

TCLT

PROVIDING GENUINELY
AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR THE
LOCAL COMMUNITY



TENTERDEN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Bulletin - April 2020

Introduction

This is a strange time for all of us. We had hoped to let you have news of the first Annual General Meeting of TCLT, but clearly for the time being this cannot take place. The Board hope that you all stay well and safe. Our thoughts are with those who are suffering in so many different ways at the moment.

This bulletin contains news on various topics and an important consultation with members. Please read the draft policy in that consultation and let the Board have your views. It is a controversial topic and we want to know what our members think.

Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey for Tenterden was due to finish on the 2nd April 2020. Due to the present extraordinary circumstances, the completion period has been extended and surveys can still be returned now. If you have not completed the survey and it applies to you, please do complete it as soon as you can. If you know people to whom it may apply, check with them that they have completed it too. If you need a new form, please tell us.

Return completed surveys to Action for Communities in Rural Kent using the Freepost envelope already provided. If you do not have that, you can drop the form in an envelope to us at Bells House, Bells Lane, Tenterden or scan and email it to info@ruralkent.org.uk

The Community Housing Fund

Some of you may have seen my repost on the TCLT Facebook page of a post from the National CLT Network giving the disappointing news that the budget had not indicated an extension to the Community Housing Fund. This Fund provided invaluable support to bodies such as ours. I mentioned in my post that we would continue to lobby and I am pleased to say we have the firm support of Damian Green MP. He got in touch with the Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher MP from which we gather the minister believes in the significant potential for the community -led housing sector to meet housing need across

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England, but also that spending allocations are to be considered in the forthcoming Budget and Spending Review.

Given the current Government spending need, there will obviously be fierce competition, but at least all is not lost. We are grateful to Mr Green for his continuing efforts.

Updated Kent and Medway Housing Strategy

The Board submitted a consultation response to this draft Strategy and were disappointed that community-led housing was not taken up and explicitly encouraged in the revised draft. I wrote and made our disappointment clear.

I received an apologetic response saying that although community-led housing was not referenced explicitly as a key objective within the Strategy document, local authorities and their partners will raise awareness and they will be encouraged to consider opportunities which are presented to them. I think there is still some way to go to persuade housing professionals that they should proactively engage with this burgeoning local movement.

We will investigate with Ashford Borough Council's Planning and Housing Departments what policies the council can introduce to encourage CLTs generally.

Consultation on TCLT Policy to engage with developers and landowners

Informally, possible sites have been mentioned to us by landowners. We also gather there is a possibility there might be a reference to TCLT in the s106 Planning Obligation relating to Limes land. This is a document that would sit alongside any planning permission and would regulate, amongst other things, the affordable housing element of the development.

The Board are conscious of how controversial that planning application is and that the Town Council, with significant public support, have asked Ashford Borough Council to reject it. Given what we have read in the application documents the Board are sceptical as to how truly affordable the proposed affordable housing may be, rather like TENT1A has proved to be a disappointment to so many in the community.

The Board feels it must have the ability to talk to landowners and developers, to establish whether sites are available, and if so, on what terms. We appreciate in relation to Limes Land, that may be unpopular in some quarters, but if that site receives planning permission, then however unpopular that may be, seeking to secure some benefit for the people of Tenterden in the long term, will be important. We would like to emphasise; this is not to be taken as any endorsement of the planning application.

To that end the Board would like to consult the membership on the accompanying policy which will provide a basis for these discussions.

Please send any comments to us by Monday, 11th May 2020.

Mark Ellender - Chairman of the TCLT Board

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