

10<sup>th</sup> January 2006

Dear Sir,

Imperial College's Science Park Public Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January involved a ½ hour presentation which gave no details of the proposed development but was instead a "sales pitch" based on the likely good deeds of the billion pound research facility. Thanks to intelligent and searching questions from the audience, certain pertinent details did emerge. The local communities must now press public officers and the College on the following issues:

1. Is the project financially viable? Might it be abandoned half way after Imperial has sold its unspoilt agricultural land holding for profit (a move the College admitted has to take place to pay for part of the project) and resolved the current financial difficulties at Wye College? We need to see their Funding Plan, names of backers and details of alleged UK and EU grants and the premise on which they are providing it.
2. The College must be asked to give a date by which they will disclose preliminary details of the number of new buildings and houses and their location as well as infrastructure changes that will impact on the local community and landscape e.g. roads, superstores, schools, reservoirs, mass transport etc.
3. Imperial's Business Plan and Feasibility Studies (as already presented to the Council and financial backers) must be published to the public. It is inconceivable that Imperial has no idea as to how many buildings and houses they will require and their respective locations. How could Imperial have costed a project like this without knowing how many buildings/square metres and which sites. Where they are sited will impact on land cost. The number of buildings and how many storeys will impact on building cost. At the meeting, there were strenuous denials that preliminary blue prints exist. Consequently, the meeting was told to effectively work with Wye College based on unfathomable and unpublished proposals.

It seems to me the local community must not accept the inevitability of the proposed Science Park. The representatives of the Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council told us that change is inevitable and Wye must move on. That is undemocratic and a breach of their duty towards the people of Wye and neighbouring villages.

Representation of information at the public meeting was so contradictory and ambiguous, it has now put many locals on their guard. The meeting was told there will be 1,400 new jobs at Wye but the Parish Council at an earlier private meeting were told 5,000 new jobs. Confusingly, the College's press release through Ernst Young states that there will be 12,500 new jobs. When asked where these jobs will be sited, we were told this is not determined at this stage which in effect means that there could be no meaningful debate on the subject. Equally when asked whether Wye will end up housing any of the manufacturing facilities mentioned in the press release, an equally ambiguous answer of "there are no current plans" came back. It seems convenient that these details are left so vague because no

village or local area of East Kent could stand up and say what they would or would not want for their area. Everything is a movable feast hence proper scrutiny becomes impossible.

The choice for the local people is either rejection or acceptance because we were told categorically that there is no half way house to this proposed development. For those of us who do not want the last rural corner of East Kent to be covered in hundreds of acres of concrete, I say that we must reject this proposal as a matter of principle.

Rachael Moorhead  
Bodsham