

From: Gary Cooke <gcooke@boomeranguk.co.uk>
Sent: 10 July 2020 09:45
To: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk>
Subject: Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Hi Teresa,

Its Gary Cooke @ Boomerang with my thoughts and opinions on the draft neighbourhood plan.

As a resident for 50 years, and a business owner in the town for 25 years of those, I feel I can contribute towards the community and business plan of Melksham Town and Melksham without Parish.

The Neighbourhood plan looks like it is the ideal plan for the town/parish's to be in control of their destiny and have what we want in our community, rather than what is either forced on us due to having no plan's or by deep pocketed housing companies!!

My core focus would be Sports, Leisure and recreation activities within our area as I am Sports Fan, ardent keep fit enthusiast and now a keen golfer. I was a RAF Physical training instructor as well as a Bath Rugby player, also I was part of the management team at the Christie Miller Sports Centre before setting up and running my own Family Leisure Business called Boomerang for 25 years now. Additionally I'm currently the President of Melksham Rugby Club whom I've been a member of since I was 15, whom I coached at senior level for 10 years, set up the mini and junior sections within the club which I coached in for 15 years and now being 'slightly older' and not quite as fit, I run the senior section of the club whom the majority of are now keen golfers!!

Below are some of my area's of concern / development which I think will be good for our town / parish's: -

1) Leisure

- a. The obvious question on a lot of the Melksham Sports and Leisure community minds is - will the Campus now happen – have the council got the money to finish this?
- b. If it has, great lets get it finished. If it hasn't, we need to know how long we're going to be without a Leisure Centre? If the council cannot do this, maybe it can be done with a mix of council / 'local' private enterprise!!
- c. 2500 new homes coming to the area and we now have less leisure facilities than we had before the houses started being built !
- d. Leisure facilities
 - i. The Campus Project is a great project for the town that brings under its roof a number of community activities e.g. Leisure Centre & Pool / Library / Council Offices. However, we need more facilities are than before – not smaller and less facilities ! We've now lost the following provision in the town / parish's - Indoor bowls / Squash courts / 9 Golf course / Ten Pin Bowling. Additionally the sports hall is smaller than the CMSC so, the sports centre will not be able to host as it did previously.
 - ii. Work with private companies to help provide these – the benefits will be in community engagement / spending in the community
- e. We need to have an alternative plan!

2) Housing

- a. Its great that Melksham in expanding however this mass expansion of houses has not added the facilities the community needs. 2500 house at average cost of £225k

each (that's just an estimate) will bring over £500 million (1/2 a billion pounds) to the building company coffers. Yes, the building companies they have some huge costs, but these also come with huge profits !!

Where are our new facilities that we actually need – Doctors / Dentists / Schools/ leisure facilities (1 new school added – 1 in the planning stage) – 2500 houses should on average bring 10,000 new residents to the town – 5000 children, and only 1 new school!!

No new leisure facilities. Remember Wiltshire Council funded the new Football and Rugby Clubs, in replacement of their old facilities which are supposed to be used for the Campus!

Developers bullying councils. I've heard the land behind Boomerang only got planning permission because a neighbourhood plan wasn't in place and the council couldn't afford to fight the developers !!. If that's the case, housing developers should be forced to give more to have any developments go through, and give this in the first phase of any development so we know it gets built !

- b. What areas of land should be used for new housing land?
 - i. The last time I looked there were approx.. 100 parcels of land on the 'list' of potential sites for houses in the town and parish's
 - ii. 2 parcels of land – 2 fields between Melksham and Bowerhill are 2 potential housing sites.
 - iii. Are these the right fields for houses or better suited for either an expanded trading estate or for new leisure development (see below)? The other two fields either side of Pathfinder way up to Bowerhill are the two fields that the councils did not want houses on – but were forced into it due to not having a neighbourhood plan in place !

LETS GET THIS PLAN IN PLACE AND START CONTROLLING OUR OWN DESTINY

3) Employment Land (Business / Trading Estate's)

- a. The town needs new business in the town and in trading estates that bring jobs to the people who move to the town. They can then spend the money they earn in our community – again if we have the facilities to do this (Shops / Leisure / Tourists facilities)
- b. What options do we have for more employment land?
- c. What about these: -
 - i. Land South of Portal way down the A365 south of Portal Road towards the Canal (south of the Great Bear Cereal Distribution Centre)
 - ii. Wrapping the land around the Wiltshire Air Ambulance site south towards Semington
 - iii. North and West of Bowerhill Trading centre (CMSC Site and Golf Course)
 - iv. Fields on A350 south of town and North of the Bowerhill Trading estate – completing the link between Bowerhill and Melksham (Its better for the community if Jobs can be created here instead of earmarking the land for more houses which we have **100 plus alternative sites** for
 - v. Avon Rubber company Land (Only the Racing division now are on this site and for how long?) Do we want to end up with another 'Usher's brewery site' like Trowbridge when they relocate to a smaller factory. This will happen – it's just when.

4) Retail / Leisure / Hospitality

- a. Melksham needs more business's for its existing and present residents to spend its money in. At the moment most will shop outside Melksham for most items except groceries (where we have an abundant choice of supermarkets!!)
- b. Having different business gives consumers different reason to visit us.
- c. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs could be created
 - i. Again more Jobs will come if we have a more appealing variety of business – not just not just Takeaways / Pubs / Betting shops / Funeral parlour's / Charity Shops – Business's selling things people need and not prime retail spaces being changed into the afore mentioned!! - Personal Note – I have no qualms about visiting any of those mentioned as I do use all their services (Except the funeral parlour which I hope to use in some distant time in the future ☺) However, should these be the business we allow to take over our high street!!
- d. Lastly, I know this will be hard to do as the town residents want shops and business's that other larger towns get. Other towns get these because they have a bigger catchment area of customers and a more 'defined' shopping centre's like 'The Shire's & Castle Place in Trowbridge / Emery Gate in Chippenham / Devizes shopping (300 shops) – The Avon Site Could be our Expanded shopping attraction in the future!!
The alternative the town / parish needs other reasons why visitors / residents will come to the area, which could be the Canal Project / A leisure Park or any other major / minor attraction(s) , as the town is on a major A road route to the coast and M4!!

5) Community Services

- a. The following should all be a priority with 2500 new houses and up to 10,000 new residents !!
 - i. Another large Doctors surgery – with Full time doctors
 - ii. More schools – both Primary & Secondary
 - 1. 5000 children – 50% of the 10,0000
 - a. 1/3rd Preschool age – 0-4.5 yrs – (1500+ children)
 - b. 1/3rd – Primary school age – 4.5yrs – 11 yrs (1500+ children) – 4 schools of 375 pupils
 - c. 1/3rd – Secondary – 12-17 yrs (1500-2000 children) – that's a new large Comprehensive school!!
 - iii. More Town Centre business's (Already discussed above)
 - iv. More shops
 - v. More unknowns – something new ????

That's my thoughts which I'm willing to discuss and work towards with anyone!

Kind Regards

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