for the extra **£8,000**. In the short term Parish Council funds can cover the costs, on an expectation that Village Hall would cover their contribution and the remainder from Precept.
- Mention was also made of other improvements to the recreation ground. If the removal of the cricket pitch was done at the same time, thus being able to make use of material from the car park and also leveling the worst areas of the recreation ground and reseeding where necessary, this would add about £700 to the total. Concrete from the cricket pitch could be recycled on the car park sub base. This would make a significant saving if both were done at the same time.

The school has expressed an interest in making greater use of the recreation ground and hall but are restricted on how it is able to support any funding. There may be grants available linked with improving sports for the children. If the recreation ground is improved such that the school can make far greater use, the issue of maintenance for this purpose would have to fall further back to the school. A further benefit to the school could be that of establishing a 'walking bus' with cars parked at the village hall and children walking to the school. There may be health and safety issues on this but the school is keen to investigate this further. This would, obviously, reduce the amount of traffic during busy times providing parents from outside the village could be persuaded to use this facility.

Parish Council is now seeking to have the voluntary 20 mph speed turned to a compulsory 20 mph under the new Wiltshire Council scheme.

Further discussion continued on the type of materials to be used and it was agreed that Tarmac was too expensive at this time. If there was a wish for this then there would also be a delay to raise money to fund it and this would only delay the ability to provide a reasonable, cost-effective solution to the car-parking problem. It was stressed that the area would not be larger than the existing failed car park and consideration for an area of grass for BBQs and other outside activities would be kept.

The whole village has been given the opportunity to put views forward; the two immediate neighbours have had personal visits. A vote was taken on the least cost option of Road Planings and improvements to the recreation ground as listed above and an almost unanimous vote agreed this option.

Timings. It is hoped that the car park area could be completed almost immediately and reseeding of the grassed areas would take place in the spring. If the weather turns then there will be a delay to ensure that the conditions are suitable for work to be undertaken. It was suggested that a village email list be created so that speedy consultation could take place. Email addresses would be sought via a leaflet drop when a suitable flyer is being circulated.