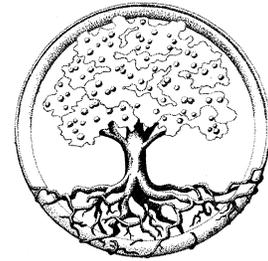


**COLE STREET FARM COHOUSING
COMMUNITY**

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NEWSLETTER – December 2009

Seasons greetings to you all. May the festive season be one of joy, peace and good health and may this also be so during next year. Thanks for your continued support and interest in our project.

ALL CHANGE!

As the big build enters its final dash to completion, so the first residents have started to move into their beautiful new units. Although the end is in sight, the last mile seems to be endless! And the mud does not diminish! But we have heat. Oh joy and bliss, the biomass boiler is working and we are becoming cosy at last. A few teething problems attended the initial week or so, but they seem to have been sorted out now and what a joy it is to leave the electric heaters behind. The new bio-digester system is also up and running, the end product being pure enough to enter the stream. The photo-voltaic panels are producing electricity, and although it's taken much longer than we had anticipated and hoped, we are getting there. Our excellent contractors, Jordan and Faber, are still on schedule to finish the build by mid Jan. with people moving into all the new units by late Jan.

BYE BYE NANCY AND VITA HELLO SARAH, LUKE AND BILL

One sad piece of news for us residents, at least, is that Nancy and her delightful daughter Vita have moved on. They have moved to Exeter to live with Nancy's new partner and although we will miss them both hugely, we wish them every happiness and success in their new life. We are also extremely grateful for the part Nancy played in coordinating the building programme, being the liaison between us and the site manager and enabling us to benefit from the grants towards both the biomass installation and the photo-voltaic panels. They have promised to keep in touch and visit on a regular basis, so we will keep them to that.

The good news is that as Nancy left, we welcomed Sarah and Luke to the farm, who will be occupying one of the Timber Barn units. They both have an interest in permaculture and sustainable living and are fresh from travelling in the states WOOFing. We look forward to learning from their experiences as we garden together. Also new to the community, and exploring becoming a full-time resident, is Bill, who has been living in London and working as a Shiatsu practitioner. He is also a skilled builder/decorator – all attributes welcomed by the group.

LIVING AT THE THRESHOLD CENTRE

Nancy leaving means there will be one privately owned cottage for sale very soon. After January The Byre will be available, initially on a six month rental basis and then for purchase. If anyone is interested in exploring living here please contact Nancy at nancywinfield@hotmail.co.uk (particularly over xmas) or phone 01392 211794 for further details of this two bedroom unit.

We also still have one Housing Association shared ownership property available. To qualify you need to be eligible for the housing register and have the ability to raise a mortgage, so that in effect you buy part of the house and rent the rest.

If you are interested in living here but have been put off by the whole issue of "registering" with North Dorset District Council we would strongly encourage you to put in a call to their officer on 01258 484322 - you may be pleasantly surprised by their criteria. In brief if you have recently lost your home due to relationship break up, are moving from a low cost to high cost area or have an income of less than £60,000

you could qualify! This one bedroom property is already in existence as it is a cottage that was originally designated as a holiday residence when we bought the site 4 years ago. If you have previously visited TTC the fact that we are talking about Swallows may mean something to you. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact Dominic Amans on 01202 864247 to discuss the application process.

GARDENS

We are harvesting leeks, parsnips, beetroot, kale, spinach and sprouts outside and a late sowing of lettuce in the polytunnel. I marvel at the Winter Density lettuce planted outside and growing well through all that the weather throws at it and am delighted to see the autumn planted onions and garlic gamely growing on. The grass is sodden on top of the layers of Kimmeridge clay of course, but our raised beds are proving their worth in allowing some drainage. We lost one fruit tree (pear) but all the others in our mini-orchard are beginning to show signs of new buds. We thank Jackie Kemp for her gift of some unnamed apple trees which are all flourishing.

As the Cole St. 'garden' area reappeared from all the trenching and piling up of mud, clay and concrete, we decided to lay turf as the first stage at healing the land. Though the ground was incredibly wet, the group gamely laid about half the area and immediately the light level rose and it is beginning to resemble a garden once again. Drainage of the wettest area still needs completing (more trenches!), but by spring when our new residents are finally with us, we will be able to plan the rebirth together.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS – 2010

The cohousing and work weekends have proved very popular this year, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cohousing Workshops :

These are residential and run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. They provide an opportunity for individuals or groups to experience life in a cohousing community for a weekend, at the same time learning how to go about setting up a project. They are very popular, so book early to secure a place. 2010 charges: £140 for course, lunches, snacks and evening meals. B&B £25/£35 per night, depending on location.

Feb. 19-21: April 23-25: June 11-13: Sept. 10-12: Nov. 12-14

Gardening/Work Weekends

We offer bed and board in exchange for your help and it's not all work! Arrive in time for Friday supper if you can, otherwise early on the Saturday. Our usual January and March weekends this year are being kept for in-house working with new residents.

May 28th-30th: July 16th-18th: Oct. 15th-17th.

Open Afternoons for Visitors/Enquirers

These take place on the **Sunday afternoon of the work weekends** from 2-4pm (see previous item). A chance for enquirers and potential joiners to have a look around, ask questions about cohousing and enjoy a cup of tea. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.

Open Lunches

These take place on the **first Sunday of each month from 12.30 – 3pm**. An informal gathering with a chance to look round and meet the residents. Please let us know (on 01747 821929) if you would like to come, and **bring vegetarian food to share**.

Meditation

We hold open meditation on the **first Thursday of each month from 8-9pm** offering meditation and visualisation techniques suitable for all levels of experience. Please let us know (on 01747 821929) if you would like to join us. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.

With best wishes from us all,

Jane, Luke, Sarah, Amanda, Peter, Monty the dog, Caroline, Bill, Michael, Gay, Andrew, John and Jamie, Alan, Linda, and not forgetting Muriel and Chris.

