

BURTON- IN -KENDAL PARISH COUNCIL

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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT BOON TOWN, BURTON-IN-KENDAL

Minutes of the Village Meeting held on Thursday 7 April, 2005 at 7.00 pm at the Memorial Hall

PRESENT: Councillors J.Alderson, R.Boddy G.Isherwood, A.Jolley, F.Mason-Hornby, P.Rogers(Acting Chairman), K.Ray B.Willink, C.Dale (Clerk), A.Willmott (Impact Housing Association)

IN ATTENDANCE: 45 members of the public.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr. R.Bingham, T.Whittaker - South Lakeland District Council (SLDC)

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Cllr. Paul Rogers explained T.Whittaker was unable to attend due to illness. The role of the Parish Council as the tenant of the Boon Town playing ground was outlined as being responsible for providing and maintaining the play equipment, grounds and boundaries. He then introduced Anne-Marie Willmott and asked her to explain the roles within the proposal of South Lakeland District Council (SLDC), the landowner of the Boon Town playing ground, and the Impact Housing Association

2-6 PRESENTATION BY ANNE-MARIE WILLMOTT –

Tony Whittaker, the Principal Strategic Officer from South Lakeland District Council was due to attend tonight but unfortunately he is ill and sends his apologies so it's up to me to explain the role of SLDC and also Impact.

SLDC has 3 roles:

Firstly - as the local Housing Authority

Secondly – as the local Planning Authority

Thirdly – as the owner of the land.

As the Local Housing Authority the Council is responsible for “enabling” the provision of Affordable Housing. This includes working with Registered Social Landlords, which is what Housing Associations like Impact are also known as, to build new affordable homes.

The Council is responsible for the assessment of local Housing Need and it commissioned the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust to undertake a parish housing needs survey on it's behalf.

Now onto the role of Impact.

Impact is a Charitable Housing Association based in Cumbria, providing housing and support for a wide range of people throughout the county.

We provide all types of accommodation from new build to renovations and buying housing off the open market.

We work in partnership with local communities through consultation and discussion.

We have approximately 3000 properties throughout Cumbria and around 200 staff.

Housing Need Assessment and the role of Cumbria Rural Housing Trust.

They completed the parish survey in April 2004 and a copy was sent to the Parish Council. The survey is valid for up to 5 years.

The survey identified 5 households in need of affordable housing and the Trust recommended that up to 10 new affordable homes should be developed. Of these, a mix of social rented housing and shared ownership is required.

In terms of the property types, the survey showed a need for a mix of properties:

2 & 3 bed houses & bungalows.

3. Site Assessment

South Lakeland District Council own the land at the top of Boon Town.

It is presently leased to the Parish Council on a 5 year lease from 2nd February 2004.

The Council's Cabinet would need to give approval, in principle, to dispose of the land to a Registered Social Landlord for affordable housing.

Planning

The land is currently allocated as Important Open Space, however planning permission for affordable housing could be obtained as an exception to the Local Plan on the basis that the new affordable homes are meeting a local need.

Discussions have already been undertaken with the Planning Officer for the area. We met him with our architect and Tony Whittaker on site to discuss this scheme and he is happy with the principle of developing 7 new affordable homes on the site.

4. The Proposal

I have some draft proposals here with me, which show a mix of:

- 2 x 2bed Houses
- 3 x 3bed Houses
- 2 x 2bed Bungalows

The Planner has asked for the properties adjacent to the existing houses to maintain the existing building line rather than being set back.

The Planners can make comments on numbers and mix of properties and also that they would prefer to see slate roofs but not stone walls.

If I just go through what the process would be from now.

I will take back your general comments on the scheme. Then I would arrange for a survey of the site and the architect would then be able to check that the houses and bungalows actually fit onto the site.

The next step is to talk to the planners about the proposal and send a copy to the Parish Council.

The Planners may then decide to have discussions with Highways and any other bodies to ask for their comments.

If the scheme is acceptable in principle we would then instruct the architect and structural engineer to draw up the scheme in more detail, which would include roads, drains etc.

The scheme would then be submitted for detailed planning.

As part of that submission we would show details of where the play area would be situated.

We would relocate that as part of the development.

The scheme then goes into the planning system and out for consultation in the normal way, where everyone has a chance to look at the plans and comment.

As part of the submission we would keep the Parish Council up to date on the proposals and where we were.

