

Shere Parish Council

7th February 2017

Agenda item 16/180: Peaslake Farm fields – draft instructions to land agent Proposal by Parish Councillor G Reffo

Search Criteria for letting fields at Peaslake Farm

Parish Council and Community Objectives

To secure 20 acres of grassland adjoining Peaslake Farm for agricultural use to maintain the character of Peaslake Village. The landlord places enormous value on conserving this land for the benefit of future generations. The landlord considers that the best way to do this would be to secure a tenant who will maintain and invest in the land, is financially viable and therefore likely to fulfil a long lease. Poor maintenance has led to past flooding of the village so a track record in regular maintenance is a key requirement. The land is not in good condition at present but the landlord is investing in the following upgrades:

- Carry out a maintenance/restoration exercise on the field and boundary hedges, and a cutting back of tree branches overhanging and encroaching the boundaries of the fields. This tree maintenance work to be undertaken in consultation with the new owners of the adjoining Hurtwood land in respect of the western boundary.
- Clear and re-profile the field ditches, with particular reference to the pipes below the bridging between the yard area and the area of field to the rear of the hard standing, to ensure free flowing of the drained water through the Council's land to the ditch which runs along the edge of Ewhurst Road.

The landlord recognises to get a high quality and responsible tenant who shares the aspirations of the Council and the local community to conserve and maintain this land for future generations, it will need to negotiate terms that are fair to both the tenant and the landlord and ensure that the tenant is able to make the investments in the land that the landlord deems essential. The landlord is willing to negotiate flexibly on upfront capital investment to ensure proper husbandry of the land.

Future tenants should be aware that over the next two years there is likely to be disruption as a small scale hosing development is constructed.

Essential Criteria for suitable tenants

- Intends to use land for viable agricultural use only.
- Financially viable operation with solid evidence of having maintained and invested in land under their care to a high standard.
- Willing to commit to an annual programme of maintenance covering land, drainage, fencing and trees and a long lease of ideally up to 25 years.
- Willing to agree to capital investment (with the Council) to make further necessary upgrades to the land to suit the agricultural use intended.

Desirable criteria

- Local business with a track record of supporting their local community.
- Low levels of traffic.
- Willing to allow the community safe access to the fields for special events.

G Reffo