

Minutes of meeting of the Hale Village Community Land Trust held at Hale Village Hall
on Friday 4th January 2018

Bill Templeton welcomed the 23 members of the Hale Village Community Land Trust (“the CLT”) who attended the members section of the meeting which started at 7 p.m. He confirmed that we now have 28 members. He invited Catherine Whitmarsh, who had been appointed a Director of the CLT to introduce herself.

Catherine confirmed that she had lived in Hale virtually all her life. She moved here from Downton when she was one year old. Her grandparents moved to Hale in 1952 from Downton. Her Grandfather ran the barbers near the Tannery and was active in the community both there and in Hale when he retired. He carved the commemorative shield for the Coronation that hangs in the Village Hall.

Catherine attended Hale Primary School, as did her children. She was fortunate enough to live in one of the Council Houses, enabling her and her family to remain in the village, undertaking a number of voluntary roles and, when the time came, to care for her mother.

She works as an Occupational Therapist and manager in the Spinal Injuries Centre at Salisbury District Hospital and is also a volunteer for the National Trust in the New Forest, including practical conservation and wildlife surveying, as well as chairing the New Forest Local Advisory Board.

Bill then confirmed that since the last meeting of the members we had received advice from Tom Warder, a CLT Technical adviser who had recommended Will Anderson to prepare the Concept Plan for the CLT. We had also answered 89 questions raised by the Parish Council Housing Consultative Group who had not yet answered 15 questions raised with them by the Directors of the CLT. The Concept Plan had been prepared and was available for consideration by the meeting. He introduced Will Anderson who would be presenting the Concept Plan.

Bill went on to say that the Rules of the CLT set out the procedure for applying for shares but the Directors would like them also to set out separately the procedure for applying for membership. He confirmed that the following proposed addition of a clarifying rule 3.2 had been taken from a different set of model rules approved by the Financial Conduct Authority and he asked the members to decide whether to adopt it:

3.2 Admission of members

3.2.1 The board shall set, review and publish its policies and objectives for admitting new members. The board shall only admit new members in accordance with such policies.

3.2.2 An applicant for a share shall apply in writing to the CLT’s registered office:

2.2.2.1. setting out their reasons for applying in accordance with the CLT’s policies; and

2.2.2.2 pay the sum of one pound (which shall be returned to them if the application is not approved).

3.3.3 Every application shall be considered by the board in accordance with rule 6. The board has the power in its absolute discretion to accept or reject the application. If the application is approved, the name of the applicant and the other necessary particulars shall be entered in the register of members. One share in the CLT shall be issued to the applicant.

One of the members asked what rule 6 said. This was the Rule setting out the procedure for applying for shares and it was read out after which the members agreed unanimously to adopt the additional rule 3.2.

At 7.15 p.m. Bill then asked Will Anderson to present the Concept Plan. Will first of all introduced his Practice and explained that it was concentrating to some extent on Community Land Trust projects. The idea of a Concept Plan had been adopted for Community Land Trusts to provide the least expensive way of introducing ideas for consideration by the community. He went on to give a detailed presentation of the concept plan prepared by him finishing at 7.45 p.m. after which there was a question and answer session with the members when the following points were raised:

1. A pitched roof would be more in keeping with local properties.
2. Timber frame and timber cladding is a good idea.
3. The National Park Authority is keen on homes having integrated garages and it would be better not to have all cars parked together in front of the dwellings.
4. Is it intended to have a cattle grid at the Folly Hill Site? This was considered likely.
5. Would the hedge at the front of the Folly Hill site be retained? The hedge would be retained to maintain the seclusion of the site.
6. It is important that we have the support of the village. Everyone agreed.
7. A member referred to the development of two affordable houses at Bransgore by the New Forest National Park Authority and asked whether these would be subject to the right to buy. It was confirmed that these houses were built on land donated by a resident of Bransgore using funds collected by the Authority under Planning Agreements and the CLT understood that a long lease had been granted subject to a covenant that the land could only be used as a site for affordable houses which would not be sold.
8. Would the grant of permission for the Folly Hill site be a precedent for further development? As any grant of planning permission would come under the National Park Authority's policy for Rural Exception Sites for Affordable Housing which is a long established policy there would be no new precedent set up.
9. A member asked if there is a set number of affordable homes planned for the village? The Housing Needs Survey was referred to and this recommends 6 to 10.
10. The Directors of the CLT will change in the future. There was some discussion about this and as the small number of Councillors on the Parish Council made it difficult for the Parish Council to be a full member because of the need to consider and respond to Planning applications it was thought that it might be possible for the

