

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**OF THE THURLESTONE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

**Held in the Yeo Room of the Parish Hall on 6 June 2017 at 2pm**

**Present:** Tony Goddard (Chairman) (AG), Sue Crowther (SC), Robin MacDonald (RM), Kit Marshall (KM), Jill Munn (JM), Charlie Mitchelmore (CM), Judy Pearce (JP), David Martin (DM) and Chris White (CW)

1. **Apologies:** Gary Luddington (GL)
2. **Minutes of meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017:** Agreed previously by email
3. **Matters arising not on Agenda:** None
4. **SHDC Community Housing Initiative:** JP and TG had attended this workshop organised by SHDC on 17<sup>th</sup> May. TG opened with the following overview accompanied by a slide presentation:
  - The background to this workshop was that the government, in an effort to help councils affected by high levels of second home ownership in their communities, has produced a **Community Housing Fund**. This fund is to be used by councils to help them deliver housing that is affordable to local people in order to tackle the problem second homes can cause in reducing housing supply.
  - The allocation of the fund to SHDC is £1.881 million, reflecting the high number of second homes in South Hams and lack of affordable housing for local people: the average house price in the SHDC area being over £350,000, whereas the average income is under £20,000 (Slides 6 & 7).
  - SHDC has as a matter of policy enthusiastically endorsed community-led housing and has appointed David Parkes, a surveyor with experience in this field, to lead the implementation of the policy.
  - Community-led housing may involve self-build, although this had been found to be problematic and the advice was against it and more in favour of custom housebuilding, where the build is contracted out to professional builders and purchasers are offered the opportunity to do the final finishing.
  - The essential ingredients of a community-led housing scheme are:
    1. The community must be involved in key decision making (what, where and for whom) throughout the process; and
    2. The community group must take a long term role in ownership, management and stewardship; and
    3. The benefits to the local area/specifyed community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity (Slide 4).

- The success of a project will largely depend on finding a local landowner willing to sell land at less than market value, typically around £10,000 per plot.
- It may also enable local community groups to deliver small-scale community-led housing on sites that are unlikely to be of interest to mainstream housebuilders. Experience has shown that developments of between 10 and 15 units are the most economically viable, but theoretically there is no reason why developments of 5 units may not be contemplated.
- SHDC will fund viability assessments and provide planning and other expertise and is even prepared to consider using its borrowing ability to provide finance for appropriate schemes.
- The scheme was recommended as being of interest to the parish, but subject to further research and finding a younger working group to pursue the idea.

JP expanded on the following topics:

- Exception Sites Policy. JP explained this was an old policy from the days before the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It allowed affordable housing contiguous to or just outside the settlement boundary, as long as all the houses were retained as affordable housing in perpetuity. This relied heavily on government subsidies, which are no longer available.
- Village Housing Initiative. This is similar to Exception Sites but allows up to 3 market houses on a site to cross-subsidise the affordable houses. Examples include Rattery, Churchstow, Frogmore, Alston Gate in Marlborough and The Ridings in West Alvington. Housing associations are involved and the affordable houses remain affordable in perpetuity.
- Feasibility Grants. SHDC will make a grant of up to £25k for a feasibility study. In addition, the money received recently from the government to compensate for second homes is available for the same purpose.
- Self-build and custom housebuilding register. Since April 2016, LPAs have been obliged to keep a register of people wishing to obtain housing by the above methods, and where they would like to live. If any schemes come up, these people have to be informed. In theory, LPAs should be providing serviced plots for this purpose. In practice, available funds and capacity have not made this common in all but a few LPAs. Teignbridge has one scheme. Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding>

For the slide presentation – [click here](#)

## 5. Working Group updates:

**Infrastructure - DAAT helipad:** RM said DAAT had identified 3 preferred sites:

- At the top of the village (part of the marquee field) which was best for DAAT but they had reservations because of grazing.

- The field below the marquee field site, which would need to be levelled but there were funds available to fund this.
- The golf practice ground by the tennis courts.

Toby Russell of DAAT was still considering these.

**Resources - Community Heating:** CW said the Rural Community Energy Fund had approved our application and £18k was available for a feasibility study to be carried out by Devon Association for Renewable Energy. There was discussion as to whether this was for the steering group to take this forward, since was really for the parish council to progress as a project, if there was going to be one.

**Resources - Community WiFi.** CW said this was proving more difficult. Initial contacts had led nowhere. Tim Beavan of the DR Company had put CW in touch with a firm in Buckfastleigh, but it was proving difficult to make headway with them too. Connecting Devon and Somerset would supply vouchers for individual connections in the '10%' left out of the BT supply. Overall, this was not proving an easy problem to solve, or even to obtain reliable information.

6. **Project Plan:** SC outlined the next steps. Once the present NPIERS Healthcheck and graphics have been completed, the draft plan will go out to parish consultation. It will also be sent to SHDC for Strategic Environmental Assessment screening. The parish consultation will take place over 6 weeks and will rely on steering group members to be available for 2 or 3 weekend drop-in meetings in the Parish Hall to assist parishioners with submitting their comments. Once the plan has been amended, it will then go to SHDC for a further 6-week consultation before being submitted to an independent examiner and finally, the parish referendum. A consultation statement and consultation statement is also required, plus the evidence base. These are detailed documents that will be prepared in the course of the parish consultation.
7. **AOB:** none
8. **Date of the Next Meeting:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at 2pm in the Yeo Room