



**Lower Compton Community consultation
on the future of the NAAFI,
hosted by Hills Group**

BACKGROUND

On 22 November, Hills Group hosted a consultation exercise with the Lower Compton community to learn their views about how the building and site could be brought back into a beneficial use and how they could work in partnership with the Hills Group to make this happen.

Invitations were posted into the letterboxes of all households, and emails were sent to all known contacts. In addition, there was good pre-event coverage in the local newspaper (Gazette, 20 October 2011) and visits to the Hills website and Twitter pages. A facebook page was also created.

On the day, over 60 people attended the consultation. In addition, 12 further people responded by email and 5 via facebook. All responses were very positive (only one negative response was received).

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

- To gain an understanding of how the Lower Compton community may wish to see the site used.
- To gain the buy-in from the Lower Compton Community to help maintain and protect any activities or infrastructure that may eventually be put onto the site.
- To clarify that the site will be retained by Hills Group but that it may be made available for community use if that is deemed to be desirable and feasible.
- To demonstrate to partners such as the police, community first, the County and Parish Councils and other stakeholders that the views of the community are valued by Hills Group.
- To make the first steps towards setting up a local community group to work with Hills Group to seek a more beneficial use of the site and building.

SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES

10.30 – 11.00 Tour of the NAAFI building and woodland

11.15 – 12.30 Consultation exercise at Compton Bassett Village Hall led by Andrea Pellegram

CONSULTATION EXERCISE

The first part of the exercise took the form of a SWOT analysis where residents put forward their suggestions on how they think the site could possibly be used and the challenges they perceive.

Andrea Pellegram explained that this was a preliminary stage of the process and a way of gauging initial community attitudes and desires. Whilst a number of ideas would be put forward at this stage, it may be that some of the suggestions would not be possible to achieve or would not attract the necessary support from the community and Hills.

A list of the comments made and various ideas presented is listed below:

1. STRENGTHS

- a. The project can bring the community together
- b. The size of the building is such that there are many options how it might be developed
- c. Most of the infrastructure is already there
- d. The facility is local to the community
- e. There is community support for the project
- f. It will provide activities for local children
- g. The building has varied spaces so it can host a range of activities
- h. It is part of the living history of the community
- i. It is well located for the strategic road network and therefore very accessible
- j. The project is well timed
- k. All rooms are on the ground floor so the building will be accessible to all.
- l. There is secure ownership (Hills Group)
- m. There is scope to develop indoor and outdoor activities.

2. WEAKNESSES

- a. There is no playing field
- b. The condition of the building and grounds are poor
- c. Site security is not adequate and the building is hidden behind the fence
- d. There are many health and safety issues on the site, in the building and in the woodland.
- e. There is a lack of policing
- f. There is no large single open room (before the last renovation, there was one large space with kitchen/toilets/storage).
- g. Ongoing community commitment might dwindle
- h. The building has low ceilings
- i. The cost to renovate will be considerable
- j. There is no active relationship and habit of working together between Hills Group and the community so this will need to be developed before the project can be a success
- k. The site is of strategic importance to Hills who wish to retain ownership of the land and buildings and access to the site

3. OPPORTUNITIES

- a. Increase car parking
- b. Remove concrete areas and replace with grass
- c. Football field
- d. Tennis courts
- e. Children's playground
- f. Village hall and community facility
- g. Village shop
- h. History centre (RAF)
- i. Revenue for community
- j. Youth club
- k. Toddler group
- l. Seasonal community events
- m. Scout groups
- n. Hills can use during the day and the community in evenings and weekends
- o. Small business incubator units
- p. Better security
- q. Car boot sales for fundraising
- r. Licenced social centre

- s. Improved play activity in the woodland
- t. Engage with local young people
- u. Available to whole community
- v. Income can be received from rental/lets
- w. Neighbourhood policing hub
- x. Garden and wildlife projects
- y. Draw the community together in multi-age activities
- z. Community allotment
- aa. Sustainable building
- bb. Adult learning
- cc. Connect to other villages through village halls

4. THREATS

- a. Insufficient revenue to cover costs
- b. Vandalism
- c. Relationship to other village halls
- d. Lack of robust management system and budget control
- e. Impact on environment from unsupervised play
- f. Insecure boundary fence
- g. Speed of traffic
- h. Flooding
- i. Local laws and legislation not understood by community members (would need assistance to deal with regulators)
- j. Inadequate health and safety provision (including insurance)
- k. Unwanted people from outside the area
- l. Negative attitude to what is past
- m. Change in Hills operational requirements for the site
- n. Lack of security and the need to pay to put it into place
- o. Too much security preventing community access
- p. Lack of community momentum
- q. It is underutilised once established
- r. Proximity to the Hills' site operations
- s. Clash of interests between Hills Group and the community
- t. Insurance costs
- u. Lack of visibility from the road

The second part of the consultation exercise was to consider what should be covered in the first meeting of the NAAFI Project Group (NPG)

An extensive list of suggestions was put forward (see below) and Andrea Pellegram explained that this was going to be too much to consider at the first NPG meeting. She suggested that the first meeting should constitute the group and set the terms of reference.

For consideration by NPG in future meetings:

- Funding strategy
- Halting the further deterioration of the building
- Make the decision whether to renovate the building or rebuild it
- Decide on the best management/accountability structure for the group (i.e. should it be a charity, a development trust or something else?)
- How to include children and young people in the project
- Communications strategy
- Options for using the site
- Research
- Strategic direction and proposal for the project

- Terms of reference
- Identification of potential user groups

NEXT STEPS

The meeting concluded with an invitation for participants to complete an application form setting out their suitability to become part of the NAAFI Project Group (NPG)

APPLICATIONS FOR THE NAAFI PROJECT GROUP (NPG)

Following the consultation day 13 applications were received from residents to become part of the NPG. Hills has invited these 13 representatives to attend a meeting on 25 January 2012.

FIRST MEETING OF THE NPG

The first meeting should agree the Terms of Reference and constitution of the NPG proposed by Hills. On the basis that it:

- genuinely represents the Lower Compton Community
- brings in external expertise from neighbour communities and stakeholder support (such as Community First, Wiltshire Police, etc)
- election of a chair and vice chair
- clarification of Hills's involvement and level of support offered
- where meetings should be held