

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF DANIEL THOMPSON-MILLS

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Daniel Thompson-Mills. I have lived continuously at Steward Community Woodland ('SCW') as a member of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative ('the Coop') since the beginning of the project in April 2000, and I was involved in setting up the project for one and a half years before then.
2. I have a BA (Honours) in Law from Durham University and I qualified as a solicitor in 1994. After that, I worked in London as a campaigner on social justice and environmental issues for four years.

RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

3. I attended a Permaculture Design Course in September 1999 and was awarded a Certificate in Permaculture Design.
4. I have participated in organising and running the seven residential Permaculture Design courses that have been held at SCW, and have taught some of the modules on the courses.
5. I was a Leader with Wray Valley Woodcraft Folk from 2000 to 2006, organising activities indoors and outdoors (sometimes at camps) for children aged 6-12. I undertook training as a Forest School Leader (Level 3) at Bicton College in 2005, and have been working as a Forest School Leader since then with school groups, the Woodcraft Folk, and groups of home educated children. I spent a few years as a volunteer on Wildwise camps and have attended several training courses run by Wildwise.
6. I was awarded a NPTC Level 2 chainsaw certificate in 2004 (Maintenance and crosscutting).
7. I have attended various First Aid courses, and I am a qualified First Aider.
8. I qualified as a Coastal & Countryside Leader (Devon County Council) in 2009.
9. I have attended various basketry courses with Linda Lemieux, a local basketmaker.
10. I have attended a Continuous Cover Forestry course with Dave Wood, organised by South West Forest.
11. I have been developing and honing my campcraft, bushcraft and nature awareness skills for many years. I have attended many courses and training days in these subjects, and completed a year long training with Trackways in Sussex in 2008, learning and practising many survival and bushcraft skills along with wilderness spirit philosophy (passed down from a Native American elder).
12. I have learnt much about wild foods from various teachers and from my own study.
13. I undertook a two year training in Earth Wisdom called the 'Circle Learning Journey' in 2004/5.

14. For two years (2007-9), I worked one day per week at the Proper Job Resource Centre near Chagford, a community composting/reuse/recycle centre.
15. In 2014, I qualified as an archery instructor (Archery GB).
16. For several years, I was employed by Devon Outdoor Learning (the outdoor wing of Devon County Council) and later by Wildwise as a Leader in their 'Wild Nights Out' programmes for school children across South Devon.
17. For several years, I worked as a leader taking out school children from Chagford Primary School for Forest School/Bushcraft/Nature Awareness sessions on land near Chagford.

CURRENT OCCUPATION

18. At SCW, I am involved in all aspects of community life and the running of the project, including facilitating, teaching on and catering for some of the courses held.
19. I am currently involved in running Bushcraft & Nature Awareness sessions and camps throughout the year as part of a group called "Wild Woods 'N Willow" with local basketmaker Linda Lemieux and Charlie Loram.
20. Also, I'm a storyteller, I teach archery, and I work as a life model.

THE BACKGROUND

21. See generally the Planning Application ('the Planning Application') including the Design & Access Statement to Dartmoor National Park Authority ('DNPA') dated February 2015 (ref 0054/15).
22. Steward Community Woodland ('SCW') comprises a group of people who are living and working together and have been experimenting with:
 - permaculture food growing and land use;
 - community organisation and dynamics;
 - renewable energy and appropriate technology;
 - building and maintaining our own low impact dwellings;
 - small-scale woodland management;
 - experiential and home education.
23. We live in 32 acres of formerly plantation woodland on a hillside, located in the beautiful Wray Valley on the edge of Dartmoor. We have been resident on the land since 22nd April 2000 and have been granted two five year periods of temporary permission: by Mr Tamplin (Planning Inspector) on 12th August 2002 (APP/J9497/C/01/1067412) and by Mr Cook (Planning Inspector) on 1st June 2009 (APP/J9497/C/08/2083419).
24. As the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ('IPCC') highlights, action is urgently needed to create a sustainable future (see www.ipcc.ch). The IPCC states, inter alia, in its Fifth Assessment Synthesis Report 2014 (Approved Summary for Policymakers – Nov 2014):

"Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had

widespread impacts on human and natural systems.”

“Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen.”

“Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks.”

25. The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') is based on the concept of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental). So governmental and intergovernmental guidance places sustainability at the heart of how we proceed as humanity. The way we are living and what we are doing at SCW and in the wider community is part of that movement towards a more sustainable future.

26. The NPPF creates a presumption in favour of sustainable development (at paragraph 14) which is carried forward by the Dartmoor National Park Authority ('DNPA') in DMD1a.

27. We are successful in meeting our Aims as set out below and therefore are now seeking permanent planning permission. Our project is one which conserves and enhances the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and fosters the social and economic well being of the communities in the National Park (thus meeting the criteria in DMD1b). Our project also meets the criteria of DMD30, a policy that was specifically created following our last planning appeal success.

28. Our world is in severe crisis. Those of us around on the planet at the moment, as a result of what we are learning from science and from our own experience, are charged with beginning to turn this around. This means adopting more sustainable lifestyles. It means coming into alignment with Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Share – the three founding ethics of permaculture. This can and will and is happening in many ways. Low impact living is one of those ways.

29. Since the Planning Application, an historic agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future was agreed by 195 nations in Paris on 12th December 2015. The Paris Agreement for the first time brings all nations into a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities. The universal agreement's main aim is to keep a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The 1.5 degree Celsius limit is a significantly safer defence line against the worst impacts of a changing climate. The first area identified in the Agreement as essential for a landmark conclusion is 'Mitigation' – reducing emissions fast enough to achieve the temperature goal. (Information from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.)

30. Every environmental system across the planet (the soil, the seas, the forests, the polar zones etc, as well as the climate) is in crisis at the moment as a result of human activity. Scientists, politicians and world leaders around the world recognise the global urgency for action NOW. That action needs to happen at every level – international, national, regional and most importantly, in my view, at the grassroots level. SCW is a small

but significant part of that response.

PERMANENT PLANNING PERMISSION

31. We are successful in meeting our Aims as set out below and therefore are now seeking permanent planning permission.

32. We don't wish to expend the huge amounts of time and money needed to secure planning permission every 5 years.

33. It is hard to make long term plans and move forward without the security of planning permission.

34. A substantial amount of the time during our two periods of 5 year temporary permissions was spent preparing the case for the renewal and raising funds to pay for the legal fees.

35. There is also a huge psychological and emotional impact on the members, children and teenagers of potentially losing their home every 5 years.

36. Furthermore, we don't wish to waste the resources of the DNPA and Planning Inspectorate.

OVERVIEW

37. This Proof will show how we are meeting the criteria in DMD30, in particular:

- * Criterion (ii) the activities and structures having low impact in terms of environment and use of resources;
- * Criterion (v) the project requiring a countryside location and involves agriculture and forestry;
- * Criterion (vi) the project provides sufficient livelihood for and substantially meets the needs of residents on site
- * Criterion (vii) the number of adult residents are directly related to the functional needs of the enterprise.

38. In addition, there are six other witnesses giving evidence in support of the Appeals:

- * Sonia Parsons & Marly Parsons (residents) giving evidence on the education of children and teenagers.
- * Jim White of White Wood Management giving evidence on woodland management.
- * Alison Heine giving evidence on the policies and legal issues.
- * Peter Cow giving evidence on the permaculture aspects of the project.
- * Jane Willis, local resident, giving evidence on local support and the local community.

THE COMMUNITY

39. The community currently comprises 14 adults, 5 children and 4 teenagers:

Merlin Howse
Rebecca Cruse
Rowan Cruse-Howse (14)
Daniel Thompson-Mills
Jamie Leeds
Sharif Adams
Fern Albert

Ollie Hornbeam
Sky Hornbeam (6) – part time resident
Wren Hornbeam (3) – part time resident
Seth Kirton
Mel Davis
Ash Davis (13)
Finn Davis (9)
Isaac Davis (7)
Sonia Parsons
John Elsworthy
Daisy Parsons (17)
Asha Elsworthy-Parsons (13)
Owen Kebbell
Chrissy Tugwell
Aaron Kebbell (11)
Lorna Williams

40. All the adults are members and directors of the Coop.

COMMUNITY HISTORY

The Early Years 2000-2004

41. The project was begun in April 2000 by a group of ten adults (with no children). Daniel, Merlin, Rebecca C & Peter were in that original group. We were starting a highly innovative project and had a lot of enthusiasm. We were mostly young people, very idealistic, and fired up by a passion to change the world for the better. We were all environmental and social justice campaigners with varying skills and experience of low impact living and horticulture. None of us had any background in woodland management so we began to study, consult with experts and observe the land. The land has always been kind and generous to us.

42. The early years of the project were challenging and exhilarating. We undertook the complex process of building a community from scratch. We had the physical challenge of building dwellings and infrastructure, clearing an area of rosebay willow herb and brambles to create vegetable beds, etc. At the same time, we were creating and evolving a structure for living together as a community. We were also building our links with the wider local community, developing our business ideas and woodland management plan, working to achieve planning permission, and we also spent much time campaigning for social change (from the woods and elsewhere).<http://www.coppiceandcleave.co.uk/our-forest-garden/>

43. This early stage involved much dedication and hard work. The Planning Inspector, Mr Tamplin, noted that having been in the wood over two winters living according to our principles “there is no doubt that...the group...has entirely genuine intentions determination and commitment to this experiment” (paragraph 30).

44. By early 2002, a number of members had left for various reasons and for the following two and a half years we had just four adults and a young child living on site. It was an incredible feat of human endeavour that so few of us with a newborn child managed to carry on living here for so long and continue the project. There was also help from a member of the group who shared her time between the woods and her house in Moretonhampstead.

45. The day to day tasks of maintaining the structures, maintaining and developing our renewable energy systems, managing the woodland, making firewood (all by hand), gardening and other subsistence living, washing, childcare etc took up much of our time. However, we also continued the Visitor Work Weekend programme and ran our first two week residential permaculture design course in August 2003 – this eventually led to more members joining the community. We also hosted some courses (eg. a Forest School Leadership course run by Bridgwater College) and continued doing lots of outreach and voluntary work (eg. building a demonstration bender and running a stall at the South West Forest Woodfair each year). It was also a time of continuing our training and learning in various fields. We completed various orders for wood (ash poles, coppice wood, larch trees for constructing a barn at Proper Job) and our permaculture course was a great success. However, as we were not generating sufficient cash income from our activities on the land to meet all our needs, we supplemented our income with other work (in particular working at Proper Job and website design).

46. We established a permissive path through the western section of the woodland in 2001 (see Appendix 24).

The Middle Years 2004-9

47. In the Summer of 2004, three adults (Son, John, Marylise) and three children (Asha, Marly, Daisy) joined the group, more than doubling the size of the community, and another adult (Nicky) joined the following summer. This led to a lot of work on maintaining and improving our structures and infrastructure to ensure that all members of the community had decent, comfortable and warm dwellings. Also we undertook a review and revision of the project's aims and objectives, developing our ideas as to how to take the project forward with this new and expanded mix of people. Because of this great effort in accommodating many new members, and particularly in having several children on site, much of our income from the land continued to be subsistence and to meet our financial needs Peter continued to work one day a week at Proper Job, Merlin worked part time from his bender developing websites and he taught computer courses at Moretonhampstead Library, while John worked with children in care, and Nicky as a Forest School Leader. We also earned money from our woodland activities (eg. selling split larch fence posts) and held another successful two week permaculture design courses with 15 students in August 2005. Home education became a key part of our activities and the community benefited greatly from Son's craft and children based skills.

48. In the Spring of 2006, a further family (Seth, Mel, Ash) joined the group and it felt that the community had fully come of age. After much debate, we decided in March 2006 to use a petrol chainsaw to process felled trees. This speeded up the process enormously of collecting firewood and making building materials, giving us much more time to do other things.

49. The training and voluntary work undertaken, developing skills and experience (for example, in the area of Forest School and bushcraft) was now paying off with more paid work coming in. We developed this further by running residential camps and retreats. Our training in chainsaw use, and woodland management (in particular Continuous Cover Forestry) helped and informed our management of the woods. Running permaculture design courses at Steward Wood (the fourth in 2008), Peter completing the Permaculture Diploma, and all the improvements to structures and infrastructure to accommodate visitors comfortably, meant we were holding one full course most years at the woods at that time along with short introductory courses.

50. We were contributing to an awareness and development of sustainable practices

through our voluntary activities (eg. participation in the Moretonhampstead Action Group for Sustainability, SCW Open Days, and breastfeeding peer counselling) and through our commercial activities (permaculture courses, Forest School, work at Proper Job, etc). Our ongoing programme of having WWOOFers come to stay ('Willing Workers on Organic Farms') allowed people to experience and take part in sustainable practices and community living. For example, Jeff who lived in Sheffield, came to stay with us for 6 weeks in 2003 and has visited many times since. What he experienced and learned here changed his life enormously. He took a greater awareness and practice of sustainability into his own family life (eg. changing his behaviour in terms of energy use) and also took that into his work within the Church.

51. There was an enormous cross-fertilisation of ideas, skills, practices etc between SCW, the local community, local businesses (eg. Proper Job) and organisations (eg. Moretonhampstead Development Trust), and volunteers and WWOOFers.

