



Annual General Meeting

Held in the Village Hall on 22 August 2021

Minutes

Colin Passey, Chair of SPCLT, introduced the other board members: Heather Culpin (Secretary), Peter Drew (Treasurer), Peter Bowers, David Cutts, David Disney and Rachel Jasinska. Colin also restated our aim of providing affordable housing for the community.

1. Apologies and attendance

Apologies were received from thirteen members.

Eleven members attended

We had nine proxy voting forms from members who couldn't attend. All voted for the various items on the agenda or nominated the chair (Colin) or the secretary (Heather) to vote for them.

2. **Approval of minutes** of last AGM held on 7 November 2020. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Directors' Report

Firstly Colin explained that last year's AGM should have been in or soon after March, but due to Covid it had to be postponed so it was eventually held late and via Zoom. Each AGM should be within three months of the previous one, so this year we are holding it in August, and hope that next year it will be in May, getting us almost back to the time of year when we started holding AGMs.

The last nine months have been dominated by two big factors – Covid and the Higher Town development plans which went to an appeal which only ended a few months ago.

Seven committee meetings have been held, all via Zoom (at no expense to the CLT!)

We have had discussions with landowners and agents.

There has been a change in our partner organisations - Wessex Community Assets projects have become the responsibility of Middlemarch Community Led Housing CIC. However we still have the same excellent consultant to help us – J Lambe.

As reported last year, 24 sites have been considered. Some were ruled out immediately, some investigated further, but none was viable. We continued to check with MDDC, Highways, and the Environment Agency. Since then we and/or our consultant have checked the status of all potential sites, of various sizes, around the village. Unfortunately all have issues, such as road access, flood risk, impact on landscape, access to services, cost of dealing with issues, and land option agreements between landowners and developers or land agents. The Higher Town site has to include an element of affordable housing, but we do not yet know what form this will take. We will try to find out more.

If we find a suitable site it must have support from our members and from the community, so we need to present it as widely as possible to the community, which is very difficult at present.

We intend to continue to discuss options with all relevant interests.

Members asked a few questions:

Last year we mentioned a possible site that might come forward – what happened to it? Colin explained that no plans were put forward for it, and as far as we know are not likely to be now that the Higher Town site has been approved.

As the housing needs survey only identified a need for 6 or 7 affordable houses are we considering smaller sites as well as larger ones? Yes we are, but no viable smaller site has been found. If one were offered to us we would be very interested. Also the survey was a snapshot in time two years ago, and we suspect that there are even more people families in need after the problems caused to the economy by coronavirus, so we would like a larger site if possible.

Can we look at sites outside the settlement area? Yes we can, as ‘exception sites’ can be used for affordable housing. And we have indeed looked at every site around the outskirts of the village, finding out who the owners are and whether the sites have any known problems. Unfortunately none of the sites we looked at is available or usable. Also we cannot look too far outside the settlement area as we would then incur the extra costs of providing utilities or road access.

Can we alter the criteria we are using which are limiting our options? The criteria are largely not set by us, they come from planning, highways, the environment agency and so on. We have approached the relevant departments where necessary, eg asking highways to look at access points. The only limitation we have to set ourselves is cost – a CLT cannot afford as much as a commercial developer.

- 4. Finances.** The financial accounts to 31st March 2021, circulated by email earlier, were approved unanimously.

- 5. Audit.** We agreed to dispense with a paid-for audit last year, and as very little has happened with our finances this year either, we suggested we should do the same this year. This was agreed unanimously. We will review it again next year.

- 6. Elections.** Heather explained that our rules state that at every AGM three directors must stand down, and they should be the three who have been on the board longest without being re-elected. They can stand again. This year David Cutts, David Disney and Rachel Jasinska stood down. All were willing to stand again, and were nominated and seconded. No other nominations were received.

All were elected unanimously.

- 7. AOB - None**

Thank you all for attending,

Colin Passey, Chair