

Rural Housing Project Steering Group Meeting  
Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005, Exmoor House

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attending:

Chris France (CF) (Chair) – Exmoor National Park Authority  
Ruth McArthur (RMc) – Exmoor National Park Authority  
Jo Cox (JC) – RHE Exmoor North Devon and West Somerset Rural Housing Project  
Susan Ayre (SA) (Notes) – Exmoor North Devon and West Somerset Rural Housing Project  
Chris Blake (CB) – Government Office South West  
Cllr. Roger Webber (RW) – West Somerset District Council and Exmoor National Park Authority  
Cllr. Mary Crowley (MC) – West Somerset District Council  
Cllr. John Edwards (JE) – Exmoor National Park Authority  
Heather Crockford (HC) – West Somerset District Council  
Barbara Venn (BV) – North Devon District Council  
Tony Murray (TM) – Magna West Somerset  
Jennifer Gould (JG) – Magna West Somerset  
Sarah Barney (SB) – Magna West Somerset  
Justin Roxburgh (JR) – Falcon Rural Housing  
Vaughn Lake (VL) – Hastoe  
Gail Cleverdon (GC) – North Devon Homes Ltd

Apologies:

Graham Mansbridge (Gail took his place)  
Angie Devine

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Angie Devine rather than ‘Mellet’  
North Molton and Brayford – Spelling mistake

3. Matters Arising

Barbara Venn has a new job title – ‘Housing Strategy and Public Health Manager.’

Discussion concerning the paper being produced about process and format of housing needs report and the issue of recommendations – ‘scaling back’.

Criticism and discussion of awareness and promotion of project at the moment. JC fully acknowledged the issue and explained the challenges faced. Now assistant is in post JC

should be able to rectify some of the issues raised and will be able to devote more time to raising awareness of the project and implementation.

Seminar to improve education and awareness of the project was discussed – Hopefully organised for January/February.

**Action Point 1** – CF, RMc, JC and SA to meet and discuss seminar.

Agreement that a six monthly newsletter be produced by the project for general distribution through each local authority and Parish Council.

**Action Point 2** – Newsletter format e-mailed around Steering Group for comment.

Discussion re: s.106 with particular focus on recent Dulverton issues.  
Agreed that for planning applications within Exmoor National Park where the District Council has an interest, that s.106 may be varied to preclude subsequent occupiers from neighbouring districts.

4. Welcome to Susan Ayre
5. Jo Cox Leaving

JC is hopeful that funding has been secured for the next two years for the project including the RHE and Assistant posts.  
Need for the recruitment process to begin as soon as possible, also important that there is some overlap time between new person taking up RHE post and JC leaving. BV recommended advertising as soon as possible and JC said advertisement for post should be ready for release in the New Year. Getting the advertisement ready for release will be a top priority.

**Action Point 3** – RMc will be e-mailed to get the recruitment process underway.

6. Affordable Rural Housing Commission (ARHC)

JC was questioned about whether enough evidence is being put forward. JC explained what had been done already. RW commented on what wanted to put forward – 3 key issues. NDDC also putting forward evidence and there are lots of opportunities to put forward more. JC highlighted the importance of contributing and said that if people want to send her information/comment she can pass it on, but officers could also use their own channels to put forward information.

RW emphasized the importance of getting involved with all research and consultative opportunities and that all members need to be made aware so that they can inform their respective communities.

JC told Steering Group about Research feedback at WSDC offices 29<sup>th</sup> Nov. JE expressed interest in seeing research.

**Action Point 4** – JC if technically possible will put Draft Research results on the website.

#### 7. Work Programme and Progress

**Action Point 5** - The project progress document will be e-mailed to Steering Group members with the minutes.

JC and others felt that there had been a lot of activity and positive outcomes within the Rural Housing Project and it was the RHE's role to highlight these outcomes to the wider public.

#### 8. Report Format

Work is continuing on a streamlined format in consultation with the Steering Group.

**Action Point 6** – Once the report format and template have been reviewed by JC, SA, and RMc it will be emailed to the Steering Group.

RW suggested the inclusion on the survey form of a tick box which if ticked would allow elected district council representatives or ENPA councilors to follow up and inform the respondent of progress.

**Action Point 7** – Amend survey form to include tick box

#### 9. Budget

JC explained the new funding stream, hoped that the funding is relatively secure but will not know for sure until the New Year. Rural Housing Project is considered high priority.

Budget explained by JC, Steering Group members appeared happy with the breakdown.

#### 10. Partnership/Closer working relations with Devon and Somerset RHE's.

JC highlighted the importance of being more visible at County level due to the restructuring of funding. A partnership agreement was proposed which would allow closer working practices regardless of changes of staff. The main aims were suggested to be:

- Raising awareness
- Ensure a consistent approach
- Raise the profile of projects

**Action Point 8** – Partnership agreement to be emailed to Steering Group

JR emphasized that greater interaction was welcomed.

JC put forward the idea of the RHE's sitting in on each others Steering Group meetings. The Steering Group felt that CB's role was already achieving the aims of communication across the area. The general consensus was that they are happy for improved communication across the area but not in the Steering Group context.

**Action Point 9** – Invitation of Devon RHE (Sue Southwell) to sit in on next Steering Group meeting to see how it works

BV clarified the role of Mary Ridgeway in the Devon County context and how she complemented the Devon RHE role.

11. Date and Location of Next Meeting

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006 (10.30am) at Exmoor House