

# CHAPTER 2

## Starting out

### CASE STUDY East London CLT

#### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.2 First steps

#### 2.3 Technical advice and support

#### 2.4 Engaging the community

#### 2.5 Engaging key partners

**‘Community is the  
first word of a CLT  
and the most  
important word’**

Bill Bewley, Chair, Keswick CLT

# CASE STUDY

## Starting out: East London CLT

In 2006 and 2007, at LONDON CITIZENS' assemblies across London, members voted to make affordable housing a chief focus of LONDON CITIZENS' community organising efforts through to the 2012 Olympics and beyond. This led to the creation of East London CLT. When the CLT started back in 2007, its initial steering group set out their hopes for the years ahead. And immediately a clear and overlapping set of interests emerged: a lack of affordable housing to buy, and a desire to strengthen an already active local community by facilitating its involvement in planning decisions and place management. Local residents wanted to remain in their community, to know their neighbours and to take responsibility for the state of their local environment.



East London CLT

Subsequently, East London CLT set itself the overarching aim of 'Revitalising Communities through the Democratic Stewardship of Land', beneath which was written "Affordable homes: designed, owned and managed by the local community". This has become the focus of East London CLT.

East London CLT is a not-for-profit Industrial and Provident Society, with membership open to anyone who lives and works in east London. Shares in the East London Community Land Trust cost just £1, and to ensure parity and fairness amongst members voting is on a "one member one vote" basis. Today, they have over 1000 members.

Since electing its first Board of Trustees in 2007, East London CLT has gained international attention with their campaigns to develop the former St Clement's Hospital site in Bow.

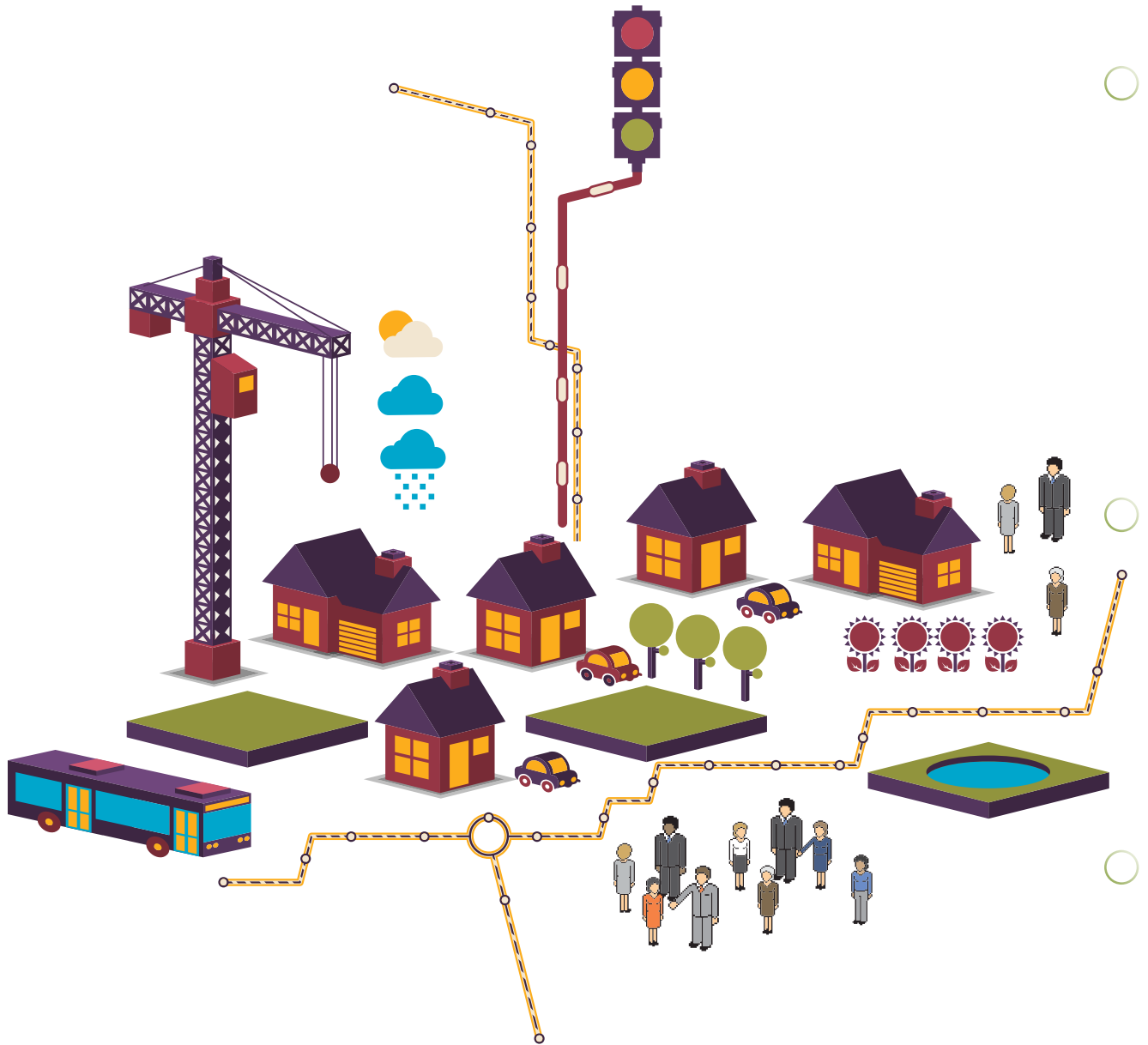
St. Clement's Hospital, on the Bow Road in east London, was originally built as a workhouse for the poor in 1849. A focal point in the local community for over 150 years, it famously served as a general hospital and then a site for people with mental ill health. Ownership was transferred from the NHS to what is now the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) when it closed in 2005.

