

EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (CLT)

Hazel Cottage, Millend, Eastington, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 3SF

Report to Parish Council, October 2015

Community Right to Bid, Option for Playing Field

1. Background

The area behind Cotswold Avenue, known as the School Playing Field, is a potential development site of some considerable interest to both the CLT and the owners, Glos. County Council.

The CLT would like to site a modest retirement home complex there, mainly for affordable rental but also some for sale. This is supported by the data of the Housing Needs Survey and is believed to be the most acceptable plan for this sensitive location.

The concern is that the County Council would obviously wish to achieve "full market value", which would mean 70% or more market development similar to Braedstone's Way and associated extra traffic. Whilst there are many planning reasons why such a proposal should fail, nonetheless we have all seen developers try for more tricky things than this.

2. The Proposal

It is proposed that the Parish Council recognises this plot as an Assets of Community Value under the Localism Bill.

Also known as the Community Right to Bid, this must be registered with the District Council

This is a defensive act, which will have the effect of making the County Council offer the land to the Parish in parallel with it going on the open market. This offer must allow any community group six months during which to organise an agreeable purchase fund.

3. Implementing a Purchase

The Parish Council would naturally turn to the CLT, who have arrangements in place with Aster Homes (an Housing Association chosen after research and approved by Council this year).

Aster Homes would organise the purchase valuation and funding, including passing the perpetual ownership of the land to the CLT. For the sums to work for Aster Homes to build affordable houses,, it is critical that the present village envelope is maintained.

No funds would be required from the Parish Council, so registering the Playing Field as an Asset of Community Value has no financial implications for Parish Council.

4. Recommendations

The CLT recommends that the Parish Council empower the Clerk to register the School Playing Field, Cotswold Avenue, as an Asset of Community Value with Stroud District Council.

It is further recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan ensures that this plot remains outside the village envelope.