

Westbourne Parish Council Newsletter

A U T U M N 2 0 1 7

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR OUR YOUNGER FAMILIES

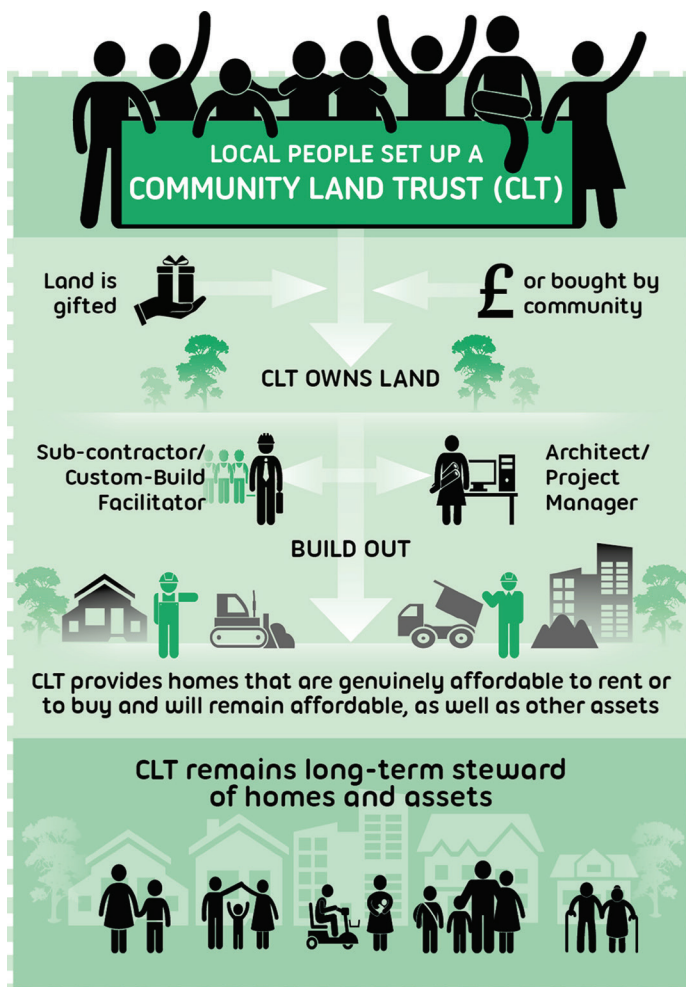
Moves are afoot to address the lack of decent, affordable housing for younger Westbourne residents who are struggling to stay in the village due to the cost of local housing, and whom we simply cannot afford to lose. Residents are currently forming a local Community Land Trust (CLT), to be called 'Home Grown Westbourne CLT'. It is to be a non-profit making community-based organisation, run entirely by volunteers, set up to develop local housing at permanently affordable levels; it will then hold these homes in trust for the long-term community benefit. It has to be a truly community-led initiative to attract the necessary funding, so we need Westbourne residents to get behind it and support it. It will require WPC support, but it cannot be WPC-led in order to qualify for government and agency funding.

This article aims to describe what a CLT does and what it can achieve. We will soon be inviting the whole community to drop-in events, open forums and exhibitions, to explain and discuss the idea in greater detail. Thereafter we will establish a steering group and try and persuade as many of you as possible to become involved in pushing the project through.

The background: it is commonly recognised that previous governments haven't built enough new homes over many decades, and there is now a major shortage of affordable housing in the south, and particularly so in our immediate local area. Westbourne is now too expensive for younger residents to get a foothold on the housing ladder, and the village will simply decline if they are driven out. The young families needed to keep Westbourne vital and sustainable, to keep the schools, shops and businesses alive, have been priced out, and that threatens to turn our village into a ghetto of the rich and elderly as the majority of our younger residents have to move out.



We have to find a way to provide decent and affordable accommodation for our younger families and those starting out in life, as well as for those local people who have no prospect of flying the family nest until their mid-thirties. We also have to find ways to accommodate essential key workers, such as nurses, police and firefighters, who currently struggle to find somewhere affordable to live near to their work.



Government policy now requires local planning authorities to increase the number of affordable homes in their area. One of the main strategies is to encourage the creation of local CLTs, so that local communities can select and buy the land and develop the homes they need. A CLT achieves this by separating the value of the building from the land that it stands on and holds the asset in trust for long-term community benefit, with homes sold or rented at a rate linked to local wages and with membership open to anyone with a strong connection to the area.

