

# TEIGNBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (TALC)

Secretary: Dudley Swain 01392 833353 email: dudleyswain@yahoo.co.uk

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## Minutes

of the meeting held Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at Forde House

### Present:

Abbotskerswell .....	Kevin Eales; Kevin Farrelly	Ideford .....	Anthony French; Ashley Lamb
Bishopsteignton .....	Elaine Cawthraw;		David Fox
	Henry Merritt	Ipplepen .....	Roger Carnell; David Palethorpe
Bovey Tracey .....	George Gribble	Kenn & Kennford	Andy Chislett;
Bridford .....	Roger Dowding		Bridgette Williams
Broadhempston .....	Peter Stevens	Kingsteignton .....	Chris Meathrel
Buckfastleigh .....	Janet Jones	Newton Abbot .....	David Howe (Chairman)
Chudleigh .....	Michael McCormick;		Carol Bunday; Mike Hocking
	Peter Jackson	Ogwell .....	Richard Broome
Denbury & Torbryan ....	Tony Brownhill	Shaldon .....	Chris Clarence
Dunchideock .....	Dudley Swain	Teignmouth .....	Sylvia Russell
Hacombe-with-Combe.	Anna Taylor	TDC	Phil Bullivant; Gary Powell

### Apologies:

Bovey Tracey (Tony Allen; Steven Leigh); Moretonhampstead (Jane Willis); Shillingford St. George (John Parrott); Tedburn St Mary (Pat Moody); Mid-Devon Advertiser (Sandra Perraton)

## 1 Devon CC Budgets – Cllr. John Hart, Leader of DCC and Steve Edwards

“Devon Budget Challenge” video was shown – see it at <https://tinyurl.com/dcc-budget> This gave an excellent overview of the situation along with suggestions for a way ahead - worth watching.

Despite the cuts and reductions already made in recent years, 2018/19 will be an increasing problem. Particular difficulties are faced with childrens’, adult care and highways services. Savings have been achieved by sales of properties, staff reductions, changes to some DCC highways depots, awarding a new highways maintenance Contract to Skanska and closer working with partners such as health and district councils.

By 2020, government grants to DCC will cease and revenue from council tax and business rates will be locally managed. However, the distribution of this income is key. A pilot arrangement is being established to create a Combined Authority, to include Devon, Somerset, national parks, health and others. This will concentrate on training, skills and job creation and enable greater control of these and also local infrastructure. The options for an alternative to Dawlish railway might be an example, particularly in the light of the latest government spending plans. The Maldon quarry line will be under review. A new station at Matford will still need government financial assistance.

Broadband connectivity was discussed. Despite the substantial progress to date, there remain rural exceptions and these are being targeted in the next round of work. Council tax is already increased to the maximum % level short of precipitating a referendum. New business rates and New Homes Bonus are both topics under discussion. A large number of decisions are awaited on Business rate Appeals, something that could have a large impact on DCC income.

DCC no longer has any care homes. The do still negotiate care costs with individual car home owners and work to keep the homes fully occupied, thereby helping the businesses to remain viable

## 2 Community Led Affordable Housing – Graham Davey, Housing Enabling Manager, TDC and Sue Southwell, Rural Housing Enabler, Devon Communities Together

TDC received £600,000 of the £60m government grant to local authorities to support Community Led Affordable Housing (CLH) schemes. Further grants are likely since the need for affordable housing is so important. Housing schemes must be community led; this partnership working is a vital element in the process. CLH schemes can actually be anywhere, not just in rural locations – the key is securing suitable land along with local support.

The process was explained in detail; it is set out in the handout and diagram – see Appendix. The evidence of need and willing local support is so important and this is where a community questionnaire is essential. This will also establish local views regarding affordable housing, older people's needs (such as single level properties) and what already exists in the locality. Other points discussed:

- “Affordable” may still be too costly even at 80% of market rent. Really efficient homes that are cheaper to run (eg. Christow's recent development) can assist in affordability.
- A case was raised of a developer's grant that might be lost whilst awaiting the CLH process. TDC/DCT can ensure such a situation can be overcome.
- The % of affordable housing needs to be TDC led, not left just to the developer
- Community events, to inform/update the public, can sometimes be more appropriate than a second questionnaire survey.
- The TDC Local Plan and Housing Needs Survey are essential to set out policy and strategic matters although some developer's land proposals might not be very obvious. TDC can clarify details in such cases. Many rural areas use “exception sites”, something supported by TDC.

Contacts:

Graham Davey Housing Enabling Manager

<https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/housing/community-led-housing/funding> 01626 215412

Mary Ridgway Teignbridge DC Housing Enabler

[mary.ridgway@Teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:mary.ridgway@Teignbridge.gov.uk) 01626 2155218 07876477763

Sue Southwell Devon Communities Together, Rural Housing Enabler

[sue@devoncommunities.org.uk](mailto:sue@devoncommunities.org.uk) 01392 248919

Note: Mary Ridgway was due to speak but was unable to attend; Graham Davey very kindly stood in at short notice

**3 Minutes of the meeting 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017** – These were approved

**4 Secretary's Report –**

- The bank balance is £165.22. Members approved the Secretary's travel and associated meetings costs for 2017 of £85.00.
- Dartmoor Local Plan information has been circulated to relevant councils. Should any others like to have copies, these can be forwarded.
- An outline of a new potential SW Co-op bank was explained. The organiser proposes to hold local meetings in due course. Members did not wish to pursue this just at present.
- TALC's representatives (Cllrs. Dowding and Swain) on the TDC Standards Committee are not permitted to vote on matters, merely participate with opinion and observe. The Secretary is to write to TDC raising questions about this.

