

## Kingsdon Estate – Presentation to Parish Council 13.10.2018

Thank you Chairman.

Greenslade Taylor Hunt are instructed as land agents by the Kingsdon Estate, who are private landowners for whom we have acted for many years.

Largely due to the advancing age of the beneficiaries, a couple of years ago the Estate made the decision to dispose of its assets in the village. Greenslade Taylor Hunt were asked to advise the Estate on a wide range of related matters including the potential for residential development on land in and around the village. Much of the outlying agricultural land has already been sold.

During this process, Greenslade Taylor Hunt received an approach from the Kingsdon Village Hall Committee, to discuss the potential for identifying a site on which to build a replacement Village Hall. In the initial discussions, it was suggested that a mixed development could be an option, whereby a site for a Village Hall could be provided alongside a housing development.

This concept was of interest to the Kingsdon Estate and Greenslade Taylor Hunt were instructed to progress discussions with the Village Hall Committee and with Kingsdon Parish Council to consider whether a proposal on this basis might be feasible, and to identify what community benefits could be derived from development. These discussions have progressed constructively over the past 12 months or so and we have arrived at a concept proposal that is the subject of our discussions today.

As private landowners, the Kingsdon Estate wishes to get commercial value from their land. However, the beneficiaries of the Estate have historic ties to the village and they have expressed their desire to deliver a legacy development that will have lasting community benefit for the village.

Land between Henley Road and Underwood Road was initially identified as a preferred location for housing. This site is away from the historic core of the village, is readily accessible, and a sensitive development could potentially be undertaken without significant harm. The housing in this part of Kingsdon is mainly post war, and a well-designed proposal for traditionally built homes could greatly enhance the character of this end of the village.

Various sites for a new Village Hall were discussed including land east of Lower Road, and land in Top Street adjacent to the Church. After due consideration of all the options, the Parish Council advised Greenslade Taylor Hunt that their preferred location would be on the land off Henley Road, alongside the residential development.

No detailed designs have been prepared and nothing is set in stone yet, but the general idea shown on the concept plan is for 20 homes in a mix of different types and sizes, to include 35%, or 7, affordable homes, which would be prioritised for people from Kingsdon who are in need of housing. The Village Hall site would accommodate a significantly larger hall than the existing, with a good size car park and an outdoor amenity area.

A particularly high quality of development is intended. The Kingsdon Estate is willing to engage with the Parish Council on matters of design before any application submission, and although the Estate are not developers and will sell the site, the quality of work and the track record of the developer will be important considerations during marketing.

In this respect, I hope you will agree that the Estate has delivered previously in terms of the quality of developments at Langlands Farm, Cottage Farm, Park Farm and elsewhere over the years.

Chairman, if planning permission is granted for this development, the Kingsdon Estate will gift the site for the Village Hall to the community, either freehold or on a very long leasehold at a peppercorn rent, similar to the arrangements for the cricket field.

Greenslade Taylor Hunt has further been advised by the Parish Council that there is a local need for elderly person's bungalows, which would be dedicated for occupancy by over 55's. The Kingsdon Estate has identified land east of Lower Road that could be suitable for this development, and the concept plan suggests that 8 bungalows could potentially be built.

If this development comes forward then the Kingsdon Estate is willing to gift the remaining part of this paddock to the village, again either freehold or on a long leasehold, for community use, perhaps as a spinney or an orchard.

In the event that planning permission is granted for the development as a whole then the Kingsdon Estate is willing to gift the allotments, and the Village Field, to the community, again either freehold or very long leasehold.

Greenslade Taylor Hunt has consulted with Planners at South Somerset District Council and we have been advised that these proposals are likely to be acceptable in principle if submitted as a planning application.

Chairman, the Kingsdon Estate is keen to work with the community to deliver a high quality housing development with lasting community benefit to include affordable and elderly persons housing, a site for a village hall with car parking and amenity area, a field for a community spinney or orchard, and securing the long term future for the allotments and the Village Field. There could also be significant financial benefits to the village from the Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus.

Constructive discussions have been held with your Parish Council over the past 12 months to get us to the position that we are in today but nothing at all has yet been agreed formally and the proposals still have a long way to go through the planning process.

I very much hope that the community will recognise this as a genuine opportunity, but of course it is for the community to decide whether or not to engage with the Kingsdon Estate on this project.

In the event that the community decides not to support these proposals, then the Kingsdon Estate will still proceed with the planned disposal of its assets. It is likely that the Estate will either go ahead with a planning application for housing, or agree a sale of the land to a developer to do so.

If a planning application is made on this basis, it will be considered by South Somerset District Council against the relevant planning policies. Policy SS2 allows residential development in sustainable rural settlements like Kingsdon where it will meet local needs, be appropriate in scale and character, and increase the sustainability of the settlement. Policy requires that proposals should comply with community led plans and generally have community support.

But Chairman, that is not the whole story. South Somerset is presently a long way short of having a 5 year housing land supply – that means that there is not enough housing coming forward through the planning system to meet the needs of the District over the next 5 years. Government policy says that in such scenarios, local planning policies for housing delivery, like SS2, should be regarded as being out of date, and planning permission for sustainable housing development should be granted, unless the adverse impacts of development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of additional housing.

Under this Policy, it's likely that planners, either at South Somerset or on appeal, will find it very hard to resist any reasonable proposal for housing development in Kingsdon, that doesn't cause significant and demonstrable harm. Similar developments have already been allowed elsewhere, notwithstanding the lack of community support. That Chairman is not the route that the Kingsdon Estate wishes to take.

I trust that this presentation has been helpful in setting out the story so far, and outlining the thinking behind the development proposals. On behalf of the Kingsdon Estate I very much hope that the community will be minded to support the Estate in its aspirations. Thank you.