

## Report to Redlingfield Village Committee – Monday 26th July 2021

### Developing the Plan and Building on the Vision

#### Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set the scene for a discussion about:
  - a. What are our priorities for development
  - b. Planning events and activities
  - c. Getting engagement and support
  - d. Who else can help us
2. Since being appointed as Chair of the Parish Meeting in April 2021 I have been impressed by the involvement, engagement and willingness of people in the village to get things done. Not all discussions have been easy, but there is no doubt in my mind that there is a strong commitment to provide the very best for everyone in this village. The overwhelming response to the defibrillator issue was but one example. The litter pick, church yard clear-up, church windows, Doorstep Green clear-up, engagement with the Coffee Caravan and the Pub on the Green are all evidence of a vibrant village.

#### Building on Firm Foundations

3. There is a wealth of background material about the Doorstep Green original developments, the subsequent acquisition of additional land, including the formation of Redlingfield Village Amenities Ltd which was a requirement of the Countryside Agency at the outset of the development of Doorstep Green. Also previous minutes of AGMs and committee meetings.
4. The backcloth to all of this is the unique contribution that Committee members (led by Mike, Janet, Drew and many others) have made to get to an outstanding position of having the Doorstep Green facility and an abiding sense of village and community that is recognised by other communities and councils in the locality. This is a significant credit to all those that have been involved.
5. There is no doubt that Covid-19 and the impact of lockdown has dealt a blow to progress and developments with understandable consequence. As lockdown eases and community events take place we can move on from that somewhat fallow time.
6. In taking stock it seems appropriate to give a view of where we are and suggest how developments might be scaled up in the next months.

#### Building on the Original Vision

7. The originating documents for Doorstep Green in 2003 set out a detailed 3 year plan with an aspiration of 20 years management and development, *“To create an area of open space to be used for community events, children's play, a youngsters meeting place and an area for residents to sit and chat”* and *“To create an environmentally rich, wildlife friendly area.”*
8. This is mirrored by the intentions of the Redlingfield Village Amenities company as set out in its Memorandum of Association in 2004 as *“to hold and maintain the Green as an area of open space for the benefit and use without charge of the inhabitants and visitors to the locality in which the Green is situate for informal recreation, play , other leisure time pursuits, community events...”*
9. This was also reflected in the Diss Express article in August 2016 after the church roof restoration and the purchase of the additional land, *“A fund raising drive has now been*

*launched to integrate the newly bought land with the current recreation area by improving road access and parking, adding play and sports facilities and installing wildlife gardens. At the same time the village is seeking funds in order to conduct additional repairs at the church, including fixes to the walls and masonry to make them water tight as was the introduction of a kitchen, toilets, running water and heating". At that time Janet is reported as saying, "we think this is all going to cost around £200,000."*

### Getting things sorted and clear

10. In a relatively small village with a small group of committed volunteers, there is no need for complicated structures and there must be flexibility of how things are done but also transparency, clarity and openness. This is needed to protect all those who may have formal positions (eg directors of the company or nominated officers of the Parish Meeting) and any others who may be engaged. It would be useful to inform newcomers to the village and remind us all (from time to time) of how it all works and hangs together.
11. It may not always be clear how the arrangements and governance between the Parish Meeting, the Committee and the Redlingfield Village Amenities Company operate together. Some individuals operate in all 3 activities and it may not always be easy to work out 'which hat is being worn'. Most of the time this doesn't matter but it is still best to be clear.
12. Much has been achieved but, as is often said, there is much more to do, perhaps the early momentum, vision and aspirations set out in the original plans have dwindled a little.
13. To support new impetus and reinvigorate those who have contributed for many years and to support a sense of engagement, shared endeavour and ownership there is an urgent need for us to set out direction, leadership and a revised plan and vision. All this in the interests of fulfilling the remarkable vision set out in 2004 and reinforced in subsequent developments.

### Making it Happen

14. Everyone is busy of course and committee members and others already contribute a great deal of time and energy to the village.
15. But this is a good time as we hope to emerge from Covid to think about these 4 things:
  - Plan, prioritise and publish – our plans and our vision
  - Set out a programme of activities for the rest of 2021 and the whole of 2022
  - Increase engagement of people in the village and gauge their support and priorities
  - Get other agencies and organisations engaged in helping us

### Headlines to get us going (Just a starter)

1. What are the big issues we should concentrate on.
2. How do we best keep people involved and engaged.
3. What kind of events do we want, thinking about social, fundraising and communications.
4. Who else can help us.

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