

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Colerne CLT, held on Thursday 30th September, 2021, at Colerne Village Hall.

Apologies:- Chris Woods, Annette and David Hitch, Karen Brezinski, Kate Colwell.

This Meeting was the first 'in person' meeting of the CLT since formal incorporation as a Community Benefit Society.

The Meeting was also supported by two members of Marshfield CLT and Seend CLT sent a slide show about their development so far. Both organisations are due to start building early next year.

The Meeting was also videod, with the permission of those present, for the benefit of those unable to attend.

1. The Chair of the Interim Board of Trustees (pending the first Annual General Meeting next year) Paddy Harmon, opened the meeting, introducing himself and his reasons for joining the CLT and other members -

Jane Mellett — Secretary
David Squire - Treasurer
Trustees -

Ally Minch
Polly Squire
Anne Nicholas
Peter Mellett

Reasons for involvement included - concern for the loss of affordable housing in this parish, and maintaining a sustainable community for the future.

The CLT initially emerged out of the Neighbourhood Plan, which clearly identified an affordable housing shortage in the parish.

2. Progress made so far - Paddy Harmon

During the covid 18 months, the steering committee made the decision to complete the formalities of setting up the CLT, rather than stagnating and we have now completed that groundwork.

- i) Colerne CLT has been registered as a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.
- ii) The steering group formed the first Trustees for the company until the first AGM.
- iii) The CLT will operate in an open and democratic way; one member one vote.
- iv) We now have our own bank account with the Co-op Bank. Thanks go to the Village Hall Committee who held our finances until a bank account could be opened. Also the Parish Council who have supported us with a pump priming grant of £200 per year for the next 3 years. We can now apply for grants to help with scoping projects and developing the membership.
- v) We have sought advice from similar local projects and CLTs and thank them for their help and presence at this meeting, showing that CLTs are feasible and not pie in the sky.
- vi) As we identify land and projects, the funding will be raised through ethical banks and community share options in partnership with other organisations like housing associations.

viii) It is our aim to build housing to the best ecological standards and aim to be carbon neutral and affordable to heat and rent.

3. Why Energy Issues are also important?

- i) Although CLTs were primarily set up to create the right affordable housing for a local community, with climate change, energy costs will require that also focus on energy efficiency and community energy provision.
- ii) Sustainability covers all aspects of life - housing, work, affordability, social mix and services, and now, more than ever, contributing towards a reduction in our carbon footprint and increasing the biodiversity of the parish.
- iii) For the residents of our homes affordable heat and power costs are an essential aspect of affordable living. While we are exploring the possibility of land for local affordable housing, we can also support the parish' existing housing stock through a joint project with the Bristol based CHEESE project.
- iv) "Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Survey Experts(CHEESE) is a not for profit Community Interest Company, currently also working in Bath. If we were to get a local person trained through them, we can provide a service to all homes in the parish at far reduced cost and for free for those on Universal Credit.
- v) Identifying exactly what homes really need to reduce heat loss then allows for correction of those problems, and if necessary a retrofit. The project can also be combined with a training through the Centre for Sustainable Energy looking at how to effectively reduce heat loss in homes.
- vi) Such a service to the parish would allow the CLT to become more widely known and increase interest and membership. It would also considerably add to the Parish' s response to climate change.
- vii) There are other possibilities following this, such as a joint project with Bath and West Energy who could carry out a feasibility study for a future energy production plan, be it for housing or services such as electric car charging points. They are also highly experienced at raising funds through community shares and ethical investment companies.
- viii) Initially, the CLT's primary role would be to purchase or receive the gift of land for the Parish in partnership with other community interest companies who would help make a service happen.
- ix) Marshfield CLT are also pursuing investigating a community energy scheme, and there are many other examples across the country. We have been made aware of this aspect of CLT work through the amazing webinar trainings offered to us free by the National CLT to which we belong.

4. **Broke into two discussion groups** together with members of the Clerne CLT trustees and the Marshfield CLT reps. There was useful discussion in both groups and themes addressed were as follows -

Group 1

1. Concerns for grandchildren who are being forced out of the village by housing costs
2. Need for housing for young people and down sizing for older people.
3. Home insulation and energy production is a permanent asset for the parish.
4. What is really affordable - 1/3 of net income.
5. Currently the rental market is becoming a bidding system. Not available to people unable to show a credit rating.

6. Colerne used to have a dozen shops within older residents' lifetime.
7. We also need to create more local employment opportunities.
8. Affordable buys also needed, or we will lose the economic base of the village.
9. Loss of social cohesion.
10. With a CLT, social rent with passive housing represents a shifting economic model where the Community is at the centre of the idea, taking responsibility and caring for the community.
11. Points raised by Marshfield rep - we will be asked about public consultation. We have to do an up to date Rural Housing need survey to clarify how things have changed in the last 4 years.
- 12 - How many holiday lets and airbnbs are there in the village now?

Group 2

1. The Rural Exception Site is a trump card for the CLT. No developer can do this.
 2. Energy production depends on the site being suitably large and able to link to the power systems.
 3. Planning permission under Rural Exception rules does not create a precedent for future housing development for developers to use.
 4. Another option is land for community facilities in return for one rural exception house to pay for it. (This pertinent to a possible piece of land brought to the meeting by two members.)
 5. Affordable housing is not cheap to build. The Marshfield project creating 18 homes has construction costs of £3m.
 6. The CLT was able to raise funding for the feasibility study for the development through Government grants and then the Housing Association raises funds through Homes for England government money to pay for the construction.
(NB there is currently less grant money for pre development work) Also, the HA funding model only provides for rentals at 60% of local market rents, not our preferred goal of 30% of net income!
 7. We should start our process with a Housing Needs survey.
 8. We are able to establish our own local letting policy with our members. This defines what we mean by "local"
 9. The land is acquired either through share options to purchase or by releasing a small number of market homes as rural exception for the landowner, which becomes part of the planning application in order to create a site for the 15 affordable at Marshfield. Of those, 9 are rentals and the rest shared ownership.
5. Plenary gathering.

These ideas and issues were shared together.

A suggestion was put that the CLT should now focus on looking for land, once the Neighbourhood Plan has passed examination.

There was a majority also in favour of the CHEESE project being pursued for the whole parish. However there were some concerns expressed re the financial details and administration of the project which the secretary was charged to investigate further before publicising any further.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.