

Minutes of the public meeting of the Hale Village Community Land Trust
held on the 21st April 2018 7 p.m. at the Hale Village Hall.

Bill Templeton opened the meeting by welcoming the 55 residents of the Village who had taken the trouble to attend.

Bill confirmed that apart from the letter which he had sent out in August 2016, this meeting was the first opportunity we had to report to the residents of Hale what progress we have made with his idea to build a few affordable houses in our village as the whole project was dependent on the outcome of the Housing Needs Survey Report which came out recently.

Bill explained that it is the intention of the four present Directors at the first meeting to be held after the appointment of new members to consider those of the new members willing to stand as Directors of the Community Land Trust and to appoint as additional Directors people who can contribute additional expertise. It was also the intention at that meeting to pass a binding resolution to the effect that no project of the Community Land Trust will be advanced without a vote of a majority of the members so that members will have a real say in what the organisation does in the future and indeed in approving plans of any proposed dwellings.

Bill explained how the idea of Affordable Housing in the Village has developed in the following way:

- (i) He and his Wife Brenda had been living in the Village for 43 years. When they first came to the village it was a village with many young families and a large proportion of the children in the Primary School lived in the village.
- (ii) He was Chairman of the Governors of Hale Primary School for 15 years and witnessed during this time the change in the proportion of children at the School who came from the village and those who lived elsewhere.
- (iii) Throughout this time he was Practising as a property Solicitor in Fordingbridge and had seen the prices of properties in the New Forest area rise incredible levels. This had been great for people established with a house in the village but very bad for the village as a whole.
- (iv) Bill had raised his concerns about this as a parishioner at two Annual Parish Assemblies in the village. He knew that a lot of people living in the village, Brenda and him included, struggled for many years with a big mortgage especially when the mortgage interest rates rose to 18% in the 1980's, and it was tempting to say that we struggled through it and therefore the youngsters of today must do the same. However, at the time we could buy a house with a 10% deposit and a mortgage three times our combined salary but in Hale last year you would have needed a combined salary of over £60,000.00 a year to finance a loan of 3.5 times the annual income to buy the lowest priced property in the village.
- (v) In 2008 a Housing Needs Survey was carried by Community Action Hampshire which organisation is now known as Action Hampshire and is the same organisation which

prepared the Housing Needs Survey Report which had just been issued. The 2008 Report disclosed that 86% of the people who responded were in favour of a small scheme of development of affordable housing in the village and there were at that time 13 households of young people who were expressed to need an affordable home. The report recommended the building of 6 affordable homes for local people being 2 x 1 bedroom flats or maisonettes to rent, 3 x 2 bedroom houses to rent and 1 x 3 bedroom house to rent.

- (vi) The Parish Council at that time shelved the question of affordable housing as the sites identified by the Parish Council at that time were not readily available. This was much to the disgust and disappointment of many people in the community and this was made clear to Bill when he first started talking about the need for some affordable houses in the village.
- (vii) In November 2015 Bill had agreed to put himself forward to become a Parish Councillor to find out how he could work to help our community and also gain the Parish Council's support to a project for affordable housing.
- (viii) Having semi-retired and with more time to do something about the situation, Brenda and he then had the idea of donating some of their garden land for affordable housing and on 2nd August 2016 he sent out 50 letters to residents considered most likely to be affected confirming that they would be willing to donate a plot of land and asking for their views. At the same time he sent a copy of the letter to Mr Steve Avery, the Executive and Director of Strategy and Planning of the New Forest National Park Authority. He received 25 replies to his letter. One of these opposed his proposal but the remainder were to a greater or lesser extent generally in favour. He also received a reply from Mr Avery inviting Brenda and him to the official opening of some affordable houses built by the National Park Authority in Bransgore. They attended and were very impressed with the two semi-detached houses which provided good accommodation and were designed to fit in with other properties in Bransgore. They are built to a high standard with solar panel tiles on the south side of the roof looking just like ordinary roof tiles and an air source heat pump to provide heating and they are connected to a private drainage system.
- (ix) Robert and Cylvean Aitken-Sykes and also Eve and David Gillmon had expressed an interest and they joined Brenda and Bill to investigate Community Land Trusts. Bill did some research on the internet and in October 2016 he joined the National CLT Network and obtained a copy of their Community Land Trust Manual which provided some very useful information.
- (x) In January 2017 Bill applied to the National CLT Network for a grant to cover the fees of a Community Land Trust Technical Adviser to advise and they were awarded this grant which covers two sessions with an Adviser costing £500.00 each and also the cost of forming the Community Land Trust. To clarify Bill confirmed that they had not received any money from the National CLT Network as the Adviser's fees are paid direct. After being awarded this grant Bill had approached in turn every Technical Adviser in the area asking for a meeting to assist with the project and every

