

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF DAN THOMPSON-MILLS

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Dan Thompson-Mills (formerly Mills). I have lived continuously at Steward Community Woodland ('SCW') as a member of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative ('the Co-operative') 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 AND TRAINING

3. I attended a Permaculture Design Course in September 1999 and was awarded a Certificate in Permaculture Design. For a definition of permaculture, see Appendix 2 of our planning application to the Dartmoor National Park Authority ('DNPA') dated August 2007 ('our Planning Application') for renewal of our permission.
4. I have participated in organising and running the four 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 March 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 have recently completed a year long training with Trackways in Sussex, 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.

CURRENT OCCUPATION

14. At SCW, I am involved in all aspects of community life and the running of the project, including teaching on and catering for some of the courses held.

15. I am also currently working one day per week at the Proper Job Resource Centre near Chagford, a community composting/reuse/recycle centre.

16. I am currently involved in running Forest School sessions both at SCW (with home educated children from Exeter & Crediton) and at Epona near Chagford (with pupils from Chagford Primary School), the latter as part of a group called "Wild Woods 'N Willow" with local basketmaker Linda Lemieux, Sonia Parsons of SCW and Charlie Loram. In addition, "Wild Woods 'N Willow" has a programme of events in the school holidays, in particular Bushcraft Days for children and families.

17. I am employed by Devon Discovery (the outdoor wing of Devon County Council) as a Leader in the 'Wild Nights Out' programme. Last summer and autumn, I lead six of the 'Wild Night Out' overnight camps for groups of school children in various locations across South Devon.

THE COMMUNITY

18. There are currently 11 members of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative and 8 resident children (with a baby on its way). The members are as follows: myself, Merlin Howse, Rebecca Cruse, John Elsworthy, Sonia Parsons, Seth Kirton, Melanie Davis, Owen Kebbell, Chris Tugwell, Becky Turner, and Ollie Hornbeam. Jamie Leeds is living on site as a long term visitor.

19. The resident children are Finn (2), Aaron (4), Asha (6), Ash (6), Rowan (7), Daisy (10), Marly (11), and a baby born in March 2009. Becky is pregnant with a baby due in September.

MISSION STATEMENT

20. We are a co-operative of people living and working together at Steward Community Woodland by Dartmoor. We aim to foster environmental awareness and solutions by providing examples of sustainable land use.

21. Our community is based on the ethics of love, earth care, people care, and resources for need not greed. We aim to practice a positive impact lifestyle by:

- managing the woods and our lives using permaculture principles, and limiting use of fossil fuels;

- growing much of our own food (organically);
- generating enough income predominantly from the project's sustainable activities and additionally from other ethically based work to meet our basic needs;
- building our own homes with materials from the wood and reused/recycled materials;
- reducing vehicle use, sharing vehicles and using biofuels (when available);
- home educating our children with the aim of fostering wholeness, balance and empowerment;
- living together in community, respecting all life;
- generating renewable energy and exploring alternatives to the use of fossil fuelled woodland machinery;
- connecting with the wider community with honesty and clarity;
- learning from all around us and passing on our knowledge, skills and experience.

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A FURTHER 5 YEAR PERIOD

22. We are a thriving woodland community with many strong and positive links within the wider local community. We are a working model of sustainability and positive action for the benefit of people, animals and the Earth. We are an asset to the National Park and the local area.
23. In our planning application to the Dartmoor National Park Authority ('DNPA') dated August 2007 ('our Planning Application') for renewal of our permission, we set out how we are meeting some of the aims set out in the original application (Summer 2000). We also **made it clear where we have yet to fully meet some of the original aims and where we believe some aims were overly idealistic, unrealistic or unnecessary and have thus been adapted or replaced as appropriate. We thus applied for permission for a further temporary period of 5 years to fulfil our amended aims across the board after which time we intend to apply for a permanent permission.**
24. Thus, in our Planning Application, we set out what we have achieved in the time we have been at Steward Wood, presented our amended aims, ethics and values, and showed how these aims will be achieved over the next 5 years.

CONTINUED NEED FOR RESIDENCY IN THE WOOD

25. We refer to the Appeal Decision (Ref 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."

26. Living on-site is essential for the continued viability of this sustainable 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.
27. There is a proven need for sustainable land use and development (see the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and subsequent policies and agreements relating to climate change etc). 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.
28. The detailed Carbon Audit carried out by ourselves (Appendix 9 of our Planning Application) shows that our carbon footprint is 23% of the national average. The independent report produced by 4th World Ecological Design (at Appendix A) 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.
29. In short, this project is holistic in its nature and scope and would be impossible to achieve without a residential element.
30. See further on this subject at Appendices 3 & 5 of our Planning Application.

PLANNING CASELAW AND DECISIONS

31. We refer you in particular to the following planning decisions and caselaw:
- (1) *Petter & Harris v SSETR and Chichester DC* [CoA 1999, EPL 5-163.25]
 - (2) South Somerset District Council decision (Ref 0401235 COU) on 23/6/05 granting 10 year temporary planning permission to Tinkers Bubble, Little Norton, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset TA14
 - (3) Appeal decisions APP/C1435/C/03/1114412, 1114361, 1114413, 1114425, 1114426, 1114414, 1114415 concerning land at Quicken Wood, Framfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG
 - (4) Appeal decision APP/K0805/F/06/2018725 regarding The Old Piggery, Keveral Farm, St Martins, Looe PL13 1PA
 - (5) Appeal decision APP/K1128/C/06/2032148, APP/K1128/C/07/2039820, APP/K1128/A/06/2018778 regarding

land at Allaleigh, Cornworthy, Devon TQ9 7DL (the appellants being Landmatters Co-operative)

- (6) Planning Application decision by Pembrokeshire National Park Authority regarding Brithdir Mawr (article in The Times dated 17/9/08 – see Appendix B)

32. 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 states: "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." South Somerset District Council granted the low impact community at Tinkers Bubble planning permission for 5 years in 1999. This decision was referred to in our original planning application and in our Appeal. The community has since been granted a further 10 year permission.

