

Eastertown Evolution Community Interest Company

Update report for Lympsham Parish Council – 8th April 2024

During the third week of March, the Eastertown Evolution Community Interest Company conducted its second round of engagement meetings to measure support for our proposal to purchase land formerly owned by Dr Ann Codman and change it into a communal space and wildlife friendly area. This has been a unique opportunity, since the family who have inherited the estate, wish to preserve Dr Codman's desire to see the land remain undeveloped and benefit the residents of Eastertown hamlet and wider Lympsham village.

Following the first round of engagement meetings in January, we removed a number of earlier suggestions for its potential use and presented proposals for a more limited scheme involving a wildflower meadow, a rare apple and fruit tree orchard, some planting of native trees and a reduced area for walking, with disabled persons access.

Whilst the great majority of people who were consulted, expressed support for the wildlife enhancing aspects of our proposal, there continued to be sceptical views about the arrangements for ownership succession and responsible management of the site, together with concerns about increased road traffic, parking arrangements and potential risk for increases in antisocial behaviour. Should any future owner of the site wish to set up a similar scheme that permits greater public access, these concerns would require careful consideration.

Recent professional advice has suggested that being a Community Interest Company may not be ideal for our purpose and our most recent bid for funds from the Government Community Ownership fund has been unsuccessful. Other options are currently being considered, such as converting the company to a Community Benefit Society. Whilst the implications of this advice are being considered, we will continue as a Community Interest Company. Lynne Booth and Emma Smith continue as Directors and are leading the review of the most appropriate constitution. Peter Smith and Debbi Smith have resigned and are thanked for their energy and efforts during the recent engagement meetings.

We feel that there remains a 'general' support for the idea of a community space for Eastertown and we have now removed the proposal for dedicated parking spaces for people with limited mobility from our plan. Our fundraising effort will continue until the field is put up for sale, in approximately 5 months' time. We will continue to give it our best efforts to develop credible arrangements for management of the project and succession planning, in the event of a successful bid for funds. We still wish this in memory of Dr Ann Codman, and to support her nieces and the people who want to have a 'common' they can use.

The consultation exercise has shown that there is a continuing interest in sharing information about activities in Eastertown and a desire to record the history, archaeology and environmental condition of the area. For this reason, the website we created will no longer be the exclusive means of communication for Eastertown Evolution CIC. It will be modified and re-purposed to represent a range of other interests and matters of concern to residents of Eastertown.

Lynne Booth, Chair of Eastertown Evolution CIC

April 2024