

EYV Committee and Trustees

15.12. 2020 by Zoom

Present: Sam Camp and Robyn Gummer, Jonathan Williams, Josh Smith, Justin Tyers, Will Lock (Chair), Les Silverlock, Marion Silverlock (Notes)

Apologies: Nicky Kemp (Rural Housing Enabler) and Steven Pugsley (both, conflicting Cutcombe and SWT meetings); Napoleon Wilcox (moving house), Annabelle Gregory (connection problems, Porlock), Keith Ross (Treasurer), Danielle Summersgill (bad BT connection, Tarr)

1. Rural Housing Enabler post:

Will and Les met with Nicky Kemp recently to discuss her links with EYV. She is entirely sympathetic to EYV aims. Her 'patch' is the old West Somerset area. She lives in her own converted chapel in Wheddon Cross. She has a base in the National Park as needed and works for SWT. She is involved with the building plots identified in the Cutcombe housing needs survey and consultation.

Justin would gladly support a self build group should one arise. He is in contact with Nicky to see what can be developed. LiveWest wants to support EYV and is now in touch with Nicky. Her role will usefully cover some of the housing issues EYV members currently champion. A close working relationship is planned.

Will asked the members for personal issues re EYV and housing etc

Jonathon: I bought a house in the Quantocks. I was disappointed to have to leave Exmoor where all my family live. There were no suitable work opportunities and housing is so expensive. I hope to return in the future.

Sam and Robyn: now we have found somewhere we just want to support efforts to meet housing needs.

Josh has put in for planning permission for a self-build.

2. West Somerset Opportunity Area proposal

Will asked whether, in the absence of any firm plans, sight of the researched needs or budget information from WSOA, EYV should pursue this project, which would take EYV into project management and delivery; or do we continue to pursue our current commitments. Discussed further under item 4.

3. Covid recovery – What are the needs of Exmoor young adults and families

Les: using a paid member to do the work, we could do a survey, funded by Somerset Community Foundation. It was agreed to apply for £2.5K from SCF and invite our contacts at CPRE to be partners.

Will: it is important to do a survey; CPRE also want our information. If we survey a wider group the information would be of interest to other groups. Does the National Park have software or a platform we could use? Ask Dan James.

Les: we hope to have the money to pay someone to do it – any suggestions needed asap.

Will: “In our building business, we split into two small teams where we could institute safe working practices and selected work as close to home as possible. Working on farms is safe and works well. So far we are able to keep going and the future looks OK.

Jonathan: the problems will be more evident when furlough payments stop, especially in housing costs, so next Spring/Summer will be the time to ask.

Josh: the business is now doing click and collect and is doing well as a result.

Robyn has been on furlough and maternity leave.

Sam took a job in Tesco as a back up to his building business and has kept it as the future is so unknowable. Currently, work is coming from new incomers for doing up second homes and holiday cottages.

Danielle (in her absence): needs to know how much to offer on the plot she wants. £20K max was suggested for the equivalent of 2 plots, 1 for possible later development, but first try offering £12K.

4. EYV Young Co-ordinators

Will recorded our heartfelt thanks to Megan and Kerrie for all the work they did, under awful Covid conditions. Megan’s work with social media and website and their work with connectedness in general is missed.

Will asked for suggestions about what the role of a co-ordinator(s) should be now. Should EYV continue with its broker role or branch out into running practical projects – and if the latter, what structures would be needed?

Les: M&K were victims of Covid – no proper support meetings etc. We need a co-ordinator to maintain and develop contact with members, with offers and opportunities as they arise in housing, employment, training etc. The website and FaceBook need to be kept up to date. Close work with Nicky Kemp is essential. There is much work to be done following up on Pledges made by organisations at Summit 1 and on Pledges yet to be received – and to pin these down to times and detail.

Summit 2 is planned for 2pm on April 22nd at the White Horse (LS to book). Loss of earnings for EYV members asked to attend can be met by EYV.

Currently we have good offers from Lendology for grants and loans for housing and Build Store for possible mortgage help. A young voice is now needed to follow up. Another role is to collect and communicate members’ stories/experiences to relevant bodies.

Justin asked members present to clarify what they themselves had gained from EYV.

Jonathan: it was EYV that nudged me towards the idea of buying rather than renting. I would like to self build at a later date. There was also help to get my sister housed by LiveWest. EYV should not be shoe-horned into a single role.

Josh: our planning application for self build has now been submitted. It all began with EYV’s self build seminar and tour, which gave us a kick in the right direction and also information on grants and loans. Some hesitation and delay arises from uncertainty about suppliers.

Justin: don't buy retail timber – find standing timber. EYV should talk to the Forestry Commission and owners of woodland. Ask FC for access, a mobile sawmill and general support for self builders. Ask the National Park for timber. Keep asking people for help until a solution emerges.

Will: a key task for Co-ordinators is to promote two way communications between members and organisations. It is too soon to take on WSOA; we need the right structures in place.