**5 Topics for Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

Members agreed to invite Martin Flitcroft, TDC Finance Manager, to talk about 2018/19 budgets, along with the PCC or a representative of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office to follow up on the presentation in June 2017.

**6 Chairman's Business**

The Chairman reminded all that only a single teaspoonful of the salty grit (some 10gms) is needed to treat 1 sq.m. of surface in normal frosty conditions. It is often wasted by throwing far too much onto the roads.

He also wished Members a Happy Christmas.

**7 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018** at 7.00pm at Forde House.

Other 2018 Meetings:- 29<sup>th</sup> March; 28<sup>th</sup> June; 27<sup>th</sup> September; 29<sup>th</sup> November

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

## Appendix

### Teignbridge District Council and the Devon Rural Housing Partnership Rural Housing Team.

Teignbridge District Council and the Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) based at Devon Communities Together have worked very closely with each other to support rural communities to develop affordable housing for many years. The new focus on community led housing is an additional opportunity for them to work together to support rural communities.

Both organisations bring different skills and expertise to a community led housing project. The division of tasks is detailed below although in most cases there is some overlap to ensure the community feels fully supported, that the housing need remains current and up to date. In most cases the RHEs are more heavily involved at the start of the pre-development process (stages 1-6) and Teignbridge District Council takes over from them (stages 7-15) once they have been introduced to the project after stage 5 in the process detailed below.

#### Stages

- 1. Identification of priority parishes** – in partnership with TDC Enabling Team based on an assessment of the level of housing need on Devon Home Choice, availability of land and parish interest in affordable housing.
- 2. Advice and information** – Providing initial advice and information to parishes that come forward with housing queries or are identified by Teignbridge District Council as a priority parish.
- 3. Assessment of local housing need** – working with Parish Councils to deliver a housing need questionnaire to all households in a parish. Questionnaires are then processed by the Rural Housing Team, the data analysed and a housing report produced which identifies the number of households in housing need, the sizes of home and the tenure required.
- 4. Site assessment** – Working with the Parish Council and in consultation with Teignbridge District Council and Dartmoor National Park Planning Authority, all exception sites are listed and assessed. A report is produced. The RHEs may contact landowners to assess their willingness to sell.
- 5. Options appraisal**- Providing the Parish Council with information and advice on options for future action following from the housing needs survey and explaining the next steps in the affordable housing process. These options will usually include the setting up of a CLT and if this is an option the Parish Council wish to pursue the Rural Housing Team will introduce the Teignbridge District Council CLH Enabling Officer to the Parish Council. Other options may include working with an RP or setting up a self-build project.
- 6. Community consultations and other communication with the public**- Keeping the community informed of the pre-development process in ways that are most suitable for the community concerned. This could include public meetings, articles in parish newsletters etc. It is good practice to ensure that the public are informed of what is happening at each stage of the process ie before and after a housing need survey, after the site assessment process and at the point of an optional appraisal, and about how and when to apply for the homes when built.
- 7. Business planning**- Facilitating the community group's vision for the project, considering an appropriate model of community-led affordable housing, exploring the implications for capital and revenue funding etc.
- 8. Legal formats and documentation** – Consideration of appropriate legal entities such as a Community Interest Company, Community Benefit Society, Company Limited by Guarantee (with exempt charity status) etc. Help will be provided to draft the objects of, and to incorporate, the new entity.
- 9. Site identification and land acquisition** - Advising on the site selection process and particularly on the heads of terms between the community group and the landowner. Advising on the content and structure of a public meeting designed to win the support of the wider community for a recommended site. Assisting with the appointment of conveyancing solicitors and with the negotiations of option agreement and lease as necessary.
- 10. Planning issues** - Supporting the community group in deciding the number, type, tenure and design principles of the proposed housing and to play a full part in promulgation of

the planning application. Facilitating discussions between the community, HA (if involved) and LA about the wording of the Section 106 agreement (where applicable) and ensuring that the community's preferences are incorporated as fully as possible.

11. **Development risks** – Ensuring that the party taking the development risk understands the implications should any such risks materialise.
12. **Communication** - Supporting the community group in its communications with the wider community as and when required, including as many public meetings as necessary.
13. **Project Management** - Administering project team meetings; drafting agendas, chairing and taking minutes as required until the community group feels confident enough to take these on. Maintaining an up to date project plan which forecasts when all elements of a project will take place.
14. **Training** - Organising training sessions in response to the community group's emerging needs. These include sessions on (a) accounting, (b) governance, and (c) allocations. Arranging peer-learning visits to other communities.
15. **Strategic advice** - Researching ways of improving the social and financial return to community groups and advising on the implications of emerging initiatives such as the Government's Community Housing Fund.
16. **Problem Solving** - Helping to keep the project on track by problem solving as and when snags arise; ranging from the withdrawal of grant for rented housing (in the CSR November 2015) to occasional reductions in the capacity of volunteers.
17. **Lobbying** – working with others in the Community-Led Affordable Housing sector to maximise resources and policy support for community-led projects, including relationships with MPs, civil servants and special advisers

