

Dear Martinstown Resident,

We are writing to you about the proposed Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application we are making to Dorset Council for the 10 acres of land north of St Martinsfield and the Church. The Asset Transfer stipulates that the land be used for the benefit of the community and the environment.



The market research to see whether the proposal was of interest to the village, was conducted last year at two Open Meetings, an email contact and a suggestion box in the shop. The response was favourable for us to continue with the business and management plan. This we have been doing for the last 4 months. The application deadline is the end of April and discussions with the council will then take place.

On the basis of this consultation process, we are now ready to let you know the proposed plans in more detail and to tell you about how you can view them.

There will be a **Public Consultation in the Village Hall on Saturday May 10th 9.30 am – 12.30 pm.** We will have a display of **all the proposed projects in the CAT and Core Group members will be available to talk about them.** Possible projects include 10 allotments, orchards, wildflower meadows, tree planting, ponds, quiet places, gathering and recreational spaces and a solar array. Each project on the asset is independent of the others and would need to have the agreement of the residents. We include a draft map with the possible layout of some ideas we have gathered so far.

The display boards will be available for all to see in the Church after 10th May.

We want to be clear that at this stage these are only proposals and are completely dependent on a suitably long term lease being granted by Dorset Council. Should the lease be granted then public meetings and further consultations would shape the asset in conjunction with the Land Asset Management Team. This team will be set up if the lease is granted.

Implementing a solar array to supply the village with cheap electricity would be subject to planning permission and public consultation. *Planning permission would only be sought if the lease is granted.*

John Scott from Dorset Community Energy will be at the Village Hall on May 10th to answer questions and talk about the solar array project.

We consider the benefits of the solar array for us all include:

- Many families and pensioners in the village would benefit from cheap electricity. (Up to half the price of the major companies)
- Residents will also have the opportunity to invest in a community energy project with a guaranteed 5% return (approx.) on sums small and large, on capital invested over 20 years. These investments will help fund the setting up and maintenance of the solar array.

- The array will become the property of the village after 20 years and any surplus from sale of electricity will be returned to the village for community use.
- Over the course of its lifetime the array will save over 100 tons of carbon per year, the annual equivalent of over 4500 trees per acre.
- It will mitigate against climate change and biodiversity loss as fossil fuel use will be decreased. 2 acres are proposed but could be less.
- It will help Martinstown be more resilient to the inevitable effects of climate change and high priced electricity.
- The expected lifespan of the array is 25 – 30 years but many arrays are still working to 80% capacity after 40 years.
- The array is not expected to be a permanent fixture as new technologies are likely to be developed during its lifespan. The installation is non-destructive and the land can still be grazed.

Steps towards the solar array are dependent on:

- A long lease from Dorset Council being granted
- A feasibility study being undertaken.
- A connection to the grid being deemed possible by Scottish and Southern Electricity (Via underground cable. There will be no overhead power lines).
- A formal independently chaired debate in the village hall followed by a vote being offered to all Martinstown residents.
- Planning permission.

We would welcome your feedback and ideas on all aspects of the Community Asset Transfer at the Consultation morning and/or at greenmartinstown@gmail.com. This information and more can be seen on our website: www.greenmartinstown.org.uk

Best wishes,
The Green Martinstown Core Group Team

