



Great Boughton
Parish Council

Working together for our community

OUTCOME REPORT

OF

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE LAND TO THE SOUTH OF CALDY VALLEY CHURCH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE 2018/2019

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In June 1983, J.Sainsbury PLC transferred two plots of land to Great Boughton Parish Council. Correspondence from the Land Registry states that one was transferred directly to the Caldly Valley Joint Management Committee which had been established to manage the neighbourhood centre and included representation from the church and the parish council. At that time, a lease agreement between the Joint Management Committee and the parish council was agreed for the plot which expired in 2017.

The land under consideration is located on Caldly Valley Road south east of Chester town centre off the major road junction linking the A55 North Wales Expressway with the A41 and A5115. Caldly Valley Road itself provides access to a large private housing estate and runs through to the B5130. To the south lies Sainsbury's superstore and a small four unit retail park. There is a Premier Inn and Brewers Fayre restaurant opposite the site and beyond lies a large estate of residential dwellings.



The space is currently grassed with trees and planting and contains a boules court and small community garden. This area had a pond that has been occupied by newts in the past but is now dried up.



In May 2018, the parish council was approached by a developer who expressed an interest in purchasing the site on behalf of a fast food franchise. After consideration, the parish commissioned an independent valuation from DVS Property Specialists for the Public Sector.

The valuation made the assumption that commercial planning permission would be granted for the site. It compared recent sales of similar sized sites in Cheshire and Merseyside and took into consideration the proximity to main roads and local amenities. The valuation report stated that *"Based on the evidence, and given the location of the site off a major road junction in an area with no fast food restaurants, the Senior Surveyor considers that there would be strong demand for the subject site with planning permission for fast food restaurant use and that a value of £1,000,000 per acre is not unreasonable: this would reflect £820,000 for the subject site"*.

Alternatively, the valuation considered that there would be strong demand for lease/rental of the site with planning permission for a fast food restaurant at a recommended £375 per square metre per year (excluding VAT).

2. RATIONALE FOR CONSULTATION

In light of the valuation report, the parish council consulted with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire Association of Local Councils and agreed to hold a public consultation on the future of the land. A Working Party was formed and representatives from Caldley Valley Church were invited to be part of the group which were tasked to plan, co-ordinate and deliver a public consultation and analyse the results of the consultation and provide the parish council with a summary of any current or future restrictions on the use of the land and a recommendation for next steps.

Membership of the Working Party:

Parish Cllr Peter Bulmer
Parish Cllr Pauline Cox
Parish Cllr Ian Huffer
Parish Cllr John Salt
Parish Cllr Keith Scargill
Parish Cllr Martin Whiteley
Rev David Goodwin
Margaret Fitzpatrick (Caldley Valley Church)

Cheshire West and Chester Officers Michelle Markert, Andrew Redfern and Gareth Joyce and Ward Cllr Keith Board also attended some of the meetings of the Working Party to provide advice and support.

The public consultation ran from 1st Dec 2018 – 11th January 2019 and included the following:

- Two public drop in opportunities at Caldley Valley Neighbourhood Centre for residents to meet and talk with parish councillors; Monday 3rd Dec from 4 – 7pm when Cllrs Bulmer, Cox and Scargill attended and Sunday 9th Dec from 12 – 3pm when Cllrs Huffer, Salt, Scargill and Whiteley attended. Approximately 70 people attended across the two sessions.

There was also a public meeting on Monday 17th Dec at 6pm at Caldley Valley Neighbourhood Centre which was chaired by Cllr Bulmer and enabled local residents to meet as a group and share thoughts, 16 people attended this meeting, along with Cllr John Salt, Cllr Keith Scargill and Cllr Martin Whiteley. Cheshire West and Chester Borough Cllr Keith Board also attended.

- There were information displays and questionnaires at Caldley Valley Neighbourhood Centre, Great Boughton Library and Vicars Cross Community Centre.
- Information was also shared via social media (facebook), the parish council website, local handbooks (Vicars Cross Voice and Huntington & Boughton Handbook), a reminder to respond was posted on facebook on Wed 9th Jan 2018

- Information was sent to local schools to share with parents (Cherry Grove Primary, Oldfield Primary, Huntington Primary and Bishops High School), local parish council notice boards and in the local free paper (the Chester Standard).
- A risk assessment was carried out by the parish council to identify potential risks of any actions taken by the parish council following the outcome of the consultation.
- Consultation with Jolliffe’s Solicitors confirmed that although there were no outstanding conditions on the potential sale of the land, permission would need to be sought from the Charity Commission before any sale to ensure that no conflicts are arising with regards to the disposal of the land.
- A tree survey carried out in 2017 was also considered during the consultation and the following detail is included in the final considerations.

Caldy Valley Centre							
T22	N/A	S	D	P	D	Dead tree situated in landscape group along east boundary, low risk because of size and position. Recommendation: Consider removal as part of routine management.	<1M V. Low
T23 (584)	Corkscrew Willow	M	M	F	F	Tree is in decline with die-back and deadwood evident in the crown. Tree is over a bench. Recommendation: Consider removal as part of routine management.	500K Low
G24	Mixed (Birch, Pine, Norway Maple, Sycamore etc)	M	EM	G	G	Belt of trees along eastern edge of site adjacent to highway. Trees are in early maturity and may benefit from thinning to improve stability and ensure wind firm edge in long-term. Recommendation: To ensure that trees are wind firm in the long-term undertake phased silvicultural thinning. Must be undertaken carefully so as not to induce windthrow into crop.	1M Low
T25 (585)	White Willow	L	M	F	G	Large spreading tree with multi-stem habit, possible as result of previous coppicing. Some unions at the base appear to be weakly attached acute unions, although there is no evidence of cracking at this time. Some stems have poor H/D ratios and appear to be beginning to subside. Recommendation: Fell and replace.	10K Mod
G26	Mixed (Birch, Pine, Norway Maple, Sycamore etc)	M	EM	G	G	Group of trees at the southern part of the site. Trees are in early maturity and may benefit from thinning to improve stability and ensure wind firm edge in long-term. Recommendation: To ensure that trees are wind firm in the long-term undertake phased silvicultural thinning. Must be undertaken carefully so as not to induce windthrow into crop.	<1M V. Low

