

PUBLIC CONSULTATION – Friday 9th July 2021

KGV ALIVE – SKATEPARK

Meeting 1

Present: Chair – Mike Edmund
Freestyle Collective – 4 representatives
SCCF – 1 representative Angela Coakley
KGV Committee – 2 representatives – Helen Mooney and Simon Foot
Sarratt Parish Council – 2 representatives – Cllr Peter Thorp & Caroline Owen – Clerk

In attendance: District Councillor Ciaran Reed

33 Members of the public (M.O.P)

Meeting held at KGV Pavilion, KGV Fields, Sarratt.

Start time: 18:00

Minutes

1. Chair detailed the protocol necessary for the meeting regarding Covid-19.
The protocol for GDPR and data protection regarding names and addresses held was also detailed. It was confirmed that names and addresses would only be used for the purposes of the NHS Track and Trace.
2. Chair explained there would be two meetings held this evening to accommodate the number of members of the public wanting to attend. The second meeting is scheduled for 19:30 therefore this meeting will need to conclude at 19:15 to facilitate a prompt start.

3. Chair requested that any member of public when speaking may be asked to initially clarify if they are a resident or not for purpose of correct representation.
4. Chair explained that he is not here to answer questions but to direct those questions to the relevant group. It was emphasized that members of the public in attendance listen to the facts and ensure any comments are made in an appropriate respectful manner throughout.
5. Personal Introduction given by Chair detailing his 24-year background and association with Sarratt.
6. Background of KGV recreational site including historical background. Site was given to the village in 1932 and designated as an outdoor leisure facility. As such it is owned by SPC as Custodian trustees. The maintenance is overseen by KGV management committee.
7. Chair read out quote from 2012 Parish Plan that included a public survey.

“Whilst the younger age ranges are well catered for in terms of activities offered in the parish, older teenagers are less well served. to some extent the problem especially for 14 – 16-year olds and the 17+ groups may experience transport difficulties which restrict their ability to visit activity centres outside the parish.”

8. It was also detailed that at that time the parish did not feel they had enough say which is why tonight’s public consultation has taken place. This is the first time this issue regarding lack of activities for the older age group has been publicly discussed.

This issue has been brought up by a young parishioner who wrote to the council requesting a Skatepark and therefore the meeting tonight is to talk it through.

9. Chair gave process/agenda/objective for the evening.
 1. For the parishioners to understand the issue at stake.
 2. To hear who ‘Freestyle’ are and what they do.
 3. Proceed to answer questions.

10. M.O.P requested that it be minuted that this is not the first time the skatepark has been discussed. It has been discussed previously although not as an official meeting due to the level of intensity of feelings in the community.

Chair confirmed that this meeting tonight was the first official meeting.

M.O.P stated that he did not want to hear about the Skatepark and Freestyles presentation.

11. M.O.P requested that the audience should listen to the presentation by Freestyle because the audience does not have enough information on the proposal.

12. M.O.P requested information on who would be making the final decision on the skatepark and when this decision will be made.

It was also asked why it was not put out to tender Chair informed M.O.P that no decision has been made and this is just at public consultation stage.

M.O.P said that it is very presumptuous to have Freestyle presentation before the public have decided if they want a skatepark or not.

13. Freestyle Introduction. Purpose is to make community's active by hearing what community's want and what they do not want and to educate the myths surrounding skateparks.

Their job is to find out what the communities hopes, dreams and fears are. There was a tender process that freestyle won. No decisions have been made, freestyle is not being paid for this presentation, this is public consultation is part of the whole process. Freestyle's goal tonight is to listen to what Sarratt want and what Sarratt needs.

There is an obvious provision for young people under 7. Great provision for the older generation, great provision for sporting individuals ie football pitch, tennis court. 86% people do not engage with traditional sport and leisure. Football pitch attracts 15% of the people. The 86% that do not participate in football, tennis etc want facilities that enable the use of bikes, boards, scooters, parkour. Overwhelmingly skateparks are for children who do not have the confidence for competitive sports, it is a non-judgmental activity.

14. Questions and answers.

15. M.O.P – requested Freestyle clarify the tender process as previously told by freestyle that they are non-profit making. Request for Freestyle to supply residents with pictures of parks that they have designed and built in the area to show condition these parks are in now as great concerns over maintenance of the park and the funding required.

Freestyle replied that part of the grant process is to demonstrate identify and propose how the maintenance will be funded for at least the next 10 years. If this is not sustainable the funds will not be given.

Cllr Thorp replied regarding the tender process. Confirmation there was a tender process by Sarratt Parish Council. Confirmation this process was robust.

Freestyle confirmed that this tender process was to be engaged in an opportunity. There was no promise of money, no contractual obligation, if the money is raised then Freestyle has the right to build it. Freestyle is a social enterprise.

Cllr Thorp reported that Sarratt Parish Council responded to a letter from a 14-year-old who unfortunately felt too intimidated to attend tonight due to the rhetoric that has been spreading around the village. The appropriate procedures were followed by the Council. Freestyle was chosen for several reasons. There is approx. £6k in the Council budget that could go towards this, and the rest will have to be raised if the project goes ahead.

16. M.O.P stated there would be a massive impact on her parents' life if a skatepark goes ahead due to their location next to the recreation ground. Noise, anti-social behaviour being at the forefront that makes this proposal unacceptable.

M.O.P detailed there was a protest raised by the people who were outside a 200m circumference of a park in Harpenden and their protest was rejected because of that reason.

