

# Upper Coly Valley Community Land Trust Ltd

Special General Meeting, Northleigh Village Hall

4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 7.30pm

Attending: P. Beard, M. Camillin, J. Little, B. Sherlow, P. Munday, P. Retter, A. Burgess, A. Stevens, R. Hare, S. Kastner, C. Worrall, W. Rich, C. Matthews, L. Skinner, L. Denny,

Apologies: J. Fulton, J. Fulton, L. Bateman, S. Retter.

## 1. Introduction

The meeting was arranged to respond to a letter dated 24 October 2017 from 5 members of the Community Land Trust and a subsequent letter dated 03 December 2017 from one member of the Upper Coly Valley Community Land Trust (UCV CLT). The authors of the letter requested it not be published outside of the membership of the Community Land Trust. The points highlighted in the letters are therefore summarised below in sections.

(The various website links in blue text below can be linked to by holding the CTRL key and clicking on the link.)

## 2. National Community Land Trust Network Guidelines (NCLTN)

The letter highlighted the NCLTN guidelines found at [www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk) and suggested that the structures and activities of the UCV CLT be compared to them.

The Board responded by highlighting the section of the NCLTN's website "Have a Plan of Action" (<http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/funding-and-resources/resources/start-a-clt--setting-up-and-building-membership>) and compared the activities of the UCV CLT to it to illustrate that the Board was exactly following the published guidelines in the establishment of the UCV CLT. (NCLTN website extracts shown in italics with [www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org](http://www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org) website links showing when these activities occurred linked to in blue):

- *Get some initial support to scope out what you want to do and how. First contact the National CLT Network to find out what support is available;*
  - Local Housing Needs Report published August 2014  
[https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool\\_timeline/local-housing-needs-report/](https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool_timeline/local-housing-needs-report/)
  - Parish Site Appraisal Reports published March 2015  
[https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool\\_timeline/parish-site-appraisal-reports/](https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool_timeline/parish-site-appraisal-reports/)

- *Hold a public meeting to inform the wider community of your plans, gain their agreement to go ahead, and ask for people to volunteer and join you;*
  - Public Meeting held November 2015
  - [https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool\\_timeline/explaining-how-a-community-land-trust-will-work/](https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool_timeline/explaining-how-a-community-land-trust-will-work/)
- *Plan meetings or establish working groups to look at specific tasks. This could be establishing the CLT's legal structure, looking for sites, and collecting evidence of housing need;*
  - Ten Steering Group meetings were held between July 2016 and May 2017
  - <https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/project-timeline/>
- *Open a bank account and start raising funds. See the Funding section on sources of funding.*
  - UCV CLT formally set up in May 2017 allowing a bank account to be opened and the Founding Board of the UCV CLT to be established
  - [https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool\\_timeline/clt-board-meeting-founding-board-appointed/](https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/cool_timeline/clt-board-meeting-founding-board-appointed/)
- *Get the word out about your plans via articles in the local press or newsletter.*
  - Articles in *The Link* local magazine and/or notices on the Parish noticeboards were distributed in November 2015, December 2016, January 2017, July 2017 and November 2017 regarding the activities of the UCV CLT.

BS, PM, CM noted that they don't always get a copy of *The Link* magazine.

### **3. Building Membership and Support**

The Members' letter particularly noted the section of the NCLTN website regarding Building Membership and Support and suggested that the UCV CLT was not a community venture. The letter also criticised that the wider community had no access to information regarding the project.

The Board responded by noting that [www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org](http://www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org) had been built and published in November 2017 giving a comprehensive background to the activities of the UCV CLT to date. The Board impressed upon the meeting that there was no intention to conceal any aspects of the UCV CLT from the wider community and that they were actively seeking to increase membership.

The Board highlighted an extract from the NCLTN's website that notes that community support is imperative, especially if a Planning Application is to be successful.

<http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/funding-and-resources/resources/start-a-clt--setting-up-and-building-membership>

The Board also noted that as the Planning application would be made under the Council's Exemption site strategies as outlined in the local plan under Strategies 27 and 35 which specifically state that Communities will need to "promote community led development (for example Community Land Trusts) justifying how and why, in a local context, the development will promote the objectives of sustainable development."

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf>

The Board concluded that it was their intention to increase membership and noted that since the letter was written the 18 members had increased to 25 and that it was the board's intention to increase membership further.

#### 4. Business Planning

The members' letter suggested that there was no evidence of a business plan and referred to the NCLTN's website.