52. In 2007, a fourth family (Chrissy, Owen & Aaron) joined our community. Owen brought his highly experienced, specialist woodland skills to the community, and Chrissy much skill and enthusiasm for gardening and fundraising. Both Marylise and Nicky moved away in 2007. Peter also moved away in 2009.

53. The Healing Hedgerow was set up by Rebecca C and Sonia in 2007 and has increased in popularity since then. To date, they have over 14 years of practical knowledge and skill in how to identify, harvest and preserve medicine from nature. As well as selling herbal medicines, tinctures, tea, tonics, balms and other elixirs to the wider community, Sonia and Rebecca C have run many courses since 2007.

54. Chrissy & Owen built their dwelling in June 2008 using milled timber from the land (see later).

55. In 2008, Rebecca H joined the group followed by her partner Ollie in February 2009. We were having a lot of interest in people joining the community which was a sign of our success and how we were thriving. However, we felt we were now at capacity and wished to take the project forward with planning permission for a further five years.

56. In 2007, we applied for planning permission to continue the project for another five years. We stated that we were a thriving woodland community with many strong and positive links within the wider local community, and that we were a working model of sustainability and positive action for the benefit of people, animals and the Earth. In the planning application, we set out how we were meeting some of the aims set out in the original application (2000). We also make it clear where we had yet to fully meet some of the original aims and where we believed some aims were overly idealistic, unrealistic or unnecessary and had thus been adapted or replaced as appropriate. We therefore applied for permission for a further temporary period of 5 years to fulfil our amended aims across the board after which time we stated our intention to apply for a permanent permission. After the application was refused by the DNPA, we appealed once again, resulting in a public inquiry in April 2009. Planning permission was granted on 1st June 2009.

The Later Years – 2009-16

57. Seth & Mel kept chickens from 2008-11 when their care was taken over by Chrissy & Owen to the present day. Chrissy & Owen also kept milking goats from 2008-15 and bees for one season.

58. Chrissy & Owen bought a Wood Mizer mobile saw mill in 2009. We undertook a

major renovation of the communal kitchen in 2011-2 using our own sawn larch.

59. Kate became a member in 2010 and left in 2014. Ollie left in 2013 and became a member again in 2014. Rebecca H left while Sharif & Fern became members in 2013.

60. From 2010, we spent three years going through a two stage funding application process for a Local Food Grant (£76,000) from the Big Lottery Fund for The MoreFood Community Garden project. The application proposed a community garden including a forest garden, bee sanctuary, and play and picnic areas in place of an area of land consisting of low scrub (mainly bramble). An ecological survey was undertaken and submitted with the application giving appropriate recommendations.

61. We were successful in this application to develop our demonstration gardens and to provide community and local employment. However, the funding was conditional on planning permission. Despite the recommendation by Stephen Belli (the Director of Planning) that temporary permission be granted, the structures associated with the MoreFood project were refused planning permission in October 2012. This was a major setback. We had spent a huge amount of time and money on the funding application (which involved two stages), the Business Plan (running to nearly 100 pages), and the planning application (with many detailed drawings).

62. When the planning application for the MoreFood project was turned down, the funding period for the Local Food Grant had unfortunately come to its end. We believe that the reasons for refusal were unfounded and that, had it not been for the fact that the funding window had expired, we would have been successful on appeal.

63. The DNPA's refusal of planning permission for the 'MoreFood' project was a huge setback and meant that initially productivity in this area was not as high as we hoped, particularly as the MoreFood project incorporated a polytunnel and deer and rabbit proof fencing. Also, we had not developed the Growing Area during the grant application process as the grant incorporated funding for a permaculture design of the area. We downscaled the area for our deer and rabbit proof fencing, which was put up in early 2014.

64. Since then, our food productivity has rocketed. We have developed an extensive area of beds under cultivation within the fenced area as well as growing more food by the communal structures.

65. Chrissy & Owen planted a large Forest Garden near their house (covering one third of an acre) in 2011-2 – see <www.coppiceandcleave.co.uk/our-forest-garden/>. The communal Forest Garden was extended in 2011. And other fruit trees and fruit bushes were planted, chiefly in the Settlement Area.

66. For many years, John was involved in the Tanglewood Project, both in a voluntary and paid position. The Tanglewood Project is a charity, whose values are rooted in community; connecting people of all ages and abilities to share traditional skills and knowledge, providing opportunities in celebrating the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Devon. Traditional round houses are built in school grounds as outdoor learning spaces while bringing in local craftsmen and women to continue mentoring the children after the structures are complete. The structure is called a reciprocal roofed roundhouse, as every beam supports one another. This metaphor of mutual support is the underpinning ethos of The Tanglewood Project.

67. In 2013, we decided to change from consensus decision making to Sociocracy (a consent based decision making model) and received training and guidance from a

sociocracy facilitator. Since then, we have kept much better records of our policies (see Appendix 1) which each have a review date (usually 12 months).

68. Jamie (Son's brother) has been a short and long term visitor on and off since 2004 and he became a member in 2015.

69. Marly turned 18 in 2015 (our first child on site to become an adult) and subsequently has left site.

70. Lorna came as a long term WWOOFer in 2014 and became a member in 2015.

71. Two week residential Permaculture Design courses (with approx 15 students each time) were held at the woods in 2009, 2010 & 2012.

72. We first submitted a Planning Application for permanent permission in July 2014 at which point we entered into a process of negotiation with the DNPA and modification of the Application until the DNPA finally accepted our Application as valid in February 2015. The Application detailed inter alia about how we are shifting the Settlement Area downhill. Moving downhill saves human hours and energy and means, for example, the new houses are closer to the main garden.

73. Seth & Mel's new house was built over winter 2014-5 and the family moved in in Summer 2015. Their old house was dismantled in 2016.

74. The DNPA received over 400 letters of support for the Planning Application and the Moretonhampstead Parish Council recommended approval. However, the Application was turned down in April 2015 and Enforcement Notices were subsequently issued. We launched our Appeals shortly afterwards.

75. We acquired three hives of bees in January 2016.

76. In Autumn 2015, Daniel and Merlin & Rebecca began building their new homes (both still unfinished).

COOP POLICIES

77. I attach at Appendix 1 all the current policies of the Coop, including the Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and Aims.

CONDITIONS AND GUARANTEES

78. We propose in the granting of permanent planning permission that:

- 1) The Settlement Area (ie. the area of human habitation) be limited to the defined area within the middle of the woodland holding as set out at Appendix 2.
- 2) The project shall continue to be managed in a way as to comply with the detailed "Fifteen Criteria for developments associated with sustainable land-based rural activities" as produced by the Rural Planning Group. The Criteria relate to, inter alia, minimisation of car use and waste; integration of the project into the local economy and community; easily dismantlable structures made of local materials which are not visually intrusive; autonomous provision of water, energy and sewage disposal; ecological management of the site; sustainable practices for agricultural and forestry activities. The Fifteen Criteria are set out at Appendix 3.

- 3) No petrol or diesel powered generator shall be operated on the site at any time.
- 4) Conditions are applied relating to Community and Structures (see below).

CONTINUED NEED FOR RESIDENCY IN THE WOOD

79. We refer to the Appeal Decision (APP/J9497/C/01/1067412) of Mr Tamplin and rely on the Inspector's reasons for the granting of permission within the scope of planning law, planning guidance, and planning policies, as well as Agenda 21 and related policies. In particular, Mr Tamplin states at paragraph 29:

"Were the group to live off-site, the evidence on housing costs in Moretonhampstead bears out the appellant's claim that conventional housing costs and the need to find employment to fund them would lead to the group having little time available for the project. Therefore it would become little more than a hobby and its purpose would become completely negated."

80. We also refer to the decision of Mr Cook (APP/J9497/C/08/2083419) who stated in his Appeal Decision:

- *"..it is my view that the value of the project is its holistic nature."* (paragraph 73)
- *"I consider that the venture has evolved into one where the education resource provided by what is, in effect, a demonstration project of permaculture principles being applied in practice is of significant wider benefit."* (paragraph 76)

81. In addition we refer to the Appeal Decision of Mr Woolnough (APP/K1128/A/06/2018778) in 2007 concerning the LandMatters permaculture project in South Devon. The Planning Inspector states:

- *"The land is worked and occupied by the Appellants as a permaculture project. For the purposes of these appeals, I accept the definition of 'permaculture' adopted by both main parties, namely: 'the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive eco-systems which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural eco-systems...the harmonious integration of landscape and people, providing their food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way'."* (paragraph 13)
- *"Permaculture is now an internationally recognised means of sustainable agriculture and the subject of much academic study in recent years. Moreover, the direction of travel of emerging national policy towards ever more sustainable approaches to development and the need to address the problem of climate change is readily apparent..."* (paragraph 43)
- *"...Annex A [of PPS7] makes it clear that whether residential accommodation is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise and, in any event, this project goes well beyond the conventional. Inherent in the concept of permaculture is the implementation of wide-ranging and inter-related sustainable initiatives on a single agricultural site in a communal way. I am thus persuaded that various activities set out in the Appellants' land management and enterprise plans should be considered cumulatively rather than individually, so that a holistic view of the overall project can be taken."* (paragraph 38)
- *"I am also satisfied that the evidence before me demonstrates clearly that, in order to practice permaculture properly and successfully on the scale envisaged in this case, a substantial and continuous residential presence is essential. I do not doubt that the Appellants or their successors would be able to carry out some of the activities planned without living on the land. However, such an arrangement would not amount to permaculture in its true sense and the scope and purpose of the experiment would, in such circumstances, be significantly altered and diluted."* (paragraph 39)

82. Living on-site is essential for the continued viability of this project. Living in conventional housing in nearby towns and commuting to the site could only be supported by having full-time (and well-paid) jobs elsewhere, leaving us with little or no time to carry out the project. Living in the woods enables us to dedicate our time to the project and be fully committed to it. Living in the woods also enables us to home educate our children in a safe and nourishing environment. The part-time jobs that some members have involving work off-site (much of which is low paid) complements the work and activities carried out on-site. We reside in low impact, ecological dwellings and utilise renewable sources of energy while reducing our fossil fuel and vehicle use.

83. There is a proven need for sustainable land use and development (see, for example, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, IPCC reports, and the UNCTAD Trade & Environment Review 2013). Permaculture and forest gardening are examples of sustainable land use. They are low input and high output in terms of energy and resources but are intensive in terms of people power. Living on-site facilitates us to grow food and live without connection to any of the utilities (water, electricity, gas, sewage disposal). We provide all these services ourselves by ecological and sustainable means (filtered spring water, compost toilets, renewable energy, using wood from the land for fuel, etc). We minimise pollution by promoting and practising a way of life that reduce unsustainable consumption, its associated wastes and throw away culture. We reduce, reuse, repair and recycle wherever possible – and encourage others to do the same.

84. The independent report produced by 4th World Ecological Design in June 2008 (at Appendix 4) showed that the average Ecological Footprint of the residents of SCW over the period studied was 2.06 gha, 39% of the the Ecological Footprint of a typical UK individual; and that the equivalent Carbon Footprint was 3.75 tonnes, 34% of the UK average at 10.92 tonnes. As activities with respect to our carbon footprint remain similar, we conclude that the findings of this report are still valid.

85. In short, this project is holistic in its nature and scope and would be impossible to achieve without a residential element.

86. Please note that paragraph 50 of the NPPF states: *“[LPAs should] plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and **people wishing to build their own homes**).*”

87. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states: *“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. ... Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:*

- *the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or ...*
- *the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.*”

88. This Proof shows how we are meeting these criteria of paragraph 55. It is worth noting that this paragraph superceded Annex A of PPS7, which was the relevant policy in place for the last two planning appeal decisions. NPPF para 55 is deliberately less detailed than PPS7 and its Annex A and the criteria are looser, in particular the reference to ‘rural worker’ rather than ‘agricultural worker’.

89. According to rightmove.co.uk in December 2015, the average house price in Moretonhampstead is £267,529, and rental prices on that website range from £675 pcm (2

bedroom) to £950 pcm (4 bedroom). Our weekly contribution to the Coop is currently £20 per person per week.

90. Criterion (v) of DMD30 is satisfied for the above reasons.

HUMAN RIGHTS

91. We refer to our rights under Articles 8 & 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (as incorporated into British law by the Human Rights Act) and to the Appeal Decision relating to SCW of Mr Tamplin (APP/J9497/C/01/1067412) on this subject.

92. In paragraph 37, Mr Tamplin states: “..on Article 8, the right to respect for private and family life and the home, it is considered that dismissal of this appeal would represent a serious interference with those rights, not only for the appellant, but for the entire group now on the site because the benders are their only homes. Given this conclusion, it is necessary to balance this interference against the wider public interests arising in this case, in terms of harm to the purposes of designation of the National Park, harm to the aims of rural settlement policies, effects on traffic generation and on the amenity of nearby residents.”

93. Mr Tamplin goes on to conclude that there is no or minimal harm in these areas and concludes by saying in paragraph 38 that “therefore, in the absence of harm caused by the development to the underlying aims of planning policies, and because of the interference with the appellant’s human rights under Article 8 were permission to be refused, the appeal on ground (a) should succeed.”

94. We also draw your attention to the appeal decision on Article 8 concerning Brook Farm, Butleigh (APP/Q3305/A/04/1138976).

95. It is important to note in this regard that the children at SCW (all of whom have spent all or most of their lives in the woodland) would find it difficult to give up this way of life and it would be highly detrimental to their well-being if they had to leave. For more on this subject, see the Proof of Sonia & Marly Parsons.

