

Notes of the Open Zoom meeting of Colerne CLT, held on Thursday 28th January at 7.30pm

Present:- Steering group members - Paddy Harmon, Jane Mellett, Annie Nicholas, David and Polly Squire, Peter Mellett, Alison Minch.

CLT Members and others:- William Driver, Karen Brzezicki, Mary Mellett, Clive Spencer, Brian Mathew, Julie Burgess, Dan Prideaux, Anthony Worrall (from Bath Co-operative group)

Jane Mellett introduced the purpose and structure of a CLT -

The Colerne Community Land Trust is a registered **Community Benefit Society**, and its aims and objectives are solely for the community of Colerne Parish, to provide, and manage affordable housing for this parish and to hold in trust land and assets on behalf of the community that relate to important community services.

Our Community Land Trust was initiated by a group of local volunteers in response to the Neighbourhood Plan allocating two sites specifically for the purpose of “**Community Led Housing**”. This is a supported label, used in national and local government planning documents. **A CLT is one form of this.**

In the context of rural areas, where land can be scarce for permitted development, a CLT is a mechanism whereby local landowners can support smallscale development that is truly needed to allow the balance of skills and age groups of a community to be sustained and extended family support systems to thrive. Known as “Rural exception sites”, the way is made for appropriate sustainable development, as opposed to purely market development. Market developers are not able to provide affordable housing in small scale developments because they are seen as unviable for them.

A CLT also holds the land ownership in perpetuity, on behalf of the local community, and thus there is no future escalation of pricing due to inflationary land costs.

Alternatively it can purchase or lease a building that is held in trust.

NB - our definition of Affordable housing is the shelter version not the Government's .

*<https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/08/what-is-affordable-housing/>

Our motivation -

i) To create truly affordable housing that is also an example of good building practice in our current times.

ii) To establish a long term mechanism by which community facilities can be managed and serviced , even when lack of volunteers threatens future existence.

Ensuring essential community services are not lost.++

iii) Community energy provision.

All these activities will involve working in partnership with other groups on behalf of the community.

Examples of what other CLTs are doing.

Anne Nicholas described two other CLT projects - Calder Valley- 6 bungalows for older people, built from scratch and funded via community shares; Brighton and Hove who initially raised general funds without a specific goal, which was not so successful, but finally hit upon a community needed project for student housing which raised over £300,000 in community shares to fund it.

NB - once a site/building/project is identified, the capital sums are raised through issuing community shares and specialist investment share options.

Peter- shared his experience of visiting Taunton CLT. A very different situation to our village, but just as relevant as an option for us. They bought a shop with space behind it. Created a flat and a community project space and later built new flats in the space behind. All this funded using investment shares from e.g. insurance companies and eco investment banks.

Paddy -Community Asset Register -Localism Act 2011 - the Local Authority has a duty to maintain a register of Community Assets - this ensures that if they come up for sale or new lease, then the registering community group have 6 months to find the funding to take on this project.

In Colerne, we could register important 'at risk' assets and maintain them for the community - to prevent the village becoming "hollowed out" in the way places like Castle Combe have become.

Stop young people and families having to move out of the village. We could lose our pubs and shops.

Discussion -

Peter - mentioned all the shops that were here in 1974

Bakers, greengrocer/sweet shop, chemist, television/electrics, shoeshop/cobblers, wine shop, post office, two grocery shops.

Ally - asking -What assets might become available in Colerne? - e.g Colerne shop in Market Place; the two clubs, both struggling in different ways, but they were given to the people of Colerne for the purposes of "social interaction" which exactly fits with the criteria for Asset Registration.

Karen - loved what Paddy said about Assets. Colerne is quite unique, and has not been "hollowed out". Colerne can work at keeping itself active and alive as a community. We need lots of focal points for interaction - "everything should be on a register" ! "**Colerne does not work quickly" and we need time to build up enthusiasm.**

We nearly lost our Post Office facility because there was no mechanism to save that building.

Brian - Colerne has a wonderful spirit to it. BUT as a community we need to stay open to what opportunities may arise - e.g. energy project on the MOD land like in Lynham - where the contributions of their solar scheme pay for community projects.

Interested in the range of funding opportunities there are now available.

Anne - fed back on a zoom meeting with the Centre for Sustainable Energy - and opportunities for community investment - e.g.electric charging points

Dan - Idea of registering properties is a good one. Concern within the PC re protecting community facilities, and don't forget Thickwood and North Colerne. How charging points in a communal area will be very desirable. Investment in local shops and local communities is happening big time now.

Anthony - spoke of how interested Bath Energy Group, which is well established, would be in co-operating with any energy opportunities we might explore.

