

PRESERVING UPWOOD COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP

MINUTES OF AN OPEN MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2010 AT 7.30 IN UPWOOD VILLAGE HALL

Present: Committee: Robin Howe (Chairman) (RH)
Deana Hudson (Secretary) (DH)
Tamara Allen (TA)
John Gaillard (JG)
Steve Howes (SH)
Keith Sisman (KS)

107 members of the community

Opening statement: RH welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new group and introduced himself.

RH explained that after the Parish Council Meeting on Monday evening it was clear that an Action Group needed to be set up to stop the proposals becoming reality and an action committee was formed after this meeting.

RH explained the background to the proposed travellers sites. It had started as the Labour Governments initiative to look for large plots of land across the country which could be used for social housing or the travelling community. Many sites were put forward and all went through a vetting process many were discounted but 15 remained, two of which are in Upwood. Once the consultation period is finished and if HDC feel that one or both of these sites have the potential to be developed as Gypsy/travellers site, then the next stage will be applications for full planning. If we do not object during this period it is more than likely that they will be put forward for planning.

The two current consultation documents were only produced on the 28th May and time was short to object to these, as the deadline was 9th July 2010.

Report back from HDC meeting: KS gave a full report on a meeting that he and David Odale had attended on Wednesday evening 9th June at HDC, again at very short notice, the details of the meeting were only presented at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 7th June. KS explained that they were not allowed to raise various point at the meeting, an example was 'law and order'. KS asked why was this being rushed along and was told that it was up to our District Councillor to keep the Parish Council

informed. Road safety was an issue as speed of 70 mph were recorded on this particular stretch of road. Aircraft safety was raised as small children or animals could wander onto the airstrip causing a serious accident. The nature of gliders is such that they are silent. KS reported that he had been appointed by the Glider Club as a spokesman for them. The nearest Police station to Upwood is now St. Ives as Ramsey is closed. KS reported that HDC are considering dropping these proposals once Eric Pickles Minister for the Environment has visited HDC, apparently HDC had received a letter as did other local authorities asking them to not continue with these proposals as Eric Pickles letter had said please consider my letter as authority to abandon these proposals. Other Councils had already done this but for some reason HDC had not followed. KS also reported that he and David Odale had raised the point that comments are not being posted on HDC website and it was promised that this would be vetted and posted shortly.

Discussion: RH asked the floor if Terry Bell (District Councillor), Victor Lucas (County Councillor) and Shaliash Vara (our MP) should be invited to a meeting of the Action Group. It was unmaously passed and all our elected representatives will be invited to a meeting at their earliest convenience. RH reported that he had been in contact with Strawsons Property the owner of the airfield and they confirmed that the County Council do not own the roadway to the proposed airfield site it is owned by a trust and it would not be likely that they would give permission for this to be used. Strawsons Property legal department were already looking into this. On the subject of leg representation RH had had preliminary discussion with Taylor Vintners in Cambridge about the possibility legally representing the Action Group should it become necessary to fight these two proposals. RH then reported to the floor that it might be necessary to start a fighting fund to pay legal costs. The residents were asked if they would be prepared to contribute to this fund. The secretary reported that it was unanimously supported from the floor. It was reported that a letter will be drafted to help people object to the two proposals, it was stressed however that these would need to be re-written, as any sign of duplication of letters is considered as one objection. This is the reason petitions don't work; they are only counted as one objection even if there are 6,000 signatures on it. It was also reported that there should be two letters of objection one for each site and the objections should be on strict planning nothing else.

Conclusion: RH said that information would be sent out to everyone in the parish either by email or leaflet in the next few days and RH asked everyone to log onto the new Preserving Upwood Community Action Group site that had been set up. RH also asked any members of the public who wanted to offer help to add their names to the list of helpers after the meeting. RH said another Open Meeting will be arranged in the near future and everyone will be informed as soon as it has been arranged.

Final notice: A reminder about the Exhibition on 17th June 2010 2-8pm at The Community Centre in Ramsey, for all to attend and offer lifts to people who cannot get there as HDC will have a number count on the day to see how interested the local area is about all proposals. A low turn out indicates that the proposed sites do not bother us and high turn out will make HDC sit up and think. The meeting closed at 8.45.