In September 2009, a tour of the site was organised and attended by over 100 members of the local community, during which they discussed its history, its importance as a social institution within the local area and their

aspirations for its future use as family-sized, affordable housing for local people. This formed the base for the public launch of the community partnership's intention to acquire the site.

In 2011, when the site was put on the open market, East London CLT put in a bid with a development partner. Although their joint bid was unsuccessful, the CLT set about negotiations with the selected developer and, on 16 July 2012, it was announced that East London CLT will work with Galliford Try and Peabody Trust to redevelop the former hospital site and become London's first urban CLT. The CLT will hold the freehold of the entire site and own all the 'affordable for sale' homes.

The Trust has further plans to bid for land on the Olympic Legacy Park site, learning from the St Clement's process. Their clear goal is to become an established part of the housing process in east London, the housing sector across the capital and the political discourse around housing by 2017.



## 2.1 Introduction

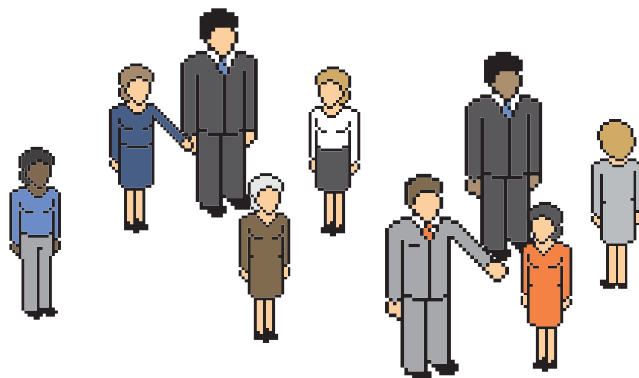
Community Land Trusts can provide long-term solutions to meet a variety of local needs. These needs may be the provision of affordable housing, the design and care of public spaces, support for the development of social and community enterprises, or part of wider community organising and community capacity building endeavours. Equally, CLTs can be started and set-up by a whole host of different bodies, each with a different initial purpose – from a group of active people or a local parish council, to housing sector advocates and professionals, and to broad-based community organisers and even property developers and municipal bodies. And while there is a very clear and definite set of criteria that a CLT must meet as set out in Section 1.2, it is part of the strength of the model that its practices and specific objectives will vary from area to area, place to place, and person to person.

The underlying principle of a CLT is that it aims to serve community interests at the same time as it serves individual interests – the benefits to one do not outweigh the benefits to the other. A CLT may build some affordable homes, for example, that house individuals on modest incomes, who otherwise might not be able to afford to remain to live and work in that community, shop in the local shops, send their children to the local school, and contribute to the overall stability and sustainability of the wider community.

There are a number of catalysts that spur the setting up of CLTs, among them:

- **recognised need and planned development** – in North Devon the High Bickington Community Property Trust was established to fulfil a holistic village plan to support a sustainable future, including provision of housing and workspace as well as health, educational and recreational facilities and services;
- **a threat** – a lack of affordable housing for their children, with the risk of them moving away, and the closure of the local pub in a remote village in Cumbria, inspired the development of the Lyvennet CLT and its subsidiary bodies to tackle these and other local issues;
- **an opportunity** – the proposed sale of a former military barracks in Wiltshire led to the formation of the Wilton CLT to pursue a vision of sustainable living on the site.

A CLT may acquire land and buildings through purchase, donation, or asset transfer and then develop it for a wide range of uses, by itself or in partnership. The types and methods of development that can occur on land that is owned by a CLT are limitless. How the CLT model achieves these things is explored in later chapters.



## 2.2 First steps

The concept of a CLT is relatively new in the UK. For a community group aspiring to set up a CLT it is best to avoid getting hung up on the technicalities. It is better to start by gathering a group of like-minded people from within the community, with the range of skills that can help meet the defined local need and make a potential CLT proactive, credible and effective.

Some basic steps for a community group just getting going follow below.

### Form a steering group

The first step is to form some sort of steering group. Getting the right people involved in a steering group is important. Who will help to get things moving and also give the group credibility? Who is affected by, sympathetic to, or influential in what is being planned?

