

CHARMINSTER VILLAGE HALL CHARITABLE TRUST

Registered Charity No: 301117

The Wyatt Homes proposal for a housing development off Weir View includes the provision of a new village hall. This is to encourage a planning approval on a site that is outside the Village Development Boundary. A Parish Council questionnaire states: *“Wyatt Homes is keen to provide something on site that enhances its development and has concluded that the best option is to focus on providing a new multi-use hall*”

Our Parish Council apparently endorse this and held a public meeting to hear residents' views. An alternative to a new hall suggested by some at that meeting was affordable housing, but this did not find favour with the developer.

The Trustees of the Village Hall have not been kept fully informed by the Parish Council and were not advised that discussions with Wyatt Homes concerning a possible new hall were taking place.

A recent questionnaire from the Parish Council has asked for your vote on the new hall proposal. The Trustees of Charminster Village Hall will not support this, for the following reasons:

- Since 1966 and by order of the Charity Commissioners the Hall has been run as a Charitable Trust by its elected Trustees, who are *“to hold the land and building upon trust for the purposes of a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants of Charminster and the neighbourhood thereof without distinction of sex or political, religious or other opinions”*. This is an obligation which we will continue to honour.
- Since 2000, nearly £100,000 has been raised through grants, fund-raising and generous donations to enable a two-stage renovation which has provided us with the building we use today. The core of the existing Village Hall dates from 1877 and one of the major grants was given because of this history. The Hall is a charming venue that is widely used. Because the Trust owns the building, there is no rent and costs are kept low. To dissolve the Charitable Trust would not be a simple process. Grant monies might have to be repaid in part, to honour the contracts that were signed to enable renovation.
- What is the future of our Village Hall if a new one is built? It occupies a prime site. Disposal of the building and its site could not take place without the consent of the Charity Commission. Charity law requires that the building, if it were to be sold, must fetch the best price obtainable which must go to charitable causes. Demolition would leave the cross-roads open to yet more development and, despite a Parish Council representative's expressed opinion, “two or three old people's bungalows” would not fulfil the Charity Commission's criteria.

This flyer is therefore to ensure that our position is made clear:

We do not support the proposal for a new hall. We do not wish to see our Village Hall, in the heart of the community, demolished.

We hope you will support us, by voting NO to the Wyatt Homes proposal.

**TRUSTEES OF CHARMINSTER VILLAGE HALL
August 2014**