

**Notes of the Public Meeting to discuss the Blackawton Business Units held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday 11 December 2018 in Blackawton Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs Rake and Thomas were present as were seven members of the public and A Thom (Clerk).

1. Cllr Simon Rake outlined the process which led to the agreement for the business units to be built. He discussed the content of the 'Blackawton Business Units Working Party Report and Business Plan' document.
2. Cllr Rake explained that we are waiting on prices from Linden Homes:
  - a) To build the final three units at the same time as the first five
  - b) To build the final three units at a later stage but before a specified date/stage of the build while LH remain on site.
  - c) To build the final three to watertight only.
3. We are also waiting on final specifications for the units.
4. The units have been built to ground level and scaffolding has been erected.  
It is expected the first five will be built in the first half of 2019.
5. Funds need to be sourced if the final three are to be built completely or in part.  
Alternatives are to borrow – possibly from specialist social enterprise lenders, from SHDC, or from the community.
6. Cllr Rake explained it was hoped to the meeting would reach a consensus regarding the way forward.
7. There will be three income generating enterprises in the parish and it may ultimately be of benefit to combine them.
8. The ownership structure recommended by the Report is a CIC (Community Interest Company).
9. How to structure a CIC was discussed – possibly one pound shares, one per person, with the Board answerable to shareholders.
10. One participant has grave concerns about how proper governance of a CIC can be ensured. Suggestions included the Parish Council as an ex-officio director on the board, employment of a paid staff and taking professional advice as required.
11. It is expected there will be surplus funds to manage.
12. There could be a grants panel.
13. One participant suggested that starting with a project goal would attract community interest and engagement. They suggest this project be a woodland amenity space.
14. The management may need to prove the income stream first, for example to show that interest can be paid.
15. It was confirmed that there are circumstances where the units could lose money. See the Business Plan.
16. The wording of the CIC's foundation document can accommodate long-term objectives.

17. Business rates liability advice – whether liability lies with the unit or the management body if the units are vacant – is pending.
18. It could be possible to employ a management company to run the units. They are small for such an entity to be interested. The disadvantage would be loss of community control.  
There is a spectrum of subcontracting – for example subcontract the busy beginning and end of a lease and the Board managing the more straightforward middle.

**Conclusion**

At the conclusion of the meeting a CIC (Community Interest Company) remained the preferred ownership structure. The steps to set up a CIC will now be established.