



# Eastington Community Land Trust Ltd. (ECLT)

## Sixty Third Meeting of Board Members

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall

### Minutes

**1. Attendance** Tom Morrison (Chair) (TM), Martin Elliot (ME), Lynne Farnden (Treasurer) (LF), Tom Low (Secretary) (TL), Muriel Bullock (Vice Chair) (MB), Cllr Mark Chatterley (MC), Ann Pitcher, Ed Davies (ED) Georgie Brocklehurst (GB).

**Apologies:** Paul Mannings (PM), Alison Loveridge (AL), Alan Brasier (AB), Sharon Wells (SW), Cllr John Jones (JJ), Karl Hine (Aster) (KH), Samantha Hale (Aster) (SH). **Declarations of Interest:** There were none.

**Questions to the Board:** There were none but the Chairman invited questions throughout.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Board Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 were unanimously approved and signed by TM

### 3. Financial and Administration Report

#### 3.1 Approval of invoices

There were no cheques to be signed and so the cash balance remains at £3,059.58.

TL aired the idea of a strongbox/deeds safe to keep our original legal documents secure. ED backed up advice given by JJ on fixing a box to the floor of the house. There are options under £100 which are both fireproof and waterproof. TL to circulate a selection for e-mail vote, which it was agreed could be approved by Chair and Treasurer up to a value of £100.

**ACTION: TL**

#### 3.2 Report from final quarter Internal Audit and Annual Internal Audit

MB reported that she and AB had had a satisfactory audit, with two actions arising. The first was to conduct the annual review of the Financial Regulations, to be circulated by TL with the action for all trustees to advise any recommended changes for the 7<sup>th</sup> November Board. TM flagged a loophole whereby Chair can authorise items up to £500, where they have been budgeted but not if they are outside an obvious budget. He suggested that a lower limit should be considered for un-budgeted items.

**ACTION: TL and then ALL**

Signed by TM, Chair ..... 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019

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The second review highlighted was to conduct a Risk Analysis, including the risks insured. Since the renewal notice for the annual premium had arrived (payment by December) TL undertook to prepare a paper for November 7<sup>th</sup> Board with the help of LF. This is more pertinent now that we have a property asset and responsibilities to planning/environmental obligations as a landowner, notwithstanding the lease to Aster.

**ACTION: TL, LF**

#### **4.1 Discussion of HNS and possible numbers for Project Two**

TM re-introduced the subject, referring to the debate on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and several discussions between trustees since. He had the circulated text of AB's comments available in AB's absence, as part of the latter.

TL reported back on several key points previously in doubt. SDC planners had indicated that, provided the great majority of the HNS needs were met, ECLT could plan for a slight reduction in the total number of dwellings of say 10% and a variation in the proportion of shared ownership/rent. MB informed the Board that the revision of the SDC Local Plan had just been published and Alkerton (i.e. Eastington Village) has escaped an allocation of market houses now planned for other Tier 3A settlements. This showed that SDC were taking into account the activities of ECLT and the Parish Council's NDP group.

Helen Bone of Homes England had been equally helpful in accepting that ECLT could enter a Feasibility Study with a range of options on tenancy and mix of housing types (quote: *the very meaning of "Feasibility"*). She had also accepted the logic of how we had arrived at the £143,750 grant application. Homes England had many examples (quote: *well into double figures*) of CLT's across the country having significant levels of Shared Ownership and selling well. In part, thanks are due to National CLT's Chair, Tom Chance, who has personally carried the message to all the top mortgage lenders, including locally-based Nationwide BS and Coventry BS, the last financial institution on Stonehouse High Street.

KH had also been consulted but indicated that Aster had had some poor experiences in Devon and Cornwall a few years ago and would be unlikely to bid for Project Two if it included a large number of shared ownership dwellings. This view seemed to be outdated by Homes England's current experience.

