

## METTLE HILL – HAVE YOUR SAY!

The Mettle Hill Working Group ("MHWG") has been meeting regularly since October and made a presentation of its "work in progress" to the Annual Village Meeting on 21st May. This is a summary of the first half of the presentation. We plan to deliver a summary of the second half of the presentation to your homes next month, together with a questionnaire asking for feedback.

### HISTORY

Mettle Hill was bought by the village after the successful campaign to stop it re-opening as a traveller's site. The £125,000 cost was financed by the means of a loan and repaid by a levy on our village precept (the part of our council tax payment which comes directly to the village). Many ideas were put forward during the campaign as to what the site could be used for and the group has looked at these.

### DESCRIPTION AND CONDITION OF SITE

The site comprises 4.75 acres, with 2.21 acres within the bund as a travellers' site. The facilities put in for travellers are in a derelict and dangerous state. The planning use for the 2.21 acres is for travellers accommodation and it has a brownfield designation. There is a large earth bund at the front of the site providing security and there are two means of entry into and exit from the site; the former entrance to the travellers' site itself and a side access on the hill side of the road frontage. This access leads via a track to the rear of the site which is scrubland with an historic agricultural use on it.

### FURTHER COSTS

Cost estimates to clear the travellers' site ready for redevelopment come in at around £28,000. We have also looked at the likely cost of applying for planning permission for a change of use: it depends on the level of complexity and we may have to find over £20,000 to process a planning application.

### CLEARANCE

Clearance would make the site safe, but could make it open to illegal use. We think therefore this should go hand in hand with redevelopment.

### MHWG BRIEF

Given the background the working group decided that we had to have in mind the following:-

**Ownership:** we assumed it was probably important as a village that we maintain the freehold which gives us overall control of the land.

**Affordability:** We need to raise/fund the costs of clearing/repairing the site.

**Longevity:** Will it still be there in 25 years, is it viable, is there a demand for its future use/purpose?

**Sustainability:** It is at least self-funding re costs, does it offer alternatives to car use, does it add to village amenities?

**Income:** additionally can the use be income-producing?

**Inclusive:** is it a use potentially available to all?

We hope that once a main use is found for the site which satisfies the above criteria, we may be able to incorporate other use/uses which provide a whole village amenity.