

Chair's Report for North Horsham CLT Annual General Meeting 8/12/2021

Whilst there has been a great deal of building development in and around North Horsham, there is concern that the high price of the houses and high cost of private rental, forces residents on low income to seek employment and homes out of the area, away from family and friends. The only alternative they have is to live in overcrowded conditions, especially as there is a long waiting list for Council accommodation.

North Horsham Parish Council, through a series of working parties of both Councillors and local residents initiated the formation of North Horsham Community Land Trust to provide genuinely affordable homes in perpetuity. Councillor Alan Britten is our representative on the North Horsham Parish Council.

Our Progress from 2020 to 2021

In 2020 a hard working Steering Committee was formed of local residents with a financial grant from the Parish Council. A well written strategic policy stating our aims and objectives was created. Registration with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Community Benefit Society was obtained in September 2020. A Membership Policy was created and Applications were invited for membership of the NHCLT through the purchase of a minimum of £1.00 shares. To date we have 19 members. We also had some generous donations from interested supporters who lived outside of North Horsham and its environs, so were ineligible for membership.

A Website and Facebook page were created and a list of possible opportunities for the development of genuinely affordable homes was compiled by members of the Steering Committee. In March 2021 we held a Special General Meeting in which members confirmed and elected a Board of four directors (John Smithurst David Hardcastle, Donald Mahon and Joy Gough)

Throughout we have been very well supported and advised by Graham Maunders (Community led Housing Advisor of the Sussex Community Housing Hub) who is currently supporting and working with other CLTs in West Sussex.

We have joined the National CLT Network (now known as The Community Land Trust Network) which provides information and training courses. Several of our members have attended these virtual sessions.

Moving Forward

In common with all voluntary organisations, given the difficulties arising from Covid, we have not been able to move forward as quickly as we would have liked.

It has become obvious that a great many skills, expertise and finance to develop genuinely affordable homes will be needed. Financial support and government grants are only easily available to Registered Providers.

It would take a minimum of 5 years for us to become a Registered Provider, so an alternative is to gain a partnership with a Housing Association. Throughout this year we have been in discussion with several Housing Associations and we are now proposing to sign an interim agreement with a Housing Association which is already working with other CLTs in West Sussex.

The agreement will be tripartite between ourselves, the Housing Association and the Sussex Community Hub.

In order to move forward more quickly, the Board of Directors decided to share out responsibilities and divide the Steering Committee into 3 teams : Property Development; Finance and Administration and Communication and Development. This makes it easier to forward your projects and ideas. Please let us know if you have the time or particular skills to support any of these three areas. Please also keep updating us with your suggestions and recommendations.

The Property development Team, led by Donald, have closely reconsidered the possible 24 sites that were suggested and have narrowed these down to 4 or 5 which may be possible to pursue They are also investigating some other possible sites which have arisen recently. If you become aware of any other possible new sites please e-mail the details to

northhorshamDM@outlook.com

The Finance and Administration Team, led by John have been able to open bank accounts with the Unity Trust bank and the Co-operative Bank, completed our first financial review and prepared the paperwork for our successful grant application of £2000 from the North Horsham Parish Council.

The Community and Membership Team, led by Joy have updated the website and a new Facebook Page will be available in 2022. Plans are being made for a publicity campaign early in 2022 . If you know of anyone interested in becoming a member, our Membership Policy and application form can be found on the website under the section headed “Documentation”

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks for the valuable work of all our members, particularly those on the Steering Committee, which has contributed to the growth of North Horsham Community Land Trust over the past year.

Joy Gough

Chair of North Horsham Community Land Trust