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The consultation responses included hand written questionnaires, phone calls, letters and emails to the Clerk of the Council and every respondent received an acknowledgement. The questionnaire asked three questions:

Q1: How often have you visited the land at the bottom of the Caldly Valley Church & Neighbourhood Centre’s car park in the last month? *This was intended to gauge the usage of the site but as many residents didn’t use the questionnaire to respond, was often omitted from the response*

Q2: If you have visited the land, can you tell us why? *This was intended to gauge the usage of the site but as many residents didn’t use the questionnaire to respond, was often omitted from the response*

Q3: Do you think the land should be:

- Maintained as an open space
- Sold or leased to a commercial developer
- Enhanced by the parish council? *This option included a note that any expenditure might impact on the local council tax precept to ensure that residents understood the implications of opting for investment from the parish council and therefore made an informed choice.*

In total, 220 responses were received, which equates to 3% of the parish population of 8300 although responses were received from people living outside the parish, most noticeably neighbouring parishes, Huntington & Christleton which will skew the percentage data. However, the Working Party felt that anyone living locally and potentially

impacted by a development should be able to express their views. Caldly Valley Church submitted a formal response however all other responses were from individuals.

The analysis of the responses show the following:

RESIDENTS WISHING TO MAINTAIN AS AN OPEN SPACE	RESIDENTS WISHING TO SELL OR LEASE TO A COMMERCIAL DEVELOPER	RESIDENTS WISHING TO SEE THE LAND ENHANCED
121 Emails 47 Questionnaires 2 phone calls	4 Email 13 Questionnaires	1 Email 32 Questionnaires
SAMPLE OF COMMENTS:		
The proposal will not be in keeping with the community as it will make traffic problems on Caldly Valley Road even worse than they already are.	I would like to say that as a family we would love to see KFC it's what's missing from the retail park	I personally would like to see more trees
The additional/volume pressures on the roundabout will make it more dangerous for my children walking to school	More jobs for local youngsters	A better and bigger children's play area
Who would be responsible for the litter that is often found near fast food outlets?	All for it but a proper traffic management scheme should be created	Would be much better to sell for something useful to a community eg. a health centre or GP surgery
A fast food outlet on land presently a community garden and boules court? You must be mad!	I think it would be a great addition to the area and save the huge trek that it currently is to get a KFC.	Skate park or adult exercise area
Suggest you put your energies in the disaster at Sainsbury's roundabout	It's a yes from me, I think it will be a good way of utilising the land.	I feel the space could be used to enlarge the centre which is always full
The traffic and noise and air pollution is often a problem in that area – siting a KFC there would make these problems worse!	If the developer respects the neighbourhood and controls the management of rubbish etc and the money is used to improve local facilities	Why not affordable housing for local youngsters?

4. CONCLUSION

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the outcome of the consultation on the future of the land to the south of Caldly Valley Church and Neighbourhood Centre:

- The consultation did not geo reference the responses, therefore it was difficult to differentiate between responses from the direct community and others from the wider area. Future consultation may incorporate post codes.
- Although the consultation was publicised as widely as possible given the limited resources of the parish council, anecdotal feedback was that some residents felt that they were ill informed of the process. This could be mitigated against in future consultations by a door to door leafleting exercise or coverage on local radio stations.
- The response rate was high when compared with other recent local authority public consultations however, it is worth noting that 97% of the population of the parish did not respond.
- Parish councillors spent a considerable amount of time talking to residents at the public meeting and feedback was that local people appreciated this and felt listened to.

- There was strong anecdotal evidence of a lack of understanding of the differences between the responsibilities and powers of the two levels of local government (parish and borough councils). A number of responses referenced recent dissatisfaction and frustration with previous public consultations on local road layouts and housing developments, both of which are outside the jurisdiction of the parish council.
- There was also a concerning level of a lack of trust in public consultations and suspicion that decisions had already been made.
- Road Safety, roundabout access and traffic concerns on Caldly Valley Road were raised particularly during the open consultation meetings.
- The overwhelming majority of the respondents were in favour of keeping the land as an open space, citing concerns about the level of traffic on Caldly Valley Road and increased litter and noise in the area. Many residents felt that there were sufficient fast food outlets in the area and expressed concerns that such a development would increase local obesity levels, particularly in young people.
- There was some support for the land being enhanced by the parish council and a number of suggestions were made for the future use of the land as a more structured park area.
- There were some responses from local residents who supported the disposal of the land for development and this number increases if the respondents who suggested housing or community buildings are included.

5. PARISH COUNCIL DECISION

On Monday 18th February 2019, the following recommendation was passed by a majority vote of the parish council parish council:

The working party recognises that the land in question is a valued green space and in response to the public consultation, recommends that the land is kept as a green space and that the Open Spaces Sub Group is asked to work with the community to produce a rolling two terms plan (8 years) for the land at Caldly Valley and provide the council with costings.

To see details of discussions and voting in the minutes of parish council meetings, please go to www.greatboughtonparishcouncil.org.uk or contact the Clerk.