

The Cumbria Rural Housing Trust Community Land Trust Service



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Keswick Community Housing Trust Case Study

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A Community Led Development Success Story



Above: June 2010 - founder members of Keswick Community Housing Trust Mike Hodgson, Lorraine Taylor, Bob Bryden, Jennet McLeod, Wendy and Bill Bewley, Sue Roberts, Jo Brand and Peter Roberts.

In 2009 members of Keswick Churches Together consulted their community and identified the shortage of local affordable homes as the top concern. Amazingly in December 2013 those same people completed an affordable housing scheme now occupied by eleven appreciative local families (5 rented, 5 shared ownership, and 1 local occupancy).

With technical support from Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT) and Impact Housing Association Keswick Community Housing Trust's first scheme put £1.4m into the local economy. Trustees are now negotiating a second scheme of 25 homes, and have been gifted Banks Court by Allerdale Borough Council to convert into four single persons flats.



Above: December 16th 2013 The Hopes opening day. 3rd from left Trustees Bob Bryden and Lorraine Taylor, Jackie Walsh from the Homes and Communities Agency, Steve Atkinson and Steve Pickering from Atkinsons Construction, chairman Bill Bewley, trustees Peter Roberts and Jo Brand, new resident Lucy Wilson & family, behind Stuart Woodall from day Cummins Architects, front trustee Wendy Bewley, centre Mayor of Keswick Andrew Lysser, trustee Joyce Swainbank, behind Andy Lloyd CLT Officer, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, trustee Sue Roberts and new residents. Photo courtesy of the Keswick Reminder.

Why Community Land Trusts?

Community Led Development ensures that communities can secure permanent assets which serve local circumstances. Community Led Development is not new. CLTs, Development Trusts and Co-ops have developed millions of pounds worth of assets in the UK and form large parts of the affordable housing sector in countries like America, Sweden and Italy. In the UK CLTs are being promoted by government as suitable vehicles to deliver some of the aims of Neighbourhood Plans, and eligible for housing grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). There is also a well established National CLT Network (www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk) which provides funding and expertise.

CLTs are able to innovate, for instance responding to local interest in self built eco housing (www.lilac.coop). They may also want to develop and manage other assets with examples including farms, allotments, pubs (www.lyvennetcommunitypub.com), shops, community centres and youth hostels (www.wooler.org.uk/glendale-gateway-trust).

In the case of KCHT, Trustees were keen to develop housing as a Community Land Trust (CLT) for several reasons including:

1. To preserve affordable homes for future generations as the town has a serious housing problem and has lost most of it's council housing through the 'right to buy'.
2. To maximise affordability – keeping rents low and by selling a higher share of shared ownership instead of charging rent on top of a mortgage.
3. To generate long term re-investment income from rents.

Local vision and determination



Above: Trustees on site John Cawood, Sue & Peter Roberts and Bill Bewley.

KCHT chair, Bill Bewley (above right), is passionate about local housing and states “This has been a real team effort with every trustee playing an important part. We know the lack of affordable homes is an issue for many communities. This affects families, employers and employees, and results in crazy situations where even people on reasonable middle incomes spend large chunks of their time and money travelling back to places of work – as happens with teachers at Keswick School. It’s common sense to see that new secure affordable homes will have a stabilising effect on the whole community. So we are very keen to help others achieve what we have!”

Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT) specialist support



Left: CLT Officer Andy Lloyd on site with chairman Bill Bewley

Successful community asset development is made possible with specialist enabling support. The Churches Together consultation coincided with the employment of the CRHT Community Land Trust Officer, above left, who was able to support meetings, shape the business plan, identify grants and loans, introduce specialist legal support, liaise with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), introduce the Cumberland Building Society and Impact Housing Association, and work on the Registered Provider application.



KCHT opted to set up a fully 'hands on' CLT employing professionals directly to deliver their scheme. Above: December 2013 - outside the completed Hopes scheme from the left, Steve Atkinson of Atkinson Construction, Malcolm Jennings of Day Cummins architects, Brian Edgar of Donleys QS, Peter Roberts KCHT treasurer, Jo Bran KCHT trustee, Richard Thorburn of Atkinsons Construction, Bill Bewley KCHT chair.

The residents experience



Above: Andy Lloyd CLT Officer with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, new residents Gary and Lucy Wilson and family, chairman Bill Bewley.

Local couple Gary and Lucie Wilson said “We heard about Keswick CLT in the Keswick Reminder. We could not afford anything in the town which was very frustrating as we have both lived here all our lives and we struggled for a long time in rented accommodation. When our 2nd child was born we had nowhere to put a pram. When a share in a KCHT house came up we were very fortunate as one of our parents provided the deposit. The repayments are actually less than what we were paying in rent which is fantastic as it is not dead money and is going into providing our family with a home. Buying a share in a KCHT home has completely changed our lives so we are eternally grateful to the trust. Words cannot express our gratitude. We have a beautiful home with plenty of space especially for the children. A private garden has been the icing on the cake. We would thoroughly recommend buying from a CLT as it is the only way we could have any form of ownership in Keswick.”