A group of six people is a good number to start with to ensure that there is always someone to turn to and, equally importantly, a basis upon which to assign different tasks and drive the project forward. It is worth doing an initial skills audit to identify any gaps in knowledge or expertise that the group may need to realise their aims, and then to recruit people accordingly. As a steering group develops into a more formal CLT board, it should consider which other people or organisations it should draw in, either as full or coopted board members, or to act as advisors. Key roles that will need to be filled when the CLT is registered as a legal entity will be a Chair and a Company Secretary.

Finding advocates, the community leaders who bring people with them, is important. Seek out those who are listened to within the community and local organisations, who are respected and who have the ability to motivate others to ‘turn

out’ and take on different responsibilities. As it develops and grows, these are the leaders that a CLT will need to draw into its wider membership.

There may be many volunteers who wish to be involved, but have no desire to sit on any kind of committee. Their enthusiasm and effort can be deployed through various working groups, on particular projects or to fulfil different functions. The more people who can be effectively involved the better. There is a separate section, **‘Engaging with the Community’**, with advice on how to involve the community in the CLT’s development and plans.

The size and longevity of the steering group will vary from organisation to organisation. It may be for just a few months, or run to years. In the case of East London CLT, featured in the case study, a ‘campaign group’ was formed to guide the CLT’s initial efforts, and existed from 2003-2007 before the CLT was legally constituted.

### Define a clear purpose

The first task of the steering group is to develop a shared vision of the proposed CLT’s core purpose and how it will go about fulfilling it. Often a good place to start is to ask why each person has decided to become involved, and what their gut feeling is to why a CLT might be a worthwhile option: “I want my kids to be able to afford to live locally”; “I want the pub to stay in the village even though the brewery may pull out”; or “The community needs to provide more for key/middle-income workers to keep them here”. From this, work towards an overarching vision for the CLT – a clearly worded, simple statement that outlines the underlying purpose of the CLT.



A vision statement is a very effective tool for explaining why the CLT is there, and providing a neat introduction to what is also likely to be a wide ranging and ambitious undertaking.

Above all, a clear vision is needed to communicate the CLT's purpose to the wider community, to capture their imagination and enthusiasm, and to other stakeholders who will need to be behind the CLT for it to succeed.

The vision may be a simple statement:

**“To create a community garden and grow healthy local food”**

**“To develop affordable housing to enable young families to live and work in our village and make our community more sustainable”**

Whatever the scope of a CLT, what it does and who will be the intended beneficiaries

will influence future decisions regarding legal incorporation, possible charitable registration, and sources of funding.

## Set some goals

There is a degree of truth in the philosophy that states you achieve that which you are able to visualise yourself doing: Clive Woodward's 2003 Rugby World Cup winning England side spent hours each day going through the mental anticipation of performing well under pressure, how set plays would pan out, and the eventual process and feeling of winning. While such an extreme is not quite necessary here, to maintain focus, CLTs should have a staggered or staged set of goals, however simple. It is highly recommendable to establish a staggered or staged set of goals, however simple, for a new CLT as early as possible.

### Examples of basic goals (These timescales will vary from group to group)

<b>12 months from now we will</b>	Have grown relationships among steering group members and be a fully operating team, which responds to and initiates work with each other.
<b>3 months from now we will</b>	Stage a public meeting to inform the community of our plans and gain their endorsement to explore the formation of a CLT
<b>6 months from now we will</b>	Establish a number of working groups to undertake different tasks, for example, establishing the best legal structure for our CLT, planning how we will involve the wider community, apply for funding for a community engagement programme
<b>9 months from now we will</b>	Report back to the community on our findings and seek their agreement to form a CLT. Have 20 new people signed up to become members of the CLT volunteer to help or join a working group
<b>1 year from now we will</b>	Have an interim CLT board in place and have developed good relationships with key partners
<b>18 months from now we will</b>	Have our CLT registered as a legal entity, and be focusing on the interesting bits. Have 50 new members signed up
<b>3 years from now we will</b>	Start work on site. Have 5% of eligible community as CLT members.
<b>5 years from now we will</b>	Own and manage 20 affordable homes, and have a network of footpaths and cycleways established. Have 15% of eligible community as CLT members.

Above all else, it is the sense of purpose and belief that a long term plan instils, combined with the reassuring and focusing practice of meeting short to medium term goals that makes this process so worthwhile. It inspires a 'big picture' whilst providing initial steps to get there. It also serves well as a monitoring tool further down the road.

There is more information on how to set up a CLT in **Chapter 4 Forming a CLT**, including governance and legal structures, and on feasibility and business planning in **Chapter 5 Making it stack up**.

