

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:**

**September 8th September 2018: Marshfield Community Centre**

**Summary Report of the Board of Directors**

**1. Site**: On 21 July the Trust unveiled at a village meeting, its proposal for the site for 12 affordable homes on a 1.6 acre site at Garston Farm. To help fund this project 6 market homes will also be built on this site. Shortly a feasibility study will be launched involving engineers, surveyors, ecologists and other professional advisers so that a strong planning proposal can be submitted. The Housing Association and architects with whom we will work will be identified by mid- September.

Choosing the site at Garston Farm was the result of an exhaustive examination of numerous site options and was supported at the village meeting by 100 people with only six abstentions. Once the feasibility study is completed the Trust and the landowner will enter into a binding agreement and before the submission of the planning proposal the village will again be consulted.

**2. Energy Working Group:** During the year the Board agreed to establish an energy working group (MCLTEWG). The aim is to identify the long term sustainable energy needs of Marshfield and a village workshop is planned for the autumn.

**3. Communications with Marshfield community:**  A regular column has been established in All Around Marshfield. So as to widen our audience Facebook has been included in our communications strategy. The MCLT website contains information on its policies and activities.

**4. South Gloucestershire Council Liaison** The Trust have built strong links with both officers and councillors of South Gloucestershire and Marshfield Parish Council and have received strong support which has helped us reach our present position for which we are extremely grateful. South Gloucestershire Council and the Parish Council responded very positively to our request to initiate a Housing Needs Survey. The survey was launched earlier this summer and the results should be available by the end of this year. This will help the Trust decide the appropriate mix of housing at Garston Farm.

**5. External Bodies** As a Community Benefit Society we are responsible to the Financial Conduct Authority and supported every step of the way by Wessex Community Land Trust Project as well as the National CLT.

**6. Thanks:** The Board wishes to thank all of those who have supported the Trust, particular our members whose patience has now been rewarded with the announcement of the Garston Farm development. All of this support keeps us motivated and enables us all to share in the pleasure of our achievements.

**Detailed Report from MCLT Board of Directors**

**Aims**

The overall aim of MCLT is to promote a confident and forward looking local community in Marshfield by developing new initiatives for community benefit. The MCLT board has identified three key areas of activity: providing affordable housing; developing other social and environmental initiatives; and encouraging community participation.

**1. Affordable Housing Project**

At the AGM last year MCLT reported that in spite of considerable efforts it had been unable to reach agreement with a landowner to purchase a site for affordable housing. That situation continued and the MCLT Board considered that a new approach was needed.

The MCLT Board determined that approaches be made to landowners whose sites were close to but not immediately adjacent to the village boundary. We also improved our offer to landowners. Instead of receiving a modest cash payment for their land they would receive a small number of housing plots with planning permission. This offer was also made to landowners previously contacted. This resulted in more interest and in May 2018 MCLT received in the space of two days three potential offers of sites. Two of these sites were not adjacent to the village boundary.

The third site was adjacent to the village boundary but was conditional on MCLT participating in a larger planning application with a commercial developer and the Board judged this to be unacceptable. MCLT has argued for small scale, incremental growth through community-led affordable housing for people with local connections, using rural exception sites. This has been its distinctive approach and has attracted support from members and the Parish Council. The offer would also have invalidated the priority given to local connections associated with a rural exception site.

The MCLT Board considered the other sites against its site selection criteria and took its preferred option to a village consultation meeting on July 21 2018. It received overwhelming support for its site (approx.106 present of whom 100 gave support with 6 abstentions) on which it hopes to build 6 market houses and 12 affordable houses. MCLT is now in the process of mounting a feasibility study to assess viability and planning issues.

The initial stages of the feasibility study are underway. As freeholder, MCLT will enter into a lease with a HA so that the HA can fund and develop the homes. The HA will bear the risks and costs of development and long-term management and will ensure that the scheme is financially viable.

The selection process for a Housing Association and Architect is now taking place. These are two critical choices for MCLT and it will be advised by the Affordable Housing Advisor from Wessex Community Land Trust Project who has experience of CLT schemes across the south west. Other professionals such as engineers, a topographical surveyor, ecologist, arboriculturalist, archaeologist and landscape architect will also be appointed as the study gets underway and we move towards submitting a planning application.

The costs of the feasibility study will be covered by MCLT applying to the government for a grant to appoint the professional advisers. Any planning and architectural costs associated with the 3 open market plots for the landowner would be borne by the landowner. Only if the project seems feasible would MCLT and the landowner enter into a binding legal agreement and move to the planning application stage. Before an application is submitted, there will be further consultation with the village.

**2. MCLT Energy Working group (MCLT EWG)**

Another key area of MCLT activity concerns non-housing initiatives to benefit the village

During the last year MCLT has set up a working group ( MCLT EWG) exploring energy use and potential greater community control. This group is drawing on previous expertise within the village and aims to identify the long term sustainable energy needs of Marshfield. The group intend to see if emerging technologies (generation and storage) and community business practices could reduce our dependencies on the national grid and thus reduce our long term energy bills, and also improve reliability of provision by reducing outages.

Since its inception the EWG have been selected to take part in a regional energy initiative known as the OpenLV project. This is sponsored by OFGEM and managed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) Bristol on behalf of Western Power (WPD) – our regional electricity distributor. This project will provide information on energy usage and demand in the village as a whole with no individual properties being identified. The data gathered will be available for display in the village. The MCLT EWG are planning a village workshop event in the autumn to explore this and wider energy concerns.