33. We refer you in particular to paragraphs 17, 19, 20 & 24 of the Quicken Wood appeal decision which we attached in full at Appendix 4 of our Planning Application.

34. Although the Appeal decision regarding Keveral Farm has been withdrawn (due to technical errors regarding the conditions set out by the Inspector), the Inspector's decision concerning sustainability shows the current stance on this issue by the Planning Inspectorate. We set out below paragraphs 28 & 29 of the Inspector's decision:

"28. Encouraging sustainable development is central to current national guidance. The 'ecological footprinting' evidence put to the inquiry demonstrates that the impact of individuals living at Keveral Farm is some 38% of the average impact of a UK individual. Their lifestyles reduce their impact on the environment by 62% when compared to the UK average. The majority of the community work either full time or part time on the farm. Permitting a small affordable dwelling at Keveral Farm would contribute to reducing travel and would support sustainable objectives.

29. I conclude that there is general support in the development plan for the change of use of this small agricultural building to a dwelling. Any shortcomings in the evidence of a reasonable attempt to secure a business use for the building seems to me to be outweighed by the sound basis for regarding this conversion as a much needed affordable dwelling for an organisation that has demonstrated an impressive degree of sustainability."

35. We refer you to the full decision regarding Landmatters Co-operative (August 2007).

CONDITIONS AND GUARANTEES

36. The five year planning permission granted by Mr Tamplin was subject to conditions and guarantees to ensure that only environmentally benign, low impact development and activities could take place on the land. Most of those

conditions were proposed by ourselves. These conditions have provided assurance that the granting of a change in land use classification could not allow inappropriate high impact development and that the project has continued in its aims of sustainable land use and being of benefit to the local community and economy.

37. We propose in the granting of a further temporary planning permission of five years 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 in the original permission – see map at Appendix 1 of our Planning Application.
- (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 10 of our Planning Application.
- (3) No fossil fuel powered generator shall be operated on the site at any time.
- (4) A total of no more than six motor vehicles owned, used or kept by residents of the site shall be parked, stored or kept on the site at any time.
- (5) No later than 1st April each year, we shall submit to the DNPA a written report giving details of the activities carried out during the previous twelve months in compliance with the Fifteen Criteria, the Business Plan and the Management Plan forming part of this application.

HUMAN RIGHTS

38. 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 of Mr Tamplin (see Ref above) on this subject (in particular paragraph 37). We also draw your attention to the appeal decision on Article 8 concerning Brook Farm, Butleigh (Ref APP/Q3305/A/04/1138976).

COMMUNITY HISTORY

39. The project was begun in April 2000 by a group of ten adults (with no children). Dan, Merlin, Beccy & 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.

40. 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).
41. 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).
42. 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.
43. 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 lead 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).
44. 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 lead 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.

45. 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.
46. The training and voluntary work undertaken, developing skills and experience (for example, in the area of Forest School and bushcraft) is now paying off with more paid work coming in. We are developing this further by running residential camps and retreats. Our training in chainsaw use, and woodland management (in particular Continuous Cover Forestry) has 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, now means we are holding one full course a year at the woods along with short introductory courses.
47. We are 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') allows people to experience and take part in sustainable practices and community living. For example, Jeff who lives in Sheffield, came to stay with us for 6 weeks in 2003. 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.
48. There is 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.
49. In 2007, a fourth family (Chris, Owen & Aaron) joined our community. Owen has brought his highly experienced, specialist woodland skills to the community, and Chris has much skill and enthusiasm for gardening and home education. Both Marylise and Nicky moved away in 2007. Peter also moved away in Autumn 2007 but we kept his membership open for a time (as a special case) in case he wished to return to live here. Peter resigned his membership in March 2009.

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

51. In 2008, Becky joined the group followed by her partner Ollie in February 2009. We have a lot of interest in people joining the community which is a sign of our success and how we are thriving. However, we feel we are now at capacity. We now wish to take the project forward with planning permission for a further five years.

THE FIFTEEN CRITERIA

52. 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 10 of our Planning Application). The criteria provide the benchmark for what we do at SCW and were incorporated into the Appeal Decision of Mr Tamplin.

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

54. Criterion 1 – The project has always had and continues to have a Management Plan and a Business Plan setting out how the objectives in the criteria will be achieved and maintained. The current Business Plan is at Appendix E and the Management Plan at Appendix J.

55. Criterion 2 – Members need only pay a weekly 'rent' of £14 to live in the community, and no capital outlay is required to join the community. See further on this subject in the section below entitled 'Subsistence Agriculture, Livelihoods & Lifestyle'.

56. Criterion 3 – We hold an Open Day each year in the summer, host numerous educational visits throughout the year, run courses and Forest School 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.

57. 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 (such as Moon Farm at Monkokehampton). 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.