96. In April 2015, the recommendation of the DNPA planning officers to the Development Management Committee concerning the Planning Application stated that: *“The welfare of the Co-operative’s members has to be taken into account, along with their human rights (especially Article 8 ECHR (right to respect for private and family life and home) and Article 1 of Protocol 1 (peaceful enjoyment of possessions)) and the best interests of the children as a primary consideration which should be given no less weight inherently than any other consideration as a starting point. The starting point should be to give those interests great weight, and, absent any completed welfare forms, the prudent assumption is that the children’s best interests would be served by remaining on site.”*

THE FIFTEEN CRITERIA

97. Our project at SCW has always complied and continues to comply with the 'Fifteen criteria for developments associated with sustainable land-based rural activities' (see Appendix 3). The criteria provide the benchmark for what we do at SCW and were incorporated into the Appeal Decision of Mr Tamplin.

98. I set out below how we have met the criteria and continue to meet the criteria:

99. Criterion 1 – The project has always had and continues to have a Management Plan and a Business Strategy setting out how the objectives in the criteria will be achieved and maintained. Our Business Strategy is set out below and the Management Plan is at Appendix 5.

100. Criterion 2 – Members need only pay a weekly 'rent' of £20 to live in the community, and no capital outlay is required to join the community.

101. Criterion 3 – We hold an Open Day each year in the summer, host numerous educational visits throughout the year, run courses and Home Education sessions, and we run an ongoing WWOOFing programme for volunteers to stay and get involved. There is a series of permissive paths running through the western end of the woodland, which is open to the public throughout the year which are accessible from the Wray Valley Trail (see Appendix 24).

102. Criterion 4 – See sections below on 'Business Strategy' and 'Community Outreach'. We have always been active members of the local community. We buy our food from as local sources as possible. We also aim to use local non-chain shops to keep our money as local as possible. Visiting family and friends often stay at local B&Bs and the self catering units at neighbouring Budleigh Farm. We are also involved in part time, paid and voluntary work within the local community.

103. Criterion 5 – We have stringent policies concerning the use of chainsaws, vehicles and other machinery in our woodland management and gardening so the work carried out in the woodland is relatively quiet. We are mindful of maintaining and improving visual screening of our dwellings when planning woodland work.

104. Criterion 6 – See the section on 'Vehicle Usage & Access' below.

105. Criterion 7 – The settlement is located within a mainly coniferous woodland, which screens it from the road and the surrounding landscape – see more below on this subject. The dwellings are grouped around a spring in the Larch area of the wood. The dwellings are located away from the neighbouring properties to reduce any visual or noise impact on our neighbours. The settlement is also located in that area to reduce any adverse effect on the local wildlife. We are close to our drinking water supply, and an abundant source of firewood.

106. Criterion 8 – The dwellings are mainly covered in green canvas and/or are timber clad, which blends into the woodland. They are also considerably screened by the trees that make up the woodland. All the materials (except for some timber – see below) used to construct the dwellings are produced from woodland resources or reclaimed. These include sawn timber, polewood, split wood, and hazel bender poles from the wood, second hand tarps, reused windows and timber, and reclaimed board. A very small amount of timber (less than 5%) has been bought new (eg. from Mike Gardner, a local forester) but only when such timber has not been available from local reclamation yards and recycling depots. As a result of all these practices, the embodied energy and environmental impact of the dwellings is very low. See the report on our structures at Appendix 6.

107. Criterion 9 – The dwellings are easily dismantlable, being made from wooden structures with canvas/board/timber cladding and some proposed structures incorporate strawbale/lime render and turf roof. A number of structures have been dismantled over the years leaving little or no trace of their existence. The platform technique of construction means that the structures can be removed and leave only a few holes in the ground where

the posts were, and most of the structures here are built in such a way. The other structures involve some levelling of ground, but this is reversible and no permanent foundations are ever used. See further in the section below entitled 'Community & Structures', including the report at Appendix 6.

108. Criterion 10 – We buy food and other resources in bulk minimising packaging. We compost food waste. Most of our non-edible consumption (such as furniture, clothes, toys and equipment) is second hand, and involves no packaging. We reuse cardboard on site for mulching in the gardens or fuel for firelighting (most of our bulk food comes in cardboard crates). We reuse plastic bags and glass jars for homemade jams and chutneys. Our compost toilet enables us to reuse our humanure around fruit trees/bushes and on our comfrey bed. We have a community policy of avoiding buying new plastics unless unavoidable.

109. Criterion 11 – All of our electricity is produced on site from renewable sources. We use very little power as we rely on energy efficient devices. We are limited by the amount of electricity we can produce from the hydro scheme and solar panels, and the hydro is usually only in operation for 6 months of the year. We use mostly wood for cooking (supplemented with LPG), and a mixture of wood and passive solar (combined with insulation) for heating our structures and domestic hot water. The dwellings have been and continue to be improved with greater insulation. Our use of candles is low as most structures are lit by electric lights. See our Renewable Energy Report at Appendix 7.

110. Criterion 12 – We have always had autonomous provision of all these services. We get water from a spring, produce our own electricity and compost our humanure. We will not hook up to any of the utilities. See our Renewable Energy Report at Appendix 7.

111. Criterion 13:

(a) Sustainable forestry – We are converting a coniferous woodland to a largely native deciduous woodland, planting trees and facilitating natural regeneration. We use coppicing as a sustainable management technique for some of the existing broadleaves. We minimise fossil fuels in our woodland work, often felling by hand (using axes and cross cut saws) and mainly using human pulling power, gravity, rollers and levers.

(b) Sustainable agriculture – All our growing is spray free, we recycle humanure and compost into our growing systems. We build up the soil and mulch or dig weeds rather than use chemical inputs.

(c) Permaculture – This project has its basis in permaculture, and we endeavour to use its principles in everything we do, creating circular systems that link in with each other, producing increasing and multiple yields from less and less human work.

112. Criterion 14:

(a) In the Growing Area, we use compost, cardboard and other mulches, green manures, ground cover plants and perennial plantings to improve soil structure, and we are cycling back humanure via comfrey and fruit trees. We have increased the tree cover in the Growing Area as well, which is improving the soil as the leaves fall and reduces any possible soil erosion.

(b) Retaining and increasing the area of land under broadleaf forestry is allowing nature to slowly balance the soil pH where conifer needles have been falling for the last 90 years. The selective felling and continuous cover operations are protecting the soil, which is fairly well protected by a lower storey of young trees and undergrowth.

(c) We have replanted felled larch areas with oak trees, and encouraging natural regeneration, boosting biodiversity and creating more semi-natural habitat. We have put aside the area at the top of the woods as a wildlife corridor/semi natural habitat,

although some clearance of sycamore and larch has and will be taking place here to reduce the impact of mature seeding trees and allow oak and ash to get more light. Part of this area is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland.

(d) We store water from the spring in the Settlement Area for our water supply to the Kitchen and Bathhouse. Some dwellings, the compost toilet, and the shelter in the Growing Area catch and store rainwater from their roofs. We store water in containers in the Growing Area, and we have created a pond there. However, in general, it is not a high priority for us to store water here with the amount of rainfall we receive.

(e) We have created and extended Forest Gardens, which include fruit trees. Where we fell trees we are committed to restocking and maintaining the woodland cover. See our Management Plan at Appendix 5.

113. Criterion 15 – The land is owned by a workers co-operative which is also our legal structure for membership and residence on the land, allowing control over changes in members and participants. Potential new members go through a six month live-in trial period to ensure suitability before they become equal members of the community and directors of the Coop.

DMD30

114. I set out in this Proof how we are meeting the criteria in paragraphs (i) to (vii) of DMD30. This also shows how we are meeting DMD1b.

115. Concerning paragraph(viii) of DMD30, our legal structure is not a trust but a co-operative. The Coop owns and manages the land with adults resident on site being members and directors of the Coop. The underlying objective of this paragraph is to ensure continuity of ownership, project aims and objectives. This is achieved by being a co-operative and this is the basis on which we have been granted planning permission previously by two planning inspectors. We also have, as part of our organisational structure, a committee consisting of members of the Coop and people from the wider community. Therefore we meet this criterion.

116. In regard to this, we refer to Lord Justice Sedley's comments in the Court of Appeal judgment *Petter & Harris v Secretary of State for Environment* (1999, EPL 5-163.25):

"But - and this is precisely the value of policy guidance as against statutory prescription - circumstances will vary infinitely and a margin of flexibility may be needed to accommodate them. So here an unexpected but undoubtedly genuine application, by somebody living by what amounts to subsistence farming, requires not a rigid application of criteria designed for commercial agriculture, but a practical adaption of those criteria to secure the underlying purposes of the policy."

117. Concerning paragraph(viii) of DMD30, Policy 47 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority which the DNPA copied to create DMD30 contains the word 'cooperative':

"in the event of the development involving members of more than one family, the proposal will be managed and controlled by a trust, cooperative or other similar mechanism in which the occupiers have an interest."

118. In our planning application of 2007 which led to the Public Inquiry in 2009, we were applying for a second temporary permission on the basis that after another 5 years we would be applying for permanent permission. In my view, DMD30 came about because of the comment by the Planning Inspector to the DNPA at the Inquiry that if he were to grant us permission, the Authority would be strongly advised to put in place a low impact

development policy ready for when our 5 year period ended and we would be applying for permanent. So the main or only raison d'etre for the adoption of Policy DMD30, in my view, is to do with our project and our likely future application for permanent permission.

119. We have chosen our legal vehicle to be a co-operative because it is a company limited by guarantee and allows us to be a not-for-profit organisation. We are a non-hierarchical group and all the members/directors have equal status. This legal vehicle establishes the ethos of co-operation in our organisation. Furthermore, the Memorandum of Association states that "The income and property of the Company whencesoever derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Company as set out herein and no portion shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly to the members of the Company except by way of payment in good faith to any member of the Company in return for services actually rendered to the Company...". In other words, the land cannot be sold for the interests of the members.

COMMUNITY & STRUCTURES

120. We would like scope to house these members and our visitors comfortably.

121. At present, we have 9 family or individual dwellings on site which currently house:

- John, Son, Daisy (age 17) & Asha (age 13)
- Visitors including Marly (age 18)
- Chrissy, Owen & Aaron (age 11)
- Ollie, Sky (age 6) & Wren (age 3)
- Sharif & Fern
- Seth, Mel, Ash (age 13), Finn (age 9) & Isaac (age 7)
- Daniel
- Merlin, Rebecca & Rowan (age 14)
- Jamie

122. It is the policy of the Coop that all structures belong to the community. All buildings and infrastructure including the houses are owned by the Coop and used by the community as the need arises.

123. I set out at Appendix 2 the Settlement Area, the area within which we confine our residential structures. We have shifted the Settlement Area downhill to an extent (red area on map) since the last period of planning permission. This is to enable us to have gravity fed water to all the dwellings on site. The green area indicates the part of the current Settlement Area to be removed by the end of November 2018, once the two structures above that line have been dismantled.

124. At present, we have the following structures on site:

- 9 individual dwellings
- 2 new houses under construction (one for Merlin & Rebecca and the other for me)
- Kitchen/Longhouse
- Part covered firepit area with wooden benches
- Field Kitchen
- Compost Toilet
- Bathhouse
- Power Tower
- Wood storage bays
- Female Urinal
- Half Bender* (in Glade)

- Shed* (in Growing Area)
- Bike Shed* (by entrance to woodland)

125. The Structures Report at Appendix 6 details all the existing and proposed structures and extensions.

126. The Block Plan submitted with the Planning Application and the Block Plan for the MoreFood project (see Appendix 8) show the location of all the structures, except both Rebecca & Merlin's and my existing residential units which are shown in the Enforcement Notices as structures Y & W. Please note that Seth & Mel's former home has now been dismantled.

127. All the structures, other than those with an asterisk, are within the Settlement Area. We also had an arrangement with the DNPA as part of our previous planning permission for a limited number of tents to be erected at any one time (up to 20 hike-type tents with no tent remaining for more than 20 nights). We would like to continue this arrangement. The Block Plan shows the camping area (namely the Glade).

128. The structures have a small visual impact from outside the woodland, particularly due to the use of green tarpaulin and timber cladding, shingle and turf roofing, and their screening by the trees. The visual effect is minimal especially considering the number of people living here.

129. All of our structures are temporary, low impact structures without any foundations and comply with both the Fifteen Criteria (see above) and DMD 30.

130. Two structures (occupied by Merlin, Rebecca & family, and myself) are currently at the end of their lives. We are therefore building new dwellings to replace these and then dismantle the old ones. Seth completed building his new structure in Summer 2015 and dismantled his old house in Winter 2016. We are also applying for permission to build a dwelling to house our recent new member, Lorna.

131. The part-covered Firepit, Field Kitchen and Half Bender (in the Glade) were not classified as buildings by Mr Cook, the Planning Inspector, in his Appeal decision in 2009.

132. We set out at Appendix 9 elevations and floor plans of all the existing structures (barring the two structures due to be dismantled soon), proposed extensions and rebuilds, and the two new structures under construction. The locations of these structures are set out in the Block Plan at Appendix 8.

