

Dorchester Area Community Land Trust

Minutes of the DACLT board meeting held on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 5.30pm via Zoom call.

Board Present: Alistair Chisholm (AC), Ian Gosling (IG), Theo Hawkins (TH), Lynda Kiss (LK), Felicity McLaren (FM), Tricia Mitchell (Chair) (TM) and Barry Thompson (BT)

Also Present: Steve Watson (SW) – Wessex CLT
Angus Johnstone (AJ) – P4P Places for People

Administration: Paula Harding (PH) – Minute Clerk

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Emma Scott (ES), Paul Derrien (PD) and Tony Foot (TF).

2) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3) Minutes of the Board meeting held on 14th December 2021

Minor amendments were agreed and made as follows:

Pg 1 – 6) Treasurer’s report: ‘£17096’ is replaced with ‘£17996’

Pg 2 – 8ii) Cemetery building Poundbury: ‘currently’ is replaced by ‘existing’

Pg 2 – 8v) Garfield Avenue – ‘has’ is added between ‘but’ and ‘not’

The minutes were then signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4) Membership applications

No new applications have been received since the last meeting.

5) Matters arising from the last minutes

There were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda for discussion.

6) Treasurer’s report

FM reported that the bank balance has barely changed since the last meeting with just the regular website fee being paid.

7) Progress report on the Tennis Court site.

SW said there has been an exchange of emails between both the DACLT solicitor and the Dorchester Town Council (DTC) solicitor. Currently a solicitor has yet to be formally appointed to act on behalf of P4P for this project. The collective view is that the drafting of the Section 106 (S106) agreement is almost complete and should be available soon for signing.

AJ asked whether a decision had been made regarding whether the rental mechanism would be that of Social Rent or Affordable Rent? Members of the board questioned the difference of these types of rentals. SW explained the rental terms as follows:

<p><u>Affordable Rent</u> Affordable rent is based on 80% of the current market rent rate. This would be, at current rates, approximately £110 a week rent.</p> <p><u>Social Rent</u> Social rent is similar to the Affordable rent but takes into account average earnings so tends to be £20 - £30 a week lower. This would be, at current rates, approximately £80-90 a week rent.</p> <p>SW outlined that the principle is that a potential resident, earning the living wage, should be able to pay a 'social rent' without requiring housing benefit. He added that this is based on a theory that 35% of gross income is the expected percentage for housing costs.</p> <p>AJ raised concerns that the scheme had been appraised and costed to be viable on 'affordable' rents. He was unsure whether the scheme would work on a 'social' rent basis. It was agreed that AJ would undertake an urgent re-appraisal to see if the scheme remains viable on social rent and liaise with SW tomorrow.</p> <p>BT asked whether the rental could be linked specifically to average wages in Dorchester, but SW confirmed that the rates are set by central government so there is no negotiation outside of these two rental types to make it town/area specific.</p> <p>FM was concerned that it was quite late in the planning process to be questioning the rental scheme. The board were assured that when this project began the grants on offer would not have been available to schemes with social rent, however the 2021-2026 grants programme has changed its position and now supports scheme with 'Social' rents.</p> <p>AJ and SW are to check on scheme competition dates before deciding whether to apply to the HES1 or HES 2 grant programme.</p> <p>AJ is to arrange a meeting with the car parking team at Dorset Council to work on finalising the easements and arrangements for access to the tennis court site across the Trinity Street public car park. The car parking team will have information about occupancy and will likely base any compensation request on this data.</p> <p><u>8) Other potential sites</u> <u>i) Cemetery building, Poundbury</u> TM has circulated photographs of the site and it was agreed that it would be big enough for 1 residential dwelling. TM is to approach Dorchester Town Council and arrange access to the property in order that the internal structure and size can be assessed. AC agreed that a site visit would be good and suggested that John Christmas also be invited to attend as an advisor to the Board. All agreed.</p> <p><u>ii) Garfield Avenue</u> TM reported that the new Dorset Council Assets Director was yet to take up his place but would write to him so that this site could be followed up with him as soon as he took up his position.</p>	<p>Angus Johnstone / Steve Watson</p> <p>Angus Johnstone / Steve Watson</p> <p>Angus Johnstone</p> <p>Tricia Mitchell</p> <p>Tricia Mitchell</p>
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<p><u>iii) Ackerman Road</u> TM has hand delivered a letter to Mr Foyle but has had no response. TM has also received a response from the Highways agency acknowledging that they do own this site. TM has therefore written back to see if they will transfer ownership to the DACLT to develop.</p>	<p>Tricia Mitchell</p>
<p><u>iv) Broadmayne development plan</u> This development would be outside the current area of the DACLT but could be included if it was thought that this would benefit the Trust. It was expected that this site would generate around 20 affordable dwellings. SW was concerned that these properties may all be required for those with a connection to Broadmayne and would therefore not benefit the DACLT in any way.</p>	
<p><u>v) Marks and Spencer site – South Street</u> IG reported that an economic study was underway to decide whether it was viable to re-develop this site or whether demolition and re-build was required.</p>	
<p><u>vi) Developments over car parking sites</u> SW reported that a Council and CLT in North Somerset have developed a housing structure over the top of one of their public car parks. A steel structure is put in place and the modular housing hoisted into place by crane. SW is to send details to PH to forward with the minutes. SW is to meet PD next week and they will discuss this concept. It was suggested that the large expanse of the Fairfield car park would offer the best options to place a small development of this nature.</p>	<p>Minute Clerk</p>
<p><u>vii) Dorchester Police Station</u> Following the announcement that a new Police HQ would be built at Winfrith, it was debated whether the Police Station at Dorchester would be disposed of. IG is to meet the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable next week on other matters so would discuss this with them informally. It was agreed that this would be an excellent development site for affordable housing.</p>	<p>Ian Gosling</p>
<p><u>9) Website</u> TH was thanked for his work on the website and it was now up to date. He reported that he now has access to the DACLT Facebook site and has set up a corresponding Twitter account.</p> <p>TH has requested that the DACLT consider how they would like to handle regular communications to members. It was agreed that a Communications framework should be established for the DACLT as soon as possible. This should include who is the DACLT spokesperson with regard to media enquiries as well as who is responsible for the administration of the social media accounts. TH and SW are to try and find examples of Communications frameworks for CLT's to base a draft on.</p>	<p>Theo Hawkins/ Steve Watson</p>
<p><u>10) Any other business</u> <u>i) Community Housing Fund</u> IG would like to contact the local MP Chris Loder, to request that he continues to lobby central government to extend the Community Housing Fund until 2023. All agreed that this could be done on behalf of the DACLT.</p>	<p>Ian Gosling</p>

ii) DACLT Zoom calls.

BT stated that he felt that meeting in person as a group was much better than meeting over a Zoom call, but understood why over the past couple of years this had been a more acceptable option.

SW reported that it was much easier for him to meet on Zoom and that he would not be able to guarantee to make any in person meetings at the present time.

It was hoped that at some point a hybrid 'in person' and 'remote' meeting could be arranged, but it was felt that no one within the group currently had the computer audio hardware to host this effectively.

TM agreed to wait until the 8th February to decide whether the next meeting would be in person or virtual.

iii) Meeting dates

Future Meeting dates were scheduled as follows:

February 15th

March 15th

April 19th

May 17th

June 21st

July 19th

August 16th

September 20th

October 18th

November 15th

December 20th

All would be held on Tuesdays, 5.30pm in the Council Chamber at the Corn exchange, unless otherwise notified.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6.30pm with notice that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday February 15th 2022 at 5.30pm Venue/Online Call to be decided.

**Tricia
Mitchell**