58. Criterion 5 – We only use chainsaws to process trees once felled (except for dangerous trees on occasion), and we use no vehicles or other noisy machinery (such as strimmers or rotavators) 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.

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

60. Criterion 7 – The settlement is located within a coniferous woodland, which screens it to all but a few places along the road and in the surrounding landscape (and more so in leafy summer than leafless winter). 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 (larch having the lowest insect count of the tree plantations in the wood). We are close to our drinking water supply, and an abundant source of firewood.
61. Criterion 8 – The dwellings are mainly covered in green canvas, which blends into the woodland. They are also considerably screened by the trees that make up the woodland, and we plan to plant a belt of Holly, Douglas Fir and other edible/useful evergreen trees or broadleaf trees with ivy trained up them for further screening. All the materials (except for some timber – see below) used to construct the dwellings are produced from woodland resources or reclaimed. These include polewood, split wood, and hazel bender poles from the wood, second hand tarps, reused windows and timber, and reclaimed board. One structure is made from timber sawn on site. A very small amount of timber has been bought new 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 further in the sections below entitled 'Subsistence Agriculture, Livelihoods & Lifestyle' and 'Community & Structures'.
62. Criterion 9 – The dwellings are easily dismantlable, being made from wooden structures with canvas/board cladding. 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 easily reversible and no permanent foundations are ever used. See further in the section below entitled 'Community & Structures' and in particular Appendix I. The other eco-build techniques we wish to employ would also meet this criterion (see 'Community & Structures' below).
63. 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 and on our comfrey bed. We have a community policy of avoiding buying new plastics unless unavoidable.
64. Criterion 11 – All of our electricity is produced on site from renewable sources. We use very little power. Our lighting is low wattage and our computers are all laptops. 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 only wood and cardboard for cooking, and a

mixture of wood and passive solar (combined with insulation) for heating our structures. 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 M.

65. 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 M.

66. 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, felling by hand (using axes and cross cut saws) and using human pulling power, gravity, rollers and levers. See the section below entitled 'Woodland Management'.

(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. See further on this subject below and in particular in the evidence of Andy Goldring.

67. 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. 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 80 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 anyway.

(b) We have replanted felled larch areas with oak trees, and are continuing now with sweet chestnut, boosting biodiversity and creating more semi-natural habitat. We have put aside the area at the top of the woods as a low intervention wildlife corridor/semi natural habitat, although some clearance of sycamore 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.

(c) 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. The hydro penstock holds a small quantity of water on site. However, in general, it is not a high priority for us to store water here with the amount of rainfall we receive.

- (d) We have created and extended a Forest Garden in the Growing Area, which includes fruit trees. Where we fell trees, we are committed to restocking and maintaining the woodland cover. See our Management Plan at Appendix J and Felling Licence at Appendix K.

68. 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 three month live-in trial period to ensure suitability before they become equal members of the community and directors of the co-op.

BUSINESS STRATEGY

69. Our aim is to meet our needs, financial and otherwise, from a variety of sources, mostly based on site and some off site, but all based on the permaculture ethics of Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share.

Business History

70. See our Accounts for the period 2007-8 at Appendix C and our Needs Analysis at Appendix D on how we are meeting the vast majority of our basic needs from our activities on site (both cash earning and subsistence activities).

71. It takes time to establish a project of this nature across the board which is the reason we are applying for a further period of 5 years permission. But we have set the groundwork, had a reasonable amount of success along the way, and are now poised to take the project into the next phase which includes earning the majority of our cash income from our activities on site (particularly running courses).

72. Our notable successes are running four Permaculture Design Courses (2003, 2005, 2007 & 2008); the sale of polewood to Proper Job in 2003 (£1132); running Forest School sessions; and educational visits.

73. As mentioned earlier, we have amended our aims when it's become apparent that the original aims were unrealistic or overly idealistic. For example, we decided not to set up a community composting scheme when we realised that we didn't have enough time and resources to do so alongside our commitment to all the other aspects of the project. We also decided to focus on growing as much food as possible for ourselves and visitors rather than developing a veg box scheme. However, we are at present applying for a Local Food Grant from the Big Lottery Fund to develop our demonstration gardens. Also, we initially did not pursue selling timber to a great extent because of the low market value due to cheap imports. However, we still have such sales potentially in our sights. We are largely focussed on producing and selling value added timber products.

Commercial Activities On-Site

74. See our Business Plan at Appendix E.
75. The income generated from our commercial activities on site is set to rise significantly over the coming years. With our range and depth of expertise and experience in various fields, our teaching skills, the high standard of facilities and structures now at SCW, and with the woods as a long-standing working model of permaculture, we are able to offer an increasing number of courses over the coming years and we can expect a large take-up of places.
76. We set out in Appendix F the accounts for the Permaculture Design course held in June 2008. Appendix G contains the list of courses scheduled to run at SCW in 2009 & 2010.
77. It is important to note that even though subsistence income provides for much of our needs, and that much less cash income is therefore required, these courses will bring in significant sums of money for both the co-operative and individuals, as well as facilitating the spread of knowledge and expertise in sustainable practices.
78. There are also other enterprises carried out by individuals which will bring in money for themselves and the community (see Business Plan).