133. Please note that, regarding the proposed new construction, due to the nature of low impact building involving natural materials (eg. roundwood), and reclaimed and reused materials, the drawings for these dwellings show the principles involved but there may be small variations from the materials shown, sizes of windows etc once these are constructed. All dimensions will be within +/- 30cm.

134. Three of the structures are considered 'dwelling houses', namely Chris & Owen's house, Seth & Mel's new house, and Merlin & Beccy's new house, the latter of which has yet to be built. The remaining seven residential structures (whether existing or proposed) are considered 'residential units'.

135. We propose the following conditions to guarantee the low impact nature of the settlement:

- No more than 18 adults and their dependent children shall be permanently resident

on the land at any one time. [We have increased this from the condition in the last planning permission as we have teenagers who will become adults soon and may wish to continue residing here.]

- All the structures on the land shall be low impact (complying with both the Fifteen Criteria and DMD30).

- If the land or any part of it were sold, or if the Coop were dissolved, the planning permission for the land no longer owned by the Coop would cease, with the consequence that any residential structures there would need to be removed and the land restored to its former condition, unless the DNPA authorised in writing the planning permission to continue under the new owner(s).

136. All structures are easily dismantlable allowing the land to be returned to its former state as stated in criterion 9 of the Fifteen Criteria.

137. In addition, we are applying for permission for the following structures outside of the Settlement Area:

- Disabled Accessible Compost Toilet in the Growing Area (see details in MoreFood documentation at Appendix 10) .
- Polytunnel in the Growing Area (see details in MoreFood documentation at Appendix 11) .
- Roundhouse Interpretation Centre in the Growing Area (see details in MoreFood documentation at Appendix 12) .
- Shed (in Growing Area).
- Bikeshed (by entrance to woodland).
- Half-Bender (in the Glade).
- Tents (in the Glade – for WWOOFers and course students).

138. The three MoreFood structures (along with the existing Shed in the Growing Area) would enable that project to be realised, facilitating growing, the running of courses, etc. The Bikeshed enables the storage of bicycles by the entrance to the woodland. The Half Bender in the Glade facilitates the running of courses. As we have WWOOFers and other visitors staying throughout the year, we need scope for up to 20 hike-type tents to be erected for up to 20 nights each at any time of the year. This is needed, for example, to facilitate the holding of permaculture design courses with up to 15 students along with WWOOFers staying on site.

Visibility & Screening

139. Concerning visibility of the structures from the surrounding area, I attach at Appendix 13 photos taken in February 2016 of SCW from alongside Steward Farm Cottage, various points on the A382, at the bottom of Pepperdon Hall Lane, points on the single track road going up the opposite valley side from us (opposite Wray Barton), and from the public footpath near the top of the opposite valley side. As you can see, little can be seen of our structures and infrastructure from these places and these photos were taken at the time of minimum foliage etc.

140. Concerning screening of structures in general, see Objective 4 and the Implementation Plan of the Management Plan at Appendix 5.

141. Concerning visibility of structures in the event of the felling of all or substantial numbers of larch following an outbreak of *Phytophthora Ramorum*, it is important to note that most of the larch in the Settlement Area have already been felled and, due to our CCF management (see later), there is much understorey and thus the structures are generally screened by sycamore, ash, laurel, hazel, birch, holly, willow etc as well as the larch. In the

event of any structures becoming more visible in these circumstances, we would focus on planting fast growing screening (eg willow).

Number of Adult Residents

142. Concerning the number of adult residents, it is important to note that the project is a low impact living and community project, not primarily a financial business. It's a holistic, educational, research resource. The project is not about making money, rather it is about experimenting in low impact community living and passing our learning and knowledge gained onto others through visitors coming on site, through outreach, through the internet, etc.

143. We have learnt that 18 people is a good maximum number. Since 2000, member numbers have ranged from 4 to the current 14. The number we have now (with the possible addition up to 18) is comfortable – it seems right as a community and it's a number that can be sustained by the site's resources (fuel, water, etc) – it provides a good range of diversity and expertise while maintaining a manageable level of interpersonal dynamics.

144. We have increased the maximum number from 15 (2009) to 18 (2015) as we have teenagers who will become adults soon and may wish to continue residing here. Furthermore, Anthony MacKarel (a woodland management expert) has confirmed this number can be supported by our resources.

145. I set out at Appendix 14 a non-exhaustive list of roles, skills, and activities that are fulfilled and performed by the residents. 18 people is a good number to share those roles/skills/activities between.

146. The main functional needs of the project fall broadly into these areas:

- * Management of the project (meetings, accounts, planning applications/appeals, publicity, media, website, monitoring and data recording, organising volunteers, etc);
- * Research and development;
- * Woodland Management (felling, coppicing, planting, etc);
- * Renewable energy management (solar panels, battery charging, hydro scheme etc);
- * Firewood (chopping & stacking wood, etc);
- * Water supply, plumbing and monitoring quality;
- * Composting and waste disposal;
- * Building homes / maintenance of structures / paths and infrastructure on site;
- * Growing food;
- * Hunting, gathering, foraging food;
- * Advertising, running and promotion of courses;
- * Managing and looking after volunteers;
- * Woodworking / crafts on site;
- * Making and selling products such as herbal medicines;
- * Parenting & education;
- * Domestic tasks (cooking, laundry, etc).

147. People's particular expertise / notable skills in relation to living on site and the project are:

MEL – parenting/home educating, beekeeping, teaching.

SETH – parenting/home educating, low impact building, renewable energy, computer skills, plumbing, angle grinding, mechanic, hunting, sheep farming.

SON – parenting/home educating, growing, foraging, herbal medicine, beekeeping.

JOHN - low impact building, greywater, bushcraft, nature awareness, sourcing reclaimed materials, mentoring, making bio fuel, woodland management.

OLLIE – parenting/home educating, conservation, ornithologist & naturalist, bird language, bushcraft, nature connection, research, administration.

CHRISSEY - growing, animal husbandry, administration, fund raising.

OWEN - tree surgery, saw milling, carpentry, low impact building.

JAMIE - musician, growing.

LORNA - growing, bushcraft, nature awareness, conservation, sheep farming.

DANIEL - planning, foraging/wild foods, bushcraft, nature awareness, administration, peacemaking.

MERLIN - low impact building, renewable energy, accounting, computer skills, mechanic, research & development / innovation.

REBECCA – parenting/home educating, herbal medicine, psychology, treasurer, peer and parenting support.

SHARIF - green woodworking, sheep husbandry, hunting, cooking, teaching, blacksmithing/forging/toolmaking.

FERN - photography, growing, administration, sheep husbandry, teaching, social media management.

However, we each perform many more roles/activities/skills than those listed above.

148. It is important to note that the members of the Coop and their children perform a whole series of often small and/or overlapping tasks throughout the day and evening. The time spent on any tasks over any significant period is therefore impossible to quantify in contrast to, for example, the time spent by someone in full time employment in a conventional job. Furthermore, the tasks fulfilled and performed by the members and their children change seasonally and also change depending on the weather, whether it's a volunteer week, etc.

149. Thus, we are fulfilling criterion (vii) of DMD30.

Effluent/Greywater Treatment

150. We have adequate greywater treatment systems (with sand, gravel & charcoal, and using effective micro-organisms) and are only using biodegradable, natural products – thus, greywater does not cause any damage to the flora and fauna. Composting toilets have been situated at least 10 metres from any watercourse. Plants are growing healthily around the Compost Toilet. For more detail, see the Structures Report at Appendix 6.

151. It is important to note that during our 16 years of living here, we have not been contacted by the Environment Agency concerning problems of water contamination from

SCW. The Agency is constantly monitoring the water quality in the Wray Brook below us, both upstream and downstream of SCW.

BUSINESS STRATEGY

Introduction

152. DMD 30 paragraph (vi) states “the proposal will provide sufficient livelihood for and substantially meet the needs of residents on the site”. This section shows how we are fulfilling this criterion and meeting our Aim in this area, namely “To generate enough income for our needs (subsistence and financial income) predominantly from the project’s activities and otherwise from other ethically based work.”

153. We meet our needs and provide ourselves with sufficient livelihood from:

- Subsistence, Agriculture, Livelihoods & Lifestyle
- The Gift Economy
- Commercial Activities On Site
- Part-Time Work Off Site

154. The primary purpose of the project is to demonstrate low impact living and to do further research/development in this area. The experiment has worked (we’ve met our basic needs and thrived here for 16 years) and we want to research and develop that further.

155. The key elements are:

- subsistence
- education
- research & development

156. See our Needs Analysis at Appendix 15 which shows that, in 2015, 81.5% of our needs were met by living at SCW. The Needs Analysis is endorsed by Rebecca Laughton (MSc Sustainable Agriculture) in her letter dated 21st March 2016 at Appendix 31.

157. The skills and knowledge we have developed from living here transfer to many employment situations off site - eg. bushcraft, low impact building. For example, Sharif taught green woodworking at the Steiner School in Dartington over a 6 week period at the end of 2015 while their main teacher was on sabbatical. And, of course, our low financial living costs enable us to work in less well paid jobs outside.

158. We share an office in town (paying one third of the rent) at the Greenhill Arts and Community Centre. We rent this space because we like having a presence in Moretonhampstead and like working within the local community – for example, Merlin has a computer support business and helps local individuals, organisations and businesses through that. Greenhill is a community hub, in particular it’s where the offices of the Parish Council and Moretonhampstead Development Trust are based.

Subsistence Agriculture, Livelihoods & Lifestyle

159. While we generate financial income from our activities on and off site, the main factor in our sustainable livelihoods is the subsistence element. Rather than maximising income and profits from our business activities, we provide most of our material needs from the land and by ourselves, thus reducing the need to earn large sums of money. We aim to maximise the subsistence element. Subsistence is a significant and bonding

element of our community and ethos – and it allays very significant costs (financial and environmental) that would otherwise be incurred if we lived elsewhere.

160. The subsistence goods and services we provide for ourselves include:

- Water;
- Fuel wood;
- Wood as building material;
- Food;
- Electricity generated through renewable sources;
- Sanitation and composting (organic waste recycling);
- Shelter;
- Homemade furniture, clothing, toys, etc;
- Social goods such as shared childcare, shared transport;
- Holistic health care including herbal medicine;
- Maintenance of the low impact structures and infrastructure by ourselves or volunteers (rather than employing plumber, electrician, boiler man, builder, etc);
- Entertainment & Music (insofar as human interaction at the settlement reduces the need to seek entertainment elsewhere).

161. The sum total of these subsistence benefits results in a lifestyle which requires a considerably lower financial expenditure than would be engendered if we lived separately in houses. The reduced level of transport is also a reflection of the fact that this lifestyle provides us with physical and social goods and services which we would otherwise have to seek elsewhere.

162. Thus the majority of our time is spent working on site to meet our needs. Day to day tasks include: child care and education, firewood processing, woodland management, human and organic waste disposal, structure maintenance, wildlife monitoring, garden maintenance, food production, community dynamics, peer counselling, recycling schemes, laundry, and herbal medicine making. These activities are an integral part of our day to day life and it is a vital part of what SCW has to offer in showing a sustainable way of life.

163. The project enables us to meet our needs by fulfilling our emotional, spiritual and physical well being. By living a sustainable woodland way of life, we have more time to spend with our children, helping each other, pooling resources and skills and volunteering with projects and people outside the community. Although this way of life can have its challenges, we feel the holistic value far outweighs a conventional lifestyle. The children at Steward Wood (all of whom have spent all or most of their lives in the woodland) would find it difficult to give up this way of life and it would be highly detrimental to their well-being if they had to leave.

164. The four survival needs are food, water, fuel and shelter. These are some of the bigger average household expenditures in the UK. A family of four in Moretonhampstead spend on average £1065 per month on rented accommodation and utilities, plus approximately £500 per month on food and household goods (data compiled from three families in 2014). We provide nearly all our own housing, water, fuel and power (meaning that the cost of a family living at Steward Wood is only £175 per month) and some of our own food (a family spends approximately £360 per month on food and household goods). This shows how we are providing for our needs predominantly by subsistence living. See more detail in our Needs Analysis at Appendix 15.

165. Our subsistence activities bring with them two main benefits.

166. The first of these is that the subsistence lifestyle is by no means introverted, but

provides the basis for a number of educational courses, on permaculture, biodiversity, low impact building, renewable energy, bushcraft skills, retreats etc. These are a benefit to the people who attend, and bring in a commercial income. There is a growing demand from the public for this kind of “back to the land” education and it is a common form of rural diversification carried out by farmers with a strong traditional or subsistence leaning. Visitors (such as WWOOF volunteers) also benefit by learning skills, taking part in the permaculture activities, etc.

167. The subsistence element, as well as being pursued for its own sake, is therefore also an important component of our commercial and educational activity.

168. The second of these wider benefits is managing an attractive landscape and wildlife habitat. See our Management Plan for details (at Appendix 5). Many of the landscape benefits are a direct consequence of our dedication to traditional, non-mechanized and subsistence methods of managing the land. This is unsurprising since these were the techniques that created the valued landscape in the first place.

