

THORVERTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
(Financial Conduct Authority registration no 9301)

Notes from the Public Open Meeting held on Wednesday 30 September 2026

1		Welcome and outline of proceedings
1.1		Andrew Foster welcomed everyone to the ninth Open Meeting and explained how it would run.
1.2		There were approximately 30 people present, together with Jo Petford from Hastoe Housing Association and Matt Sicolo from their architects, Sicolo Webb. Matt made a presentation on how Sicolo Webb had approached the project and then presented a design illustration.
2		Questions
2.1	Q	On the preferred outline plan, there is a large open space towards the back of the site; might further houses be added in the future and if not, what is its purpose?
	A	This space is intended to help with the drainage for the site, to add to the net biodiversity gain (BNG) and to act as a buffer between the development and Court Barton Close.
2.2	Q	How many parking spaces will each house have?
	A	There will be at least two allocated to each house, plus some visitor spaces.
2.3	Q	What will the site boundaries comprise?
	A	At the moment, the boundaries are shown as native hedgerow, although there is a need to be mindful of maintenance requirements. The green spaces and tree planting is intended to help with the water run-off from the hill behind.
2.4	Q	Has any consideration been given to trying to integrate the site more with the Court Barton development?
	A	Yes, but sadly the open space in Court Barton close is designed for parking rather than as a green space and so there are limited options for such integration.
2.5	Q	The density of houses on the site is quite low; is so much open space needed for the BNG?

	A	15 houses are planned at the moment, although it may be possible to fit just a couple more in; consideration does have to be given, however, to space for gardens and parking.
2.6	Q	Has consideration been given to both the transformer and SuDs?
	A	Yes, there is likely to be a new substation located to the rear of the site and, although there is still work to do by the consultant engineer in relation to the drainage, it is likely that it will go under the road to the South site.
2.7	Q	On the preferred outline plan, the roofs of six of the houses are at right angles to the preferred orientation for solar gain; will they still have solar panels?
	A	It is likely that Building Regulations will require solar panels to be installed.
2.8	Q	How long is it before these houses are likely to be built? People who indicated a need for them in the Housing Needs Survey may well have moved on by now.
	A	A planning application is likely to be submitted next year and, by being very explicit with the criteria for local connections, it will still be possible to prioritise local people in housing need.
2.9	Q	Should a further Housing Needs Survey be undertaken due to the amount of time elapsed since the last one?
	A	This tends to be a standard issue when dealing with exception site developments and it is unlikely that another survey will be undertaken – quite often it is found that numbers in need increase rather than decrease. The key is for local people to make sure that they are on the housing register.
2.10	Q	The local housing register website is not very helpful – how can people get on the register if the website won't let them?
	A	This is something which TCLT can help with – both in terms of the specific example given (Andrew Wiles offered to help personally with this) and in providing helpful information via the TCLT website.
2.11	Q	What form of heating will the houses have?
	A	The houses will be very well insulated and so there is unlikely to be a great need for significant heating; there will not be any gas heating and Hastoe's preference at the moment is for an all-electric system, although technologies are moving very quickly and the experience of trying to find people to maintain heat pumps has not been good.

2.12	Q	And, conversely, will there be any provision for cooling?
	A	An assessment will be carried out, taking into account insulation, shading and orientation, but it is unlikely that there will be an active cooling solution (although air-to-air heat pumps were highly recommended!).
2.13	Q	Is there anything out of the ordinary, from Hastoe's point of view, about working with TCLT? Given the availability of the grant to buy the land, how much negotiation power does TCLT have with Hastoe, in terms of, for example, the numbers of houses, the heating solutions, the length of time they can be untenanted etc?
	A	Every project is different, although the general process is similar and it is an advantage that TCLT had done a lot of preparatory work, including securing the grant. Without the grant, Hastoe would have wanted to progress the project anyway, but having it will make it much more attractive to Homes England. Hastoe do try to work in a collaborative way, working towards compromises (if necessary) together. The letting policy is the most important aspect for TCLT to prioritise during any negotiations.
2.14	Q	Are there any details in relation to proposed building materials?
	A	Nothing has been finalised yet, but themes will be taken from what is already here in the village – for example, cobbled leats, local stone and (off) white render. It was noted that bright white render can require a lot of maintenance to prevent dirty streaks and it does stand out against the landscape – although opinion was divided on the desirability of this!
2.15	Q	How does Hastoe cope with the risk of being involved with building projects in the current climate of rising costs?
	A	Hastoe is a charity and so, unlike commercial developers, is not driven by making profits; it also has a longer-term view of break-even points. It has built over 7000 houses over the last 20 years and is continuing to build despite the current circumstances.
2.16	Q	When might more detailed plans be available?
	A	With a fair wind, Spring 2027, at which time drop-in sessions will be held prior to the planning application being submitted.
2.17	Q	In the context of Wain Homes' proposals for affordable housing (albeit with affordable rental rather than social rental properties) within the Lynch Road development, please could TCLT remind people in the village that TCLT's affordable housing scheme will fulfil the majority of the identified need, so Wain Homes' assertion that they will be fulfilling

	A	that need is not justified. Yes, we need better to disseminate this message and also articulate the advantages of our scheme in providing homes for locally connected households with a relatively low level of need, perhaps with a post on the Thorverton Community Facebook page in addition to the usual channels of communication.
2.18		It was noted that it would be courteous to check with the Church Commissioners before any designs reach the public domain.