Reasons to be cheerful

The strengths and benefits of KCHTs development include:

- Showing that, with the right support, community members starting with no development experience, land or money, can access development finance and deliver schemes successfully.
- A single CLT scheme has put £1.4m into the local economy
- Showing the strength of the fully ‘hands on’ CLT model - developing, owning and managing the homes, ensuring the local community is prioritised, and securing future re-investment income.
- The Trust harnessed rich community networking and partnerships with the Churches, Town Council, community, Local Authorities, CRHT, CLT Net, HCA, Impact. This also generated diverse funding including grants from the local Quakers and Town Council and raising £60,000 via a community share issue to hold rents down to £500pm.
- Partnership working. For instance HCA guidance on value for money tendering for consultants and contract price.
- Procuring Housing Association project support and generation of fee income for the Housing Association.
- Trustees grew into their development role, providing excellent project and financial oversight and managing all site meetings alongside Donleys Quantities Surveyors.
- Demonstrating the community led funding pathway: CLT Network and Local Authority start-up grants, CLT Network and HCA pre-development grant and loans, development capital grant and commercial loans, post development residual mortgage.
- Unlocking development lending without capital or assets through a combination of:
 - An option on the land
 - Acquiring planning permission
 - Ensuring suitable Loan to Value ratios and Debt Serviceability on rental income.
 - The Mortgagee in Possession Clause in the 106 agreement.
 - The quality of the professional project team
 - Collateral warranties whereby the professional team agree to be employed by the lender if the Trust runs into financial difficulty.

The above enabled the Cumberland Building Society to provide a £1.1m development loan and £300,000 residual mortgage.

- Local people becoming champions for affordable housing, dealing gracefully with objections as they occur.
- Showing how a trust can grow to become a significant affordable housing provider.
- Everyone on the board is engaged and contributes to decision making.
- Showing how a community can create a land supply – in the case of The Hopes, through church contacts.
- Setting up a versatile and democratic company in the form of an Industrial & Provident Society (now termed Registered Society) and Exempt Charity able to receive charitable gifts and carry out a community share issue, with resident representatives on the board and a residents committee contributing their experiences and relative youth to help steer the trust in the future.
- Value for money shared ownership – selling a higher share instead of charging rent on top.

CLT activity in Cumbria

The Lyvennet Community Trust, Stoneworks Garth, Crosby Ravensworth, Eden District



Above: October 2012 - the official opening of the Lyvennet Community Trust scheme of ten rented homes and seven self build plots. From the left – trust chairman David Graham MBE, also chair of the National CLT Network, trustees Cameron and Kitty Smith, Roger Bird, Jill Winder, Cllr Joan Rayne, centre Allan Foster of the Homes and Communities Agency, trustee Sue Ferguson, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust CLT Officer Andy Lloyd, Lynne McKenzie of Eden Housing Association, Simon Thorington of Charity Bank, trustees Annie Kindleysides and Doug Henderson, Mike Story of Donelys QS and Rory Stuart MP. Photo - Derek Horn

Allerdale Borough Council	<p>Budget set aside to promote community led development (CLTs and self build) with the possibility of linking to some publicly owned sites. CRHT helping to identify three interested communities.</p> <p>Keswick Community Housing Trust: Completed 11 homes. Progressing two further sites in partnership with Impact HA and Allerdale BC.</p>
Carlisle	Brampton and Beyond Trust: Asset transfer and redevelopment of infant school site.
Eden District	<p>The Lyvennet Community Trust: 10 CLT rented homes built and occupied. Self build plots being built out. Butchers Arms pub community buy out and renovation.</p> <p>Greystoke landowner considering CLT affordable homes on proposed quota site.</p>
South Lakeland	<p>Helsington CLT – negotiating 8 home site with the Forestry Commission.</p> <p>Kirkby Lonsdale: Queen Elizabeth School exploring partial development of palying field for community owned affordable homes plus sport facility.</p> <p>Levens Parish: Existing trust used as vehicle to develop new village hall through sale of parish land, with some affordable homes required by Planning.</p> <p>Skelwith & Langdale CLT: Church House renovated and let. Site for 4 rented homes identified.</p> <p>Staveley: CLT group and self build group working with parish council and SLDC to confirm housing need and identify sites.</p> <p>Ulverston: Local people requested support to explore a CLT for the town.</p> <p>Witherslack: Two homes under construction.</p>
Copeland	Millom Network Centre charity: Exploring possibility of developing affordable local homes through new build and renovation.

Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT)

CRHT provides information and support to help communities acquire local affordable housing schemes with Housing Associations or through Community Land Trusts. The Trust also promotes self built affordable housing following new government policy initiatives.


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Andy Lloyd is the CRHT Community Land Trust Officer operating in the North West, and is also a board member of the National Community Land Trust Network and a contributor to the CLT Handbook. www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/resources/CLT-handbook

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Photos Andy Lloyd unless otherwise credited.

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