

PROPOSAL & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A SEEND COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (CLT)

Recommendations agreed in principle at Seend Parish Council Meeting - 28th November, 2017

Final version of document agreed by Seend Parish Council, Seend Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Seend CLT Steering Group: February 2018

Seend Parish Council:

- a) approves the setting up of a Seend Community Land Trust, with a Steering Group, under the auspices of the Parish Council.
- b) will nominate one/two councillors to serve on the CLT Steering Group.
- c) requests that a member of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group serves on the CLT Steering Group.
- d) requests that our Wiltshire Councillor serves on the Steering Group and/or other Wiltshire Council representative, as may be appropriate.
- e) will support a public meeting to be arranged by the Seend CLT's current Steering Group that will seek to inform the local community and recruit members.
- f) will join the National CLT Network at an annual cost of £49, thereby gaining access to grants from the CLT Start Up Fund and other support.
- g) will approve a sum of £500 from which the Steering Group can meet expenses as necessary prior to achieving start-up funding.

1. Background

1.1. The Seend Housing Needs Survey published in June 2016 highlighted that the Parish has a lower percentage of social housing than the Wiltshire average, with very little turnover in the stock. There are 60 homes for social rent in a stock of 479 homes (2011 Census).

1.2. The cost of housing in the Parish may make it difficult for young families to buy a home here. Older people wishing to 'down-size' may not find suitable properties. This suggests the need for the provision of some new housing, and the provision thereof was supported by 86% of those who responded to the WC Housing Needs Survey (42%, 214 replies). The survey identified the need for 7 'affordable' homes of various sizes in October 2016, but of course this figure can fluctuate.

1.3. A local CLT could develop homes for rent, which would be let via a Local Connections Policy to local people registered with Wiltshire Council as being in housing need; shared ownership homes providing a ladder into home ownership; covenanted freehold bungalows for older people who wish to downsize without having to leave the parish; and freehold homes to cross-subsidize the affordable homes. The actual mix of homes on any site and the allocation of rented homes would be a matter for discussion and agreement between Seend CLT, Seend Parish Council and Wiltshire Council with support of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4. With recent changes in Government policy housing associations are under pressure to sell the freehold of their highest value stock. By affordable homes being owned freehold by a Community Land Trust (CLT) local housing needs can be served in perpetuity, i.e. homes owned by a CLT will not be sold to tenants and then become second homes or buy to let private properties.

1.5. A CLT is a legally recognised social enterprise defined in the Housing & Regeneration Act 2008, clause 79 by two conditions:

1.5.1 The body is established for the express purpose of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of a local community by acquiring and managing land and other assets in order:

(a) to provide a benefit to the local community

(b) to ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust's members think benefits the local community.

1.5.2 The body is established under arrangements which are expressly designed to ensure that:

- any profits from its activities will be used to benefit the local community (rather than being paid directly to members);

- individuals who live or work in the specified area have the opportunity to become members of the Trust

- the Trust is controlled by its members.

1.6 A public meeting was held on 11th July, attended by approx. 60 people. It was agreed that further information was required.

1.7 The National CLT Network was approached and a grant of £500 was awarded to hold a Scoping day with a national CLT technical adviser. Ian Crawley, a volunteer based in Gloucestershire, visited Seend on 18th October. Following discussions with interested residents, and a tour of potential housing sites, he made a presentation in the Pavilion. He shared information on other CLTs and answered a wide range of questions on the possible issues for a CLT in Seend, including the relationship with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. He provided a report on the next steps, available on request. He will continue to provide advice and assistance.

2. Next Steps and Further Recommendations

2.1. The key next step is the formal endorsement of the Parish Council, hence this report. Public membership of the CLT is critical to its credibility, a public meeting should then be held to launch the CLT and seek members and those interested in serving on the Steering Group.

2.2. The formal involvement of the local Wiltshire Councillor, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is critical and therefore, as with other CLTs, places on the Steering Group and subsequent CLT Board should be reserved for them to sit alongside residents.

2.3. The Parish Council considers that it is critical that the CLT does not undermine the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) and therefore it is essential that there is close liaison and dialogue between the NPSG and the CLT.

- The CLT & NPSG will coordinate their activity timelines.

- The NPSG will identify/confirm housing need and sites for development, including sites that the CLT may wish to bring forward. Housing need and possible sites will be part of the consultation that will need to take place during 2018-19 and will be subject to the Parish referendum that will determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan is accepted, refined or rejected.

2.5 The Parish Council considers that for the CLT to be successful and to gain the trust of parishioners then the representation on the CLT Board must be as broad as possible so that it ensures that it is as representative of the Parish as is possible.

2.6 The Parish Council will review the progress towards and its support for a Seend CLT. Reviews will be held on a monthly basis and will be in line with the monthly reporting of the NPSG. The PC will consequently have an agenda item that will provide for feedback on the CLT's progress and which will include consideration of any request for funding from the earmarked £500 as agreed.

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Amendments: Tony Murch, Chair Seend Parish Council; J McManus, Seend Parish Council

Annex.

What is a Community Land Trust (CLT)?

It is a community- led organisation, operating in and for a defined geographical community, usually the area of a Parish Council. What is most important is that the community area is one that people identify with as somewhere they live and/or work. The CLT is run by local volunteers. It is set up to develop and own land and buildings the community needs. It holds that property in trust - it can never be sold for private profit. Any surplus from the CLT's activities is reinvested in that community. A CLT is legally defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, but must still be registered as a Community Benefit Society, Community Interest Company or Company Limited by Guarantee. These types of legal structure provide those who become involved, with defined governance and limited liability protection.

How are individuals involved? CLTs help communities become more resilient and sustainable by giving all those living and/or working over 16 years of age a stake (through a £1 share for life) in the CLT assets; and a say in what the CLT does through membership, or standing and being elected as a Director. The test of whether a CLT is fit for purpose will include the clarity of the vision and its relevance to local people; the size of the membership and their involvement; and the transparency of how it conducts its business. These give credibility to the CLT in the eyes of local people, local government, government agencies and the business community.

What do CLTs do? There are over 170 CLTs across England and Wales. The majority either have housing in place or are well on their way to building affordable homes. They are located where people have come together to build affordable homes or refurbish derelict homes for local people in housing need; build a village hall or community centre; rescue shops and pubs; grow food ,on allotments and through community orchards and farms; plant and manage woodland - to create a better quality of life for all.

Alone or in a partnership? A CLT may obtain funding, develop, manage and maintain the community asset itself. Alternatively, it might enter into partnership with a Housing Association or other organisation or enterprise. However, the community always retains control, through the CLT holding the freehold or the long leasehold of the asset.

You are never on your own! Advice and financial assistance is available specifically for communities wishing to set up a CLT - to develop the vision, prepare a business plan, become registered and obtain professional advice. The National CLT Network (website below) is an independent social enterprise with full-time staff. One of its roles is to manage the CLT Start-up Fund through which grants and loans are available. There is a network of regional umbrella CLTs which exist to provide advice and support, including the Wiltshire CLT. There are CLT Technical Advisors, who will work with your community to help build the competence and confidence to set up a CLT and develop assets for the benefit of the community. There are also the volunteers themselves who have set up a CLT in their own community and developed assets, who are keen to share their experience with those just starting out.

To find out more. Go to the website www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk

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