Adviser had been too busy to help at that time so they had decided that they needed to carry out our own further investigations.

Robert Aitken-Sykes took over explaining to the meeting the further investigations which were carried out after he and Cylvean had joined in the project. He confirmed the following:

- (1) On 25th November 2016 the four of us and Eve Gillmon had a meeting with Steve Avery of the National Park Authority and Chris Elliott and Lucy Buis of New Forest District Council when we discussed with them our proposal to form a Community Land Trust. Our proposal received a good reaction from the Planning officials.
- (2) This was followed by another meeting on 9th February 2017 with Steve Avery of the National Park Authority and Lucy Buis of the New Forest District Council when they inspected the Templeton's paddock site and went around the village looking at various possible sites to get some idea what would be acceptable from the planning point of view.
- (3) On 2nd April 2017 David and Eve Gillmon confirmed to us that they were no longer in a position to continue with active involvement in the proposals for a community land trust so this left just the four of us working on the project.
- (4) On 12th June 2017 through Lucy Buis of the New Forest District Council we were invited to visit Wickham to meet with members of the Wickham Community Land Trust and we visited the homes run by the Community Land Trust and listened to a presentation by Mr Geoff Phillpotts who had very kindly agreed to join us at this meeting and would be giving some direct information and the benefit of his experience.
- (5) On the 5th July 2017 we again visited Wickham when they hosted a presentation for the Rural Housing Week during which we learned more and they showed us their homes again.
- (6) In March 2017 the Hale Parish Council organised the Village Plan questionnaire and followed this in October 2017 by arranging a new official Housing Needs Survey the result of which we have now seen and this disclosed that 79.8% of respondents support the provision of a small number of affordable homes on sites spread around the Parish and the Report recommends that the Parish Council supports a scheme for the building of 6 to 10 affordable homes, both rented and shared ownership within the parish of Hale.
- (7) In May 2017 we eventually found a Community Land Trust Technical Adviser named Alison Ward who was able to help us. Alison is a Director of the National CLT Network and she has since formed the Hale Village Community Land Trust for us and also come to Hale to give us detailed advice. She has

prepared a Report setting out her advice and has agreed to introduce us to another Adviser who can give us advice on how to take the project forward.

- (8) Robert confirmed that this brought us to where we were now, wishing to press ahead and involve more people in the village and this meeting had been arranged to do this.

These remarks were followed by three short video clips to demonstrate how Community Land Trusts can and do work after which there was a presentation by Geoff Philippotts from Wickham Community Land Trust to tell their story, the ups and downs but very successful outcome eventually. He was most informative and helpful and very easy to listen to .

Bill then showed photos of two sites that have been identified as possible sites for the CLT to progress with. The first is owned by New Forest District Council and is situated in Carters Close where the old garages are. Edward Heron is looking into this site and we are waiting to hear from him. The second site is part of the paddock at Folly Hill, home to Bill and Brenda.

After that the audience were invited to ask questions if they wished to.

1. Mark Clark wished to make an observation rather than question and this was that the Templeton's site was very well screened but there would not be many sites in the village as well screened as this and we would need to choose sites very carefully.
2. Eve Gillmon suggested that the 2011 Housing Act gave priority to Community Land Trusts with planning applications and allowed them to by-pass the normal planning procedures which did not allow development in the National Park even if it was deemed affordable housing. Geoff Philippotts said that this was not the case as the normal planning procedures applied to applications by a CLT.