The cost and supply of energy remains a challenge for everyone personally and also in terms of the impact of the changing environment on energy use. Of particular concern to Marshfield residents is the number of times the electricity supply fails. The study, which will last for a more than a year, will be able to check when and why these ‘outages’ occur and if ways can be found to reduce or eliminate them. The study will also provide information to inform strategies for making Marshfield less dependent on the big energy suppliers and exploring future ways that may emerge to make electricity cheaper.

The MCLT EWG was formed to look into these issues and to provide Marshfield with helpful information on how other communities are addressing them. The MCLT EWG will also be looking at local implications of planning constraints; the impact of electric cars (parking and recharging); and new battery storage technologies linked to local solar and other renewable energy sources.They will also be providing an input into the forthcoming feasibility study for our affordable housing project.

**3. Communication and accountability**

Our third key area of activity is around community participation and local accountability. MCLT works continually to develop and sustain relationships with a number of important local, regional and national groups and individuals.

**Village communication**

The board recognises it is essential that it maintains good communication with the village. Its website contains information on the various policies and approach of the MCLT but during the year it was felt it needed to reach a wider audience and Facebook has been used to signal MCLT developments and activities and point people towards fuller documentation on the website. MCLT also have a regular column in All Around Marshfield. In July 2018, following an appropriate site becoming available, a village consultation meeting was held to seek support for the site and provide an opportunity for questions and comments.

**Members’ communication**

In addition to the information available to all members of the community, MCLT members receive any newsletters and reports through individual email or delivery.

**Parish and Local Councillors**

**A** member of the MCLT Board attends Parish Council meetings to ensure the Board is aware of developments that may have relevance to the MCLT. There is also regular communication with our two supportive district councillors who we keep informed of MCLT activities.

**South Gloucestershire Council**

The Board has made 2 responses to South Gloucestershire Council consultations during the year. One of these related to changes to the allocations criteria used by SGC HomeChoice to address issues of homelessness. The second consultation referred to the draft Local Plan. The MCLT Board argued that CLTs could make a contribution to non-strategic housing growth through small scale housing developments for people with local connections on rural exception sites developed by community-led CLTs. This could lead to the possibility that no allocations within the Green Belt would be needed in places where a CLT exists.Working within the rural exception site policy would also ensure that new housing developments would be primarily for local people, would be genuinely affordable and would be held in perpetuity by the CLT.

During the year, MCLT were concerned that the 2013 Housing Need Survey would not be viewed as recent evidence of housing need. MCLT need such evidence to argue for planning approval on rural exception sites. It contacted both SGC Affordable Housing Department and the Parish Council and have been pleased that Marshfield Parish Council have commissioned a Housing Need Survey from South Gloucestershire Council. This evidence will be used to help determine the type of housing built.

The Board also has regular contact with the planners at SGC to seek informal advice on planning policy and constraints.

**Wessex CLT Project**

The support of Wessex CLT project has been essential to the development of MCLT. We could not have overcome the many challenges we have faced without the continuing close relationship with the Wessex team.

**Visits to Other CLTs**

Our involvement with the Wessex CLT project has given us access to a network of CLT projects in the South West region who have provided invaluable support and encouragement. MCLT was asked to make a presentation to a group in Bath and another at Hawksbury Upton. In addition contact has been made with other CLTs in the South West to learn from their experiences, including at the regional CLT annual conference where Marshfield CLT was asked to make a presentation*.*

**Planning and Housing policies**

Marshfield CLT continues to belong to the National Community Land Trust network. It keeps us informed about significant policy developments in housing and provides a network that allows the considerable number of CLT scattered across the country to operate collectively.

We also use resources such as the Resolution Foundation, Shelter, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, CPRE and the government’s Homes England website to keep us informed of planning and housing developments at a national and local level. The new National Planning Policy Framework has recently been published and such documents are shared within the MCLT Board.

**Governance**

MCLT has fulfilled its responsibility to send financial information and a report on its activities to the Financial Conduct Authority.

It has also recognised the new demands associated with the introduction of more stringent controls on communication through the introduction of GPDR and reviewed its communication policy to ensure it is meeting these demands.

MCLT undertook a review of its objectives and outcomes for 2016/17 in Feb/March 2018. This indicated that it had to a considerable extent met its objectives although at the point of review no site had been identified. Objectives have been set for 2017/18 and there has been a mid- year progress review and the final review will occur in the Spring of 2019.

**5. Thanks**

The Board wishes to thank all those who have supported MCLT. We continue to receive invaluable advice and support from the Wessex CLT Project. We are pleased we have a strong membership and grateful to the Parish Council who have continued to support us as have our 2 district councillors. All this support helps keep us motivated and we will keep you informed of our progress.

**6. Retirement of David Dodd**

The Board would like to give its whole hearted thanks to David Dodd who is retiring as honorary secretary of MCLT. He was a founder member and has given unstinting support and commitment for over 2.5 years. His determination to see the MCLT affordable housing project succeed has been unwavering and he has given considerable time to ensure our members are valued and know of its aims and progress. His thoughtful and wise judgement will be much missed.

Christine Eden (chair), Oliver Shirley (vice chair), Simon Turner (Treasurer) David Dodd ( secretary) Ian Dawes, Ian Jones, Jenny Gibbons, Jim Brookes