Parish Council to nominate non-Councillors as Parish Council Directors of the CLT and this idea would be given consideration.

11. Is it correct that Carters Close may not be available to the CLT. This is the position as the CLT has put arguments to the New Forest District Council that the site at Carters Close should be managed by the community of Hale through the CLT with no right to buy applying but the response received so far is that the New Forest District Council adopted a policy at a meeting on 5th December 2018 that the Council will give priority to council house building on available sites. If the site is viable for the District Council to build on it will do this. If not then it may be made available to the CLT.
11. If Carters Close is made available will New Forest District Council want the CLT to pay for it. This question has not yet been addressed by the New Forest District Council.
12. The Garages at Carters Close are all in use except for one and the residents of Carters Close are not happy with the idea of them being demolished. It was stressed that it is a Concept Plan that is being considered for the first time and the proposals are in their early stages and all comments will be taken into account.

This concluded the members section of the meeting just before 8.15 p.m. and there was then a short interval during which residents of Hale who had not yet joined the CLT arrived.

The public section of the meeting commenced at 8.17 p.m. and Bill welcomed the 33 non-member residents of Hale who had joined the meeting. He confirmed that the meeting was intended to be a friendly meeting to share the Concept Plan which is at an early stage and the CLT would be taking on board comments which are made. Anyone who wished to comment would be given the opportunity to do so without any interruptions and he asked everyone to listen to the presentation also without interruptions.

A Video clip of a Countryfile program about rural housing was then shown to remind everyone present what the CLT was trying to achieve.

Bill then confirmed that he had received a copy of the minutes of the Hale Housing Consultative Group meeting and wished to comment briefly on these. He was pleased to read that the Group has now moved on from discussion about the Housing Needs Survey and is making positive investigations. He confirmed that the CLT members share the view that the CLT needs to be an organisation run by the Community and that the Parish Council must be involved in the management of affordable housing in the village. It had been his hope that the Parish Council would be a permanent member but he now appreciated that because of the planning issues this might not be possible. He was now thinking that the answer may be for the Parish Council to nominate someone who is not a Parish Councillor to serve as Director of the CLT and this possibility would be investigated.

Before setting up the CLT, detailed investigations were carried out as to what would be the best vehicle for management of affordable housing in the village and he has a detailed Community Land Trust Manual which he would be happy to share with the Consultative Group. The concerns were to make sure that any housing would be run by the community, would not be subject to a right to buy and would be managed locally for the benefit of local

people.

Bill confirmed that Robert Aitken-Sykes before he retired had 35 years of experience in a firm of Specialist Surveyors managing estates of leasehold flats and houses in London with 2000 units under management on behalf of both freeholders and management companies. He operated long term maintenance programmes and represented Landlords and Residents Associations at Property Tribunals appearing as an expert witness and was on numerous occasions appointed by the Tribunal as the manager of housing units. During this time he dealt with Housing Associations and is very knowledgeable about the way Housing Associations are run. He then asked Robert to comment about this experience.

Robert confirmed that his experience of Housing Associations was not very good as they were generally managed somewhat remotely and without hands on management. He felt that the number of houses we were thinking of for Hale would be too low for a Housing Association to take a serious interest in and for this reason he felt that management by local people in the community who would know the occupants was preferable.

