

Notes of the Sixpenny Handley Community Land Trust Steering Group Meeting

held on
Tuesday 11th November 2014 at 7pm in the Parish Office

Attendees: Simon Parker (Chair), Jenny Chapman (Secretary), Steve Watson (WCLTP), Ian Mereweather, Matt Gibbons, Colin Taylor, Donald Penrose, James Reed (Treasurer), Steve Barrett, David Salmons

Apologies: David Lockyear, Tim Reynolds, Vic & Linda Howard, Ros Adams, David Adams, Alison Ward (WCLTP)

1) Welcome and introductions

SP welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were acknowledged.

2) Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 1st October 2014 were accepted.

There was a discussion and agreement that the members of the current Steering Group should be confirmed for admin reasons and for the Downsman article to ensure members of the wider community knew who they could approach if they had any questions or remarks.

ACTION: Simon Parker, Jenny Chapman

3) Project Plan

SW gave a brief overview.

4) Report on EDDC meeting re Exception Land at Common Road

(a) SP gave an overview of the meeting held at the EDDC offices on 21st October attended by Simon Parker, Jenny Chapman and Steve Watson. The representatives from EDDC were open and supportive to the proposal of SHCLT acquiring approx one acre of the land for the affordable homes project.

(b) It was agreed with EDDC that SHCLT and EDDC would enter into some non-binding Heads of Terms to set out the basis for the land transfer which were drafted by WCLTP and amended by SP and JC. Since HoTs were drafted EDDC had also confirmed that since the land is held in their General Fund it would need to be 'sold' at the prevailing value for an exception site to SHCLT rather than sold for £1.00, as would be required by the HCA if the land were held in a Housing Revenue Account. But, as a condition of HCA funding, the value of the land would, post-sale, then be put into the housing scheme as a capital contribution. The HoTs will be amended to reflect this change. HoTs need to be sent to EDDC by the end of November ahead of their Property Group meeting on 12th December.

(c) SW shared the plan which details the land, the car parks, the soakaway and the environmental flooding risk. The entire piece of land is 3.7 acres, of which approx. 1 acre would be required for the affordable homes. However, there was discussion around the table of SHCLT members that it might be prudent to request the entire piece of land to ensure sufficient land for the project, to perhaps enable larger gardens and to allow for future needs e.g. a community energy efficiency scheme or similar. SP and JC agreed to further amend the HoTs to reflect this request prior to sending to EDDC.

ACTION: Simon Parker, Jenny Chapman, Steve Watson

5) EDDC grant for legal costs

SP confirmed that EDDC had agreed to provide a grant of £5,000.00 for the legal costs associated with the purchase of the exception land. It was agreed amongst members that rather than wait until the SHCLT was officially incorporated and had its own bank account, in the meantime the grant monies should be accepted and paid into the Parish Council bank account and held for safe keeping.

ACTION: James Reed

6) Visit to Powerstock CLT

Members to visit Powerstock on 19th November were confirmed as Simon Parker, Jenny Chapman, Matt Gibbons, James Reed, David Salmons, Vic and Linda Howard and Steve Barrett.

Questions to put to Powerstock were discussed and agreed.

ACTION: Simon Parker (to put together questions and share with Powerstock prior to 19th)

7) Number, type and tenure of affordable homes

8) CLT scope to vary EDDC policy allocation criteria

(a) There was a general discussion regarding both the above subjects. The Housing Needs Survey report had previously been circulated to members.

(b) It was confirmed by WCLTP that a CLT cannot change the local council housing needs criteria and that all possible occupants of the affordable homes to be built would have to meet the EDDC criteria and be on the 'Council Housing List' prior. This is because the purpose of the housing list – known as 'Dorset Home Choice' – is to provide fair and transparent county-wide criteria for 'housing need'. Dorset Home Choice has replaced the confusing and sometimes opaque range of lists held by different councils and housing associations in the past. All councils and housing associations operating in the county sign up to using Dorset Home Choice in order to ensure consistency in the way that applicants' housing needs are assessed.

(c) The CLT can negotiate under the Exception Policy (S106) criteria for occupants to be local, have a connection to the village etc. In this respect, WCLTP has encountered an encouraging willingness amongst councils and housing associations in the South West to support the customisation of the sort of 'policy' criteria set out in section 1.9 of EDDC's exception site policy (circulated). For example, Powerstock & District CLT had negotiated slightly longer periods of time (for residency, employment and family connection) as the threshold for their first 'filter' and then slightly shorter periods for their second filter. Only after both filters had been applied to their core community and then, if any homes remained, to the surrounding parishes, did the Council's policy criteria apply to the wider district.

(d) There was a general feeling that rental properties, as opposed to 'help to buy' properties would be preferable, to keep the assets in control of the CLT/village, but the project is in its early stages and if there is a clear need for part-ownership properties then the CLT would re-think.

(e) The Housing Needs Survey, whilst thorough, does not definitively say what type and tenure of homes should be built. WCLTP suggest a mix based on a broad reading of the HNS but, equally, had found that a good mixture of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed homes always offers flexibility in the long run. In the absence of definitive information, it was agreed to do some further work on types of houses required and to build a list and/or expressions of interest for occupancy.

ACTION: Steve Watson, Simon Parker

9) Communication with wider community

(a) It was agreed that an update should be put in the next issue of the Downsman together with notification for a public meeting to be held in January.

- (b) It was suggested that it would be useful to 'define' what we mean by affordable housing in both the Downsman article and for the public meeting
- (c) SW would share with SP and JC the community presentations held by Powerstock and Lyme Regis to assist in putting together a presentation for January.

ACTION: Jenny Chapman, Simon Parker, Steve Watson

10) AOB

None

11) Date of next meeting

To be confirmed – but to include a Christmas celebration.