169. I refer to the Court of Appeal decision of *Petter & Harris v SSETR and Chichester DC* [1999, EPL 5-163.25]. The case of *Petter & Harris* is cited in Mr Tamplin’s Appeal decision. The judgment states that although profitability is often an indicator of financial viability it is not an essential component and a non-profit making holding may satisfy the “*underlying purposes of the policy.*” This lead to the subsistence policy of paragraph 8 of PPS7 which stated: “*Some enterprises which aim to operate broadly on a subsistence basis, but which nonetheless provide wider benefits (eg. in managing attractive landscapes or wildlife habitats) can be sustained on relatively low financial returns.*”

170. The means of reducing our ecological footprint are detailed below.

171. Our settlement is sited so as to take advantage of the potential for decentralized energy generation.

172. All of our structures are heated entirely with wood derived sustainably from woodland of considerable amenity value. If we lived in town we would (a) need more wood to heat larger and less well-adapted dwellings which typically take 7 to 9 tonnes of wood to heat; and (b) need to transport it to our homes. We would not be able to have a micro hydro scheme to generate electricity from water. As for public transport, we are fortunate to have good transport links.

173. We are thus attaining a far higher standard of sustainability than that achieved by conventional housing developments; and this achievement is conveyed to those who visit or take courses at the settlement. The dissemination of this degree of sustainability constitutes a wider benefit of the subsistence approach to land management; and the high level of sustainability is a significant material consideration for the renewal of our planning permission.

174. We are providing eco-friendly housing at incredibly low cost. All of us (apart from Lorna) have lived here continuously for over 2 years and thirteen of us for over 5 years (largely as families) placing most of us high on the points system for housing need as set out by Teignbridge District Council. By providing our own affordable housing, we are not a burden on the District Council in any way in relation to housing.

Gift Economy

175. We value the gift economy, bypassing the need for money. This operates through websites such as Freecycle, sharing skills and tools, exchanging goods and services.

176. For example, our weekly Community Growing Day has been a great success and acts as a place to learn, grow and communicate with the local community. Volunteers come for the day to help us in our garden. We provide lunch to all and there are always questions about the project and our garden. The same is true for our fortnightly Conservation Days. We have found over the years that by having people here voluntarily and without payment is more beneficial for us and them. By not charging, we are being inclusive not exclusive to those without funds to participate. We see this as a huge benefit to the community, a place for people to come with their children and participate in a holistic activity. Some volunteers are experienced growers and others come to learn but all take away something from the experience.

Commercial Activities On Site

177. We generate financial income from on-site activities by running courses, and making and selling timber, value added timber products, tools, and herbal preparations.

178. We are continuing to run courses on site at Steward Wood such as:

- Healing Hedgerow
- Bird Language Interpretation and Nature Awareness
- Green Woodworking
- Wild Food Foray
- Fungal Foray
- Permaculture Design
- Off-grid Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Living
- Bushcraft
- Tours/visit
- Home Ed Science Group
- Wild Woods 'n Willow

179. With our range and depth of expertise and experience in various fields, our teaching skills, and with the woods as a long-standing working model of permaculture, we are able to offer a variety of courses and opportunities. We detail some of these below.

180. It is important to note that educationally, SCW offers two kinds of experience. Courses, which are run by individual members or outside tutors teaching their skills and are paid for by participants, and volunteer days and weeks which are led by all members of SCW and are free. Although the courses are varied and of importance, the greatest amount of teaching and skill sharing occurs in our volunteer days/weeks.

Green Woodworking Courses

181. Sharif is an award winning bowl turner and runs a variety of green woodworking courses from Steward Wood. Sharif is one of only a handful of people who teaches pole lathe bowl turning in the UK. This traditional craft has grown in popularity in the last few years and continues to gain a lot of interest. He takes his spoons and bowls for sale to various events and markets while also taking regular commissions and forging bespoke bowl turning tools for sale from his outdoor workshop at Steward Wood.

"I attended a spoon carving course held by Sharif and I am now totally addicted! Sharif

is a natural teacher, very patient and clear in his instruction. He's very knowledgeable about the subject of greenwood carving and you can't help but be infected by his enthusiasm. Just looking at the spoons and bowls he has produced will inspire you to give it a go." - Edwin Mitchell-Finch

"Sharif is very patient and we all progressed at a good pace making a spoon to take home along with the skills to use for the future. His own work is superb and very inspiring. He also has spoons by many makers from around the world and can tell a story about each one. He is a natural teacher and thoroughly interesting chap to spend some time with." - Paul And Claire Mills

"I learnt to carve spoons with Sharif and even though I was a complete beginner, his clear instructions made me feel able to use the carving tools with confidence. Sharif's teaching really has opened up a new interest in my life. I went on to carve in my own time, even on Christmas day! I've made a spoon for a friend from a branch in her garden and my sister had an apple-wood spoon for her birthday. Sharif's gentle enthusiasm for his craft has enabled me to get to know different woods and how they look, feel and carve. I think everyone should carve at least one spoon in their lives...and Sharif is the man to help you do it!" - Annie Gill

182. In Autumn 2014, Sharif exhibited his work as one of the artists/craftspeople involved in Devon Open Studios. His work has also been exhibited at Greenhill Arts Centre in Moretonhampstead and as part of the 'Made in Moretonhampstead' project.

183. Here is a summary of the courses run by Sharif at SCW in 2015: seven Spoon Carving courses, twenty Bowl Turning courses, nine Forging courses (36 courses in total for 8 hours each with 46 students in total).

Value Added Timber Products

184. Owen runs a business called Coppice & Cleave <www.coppiceandcleave.co.uk> hiring his mobile sawmill, and producing and selling value added timber products. He makes and sells carpentry products to order, such as bird/bat/dormice boxes, shelving, shave horses, etc. Sharif uses wood from the land to make spoons and bowls for sale, as well as running green woodworking courses. Merlin makes and sells catapults. Sonia sells hand crafted crochet hooks from coppiced hazel, oak and sycamore. John and others often use hazel poles from Steward Wood to create bender structures off site to be used as teaching structures and to promote the project. Seth is developing a business making and selling rustic stools and chairs. Occasionally, other woodland products are sold (such as split larch fenceposts and planked wood for shelving). For several years now, poles from the wood are used as flagpoles in Moretonhampstead's annual community flag festival.

Wild Food Forays

185. I run approximately five Wild Food Forays (4 hours each), and organise one Fungal Foray with an outside tutor each year, as well as leading Coastal Forages to collect seaweed etc.

Coppice & Cleave

186. Owen is a mobile bandsaw owner-operator. He transports the sawmill to other locations, as well as cutting wood at SCW. His business structure allows him to offer a personalised cutting service at a budget to suit domestic customers and small businesses.

This enables customers to realise the value of small quantities of high-quality raw timber, or recut recycled or poorly seasoned timber, in locations that would represent access challenges and with minimal wastage. He finds it extremely rewarding to be able to offer customers the opportunity to produce beautiful timber from their own trees or reclaimed timber. Customers have included furniture makers, timber framers, smallholders, the Woodland Trust and SCW. He also offers a general carpentry and fixing service to existing customers.

Healing Hedgerow

187. The Healing Hedgerow was set up by Rebecca and Sonia in 2007 and has increased in popularity over the last 9 years. They have over 12 years of practical knowledge and skill in how to identify, harvest and preserve medicine from nature. As well as selling herbal medicines, tinctures, tea, tonics, balms and other elixirs to the wider community, Sonia and Rebecca have run many courses since 2007.

188. Festival and camp organisers frequently identify Sonia & Rebecca as experienced people in this field and give them free entry to the festival/camp with an area set aside for their stalls and workshop space in exchange for providing workshops for free to festival/camp goers.

189. In 2015, Sonia & Rebecca concentrated on running free Herbal Medicine foraging courses at festivals and camps:

- 'Of Oak, Ash & Thorn' family foraging at beginning of June - cancelled at last minute due to Son's back injury;
- Medicine forage with volunteers at SCW (July) - 4 participants for 2 hours;
- Powerwood family camp (August) – a workshop lasting 1.5 hours with 15 adults and children;
- Shambala Festival (August) - three 2 hour workshops with 15 participants on each;
- Home Education foraging (August) – a workshop with 3 families for 3 hours;
- Open Day at SCW (Sept) – a workshop lasting 1.5 hours with 30 participants;
- Medicine forage with volunteers at SCW (Sept) - 3 participants for 2 hours;
- Three courses were cancelled due to Son's back injury;
- There were twenty 1 hour free consultations on herbal self care throughout the year.

Nature Connections - finding yourself in nature

190. Nature Connections was set up in 2010 by Ollie. He has trained at Trackways, the leading nature awareness school in the UK. His woodland lifestyle has enabled him to develop an understanding of bird language and behaviour, ecology, tracking skills, ways of movement and sensory awareness that enables people to deeply engage, directly, with the natural world that surrounds them.

Permaculture Design Courses

191. Since the granting of our last planning permission, we have run three permaculture design courses lasting two weeks (in 2009, 2010 and 2012) with 15 students each time.

"This was an experience of a lifetime. I feel inspired and empowered by the whole process. It's given me hope for the future of our beautiful, threatened planet."

"It was fantastic to be a part of a thriving permaculture community while learning about sustainability and permaculture – it helped me to make sense of it all. What a

wonderful bunch of people – very friendly and helpful (including the children). The whole experience has been a delight.”

“I've got the bug to design all the gardens of people I know and spread the ethics and principles of permaculture.”

192. We are currently taking a break from running these courses until we rebuild the Longhouse and can provide an adequate teaching space for this length of course.

Educational Visits

193. See the section below headed 'Education'. We often charge a fee for tours and educational visits.

Photography

194. Fern is a photographer and artist. She uses a traditional medium format camera and has her films processed at Plymouth University. Fern's photographic series 'Wild Wood' has been shortlisted for the National Open Art Competition 2013, The Ideastap Photographic Award 2013 and The Magnum Showcase 2013. Wild Wood was then exhibited in group and solo shows across the UK and has been published in a variety of digital and print publications. In 2014, Wild Wood was exhibited in The Netherlands for the Noorderlicht Photography Festival and an image from the series was also selected by The Royal Photographic Society for their International Print competition and toured UK venues such as the Berkeley Gallery and The Royal Festival Hall. In 2014, Fern produced a second solo show at The Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World at Exeter University. In 2015, she continued to exhibit internationally, sending her work to New York and South Korea. She has publications coming out this year and is working on her first book. Fern continues her practice from the woodland where she works and lives. She believes that immersing herself in this way of life is integral to the project's success. It is important to note that the interest in her work is not just due to aesthetics but directly relates to the huge interest people have in this way of life. Using old processes and modern technologies (the internet) enables her to educate and inspire people across the globe from her woodland home. In 2014, she received a grant from an Art's charity (Ideastap) to continue her work. She also sells prints from the series.

195. After the granting of our last planning permission, we found that meeting the majority of our cash needs from activities on site was unrealistic due to these three main factors:

- 1) Having to spend over £20,000 on legal fees for our last successful planning appeal in 2009. This resulted in an immediate need for us to earn money to pay back the legal fees which could only be met by working off site leaving little time to set up on-site enterprises.
- 2) The economic downturn which resulted in a marked decrease in people booking on courses.
- 3) The MoreFood project planning application being refused by the DNPA in October 2012. We were successful in applying for a Local Food Grant (£76,000) from the Big Lottery Fund to develop our demonstration gardens and to provide community and local employment. However, the funding was conditional on planning permission and was refused by the DNPA. This was a major setback. We had spent a huge amount of time and money on the funding application (which involved two stages), the Business Plan (running to nearly 100 pages), and the planning application (with many detailed drawings).

196. We now feel in a position to develop our courses further, although the need to rebuild the Longhouse (which will provide much improved facilities for running courses) and slow uptake are still major issues. In recent times, we have found it more productive to share and spread knowledge and skills through outreach, such as festivals and home ed groups, and free workshops for volunteers such as on our Conservation and Growing Days. Once again, it is important to note that our focus at SCW is on education not income per se.

Vision for the Future

Arts & Crafts Centre

197. We intend to turn our workshop room in the Longhouse into a gallery, shop, and small workshop. Here we will display, make and sell the items we produce such as: woodcraft, photography, artwork, wild medicines and poetry. We plan to apply for funding for this in the next 5 years. NB. We are not seeking planning permission for this now.

Community Garden

198. When the planning application for the MoreFood project was turned down by the DNPA, the funding period for the Local Food Grant had come to its end. However, we intend to seek alternative funding for this project within the next three years.

199. Despite the recommendation by Stephen Belli (the Director of Planning) that temporary permission be granted (see Appendix 16), the structures associated with the MoreFood Community Garden project were refused planning permission on 15th October 2012 (see Appendix 17).

200. Mr Stephen Belli said in his report (Appendix 16):

“The development is consistent with the provisions of the Development Plan and government advice (and material considerations do not indicate otherwise)”

“The development complies with the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority Core Strategy Development Plan Document”

“The development complies with the emerging policies of the Policy DMD8 of the Dartmoor National Park Authority Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document Publication Version”

and states the relevant Devon Structure Plan, DNPA Core Strategy, Development Management and Delivery Development policies and his reasons.

201. We believe that the reasons for refusal were unfounded and that, had it not been for the fact that the funding window had expired, we would have been successful on appeal. We set out below the reasons for this conclusion.

202. DNPA Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. In the absence of sufficient explicit detail submitted with the application such as a detailed site layout plan and the potential intensification of the use of this land, the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of this part of the Dartmoor National Park, contrary to policy CO2 of the Devon Structure Plan, the Dartmoor National Park Core Strategy Development Plan Document and in particular policies COR1, COR3 and COR4, policies DMD1 and DMD5 of the Dartmoor National Park Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and to the advice contained in The English National Parks and The Broad UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

203. There was an enormous amount of detail submitted with the application including:

- a Business Plan (see Appendix 18) with appendices adding up to 95 pages
- detailed, scale drawings of all the structures (see Appendices 10 to 12) which after consultation with the planning officer, Louise Smith, and some additions/amendments were approved by her as sufficient for the planning application.