## Open a bank account and start raising funds



Any organisation needs some level of income to cover its costs at start up, even if it is only enough to buy printer cartridges and paper. As soon as the steering group or CLT has a name, it should open up a bank account in that name so that it can begin to bank money. It is very important that the name of the organisation and the bank account match. There are a number of sources of funding for CLTs:

- 1 Local fundraising (parish council grants, sponsored events, small tin donations etc.)
- 2 Local sponsorship and larger donations (business, pro bono support etc.)
- 3 Regional organisations (councils, foundations, Local Enterprise Partnerships etc.)
- 4 National support organisations (e.g. the National CLT Network – CLT Fund)
- 5 Charitable trusts and foundations (e.g. Tudor Trust, local Community Foundations)
- 6 National Lottery and Government grants (e.g. Awards for All)

Income will be either unrestricted; it can be spent at the applicant organisation's discretion (generally funded by 1, 2 & 3) or restricted; for specific projects and activities such as a series of workshops (generally funded by 4, 5 & 6). It is very difficult to generate income for core

(running) costs such as rental of work space, administration, salaries, volunteer expenses and general equipment.

It is advisable to make sure that overheads are funded through the organisation's own long term income generation, for example, income from rents or services.

The sort of detail grant givers may seek, depending on the size of grant required, is:

- Documented evidence of need
- Evidence of previously successful projects/ activities
- A formal constitution or clear legal structure and organisational policies and governance in place
- Clear and achievable objectives and potential outcomes
- Evidence that the project or organisation strictly fits that specific funder's criteria
- Match funding and evidence of long term sustainability
- Clear and concise reporting (project and financial) and updating
- Details of bank account

Funders may also like support to be acknowledged in the form of logos etc. on all project material.

Most funds and funders have timetabled deadlines and then take between 6 weeks and 3-4 months to reach a decision on allocation of funds. Therefore it is imperative that any funding programme is put into place as quickly as possible.

## Tell the story

There is nothing like a good story, particularly about something or somewhere that people can identify with to draw attention to a cause.

To use the example of the East London Community Land Trust, between 2003 and 2007 the original campaign group made little to no significant progress. At this time it existed as a pan-London campaign promoting the CLT concept, but not on



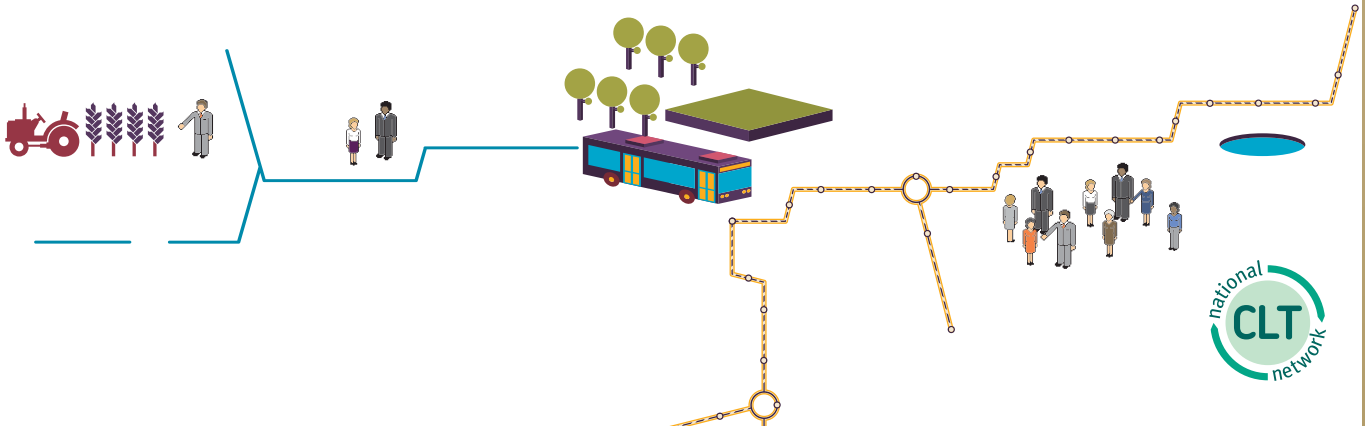
behalf of any particular group, beneficiaries or responsible party. It was, in effect, a lobby that gathered periodically – each time with different members – to cry at City Hall, “give us some land!” The response, “What land? And who are we giving it to?”, was not an unreasonable one on the part of the municipal body.

However, with the formation of East London CLT in 2007, and the identification by its members soon after of the St Clements Hospital site in Bow as its preferred location for London’s first ever CLT, the personal testimony, the necessary stakeholders, the potential for community-led design, the funding requirements and a whole

host of other considerations were more easily overcome. Rather than just saying “Londoners need affordable housing and a CLT could provide it”, they could now say “This is Julie. Her three kids aged 16, 12 and 9 all live in the same small room. She earns decent money as a teacher but the average house price in her neighbourhood is £385,000. The school doesn’t want to lose her. She doesn’t want to leave her community. And there is a big empty, government-owned building sitting empty just three doors down that provides an incredible opportunity to right this”.



