

The Heart Beats On

Isn't it great when a plan comes together? On Wednesday June 3rd, we had completed our display boards, taken part in a new video and put the final touches to our business plan but were left with two important questions: Just how many people would be able to attend the Parish Council's public meeting and 'Options Bazaar'? And, would people find our presentation useful? Answers: Approximately 200 – which is fantastic – and yes, we are sure they did!

Being involved in the events was a very positive experience for us. It felt good to be able to give detailed answers to people's queries and give a clear vision of what we would like to achieve i.e. a beautiful community owned shop, café and play area on community owned land at Morgan's Field.

If you weren't able to attend the meeting or event in the Village Hall, watch the short video on our website www.heartofthevillage.co.uk – it gives a good feel for what we imagine a new shop and café to be like. We also hope the following key questions and answers are useful.

Q: Is the Heart shop linked to a housing development?

A: No. The Heart shop and café will be an independent, freestanding building that does not include any new housing and is not funded by a developer.

Q: Who will own the new Heart?

A: The shop, café and surrounding site will be wholly owned by the community, forever. In early 2015, the project became a Community Benefit Society which means that like many successful community shops around the country, our Heart will be underpinned by strict financial and legal regulations. As a community project, we will have access to a large range of grants and funding streams and we plan to offer local people the opportunity to buy shares in the project. We may also need to consider a loan in the form of a mortgage for the project.

Q: Why has Morgan's Field been chosen for the site?

A: The Field is a beautiful 4-acre site at the intersection of Kingsbridge and Mathon Road. The whole site will become open to the community and will give access to an additional stretch of Cradley Brook. Importantly, the location is convenient for people living in both halves of Cradley and in Mathon.

Q: What about flooding?

We know Morgan's Field floods occasionally but one part of the site – by the gate – does not flood. This is where we would build. By moving earth from lower parts of the field to the higher parts we will be able to create a flood defence for the building that would not increase the risk of flooding up or down stream. Herefordshire Council has indicated that it would be acceptable to build a shop in this location. The Environmental Agency has also stated that no special measures would be needed.

Q: Will traffic be a problem?

We will have parking on site and we plan to design an easier walking and cycling access to the shop and café. Morgan's Field is on the same road as the old village shop but on a much less congested part and the road is straight with clear views in both directions.

Q: Can Cradley really raise the funds to build a shop and cafe?

Absolutely. Far smaller communities than Cradley have successfully raised the funds to build their own facilities. Take Brockweir for instance. A community of 500 people raised £70,000 within their community. The remaining £330,000 to complete their project was through loans and grants. 2015 was their 10th anniversary and they are now debt free. Cradley's population in the 2011 census was 1,667.

To find out the very latest information check www.heartofthevillage.co.uk or [facebook.com/cradleyHoV](https://www.facebook.com/cradleyHoV). You can also talk to any one of the Heart of the Village Team – but please remember we are all volunteers and would be very grateful if you have specific expertise you too can offer this project:

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