

For sale by public auction - Highweek's Parish Meadow

An important piece of Newton Abbot's history will come under the hammer on Thursday 28th July. Highweek's Parish Meadow, the three acre green field which provides the setting for the village's fourteenth-century All Saints Church, visible from all over the town and beyond, is up for sale.



Auctioneer, Nick Wood FNAEA of Wood's Estate Agents and Auctioneers said: "This is a unique opportunity to acquire an iconic piece of land of a kind which very rarely appears on the market. Designated as of outstanding public amenity value, the Parish Meadow forms part of the green belt surrounding the Church, which together with North Close on the other side of the lane leading to the Church guarantees a rural setting which has been enjoyed by generations of those who use the Church. The prospect of a sale has generated a great deal of interest from local people, and we expect bidding to be quite competitive."

The meadow's survival as a piece of completely unspoilt pasture has been no accident, and the tale of how it escaped the ravages of development in the 1920's before the advent of planning laws and at a time which pressure to find land for houses "fit for heroes" was intense, is interesting. The land was then owned by the Vicary family, who lived in Dyrons House in Newton Abbot. Much of the surrounding land belonging to this family was gradually given over to house building, threatening to erode Highweek's separate identity as a village. This fate escaped the Parish Meadow as a result of the foresight and public spirited attitude of three maiden ladies, who lived in the village, Miss Dorothy Lloyd Downes, Miss Alice Baker and Miss Beatrice Wild. These three, who might today be thought of as early eco-warriors, clubbed together to buy the meadow, agreeing with each other never to allow the land to be built on. That intention is now firmly protected by planning laws, and especially the recognition that as part of the setting of the fine Listed All Saints Church, Parish Meadow is of special public amenity value and worthy of protection in its own right.

To celebrate the millennium, the Moxon Browne family, the current owners of the Parish Meadow, undertook extensive repairs to the random stone wall boundaries and planted dozens of specimen

trees, some of which will in time replace the huge elms which distinguished the northern boundary before being decimated by disease in the 1960's. As Mr Bob Moxon Browne QC, a London lawyer, explained: "My family no longer has any connection with the village, although lots of us are buried in the Churchyard of All Saints. The status of the meadow as a part of the curtilage of the Church is I think secure in perpetuity. We are selling the land in good order and well-planted with new trees, some of which will I hope see the village through to the next millennium. I also hope that new owners will continue to safeguard this special piece of land."

The auction will be held at Highweek Inn, Highweek, Newton Abbot on Thursday 28th July at 6 o'clock. The auctioneers have suggested a guide price of £25,000 - £35,000. Nick Woods concludes: "This is a unique site and I am sure there will be a great deal of interest".

For further information, pop into Wood's at 1 The Plain in Totnes or call the office on 01803 866336.

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Digital images are available from bubblepr@mac.com

Notes to editors:

Westcountry **team** is part of **team** Association, the largest organisation for independent estate agents in the UK, with hundreds of members. Westcountry **team** covers Cornwall, Devon and West Dorset, and consists of 63 members at this time, all of which work together to sell property for clients, and are actively committed to their nominated charity, Macmillan Cancer Support. **team**'s 'blue sky' image, with transparent team logo on a blue sky background reflects the association's and each individual agent's commitment to providing a clear, transparent service to their clients and conducting business in a straightforward, honest and professional way.

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