Engaging the whole community at East London CLT. Courtesy of East London CLT



## 2.3 Technical advice and support

A CLT scheme may not be something for which there is an established series of local policies, and so securing the support of council officers, local politicians, development partners and experienced enablers for the principles underlying the proposal will help to secure the successive agreements that will be needed. Making contact with key people early on is advisable.

The local planning authority will need to be involved in and give their consent to a scheme, as explained in **Chapter 7: Land and planning**. Seeking the support and advice of the local councillor might be a good place to start. There may be policies which have to be amended if CLTs are not already part of council policy and the officers may be able to do no more than interpret existing policy. Support may also come from parts of the authority concerned with community development or regeneration if the CLT might be seen as achieving outcomes which go beyond affordable housing.

In addition, at several points it will be advantageous – even necessary – to get help from professionals who have skills or information beyond the immediate resource base of the CLT. Some professionals may be willing to do some initial work at no cost in anticipation of payment when the project comes to fruition. The National CLT Network will be able to suggest sources of help.

### The National CLT Network

The National CLT Network promotes and supports the work of CLTs and its members across England. The Network operates in three main areas:

- **Resources and training** – The Network provides resources and best practice for CLTs, including model policies and toolkits. The Network also provides training and events for CLT practitioners and those who work with CLTs.
- **Advice and support** – The Network provides advice to communities, manages the CLT Fund and runs a peer to peer learning programme ‘See it and Believe it’.
- **Lobbying and influencing** – The Network works with Government and key partners to create the right funding, regulatory and policy environment for CLTs to grow and flourish.

### Recent CLT publications

#### **Proof of Concept Community Land Trusts**

(Dr. Bob Paterson and Prof. Karl Dayson, Community Finance Solutions, January 2012)

This records the development of the CLT movement and demonstrates how twelve communities have been able to practically implement the CLT model.

#### **Trust and association: Partnerships between Community Land Trusts and housing**

**associations** (National CLT Network July 2011)

This guide sets out the experiences of early CLTs and housing association partnerships and points out the way for others who may wish to follow or improve upon them.

#### **Community Land Trusts in a Nutshell**

(National CLT Network 2011) This provides a concise introduction to CLTs for beginners. It outlines what a CLT is, the benefits of a CLT and how it operates, including what support and funding is available.

These can all be downloaded from [www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/resources/publications](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/resources/publications)

## The CLT Fund

The CLT Fund was established in 2008 to assist in the development of CLTs and is funded by the Tudor Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Charities Aid Foundation and the Nationwide Foundation. The CLT Fund has both a Feasibility Fund and a Technical Assistance Fund for fledgling CLTs. This is managed by the National CLT Network.

The Feasibility Fund provides one day of consultancy support and guidance from an expert on CLTs. This initial ‘scoping day’ will be used primarily to develop a concept note for the community group.

The Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) provides grants of up to £5,000 to emerging CLTs to develop the initial ideas into a comprehensive business plan that is ‘investment ready’.

For more information about the fund and how to apply please visit [www.cltfund.org.uk](http://www.cltfund.org.uk)



## Umbrella CLTs in England

There are a number of umbrella CLTs or sub-regional support bodies that provide technical advice and support to a CLT. They offer bespoke one-to-one support to CLTs in their areas. The sort of help available to CLTs includes:

- Listening to ideas and advising on how best to take them forward
- Providing information and arranging links with existing successful community-led projects
- Guiding groups through the process of setting up a CLT
- Registering a CLT as a legal entity
- Advising on how to conduct feasibility studies, create a business plan and put together the finances
- Acting as a development agent to develop a site (often on a fee paying basis)
- Brokering partnerships with organisations such as housing associations and developers
- Signposting to others who can help make projects happen

Support is provided free of charge in the early stages of a new CLT’s formation, but as the level of support and complexity of projects increases, some charges are usually applied. The CLT Fund can support some of these.



The ten steps to a successful steering group, National CLT Network training event, Gateshead

## Regional support bodies

### East Anglia

#### **Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk**

Foundation East: [www.clteast.org](http://www.clteast.org)

Contact: *Phil Rose, CLT Development Manager, [phil.rose@foundationeast.org](mailto:phil.rose@foundationeast.org) or 01284 757771*

### East Midlands

#### **Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northants and Rutland**

Lincolnshire CLT

Contact: *John Mather, CLT Facilitator, [johnm@lclt.co.uk](mailto:johnm@lclt.co.uk) or 01790 755754*

### North West

#### **Cumbria**

Cumbria CLT project: [www.crht.org.uk](http://www.crht.org.uk)

Contact: *Andy Lloyd, CLT Project Officer, [andy@crht.org.uk](mailto:andy@crht.org.uk) or 01768 210265*

### South West

#### **Cornwall**

Cornwall CLT

Contact: *Alan Fox, Director Cornwall CLT: [alan@crha.org.uk](mailto:alan@crha.org.uk) or tel 01208 892005*

For more information on Cornwall CLT's work please see the report 'Delivering Assets and Homes with Communities: the Cornwall Community Land Trust Project' (2010) by Tom Moore and Roger Northcott.