Bill then commented on the list of the possible sites and confirmed that the CLT had had meetings with Steve Avery of the National Park Authority about some of these. Mr Avery, looking at the sites from a planning application point of view, was positive about the Folly Hill site and the Carters Close Site and also the Tethering Drove Paddock on the North side of the road but very negative about any site on the South side of Tethering Drove and also very negative about sites towards Home Farm and Hale House. The Directors of the CLT were not aware of Mr Ogg's site as a possibility and this was not considered by Mr Avery. The CLT will liaise with the Housing Needs Consultative Group to ascertain how far discussion with the owners has progressed.

Bill pointed out that the notes to the questionnaire are biased against Hale Village sites. For example the distance from Woodfalls Cross to the post office is greater than half a kilometre so that there is no-where in the village that meets this. Most sites in the village are near or adjoining Sites of Special Scientific interest. A lot of properties in Hale have their own private drainage systems and are not connected to gas. So far as employment opportunities are concerned we have a primary school with teachers and classroom assistants and he thought he was correct in saying that none of them live in the village, we have recently lost a painter and decorator who lived in the village and Brian Hartas has just retired and we have no qualified electrician to take his place. The questionnaire is suitable for a town but is not really appropriate for a rural village.

At 8.35 p.m. Bill then introduced Will Anderson who repeated his introduction of his Practice and his detailed introduction of the Concept Plan prepared by him for the benefit of the residents who had joined the meeting. The presentation lasted for 30 minutes finishing at 9.05 p.m.

There followed a question and answer session for the full meeting when the following points were raised:

1. Two residents have enquired about buying some land at Carters Close from New

Forest District Council and have been refused with the reason given that it is community land.

2. The residents of Carters Close are upset at the idea of losing the garages which are all let except for one.
3. The residents of Carters Close and Tethering Drove should all have been consulted before plans were drafted as the CLT is interfering in their lives.
4. The residents of the houses in Tethering Drove are upset at the fact that they would be overlooked if the houses shown in the Concept Plan were built.
5. The comment that the New Forest District Council was likely to make full use of the site was considered by one resident to be scare-mongering.
6. If the New Forest District Council did agree to transfer the site to the CLT would the CLT be required to purchase it? This question could not be answered at this time as the point had not yet been addressed.
7. What is the target for new homes in the New Forest? Robert Aitken-Sykes answered this point so far as he could but the precise number was not known.
8. What would the rent be for the affordable houses if they were built. This would depend on the costs involved. This would be the cost of land if not free and the cost of building them and how much of this had to be borrowed as the rent would need to cover the cost of interest and repayments of loans and management costs. The aim would be to build as economically as possible and to set the rents as close to 50% of market rent as was realistic. The rents of Community Land Trust properties were usually between 65% of market rent and 80% of market rent. There is one two bed roomed property in Hale which is being advertised at a rent of £15,000.00 per annum but which has not yet been let at this rent so it may be higher than the market rent.
9. Can we be sure that local people will be allocated the houses? The CLT will have an allocation policy which will set out the priorities which will be applied and this will favour local people.
10. One resident who had experience of planning appeals asked whether any precedent would be set in the event of an appeal against a refusal of a planning application under the Rural Exception policy. The answer was given by Robert Aitken-Sykes who confirmed that the policy only applied to affordable housing.
11. Would the planning authority Rural Exception Policy be adhered to. The answer was “yes”.
12. One resident commented that there is plenty of land in Hale Park which could be used for all the required affordable housing. It was confirmed that the Planning Authority considered this to be outside the village and therefore unsuitable.
13. One resident commented that land at the Woodgreen end on Hale Purlieu had been considered by Mr Avery as a possible site which suggested that use of the Folly Hill site could set a precedent for sites of affordable housing all along the Hale Purlieu road. It was pointed out that there has never been any intention of such an idea and it certainly was not considered by Mr Avery.
14. The last point was from one resident who did not think that anyone in the village really supported the CLT and suggested that we were on a vanity trip. Bill confirmed that this suggestion was certainly not the case.

Bill thanked Will Anderson and everyone else for attending and there being no further business the meeting was closed.