Eve also asked why there appeared to be competition between the PC and the CLT? The reply was that all planning applications would have to go through the correct procedures and that the PC would only be asked to say if they were in favour or not.

3. Doug Gemmell endeavoured to clarify the point which Eve Gillmon was making and asked whether a normal application for planning permission on a paddock in the National Park Authority would be accepted and it was agreed that it would not. Doug pointed out that this showed that an application for affordable housing by the CLT would receive preferential treatment. It was pointed out that such an application would come under the Rural Exception Site procedure which had always been in place. Doug went on to criticise the Rules of the Community Land Trust which he considered were hugely over complicated and he thought that they could easily be simplified, and rules drafted by the members adopted. Bill confirmed that the Rules were standard rules for Community Land Trusts accepted by us without amendment and they had been approved by the Financial Conduct Authority.
4. John Williamson asked if there were any other CLT schemes in any other National Parks. Bill was not sure of the answer but someone at the meeting said that the

answer was yes and there is one in Keswick which is in a National Park. John also criticised the way the CLT had been set up as he considered that a public meeting should have taken place earlier. Bill confirmed in reply that we could not hold a meeting until the result of the Housing needs survey had been issued confirming that there was a need.

5. Josh Lavis made a long statement in which he said that he is not against affordable housing per se but would not wish any infill to take place. He said Hale is not a dormitory area and possible occupants would not be living with their own peer group and so would be isolated. He went on to say that he thought that developers would jump in to make the most of possible opportunities. He considered that locations would need to be thought out very carefully, but definitely not as infill and not in Hale because if it happened here the families in such housing would then be living in isolation as they could not integrate into the community and it would not work.
6. Mark Clark pointed out that all the children of the residents who had lived in Hale for a long time went to Hale School and if the youngsters cannot now afford to live in the village what would happen to the School.
7. Ruth Tonkin said that she believes that the elderly can live in harmony with young people and they need each other.
8. Sloan Hickman raised the question asking how you would get the young to move on as he thought that once a family was installed in an affordable house it would want to remain there indefinitely. Geoff said that the people living in the Wickham houses stay until they are able to get together enough money for deposit or need house rather than a one bedroom flat. He also said that they had not experienced any anti social behaviour or rent arrears so far.
9. Ian Gemmell asked whether the CLT had held the first special meeting and Bill confirmed that it had. He then asked if that meant that the next AGM would not be held until about 12 to 15 months time and Bill confirmed that this was correct.
10. Paul Merrick said that he thinks that we need to look farther than housing and see if we can do anything else to help village. It was pointed out that we already have a school and a village hall but he thinks the community needs to be more objective?
11. Nigel Moraine-Griffiths asked whether there would be government cash available in addition to grants, gifts etc. The answer to this was "yes, hopefully".
12. Gaby Lucas pointed out that the demography of this village has changed in the last twenty years since she came to live here. Most people living here are now in their fifties or older and we really do need some more young people. It is most encouraging to see that we do have a few new arrivals in Hale with children and they are attending the School. She is very supportive of the CLT and its aims and objectives. She pointed out that the people we would look to house are members of local families and not people from Mars.

13. James Grigg stated that he had attended the School along with very many children of villagers present. He had a great time growing up here and had no complaints at all. He considered that there would be absolutely no difficulty in young people becoming integrated into the village. He considered that the village was lucky to be offered some land and should accept it gratefully. All his age group (30+) have left the village. He confirmed that there had been no problem with integration in his age group.
14. Sue Mercer asked whether the CLT is set up as a Charity. Bill confirmed that it is not at the present time but it can be converted at a later if this was considered appropriate. Charitable status would restrict the activities of the CLT to some extent but it would be for the members to decide. Geoff confirmed that Wickham CLT started as a non charitable CLT but had converted to charitable status.

Bill then thanked all for attending and asked any people who wished to join to put up their hands and he distributed application forms to them.

Robert then thanked Bill and Geoff for all the work they had put in for the evening and the meeting closed.