



Hereford Community Land Trust

HEREFORD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (HCLT) – FAQs

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Find HCLT at : www.herefordclt.org.uk
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A. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS – IN GENERAL

What is a Community Land Trust?

A CLT is a non-profit community-based organisation, run essentially by its members, which acquires and holds land on which the CLT's specified objectives are carried out. Most CLTs develop and own 'permanently affordable' housing, possibly with other assets such as workspaces, open spaces and community facilities, which together meet the needs of the community.

Land is held in perpetuity and once built, properties are protected from fluctuations in land market valuations by a legal 'asset lock' that is a fundamental part of all CLT structures: assets can only ever be sold or developed in a manner which benefits the local community. Should the CLT go out of business, the land has to be passed on to another organisation with similar objectives.

Key Features are....

Community-controlled and community-owned. A CLT is set up by the community and for the community. The members of the CLT control it, and its assets can only be sold or developed in a manner which benefits the local community. If the CLT decides to sell a home, the cash realised is protected by an asset lock and is re-invested into something else that the trust's members believe will benefit the local community.

Open democratic structure. People who live and work in the defined local community, including occupiers of the properties that the CLT owns, must have the opportunity to become members of the CLT. The CLT should actively engage members of the community in its work and ensure that they remain engaged in the development and operation of the CLT.

Permanently affordable housing or other assets. A crucial defining feature of a CLT is that it will endeavour to keep the homes or assets 'permanently affordable': the home or asset is not just made affordable for the first buyer, but maintained so in perpetuity.

Not-for-profit. All CLTs are not-for-profit and any profits generated by the CLT cannot be paid by way of dividend or otherwise to its members but must be used to further the community's interests.

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Long-term stewardship. A CLT does not withdraw when a home is sold or let but has a long-term role in stewarding the homes. In some cases, the CLT will remain the landlord or will retain an element of unsold equity.

Recognised by....

In the UK, having been statutorily defined in the 2008 Housing & Regeneration Act there are now over 225 CLTs, increasingly recognised at local authority and government level as an important vehicle for delivering affordable housing. The National CLT Network provides a supportive umbrella with regular workshops, conferences, case studies and advice. CLTs are also common throughout North America, where they grew out of the civil rights movement during the 1970s.

B. HEREFORD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (HCLT)

BECOMING A MEMBER...

Why Join?

Someone may wish to support provision of affordable housing in the Hereford area as a matter of principle, or may want affordable housing for themselves or for people they know. They may have an interest in the built environment and wish to get involved with a lively and co-operative group of people aiming to establish something better than profit-driven 'dormitory' development. Or they may feel that housing nationally is in crisis and would like to help see the problem addressed locally through community-led approaches.

Whatever the motivations, we encourage those who meet the membership criteria (see below) to join HCLT, so the group can benefit from their ideas and skills, and can demonstrate widespread community support.

Who Can Join?

Anyone who lives, works (paid or unpaid) or studies in Hereford, or lives elsewhere but is actively involved in Hereford community events, and is aged 16 or over, is welcome to become a Full Member of HCLT on condition that they support its stated aims and values, permit us to use contact details, and pay a one-off fee of £5. Or, if you live, work, or study elsewhere in Herefordshire you can join in the same way, as a County Member (without voting rights).

Want to Help?

We are open to all offers of support and expertise including: attendance at open meetings, participation in a Team Group and/or the Board, providing IT/social-network support, developing publicity materials, campaigning, help of all kinds before during and after public events, et al. Please see 'How to Contact HCLT' below.

HCLT'S MISSION...

Why set up a CLT in Hereford?

The primary aim of Hereford CLT is to provide genuinely and permanently affordable homes for local people who cannot afford open market (commercially-built) housing. Its purposes can also include preservation of existing buildings, management of open spaces and creation of business and employment.

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In Herefordshire, the Local Plan (Core Strategy) states that the county's development needs to 2031 include 16,500 new homes. 6,500 of these will be built in Hereford city, so that it becomes 'home to innovative design and sustainable construction.... [with] residential and employment areas integrated into the existing urban fabric and surrounding countryside.' Furthermore, the economic development plans of both the county and the Local Enterprise Partnership place great emphasis on the need for 'housing-led economic recovery'.

We are setting up HCLT to create 'exemplar community-led housing' in the Hereford area for three principal reasons.