5. Eligibility

Because the land belongs to the Council, rather than a Section 106 Agreement being in place there will be a covenant and all of the restrictions on local occupancy will be included in this covenant.

Applications for the shared equity properties would be made to and approved by the Council.

South Lakeland District Council would ensure that prospective purchasers were in housing need, that they were unable to purchase a property from the open market and that they met all of the local occupancy requirements.

Applications for the bungalows for rent would also be made to SLDC. They would have 100% nomination rights on initial lettings and 75% thereafter.

6. Timescale

We will make a bid for funding to the Housing Corporation. They are the Government body who provide Registered Social Landlords with a grant towards the development of the scheme.

The Housing Corporation give Registered Social Landlords funding and they set down regulations that we have to stick to when we build.

Things like:

The size of the property

Door widths

Level access

Storage

As well as things like energy efficiency and running costs for heating, lighting etc

This ensures that not only are the properties built to a high standard but they are economical to run.

We would bid for funding for the year 2006/2007.

If this was successful and the planning application was approved, the scheme could potentially go on site anytime from April 2006.

7. OPEN FORUM – The following is a summary of questions and points raised (**Q**) and responses (**R**)

- **Q:** Why does the proposed development have to be at Boon Town? A petition has been signed by 150 people who do not want change at Boon Town. **R:** The site is the only one identified in the area that is available at a cost that can provide affordable housing.
- **Q:** What parking has been allocated to this development? **R:** 11 spaces
- **Q:** The Village stands to lose a valuable space for children to play and run around. What happens to them if this development goes ahead? **R:** A generous play area will be provided at the top of the field behind the proposed houses, with fully maintained modern play equipment for all ages of children
- **Q:** Why shouldn't the young people of today born in the village not have the opportunity of living here at Boon Town in affordable housing instead of being forced to live away from parents and grandparents? **R:** A lively debate ensued.
- **Q:** What is the equity stake of the householders? **R:** Up to 75% for houses, all bungalows rented.
- **Q:** Why no equity stake in bungalows? **R:** To enable low income parishioners access to affordable housing and they will also be designed for disabled access.
- **Q:** Are applicants considered on a first come first served basis? **R:** Possibly, but special needs will be taken into account.
- **Q:** What is the use of accommodating disabled people at the top of Boon Town? **R:** They are designed for mobile disabled people.
- **Q:** How is eligibility of applicants for affordable housing established? **R:** This is decided firstly at Parish level.
- **Q:** Will the work generated by the scheme be available to locals? **R:** Yes.
- **Q:** Have any other sites in the parish been looked at? **R:** Impact have only been asked by SLDC to look at Boon Town.
- **Q:** As the site and its access appear to be inappropriate why not consider alternative sites in the parish? **R:** The opinions expressed so far at this meeting demonstrate the need for affordable housing in the parish on more appropriate sites. It may be for the Parish Council to investigate the availability of such sites that may be purchased at prices that enable affordable housing to be provided. The Housing Associations cannot afford sites that go onto the open market. If no such sites exist then the proposal for Boon Town will need reconsideration.
- **Q:** Is Impact's head office located in Norwich? **R:** No, it is in Workington.
- **Q:** Is Impact the only Housing Association in Cumbria? **R:** No.
- **Q:** Is Impact SLDC preferred? **R:** No. All the Associations discuss and agree between themselves which sites can be developed most cost effectively by whom.
- **Q:** What is the use of scouring the village for another suitable site when the Boon Town proposal could be being built in April 2006 and the affordable housing is needed now? **R:** Another lively debate ensued.
- **Q:** What is the cost of affordable housing to the equity holder? **R:** Experience shows this to amount to a discount of approximately 33%, but this depends on the area.
- **Q:** Does eligibility extend to the over 60s? **R:** This depends on the individual's circumstances.
- **Q:** Are local people who have moved to Lancashire eligible? It was noted that at least 8 local young people were forced to relocate from the village last year. **R:** They may be, but those living and working in the parish will have priority.
- **Q:** Why not re-locate the playing ground from Boon Town to the site above the tennis courts and build more affordable housing on the Boon Town site? **R:** There followed a discussion over the desirability of children not having a safe playing area close to their homes.

The Meeting closed at 8.20pm after Cllr. Mason-Hornby urged all parishioners to access the Parish Council website (address above) and make their further suggestions known for the Parish Council to pursue, if appropriate.