Work Off-Site

79. In addition to the commercial activities carried out on site, at present we also earn money from activities off site. As our Business Plan shows, our cash income will be increasingly and largely met by our commercial activities on-site over the coming years.
80. Of the activities off-site at present, sometimes these are the same activities carried out at other locations, for example running Forest School sessions, teaching permaculture design courses. Also, some members of the community have part-time jobs based off-site. Seth, Becky & Dan work at Proper Job in Chagford, a community composting, reuse/recycle centre. Merlin teaches computer courses at Moretonhampstead Library and offers computer support to people living in the area. John and Ollie do care work in the local community. John teaches on bushcraft courses a few times per year. Dan and Son are involved in running Forest School sessions, for example with children from Chagford School on some land above Chagford. Owen works occasionally as a tree surgeon.
81. We are looking to earn the vast majority of our financial income from activities on site. At present, our cash income is from a mix of work off site and income generating activities on the land. All our activities off site are strongly connected to the project and have the same ethical basis.
82. 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 at Proper Job, SCW and Proper Job both benefit from the

sharing and learning of skills, resources and expertise. Many useful materials and compost are brought from Proper Job back to Steward Wood, and we sell products at Proper Job such as our rustic planters. Furthermore, Proper Job cannot afford to pay high wages. With our low housing and living costs at the woods, we can happily work at Proper Job at the low wage level.

Subsistence Agriculture, Livelihoods & Lifestyle

83. While we generate financial income from our activities on and off site, a key factor in our sustainable livelihoods is the subsistence element. Rather than maximising income and profits from our business activities, we aim to provide for as much of our material needs as possible from the land and by ourselves, thus reducing the need to earn large sums of money. 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.
84. The value of subsistence in meeting our basic needs is set out in detail in our Needs Analysis at Appendix D.
85. The subsistence goods and services we provide for ourselves include:
- Water;
 - Fuel wood;
 - Wood as building material;
 - Food;
 - Electricity generated through renewable services;
 - Sanitation and composting (organic waste recycling);
 - Shelter;
 - Homemade furniture, clothing, toys, etc;
 - Social goods such as shared childcare, shared transport;
 - Maintenance of the low impact structures and infrastructure by ourselves (rather than employing plumber, electrician, boiler man, builder, etc);
 - Entertainment (insofar as human intercourse at the settlement reduces the need to 'go out').
86. 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 in houses scattered about in local villages or towns. 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.
87. Paragraph 8 of Annex A of PPS7 states:
“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”.
88. This sentence suggests (without actually spelling it out) that subsistence land management ought to carry with it “wider benefits.” Our subsistence activities bring with them three wider benefits.

89. 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 ‘Willing Workers on Organic Farms’) also benefit by learning skills, taking part in the permacultural activities, etc.

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

91. The second of these wider benefits is that actually specified in Annex A, namely managing an attractive landscape and wildlife habitat. See our management plan for details. 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.

92. The third benefit is the high degree of sustainability achieved by the development. PPS7 states that: “sustainable development is the core principle underpinning land use planning . . . Decisions on development proposals should be based on sustainable development principles, ensuring an integrated approach to the consideration of:

- social inclusion, recognizing the needs of everyone;
- effective protection and enhancement of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources;
- maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.”

93. Our settlement performs well in respect of all of these four principles:

- it provides access to land, opportunities for land-based work and affordable housing for people who might not otherwise be able to afford these ; and it provides services which allow the public to participate;
- we have a detailed management plan for protecting and enhancing the land;
- our use of natural resources such as water, energy, waste sinks etc is very restrained compared to nearly all other developments;
- the project provides stimulating and healthy outdoor employment and combines well with similar ethically-based employment nearby at a time when opportunities for rural employment are declining.

94. Another helpful guide for assessing sustainability is Ecological Footprint Analysis.

Paragraph 1.6.2 of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West states:

“The South West’s ecological footprint is unsustainable as it stands. If everyone on the planet consumed such a quantity of natural resources and energy as an average South West resident, three planets would be needed to support life on Earth. Consequently a shift is needed towards ‘one planet’, lower consumption, with lifestyles which are more efficient.”

The means of reducing our ecological footprint are detailed below.

95. Paragraph 38 of Planning Policy Statement 3 on Housing emphasises: “the contribution to be made to cutting carbon emissions from focusing new development in locations with good public transport accessibility and/or by means other than the private car and where it can readily and viably draw its energy supply from decentralized energy supply systems based on renewable and low-carbon forms of energy supply, or where there is potential for this to be realized.”

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

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.

97. Appendix H demonstrates the great benefits involved in creating our structures ourselves with the timber and labour available on site. The timber for Chris & Owen's house (built in 2008) cost them £500 (the cost of milling) compared with £1980 if bought new, and the labour £80 (food costs for WWOOFers) compared with the commercial rate of £3390 (a low estimate).

98. We are providing affordable, eco-friendly housing. All of us (apart from Becky Turner and Ollie Hornbeam) have lived here continuously for over 2 years and nine 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.

COMMUNITY AND STRUCTURES

99. We are a community of 11 adults and 8 children. All the adults are members and directors of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-operative. We would like scope to house these members and our visitors comfortably. We believe we are now at or close to the capacity of the wood, of our infrastructure and of the human dynamics.

100. At present, we have the following structures on site which were covered by the previous planning permission (apart from the eighth individual dwelling built in June 2008 and the Shed in the Growing Area):

- 8 individual dwellings
- Longhouse
- Kitchen

- Compost Toilet
- Bathhouse
- Workshop
- Shed* (in Growing Area)
- Bikeshed*
- Forest School Shelter*

101. All the structures, other than those with an asterisk, are within the Settlement Area (a designated area set out in the previous planning permission). We also had an arrangement with the DNPA for a limited number of tents to be erected at any one time (up to eight hike-type tents with no tent remaining for more than 14 nights).