In comparison to their site and Sarratt KGV site within the same 200m circumference there is approx. 40 houses in proximity.

Main concerns are proximity and noise.

Freestyle responded stating that these are understandable and valid points of concern. When designing a park all comments and fears are considered. This could be looking at designs that could limit the amount of noise.

17. Freestyle explained that regarding anti-social behaviour, skateparks decrease anti-social behaviour not increase.

PCSO Steve Jacobs- size of Sarratt KGV park is much smaller than other parks in the area.

Steve Jacobs interrupted by much noise from the audience.

Unable to minute the audiences heated discussions due to lack of accuracy created.

M.O.P questioned PCSO Jacobs about stabbings that have been reported at local parks and gang related crime.

PCSO Jacobs confirmed a stabbing had taken place at a park in Croxley Green but not in the Skatepark and confirmed that it had no connection to the users of the skatepark although social media reported incorrectly.

M.O.P questioned if KGV is correct location for skatepark.

PCSO Jacobs confirmed that Sarratt will not attract anti-social behaviour due to its size and location.

18. M.O.P delighted to have debate. However, one question that has not been asked is if Sarratt wants a skatepark.

No survey results have been circulated.

19. M.O.P asked if there is a need for a skatepark. How many people have been asked.

CLlr Thorp. Replied all stats will be given to the audience to take home. From the customer group of 7- 17year olds, 70 young people in the village said they would love a skatepark.

M.O.P stated this cannot be true as no one asked her children.

CLlr Thorp confirmed that all households in the village had posted through their door an outline to the proposal detailing the survey and how to take part by either online, telephone or email.

20. District Councillor Ciaran Reed questioned the wording used regarding the questionnaire being sent to Sarratt or Sarratt Parish.

CLlr Thorp confirmed the paper-based proposal was circulated to every household in Sarratt Village.

21. Freestyle stated that the community should be looking ahead at least 30 years when deciding about what the needs are as well as in the current time. It needs to be looked and build for 30 years' time looking at what younger people want generally as well as what they want and need now.

22. M.O.P raised question again on who will be making the ultimate decision, who will be responsible, who will be signing this off.

Chair explained the group assembled to examine a letter that was sent to SPC comprises Sarratt Parish Council who are custodians of KGV Fields, KGV Management Committee who manage day to day running of the field and SCCF.

Cllr Thorp confirmed that the 4 representatives here who are representing those mentioned bodies are running the Feasibility study around the process. The evidence will then be looked at and a recommendation will be made that will go back to a Parish Council meeting, KGV meeting and SCCF meeting for ratification or not.

M.O.P concerned that majority of members of these bodies are all Pro and therefore not a true representation of the village.

23. Chair asked Cllr Thorp what the positives and negatives in terms of responses to the survey.

Cllr Thorp- 65% of all respondents were pro skatepark, 11.65% were against.

Freestyle confirmed that all negatives were captured.

Simon Foot KGV Committee – confirmed questionnaire went to every household plus it was on SCCF website and Social media. It was also confirmed that if it is felt that the survey should be more widespread then they will do that.

The feasibility group want to hear different ideas and views.

24. District Councillor Reed stated that one of the main concerns is the democratic nature of the process. D Cllr Reed stated he is the only elected person in the Parish and his concerns are that the parish Council that is uncontested elections and therefore not voted on by the community of the parish. D Cllr Reed said SPC was not an elected body and that it did not have the remit to make the decision.

Cllr Thorp, representing SPC stated Cllr Reed's comments were incorrect on both counts.

Cllr Lowry stated that his co option process was robust and he had to go in detail of his experience, and as part of the process was rigorously tested for the position.

D Cllr Reed explained that he is not criticising the parish council however when there is a Parish Council that claims it has the legitimacy of the people by doing a survey, that is significantly different to claiming having legitimacy from a democratic election.

Simon Foot – explained it was a Feasibility survey and not a vote.

Minutes could not be recorded due to audience disorder.

D Cllr Reed asked whether the parishioners would have a vote on how their public money will be spent regarding the £6000 that is available.

Minutes could not be recorded due to audience disorder.

25. M.O.P states there has been a figure of £70k circulating around the village for the build cost. Confirmation is needed on where the funding will come from. Where will the money come from to maintain and protect it.

Who will pay for graffiti removal, maintenance, protection, CCTV, security?

Simon Foot agreed these questions were valid and all these questions regarding maintenance security etc need to be factored into the feasibility project to see if it is sustainable. If it is not, then it will not be feasible.

26. Freestyle explained that the maintenance is 0 as it is made of concrete.

27. District Councillor Reed asked to reflect on the comments made 2012 Parish Plan where it was identified there was a gap in activities for 7 – 17-year-olds. As a parishioner living in Sarratt D Cllr Reed explained that his social life was not based in Sarratt but at his school.

D Cllr Reed asked the question as to whether this skatepark will provide for the social needs of the teenagers in this village.

Freestyle responded by stating that needs are for local provision. A place that does not rely on mum and dad as taxi that increases pollution. For climate and social reasons, it has to be local.

28. M.O.P explained that he along with others have bought a house next to a social amenity should know that it does not come with the right to veto a proposal.

There will be no vote, it will be decided by the bodies who are here and have organised this public consultation. 70 young people have expressed that they want this skatepark. It was already identified in the previous 20102 Parish Survey there is a need. KGV fields is the only sports field. It is the only recreational facility for this parish.

29. Chair thanked the audience for their participation, Freestyle and Clerk.

Meeting Concluded at 19:16