204. There was enough detail to satisfy the Lottery funded Local Food Grant scheme to fund the project (after two stages in the application process). There was not a site plan for the garden because the design was going to be professionally created using funding from the grant which was dependent on receiving planning permission. The garden design was not a planning issue and should not have been a consideration in the decision. A concept design was submitted in order to put the structures in context.

2. The proposed development would not be low impact and increased levels of activity and visitor numbers coupled with additional vehicle movements, taken together with a lack of detail regarding effective monitoring of vehicle movements and car parking arrangements, would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would detract from the special qualities of the area, contrary to policy DMD4 of the Dartmoor National Park Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document.

205. We believe that the structures included in the MoreFood application would be low impact as defined by the Fifteen Criteria. Chris Gubby, the case officer from Devon County Council Highways Department, stated that he did not foresee any major highways issues and made no objections to the application. As the highways officer had no objections to the proposed development, we fail to see how it could contravene DMD4 in terms of highway safety. We also fail to see how a small number of visitor vehicle movements could have a detrimental impact on residential amenities. The site has good access and parking and strict conditions were suggested to ensure vehicle movements and parking would cause minimal disturbance.

3. It is considered that the proposed development does not enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. Neither does it promote understanding of the special qualities of the Park or foster socio-economic well being to the extent that the concerns expressed above can be set aside. The proposal is considered to be contrary to policy CO2 of the Devon Structure Plan and policy DMD1 of the National Park Development Management Delivery Plan Document.

206. The MoreFood project proposed a community garden including a forest garden, bee sanctuary, and play and picnic areas in place of an area of land consisting of low scrub (mainly bramble). An ecological survey was undertaken and submitted with the application giving appropriate recommendations.

207. The proposal is in alignment with many of the DNPA Core and Development management policies, as set out in the officers report (see Appendix 16), and should therefore have been granted planning permission.

208. As part of this current planning application for permanent permission, we are applying for permission for the structures associated with the MoreFood project (namely the Roundhouse Interpretation Centre, Polytunnel and Disabled Accessible Composting Toilet) so that in future we can obtain funding and establish the community garden.

Education

209. We have witnessed the educational benefit SCW has on the people who visit the project. We want to invite more Universities, organisations, schools and camps to come and visit the woodland and learn about our way of life. With the Roundhouse Interpretation Centre in the Growing Area and the extra scope in the Settlement Area this permission would give us to create more functional structures, we can increase the visits from these groups.

Social Media

210. Our Facebook page (set up in July 2013) has over 3000 followers and is growing rapidly. We have found there is great interest in what we are doing here at Steward Wood. Social Media is enabling us to connect to a wider audience increasing the educational benefit of the woodland. With the growing support of people from this page we predict this will be a great way for us to increase the educational value of SCW. One of our next steps is to use a crowdfunding platform to raise money for the MoreFood project so we can continue what we set out to do in 2007.

Part-Time Work Off-Site

211. In addition to the commercial activities carried out on site, we also earn money from activities off site. Often these are the same activities carried out at other locations, for example teaching bushcraft and nature connection. All members of the community work part-time off-site through employment and/or self-employment.

212. Most of our off-site work is within the local community.

- Rebecca – local village shop; admin assistant for local craftsperson.
- Son – cleaning Moretonhampstead Library.
- John – bushcraft & nature awareness instructor, working with disaffected youth, drug and alcohol rehabilitation through nature connection, care work.
- Seth – electrical safety testing, event waste and recycling management for local festival, farm work for local farmers, sawmilling.
- Mel – Teacher's Assistant in Moretonhampstead Primary School.
- Merlin – computer support and website development, running courses at Moreton Library, off-grid technologies.
- Fern – Part time administrator for Green Shoes (Shoemakers) in Moretonhampstead.
- Sharif – green woodworker, teaching greenwood skills.
- Daniel – storytelling, bushcraft and nature awareness instructor, archery instructor, life model.
- Ollie – currently no off-site work.
- Owen – Retained Firefighter in Moretonhampstead since 2012 (in 2015, he qualified as a driver).
- Chrissy – part time admin work.
- Lorna – not working off-site.
- Jamie – not working off-site.

213. Our activities off-site make an important contribution to the economic, social and educational life of the wider community, and there is a cross-fertilisation between our work and jobs off-site and the project. For example, by some members working within Moretonhampstead, both members and local residents benefit from the sharing of resources and expertise. With our low housing and living costs at the woods, we can afford to work at the low wage level.

214. We integrate with the wider community partly by working off-site and obtain most of the money we need this way. This is not only because it helps provide the small amount of money we need, but also because that is the way the country works largely and it allows us to establish common ground in which to make links and exchange ideas with the wider community. When on-site we try as much as possible to live using subsistence and the gift economy (including with our visitors). This provides an example, for the education we offer, of living in a community based mostly on non-fiscal exchanges.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

215. Our Aims in this area are:

- To manage the land using the principles of permaculture, forest gardening, and continuous cover forestry.
- To manage the woodland primarily for the creation and protection of wildlife habitat, whilst also providing fuel and timber for ourselves and producing some materials for sale.

216. This section shows how we are meeting these Aims and the criteria in DMD30, in particular paragraph (v).

217. See the Management Plan at Appendix 5.

218. See the report of Anthony MacKarel (March 2016) at Appendix 19, the letter of Kenny Comain dated 17th March 2016 at Appendix 20, and the letter from Dr Christian Taylor dated 7th February 2016 at Appendix 21.

219. As part of the Management Plan review in 2014-5, we sought the advice of the Devon Wildlife Trust and received a visit from Lynne Kenderdine (Land Management Advisory Officer) on 16th April 2014. Subsequently we received a letter from Ms Kenderdine dated 20th June 2014 (attached at Appendix 21) which provides written advice on how we can enhance our management of the woodland. This informed our updating process, in particular concerning the management of wildlife habitat.

220. Ms Kenderdine states:

"In terms of landscape scale conservation, Steward Wood has a very valuable contribution to make to biodiversity within the local area, not least as it forms the northern end of the Bovey woodland ridge; much of which is ancient in origin. As such your land provides something of a transition zone between the adjoining farmed environment to the north and woodland to the south. Your phased and sustainable approach to management, as well as construction of your settlement area, has created an interesting array of niche habitats providing much structural diversity for wildlife."

and her letter concludes by saying:

"Overall we consider that your management is having a very positive impact on your local biodiversity."

221. Wildlife conservation and restoration are at the heart of our Management Plan, and both the nurturing of our replanted oaks and the natural regeneration occurring in the Settlement Area is a prime example of our success at creating and managing wildlife habitat and the increase in species biodiversity this brings. According to the UN Environment Programme, the Earth is in the midst of a mass extinction of life. Scientists estimate that 150-200 species of plant, insect, bird and mammal become extinct every 24 hours. This is nearly 1,000 times the "natural" or "background" rate and, say many

biologists, is greater than anything the world has experienced since the vanishing of the dinosaurs nearly 65m years ago. There is scientific consensus that this is caused mostly by human activity including habitat loss, climate change, increasing consumption, overpopulation, deforestation, pollution, and the hypoxiation and acidification of the oceans.

222. The State of Nature Report, produced in 2013 by an exciting new coalition of conservation and research organisations, is the first of its kind to document the status and population trends of animals and plants in the UK. Sir David Attenborough writes in the foreword:

"This important document provides a stark warning: far more species are declining than increasing in the UK, including many of our most treasured species. Alarmingly, a large number of them are threatened with extinction. The causes are varied, but most are ultimately due to the way we are using our land and seas and their natural resources, often with little regard for the wildlife with which we share them. The impact on plants and animals has been profound."

223. A quote from Defra on gov.uk echoes the severity of the situation:

"In England, much of our biodiversity, including many of our birds, butterflies and plants, is declining. Our wildlife areas are too disjointed and fragmented, which makes it harder for wildlife to flourish and respond to climate change and other pressures, like pollution. All countries need to act to improve biodiversity and preserve natural ecosystems. Otherwise the natural environment, wildlife and human life as we know it are all at risk."

224. In 2010, Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Secretary-General of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, stated:

"What we are seeing today is a total disaster. ... We are losing biodiversity at an unprecedented rate. If current levels [of destruction] go on we will reach a tipping point very soon. ... The loss of biodiversity compounds poverty. Destroy your nature and you increase poverty and insecurity. Biodiversity is fundamental to social life, education and aesthetics. It's a human right to live in a healthy environment."

225. It is clear that the conservation and restoration of the natural world are vital to the survival of humankind, our non-human neighbours, and the world as we know it. We are proud that it's been confirmed by our own observations and monitoring over the years, combined with our recent visit from the Devon Wildlife Trust, that we are being successful in achieving our aims of creating and managing wildlife habitat. We look forward to further collaborating with local and national conservation organisations to continue our valuable work in this critical area for the benefit of the local biodiversity, and as a part of the global effort to protect the natural world we all depend on.

226. We attach at Appendix 23 our Licence to Fell Growing Trees issued by the Forestry Commission on 2nd December 2014. Roger Ford (Woodland Officer of the Forestry Commission for Exeter, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay and Dartmoor National Park) visited SCW in October 2014 and stated: *"I had a great time walking through your woods and I think you're doing a wonderful job of managing the woodland."*

227. The analysis of our Continuous Cover Forestry monitoring is attached to the Management Plan at Appendix 5. This shows the wide range of plant and tree sizes, their different ages and the variety of habitats. It helps us to identify trees and species that need encouraging or cropping. It shows that using the CCF approach means we are being successful in meeting our aim of re-establishing native broadleaf woodland from what was previously a plantation woodland with limited biodiversity. For example, it can be seen that

there is a large number of young broadleaf trees coming through as we fell the mature conifers.

228. Our emphasis has shifted from replanting with oak, which takes a considerable time to grow. Instead we have mainly encouraged natural regeneration and planted a mixture of fruit and nut trees and other broadleaves (such as hazel, rowan, birch, lime, ash and hornbeam). Our restocking plans were approved by the Forestry Commission (in our latest Felling Licence).

229. Our activities are an integral part of the life of the woodland. Humans are a part of the ecology, of the land, not separate from it. Whilst it would not be appropriate for humans to live in every part of the countryside, there are places where we can return to our natural place (woodland dwellers) living in harmony with the flora and fauna. The residents of Steward Wood are achieving this in a way that is admired and enjoyed by many who come to visit.

230. We can compare our residence in and management of the wood with the likely management had the woodland remained a commercial one: group felling and replanting with conifers. Our approach is one of on-going, day to day woodland management rather than large scale forestry. This approach promotes the life of the woodland, its diversity and tranquility. In addition, we are facilitating people's understanding of and interaction with nature through our being here. Our on site presence is of great assistance to deer, rabbit and squirrel management.

231. The site is designated as a Section 3 woodland by the DNPA. Section 3 woodlands are expected to be retained and enhanced and are inappropriate for development unless for the proper management of the site. Dave Wood, our forestry expert at the Planning Appeal in 2009, stated in his Proof of Evidence that *"it is unusual to see conventional conifer plantations listed under section 3 unless there is a significant landscape value. It seems at odds with National Park objectives not to support the gradual conversion of conifer plantation to predominantly broadleaves via continuous cover practise. Forest gardens and small low-impact dwelling sites will hardly be visible within the woodland structure proposed from any potential viewpoints available. The structural changes will only bring improved landscape character and a community supporting itself from its woodland assets."* This remains the case.

232. We can process timber using the mobile band saw owned by Chrissy & Owen. This includes planking softwoods (in various sizes), making shingles, cladding, and floor boards.

233. Owen runs a business <www.coppiceandcleave.co.uk> hiring his mobile sawmill, and producing and selling value added timber products. Sharif uses wood from the land to make spoons and bowls for sale, as well as running green woodworking courses. Merlin makes and sells catapults. Sonia sells hand crafted crochet hooks from coppiced hazel, oak and sycamore. John and others often use hazel poles from Steward Wood to create bender structures off site to be used as teaching structures and to promote the project. Seth is developing a business making and selling rustic stools and chairs. Occasionally, other woodland products are sold (such as split larch fenceposts and planked wood for shelving). For several years now, poles from the wood are used as flagpoles in Moretonhampstead's annual community flag festival.

234. Please note that we are using Aspen fuel for our chainsaws, an alkylate petrol which is sulphur and solvent free and contains less than 1% of the amount of benzene found in normal petrol. It costs three times the amount of normal petrol. Also, we use vegetable oil

rather than mineral oil as the lubricant. We use an electric chainsaw for small jobs when there's sufficient power.

235. Our management of the wood has led to more recreational use by the public, both by visitors to the project and walkers on the permissive path. For the route of the permissive path, see map at Appendix 24. Also, the MoreFood project (which is incorporated into the Planning Application) includes a children's play area and a picnic area, along with the community garden.

FOOD

236. Our Aim in this area is:

- “ To generate much of our own food and medicine by growing organically, raising livestock, hunting and gathering.”

237. This section contributes to us meeting the criteria in DMD30 paragraphs (i), (ii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii).