102. Please note that all of the temporary structures granted planning permission in 2002 have been rebuilt out of necessity. The nature of such structures is that they require frequent maintenance and improvement, and they needed to be improved to accommodate more residents, particularly families, and to provide decent, comfortable and warm homes. The DNPA has been aware of the improvements made through our Annual Reports and site visits and had not required us to apply for planning permission.

103. The structures have a small visual impact from outside the woodland (particularly due to the green tarpaulin used and their screening by the trees). The visual effect is minimal especially considering the number of people living here.

104. We are now applying for permission for the following structures:

- 9 individual dwellings
- Longhouse
- Kitchen
- Compost Toilet No.1 (existing one)
- Compost Toilet No.2* (alongside the Glade)
- Compost Toilet No.3* (between the Growing Area and the Forest School Area)
- Bathhouse
- Workshop
- Bikeshed*
- Forest School Shelter*
- Shed* (in Growing Area)
- Greenhouse* (in Growing Area)
- Polytunnel* (in Growing Area)
- Storage Shed* (by Bikeshed)
- Tents* (mainly in the Glade – for WWOOFers and course students)

Again, all the structures, other than those with an asterisk, are to be within the Settlement Area.

105. As you can see, we are applying for nine individual dwellings which we need to house our members and visitors comfortably (especially in the winter). If another individual dwelling were to be built, it would be sited within the Settlement Area and be within the scope of the permission and planning conditions (including the Fifteen Criteria). We need another compost toilet to be

set up alongside the Glade for use by visitors camping in the Glade. It would also facilitate partially-disabled people to stay at the woods and attend courses. A compost toilet between the Growing Area and the Forest School area is needed for people working in the Growing Area (especially those with children) and for people attending Forest School sessions. These would be of a similar design to the existing compost toilet but smaller (as they will be used less). We need a shed (to store tools), a greenhouse (for propagating plants), and a polytunnel (for growing a greater range of plants and for growing over a longer period in the year) in the Growing Area. The maximum size of the polytunnel would be 7 x 20m (3m in height) and the greenhouse 12' x 6'. We would site these structures sensitively in relation to their visibility by our neighbours. In particular, we would site the polytunnel so that it could not be seen from any of the neighbouring properties. The storage shed alongside the bikeshed would be for storing materials on their way on and off site, as well as giving greater capacity for housing children's buggies and the like. In addition, as we have WWOOFers and other visitors staying throughout the year, we need scope in the new permission for tents to be erected extending the existing arrangement to allow up to 20 tents for up to 20 nights each at any time of the year. This is needed, for example, to facilitate the holding of more permaculture design courses with up to 15 students along with WWOOFers staying on site.

106. All our existing dwellings and structures are made of wood from the land, reused timber and other reclaimed materials (such as board and windows) and are all canvas covered. We would like scope within the new permission to employ other eco-build techniques, namely:

- Cob Construction
- Strawbale Construction
- Cordwood Construction
- Rammed Earth Construction
- Timber Cladding
- Log Cabin Construction
- Earth Sheltered Dwellings
- Turf Roof
- Thatch Roof

107. This will enable us to experiment with and demonstrate other types of eco-build as well as enable our dwellings to be more efficient (for example by providing greater insulation) at the same time as being beautiful and in harmony with the character of the woodland and the existing structures. At Appendix 11 of our Planning Application, we enclosed some photographs of such structures built elsewhere to give a feel for what such structures at Steward Wood might look like. We need scope to improve/rebuild our existing structures using one or more of these techniques as well as building any new structures. Any such structures would of course adhere to planning conditions, including the Fifteen Criteria. Some of these techniques, such as cob, have been employed in the area for many hundreds of years. Furthermore, these types of structure have been given planning permission in many other places (details supplied upon request). In particular, there are timber clad structures, and structures incorporating cob, strawbale and thatch at Tinkers Bubble, all within the scope of their temporary low impact planning permission (see earlier for details). These eco-build techniques are not incompatible with a temporary permission as they all result in structures which are easily dismantlable and

often biodegradable. For example, cob can easily be broken up with a sledgehammer and will biodegrade readily.

108. Since submitting our Planning Application, Chris & Owen have built their residence (described as 'Residential Unit N' in the Second Enforcement Notice) and the short term structure (described as 'Residential Unit R') has been dismantled. Thus, we now have 8 family or individual dwellings on site which currently house:

John, Son, Asha, Marly & Daisy

Jamie

Chris, Owen & Aaron

Becky & Ollie

Visitors (formerly Peter)

Seth, Mel, Ash, Finn & baby

Dan

Merlin, Beccy & Rowan

109. Our position remains that we are applying for permission for 9 residential structures altogether to allow for the possibility of a small expansion to our group or to accommodate long term visitors.

110. I attach at Appendix I a report entitled "Temporary Structures at Steward Community Woodland" which details the nature of our structures, the dismantling of the short term dwelling ('Residential Unit R') along with other former structures, and details the current structures on site.

111. Chris & Owen's family residence (built in June 2008) was the first structure to be made using sawn timber milled on site. Six full size conifer trees were felled by hand to clear the area for the structure. These trees were cut into 5m lengths and stacked ready for milling. The stacking was all done by hand and with tiorfor winches. In May 2008, a Lucas saw mill was brought up one of the forestry tracks by hand and positioned by the log stack. The logs were milled into various beams and planks over two days. Details about the costings of this structure can be read at Appendix H. No machinery was used other than a chainsaw and the saw mill.

