

Lopen Village Public Space Opportunity



Dear Villagers,

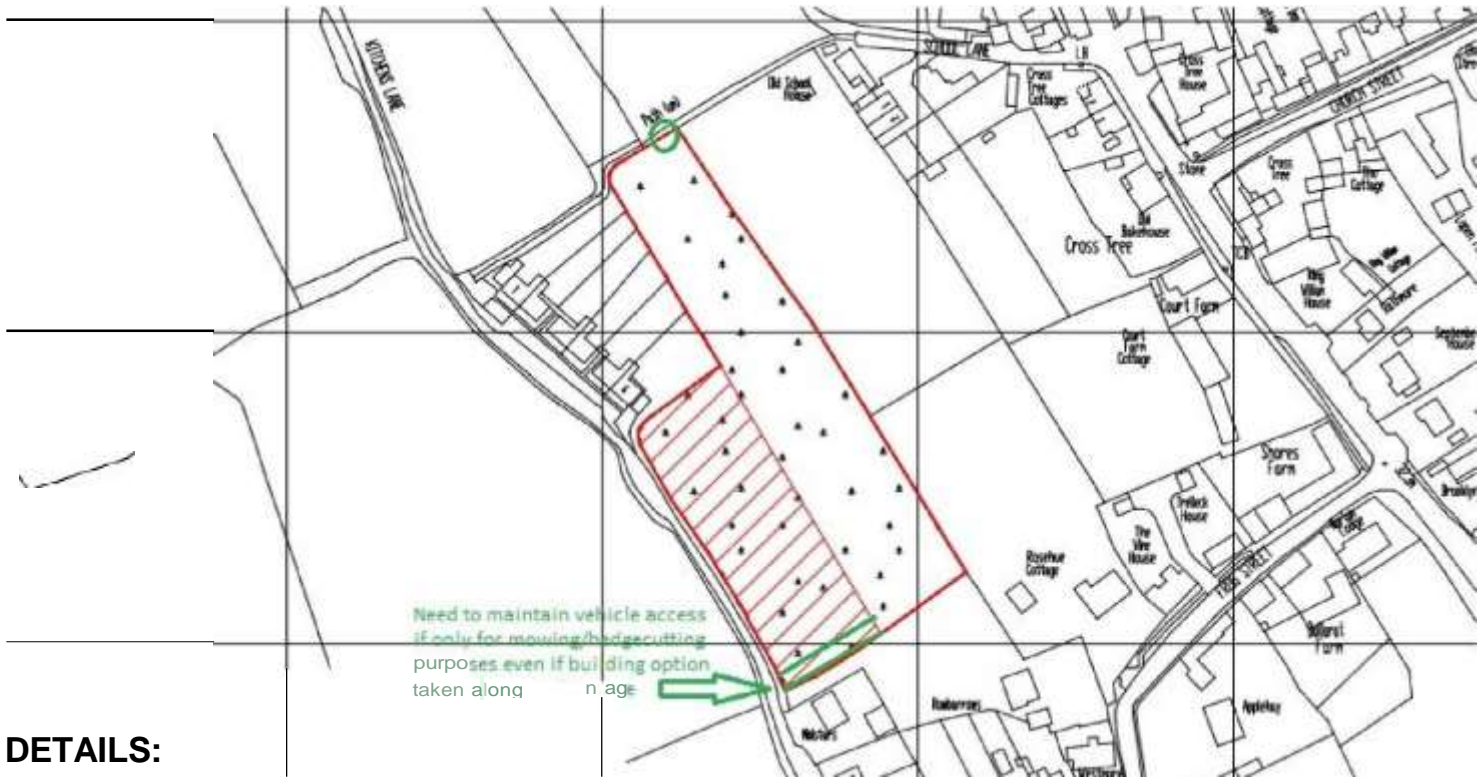
As you may already know, Somerset Council has offered Lopen village, via the Parish Council, the unique opportunity to take a 25 year, zero-rent lease from them on a 2.2 acre plot of land opposite Manor Farm on Kitchens Lane.

Although the lease is rent-free, there are significant initial costs, estimated at £6 - 8,000, including: Legal fees, some key ground works, fencing /hedging and clearance work. There will obviously also be ongoing costs associated with maintaining it and developing it.

Before we finally commit ourselves we need input from the Village regarding the land as it will be a responsibility we must all support if we are to go ahead.

It is hoped that across the village there are sufficient skills and trades that will volunteer as much of their services and time as possible to make this happen IF we collectively agree this is an opportunity we wish to take on board.

It has long been a need for the village to have its own 'public space', and whilst not a Village Hall and a host of amenities, this is a crucial starting point; but one that we need to agree is worth the commitment of our time and funds.



DETAILS:

The parcel of land is approx 2.2 acres.
 There are approximately 60 fruit trees, - all will need pruning/tidying and some removing altogether

At the north end a new pedestrian access would be created
 On the Kitchen Lane access, there would need to be a new gate.
 The site would need some clearance work, rolling, cutting, hedging, fencing etc. Depending on the projected use, ongoing maintenance costs/work needs to be considered. This will have to be self-funded by the village. Basic maintenance can be covered by a small (<£10/year) addition to the precept, but larger development projects would likely need specific funding to be raised.

On the above map, the total red area is what is being considered. The red 'hatched' area denotes a section where Somerset Council wish to retain the option for early reclaim as possible housing development land in the future, though it should be emphasised that there are no such plans at present and it might never happen. Access to the community land would be down the side via the green area, this is large enough for vehicle access.





Potential uses: YOU need to decide

This is the key decision area to determine if the land is rented, as it will shape the investment required and be incumbent on the Village to own and manage the space.

Usage could include any of the following:

- A simple amenity space - kids games/open area, dog exercising, picnics, village events
- Park / garden area
- Nature area - left to grow wild, plant more trees
- Allotments
- A more formal play area (significant costs/risks involved)
- What else? What do you think?

The next, important step is to provide us with your feedback...

We ask that you complete our very short survey, either using the form that has been put through your door (Please return to our parish clerk, Lisa Wilson, at 3 Holloway)

or online <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BWTR5HV> (or use QR code)

We need your response by 26th September for our next Parish Council meeting on the 30th.



Please do take the time to respond as it's most unlikely we'll be offered such an opportunity again!