

# **WYE with HINXHILL PARISH COUNCIL**

Chairman: John Hodder

Clerk: Jenny Oram, Priors, Church Lane, Waltham, CT4 5SQ

Tel: 01227 700909 Fax: 01227 700033 [wye.pariishclerk@btinternet.com](mailto:wye.pariishclerk@btinternet.com)

Dear Parishioner,

17<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Yes - another letter, but it's important we try to keep you informed!

Since we sent you the information booklet in February, we have had a meeting with Imperial. We would like to update you on this, and to advise you about the current position the Parish Council is taking regarding Imperial's plans.

## **Meeting with Imperial**

On 28<sup>th</sup> February, we attended a meeting held by Imperial College, to discuss their idea of forming a "Residents' Liaison Group". Imperial wanted this group to be a way for them to understand any concerns that the village might have. Given that the details of Imperial's development plans are still not known, we restated what the concerns were, and advised them that it was the Parish Council who would continue to represent the parishioners.

Imperial outlined a process they were putting in place, (which includes consultation), that would determine whether they were going to submit a full planning application or not. This process would take place over the next few months, and conclude in June / July this year.

They promised that they would make a statement to this effect and provide us with details of the process with time scales, by the end of that week, but did not do so till 13<sup>th</sup> March.

The Parish Council wrote to Imperial on 7<sup>th</sup> March setting out the key points of our discussion including our understanding of the village's concerns, and our position regarding the "Residents' Liaison Group". A copy of our letter is attached, which will give you more details of the discussions.

## **Parish Council Position**

As Imperial continues to say that it has no plans for us to comment on, your views and concerns should and can be taken into account when it does draw them up.

We believe these to be :-

- That the redevelopment of the existing College sites within Wye Village is to be welcomed, provided that any buildings are of a suitable size and scale to be harmonious with existing college and village buildings, and in keeping with the AONB setting.
- That the continuing presence of Imperial College as a provider of higher education in Wye is to be encouraged.
- That development outside of the existing College sites in Wye, across the countryside and particularly in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is to be opposed.
- That the sale of land in the countryside for development, is to be opposed, - whether for housing, buildings, industries, the College, or for other uses.
- That suitable infrastructure must be in place before any development takes place.

We believe that the above Parish Council Position is the one you want us to take at present.

If you do not believe this stance to be the correct one, come and discuss your concerns with us.

We are inviting you to come and meet with the Parish Council in the Methodist Hall on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March between 9.30 and 12.30 to tell us if you disagree with the position we are taking.

It is very important that you express any disagreement you may have, as otherwise the Parish Council will proceed to support the "Parish Position" above, in all future discussions with Imperial, until such time as detailed plans are available for us all to consider.

*John Hodder*

# WYE with HINXHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: John Hodder

Clerk: Mrs Jenny Oram, Priors, Church Lane, Waltham, Kent, CT4 5SQ

tel: 01227 700909 fax: 01227 700033 email: wye.parishclerk@btinternet.com

Dear Professor Borysiewicz

7 March 2006

Further to the meeting between Imperial College and the Parish Council on 28 February, I am writing with regard to those matters on which you requested further Council input.

As you know, the concept of a Liaison Group has been a difficult one to visualise. First, the term 'liaison' carries nuances of a close partnership or union which is simply not acceptable to many people in Wye. Secondly, if a group of people are to liaise on behalf of others, then, to be properly representative, they need to be chosen by some democratic means. Otherwise they will lay themselves open to accusations that they represent their own self-interests or those of a particular sub-group.

One of your prime objectives was stated as being to address any concerns that the community may have regarding the scope and scale of Imperial's Vision. We would remind you that, as we clearly outlined at our meeting, the community's concerns include:-

- Building outside of "brownfield" sites with a corresponding loss of AONB countryside.
- The impact of new supporting road infrastructure being built across the countryside.
- The prospect of speculative housing built in the AONB to fund the project.
- The enlargement of Wye to become a town, with attendant urban problems (traffic etc)
- Chaos during the construction phase through inadequate infrastructure in the initial years of any development.

In developing your project proposals we strongly advised that you bear these concerns in mind. It is our understanding that parishioners value their quality of life. They do not wish to see wholesale change come about in Wye, and in the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, we understand that this is also the view of many people in surrounding parishes, although we cannot speak for them.

Consequently, given the current declared level of project detail, rather than nominate an unelected body of people to 'represent' the village during the coming months, councillors are unanimous that the Parish Council should fulfil its natural role and represent the whole parish in discussions with Imperial College.

As agreed, the parish's other elected representatives (ward councillor, county councillor and MP) should attend discussions as observers. Furthermore, both Imperial College and the Parish Council should be free to invite along additional people with relevant knowledge and expertise so as to maximise the usefulness of the discussions and to ensure that an informed and proactive dialogue takes place.

The discussions will, as the Council understands it, take place at monthly meetings, a record of which will be kept jointly by Tom Miller (as Imperial's Head of Communications) and myself (as Parish Clerk). The Council would like to make it clear that these meetings will not be for consultation regarding the acceptability of Imperial's proposals. They will be to review Imperial's progress regarding their master planning process so that we may continue to keep our parishioners advised. The Parish Council's view is that these regular meetings will benefit from having an agreed agenda that is circulated with any briefing papers well in advance.

You explained at last week's meeting that Imperial College will also be organising other forms of consultation, including workshops. We should be grateful if you could provide the framework and dates of the proposed workshops as soon as possible so as to minimise the risk of them clashing with activities organised by other local groups.

The Parish Council looks forward to receiving a copy of the briefing paper David Brooks Wilson referred to and promised to provide last Tuesday evening, as well as a document outlining the objectives of the master planning process Imperial College has initiated, the schedule that has been devised to achieve these objectives, and the decision options facing Imperial College at the end of the process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think there is a need for further clarification. The Council looks forward to the next meeting which, according to your letter dated 1 February 2006 will take place on Tuesday, 4 April 2006 at 7.00 pm.