TM raised AB's point, taken up by other members in debate, that some of the respondents in the HNS appeared too ambitious. In agreeing, TL pointed out that he and GRCC had downgraded seven respondents' requirements in arriving at the matrix circulated. The data in the HNS had to remain "as written". Four respondents (8%) had not indicated a clear local connection and must be considered doubtful.

Also debated by all members present was the likelihood of all of the respondents asking for Shared Ownership being able to afford that – particularly in providing the deposit for the mortgage proportion. TL referred back to Jasmine Ellicott's description of promoting the planned homes in advance of them being available i.e. off-plan. ECLT could do a limited amount of such promotion during Feasibility Stage to gain more confidence in say, 10, 12 or 14 units

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rather than the 16 in the HNS. In discussion it was agreed that lowering the number of Shared Ownership units should imply a corresponding raising of the rented units, as a “safety net”.

ME and ED asked if ECLT could ensure that Shared Ownership homes could be retained in perpetuity and TM explained that that would be covered by the S 106. ME asked if that meant the cascade would be different and TL said that in example S 106’s that he had seen, the cascade was always identical for both tenancy types. One difference, highlighted by Jasmine Ellicott was that shared ownership properties would have a wider time-frame for completing a sale (she had said up to 90 days: for affordable rented, a target of “zero void” was the norm).

MB and LF felt that the back-up from SDC and Homes England appeared to support a range of 25 to 30 units as the starting point of a Feasibility Study, with an open mind on the proportion of Shared Ownership units. MB advised urgency to secure the Homes England grant before any political preferences changed.

ME agreed in the spirit of it being a feasibility, not set-in-stone. TM’s reading was that AB’s notes indicated acceptance of the principle of the range, whilst advising towards the downside.

It was unanimously agreed to commence the Feasibility Stage with a range of 25 to 30 units, with the mix of tenancy, house sizes and types all to be decided.

#### **4.2 Grant Application to Homes England for Project Two**

TL reported from his discussion with Helen Bone that Homes England still had a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 for spending grant money. That would mean that ECLT could only be offered a contract for the Feasibility Stage, 50% of the overall grant. It was to be hoped that government budgets would be set for the next three years once political uncertainties had settled down. An extension to the grant could then be arranged, perhaps out of some different funding line.

TM took the agreement in item 4.1 to support TL and LF proceeding to detailed discussions with Homes England. TL indicated that it should be possible to put our proposal to the Homes England Regional Panel on October 24<sup>th</sup> and to the National Panel by the end of this month. If an offer were made, the contract could be brought back to the 7<sup>th</sup> November Board.

**ACTION: TL, LF**

#### **5. Review of Queries on Tenancy Agreement**

SH had provided four comprehensive responses which were accepted as reasonable by members present. TL undertook to assimilate these responses into the master list of queries and answers to see if there were queries still remaining, if any.

**ACTION: TL**

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## 6. On-site Activity

### 6.1 Date of next Site Meeting

No date has been provided by SH. It was noted that Heras fencing had been erected as the first evidence of activity.

### 6.2 Start on Site Date

KH has given no date but predicts "later this month". TL is aware that Homes England expect a start to be declared by 1<sup>st</sup> November, otherwise grants will be affected.

### 6.3 Golden Spade ceremony

Without a start on site date and indeed physical site buildings, TM accepted that a date for the ceremony was not possible. MB felt that senior SDC officers and politicians deserved a decent period of notice, implying a mid-November date. ME asked who was organising this and TL named Clare Cathersides of Aster's PR department.

The main components of the proposed golden spade were inspected and approved.

## 7. Dates of next meetings

Agreed as November 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, both at 7 pm in the Village Hall. Given the decisions reached on Project Two and the lack of a start on site date, it was agreed not to meet on the contingency date of October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Tom Low, Secretary

October 2019

## CIRCULATION

**Board of Trustees**   **Members attending**   **Webmaster:** Ed Davies(pdf)

**Aster Group** Karl Hine (KH), Sam Hale (SH)   **Parish Council**   Cllr Mark Chatterley

## GLOSSARY

As per previous meetings

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