

COLE STREET FARM
COHOUSING COMMUNITY

THE THRESHOLD CENTRE
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NEWSLETTER MARCH 2008

PLANNING

Let's start with this news, which we know many of you are eagerly awaiting. The hearing of our revised Planning application was scheduled for Tuesday 11th March. We had done everything possible to ensure a positive outcome and are delighted to report that the vote was UNANIMOUSLY in favour, despite a recommendation for refusal from the case officer. Hooray! Thanks to Alan and Amanda in particular for all their hard work. We can now continue with our work of education and demonstration of all the benefits of Cohousing. The sustainability of this way of living is of major importance at this critical time, and this was one of the benefits recognised by the Committee, as was the need for planning policies to be more forward thinking.

We hope development of the new units will get under way in August and we can welcome Housing Association tenants here next Spring. We will be reviewing the situation with the Housing Association and will plan another event for potential residents during this Summer. Details in the next Newsletter.

Thanks to all of you who have helped bring about this positive outcome, by sending letters of support, your positive thoughts, or helping in other ways. We are very grateful. The application still has to go to full Council, and some legalities tied up. After that final hurdle, we will have a Celebration Party, to which you are invited. Details in due course.

SPRING IS IN THE AIR!

The planning news will bring fresh impetus, of course, and added to the renewal of energy that comes with Spring, there should be no limit to what can be achieved!

We all enjoy the beauty here all the year round, but especially now with the birds singing so joyfully and the daffodils and other early flowers in bloom. Too early yet for the return of the swallows, but not long now.

MARKET GARDEN

The acre of land across the road has been fenced off (thanks mainly to Amanda and Peter) and we plan to start with establishing some raised beds. Thanks in anticipation to the volunteers who are coming this weekend to help. Later we hope to erect a polytunnel and plant a small orchard.

Establishing the market garden and producing as much of our own food as possible is of course an ongoing task. If you would like to come and stay and receive bed and board in return for work please book for the next gardening weekend in May – see details in the programme.

Meanwhile, thanks to Peter, we will to get a crop or two from the small cultivated area on site before the building work starts.

SHORT STAY VISITORS

We had a good response to our advertisements for short term stays here. We welcome Andrew, David and Paul and feel lucky to have three such pleasant and helpful men, with a wealth of skills, on the scene. David runs sailing holidays in the summer, so contact him if you would like more details. You can even earn your passage if you are competent crew. His email is – sundancerluk@yahoo.co.uk
Space will be available here at times in the future, so let us know if you are interested to stay with us for a while.

WORKSHOP – ‘GETTING PRACTICAL ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY’

We are holding a 1-day workshop in conjunction with the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills on Wednesday May 14th at their premises at Farrington, near Blandford. Main topic -
How can a household or a whole community reduce its fossil fuel use substantially? Whether you worry more about Peak Oil or Climate Change, we know that big cuts are essential. But how do we get there?
DCRS Construction are consultants, trainers and builders with wide expertise in green building, renovation and energy systems. The ecological footprint of the Threshold Centre, when the new build is complete, and with a biomass boiler, will be 55% below the average for the district, which itself is below the UK national average.
Contact DCRS direct on 01747 811099 for enquiries or to book a place. Individual cost is £35 for the day, including lunch. Other rates for groups and organisations. 10-4pm Their website www.dursetruralskills.co.uk
The event is being co-hosted with The Blackmore Vale Magazine. If you live locally and are able to display a poster for us, let us know and we can email a copy to you.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Due to development work, we have kept our programme to a minimum this year, this is what is planned so far –
Cohousing workshops
April 18-20: June 13-15: September 12-14: November 14-16
These popular workshops book well in advance, so contact us as early as possible for more information and booking form.

Gardening/Work weekends March 14-16, May 16/18, July 11-13, November 28-30 – see below

We will have our acre of land for market garden, as well as the area here to keep in order. As before, we offer bed and board in exchange for your help and it's not all work! Contact us for more information.
On the November weekend, as part of National Tree Week, we plan to plant a small orchard. More details later.

Open Afternoons for visitors/enquirers : Sundays 2-4pm as part of the weekends above, ie. 16th March ,18th May, 13 July, 30 November
A chance to have a look around and ask questions about cohousing.
Contact us for booking form.

With best wishes from us all,
Caroline, Gay, Jane, Alan, Michael, Amanda and Peter (and Monty!), Nancy and Vita,