

Cumbria Rural Housing Trust PRESS RELEASE

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COMMUNITY LED DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION!

KESWICK COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST SITE VISITS

SEPTEMBER 17TH & 18TH afternoons

An inspiration for ALL communities



Photo Left to Right: Community Land Trust Officer Andy Lloyd with Bill Bewley, Chair of Keswick Community Housing Trust



Keswick Community Housing Trust directors left to right: Jo Brand, Treasurer Peter Roberts, Sue Roberts, supporter Paul Rowlands, Wendy Bewley, Chairman Bill Bewley, Secretary Lorraine Taylor and Joyce Swainbank.



Delegates from Cheshire with KCHT Trustees, from left to right: John Heselwood Cheshire Community Action, Jennet McCleod Trustee, Chairman Bill Bewley, Joyce Swainbank Trustee, Tony Clare Cheshire CLT Officer, Bob Bryden Trustee.

Four years ago a group of ordinary Keswick residents got together to discuss the shortage of local affordable homes in their town. Amazingly in October those same people will complete an 11 home scheme of affordable homes worth around £1.2m to benefit their town. The group formed as a result of a **Churches Together** consultation and invited **Community Land Trust (CLT)** Officer **Andy Lloyd** from **Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT)** to advise them on setting up a trust for Keswick. This was the beginning of **Keswick Community Housing Trust (KCHT)**. Andy says he has been very proud to work with such determined volunteers, helping them produce a business plan, access funding from the **CLT Network** and the **Homes and Communities Agency**, engage with the **Cumberland Building Society**, and procure project management from **Impact Housing Association**. The Trustees made all the decisions and with professional support from **Day Cummins architects**, **Donleys QS** and **Atkinsons Construction** have achieved a development of high quality, energy efficient and very affordable homes for local people - and before the dust has even settled they already plan to develop more homes on the CLT model. The trustees are passionate about housing and justly proud of their first energy efficient, very high quality development at **The Hopes**. They have also shown great imagination by successfully raising £60,000 towards the cost of the scheme from their own community via a share issue.

KCHT also wants to help other communities who may see advantages in locally owned affordable homes. **Chairman Bill Bewley** says “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. On the 17th and 18th of September, with **Andy at CRHT**, we’re offering tours of the scheme while the buzz of construction is still in the **air!**”

If you'd like to join one of these tours just email **Andy Lloyd** at **CRHT**: andy@crht.org.uk

"See It and Believe It" grants are available from the CLT Network towards the cost of travel for community groups. Contact Hannah Fleetwood: Hannah.Fleetwood@housing.org.uk Tel. **020 7067 1039**

So what else is special about Community Land Trusts? Quite a few things Andy points out. "CLTs offer choices for communities. They can create good support because they are community owned and prioritise local need. They also strive to provide local affordability and value for money. For instance KCHT is selling 5 shared ownership homes but will not charge rent on top of purchaser's mortgages. CLTs protect against loss of precious affordable homes through 'right to buy' thus preserving homes for future generations and - importantly in these times - they can eventually generate **long term re-investment income** which could be used for things like more homes, a **local mini-bus** or **village hall costs**. CLTs can also be versatile developing other useful assets like **allotments, shops or a community pub** as in **Crosby Ravensworth**. CLTs fit perfectly with the governments drive to promote **Community Led Development**, and are written into the strategy and funded by some **Local Enterprise Partnerships**."

Staff at **CRHT** recently provided training for staff at **Cheshire Community Action** who wanted to learn about innovative work supporting the development of **CLTs** in Cumbria. The new CLT Team from Cheshire spent most of the day with Andy to learn how **KCHT** got started, negotiated a site with **Carlisle Diocese**, accessed funding and finance (including the share issue), and assembled a professional team. This was followed by a visit to the **The Hopes** site in Keswick. **Tony Clare**, the new **CLT Officer for Cheshire** said "For inspiration, there is no substitute for seeing a project in action. It was amazing to see how communities had responded proactively to the housing issue in their own area. The knowledge we have gleaned will be invaluable as we support communities in Cheshire to develop CLTs." And added "CLTs present a great opportunity for communities to take control over their own housing issues. It was incredibly beneficial to learn directly from practitioners and those who have already developed successful community led housing projects".

ENDS

Info for editors:

1. Community Land Trusts are non-profit, community owned organisations run by volunteers, which provide permanently affordable housing for local people and can provide other community-owned assets such as workspaces, pubs and shops.
2. Keswick Community Housing Trust (KCHT) is a CLT registered with the Financial Services Authority as an Industrial and Provident Society (No 31141R).
3. Cumbria Rural Housing Trust is a charity which researches the housing need in rural areas of Cumbria and campaigns for affordable housing to be provided where it is needed: www.crht.org.uk
4. Cheshire Community Action (CCA) is an independent charity which is set up to encourage and develop sustainable and vibrant rural communities where people want to live and work.
5. There are currently 150 CLTs in England developing over 400 affordable homes.
6. The majority of CLTs are rural and small scale but there is an increasing growth in urban CLTs.
7. The National CLT Network provided grants and technical resources for KCHT: www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk

8. The Homes and Communities Agency provided Community Led Funding for KCHT:
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/community-led-development>

9. Impact Housing Association provide development support for KCHT:
<http://www.impacthousing.org.uk/>

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