

Record of meeting of Newenden CLT Steering Group

Church Cottage, Newenden 21st August 2017 at 11:30

Attended:

Stephen Hill (Guest)	Tessa O'Sullivan (Guest)	Åke Nilson (Guest)
Ellen Hannavy-Cousen	Richard Gould	Derek Urquhart
Caroline Anderson-Jones	Brian Livesey	

Apologies:

John Tapley	Raymond Chitty
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1. The meeting began with the following summary from Brian of what has happened since our last meeting with Stephen and Tessa:
 - In early 2017 Newenden PC requested further pre-application advice from Ashford Borough Council, concerning the Rother Valley Farm site, following a request approximately a year earlier concerning other possible sites in Newenden. ABC considered this site was possibly acceptable, but with some reservations.
 - Village AGM finally held at end of March - presentation on the CLT by Brian, Ray and Ellen
 - The AGM was well attended. Nature of CLT explained, the possible site in Lossenham Lane was explained with the agreement of the landowner.
 - Vote held to decide whether village should go ahead and form a CLT. Almost unanimous support (believed one vote against and one abstention).
 - More members for CLT Steering Group were sought and Richard, Derek, John and Caroline volunteered, together with another person who never responded to further communications and Martin Norris, who subsequently resigned for personal reasons.
 - Subsequently, half a dozen CLT Steering Group meetings have been held.

- Put together and developed a new Housing Needs Survey (with assistance of Tessa) to ascertain current levels of demand - decided to do this at same time as developing the CLT structure to speed up final delivery.
- Set up a public web page on the Newenden website and also shared documentation within the Steering Group on Dropbox
- Carried out an initial Organisational Health Check
- There was some concern expressed by a small number of residents in Lossenham Lane at the possible location of any future development, not helped by the spreading of false information concerning the size, location and motivation of possible developments.
- Brian and Åke attended a meeting with these residents and all the documentation concerning the possible development sites submitted to Ashford was shared openly following the meeting. It was agreed at the meeting that Caroline would feed back from CLT SG meetings to those attending.
- A representative of this group of residents was invited to and attended the following CLT SG meeting in order to demonstrate the openness of the CLT process.
- Tessa obtained finance from Ashford for the HNS and the final design and content were agreed
- The area of the CLT was agreed (subject to ratification by the CLT once established) - slightly larger than Parish area.
- The HNS was delivered by hand in the village (largely by Ellen, with assistance from Ray) in mid - July, with return date by 1st September.
- Plan to hold a village meeting in October to reveal and discuss the findings of the HNS and discuss the way forward from there.
- Now looking to formalise the CLT and set up proper legal structures to meet any needs identified by the HNS.

2. Stephen Hill made the following points concerning our future activities:

- We need to ensure that we keep our housing provision dynamic, so we don't simply end up in the same situation of having an ageing and static population in (for example) ten years time
- Would be sensible to communicate with all villagers that we are looking for development sites, to ensure that all possibilities are considered. The decision about the choice of site must be open and transparent and we should be willing to argue our case with ABC if they are not supportive of our choice.
- The CLT SG and the ultimate CLT Board need to include members with financial expertise and understanding of legal processes, or have access to such expertise.
- A Community Benefit Society is the most common legal structure for CLTs and probably the best in our circumstances as the Newenden Trust gives us access to the benefits of charitable status if necessary.
- It is best to have a founding Board for the CLT when it is initially formed, with an agreement they would stand down after a set period (e.g. a month) to allow election of a permanent Board.
- Recommended that villagers should have to opt in to membership and should consider a subscription system (e.g. members pay £5 p.a.).
- There was a discussion about conflicts of interest for Board members once CLT is established. Stephen did not feel this was an issue if it was just about people objecting to a site because it was near their home and emphasised that the CLT Board would need to be able to demonstrate a very open site selection process. However, CLT members must be supportive of the CLT ethos overall and sign to that effect.
- HNS results should be available during w/c 25th September 2017. *Possible* date for Township Meeting would be 31st October 2017.

3. NEXT STEPS:

- One more day of Stage 2 funded advice has already been agreed - could possibly use this after the HNS results are available.
- Work out a clear and open appraisal process for the sites that may be available, incorporating the criteria used by ABC Planning.

- Once we have the HNS results, we should employ architects to carry out a basic plotting exercise to ascertain the amount of land needed for the development, ensuring that we overestimate rather than underestimate.
 - We need to contact one of the firms of lawyers (Towers and Hamblins, Wrigleys (Leeds) or Anthony Collins and Partners (Birmingham)) that have expertise in setting up CLTs or could use Alison Ward from Wessex CLT, who set up Shepherdswell CLT (need to speak to Tessa).
 - Decide whether CLT will be the direct developer or whether to proceed in partnership with a Housing Association (Tessa has details of another HA which may be interested in a small rural development).
 - If a need for work/live spaces is identified, then worth contacting High Bickington Property Trust in Devon, who have incorporated workspaces in their scheme.
 - Prepare for Stage 3 funding submission - will need to work out a budget beforehand for legal costs, approval of sites, pre-application advice, admin. support etc.
 - Ensure that the rules of the CLT cover issues of conflicts of interest and support of the CLT ethos.
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