

Informal discussion between Piper Homes and Marshfield Parish Council

Tolzey Hall, Marshfield

Tuesday 5 April 2016

MEETING NOTES

Present:	Keith White (KW)	Land Director, Piper Homes
	Cllr Tony Albon-Crouch (TC)	Marshfield Parish Council (MPC)
	Cllr Sally Flint (SF)	MPC
	Cllr Howard Finnegan (HF)	MPC
	Cllr Bob Veitch	MPC
	Lin McManus	Clerk to MPC

KW introduced himself and Piper Homes. Piper Homes are a Solihull based family owned development company. Most of their current work is house building and they are building around 130 homes this year. They have considerable experience in building rural exception site schemes are currently working on a site in Hillesley, Glos. The Hillesley site comprises of 22 homes, with a 50/50 split between open market and affordable units. Piper are working with registered social landlord English Rural Housing Association on that scheme. KW explained that the 50/50 split at Hillesley had come about due to advice from the local authority regarding the make-up of the affordable housing units, with the resulting costs from this dictating the 50/50 ratio. A higher ratio of affordable units was possible.

KW gave a very useful explanation of finance, confirming that developers were permitted to achieve a (maximum) 20% profit margin on a rural exception scheme, and the finance around this would be independently scrutinised by someone such as the district valuer. In the case of Hillesley, the local authority was using the Oxford District Valuer. TC said that this was an important point as when a previous housing scheme was proposed in Marshfield, some members of the community were under the impression that the developer was standing to make considerable profits.

KW said that his interest was in the St.Martin's Lane site and not in any other site in the village (he did however subsequently make it clear that the conclusion should not be drawn that Piper Homes would not be potentially interested in other sites in Marshfield). He had been introduced to the landowner by residents of Marshfield but had no financial interest in the land as yet. He was aware that the Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 37 homes, but considered this number too high to be

delivered in one development at one time for a village of this size. His preference was therefore a development of around 16 houses.

TC outlined the surveys which had identified the need for affordable housing in Marshfield and went on to relate the story of the previous proposed scheme in Marshfield. He concluded this by saying that a signature of over 500 names opposing the scheme had been delivered to MPC and it was clear from this that the community was not convinced by that development approach. The challenge for any new proposal was to deliver a scheme which convinced a far higher number of people than the previous proposal. All attendees recognised that any new development would not be accepted or popular with everyone.

SF and HF talked about the Community Land Trust (CLT) which had recently formed and had held about 5 meetings to date. It was in the early stages of formation and about to embark on a search for sites. The MPC had supported the formation of the CLT and saw it as a means of building consensus around the development of affordable housing. MPC were keen that the CLT was given the chance to prove if it could deliver housing. KW was fully aware of the CLT model and indicated he was willing to work with such a body, although this would not be his first choice as the CLT route was inevitably more protracted.

KW left details of the Hillesley scheme, which had recently been the subject of a public exhibition.

TC gave KW a copy of MPC's adopted statement of housing (January 2016), in which it says MPC prefer that any housing scheme is led by a community initiative. At present the CLT represented the community body most likely to lead a scheme and KW was strongly advised to contact and work with the CLT. TC would supply KW with contact details.

TC said there was considerable community interest, and some concern, around the issue of new housing and that there was a community expectation that any proposals should be worked up as openly as possible. KW understood this and was happy for meeting notes to be taken and at the suggestion that any further meetings should be held as part public MPC meetings.

Both parties thanked each other for their time. No future meetings were set.