

Agriculture/Utilities Focus Group.

Meeting in the Village Hall on Wednesday 6th February 2013 at 7:30pm.

Those in attendance;- Mr. K Hern. (Chairman)
Mr. J Parker (Secretary)
Mr. P Overhill. 9. Burgage Close.
Both retired Farmers Mrs. E Overhill “
Farmer Mr. Chris Price Moorcourt Farm
crisprice85@hotmail.co.uk
Farmer Mr. M Davies.
Farmer Mr. A Burgoyne.
Mrs. (Did not sign but was at the last focus group).
Mr. G Lyewood. (Email from previous meeting).

Mr Hern gave a summary of objectives and the results of the questions asked in the first questionnaire.

It was initially evident that the answers given in the questionnaire were all very positive and little would be gained by asking more questions on the same topic.

However general discussion took place on most of the issues raised by a small amount of respondents within the first questionnaire.

1. Farm traffic. The main issue was with the amount of mud on the roads. It was agreed that the main cause was HCC contractors placing spoil on the road edge and this subsequently arriving on the road and then being washed back into the ditch whence it came. Suggestions to rectify the problem were made, including farmers helping, but the ultimate solution lies with HCC.
2. Heavy Lorries can cause problems too; noise, damage to the road surface and congestion. This highlighted two suggestions: 1) One-way traffic system and 2) more suitable passing places.
3. Noise from farms. Generally not an issue but one sprayer operating in the Parish is very noisy.
4. Chicken sheds. It was noted that the Parish already has a planning policy. It was suggested that some areas of this paper could be discussed further in the light of the Plan.
5. Polytunnels. It was thought that many of the constraints imposed on poultry sheds e.g. screening, pertained to plastic tunnels. It was identified as an essential growing method of food production for certain crops like cherries.
6. Land use for energy production. Although the possibility of producing energy near the village for the village seemed a great idea, more research needs to be done with the major networks to look at the future possibilities of delivering this idea. Whether energy production benefits the village or not, it could become a good use for small areas of unproductive or unprofitable land. In the case of solar panels, appropriate

screening was thought to be necessary, and on south facing roof space of suitable buildings.

Wind turbines were discussed with the conclusion that although generally undesirable to the public there were unlikely to be suitable sites in Lyonshall.

Other forms of production were discussed; poultry litter incineration, underground piping systems, anaerobic digestion and woodchip burners.

7. The planning requirements for farm workers houses was raised but there was no knowledge of the current planning requirements in terms of need, as there had been no applications for many years. It was recognised that this should be supported if local farms have appropriate needs.

8. It was considered worthwhile to look at the planning and other requirements necessary to have a farm that could open to the public to keep the community informed of agricultural practice and identify how food was produced. NFU Open Farm Sunday would be the suitable vehicle to bring agricultural education to the parish.

9. Issues such as changes in agricultural practice to produce more food for local retail outlets or produce organic food were at the mercy of farm profitability. Hence at the present time it was unlikely to be an issue.

It was suggested that a 'Lyonshall Good Farming Practice Code/Guide' would be good to have. However, the point was also made that existing legislation of farming practice covers most farm operations that affected the general public such as 'mud on road' responsibilities etc...

The meeting closed after 1½ hours. It was felt that the results from the first questionnaire give excellent feed back to be able to write the initial plan from an agricultural development perspective, and little would be gained by including similar questions in the second questionnaire.

Future meetings will be held after the second questionnaire (if it happens) to compile the policies for Farming and Agri-Business, fine tuning them to suit the needs of Lyonshall.