<https://www.bwce.coop/>

Dan - community waste - might this be something to consider - energy provision via waste? Peter cautioned that such ideas need expert assessment to ensure they are also energy efficient.

Anne - CSE in Bristol are putting together a "green List" that measures footprint and energy efficiency.

Dan - ways of improving the biodiversity of the parish - future possible project.

Jane - the NP will put down the marker for all these things in the Plan, incorporating Cotswold AONB guidances, and in the future the Concept Statement will ensure we have a place at the planning table in the disposal of the MOD land.

Ally - **More Discussion needed re people's feelings about Affordable Housing.**

David Hitch - the central point of a CLT is the housing

Mary - that is my priority, for although we have been able to stay in the village because of inherited money, many of my generation are forced to move out of the parish.

Currently, if you have enough money you can create your own eco home, and the opposite end of the pole - low quality social housing, cheap to build but not meeting sustainable standards that people can afford to live in.

So many people lack the funds but have the values to support this trend. I believe there would be public support for housing that met both factors, and people would be prepared to invest in that.

The group universally supported Mary's reasoning that by providing accommodation for eg. single parents so they can stay near their children, elderly singles and couples who can be close by their children, and sustainably built and run housing, we are helping this community to remain sustainable.

A CLT is about maintaining a Sustainable Community

David Hitch drew attention to the recent ??Norwich housing estate that received an award for being sustainably built, sustainable to live in, energy neutral, and also affordable for young people to rent..

Jane - in Colerne, until we get some MOD land comes on stream, we cannot build such a large number of properties. We have to start small.

Currently the two allocated sites in the NP are for small Community Led Housing projects to meet Colerne's immediate assessed needs.

Right now, our biggest problem is getting a bank account up and running because of covid.

We cannot get grants for that reason, but we do have a banking facility through the Village Hall.

Suggested asking all members to donate £10 each towards providing a starter fund to allow us to carry on functioning. Incorporation, publicity, printing and website development etc. have used up all the original pump-priming grant originally received.

Anthony - The Bath Co-operative Group could possibly give us a small grant to support our ongoing development. Peter asked to put in a bid. For them, it would be a positive example of the values and role, showing how they support emerging ventures. [NB - Peter has now lodged an application with this group.]

Brian and Dan both making the case for people from our group putting their names forward for election to the Parish Council for the local election due in May.

That there should be a close working relationship with the PC.

Ally - wanted to hear more of how Brighton and Hove failed at trying to raise shares for a "war chest" for when projects came along. It was a disaster. Once they engaged with the community to plan the project, the investment came fast.

What can we be doing now?

Jane -After lockdown, it will be possible to go and visit those projects locally that are actually being built, even through Covid.

Till then, **we need to keep talking about the ideas with friends and neighbours, as word of mouth is undoubtedly the best way to raise the membership - from 54 to 200, ideally** - which would be 15% of the parish community. The membership size demonstrates to grant givers that there is a real community support for the projects. As we get projects, this will interlink us with other organisations, and will be a learning process for the people of Colerne also.

The meeting supported the idea of asking for a donation of £10 to replace the lost pump priming money.

Paddy- in order to give us a focus now - the registering of community assets with the Local Authority - People are more responsive to a focussed idea.

Mary echoed Paddy's concern that we have a focus.

Karen - it would cost nothing to develop. It is a non-threatening activity, **having a conversation about assets for the community.**

Peter - should we even identify a piece of land? Jane - we are jumping the gun, as we now have to get the two allocated sites working as community land trusts.

Jane -We could ask for the approval of the membership to register the Con Club. and then do it now.

We could also then move onto a CLT related Housing needs assessment, in order to decide who to prioritise for project development.

Those not already members, please go to the website where it is easy to join up.

Additional themes raised In the Chat facility -

Dan - there's a Banes energy and environment meeting next week. Reply - good to get info, but remember they are a different local authority.

Jane I will send you my notes from the Wiltshire meetings last year that I originally shared with Meryam.

Dan - Local Plan webinar - reply glad you are attending the one on Tuesday. I am attending the rural communities one on Monday.

Dan -Local Plan update re climate emergency reply - really pleased you are attending the climate policy update on Thursday - I did not get an invite to that. Could you share any notes you receive or make from that as I am currently working on updating the NP policies re this.

Karen -NB Geothermal energy in new development.

Mary - could apply as a community group to the PC for a small grant.

Post the meeting -

Paddy and Jane - we could register the Con Club as soon as incorporation papers arrive. JM to find out the details of who hold the deeds in Trust, and the codecile details. As this needed for the registration.

Agreed to have next Steering group meeting in early March.