VEHICLE USAGE AND ACCESS

112. Part of SCW is a section of disused railway track that once served Moretonhampstead. At the point where the 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.

We are committed to reducing vehicle usage, sharing vehicles and using biofuels (when available). We have 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. We now have four electric bicycles (which we charge mostly from

renewable energy systems) which enable us to go on longer journeys by bike. We are also looking forward to the construction in 2010 of the community path and cycleway along the route of the disused railway track between Moretonhampstead and Bovey Tracey which will make it easier and safer to make journeys by foot or bicycle.

- Use bio-fuels (when available).
- No petrol cars.
- Co-ordinating and sharing journeys.
- Realistic price per mile charged on shared vehicles to discourage 'unconscious' usage.
- Avoiding short trips.

113. The Carbon Audit (at Appendix 9 of our Planning Permission) shows how low our carbon footprint is in relation to transport.

114. We are proposing a condition restricting the number of residents' vehicles on site to six. In the original permission the restriction was three residents' vehicles. The reason for the change is that we are a larger community now than in 2002 with different vehicle needs. In particular, we have four families living on site with the need to take children on educational trips. We aim to find a balance between keeping the number of residents vehicles well below the norm of two per household, minimising vehicle use and meeting our transport needs in a rural location which may change over time.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

115. See our Management Plan at Appendix J, and Felling Licence granted by the Forestry Commission on 29/1/08 at Appendix K.

116. Here is a non-exhaustive list of woodland management tasks we have completed during our time here:

- observation and species identification;
- drawing up and updating our Management Plan;
- seeking and receiving advice from forestry experts and other practitioners (including visits by some of them to SCW and visits by coop members to other sites);
- attending chainsaw and first aid courses;
- group felling of larch and sycamore in the Settlement Area and replanting with oak (2002-4);
- felling larch, ash & sycamore for firewood and building needs and replanting with oak where required;
- processing of felled and coppiced timber for subsistence living and occasionally for sale;
- oaks restocking in areas of newly planted oak;
- clearing around newly planted oaks;
- coppicing of ash;
- coppicing of hazel;
- coppicing of sycamore;
- protection of coppiced stools from deer browsing;
- killing ivy on veteran trees at risk from wind throw;

- planting of half standard and dwarfing fruit trees and fruit bushes in the Growing Area to set up a Forest Garden (2002);
- pruning and maintenance of Forest Garden trees;
- erecting a deer fence around the Growing Area;
- maintenance of forestry tracks and paths, including marking out permissive paths for walkers;
- felling of nine larch trees near the back gate which were sold to Proper Job for use in constructing a barn (2003);
- clearing windblown trees and dangerous trees/branches;
- sectionally felling tops of conifer trees overlooking the Growing Area to let in more light (2005);
- laurel and rhododendron clearing;
- creating habitat piles from brash;
- attending Continuous Cover Forestry courses;
- carrying out Continuous Cover Forestry monitoring of the woodland (2007/8) and analysing the results;
- attending and participating in the South West Woodfair (annually) and the Permaculture Woodland Gathering (2004);
- experimenting with chainsaw planking tool (2007);
- marking of trees for felling (2007) – 500 trees selectively chosen;
- making and putting up bird, bat, and mammal boxes and bird feeders;
- six full size conifer trees felled by hand, cut into 5m lengths, stacked and milled by a mobile sawmill over two days in May 2008;
- tidying and clearing after weather/snow damage;
- clearing back trees from upper side of the Growing Area to be able to extend Forest Garden;
- 39 fruit and nut bearing trees and 12 shrubs planted in Forest Garden and Settlement Area in March 2009;
- enjoying the woods!

117. The total hours we have recorded for forestry work in the last two years are as follows: 3212 hours in 2007, and 3465 in 2008. The analysis of our Continuous Cover Forestry monitoring is attached at Appendix L.

118. We have made progress towards restoring the woodland to a broadleaf woodland. Our emphasis has now shifted from replanting with oak, which takes a considerable time to grow, to sweet chestnut which grows much quicker but which also has high value both in terms of biodiversity and useful product. Our restocking also includes small percentages of fruit trees (to increase the amount of food grown) and some conifers which grow relatively quickly and provide useful timber. Our restocking plans have been approved by the Forestry Commission (see the Felling Licence).

119. 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 (forest 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.

120. 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. We are promoting the life of the woodland, its tranquility and facilitating people's understanding of and interaction with nature through our being here.

121. The DNPA state that we have failed to manage and restore the ancient woodland. In fact, the ancient woodland we own is only a small area in the top corner of the woodland and our management has been to leave it largely undisturbed (as a wildlife area). See the Management Plan for our objectives in this part of the wood.

122. We now have a small bandsaw on site powered by our renewable energy, which is facilitating the production of bird boxes etc (for our own use and for sale), and producing timber cladding.

123. 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.

FOOD GROWING

124. We love gardening and growing organic food is an integral part of our lives. We produce healthy, nutritious food and herbal medicines for ourselves. 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. The fostering of awareness of organic food growing methods and solutions is highly relevant in the context of the uncertainties of the national and international climatic and political future.

