

## **Powerstock & District Community Land Trust Affordable Housing Steering Group Update**

The fourth public meeting regarding the formation of a Community Land Trust (CLT) and the building of a small number of permanently affordable homes for local people was held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January in the Hut, Powerstock. After a welcome and introductions, a brief background was given to the setting up of the CLT.

It was explained that a Community Land Trust is a not-for-private profit organisation set up to benefit a defined community ie Powerstock Parish with North Eggardon, Barrowlands, Mangerton and Loscombe. Anyone who lives or works in the community and supports the aims of the CLT was invited to join as a member.

Catherine Bonnett, Rural Housing Enabling Officer (WDDC), spoke about the need for affordable housing: firstly presenting evidence compiled by Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council and then from the local affordable housing needs survey carried out in April 2013. There were nine households on WDDC's housing register and a further ten households had identified themselves as in need of affordable housing through the survey. All with a local connection.

12 sites had been considered by the steering group for the building of affordable homes. Various factors had been taken into account, with feedback from local authorities and from the wider community. The Forge site (at the end of the lane opposite the Three Horseshoes) was preferred by everyone in the group for further investigation. It was close to amenities, would not change the entrance to a village, enjoyed relative seclusion with no through traffic and was not a completely undeveloped site. Essentially, both existing businesses would be able to stay and the landowner was willing to sell.

Questions were invited from those present and everyone was asked to give their views. At the end of this open forum, a straw poll was held on whether the community supported the choice of the Forge site. 64 people voted in favour, three against and there were 12 abstentions. The Chair outlined the next steps, which would involve investigating the site further and choosing a Housing Association Partner. The meeting then drew to a close.

Since that time there has been much positive feedback regarding the choice of site. 31 CLT membership applications have been received to date. Four of the Steering Group, along with three members of the public, recently visited another CLT's affordable housing project, in order to learn from their experiences and see the homes they have built, now allocated to people with a local connection in need of affordable housing.

CLT Membership forms can be obtained from Lynne McLaughlin (485600), Vanessa White (485287) or Steve Poole (485582).