Justin: had asked M and K for their ideas for the future of EYV and hoped for a reply.

5. Co-ordinator contract: ideas are now urgently needed for possible candidates with social media and communication skills.

Les: the first and main job is chasing up Summit pledges, with support from Steven Pugsley. An ability to work with young people and organisations, plus media skills are essential. There is quality, local, members' and professional support available in housing, self build, finance, planning, Local and Park Authorities, media and digital inclusion for the right candidate; s/he needs a 'can do's style rather than all the knowledge and information.

6. EYV's housing research and case studies - sent previously

40 members responded with astonishing statistics which HA's have noted. This is still having an impact which will increase post covid, because it is real and the evidence of strangulation by red tape is clear to see.

7. Lendology – previously known as Wessex Resolutions

Les: they make loans and grants of £30-50K for renovations and self build. They need live projects to work on – work in progress. The funding comes from district council housing budgets and is intended to plug funding gaps. This is a cheaper way for councils to get houses built and run down properties renovated. It is social housing by another route.

Will: success is more likely if a house can be part built before applying for a mortgage. The Lendology offers make it easier for lower paid people like himself to get on the housing ladder. Talk to Lendology as early as possible in your thinking. If you know people in need of this sort of help, put them onto Lendology or us. The Co-ordinator can also chase people up and put them in touch with Lendology.

8. A Self Build plot and group

Justin asked members what barriers they can see now, because whatever they face will apply to many other self builders.

It was agreed that the following makes a good start:

- Drawing up plans and having some idea of the likely costs of this
- Getting approval from Building Regs
- Identifying own skills and what might need to be bought or brought in
- Timescale – how long will it take to build and what it might cost.

EYV Advisors and others can help with lots of it.

Finance: the big lenders are never interested in S106 self builds, if you go the conventional route of applying. BUT – what if you/EYV were to approach the marketing department, offering a pioneering scheme to help solve the housing crisis in the UK? The kudos and marketing value would be high for that lender.

Jonathon: I have no idea how to find a plot of land, where to go for help. I feel over-whelmed by architects and plans and the possible traps. I lack time to put into making a sensible plan. It feels easier to buy a ready-made house. Easier access to all the information might help.

Justin: build in the costs/loss of earnings for the year you might need to build it. At the end of the year, house built, your confidence will be sky high and any job will feel possible.

Sam: how much money do you need to get started?

Justin: if EYV produced 2 or 3 costed designs, would that help?

Members: Yes

Justin: remember you can move into an unfinished house as soon as it is water tight, warm and has running water. Finishing off can be done at your own pace.

Josh: would modular designs be a barrier for the Park?

Justin: the Park want to know that it looks right.

Will: there are changes afoot and extra rooms can be added for office space etc.

Justin: “THE WHOLE WORLD WANTS THIS TO WORK” *Possible title for Summit 2?*

Will: we need a list of acceptable materials and approved designs.

Marion: could Justin and these members get together to make designs?

Les: LiveWest has pictures of the houses they want to build in Wheddon Cross.

Justin: I could help others to put together designs which then might be useful to others. Use me!

Will: Steven Pugsley would be an essential supporter for this idea.

Justin: Joe White would be very useful at the Park.

Will: sadly, members are still finding the Park throwing up many obstacles

Justin: just submit plans and let’s see what happens.

Josh: for me the barriers were ‘How?’ – a lack of knowledge, but EYV put us onto the right people. No way to know what the Park would demand next – wildlife surveys etc. We should make a list of everything that will be needed because it’s hopeless not knowing what might come next.

Justin: we need a road map, a blue-print list of steps, called “Where do you start?”

Will: for me the main issues are finance and location (near to family and work).

Les: there are the 8 plots of land as a result of the Cutcombe survey and the Park has a map of plots on its website.

Josh: EYV needs to quietly promote the availability of help to keep young people here.

Les: ENPA is producing some changes eg the issues of where you live is widening to include the whole Park not just neighbouring parishes. EYV members have never expressed the need for lots of affordable new builds – just help to self build and convert existing property.

Justin: consider what house building skills you might have or develop.

Josh: with family help; I would like to do all the internal work and just get the shell built by others.

9. **EYV Update**, previously sent round.

Les recorded our thanks to Will and Sam for all their recent media work promoting young residents' problems and solutions.

AOB:

Justin will contact Sam, Josh and Jonathon to consider designs. **Les** to send contact details.

Sam: could young people attract a new sort of scheme, other than S106, that might make it easier for banks to lend? **Could S106 be varied?**

Will: flexibility seems to be vital in every area.

Les: should a face to face Summit prove impossible, if a suitable window is not too far off, we defer, not cancel. If it looks unlikely, then an online event would be organised to keep things moving until a proper meeting can take place.

SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE YOUNG CO-ORDINATOR, PLEASE?

Draft Contract Description attached

The next meeting of EYV will be for all members and advisors with a new Co-ordinator(s) in post.