#### **Devon, Dorset and Somerset**

Somerset, Devon and Dorset CLT Project

Contact: *Steve Watson [steve.watson.cltproject@googlemail.com](mailto:steve.watson.cltproject@googlemail.com) or 01749 346954*

#### **Wiltshire**

Wiltshire Community Land Trust [www.wiltshirecommunitylandtrust.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirecommunitylandtrust.org.uk)

Contact: *Rose Seagrief, CLT Manager, [rose@wiltshireclt.org.uk](mailto:rose@wiltshireclt.org.uk) or 01380 850916*

#### **Gloucestershire**

Gloucestershire Land for People Ltd: [www.gloucestershirelandforpeople.coop](http://www.gloucestershirelandforpeople.coop)

Contact: *[info@gloucestershirelandforpeople.coop](mailto:info@gloucestershirelandforpeople.coop) or 08453 457 599*



## 2.4 Engaging the community

Community engagement is the process of involving people in decisions that affect them. It is only by listening to the experiences and ideas of people who live in a community that we can find solutions that truly meet the needs and aspirations of those people and that will make a lasting difference.

### Why do it?

The legal definition of a CLT requires it to be democratically controlled by the community it benefits. This means operating in the interests of the wider local community rather than solely for the CLT's members. Informing the community and involving them in the CLT's development at the earliest stage is vital. Not only will this help gain support for the CLT's vision, but it may lead to greater interest amongst the community and help recruit membership or skills to support the CLT. It may also ease the passage of planning consents for, say, a housing scheme, if people feel they have been fully informed and that their views have been heard and addressed throughout the planning process.



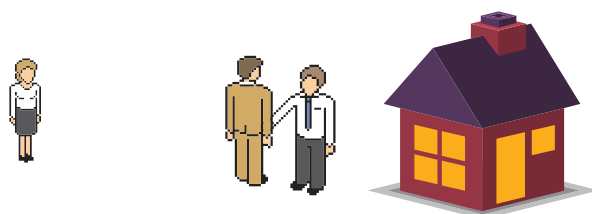
Young people leading the way at Homebaked CLT.

### Ways to do it

The best method to use to engage with the wider community will depend on the reason for making contact. For a CLT, some reasons for engaging with the community might be:

- **Informing** – getting a message across that doesn't require feedback or comment
- **Seeking views and information** – finding out what people think, what their concerns are, getting information about their circumstances
- **Recruitment** – inviting people to volunteer, become members, join a working group
- **Consultation** – provides choice between pre-determined options
- **Participation** – from getting people together simply to meet and to get to know and talk to each other, to discussing views and making decisions together and agreeing a course of action
- **Partnership** – working with other groups and agencies, and acting together to make decisions and carry through the action agreed

The table overleaf lays out some of the methods that can be used in each case, and which are most effective.



## Methods of engaging the community

Method	Informing	Seeking views & information	Recruitment	Consultation	Participation & Partnership
Local press, newsletters, mailshots	✓✓✓	✓	✓		
Leaflets, info sheets, website, texts, TWITTER, social networks	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓		
Questionnaire, surveys, consultation documents		✓✓✓		✓✓✓	
Public meetings, coffee mornings, workshops, seminars, conferences	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓
Exhibitions, open days,	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Focus groups, online discussion groups	✓	✓✓✓		✓✓	✓✓✓

Of course, talking face to face is the very best method. It is relatively easy in smaller communities but more difficult in larger ones. It is likely, though, that all of these methods will be useful at some point during a CLT's development.



Land's End Peninsula CLT planting raspberries. Courtesy of Land's End Peninsula CLT



## Staging an event

Having decided to gather people together, choosing the right kind of event for the proposed audience is important. It will depend on the stage of the project and who needs to be involved.

An **informal** gathering where people can drop in when it suits them, such as a coffee morning or an open day, is often good at the start of a project. At this point awareness-raising is the main aim, and also trying to attract harder to reach members of the community who wouldn't normally attend a more formal event. What is critically important is that everyone knows who has put on the event and why, and what is expected from them as participants.

If there is material on display, or anything to sign up to or comment on, there should be lots of help on hand to guide people to make the best of the occasion. Having brief information leaflets for people to take away may help to spread the word. As with any event, it is recommended to make a record of attendance and to take photographs, to start forming a body of evidence of local interest and support.

Some people prefer more structured or **formal** meetings, particularly busy people with limited

time. If there's a need to seek clear decisions on particular issues, this is probably the best format. It's a good format for reporting back on actions taken and progress made. Make sure that people know the purpose of the meeting in advance, how long it will take, what will be discussed and what decisions will be needed. Keep it brief – don't put up wordy notices, or send out too many papers as they are unlikely to be read, but do prepare and circulate a simple agenda. Record attendance and take notes or minutes that record any decisions taken. If any voting is involved, have a clear voting process in place and independent tellers to verify it.

