

Press release behalf of Heritage Homes
3.30pm Friday 3rd January 2012

Kirk Michael land Swap
Alfred Cannan MHK's proposed Motion for Select Committee

On the 30th January Alfred Cannan MHK wrote to all Tynwald Members, informing them that he proposed to bring forward a motion at the February sitting calling for a Select Committee to be appointed to investigate the above. However, in order to avoid wasting Tynwald Members time on an obvious misunderstanding we herein clarify the facts of the matter.

Prior to entering into the agreement with the Department of Education, we were required by Minister Teare to provide irrefutable proof that we could access the land to the rear of the school (albeit for a maximum of 100 houses) via an ALTERNATIVE access.

This was for the specific purpose of establishing that the Department WERE NOT in possession of the ONLY access which would enjoy an enhanced value.

The alternative access comprises land on three properties all controlled by Heritage Homes. Correspondence from the Highways Department confirming that we COULD access the site at this location was passed to The Department. The Department also has Proof of our Ownership and Control of the alternative access land.

At the Planning Inquiry, an objector asked our Transport Planning Consultant, Mr Bryan Hall, if Heritage Homes could access the site via Westlands or Knock Y Tholt (properties on Douglas Road in the ownership of Heritage Homes). He replied no, because on their own these properties do not allow a viable access. He did not unfortunately explain that when taken with the additional land on Douglas Road that is under Heritage Homes control, an alternative access can be formed.

Mr Hall's written evidence did however include a plan of the alternative access together with a copy of the correspondence from the Dol Highway Division confirming that the alternative access is acceptable.

Mr Hall's dogged adherence to one of the golden rules of cross-examination (i.e. listen carefully to the question and confine your answer to the question) may be fine normally at an inquiry, but in this instance it would appear that the limited nature of the question which was asked and the limited answer, has unfortunately lead to a misunderstanding by Mr. Cannan.

We have been informed that the Department proposes to write to Mr Cannan and all Tynwald Members later today, clarifying the matter and providing Mr Cannan with proof that Heritage Homes do indeed have an alternative access. The Department's Chief Executive has assured us that he spoke to Mr Cannan approximately two weeks ago and clarified the misunderstanding.

Mr Cannan's assertion that The Department enjoyed a ransom over development is not correct, 100 homes can be accessed through other land within Heritage Home's control.

Minister Teare and his team (which included The Government Valuer, the AG's Office and Directors from The Department), in our opinion negotiated a very astute deal. In addition to the land swap and significant improvement works to the School, any future development availing of the school access will be at the control and benefit of The Department of Education (i.e the tax payer).

The terms of the agreement were made public by Minister Teare in his press release at the time. We regret the misunderstanding of our consultant's remarks at the inquiry, and apologize for any inconvenience, which this may have caused.

End.

Heritage Homes.