125. Year on year, we have been able to direct more resources towards soil preparation and food growing, particularly with the addition of two more resident families since 2004. As a result, we estimate that our carbon footprint in relation to the food that we eat is 20% of the UK average (see the Carbon Audit at Appendix 9 of our Planning Application).

126. We have our main Growing Area (incorporating a Forest Garden) where we grow a wide range of produce in quantity and it has proved productive to grow food around living structures in raised beds. We plan to expand on this by experimenting further with ways of integrating food growing space amongst our structures. More raised beds are planned, and we will also be experimenting further with forest garden techniques (cultivating crops suitable for woodland edges).

127. Over the last winter, we have redesigned the Growing Area to make our growing more efficient and productive. We have set up linear raised beds with mulched paths in between. We have also erected a shed for storage of tools and other materials, and to provide a covered space for those working in the garden and their children.

128. In addition, we have recently invested £750 in fruit and nut bearing trees and

shrubs.

129. We plan to expand the range and quantity of food grown in the Growing Area by introducing a polytunnel and greenhouse. By extending the growing season of a variety of different foods, this will increase our capacity to produce food all year round in this climate.

130. We also plan to establish a tree and herb nursery, in which we will nurture culinary and medicinal herbs, broadleaf trees (particularly of local provenance), and fruiting trees.

131. We will continue to 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.

132. Since Autumn 2007, we have invested £550 in having chickens on site for their eggs. They are free range and we supplement their diet with leftovers and a small amount of organic layers. We have fenced off a large area as their run.

133. We have many WWOOFers, course students and other visitors throughout the year who are able to gain knowledge of organic, resource efficient and practical food growing methods whilst staying at SCW (a working demonstration of sustainable land use), as well as sharing the skills and knowledge they have.

134. See the mind map relating to food growing in our Planning Application.

HOME EDUCATION

135. All the children at SCW (bar one) currently choose to be home educated. Given the prospects of climate change and other environmental challenges, we believe that living at Steward Wood with the children fully integrated, is the best way to teach our children important skills in sustainable living, being in harmony with nature.

136. We encourage the children to have active involvement in every aspect of communal living as part of their education. This includes generating their own power, keeping themselves clean and warm, growing and cooking food, providing shelter, woodland management, dealing with waste, and relearning lost skills of communication and resolving conflict in a peaceful way.

137. The children of SCW are also able to pass on their skills and knowledge to other children and adults through play and other communication. Visitors are frequently amazed when the older children demonstrate their skills in firewood chopping, fire making, cooking, music, and contribution to social interaction.

138. As well as learning from living at SCW, all the children take part in activities within the wider community. These activities include: swimming, judo, tennis, camping, music lessons, walking on the moors, gymnastics. They take place within the context of visits to the library, museums, and the Miniature Pony Centre, youth clubs, festivals, the local resource centre Proper Job, and local home education groups. The latter groups sometimes come to SCW for Forest

School sessions.

139. The visitor work weekends, WWOOFing and courses at SCW (attracting people from a range of backgrounds and occupations) has brought great opportunities for learning for the children. They are able to learn directly from visitors, seeing every one as a potential new teacher, and having the confidence to talk and ask questions, at the same time as sharing their own knowledge.

140. It has become clear that for our children to learn a more sustainable future that they can in turn pass to their children, they need to live sustainably. SCW offers many opportunities for this.

VISITORS AND STUDENTS

141. We have had an enormous number of visitors and students coming to SCW over the years, facilitating a great two-way learning experience.

142. Those people who come to attend our courses and our WWOOF programme mostly come from the UK. Of those who have come from abroad, virtually all were travelling in the UK already. It is wonderful to spread permaculture ideas far and wide and to hear about and learn from what is happening elsewhere, but it's also very special to receive visitors from the local area (of whom there have been many).

143. We always encourage people to visit us by the most sustainable means possible, which is often by public transport (we are fortunate to be well served by bus from Exeter), hitching or bicycle. The construction of the Community Path & Cycleway soon will of course facilitate this. If someone is driving to come here, we do our best to facilitate car sharing.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

144. See Appendix M for our detailed report on this subject.

WEBSITE

145. Our website (stewardwood.org) receives 400 unique visitors per day on average, which shows that a large number of people are learning from us.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

146. 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.

147. Proper Job - this is a community-run, not-for profit business. It receives partial funding from the DNPA, and has recently received an Edward Morshead award from the Authority. It is a recycle, reuse and composting site. It has direct benefits for the local community by facilitating the re-use of a wide variety of resources and selling affordable, high-quality second-hand goods. It facilitates recycling of local waste, reduces the volume of waste sent to landfill, and

makes and sells compost made from local green waste. Proper Job has an impact on up to seven thousand local people.

148. The running of Proper Job is facilitated by employing three people (Seth, Dan and Becky) who currently live at SCW. Low-resource, subsistence living means that these people can afford to work at Proper Job.

149. Med Theatre - Dan and Peter have been involved in several productions of this community theatre group.

150. Breastfeeding support (peer counselling) - Beccy, Mel and Chris are all trained breastfeeding peer counsellors and provide advice and counselling on a voluntary basis.

151. Teaching IT to the local community, computer repair & support – Merlin provides IT tuition and support within the local community by running courses, the U3A IT group, and IT surgery in conjunction with the Moretonhampstead Development Trust. He also provides computer support to local individuals and community businesses, such as the King George V Playing Fields Trust.

152. Moretonhampstead Action Group for Sustainability – Dan, Ollie, Merlin and other members of group are involved in this local initiative.