Meetings, particularly larger ones, can be quite tricky and need to be well managed, to ensure everyone who wishes to has an opportunity to express their views. Sometimes people feel they have to compete to be heard.

The noisy ones often find it hard to listen, because they are bursting to speak, and the quiet ones often give up because they think no one will take any notice anyway, or they will be interrupted, so what's the point. There are some tips on facilitating meetings are provided overleaf under the heading 'Encourage interaction'.

### Barriers that informal meetings can overcome:

- **Age related** – children, young people and some older people will require innovative ways of engagement. It's OK to have fun! Some groups have invited local musicians to play in the background, or provided a crèche and play areas for children.
- **Attitudes** – within your organisation, and of researchers e.g. towards Black and Minority Ethnic or transgendered people; choose people who have empathy as well as objectivity to do the engaging
- **Lack of understanding** – of individual circumstances or a different culture or religious custom
- **Physical barriers** – for disabled people; such as easy access to buildings, requirement of hearing loops in meetings
- **Lack of transport** – provide contact details in publicity information for anyone needing a lift and coordinate lift giving on the day
- **Convenience** – people can drop in when they can
- **Low income** – they may feel that they won't be listened to or can't afford to get there and so choose not to take part; consider offering prizes or expenses

## Planning is everything

Good meetings, formal or informal, are very well planned – they do not just happen. Here are some pointers to planning and running a successful meeting:

- **What is the purpose of the meeting?** – start by thinking what you want to come away with and get agreement on and keep this in mind as you plan the various aspects of the meeting.
- **Have you got the right people coming?** Do you need to do some face-to-face invitations to encourage attendance? Are there some influential local leaders that can be invited who will bring along others with them?
- **Break down the session into parts** with a clear beginning, middle and end – set out at the outset the purpose of the meeting and how you will use the time in the meeting. Structure the time, allotting a realistic amount of time for each task/agenda item, tell the participants how long an item should take or how long they have got if doing a group

exercise, and how long left, e.g. “5 minutes to go!”. Put the timings on the master copy of the agenda for your own purposes and move things along as needed to keep to time, without cutting across valuable discussions if they are proving productive – i.e. be structured but flexible.

- **Start and finish on time** – don’t hang on for stragglers and always finish when you said you would, by maintaining focus.
- **Sum up at the end** – review any actions and who will take them and by when, and make clear the next steps and thank everyone for their contribution.
- **Follow up** – it is important to keep the momentum going and follow up actions agreed at the meeting as quickly as possible, and also to analyse and report any results from any research, to track decisions and publish outcomes.

Evaluating how the meeting went and noting what worked and what didn’t and who made valuable contributions is always a useful exercise.

### Practical tips for successful meetings

**Timing** – consider the best time of day for majority of target audience. Make sure it doesn’t coincide with another event – local or national. Avoid school and summer holidays or religious festivals when many people are away or are focussing on other issues.

**Venue** – find one that is fit for purpose, has parking, is near public transport and that people can access.

**Room layout** – use a layout that is informal or formal and where it is easy to see and hear the speakers. People tend to sit at the back so chairs in a circle with no tables encourages group interaction. Check out any health and safety issues.

**Equipment** – you may want to use digital projectors, screens, microphones, amplifiers, flipcharts, paper and pens.

**Hospitality** – don’t forget tea/biscuits and catering.

**Paperwork** – you’ll need a signing-in sheet, displays, handouts – remember to keep and record everything!

**Personnel** – remember to chair, meet and greet, facilitate and note take. Don’t forget name badges and get the right people there to bring about results.

**Publicity** – you can never do enough, before and after.

## Encourage interaction

The more people get involved in discussions, the more enjoyable the event will be. An interactive session is a good way to kick things off at any event. Ideas build and people get excited and want to participate. Whole events can also be interactive. Plays, rap sessions, games – carefully structured and facilitated sessions all draw out issues and needs that can then be followed up and acted on by the appropriate body. There are some recognised and very successful interactive methods of engaging with communities, such as Action Planning Workshops, Community Planning Weekends, Enquiry by Design, Planning for Real®, and Village/Parish Appraisals. There is a range of useful information about these methods and many other aspects of community engagement available on the Community Planning website at [www.communityplanning.net](http://www.communityplanning.net)

Using different techniques avoids boredom setting in and helps to engage all participants: eliciting contributions by going round the group; breaking into smaller discussion groups; making brief presentations; showing short films. Use flipcharts, post-it notes etc. as appropriate to record ideas – but don't overdo it. If flipcharts are used, make sure a scribe is assigned to record all the key points. Keep and photograph the results, and also type them up afterwards for reporting purposes.

