

# **THORVERTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST – BOARD of DIRECTORS**

## **Report on the meeting held on Wednesday 31 July 2024**

### **Present:**

Andrew Foster (AF - Chair), Steve Rendell (SR), Stuart Crebo (SC), Bry Uglow (BU), Andrew Wiles (AW), Roger Cashmore (RC), Andrew Saunders (AS), Noel Tancock (NT), Geoff Pook (GP), Jim Roberts (JR), Jan Wills (JW)

Minutes Secretary: Helen Ratcliffe (HR)

### **Apologies and Introduction**

All members were present.

### **Minutes from the Steering Group Meeting held on 26 June 2024**

The minutes were approved.

### **Matters arising**

In relation to minute 5.3 – bank account; it was reported that, as yet, there has been no progress on opening a bank account.

In relation to minute 8.2 – payment for meeting room; it was noted that AS had paid for the room for this meeting and that AF, SR, AW, NT and HR had paid for previous meetings.

### **Briefing Document**

The revised briefing document (Appendix B) was received and approved.

Dissemination/Sharing: It was agreed that, as the same information contained within the document also appears on the website, there should be no barriers to sharing/disseminating it as a ‘taster’ document; It was also agreed, however, that it should now be ‘frozen’ with no new document being produced without Board approval.

### **Housing Mix**

There was much discussion about the numbers and mix of housing to which we should aspire, particularly on the North Site; central to the discussion was what the actual need for rental housing is and how the mix of what might be proposed or possible would impact on the future of the village as a whole;

One view was that we should aim to be generous in our provision of rented social housing, although concern was expressed over the way in which any over-provision would then be allocated – however, as the North Site is an exception site, a carefully drafted S106, submitted as part of a joint planning application with an HA, should provide the necessary controls in this respect.

The question of whether it would be possible to buy the whole plot, but only develop some of it (at least to start with) was raised.

It was noted that some of the homes shown on the drawing could be made available for self-build/self-commissioned housing and that, given a Self-Commissioned Housing Act had been passed in 2015 and a register of people keen to do this should be available, there may be interest from MDDC in this aspect of the project;

It was agreed that, in order not to over-complicate matters at the moment and to retain momentum, the element of flexibility in our thinking about the number, type and phasing of homes should be taken forward to the meetings with MDDC and HAs.

It was noted that the Housing Needs Survey had demonstrated a need at a particular moment in time and that circumstances for individuals and the village (and, given the new Government, the country) may well have changed in the meantime. It was therefore agreed that Devon Communities Together should be approached to establish whether they are able to provide any more detailed data analysis from the Housing Needs Survey which they undertook on our behalf, which may help to inform our decisions for housing mix proposals.

### **Governance arrangements - update from Corporate Governance Group**

Code of Good Practice, Membership Policy and Data Protection Policy

It was agreed that, in accordance with the Chair's introduction to this meeting, a sentence about us all operating within a culture of mutual respect should be added to the Code of Good Practice.

It was noted that, in the Preamble of the Code of Good Practice, "TCLT" should be replaced with the more generic "CLT". With these amendments, the documents were approved;

It was also agreed that Jim Roberts would undertake the role of Data Protection Officer.

### **Meeting with Aster HA**

It was agreed that, although Aster have indicated that they could meet on 11/12 September, dates in the following week should be investigated so that AF can attend.

### **Meeting with Teign HA**

It was noted that Teign have proposed a meeting on 17 September and agreed that this date should be accepted;

It was agreed that AF and AW should sort out the practicalities for both this and the Aster meeting;

It was also agreed that GP, as our current external adviser, should attend these meetings if possible.

There was some discussion about the pros and cons of using the expertise of Middlemarch to help deliver our agenda: on the one hand, they themselves have wondered what they could bring in addition to the undoubted expertise which already exists within the Board; on the other, they have ready access to all the appropriate legal documentation etc and could possibly be used for that purpose on a retainer rather than in a partnership arrangement. It was agreed that there is a need to remain open-minded about all such relationships and that, as both Aster and Teign have expressed a keenness to work with Middlemarch, it would be prudent to revisit this after the meetings with Aster and Teign.

### **Discounted Market Sales (DMS) expertise**

It was noted that, as DMS is not a main-stream type of tenure, there may be a need to buy in some additional external expertise at some point;

It was agreed that the concept of DMS should be added to the agenda for the meeting with Arron Beecham (MDDC) to gauge his interest/experience;

It was noted that Cornwall County Council do have some experience with DMS and may be worth contacting in the future.

The prospect of approaching LiveWest, who have not hitherto been interested in working with CLTs, was raised and it was agreed that we should just stick with Aster and Teign for the moment;

### **Financial Feasibility – update from Finance Group**

The Income and Expenditure Account was received.

Update re grants; it was agreed that this will be raised with Arron Beecham.

Business Plan It was noted that the development of the Business Plan will provide coherence for our agenda and that CLT advice is that it should be started early in the process; It was agreed that it would be prudent and logical to start the Business Plan after the meetings with MDDC/Aster/Teign;

It was noted that the bank had requested a signed minute in relation to opening the account, which was duly provided; it was also noted that, without a Business Plan and equity, approaching Social Lenders for a loan is unlikely to be fruitful at this stage, although if development grants are available, there may be more prospect of success. Finally, it was noted that a further iteration of the model was available and would be circulated with these minutes.

### **Site due diligence – Update from Technical Group**

Report from Technical Group was received and it was noted that the majority of items within it had already been covered in the meeting; it was agreed that a further meeting with Homes England would be set up in September/October.

### **Community support/housing need – Update from Community Engagement Group**

The membership application form and process (Appendices Gi and Gii) were received and approved. It was noted that these were available via the website, via Focus and via the Post Office.

It was agreed that Andrew Foster would be the Membership Secretary for now.

All members of the Board were reminded that they should sign up as TCLT members as soon as possible; it was noted that an SGM should be held in late Autumn for the members of the CLT to confirm the Board.

### **Any Other Business**

Board/Group Operation and Communication

There was some discussion about the way in which the four groups are working, evolving and communicating, with a range of views expressed – from keeping the status quo, to asking the governance group to devise a process for the way in which tasks are allocated, worked upon and then reported back to the Board for decisions to be made;

It was agreed to maintain the status quo for the moment, but to make efforts to improve communication, particularly by ensuring that all information, including meeting dates and agendas, is shared appropriately;

In order to facilitate this, it was suggested that, as an adjunct to our website, an intranet is developed so that all members of the Board can contribute to it and ‘pull’ information rather than having to have it ‘pushed’ – AF and HR agreed to investigate taking this idea further.

### **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 6.30 in the Exeter Inn Skittle Alley