

Wickham Residents' Association - News Update

MILL LANE SPORTS & RECREATION SITE PROPOSAL

The Mill Lane Forum and Steering Group met on February 23rd. The focus of the discussion was centred mostly on the potential costs and benefits of the 3G football pitch that the Council is still considering for the site.

Although residents in two surveys have soundly rejected the notion of a 3G full-sized football pitch at Mill Lane (91% and 81% against) with its attendant fencing and floodlights, the footballing stakeholders represented on the Forum, unsurprisingly, are keen to see it come to pass. As WRA, along with Wickham Society and Knowle Residents' Association, have supported the wishes of the majority of residents in opposing the installation of a 3G pitch, it is becoming increasingly likely that the Forum will fail to deliver to the Council a consensus view of what should be installed at the site.

Reflecting the lack of consensus, 4 options were put forward by the Chair in anticipation of consulting further with residents to try to discover which was most favoured. Three of these were dominated by football provision and the fourth was "do nothing". The residents' representatives objected to

this approach because no one has ever proposed "do nothing", and that 4 choices were too many for a sensible and quantifiable consultation.

Additionally, at the February meeting, the Chair presented financial projections for a 3G pitch (and other items) that might be installed at Mill Lane. These showed that, based on certain assumptions, a 3G pitch could be financially viable and even with reductions to allow for risk could break even or make a slight surplus. This conclusion runs counter to the projections made by WRA, a summary of which was circulated to the Forum members, but time did not allow for them to be presented or discussed.

It was heartening to hear the Chair of the Council's Recreation Committee, who was in attendance at the meeting, state that she would not support a project that was not financially sound.

Since the meeting, WRA has worked further with Wickham Society and Knowle Residents' Association on refining its financial projections for a 3G pitch. The three residents' organisations have concluded that it represents a significant financial risk. The projections have been made using evidence of the performance of nine other 3G pitches around Hampshire and applied to the likely utilisation of such a pitch at Mill Lane. By agreement with the Chair, these projections will be presented to the next meeting of the Forum on March 30th – unfortunately, the timing of Forum meetings does not ideally fit the timetable for publication of the Parish Magazine.

Also at the next meeting, on March 30th, the three residents' groups propose to table a proposal for the facilities that they feel should be provided at Mill Lane, these being based on the evidence of residents' and Wickham Primary School's wishes, plans for future playing pitch provision by Winchester and Fareham Councils and the principles of the Local District Plan. This proposal includes recommendations for the future of facilities at Mill Lane and both the Wickham and Knowle recreation grounds, providing a coherent, joined-up approach to the provision in the parish.

In that respect, we are recommending that the £150,000 from the Wykeham Vale development for the improvement of the facilities at the Rec is used there and not diverted to Mill Lane as the Clerk has intimated. For some reason, the existence of this sum and the purpose for which it is intended seems not to have been widely publicised.

We hope that residents will strongly support our proposals when the opportunity comes for them to give their opinion.

If the 3G pitch plan despite our efforts is approved, then residents can expect that:

1. There may be an unacceptable financial burden falling on the parish
2. Our local team, Wickham Dynamos, say they play about 40 home games a year – so to make it pay the pitch must be used predominantly by users from outside the parish and not residents or teams from the parish. It will not work financially any other way.

3. Traffic in Wickham and Mill Lane will be considerably increased
4. To make the pitch financially viable the door may have to be opened again to Infinity FC (or some other Club). This possibility, of course, was stated, as long ago as February 2022, no longer to be part of the plan for Mill Lane. However, the wording of the statement published by the Council on the subject allows Clubs to use our pitches if approved by the Council. Thus, if the need arose, the Council might have to take a decision that residents have made abundantly clear they would not approve.
5. The use of the Rec and Knowle for adult football would cease.

As reported in the February Magazine, the Parish Council has received a response from Winchester City Council to the pre-planning application that had been submitted. WRA has asked that the Forum be given sight of the pre-application and the Winchester response to be better informed about planning issues that need to be taken into account. This information has not been forthcoming.

WRA has also asked for evidence from the Clerk that a grant of about £10,000 for outdoor gym equipment must be spent in the Rec – and not used (unlike the £150,000 mentioned above) at another location. Again, satisfactory information has not been forthcoming.

WELBORNE

We have little to report over and above the content published in the February Parish Magazine. We do now

have, though, a better idea of the timing of the sequences of the development and information from the Case Officer at Fareham Borough Council has confirmed that there will be two, perhaps three, adult 3G football pitches there. The first of these should become available around 2033.

We have continued to press the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Health Board for a decision as to where the occupants of the first 800 homes at Welborne (due for occupancy 2025) will register for health services. Each enquiry is met with “no decision yet made....” – which simply triggers our next enquiry! The fear is, of course, that in the short-term at best and long-term at worst, health provision will be located at Wickham Surgery. This risk was highlighted during the planning application hearing for the surgery extension, and no firm assurances were received at the time.

