

SCHOOL FIELD PLAN

1 message

~~Becky Stannard <becquestan@yahoo.com>~~

Sun, Dec 1, 2019 at 1:43 PM

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December 2, 2019

TO: Neville Lane

Members of the Thorverton Parish Council

Alison Marshall, Secretary

Sarah Parkes, Head of School, Thorverton Primary School

FROM: Mike and Becky Stannard

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We read in the December/January Focus that the Thorverton Parish Council has formulated a plan to use S106 funds to create a park with picnic tables, possibly a basketball hoop and a pathway through the top end of the School field in the Glebe to School Lane and has submitted this proposal to the Mid Devon District Council for approval.

We as property owners whose land is immediately adjacent to the upper section of the School field have not been consulted nor has there been any presentation of this plan to Thorverton residents at large. We understand that S106 funds are public monies and, as such, the Parish Council is obliged to offer all Thorverton residents the opportunity to review and comment on any plans using these funds. The Parish Council must represent all the residents of Thorverton and the residents, in this case, have not been consulted.

The "woodland" is a precious natural resource — a home to birds, insects, hedgehogs and other wild creatures. The sweet chestnut trees, at 500 years, are perhaps the oldest trees in Thorverton and are under preservation orders. An athletic field already exists that is more suitable for active sports. More money could be allocated for such amenities as a basketball court. The Millennium Green has picnic tables and there are pathways of all kinds and plans for an orchard.

In short, we insist that there be public meetings to solicit input from the residents regarding this proposal before any action is taken. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

MR + MRS STANNARD
END.

Dear Councillors

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL LAND
ADJACENT THE SCHOOL – CONVEYANCE NUMBER DN121717
(SECOND LETTER)

I apologise for troubling you with a second letter, but I have now had a little more time to read the very well done and comprehensive Minutes of your meeting.

I refer to the "penultimate paragraph" of Minute Section 19/133 S106 when Councillor Crang confirmed the land had been acquired as "Public Open Space". I believe this not to be the case for the following reasons:

- 1) The previous Planning Permission which gave rise to the Development initially placed no demand on the Developer to provide any "public open space".
- 2) The arrangement of the gift of the land in question was purely due to the Rev. Prebendary Derwent Davies's desire to have a quiet "buffer zone" between him and the future Development and therefore wrote Covenants with restrictions that would prevent certain activities taking place on the land.
- 3) I can find no Plans indicating this to be Public Open Space.

4) I have however found a Plan suggesting it should be "Public Amenity Land" – a term that is not often used these days but purely means 'a pleasant feature' in the Landscape.

5) That in the conversations between the Parish Council at the time of the Conveyance and the Rev. Prebendary Derwent Davies, the Parish Councillors would have become fully aware that the planting and the supervised activity by the School would be the only criteria acceptable. Therefore it became clear that Public Open Space access would not be acceptable as he had set up the "buffer zone" so that he and future Incumbents would enjoy peace and quiet as if it were Glebelands.

6) I believe that the Councillors would want to uphold the spirit of the verbal agreements before the Conveyance was signed.

The Minutes seem to indicate that they are in a desperate hurry to spend the circa £13,000.00 S106 money – WHY? The S106 Agreement states that the money must be all allocated to a definite project not later than 10 years after the first date (being when the first full market price house within Court Barton was sold). Since the S106 was only drawn up in 2014 the 'use by' date is not likely to be before 2025.

The Parishioners would no doubt be pleased if the Council delayed this decision to enable the Parishioners to have an input into how they would desire the Council to spend the relative money. Is it time for a Thorverton Referendum!!

JON COE,

I read in Focus of the Parish Councillors' plans to create a small public park at the top end of the school field. As you know this borders on my garden so I am particularly interested.

I appreciate the PC is anxious to use some of the funding monies but have they SERIOUSLY thought about this project?

I mentioned this proposal to a friend today and her immediate reaction was "who on earth would want to use it?" It is hemmed in by properties, has none of the lovely views that the Millennium Green has, and the thought of having a picnic there caused some considerable amusement!

Surely if you want to have a basketball hoop, the playing field has more space and would be more suitable (although I would query who would use it, - as the table tennis table and Gym equipment, after the initial flurry of use after it was installed, is seldom used now according to a neighbour living next to the Field.

The idea of a community orchard is more sensible but would mean clearing most of the trees to let in the light which the fruit trees need, but this certainly could be done with permission, as the existing trees are protected I'm told. I doubt if the area is large enough to have a reasonable size orchard and room for the Picnic tables, paths and basketball hoop.

I wonder how many, if any , of the Councillors have actually ever stepped foot in the copse – it would be interesting to know! If they had they would be more realistic in their expectations!

If this goes ahead, the ground will take a lot of clearing to make it useable – it is covered with brambles and ivy, so who would do that and who would maintain it ? Would this be from the parish precept (bearing in mind your stated aim is to be "careful with our spending money so that the precept is kept to a reasonable level".

Then there is the safety aspect which I am sure the School will consider, as to whether it is wise to allow any Tom Dick or Harry to have access to the school playing field and playground when the children are there.

For the adjoining neighbours security, we would insist on fencing included in the scheme if it goes ahead, such as the school had erected for Mr Coe.

I'm sorry I won't be able to come to your next Council meeting to listen to your discussion on this topic, but please would you raise with the Members the points I have made.

The PC might spend the monies better in the copse creating a wild life area with bug hotels and log piles for beetles and reducing the number of trees to encourage birds and butterflies etc . I am sure the Devon Wildlife Trust would be pleased to advise. This might be more acceptable to Mid-Devon DC as the land is in the Conservation Area.

I will be interested to hear your views and ideas.

Best wishes
Brian Trump