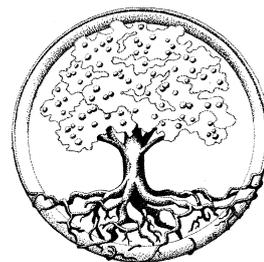


## COLE STREET FARM COHOUSING COMMUNITY

***THE THRESHOLD CENTRE***  
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NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2008

Dear Everyone,

Life has been full since the last Newsletter and we have formed sub-groups such as gardening and building to focus our efforts. The market garden is well under way and it has been exciting to watch the results! Peter and Paul have worked hard building raised beds and we have promising crops of potatoes, parsnips, saladings, tomatoes and greens awaiting harvesting. Gay made a huge tub of Borsch soup for the July gardening weekend from her home-grown beetroot and onions. Lovely to be able to go out and pick a handful of salad and eat it while it still bursts with life force!

It's not all work! We try to have some fun activities too and recently held a musical evening following one of our shared meals. Each chose a tune with a personal memory, and the remainder had to guess who had chosen what. We were able to locate most of the tunes on the computer, often with an accompanying video and most ended up dancing to the final choice! Lots of laughter and fun and another one is planned soon. We have also celebrated birthdays in various ways, usually going out for a meal but for Vita's 5<sup>th</sup> (and Amanda's ?) we had a Mad Hatter's tea party in the garden, with each wearing a crazy headpiece!

A new time when friends, family and visitors can join us for an informal visit is on the first Sunday of each month when we are holding a bring-and-share veggie lunch. The two held so far have been out-of-doors and much enjoyed. We hope to have more al fresco before the season changes and the next one is Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 12-3pm. It is helpful, though not essential, to know numbers in advance, so give us a ring on 01747 821929 if you would like to come.

The Cohousing concept is gaining momentum generally, and we congratulate the Bristol group on finding a suitable site. We will feature in an article about the Cohousing way of life in, possibly this week's, Sunday Times.

### **DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Our building plans are moving forward gradually. We hope within the next few weeks to finalise the planning permission. Architectural work is largely completed and our preferred contractors are local, Blandford-based Jordan & Faber. We hope that they will start work in October, with a build period around 8 months.

Amanda, Alan, Nancy and Michael form our building sub-group. They are doing a lot of research for the biomass system and other aspects of the new build, such as photovoltaics. Nancy and friend Ann Clare spent a day doing a survey of the drains and made some interesting discoveries, including a second – and more recently a third - septic tank!

The group are also working with the East Dorset Housing Association on our joint agreements; as this is the first cohousing project to include social housing EDHA have undertaken, all the legal documentation is ground-breaking and therefore very time consuming.

The rest of us are very grateful to all of them for their hard work in so many areas.

### **LIVING AT THE THRESHOLD CENTRE**

Eventually there will be seven 1 or 2-bed social housing units here. To qualify as a rental tenant or part-owner through the Housing Association, you need first of all to be on North Dorset District Council's housing list and to express your interest in living here. We have our say in the selection process and obviously are looking for joiners who share in our ethos and are willing to give time to help in the general running of the Centre. We will then invite those who have expressed interest in

joining us through EDHA to another meeting in the autumn, by which time all the paperwork should be agreed and the timings more definite.

### **SHORT/MEDIUM TERM STAYS**

Paul is still with us and has proved invaluable in the garden and in many other ways. Thank you. We welcome Muriel and Chris who are great to have around and all three are perfect tenants.

Occupancy of rooms in the house will change from time to time so, if you find yourself in a time of transition and would like to stay for a while, do get in touch.

John has taken up residency in one of the cottages with a view to becoming a social housing tenant in due time, and his delightful son Jamie visits regularly.

### **A BATTY STORY**

One requirement of planning permission is to have a bat survey. This has been done and Pippistrelle and Long-eared brown bats found in the roof of Settebrook Barn. As they are a protected species, we have to make provision for them in the new design, as well as purchasing a bat licence for around £1800 - and the building work has to be undertaken to accommodate their breeding season. Let's hope they are happy in their new home!

### **GARDENING/WORK WEEKENDS**

We have had two of these since the last Newsletter. The weather was kind in May and a good deal of work was done – thanks to all the helpers.

Contrary to the bad forecast we were blessed with perfect gardening weather in July.. While Peter and Christopher erected the footpath gate in the market garden field, the rest of us worked together at the side of the house clearing brambles and undergrowth, and weeding the vegetable bed. We harvested elephant garlic and rhubarb (both of which were enjoyed at supper that evening). Another overdue and much appreciated task undertaken was clearing and beautifying the bar-b-q area, removing the moss and lichen covering the pinkish paving beneath and placing flower filled pots and containers. Attention was paid to the patio outside the back entrance while the car park area also received welcome tlc, removing the ivy threatening the fencing panels and clearing one of the raised beds which now is home to more veggies. The first potatoes were gathered from the market garden, (also relished at supper) freeing up more desperately needed planting space. The grass was cut, the hedges trimmed and some pruning carried out to the low maintenance front areas, where Meadow Brown butterflies and bees were enjoying the sunshine on the lavender bushes. In the evening a visit was made to the local Bison Centre to join in the annual Pow-wow making a pleasant change to the hard graft! It was a pleasure to welcome Anna and her family who came to help on Saturday. Anna has been volunteering for some time to help with gardening so it was lovely to meet her family too. So, many many thanks to our visitors who helped us achieve so much more together than we would have done separately, and we look forward to meeting you again soon.

The next one is in November, when we plan to plant create a small orchard in our market garden area. See programme for dates.

### **VISITORS AFTERNOONS**

Recently these have taken place on the Sunday afternoon of the gardening weekends. This is a time when enquirers and potential joiners can come, have a look around, ask questions and enjoy a cup of tea. There is no charge but it is helpful if you contact us for a booking form so we have an idea of numbers beforehand.

### **'CREATING COHOUSING' workshops**

These continue to be very popular and 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 take place bi-monthly and the two remaining this year are in September and November.

### **FUTURE PROGRAMME**

Due to development work, we have kept our programme to a minimum this year. This is the remaining schedule- –

**Cohousing workshops**

**September 12-14      November 14-16**

These popular workshops book up well in advance, so contact us as early as possible for more information and booking form. They run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

**Gardening/Work weekend : November 28-30**

We offer bed and board in exchange for your help and it's not all work!

On this November weekend, as part of National Tree Week, we plan to plant a small orchard. Contact us for more information and booking form.

**Open Afternoons for visitors/enquirers : part of the work weekends**

**Sunday 30 November 2-4pm.** A chance to have a look around and ask questions about cohousing. Contact us for booking form.

With best wishes from us all,

Caroline, Jane, Gay, Alan, Michael, Amanda and Peter (& Monty!), Nancy and Vita.

Not forgetting Paul, John, Muriel and Chris.