TITCHFIELD LANE - SOLAR FARM PROPOSAL

(Planning application: HCC/2021/0701).

Following the closure of Hampshire County Council’s public consultation, Wickham Residents Association continues to challenge the planning application on the following grounds i) unsubstantiated need for landfill waste ii) unacceptable high volume of HGV movements to/from Titchfield Lane via Wickham and iii) serious traffic safety issues. Following the Associations’ detailed review of the VECTOS (applicant’s traffic consultant) report the WRA voiced our & residents’ concerns at Wickham & Knowle Parish Council

meeting on 16th February highlighting the following.

- The VECTOS report identified Titchfield Lane has 21 unsafe pinch points where HGVs and oncoming family cars cannot pass safely - indicating how unsafe & unsuitable the lane is for such traffic.
- Whilst VECTOS mentions mitigation measures these will involve substantial & costly changes to Titchfield Lane and would forever change its character as a country lane not to mention a likely increase in “rat-run” traffic as a consequence.
- VECTOS although portrayed as an independent consultant is part of SLR, the applicant’s design consultancy team! Highways as part of the planning authority must require such reports to be submitted by completely independent traffic consultants that are not part of the applicant’s design team and without links to Highways. Highways & the local planning authority should reject this report due to an obvious conflict of interest.
- SLR has again failed to explain and justify the need for 1.15mil tonnes of landfill waste and contrary to local haulage firm & SLR assertions - landfill waste will not be coming from Welborne. This was confirmed during Welborne open day when developer “Buckland” stated no landfill waste will leave the site and all site traffic movements will be to/from the south (M27) and not the North (Wickham).
- Further, as previously identified in WRA reports putting 1.15mil tonnes of landfill waste on top of the existing cap will jeopardise the integrity of the cap and is

unnecessary to realise the solar farm as per the previously approved application.

- The Association has concerns the company behind this application, "Navigate Corporation" registered in the British Virgin Islands has no proven experience in developing and executing complex, long-term solar farm generation projects.

The Association appealed to Parish Councillors at the meeting to support residents' objections and forwarded our detailed analysis and reports to the chair & clerk as requested. Unfortunately, the Parish Council did not make use of these. We would however like to express our thanks to Councillor Patricia Stallard, Hampshire County Council, who undertook to ensure our analysis and reports reached the local strategic planners.

WICKHAM RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (WRA)

Wickham Residents Association is free to join, the only criteria being you live in the PO17 postcode area. The Association is a collective voice for matters concerning Wickham residents - the more members the stronger & louder our voice! To join please contact Membership@WickhamResidents.org.uk or visit our website at <https://wickhamresidents.org.uk/>

WRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - TUESDAY 4TH APRIL 2023

Save the date - Wickham Residents' Association will be holding its Annual General Meeting on **TUESDAY 4TH APRIL 2023** in the Houghton Room, Wickham Community Centre, from 7 pm. Members

are welcome, indeed encouraged, to attend and the Association will be circulating the agenda & further details shortly.

WICKHAM AND KNOWLE PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS – THURSDAY MAY 4TH, 2023

We remind readers that elections to the Parish Council take place on this date and we encourage residents to take this chance to exercise their right to contribute to the maintenance of local democracy.

UPDATE FROM THE KNOWLE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (KRA)

Background To The Association

This Association has existed for many years and has a strong constitution that is reviewed on an annual basis. All Knowle residents over the age of 18 years are automatically members but like other similar organisations, work and activities that are undertaken in Knowle usually fall to a few dedicated residents to pursue. In representing residents in old Knowle and the village, there is a mixture of both skills and age ranges on the KRA committee.

Highlighting Some KRA Work Activities

A few years ago, the Association realised that the Parish Council (PC) had never



considered placing a welcome sign into the village. So, the committee shopped around and decided on the most appropriate one by liaising with Hampshire CC and then requested the PC to place an order. It is often used in photograph opportunities by residents and visitors.

Through its elected committee, various tasks are undertaken with many first pursued by consulting with residents on certain matters. For example, there are four play areas in the village and when old equipment needed to be updated in some of them, residents were able to decide on their preference. People thought that the play equipment should be in keeping with the rural environment... namely wooden and no coloured metals. Another example and similar consultation exercise were also undertaken to choose both the type and best locations for placing picnic benches on the village green.

The committee regularly has to address parking issues in the village and for one example help determine the problems caused by a double-decker school bus that could not navigate around the narrow parts of Knowle Avenue. It now has to wait outside of the village which resulted in students frequently standing on the muddy ground whilst waiting to access the