<http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/funding-and-resources/resources/start-a-clt--business-planning-tenure-land-and-planning>

The Board responded by highlighting the statement in the extract of the NCLTN's website provided by the members that: "*Before you start writing the business plan though you will need to carry out a feasibility study, often at an early stage, to help clarify how you will deliver your aims, the potential costs of the project, and what issues you may face.*"

The Board noted that the process is at the Feasibility Stage currently, so a Business plan would not yet have been written. In addition, there are two forms of Community Land Trust, one where the organisation develops the project in its entirety itself where it fully funds the project and would therefore require a business plan and one, as the Upper Coly Valley CLT is, where it collaborates with a Housing Association that takes on the full funding responsibility and would therefore develop its own Business Plan. The Board referred the meeting to information contained on the website at:

<https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/2015/11/16/what-types-of-clt-development-are-there/>

The members asked what Teign Housing have done in this area. The Board responded by noting the link to Teign's website on the CLT website.

The members asked if the feasibility studies being undertaken would be shared with members once completed. The Board confirmed this would be the case.

CM noted that meetings should be consultation meetings and not solely informing meetings. The Board agreed.

AB queried the safety and access issues involved with the road in front of the site. The Board responded noting that in both the feasibility stage and as part of the planning stage the roads to and from the site would be considered.

## **5. Requested Items to be Presented at the Meeting**

The Members' Letter requested that the following items be presented at the meeting: (See bullet pointed bold items with the Board's Responses indented and links to the [www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org](http://www.UpperColyValleyCLT.org) in blue:

- **The short form membership list**
  - This was tabled at the meeting for review by the members.
  
- **Director's roles and responsibilities**
  - Willy Rich - Chair
  - Richard Hare - Treasurer
  - Lynsey Skinner - Secretary
  - Liam Denny - Communications
  - Arthur Stevens - Board Member
  - Stefanie Kastner-Walmsley - Board Member
  - Jim Little - Board Member
  - Charlie Worrall - Board Member

The members noted that John Reed had resigned as a director due to other commitments and that JL was now a director. The members queried why JL was asked to join as a director. The Board responded that his previous experience with affordable housing and at the Campaign to Protect Rural England was very relevant and helpful to the process.

- **Roles and responsibilities of Wessex Community Assets**
  - The Board noted that this information was explained on the UCV CLT website:

<https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/2015/11/16/what-is-the-wessex-community-land-trust-project/>

- **The strategic vision of the UCV CLT**

- The Board noted that this information was explained on the UCV CLT website: <https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/2015/11/17/the-upper-coly-valley-clts-vision/>

- **The Business Plan**

- See item 4 above

- **Initial feasibility studies**

- The Board explained that these were currently being undertaken by the consultants and that they would be completed in February 2018. The Board presented to the meeting the topographical survey of the existing site that had been completed so far.

- **Land identification and acquisition process**

- The Board noted that this information was explained on the UCV CLT website: <https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/2015/03/23/site-chosen/>

A member queried why Northleigh Parish Council paid for a valuation of Chilcombe field. The Board noted that this was a Northleigh Parish Council question and not one to be answered by the UCV-CLT.

BS also noted that Northleigh Parish taxpayers were paying for the valuation. The Board advised that this comment should be taken to Northleigh Parish Council.

The members questioned if the Parish Council had already agreed to sell the field? The Board responded by noting that the PC have agreed to sell the field subject to the process going forward after feasibility.

The members queried who suggested the sites. The Board responded that Devon Communities together, EDDC and the local parish councils had ruled out sites that were not suitable and that had left 4 which were then looked at further. The Board referred the members to the detailed explanation on the website.

The members queried what the 'Plan B' was if the feasibility for Chilcombe field doesn't work out. The Board responded that the feasibility is under way and the board will wait for the outcome of it.

- **The project plan**
  - The Board presented the project plan gphant chart.
  
- **The communications plan**
  - The Board presented the Communications plan which will focus on development of:
    - The Website
    - The Link magazine
    - Mailshots
    - Open Meetings

With key upcoming stages being the completion of Feasibility Studies in February 2018 and the commencement of Development proposals (subject to the Feasibility Studies' findings in March/April 2018)
  
- **The Business Management System**
  - See item 4 above
  
- **The Document Management System**
  - The board presented its information filing system
  
- **A review of the National CLT Guidelines provided check sheets covering: legality, ethos, governance, finance, local ownership and long term stewardship**
  - The Board noted that the NCLTN Guidelines checklist referred to in the Members' letter had been written by one of the advisors who was advising the board and hence the checks were being undertaken as part of the regular meetings. The Board also noted however that the checklist was currently being completed by the Board.

