



Haslemere Community Land Trust Autumn 2020 Newsletter

As we bid farewell to a summer of staycations and trepidations and continue our emergence from the virus lockdown, we are pleased to offer this update on Haslemere CLT's activities and plans. We would like to pay tribute to all the local officials, care workers and volunteers who have helped carry the community thus far though this year of trial.

Before the outbreak put a stop to such gatherings, we attended a rewarding and well-attended conference on Surrey's housing crisis in Dorking, organised by Surrey Community Action. "Be part of the solution" was the theme, and the excellent speakers and emergent discussions matched the aspiration. The South Norfolk MP Richard Bacon, Alison Ward of Community Led Homes & Wessex Community Assets, and Paul Milton from the countryside charity CPRE usefully and entertainingly addressed the issues and took questions.

Most inspirational for attendees from housing associations, councils, community groups and elsewhere was Nicholas Boys Smith of Create Streets, the prestigious research institute that advises community groups and councils on planning and developing housing that matches how people want to live. He posed the question "can we feel good about development?", and then answered it resoundingly in the affirmative.

Nicholas was also co-chairman of the government's Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, which reported recently highlighting the role that the community can take in helping to design new developments. We were so taken with the inclusive and pro-active Create Streets approach that we have asked them to work with us on some public workshops and consultation as soon as lockdown allows.

Talking of consultation, you will be aware that the Town Council and Haslemere Vision have been inviting comments on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan - and doubtless some of you will have been responding. The CLT also responded, of course, congratulating those responsible for the work, particularly relating to affordable housing, but requesting emphasis be placed on genuine affordability linked to local incomes. We also asked for clarification in the Plan that our CLT is the only one to whom developers may turn when considering their affordable housing - a particularly important point central to our relationship with members and the wider community. While Haslemere Community Land Trust remains registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) with the object of pursuing affordable housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the FCA cannot register another one.

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Building in the community, for the community, by the community



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While there is only one CLT in town, it is always open to change. You are not stuck with board members if you don't like our direction of travel - just vote in a new team. In the end you, our members, control the CLT and are ultimately responsible for its stewardship. That is one of the main reasons why the Plan area would never need another CLT: our own, by its very nature, is perpetually in the hands of the community.

Our submission went on to thank Haslemere Vision and its then leader Stewart Brown for the inspiration and help provided in founding the CLT in 2016, and we concluded by praising the vision and clarity of this comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan. It is a blueprint that points the way towards a bright future for Haslemere - and we are ready and able to play our part. The full text of the CLT's submission is on the website (see below).

On 6th August the government published a White Paper called Planning for the Future, a claimed blueprint for an overhaul of the planning system "to streamline and modernise the process". We shall be studying this, with particular emphasis on the implications for affordable housing.

Our AGM is scheduled for Thursday 22nd October at 8pm and - because of virus restrictions - we will be conducting it via Zoom. If you would like to "attend", please email finance@haslemereclt.org.uk for details.

Have a great autumn - stay safe, watch this space and keep in touch via the contact details below.

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