

THE COMMUNITY HOUSING WORKING GROUP.

Minutes of first meeting: 26th May 2006.

1. PRESENT.

Robin Hogg (RH) , Robin Geldard (RG), Chris Bradley (CB), Suzie Cooper (SC), Nicky Tewson (NT).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE .

Paul Francombe (PF).

3. DISCUSSION & DECISIONS.

* **The General Approach.** It was accepted that the Working Group had a major task in front of it and would need to manage the workload in sub groups if it was to achieve results to the timescale set by the NNPC.

There was an immediate requirement to establish the basic PRINCIPLES and FACTS that would underpin all the work:-

* PRINCIPLES:

- The study would be transparent to everyone.
- That said; Privacy & Confidentiality would have to be paramount when dealing with Landowners and similar groups. This would limit the amount of information that could be published on the web until the final presentation of the Working Group's report towards the end of the year.
- Each potential site being considered for "Community Housing" would be judged equally on its individual merits according to a set of factors yet to be worked out. The aim would be to create a genuinely level playing field for everyone.
- Though the CHWG had been presented with a requirement to build approximately 100 Affordable Housing Units, there was unanimous agreement that, if the Parish was to grow organically and in the interests of its local people, strict criteria of eligibility would be required to meet the needs of the two villages.
- Any plan for Community Housing should, therefore, meet the true local demand for such housing and allow the village to grow organically.
- The aim for any Community Housing Scheme would be to ensure that Community Housing remained affordable in perpetuity and under the control of the local community.

* FACTS:

- The village questionnaire had produced 75% in favour of Affordable Housing and 50% in favour of extending the village boundary to achieve this. What was not known was **the number of those who actually needed and would take up any Community Housing built**. There was an urgent need to create a set of criteria against which to assess the eligibility of those for whom such housing should be built.
- **Local Infrastructure:** water, sewage, electricity, gas, communications, transport, parking and other factors all had to be investigated before any sensible site assessments could be made.
- **House Building Prices.** There was a need to explore the actual likely costs of affordable homes, both self build and by outside contractors.
- **Environmental issues.** The CHWG was under remit to try and achieve the most cost effective approach to the use of both energy and water. Details of the most suitable technologies needed to be acquired.
- **Employment Land.** There was a need to discover the true demand for employment land beyond that already available.

- **ACTIONS:**

- We would need to establish who was genuinely prepared to offer land at less than commercial rates in support of Community Housing. RG and CB would visit each of those thought to be prepared to consider such arrangements and report back on the results. Such discussions would remain confidential.
- There was an urgent need to create some criteria against which to judge the suitability of each site. RH and SC would generate proposals for discussion.
- We also need to identify what information the Housing List could give us about the “local” need for community housing. SC to would talk to the appropriate people at SHDC.
- In addition to the requirement to sample local needs through the Parish Magazine and the NNPC website, there was a requirement for all Working Group members to sample village opinion so that we have a real feel for local requirements and timescale.
- There was a need to create a set of eligibility criteria, linked to what has worked in other similar schemes, and fits the requirements of those local people who might wish to take up community housing under some future scheme. NT and PF would come forward with proposals.
- RH would continue to explore infrastructure matters, likely building costs and similar basic facts in support of future decisions.
- Because of the urgent need to discover how many people from the Parish would actually be eligible for and would wish to take up any Community Housing that might be built, it was agreed that RH would write a piece for discussion by the CHWG for subsequent inclusion in the Parish Magazine and for publication on the web and on notice boards in the two villages.
- Employment Land. In similar vein we needed to discover the real need for such land. RH would combine this requirement with the one above.
- The form of Community or Development trust that might be required could be left until we had a surer feel for which Sites and potential residents might be available for Community Housing. RG and CB had reviewed a mass of material and there was general agreement that there was no point in re-inventing the wheel at this stage.
- RH would continue to handle the development of the Final Report.

- **TIMESCALE.**

- It was agreed that all the FACTS should be assembled by the end of June prior to the next meeting. This would be held, as convenient to members, towards the end of June or early in July
- A “Work in Progress Report” should be forward to the NNPC on completion.
- There would be a further meeting at the end of July.
- A Report would be sent to the NNPC in September.
- The final report would be sent to the NNPC at the end of November.

Robin Hogg
Chairman