It's a radical model that effectively takes housing out of the property market and pegs it to the labour market instead. Further, as the Government is pushing it hard, generous funds, grants and tax breaks are currently available to communities that form and run their own CLTs.

As a CLT holds these assets in trust for the benefit of the local community, they can be made permanently affordable. The community decides who can occupy these homes, for how long and at what cost, not just for now but for every generation of future occupiers. Crucially CLT homes are also one of the only forms of affordable housing that are immune from 'right to buy'. The real joy with community rental is that, once any mortgage has been paid off, the community receives a substantial annual income to use for local community benefit.

To raise the finance to fund kick-starting an affordable housing scheme and attract funding from national and local government, ethical lenders, other charitable sources and housing organisations, the only viable way is to form our own Westbourne CLT. If we don't identify our own site to develop, the stark fact is that CDC will have to, and Westbourne will have no further say in the matter; we will have no long-term ownership of the housing, no future income stream, no say in who occupies these homes and no leverage to ensure that they are made available to parish families and local residents.

The primary benefits to setting up and running a CLT are:

- They are locally driven, controlled by members of the community and democratically accountable;
- They help to ensure that a community remains vital and sustainable for all age groups;
- They allow the community to decide where these homes are located and who lives in them;
- They can help to meet local housing need even in areas with very high house prices;
- They provide homes that are permanently affordable, benefitting generations of residents;
- They give the community an asset, and an income stream for future generations;
- They help to prevent external agencies forcing a scheme somewhere in the parish that the community does not approve of or want;
- They have the advantage of being subject to a 'lighter touch' from the planning authority when assessing sites for affordable homes. A 'rural exception' site, that would otherwise never be granted planning, can be justified for a CLT affordable housing scheme.

However we will only succeed if we get the support of the community. We want to hear from you if you feel you may want to be involved, or just leave a contact email so we can tell you how things are going. So, please email westbournepc@outlook.com and we will send you regular updates. No commitment is required from you at this stage, but your support is essential. In order to establish a CLT we need to show that the community is right behind it. So please don't forget - email us now!

GAP BETWEEN EMSWORTH AND WESTBOURNE THREATENED

The Parish Council has recently learned that the gap between Emsworth and Westbourne is in danger of further erosion. Hampshire Homes are soon to apply to build 49 homes in Hampshire Fields. Some of you may be aware of the footpath, just over and to the left of the Hampshire Farm footbridge, and which leads down through fields to Emsworth, passing Lumley Mill and through Brook Meadows. This planned development is in Emsworth and therefore outside the jurisdiction of Westbourne Parish Council. However, as it is so close to the county and parish boundaries, we will be making representations when the time comes to do so. Please contact us if you have any questions or information that might help us oppose this inappropriate development.



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEARS COMPLETION

The public hearing requested by the independent examiner took place on 25th October. The session was well attended and the parish council was represented by Piers Mason (WPC and WNPSG), Roy Briscoe (WPC and WNPSG) and Patricia Goodhew (WNPSG). They were ably supported by our planning consultant Lisa Jackson.

The fact that the hearing, which started at 10.00am, concluded shortly after 12.30pm is in no small measure down to the fact that our representatives had prepared themselves thoroughly and were therefore in a position to respond appropriately and effectively to the questions posed by Jeremy Edge, the independent examiner. We now await Mr Edge's report and are quietly confident that only relatively minor changes will need to be made to the Plan before it goes to referendum early in the New Year.

Please look out for further reports on the Parish Council and Village websites, as well as in the Westbourne Magazine, since we will need your participation at the forthcoming referendum. Only if the neighbourhood plan gains the support of the parish will it become part of planning law, which will enable us to have a degree of control with regard to any future development.

FLU VACCINATIONS

The clocks have gone back and autumn is turning into winter, so now is the time to get a flu vaccination before any outbreak occurs. The NHS is reported to be braced for the worst flu season in its history, amid fears that hospitals will be unable to cope. Australia, which is just coming out of its winter - has had a 'heavy flu season', with hospitals struggling to cope. Australia has reported 98,000 cases of the flu - more than double the number last year.

The injected flu vaccine is offered free on the NHS to help protect adults and children at risk of flu and its complications. Flu can be unpleasant, but if you are otherwise healthy it will usually clear up on its own within a week. However some are more at risk than others.