- We believe that much new housing will otherwise be built by large companies to a standard 'dormitory' style, with minimum consideration for sustainability and low levels of affordable provision. Some will not go to local people and much may well end up sold onto the private market within 10 years, thus in a number of ways failing to meet the long-term needs of local people for sustainable housing.
- Places where local people have to move away because they cannot afford to buy or rent are unlikely to be sustainable as real communities, and as commercial housing development often neglects the necessary ingredients for creating healthy, balanced communities, we believe there will also be a shortfall in addressing local demographic, health and social needs.
- If housing construction is left to market forces, we expect there will be little local-sourcing of the required design, materials, equipment, skills and labour, thus missing an important opportunity to help create a thriving, resilient local economy.

We believe that through community-led design and construction, and community ownership of housing, something much better can be achieved: durable high-quality housing which is genuinely sustainable and permanently affordable, along with needed community facilities and open spaces, benefitting both local communities and the local economy. This is because:

- CLTs are locally driven, controlled and democratically accountable.
- CLTs have shown they can meet local housing need even in areas with high house prices.
- CLTs, by retaining an equity share in each property, provide housing that is permanently affordable, benefitting many generations of residents.
- CLTs create valuable future assets for the community.
- CLTs genuinely empower local communities, making them part of the vision and solution for their local area.

What exactly is HCLT's Mission?

Our central mission is to provide low-cost, high-quality homes for sale or rent to local people in the Hereford area and surrounds. Following pathways developed by CLTs elsewhere, our aim is for these to be designed with community input to be energy-efficient and low-carbon, built with locally sourced materials and skills in a sustainable setting that includes food production, renewable energy, waste management, and all that is necessary for a healthy, balanced community. Clearly, for homes to be affordable compromises in some areas may have to be considered.

The intention is to provide as many units as possible that are genuinely affordable - to buy or rent or some combination of the two - and also to live in. This will almost certainly entail building some homes for market sale so as to help cross-subsidise any development. We anticipate there will be scope for self-build or self-finish options, and for providing or managing community facilities such as open spaces and allotments. All assets will be retained in community ownership in perpetuity.

We envisage that an initial project of a single-figure number of units would lead onto a further project(s) with larger numbers up to 100, some of these possibly on the Three Elms

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strategic site on Hereford's northwest boundary - if that receives planning permission to go ahead. HCLT has already been in discussions with the landowners and the local authority planners who have both seen positive potential. HCLT would be interested to work in partnership with other organisations such as a housing association.

We are interested to identify any suitable pieces of land for the Land Trust. We would like to be informed of any suitable piece of land which could be donated or for which we would have to pay.

Whatever we build and wherever, the project will be designed as an exemplar for how local people can develop sustainable housing in a way that benefits the community and the local economy long-term, in the expectation that other communities will then copy and improve on this.

HCLT'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE...

All CLTs are locally driven, controlled and democratically accountable. They have a membership that is open to all who live or work in the defined community, including occupiers of the properties that the Trust owns. The members elect a volunteer board to run the trust on their behalf on a day to day basis. Usually, the board comprises a balanced mix of supportive local residents together with people from the wider area who have useful skills to offer, and additional stakeholders who preserve the integrity of the trust.

Since July 2017 HCLT has been registered with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Community Benefit Society (#7614) as amongst other things this will enable us to issue shares in due course. The society's set of rules (constitution) is available to anyone on request. HCLT is also a member of the National Community Land Trust Network (<http://communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>) which has provided startup support and expert advice.

HCLT has a Board of about 6 to 8 people including Chair, Secretary and Treasurer which meets about monthly. All Board members give their time voluntary and unpaid.

In March 2018 HCLT obtained a Community Housing Fund Start-up Grant of £9,600 from Herefordshire Council to fund our 'Building Momentum' project running to the end of the year. A paid part-time Project Manager has been appointed.

Open meetings of HCLT are held in Hereford about quarterly, for members and anyone interested.

We also have six Working Teams which anyone can join, working to further develop our aims in relation to: affordability; design for sustainability; hunting for sites; self build/self-finish; co-housing (for groups wishing to share some facilities); and for sale.

How will HCLT allocate the homes it builds?

As part of its organisational and project development, HCLT will formulate an allocations policy agreed by the membership. Allocations policy will favour local people subject to criteria to be decided. Being a member of HCLT will be taken into account in any such policy but will be only one factor among others and does not confer a right or priority to be housed.

CONTACTING HCLT...

Email : herefordclt@gmail.com

Phone : Secretary Nick Sherwood on 01432 830204 / 07957 348885.

Web : www.herefordclt.org.uk

Social media : Facebook : www.facebook.com/HerefordCLT Visit and like our page!