## 6. Community Land Trust Rules

The original members' letter suggested that a number of the Rules of the Upper Coly Valley Community Land Trust were divisive. The Board wrote to the members on 10 November 2017 requesting clarification as to which rules they were concerned with. A second letter from one member was received on 03 December 2017 (The day before the SGM Meeting) noting the following and raising the following additional comments noted in item 7.

The Member's letter stated that the member believed Part A Section 2.1 of the rules to be divisive in that the members or the Community of Northleigh had not

requested that the objects as outlined in rules of the CLT be done to them. The letter also noted that the member did not believe it was possible for many people to agree to the objects and therefore to become a member.

<https://uppercolyvalleyclt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Rules-of-Upper-Coly-Valley-Community-Land-Trust-Ltd.pdf>

The Board responded by noting that if members do not agree with the objects of the CLT they are under no obligation to join the CLT. The CLT was established with these objects and has requested that members sign up agreeing to and supporting the goals as described in the Rules.

The Member's letter noted that the Rules allow the Board to veto a membership. The Board responded by stating that to date the veto had not been used, however it was there to ensure members supported the objects of the CLT and to prevent people with no connection to the community becoming members.

CM stated that other CLT's have removed the section that states that it is up to board to approve membership,

BS and PM both noted that they did not agree with all of the objects of the CLT contained in section 2.1 of the Rules. BS specifically noted that he did not agree with Rule 2.1.7 that states that the CLT should hold land in trust for its community.

BS stated that LS should not be a member due to not living in the Upper Coly Valley area postcodes. The Board responded that if a member has a local connection or lives or works in the area then they can be a member.

## **7. Additional Issues raised in Letter dated 03/12/2017**

### **Community**

The letter raised issue with the fact that only one of the 8 members of the board of the Community Land Trust lives in the village of Northleigh and stated that it is made up of people with no direct association with the Community who are trying to impose a development on the community.

The Board responded by noting that the Community was the three parishes of Northleigh, Southleigh and Farway and not just Northleigh Village. The members of the board had participated very actively in that community for many years and to suggest that they were not part of the Community was incorrect. The Board is also not imposing the development on the Community, as noted above in section 3 it is imperative that the Community supports the proposals and the Board is looking at ways to increase membership of the CLT.

## **Farway**

The Member's letter took issue with website statements noting that during the process to locate a site that Farway Parish Council had noted that it did not wish to have affordable housing built in the village. The Board responded by explaining that a similar process to locate sites had been undertaken several years before and that no satisfactory location had been identified within Farway. Based on this it was considered it would be a wasteful process to repeat the process again.

## **Local Housing Needs Report**

The Member's letter notes that the report was commissioned in 2014 and that it states that it remains appropriate evidence of a need for up to 5 years. Given that Widworthy has now split away and that the 5-year period is ending in 2019 the letter suggests that the Parishes should be re-surveyed. The Board responded by noting that the Housing Need in the three Parishes of Northleigh, Southleigh and Farway was now being surveyed without the inclusion of Widworthy to assess if the housing need within the three parishes was still there to require a development in the Upper Coly Valley.

## **8. Members**

The initial members' letter referred to Lyme Bay Community Land Trust and the way it operates and suggested that the UCV CLT was actively discouraging non-board members' engagement. The Board responding re-iterating the comments noted in section 3 above and stating that:

- The CLT is a Community Benefit Society
- It is controlled by the members by members standing for, and voting for, the Board of the Society.
- The Board then have a responsibility to make the operational decisions of the Society, and act in the best interests of the whole community and not just the members.
- To succeed in obtaining Planning Approval the CLT must show Community Support

BS noted that he would continue to send letters to hold the board accountable as he had been unable to be a director of the CLT due to his conflict of interest.

## **9. Communication**

The Members' Letter criticised the Chair of the Community Land Trust for announcing at a Parish Council Meeting that the CLT had received a grant from East Devon District Council before it was announced to the general membership



of the CLT. The Board responded by noting at the time there was no CLT website and it was felt that there was no issue in stating the progress of the CLT's activities at any public forum.

AB stated that he had issues with the CLT's communication. He stated that he hadn't received the paper work for standing as a director and that he would have put himself forward. It was noted that BS & PM had his vote at the SGM as he was unable to attend the meeting.

The members noted that it would be good to have more involvement for the members in key decision making.

CM queried if members could observe at board meetings.

The members also raised that maybe there should be 2 slots at each meeting for members to attend.

PB Suggested that there should be a rolling road show in each village to update the progress of the project, and to help with increasing membership.

The Board noted that these ideas would be discussed at the next meeting.

**The Special General Meeting finished at 9.55pm**