

TOLLESBURY COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (CLT)

STEERING GROUP

DRAFT Terms of Reference for the Steering Group

Background

Tollesbury's draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is being reviewed by Maldon District Council (MDC). Once returned, it will be amended as necessary and submitted to residents by Tollesbury Parish Council (TPC) for a statutory referendum. When that process completes, the NP will be adopted ('made').

In the meantime, drawing on experience elsewhere in England, the village can establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to enable the provision of affordable housing and other assets for the local community.

A Steering Group (SG) is a temporary, informal, voluntary body independent of TPC that investigates viability and decides whether to prepare for incorporation. The SG does not have assets, sign contracts, or employ staff.

Aim of the SG

To explore the viability of a CLT for Tollesbury and – if there is agreement – to mobilise activity to develop the mechanisms leading to incorporation.

Roles and responsibilities of the SG

Agree to work together, accountable to the community for local benefit, to:

1. Discuss and explore the mechanisms for setting up a CLT.
2. Consider and agree:
 - a) The evidence, nature and scope of the local need
 - b) Boundaries and limits of the geographic area of interest
 - c) A broad Vision for affordable housing and any other asset provision
 - d) Principles for the legal model to be adopted
 - e) Objectives and the priorities for action
3. Envisage and appraise options for funding homes and other provision
4. Identify land and other assets that could be involved, exploring possible sites, but not negotiating terms
5. Work with *Community Land Trust Network (CLTN)* and other bodies to explore legal structures and prepare a *Concept for Incorporation*
6. Seek technical advice and apply for funding to enable set up and incorporation to take place by not later than 31 March 2027
7. Initiate a communication strategy to engage the local community
8. Carry out a skills audit to identify and plug gaps in SG expertise
9. Defer formal decisions until after incorporation.
10. Wind up after incorporation or upon a decision by the SG not to proceed

Membership

Open to all members of the community who are signed up to the SG's aim and ways of working. Normally between 5 and 10 people. Note that the SG has no legal status while unincorporated. Officer roles are to help functioning but carry no legal authority. MDC and TPC Councillors in attendance are non-voting.

All SG members need to be:

- Resident in Tollesbury
- Interested in the CLT project and committed to championing its cause
- Able to take on responsibility and devote time, experience and / or skills;
- Always committed to maintaining enthusiasm for the project.

Roles of the SG Officers (See Appendix for Role Specifications)

Chair / Vice Chair

The SG will elect a Chair and Vice Chair

Secretary

A Secretary will be appointed by the SG

Treasurer

A Treasurer will be appointed by the SG

Meetings

The SG is time limited. It winds up after incorporation or upon a decision not to proceed. Meetings will be held monthly initially and reviewed in the light of activity / need. A final meeting will be held by not later 31 March 2027.

Successful meetings don't happen by chance. Individual SG members are invited to be respectful of each other and are bound by the following *Code of Conduct*:

- One person speaks at a time;
- The Chair decides who that person will be;
- The speaker may speak only on the issue being considered;
- Those wishing to speak will be given an opportunity;
- Decisions require majority support; and
- Once voted upon, no further discussion is permitted.

Principles to be observed

- **Transparency:** publish notes and decisions
- **No legal overreach:** no contracts or assets
- **Time-limited:** steering group ≠ permanent governance
- **Community-first:** acting *on behalf of*, not *instead of*, the community

Conflict Resolution

In the event of a disagreement, the Chair will lead on agreeing a way forward. This may be in the form of a vote (if appropriate) to gauge the majority view or a deferred decision pending further discussion after the meeting.

Confidentiality

Meetings may receive information which is not in the public domain often relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. Members must ensure this information remains confidential unless prior agreement has been obtained.

Breaches of the *Code of Conduct*

Anyone who does not comply with the *Code of Conduct* will be asked to leave the meeting by the Chair.

Make it Fun

SG members are volunteers. Where possible the experience should be enjoyable.

APPENDIX – Role Specifications

APPENDIX to SG Terms of Reference

ROLES OF SG OFFICERS

The Role of the Chair – supported as necessary by the Vice Chair – is to:

1. Provide overall coordination and direction of the Group
2. Ensure the efficient conduct of the SG's business and meetings;
3. Ensure that all members are given the opportunity to express their views and that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained;
4. Manage the delegation of key responsibilities and resolution of any SG problems;
5. Establish a constructive working relationship with other organisations i.e. CLTN, Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), MDC, TPC, Registered Providers etc;
6. Ensure that the SG receives professional advice and seed corn funding when it is needed, either from TPC or the CLTN, or from other external sources;
7. Representing the organisation as appropriate; and
8. Take decisions delegated to the Chair.

The Role of the Secretary will be:

1. To take and circulate minutes of meetings
2. Circulate meeting agendas and papers seven days ahead of meetings
3. Ensure that SG members have access to timely information, papers, advice relevant to its discussions to enable decision making
4. Arrange meeting venues and resources
5. Lead on the communications strategy, provide support for wider communication / promotional activities such as a website / Facebook
6. Liaise with key stakeholders
7. Undertake correspondence / complete returns as necessary
8. Liaise with the Chair / Vice Chair / Treasurer to ensure good coordination

The Role of the Treasurer will be:

1. Open and manage the bank account
2. Maintain accurate accounts
3. Report to the SG and Members when the organisation is formed
4. Ensure financial procedures are followed
5. Be involved in and advise on financial decisions
6. Be aware of and manage any financial transactions
7. Liaise with the Chair / Vice Chair /Secretary to ensure good coordination