153. Moorcare – Ollie is volunteering for Moorcare, a befriending scheme for elderly people.

154. Appendix N is a letter from Dr Robert Cook and Dr Roger Cutting of the University of Plymouth detailing the growing links between SCW and the University.

POTENTIAL RELOCATION (GROUND G)

155. We maintain that the time for compliance in the Enforcement Notices is too short. 180 days is plenty of time to dismantle our structures but we need at least a year to find alternative accommodation. In our community we have two families with 3 children, two families with 1 child, a couple about to have a baby (in September), and two single people.

156. Our lives are integrated into the area in and around Moretonhampstead. One child is attending Moretonhampstead School and all the children have friends in the local area. All the adults also have friends in this area and have many ties with the local community (see the section on Outreach above).

157. We all wish to stay within the immediate area but affordable accommodation in the Moretonhampstead area is in short supply. Each person is committed to living in as sustainable a fashion as possible, and so we would also need more than 180 days to be able to find alternative places to live where we could follow those commitments and ideally live close to each other.

CONCLUSION

158. We have achieved a great deal at SCW during the time we have been here

and, based on those achievements, there's great potential to carry the project forward, meeting our amended aims across the board over the next 5 years. We have been a model of sustainability and permacultural practice since we moved here. Our Carbon Audit and the independent analysis by 4th World Ecological Design show our record in sustainability. The statement of Andy Goldring, CEO of the Permaculture Association, together with this statement set out clearly how we are contributing to knowledge and good practice in the field of permaculture.

159. We are committed to managing the woodland for the benefit of the flora and fauna and ourselves. We have completed a great range of tasks within the woodland based on our Management Plan and continue to do so. We have of course updated and amended our aims in this area and the steps to achieve them as we have gone along. However, the foundation of our Management Plan continues to be to restore the woodland predominantly to broadleaf and to enhance biodiversity. Our current restocking plans have been approved by the Forestry Commission. The statement of Dave Wood, a professional forester and expert in Continuous Cover Forestry, acknowledges our achievements and that we are working from a sound basis.

160. Our achievements on the business front and the work we have performed generally on site mean we are now poised to earn the majority of our cash income from our activities on site (particularly running courses). As well as generating income, the courses are an excellent opportunity to pass on the ideas and skills of permaculture, woodland management, organic gardening, renewable energy and low impact living. Our cash income is also made up of earnings from Forest School activities and selling added value timber products and other crafts. The courses are being marketed through our website (which receives a large number of visitors) and in a range of media and ways. The opening of the Community Path in 2010 will further facilitate our business activities and the marketing of them. Our Business Plan shows that the tutors for the courses are mostly community members, and sets out our strategy for minimising the impact of students' travel to our site. The spreading of permacultural ideas and practices at this time of Peak Oil and climate change can only be a good thing.

161. The value of living on the land rests to a large extent on subsistence. Shelter, water, fuel, food, electricity etc are all basic needs. Our Needs Analysis sets out how we met 78% of these basic needs in 2008 from our activities on site, and thus in an eco friendly fashion.

162. The "Fifteen Criteria for developments associated with sustainable land-based rural activities" have always been and continue to be our benchmark for the running of this project, and the Criteria were incorporated into the Appeal Decision of Mr Tamplin. Throughout our time here, we have met the Criteria and I have shown how we will continue to meet the Criteria in the coming time.

163. We set out once again conditions and guarantees to ensure that only environmentally benign, low impact development and activities can take place on the land. We also rely on our Human Rights to be allowed to live here.

164. We are rediscovering the art of living in community, of cooperation and

sharing, which is so vital to humanity at this time of separation, greed and conflict.

165. The statement of John Willis, a Moretonhampstead resident, and the letters of support received show how well regarded we are generally in the local area.

166. Our project is a holistic one. Every element is integrated into and serves the whole. For example, our subsistence lifestyle means we are largely meeting our needs from being on the land and it is facilitating our commercial activities, educational activities (for ourselves, our children, visitors, students, website viewers, etc), and management of the woodland. In particular, our subsistence lifestyle enables us to live in an environmentally friendly way. As any elements are taken away, and in particular if we were no longer allowed to live on the land, this functioning system of mutually beneficial elements would begin to break down. We would struggle to continue to live in such a highly sustainable way and would most likely find our time increasingly taken up with working in high paid jobs off site to meet high rent or mortgage repayments.

167. As we face the huge challenges of Peak Oil, climate change, and other environmental issues at this time, there is nothing more urgent for humanity than to find and rediscover ways of living in harmony with ourselves and our world. SCW is a shining example of solutions to these challenges in the areas of community, low impact living and permaculture. This project deserves to be given permission to continue for the benefit of its residents, visitors, the local community, the National Park, and beyond.

APPENDICES

A – Ecological Footprint produced by 4th World Ecological Design

B – article in The Times dated 17/9/08 concerning Brithdir Mawr

C – Accounts of Affinity Woodland Workers Co-op Ltd 2007-8

D – Needs Analysis 2003-14

E – Business Plan 2009-14

F – Accounts of Permaculture Design Course at SCW 2008

G – List of Courses at SCW 2009-2010

H – Report on timber and labour for Chris & Owen's house

I – Temporary Structures at SCW

J – Woodland Management Plan

K – Felling Licence

L – Analysis of data from Continuous Cover Forestry monitoring exercise

M – Renewable Energy report

N – letter from Plymouth University