

Notes of a public meeting 18.8.09

The meeting commenced at 8.00pm

There were 15 members of the public and the meeting was chaired by Geoffrey Kay.

The meeting was called to discuss the possibility of new premises for Haughley Pre School and the possible location of such a building.

- Geoffrey Kay introduced the business of the meeting and offered to take the chair.
- Rebecca Varela, representing the Pre School, gave background information about the Pre School, which has existed since 1979 and been located throughout that time in the Village Hall. She explained that there was the potential to increase the scope of the Pre School, to include after school care and breakfast clubs, which would enhance the provision of the Pre School within the community.
- Jim Grainger, representing the Haughley Scout Group, was generally in favour of the provision, but expresses concern about the possible location of a new building, which could conflict with a provision that is currently enjoyed by the Scouts.
- Loretta Greenacre, Early Years Advisor for Suffolk County Council, explained that there was potential funding for a new building through money identified by central government. Such funding might be available for a further 18 months. Whilst she couldn't guarantee the funding, which would only be granted after a stringent examination of plans that would need to be provided by the Pre School, nevertheless she was very supportive of the Pre School, who apart from anything else had an extremely positive OFSTED report and clearly provided a valuable community facility.
- Alan Shaw, Haughley Parish Councillor, reported on a visit to Woolpit, where he had seen a provision similar to the one proposed for Haughley. The building there is 140 square metres, similar in appearance to a Suffolk barn, with a secure play and outdoor activity area. He said that the building had been equipped to a very high standard, and that the funding had included equipment and a contribution towards initial running costs within the first two years of operation. The Woolpit provision had cost something in the region of £200,000. He went on to explain that the King George Vth playing field was in the ownership of "Fields in Trust", who would need to give approval if any part of the playing field was to be used for this purpose. The key person was currently on holiday, and so there was some uncertainty about the feasibility of using playing field land for this purpose.

- Peter Reynolds, a resident in Haughley Green, wondered if land adjacent to the Playing Field might be made available; that land is in private ownership.
- Sally Green, Haughley Parish Councillor, drew upon her previous experience as a Headteacher and praised the Pre School for the work that they do. She also recognised that whilst the Village Hall had served the Pre School well, it also limited the scope of what was possible and made any thoughts of expansion of the service impossible.
- Bruce Cameron-Laker, Mid Suffolk District Councillor, was generally supportive of the proposal, but urged that the bigger political and educational picture needed to be considered, especially the way in which school reorganisation within Suffolk might impact upon the educational provision within Haughley.
- Colin Hart, Haughley Parish Councillor, was keen that all possible sites within Haughley be considered and that the views of the football and bowls clubs are sought at the next meeting of the Playing Field Committee.
- Judy Thomson, Haughley Parish Councillor, reminded the meeting that the funding might only be available for a limited time, and that for that reason there was some urgency about progressing the proposal. She also wondered if the Scouts had other objections to the scheme, and in reply Jim Grainger indicated some concerns about the possible disruption caused by building contractors on the playing field.
- There was some discussion about the issue of parking at the Pavilion, which on busy occasions is not satisfactory. Another building on the site could reduce the amount of space currently used for parking.
- The meeting concluded by Geoffrey Kay thanking all participants for their contributions. There seemed to be general support for the proposal, recognising the problem of finding a location for a new building. Rebecca Varela undertook to firm up on some aspects of the proposal and to report back to the next meeting of the Parish Council on September 15th. The meeting concluded at 9.15pm.