238. At SCW providing food and medicine for ourselves and volunteers is a vital and intrinsic part of demonstrating low impact living. We do so by:

- Growing/cultivating
- Gathering and preserving wild foods, herbs and medicines
- Animal husbandry
- Swapping excess produce and seeds with other local growers
- Hunting

Growing at SCW

239. Growing organic food is an important part of our daily lives and we produce healthy, nutritious food and herbal medicines for ourselves, friends and volunteers. We have a weekly Growing Day when we invite local volunteers to join in with the work and then share the produce of our Growing Area thus exchanging important skills and knowledge as well as seeds and plants. Furthermore, by increasing our capacity to feed ourselves, we reduce our dependence on international agriculture and global transport networks which are reliant on fossil fuel and pesticide use. Given the context of climate change and the environmental crises we face, the fostering of awareness of organic, local food growing is hugely important.

240. In our main Growing Area (which incorporates a Forest Garden), we grow a wide range of produce in quantity. We also grow food in raised beds beside our homes and have numerous fruit trees and bushes.

241. Our Growing Area is set up with linear raised beds with mulched paths in between. We have recently constructed a rabbit and deer proof fence surrounding these beds. We have a Shed for storage of tools and other materials, which also provides a covered space for those working in the garden. The roof of the Shed also provides rainwater collection for watering the beds.

242. In 2011, we extended our Forest Garden in the Growing Area with more fruit and nut bearing trees and shrubs.

243. Chrissy & Owen planted a large Forest Garden near their house (covering one third of an acre) in 2011-2 – see <www.coppiceandcleave.co.uk/our-forest-garden/>. In

converting the bracken-infested ground to a productive Forest Garden, they have used almost no imported biomass and no plastic mulch. Most of the fruit trees are alive and growing, and the project is of relevance to others: most landowners would use plastic weed-excluding mulch and a strimmer, which would enormously reduce the work required. Chrissy hand weeds round the fruit trees, bushes and canes, using the bramble and bracken stems as weed-excluding mulch. This is a slow process, but ensures she is able to retain the bluebells and other woodland flora, and minimise destruction to lizard and small mammal habitat. The area doubles as a natural tree nursery and produces a yearly crop of self-selected, healthy native saplings (mainly oak and hazel) of true local provenance - again, this is possible through use of hand-weeding.

244. We are working to find funding to implement the MoreFood project which will enable us to expand the range and quantity of food grown in the Growing Area. The MoreFood project incorporates a polytunnel which would extend the growing season of a variety of different foods, increasing our capacity to produce food all year round in this climate (see Appendix 11).

245. We make our own compost from food waste. This is clearly an excellent way of minimising our reliance on resources outside the community, whilst improving our crop yield. Humanure is also produced from the compost loo which we use to fertilise comfrey plants and fruit bushes. In addition, we gather horse manure from local sources and compost from the community composting scheme at Proper Job Resource Centre in Chagford.

246. We have many WWOOFers, course students and other visitors throughout the year who are able to gain knowledge of organic and permacultural food growing methods whilst staying at SCW, as well as sharing the skills and knowledge they have.

247. After the setback of the MoreFood project rejection and having fenced off an area in early 2014, we have got back on track with communal growing and have grown increasing amounts in the last two seasons (2014 & 2015). This lead to us being self-sufficient in summer vegetables for 4 months in 2015 (see photos at Appendix 25). Over this last winter, we have increased our growing space substantially within the fenced area and prepared much manure etc for the coming season. And we we have great plans for the near future incorporating chickens and extending the fenced area of veg beds (see the Growing Area section of the Management Plan at Appendix 5).

248. We hope to find funding in the near future to enable us to move forward with the MoreFood project, providing increasing amounts of food for ourselves and the local community as well as demonstrating organic and permacultural growing.

249. We acquired three hives of bees in January 2016, enabling us to harvest honey and pollen when there is a surplus, and wax and propolis.

Gathering

250. Our diets include a large portion of foods which grow wild in our woodland. The intimate knowledge of the land we have from living here enables us to know what grows where, and at what time of the year. Daniel, in particular, runs Wild Food Forays, passing this knowledge on to children and adults. Also, two members of the community have been studying the medicinal flora and fauna of this land for the last 10 years and they sustainably harvest and prepare medicine for the whole community, enabling us to stay healthy and vibrant throughout the year and ward off serious illness and infections. As well as providing for the community they are able to guide and teach children, volunteers and

course attendees in the ancient ways of wild medicine making through hands on experience, and above all, connection to the land and plant life that has only been possible through living so closely with it.

Animal Husbandry

251. Sharif & Fern share a flock of 32 sheep (which will be lambing in the Spring) with another couple who own a smallholding above Moreton. Seth & Lorna also keep a small flock of sheep in nearby fields by arrangement with a local landowner to feed themselves, Seth's family and others. Chrissy & Owen keep chickens to help meet their needs and we are currently creating a communal chicken run.

252. Chrissy & Owen have kept chickens for seven years, without lights and free-range, and they are a complete success, converting the inherent value of food waste (which can still be composted once it comes out of the chicken), grass, slugs, weeds and some supplementary feed into eggs. They experimented with keeping goats for four years to produce milk and meat, discovering that, with access to a small amount of grazing and some supplementary feed, it is possible to feed goats on a mixture of brash, weeds, and veg waste, with up to 20% brambles. They found that keeping goats is incredibly labour intensive but it is something they intend to return to: goats are excellent at converting biomass into food for us.

Hunting

253. By hunting squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, and deer, we control local pests and provide ourselves meat with no food miles. Seth & Sharif perform deer management for us and local landowners and each hold a DSC1 certificate. By managing the local Roe & Fallow population, they provide venison for themselves and the community here as well as the local landowners. Sharif has recently become a committee member of the SW British Deer Society.

EDUCATION

254. Our Mission Statement states:

- We are educating our children with the aim of fostering wholeness, balance and empowerment.
- We are learning from all around us and passing on our knowledge, skills and experience.

255. Our Aims in this area are:

- To encourage healthy, happy and empowered individuals.
- To explore and promote innovative, sustainable practices and ways of living.

256. This section contributes to showing how we are meeting the criteria of DMD30 paragraphs (i), (ii), (v), (vi) and (vii).

257. This section covers the following topics;

- Education of Children
- Courses
- Community Outreach/Voluntary Work
- Online Presence
- Media
- Higher Education

- Volunteers
- Visitors

258. In the previous planning appeal decision, Mr Cook states at paragraph 73;
“...it is my view that the value of the project is its holistic nature. Mr Goldring explained that the Community was one of the best developed and most cohesive and that a number of lessons were being learned about how it might be possible to live in and from a wood. I have noted the many representations from those who have visited the Community and gained from the experience and heard the evidence of interested parties about the contribution that the Community members make to the local area and the flexible skills resource that they can offer to those involved with environmental projects. Mr Goldring emphasised the value to be gained from what is in effect a working example of a permaculture system and, in my view, the increased educational role planned represents a further stage in the project.”

and at paragraph 76:

“I consider that the venture has evolved into one where the education resource provided by what is, in effect, a demonstration project of permaculture principles being applied in practice is of significant wider benefit.”

259. I set out at Appendix 26 a letter dated 10/11/14 from Peter Cow, an international teacher and consultant on ecological living, and one of the founding members of SCW who lived here from 2000-7. He states, inter alia:

“I have taught some of my courses at Steward Wood, and I know first hand what an important resource it is for visitors looking to learn about ecology and low impact living. I am sure it has inspired thousands of people in its 14 year history – volunteers visiting for a day or several weeks, course attendees, visitors on Open Days, and people who visit the rich website.

To see ideas and techniques actually manifested in reality is a much deeper, more empowering experience for people, and positive impact projects like this hold that opportunity for people who may only have read about micro-hydro schemes or Continuous Cover Forestry or chicken tractors in books before.”

Education Of Children

260. See the Proof of Evidence of my colleagues Sonia & Marly Parsons.

Community Outreach and Voluntary Work

261. The residents of SCW have a significant positive effect on the local community through the activities and groups we are involved with, some of which are listed below.

262. **Youth Club** – Chrissy & Owen volunteer at 'The Yard' Youth Club in Moretonhampstead, and Owen is a trustee of the Moretonhampstead Association for Youth. Chrissy is the organisation's Deputy Safeguard Lead and represents the Youth Club on the Patient Participation Group based at the Health Centre. The club is a success story for all involved – since the DYS funding was cut they have increased its membership from 56 to 80 and opened another session each week.

263. **Green Hill Arts Centre** - Chrissy works voluntarily at the Green Hill Arts centre in Moretonhampstead.

264. Chrissy is also a befriender with **Morecare**; secretary of **Moretonhampstead Action Group for Sustainability**; secretary of the **North-East Dartmoor Community**

Land Trust; and a regular library volunteer and the secretary of the **Friends of Moretonhampstead Library**.

265. Owen make the flag poles for the yearly **Moretonhampstead Flag Festival**. He has donated cut timber products to Green Hill Arts, Moretonhampstead Primary School and the Youth Club.

266. **Teaching IT to the local community, computer repair & support** – Merlin provides IT tuition and support within the local community by running courses, and IT surgery in conjunction with the Moretonhampstead Development Trust. He also provides computer support to local individuals and community businesses.

267. **Woodcraft** – Sharif gives demonstrations to visitors on traditional crafts as well as travelling to shows and craft fairs to demonstrate his skills.

268. **Tours/Open days** - Members of SCW regularly give tours to individuals, local groups and organisations such as: Exeter University, Plymouth University, Silvanas Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, Kingsteignton Conservation Group, and various permaculture student groups. Our Open Day each summer is always well attended.

269. **Science Sessions** - Merlin runs science sessions for home educated children at Steward Wood and other locations in the local area.

270. **Media and Communication** - Fern has published various articles and photographs about Steward Wood. She continues to give talks, exhibitions and writes about the project. Her work has been shortlisted for various arts awards in relation to her photography.

271. **Nature Culture Network** - Daniel, Son, John and Ollie are involved in facilitating gatherings and events in nature connection and the mentoring of young people.

272. **Skills Exchange** - Community members often exchange skills with people in the local community as well as each other. For example we employed the services of a Tree Surgeon in exchange for a bowl turning course, employed James Priest (Sociocracy Trainer) in exchange for web hosting, and wood processing in exchange for spoon carving.

Within SCW we exchange music lessons, herbal medicine, labour, counselling, child care, tools, plumbing skills, building skills, electrical skills, IT skills, art and crafts as well as knowledge sharing. A lot of these skills have been learnt though living at Steward Wood. As well as being active in the wider community this way of living enables us to be more resourceful in the way we live.

273. **Tanglewood Project** - John has been involved in the Tanglewood project for many years now, both in a voluntary and paid position. The Tanglewood Project is an emerging charity, whose values are rooted in community; connecting people of all ages and abilities to share traditional skills and knowledge, providing opportunities in celebrating the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Devon. Traditional round houses are built in school grounds as outdoor learning spaces while bringing in local craftsmen and women to continue mentoring the children after the structures are complete. The structure is called a reciprocal roofed roundhouse, as every beam supports one another. This metaphor of mutual support is the underpinning ethos of The Tanglewood Project.

274. **Community Growing Day** - Every Tuesday we invite people from the wider and local community to get involved in our Growing Area. Our garden (with easy access from the Wray Valley Trail) is a place where people can come and grow, learn and interact with

a working permaculture project. This to be a great asset to the National Park and wider community. Realisation of the MoreFood project will expand these benefits.

275. Natasha Mihailovic, an Exeter resident, explains what she gains from being involved in the Growing Day:

“Attending the growing day at Steward Wood gave me the opportunity to learn about permaculture growing methods and to witness the amazing biodiversity of a natural, chemical-free environment. I have never seen a slow-worm before, but in the Growing Area I saw three in one morning! I also had the chance to talk with Community members about their way of life and the values which inspire them and the Community. In addition to learning about food production, visiting the Wood has given me the opportunity to learn other practical skills, such as the use of maul, hatchet and machete for chopping logs and kindling. I hope that on future visits I will continue to gain the practical skills and knowledge needed to live a sustainable and self-reliant woodland life, and to draw inspiration from the dedication and enthusiasm of Community members.”

276. **Conservation Day** – we hold a fortnightly 'Conservation Day' when we are working anyway and invite people from outside to join us.

277. Both the Growing Days & Conservation Days have allowed bonds to be created between local people and SCW and provide an excellent learning and recreational activity for both adults and children. People come from as far as Exeter and Bude for the day. We actively encourage children (accompanied by an adult) to come and enjoy the woodland as there is an increasing need for children to have access to wild spaces. Television presenter and Naturalist Chris Packham recently said: *“The rarest sight in the British countryside isn't a lapwing or a skylark – it's a child.”*

278. **Festival talks, workshops & demonstrations held by members of SCW** - Sonia, John and Ollie offer free workshops and talks at festivals based on nature connection and living in community on the land, as well as holding a space where people can come and peruse information and photos and ask questions about home education, wild food and medicine, community life, forest gardening, food growing, forest management, communication techniques, appropriate technology and self sufficiency ... and sign up for more in depth courses held at the woodland.

