

Chimney Down Public Consultation Meeting 4th October at 7pm Hockworthy Village Hall

NOTES/REPORT

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 4th October 2023 at Hockworthy Village Hall to hear suggestions from the public on how to use the S106 money allocated by Mid Devon District Council for the betterment of Chimney Down. The meeting was well attended with over 25 people in attendance, many of whom were from Hockworthy Parish, but also residents from Clayhanger, Holcombe Rogus and Tiverton. Hilary Corcoran, the Chair of Borden Gate Parish Council, presided over the meeting, which was held to gather opinions, but not to make any decisions. Amongst those in attendance were members of the Council, Commoners, and the Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk outlined the amount of money available is £5,768 following new housing development within Hockworthy Parish and that the money can only be used for the betterment of Chimney Down Open Space, and it is very prescriptive for what it can be used for.

Discussions were held concerning the provision of dog waste bins, benches, including picnic benches and a nature trail.

The problem of dog waste on the Down was discussed and the provision of a bin to alleviate the situation. This would involve an on-going expenditure to have the bin emptied. While some thought this would not help improve the situation, others did.

There was a discussion on the provision of benches and picnic benches as this is a specified use of S106 funds. There was a consensus that the provision of benches and picnic benches would enable those with reduced mobility to enjoy the open space, with seating around the main car park facilitating this as some people are not able to walk across to the millennium bench, which needs replacing. Others thought people could just take their own chair if they wished to sit.

There was discussion on the provision of a nature trail which could enhance the appreciation and respect of the natural environment and therefore encourage responsible use of the open space. There had been an expression of interest in using the trail by a local school if provided. Others thought people could go home and look up the information for themselves.

The commoners present informed how they managed the grass and cut it after the season for ground nesting birds was over, which also helps other wildlife and that a reduction in dog waste would be welcome if possible.

There were concerns about anti-social behaviour, but it was noted that improvements had been made in this area and this money was an opportunity to maintain the progress that has been made.

The Clerk explained that the money is a one-off opportunity which will never be available again due to the change in payments from developers. Everyone had a wish that how they currently use the Down, whether as dog walker etc, or of the commoners who have rights, should remain the same.

The Parish Council will take into consideration the opinions expressed in the decision-making process.

The Chair Hilary Corcoran, who generously provided refreshments, thanked all those who attended.

Clerk Borden Gate Parish Council October 2023