

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

Present:

Cllr P Batstone
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson
Cllr A Donaldson (Chair)
Cllr C Fraser

Cllr H Lacey
Cllr D Mantock (Vice Chair)
Cllr J Matthews
Cllr J Rose
Cllr P Marks (Apologies)

In Attendance: K Squire (Town Clerk), J Drew (Office Administrator).

Members of the Public: 2

Minute No.	Comments
24/25/075	To receive comments and questions from members of the public. One member of the public spoke about the possibility of a Community Land Trust.
24/25/076	To receive declarations of interests and approve any written applications for dispensations. No declarations of interests had been declared and no written dispensations received.
24/25/077	To approve the minutes of the previous Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 19th March 2025. The minutes of the meeting were taken as read and approved for signature by the Chair as a true and correct record.
24/25/078	To consider Planning Matters: • P/HOU/2025/03660 Stour Grange, Church Lane Install new window – no objection. • P/LBC/2025/03661 Stour Grange, Church Lane Install new window (Listed Building Consent) - no objection. • P/PABA/2025/03789 Copse Hill Farm Broadoak Erect agricultural building (Egg Packing) with biosecure link corridor to existing building – noted. Report on Decisions of Dorset Council. The contents of the report was noted by the Committee. Any other Planning Matters. P/MPO/2025/04077 Woodlands Farm A modification on this application had been received after the summons. A request to extend the deadline was not granted. An Extra Ordinary Committee meeting would be arranged Tree Matters. None to note.



- 24/25/079 **To consider an update regarding Community Land Trust project from Cllr P Batstone.**
A report from Cllr Batstone had been previously circulated to members and is attached to these minutes.
- 24/25/080 **To consider an update regarding Dorset Council Local Plan from Cllr A Donaldson.**
Cllrs Donaldson and Mantock had attended a Dorset Council meeting regarding the Local Plan.
The County needs to build a further 25,000 homes by 2043. Consultations on achieving this are being held throughout the County in the coming weeks. Sturminster Newton is not a chosen venue. Cllr Mantock had requested that Sturminster Newton be included.
The Town Clerk has contacted the Neighbourhood Planning team at Dorset Council for clarification about resubmitting the existing plan to ensure the current settlement boundary is revalidated.
- 24/25/081 **To receive information from members and proposals for future business.**
Cllr Mantock – Everyone is invited to a tour of the Mill on 24 July 2025 at 7pm.
Cllr Lacey – Reported the road sign for Ingrams is unreadable.
Cllr Donaldson – noted the condition of the railings at the Bridge and the fading road markings around the town. He is not in favour of precept money paying for these works when this should be completed by Dorset Council who advise that they do not have the funds for this work. The Clerk is chasing a quote to redo road markings in the Town Centre.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.03 pm

Approved on Chairman's Signature



COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS – for discussion on 16th July 2025 at Planning and Environment Committee Cllr Pauline Batstone

Chris Spackman, as Chair of the Sturminster Newton Community Lane Trust has asked for the Council's support with the Trust – in particular he is anxious to recruit more Board Members as he himself is having to stand down. As I understand it, the Council itself cannot run a Community Land Trust but Councillors as independent individuals could be Trustees. So the purpose of bringing this before you today is to ask if any Councillors in their own right would like to be involved, or are they aware of any individuals in the Community who might wish to do so.

Chris's argument in favour of a Community Land Trust is that it can set its own criteria for tenancies, in particular can favour key worker's, and there is no right to buy so the housing stock is secure.

I have asked Paul Derrien of Dorset Council's Housing, whose specialist area this is, to clarify some issues. This is his response -

"Housing Associations are not subject to the right to buy. There was a trial programme that looked at introducing the right to buy for Housing Associations but this was not continued. Some properties are covered by a policy called the Right to Acquire, this depends on how the homes were funded but the discounts are not high and I have never heard of this being used locally. Some Housing Associations do dispose of housing stock, normally older properties. Working in partnership with a CLT would prevent this. It would also safeguard against future legislation changes in regard to the right to buy. If a CLT held the freehold of a property they would need to give approval to any sale.

When homes are owned by CLTs they normally set some local lettings criteria and then allocations are done through the Council. There is normally a local lettings plan and conditions in S106 agreements to ensure to ensure priority goes to local people, or other group the homes are intended for. These will set the rules for allocating properties but the actual property allocation is done by the Council, though sometimes CLTs will verify the local connection. Normally the CLT works in partnership with the Housing Association and they own the homes, the CLT owns the freehold. Having the Council do the allocations ensures a process is followed and we can deal with any complaints, it also means the CLT does not have to deal with the disappointed people who did not get a home.

CLTs can give priority to keyworkers. Dorchester CLT has planning for 15 units that will be allocated to people who work in Dorchester under the age of 35.

Other social landlords can do housing for keyworkers, and we have a couple of schemes aimed at NHS workers. However, we do also have to balance the general need for affordable housing as well as that for keyworkers.

I do think CLTs can be an effective way of delivering homes and for getting local support for new housing projects."



Chris has received the following information re the Stur CLT from the Director of an organisation set up to help Community Land Trusts, who has been involved with the discussions in Stur. which sets out the current position -

“CG Fry has invited offers from Residential Providers (RPs) and included our heads of terms for the partnership with SNCLT in their invitation. The only RP to contact me was Aster so I assume that none of the others were interested in submitting a CLT-compliant offer. Aster submitted two offers - one for a partnership with SNCLT and one without..... “

Steve Watson
Director
Middlemarch Community Led Housing CIC

So I repeat, the purpose of asking that this go on the Agenda is to make Councillors aware of the current position and to publicise the fact that the Community Land Trust for Sturminster Newton is still in existence and looking for Trustees. More information is available from Chris Spackman if anyone is interested.