279. **Healing Hedgerow Workshops** - People come on the Healing Hedgerow walks and talks at festivals and learn to identify, sustainably harvest & preserve their own health tonics and elixirs from Mother Nature. Individuals are also given the opportunity to purchase some of the finest, home made, sustainably wildcrafted, hedgerow preserves made from the plant life at Steward Wood, enabling people who do not ordinarily have access to organic wilderness the opportunity to keep their families healthy and nourished while supporting this valuable project.

280. **Primitive Fire Making** - Enables participants to experience the ancient art of fire by friction, learn to identify suitable materials from the landscape around them, get hands on experience of the ember making process and finally ignite tinder bundles. Ancient Bow and hand drill techniques are covered. Participants often report higher self esteem and feelings of empowerment after such an experience.

281. **Survival Shelter Building** - John covers the principles of building real life survival shelters from just the natural materials around, incorporating tree and plant identification. These shelters have and will continue to save lives around the world.

282. **Nature Connection** - Through games and activities that enhance sensory awareness, adults and children learn to move practically unseen in nature thus deepening their connection and improving the chances of close encounters with wildlife.

283. **Bird Language Interpretation** - Ollie introduces the concept of bird language and how to begin the journey into the secret world of the birds. Learn how an understanding of bird vocalisations, behaviour and pattern recognition enables us to reconnect to the natural world and read the landscape around us.

284. Sonia, John and Ollie are invited back year after year to many different festivals to create beautiful hand built spaces and run workshops, walks and talks as the organisers know that they offer a unique opportunity for customers to connect with nature and learn traditional and ancient skills and crafts that are all but lost and forgotten. Delivered in an authentic way as these skills and techniques are practised daily through life at SCW.

Courses

285. See the Business Strategy section above for a list of courses we run from the woods.

286. Course participants who come to learn at Steward Wood come away not just with new skills but an insight into community life that often leaves a lasting impact. Whilst here they engage in activities such as: cooking on an open fire, chopping wood, nature connection, plant identification, low-impact structure maintenance, sustainable energy harnessing. This holistic nature of learning and how we live on the land adds to the experience and students often come away with a deep understanding of our land based way of life.

287. Recent course participant Adrian Lloyd expresses his view as a Headteacher on the educational value of SCW (see Appendix 27 for the complete letter):

"Much has been written about the educational value of time spent in woodlands, but I know that Steward Community Woodland takes learning in the great outdoors to a whole new level. Just the diversity of the programme that is and can be offered at the wood not just for it's residents, but for the local and wider community as a whole. I know the local community are extremely supportive of the work that the residents share with them and feel sure that they would be really missed if they were not there.

On a personal level, I was extremely fortunate to spend some quality time at Steward Community Woodland at the end of March this year, visiting and learning from one of the residents, Sharif Adams. Sharif is an outstanding green wood craftsman and an exceptional bowl turner, and I visited to see if some of his skills would improve my own turning – which they did immensely I'm pleased to say! I received a really warm welcome from all of the residents that I had the opportunity to meet, who were most enthusiastic in sharing their woodland life with me. I was also really pleased to be given a guided tour of some of the woodland facilities – there is so much resourcefulness that could be shared about living a low impact life and making a positive impact on the landscape that it almost seems unethical not to allow the residents to share it?

I wholeheartedly lend my support to this planning application and hope that I am able to visit again in the future, maybe with some of the young people that I care for so they too can be inspired and learn from the residents of Steward Community Woodland."

288. Here are two testimonials from participants on Ollie's Bird Language Interpretation

and Nature Connection courses:

"I became really happy when practicing the techniques Ollie shared with us, fox walking, owl eyes and deer ears. Especially the owl eyes I think. I found these really awareness expanding, and just became really happy, also happy because much hope was born in me. Some of these 'techniques' are really ways of genuine meditation, and the attitude of gratitude and appreciation, which seem to be the main motivations, guided everything. Really genuinely major and life changing experiences and teachings for those who find themselves in the right place at the right time. Thank you." - Anna Morgan

"Thank you for such a deep and reviving experience. The skills you have taught I am sure will help me experience a greater sense of connection with a far more vivid life. I feel I have also learned a deeper connection with myself and my emotions which will help me in all my life relationships with others." - Derek Kirkup

Online Presence

289. Website - Our website (stewardwood.org) receives around 300 unique visitors per day, which shows that a large number of people are learning from us.

290. Facebook - Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stewardcommunitywoodland) set up in July 2013 has over 3000 active followers and is increasing by the day.

291. Blogs - Sharif's blog has received over 83,000 hits and continues to become increasingly popular, again this is another example of people learning from our activities on site.

292. Media - As well as internet coverage, there are articles about the project on occasion in newspapers and magazines, and reports on television or radio. For example, there was an article on Sharif's bowl turning skills recently in 'Living Woods' magazine, and articles in the Guardian, The Daily Mail, and the Western Morning News. Also the project has featured recently on BBC Radio Devon, BBC Spotlight, and ITV West Country News.

Higher Education

293. Over the years we have had many students visit Steward Wood writing papers and dissertations from Permaculture to Anthropology. We recently had a visit from a group of undergraduate students from the University of Exeter who were doing a project on 're-orienting education'. They were investigating how education could/should be different from the standard English schooling model.

294. Here is the response from tutor Laura Moralee on their visit:

"My students had a fantastic time on Wednesday, thank you so much for giving them an experience that they will not forget. They told me that they thought about some things in ways that they had never done before as a result of their visit. That's a real success; their undergraduate education is all about just that. Thank you." - Laura Moralee, University of Exeter 07/06/2014

295. Projects like SCW enable students in the UK to observe/study communal land based living, wildlife, conservation & permaculture without the need to travel abroad. This in itself reduces the carbon footprint of students and gives them the possibility to directly learn and engage with a community without the need for sufficient funds.

296. Since 2006, SCW has provided an invaluable medium for students from the

University of Plymouth to experience and discuss key aspects of the practical implementation of sustainable development. See the letter from Associate Professor Roger Cutting and Dr Robert Cook dated 15th March 2016 at Appendix 28.

Volunteers

297. SCW is a WWOOF host (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) and accommodates volunteers through the year from all over the world. They engage in a spectrum of activities such as:

- permaculture food growing and land use
- community dynamics
- renewable energy and appropriate technology
- building dwellings using low-impact materials
- small-scale woodland management
- experiential and home education
- Sociocracy

298. As with course participants, volunteers often come away with many new skills and experiences.

299. The volunteer days/weeks are of great value because they are open to anyone and do not exclude those on a low or no income. It is of huge importance to have the woodland accessible to all.

300. Here is an extract from a letter to us written by a former volunteer, Sophie Wright, dated 4th March 2016:

“The value that this community brings to land and creatures, individuals and society, has been proved time and time again. For me personally, I came away from my Wwoofing experience with, not only renewed energy and lust for life but new skills and knowledge about how to live sustainably. These tools I have brought back to my London city life that has seen me successfully obtain funding and permission for the greening of neglected urban corners, which have now been transformed and where now locals meet and garden, building a sense of community and belonging. My eldest daughter has just secured business funding for a start-up that combines community participation with recycling, these are all things that our time with you at Steward Wood, either introduced or reinforced, and is further proof and evidence of both your value and the extent of your reach and positive impact. It was a privilege to share in your way for a while, and an experience that has enriched myself and my family and one that continues to inspire me.”

Visitors

301. We set out in Appendix 29 a summary of the record of all activities provided for the public at the land as required by our previous planning permission.

302. The Open Day occurs once a year usually in June but in 2015 it took place in September. We typically get over 100 people.

VEHICLE USAGE & ACCESS

303. Our Mission Statement says:

- “We are reducing dependency on fossil fuels and exploring alternatives.”

304. Our Aim in this area is:

- “To explore and promote innovative, sustainable practices and ways of living.”

305. This section shows how we are meeting the criteria in DMD30 paragraph (i).

306. Part of SCW is a section of disused railway track that once served Moretonhampstead. It is now part of the Wray Valley Trail with designated parking areas and a turning circle. The area from the road to the end of the parking zone is tarmaced. At the point where the railway track crossed the A382, there is a highly visible entrance which provides safe access to and from the road. There is ample parking on the track for the limited number of vehicles used by the project and for our neighbours. We have granted rights to all three of the neighbouring cottages allowing them access and parking.

307. Our section of parking on the track has 20 parking spaces.

308. We are committed to reducing vehicle usage with the following objectives:

- * Continue to increase levels of self-sufficiency on the land thus reducing the need to travel.
- * Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use among ourselves and our visitors. Now community path and cycleway along the route of the disused railway track between Moretonhampstead and Bovey Tracey which makes it easier and safer to make journeys by foot or bicycle.
- * Use sustainable bio-fuels (eg reused veg oil) when possible.
- * No petrol cars.
- * Co-ordinating and sharing journeys.

309. We use a quad bike and 4-wheel drive vehicles on occasion to transport materials up to the Glade along the hardcore track from the carpark area.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

310. Our Mission Statement says:

- “We are reducing dependency on fossil fuels and exploring alternatives.”

311. Our Aim in this area is:

- “To explore and promote innovative, sustainable practices and ways of living.”

312. This section shows how we are meeting the criteria in DMD30 paragraphs (i), (ii), (iv), (v), and (vi).

313. See Appendix 7 for our detailed report on this subject.

SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT

314. There were 411 letters to the DNPA in support of the Planning Application in 2015. 67 of these came from people living in Moretonhampstead, 127 from the Dartmoor area, and the rest from the UK and other parts of the world. There is clearly a strong desire amongst many to see this experiment in a low carbon lifestyle continue. Furthermore, the Moretonhampstead Parish Council recommended approval of the Application. There were only approximately 20 letters against the proposal.

315. Crowdfunding - On 23rd February 2016, after many months of preparation, we

launched an online crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the legal fees for this Appeal (see <bit.ly/savestewardwood>). Within four days of its launch, we had raised £9000 and the letters and messages of support began to flood in. It was incredibly heart-warming to see so many people wanting to support us with lots of people opting to simply give what they could and not receive a 'perk' (an item or gift in return) for their donation. We were further astounded to then have reached £22,000 within 7 days. Our campaign was proving to be so popular the press, radio & TV ran features on us. When The Guardian published an article online showcasing our film followed by an article in print, the amount of support we received went through the roof. We were contacted by people from all over the world, wishing us well and offering their good wishes and support. The positive media attention propelled us forward and by day 10 we had reached our goal of raising £38,000, a momentous achievement. As I write (21st March 2016), the crowdfunder is still running and we are raising further funds for the project. We have currently raised £42,752 and have 14 days to go. In total so far, 1341 people have given donations large and small through the crowdfunder, and thus are actively supporting the project. There are currently 41,413 views of the crowdfunding video on YouTube (see <www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6FWbrvSWk0>).

316. Here's a couple of the messages of support we have received as a result of the crowdfunder:

"Thank you Steward Woodland Community for showing us that by living in harmony with nature, we can all play a profoundly positive and beneficial role taking care of the precious world we live in."

"I've just read about the fight to save your community, and found it most inspiring. Despite having lived in Devon for 12 years, I've never heard of you before, but its fantastic to discover a group of people willing to embrace a different lifestyle to the mainstream, and what you have achieved so far is very impressive."

CONCLUSION

317. SCW is a success story and an asset to the National Park. The project is meeting its Aims in full and is fulfilling DNPA policies as well as the NPPF. It is demonstrating much needed solutions to the huge environmental challenges we face.

318. We urge the both the DNPA and the Planning Inspectorate to actively support this project by allowing its continuation with permanent planning permission.

APPENDICES

- (1) Policies of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-op Ltd – March 2016
- (2) Steward Community Woodland - Settlement Area
- (3) Fifteen Criteria for developments associated with sustainable land-based rural activities
- (4) Report produced by 4th World Ecological Design in June 2008
- (5) Management Plan 2016-26
- (6) Report on the Structures at SCW – March 2016
- (7) Renewable Energy at SCW
- (8) Block Plans of SCW / MoreFood
- (9) Structure Plans (submitted with the Planning Application)
- (10) MoreFood Community Garden Project – Composting Toilet
- (11) MoreFood Community Garden Project – Polytunnel
- (12) MoreFood Community Garden Project – Interpretation Centre
- (13) Photos of SCW from the surrounding landscape – February 2016
- (14) Non-exhaustive list of the roles, skills, and activities fulfilled and performed by the residents at SCW
- (15) Needs Analysis (March 2016)
- (16) MoreFood Community Garden Project – DNPA Officers' Report to Development Management Committee
- (17) MoreFood Community Garden Project – Refusal of Planning Permission
- (18) MoreFood Community Garden Project – Business Plan
- (19) Anthony MacKarel's Report on Woodland Management – March 2016
- (20) Letter from Kenny Comain dated 17th March 2016
- (21) Letter from Dr Christian Taylor dated 7th February 2016
- (22) Letter from Devon Wildlife Trust dated 20th June 2014
- (23) Felling Licence issued by the Forestry Commission – December 2014
- (24) Permissive Path at SCW
- (25) Photos of the Growing Area at SCW – Summer 2015

(26) Letter from Peter Cow dated 10th November 2014

(27) Letter from Adrian Lloyd dated 2nd July 2014

(28) Letter from Associate Professor Roger Cutting and Dr Robert Cook of Plymouth University dated 15th March 2016

(29) Summary of the record of activities provided for the public at SCW 2009-14

(30) Accounts of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-op Ltd 2014-5

(31) Letter from Rebecca Laughton concerning the Needs Analysis dated 21st March 2016