The over-65s, and those with a weakened immune system, are most at risk. As the immune system weakens over time, the over-65s are less able to shrug off infections. Other individuals that have a weakened immune system could be at risk too. These include those suffering with cancer or major heart disease. The risks of flu are very real so it's important to get vaccinated as it's the best protection we have. A Public Health England spokeswoman recently said: 'It is crucial that all eligible groups get vaccinated before people start getting the flu. It also

highlights the importance of the vaccine programme in children, which indirectly protects other vulnerable members of the community, as well as the children themselves.'



The flu vaccine is also routinely given on the NHS as an annual nasal spray to children aged two and three plus children in reception class and school years one, two, three and four as well as to children aged two to 17 years, who are at a particular risk of flu complications. You can have your NHS flu jab at your GP surgery, at a local pharmacy offering the service or, for pregnant women, at your midwifery service if they offer it.

Studies show that the flu jab will help prevent you getting the flu. It won't stop all viruses and the level of protection varies, so it's not a 100% guarantee that you'll be flu-free, but if you do get flu after vaccination it's likely to be milder and shorter-lived than otherwise. There is also evidence that the flu jab can reduce your risk of having a stroke.

CALLING ALL ARCHER FANS - ARE YOU AN EMMA GRUNDY OR A ROBERT SNELL

There's a real danger that, if you don't listen to BBC Radio Four's The Archers, you won't read beyond the title above. But if you're with us so far, let's talk about the Parish Council. If you are a regular listener you'll know that quite a furore has arisen about filling a vacancy on the fictional Ambridge Parish Council. There is no such drama here in Westbourne but there are three vacancies on Westbourne Parish Council. And, anyone who is a registered elector and has lived in Westbourne village for over a year can apply.

Why should you apply? Because the Parish Council needs to reflect the whole community it serves. If you are interested in the life and future of our community and can attend an evening Council meeting on the second Thursday of every month then this might be for you. Why not call or email the Parish Clerk for a chat on 07775 654483 or westbournepc@outlook.com

HOW RESILIENT IS OUR COMMUNITY?

What if there is a fire in your home? What if there is a power cut? What if there is a heavy snow fall or your home is flooded? How resilient is our community? Westbourne residents are invited and encouraged to attend a short presentation, intended to help your parish councillors with resilience and emergency planning for individuals or families, particularly when elderly or other vulnerable people may need support in the event of an emergency occurring. The emergency could be any of the above.

This presentation, which will be led by Christopher Scott, is the first step towards providing the parish with training and guidance, with the aim of becoming a stronger, safer and therefore more resilient community. The presentation will be followed up with two training sessions, aimed at providing additional information and guidance, ensuring that any activities undertaken would be carried out effectively and safely. Christopher leads on the 'Community Resilience' element, which falls within the 'What if' programme, which is being delivered countywide.

In order to enable as many Westbourne residents as possible to attend this meeting, it has been arranged to take place at 10am on Saturday morning, the 25th of November, at The Meeting Place in North Street, Westbourne. Please try your best to attend this very important meeting - we look forward to seeing you there.

PHONE CALLS FROM BOGUS POLICE OFFICERS

Ray Burgess, Westbourne's Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, has reported the following: Recently bogus phone callers have stolen more than £20,000 from three local residents by pretending to be police officers and getting them to hand over money to couriers at the door.

An 84-year-old Westbourne woman had a call from a man who said he was a police officer. He told her to send bank cards and cash to check for fingerprints as someone in her bank was involved. She withdrew £8,000 and handed it to a courier, together with her bank card and cheque book. Two other Chichester residents, an 85-year-old and a 90 year old, were both robbed of £7,500 by bogus police callers using similar stories. The bogus callers even asked the victims to ring a telephone number where a woman 'confirmed' the bogus callers were genuine. PC John Blight said: 'The victims were deceived by different ruses into handing over large sums of cash. The police would never contact anyone and ask them to withdraw or hand over cash to officers'.

People carrying out these frauds are targeting those they think are vulnerable, so please look out for your friends, family and anyone you feel may be at risk. When in doubt that a telephone caller is genuine, simply hang up. If you know anything about these incidents or if you yourself have fallen victim to fraud of this type, please call the police on 101 quoting Operation Signature. *With thanks to Westbourne Magazine, where this article first appeared.*

CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL

Call: 07775 654483
Email: westbournepc@outlook.com
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The Parish Council meets every second Thursday of the month at 7.15 pm at the Meeting Place, North Street, Westbourne. Residents are very welcome to attend the meeting which is held in public.