### Tips for facilitating sessions

- Ice-breaking (at the very least, get everyone to introduce themselves)
- Know your facts and state them (avoid jargon)
- Be transparent and honest (if you don't know the answer say so, offer to follow up)
- Listen and acknowledge (you don't have to agree)
- Park issues (record them on a flip chart, agree to continue discussion at end of meeting)
- Get people actively involved in discussions
- Invest in biscuits – food and drink work wonders, take a tea break
- Think in advance about questions to use as prompts to keep things going and get the most out of it
- Bring in people who have not spoken.

Take plenty of time to plan any interactivity. It is good to have at least two people working as a team to do this, so that ideas can be discussed and played to out to get a feel of how it will work on the day. If possible, run it past someone who knows the group/topic but is independent.

On the day, remember to keep things chatty and informal and that you are allowed to have fun!



Residents get their keys to the homes at Worth Matravers, Dorset. Courtesy of Worth Community Property Trust

## 2.5 Engaging key partners

It will be important to acknowledge from the outset that a CLT does not and will not have sovereign status within any community. That is, there will be other groups and organisations in the area with which the CLT may have to engage, particularly if they share a similar focus. This includes the local authority and parish council as well as other non-profit organisations in the area. There may be existing parish and community plans developed by either the local parish council or through community-led planning processes supported by Rural Community Councils. Local Strategic Partnerships, which bring together multiple agencies from the public, private and third sectors, often aim to create and implement local neighbourhood improvement plans containing a vision for future community development.

For any group starting out, it is worth mapping out early on all the different organisations – locally, regionally and nationally – that it may need to work with or influence to achieve its aims.

Knowing and understanding the structures within which the CLT operates and who are the decision makers is important to making progress and ultimately to success. Engaging with these bodies and processes early in a CLT's development will help garner support for the CLT's scheme. This will be helpful in the future and, in addition, will identify the extent to which each group's core purpose dovetails with existing plans. Some useful partnerships could emerge from these discussions, where both parties work towards shared goals.

The table opposite shows how you might record relationships and how they might develop over time.

All bureaucracies and municipal bodies have their structures, both real and formalised, and unwritten and assumed, which govern their decision making procedures. However, so too do all communities, churches, clubs, residents organisations and just about any body of people a CLT might wish to engage with. In mapping out key contacts, finding the people who are influential is important. It may not always be the people with the titles, so seek out the leaders, both of people and opinion. The table opposite might end up with two contact names in it for some organisations – the person with title, through whom it is necessary to work, and the person who will influence the decision that will allow the project to proceed.

Recommended further reading on engaging with stakeholders can be found in “To Have and to Hold” (Lorraine Hart, Asset Transfer Unit, 2010) in Chapter 5: Building support from Stakeholders. This second edition of this excellent publication covers all aspects of asset development for community and social enterprises. It can be downloaded from [www.locality.org.uk/resources/hold](http://www.locality.org.uk/resources/hold)



## Mapping potential partners – an example

Type of organisation	Key agencies, companies, departments	How good is our relationship?	How can we improve the relationship? Now (in next six months): Soon (within year): Later (more than a year):
Local statutory bodies	e.g. The District Council – Housing Department (Head of Housing, J Smith), and all housing enablers, x, y and z	Excellent	<b>No action needed</b>
	e.g. The Parish Council	Poor	<b>Set up a meeting to establish constructive dialogue</b> Maintain regular contact on a long term basis <i>AGM invitations, on-site meetings, events</i>
Local planning mechanisms	e.g. Forum for Community Area Partnership (Chair, G Mills)	Good	<b>Meet to continue and develop exploration of partnership potential</b> Maintain regular contact to establish potential partnership opportunities <i>AGM invitations, on-site meetings, events</i>
Housing associations	e.g. Major regional housing association	Undeveloped	<b>No immediate plans to pursue relationship – no obvious shared vision</b> Keep informed through events & publications <i>AGM invitations</i>
Other local third sector agencies	e.g. Local Rural Community Council (CEO, R Chowdhury)	Excellent	<b>Establish key contacts</b>
Other local public sector agencies	e.g. NHS	Undeveloped	<b>Set up a meeting to communicate recent activity and aspirations</b> Invite on a learning journey to a successful CLT <i>Invite onto CLT board when established</i>
Local private sector	Local Building Society (Manager, B Gates)	Good	<b>No action needed – good shared vision for community led housing delivery</b> Maintain regular contact to establish potential partnership opps on other sites <i>AGM invitations, on-site meetings, events</i>
Regional/national public sector	Homes & Communities Agency (Local Area Officer, M Wilks)	Excellent	<b>No action needed – good shared vision for CLTs</b> Maintain regular contact re informing best practice <i>AGM invitations, on-site meetings, events</i>
Regional/national third sector or private sector	National CLT Network (National Coordinator, C Harrington)	Excellent	<b>No action needed – good shared vision for CLTs</b> Maintain regular contact r.e. informing best practice and sharing progress. Access resources and attend events. <i>AGM invitations, on-site meetings, events</i>



