

Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust
Annual Review
2019-2020

[Plain Text Version](#)

This is PDF document that we expect to be compatible with most assistive technology.

A version of this review, with images and links is also available. If you would like a link to any part of it, please ask.

If it is not accessible to your specific needs, please phone Shelley on 01424 235901.

[Review Content](#)

[Welcome](#)

Welcome to our members, supporters, partners, volunteers and friends.

All year, you've been part of events, workshops, meetings, and working groups with us.

You've given us your time, your opinions, and your experience to benefit our town and the people in it.

This Annual Review looks back on the year that ended March 2020. Every year we take time to look back and reflect, and we usually do this in the company of our members and friends.

We all know March 2020 brought with it huge changes for everyone with the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic. We're learning as we go, trying to find new ways of staying in touch with you.

We still look forward to meeting in person, and celebrating the achievements of our volunteers with real-life parties and activities.

Until that time comes, we want to keep you safe, and offer you this Zine! We've tried to capture the excitement and fun that are part of our face-to-face work.

We've included news, testimonials, loads of photos, videos, and website links. This zine is interactive: so, please take the time to explore, click through on anything that interests you. When you've digested this, then please get in touch with questions, suggestions and your ideas.

[What Is A Community Land Trust?](#)

A community land trust (CLT) is a not-for-profit organisation that is made up of community members. CLTs are a way for communities to build, bring back into life or protect buildings and services that are important to them.

“Projects that CLTs have taken on include building and renovating houses; taking over the running of local pubs and shops; creating play areas and nature walks; and building workspaces.”

- Community Led Homes

We wanted to start our work as a CLT by building 80 affordable homes in the Ore Valley. Heart of Hastings got involved with the site in 2016, when we were invited to the old Power Station. In November 2019, the landowner Seaspaces rejected the bid that we submitted with the Bioregional charity

[How Did We Get To Ore Valley?](#)

In 2010, Marsh Farm in Luton was a troubled estate, with high unemployment but a strong sense of community. Top-down regeneration wasn't solving their problems; they believed that bottom up development could. They invited Jess Steele to help them out, and when Heart of Hastings were asked to take over the old power station site in 2016, Jess in turn invited Marsh Farm to Hastings as the experts on bottom-up development.

What Is Bottom-Up Development?

Connecting people with spaces is a fundamental value of Heart of Hastings CLT.

Our vision is affordable spaces held in community ownership. How people live and work in these places must involve them. Meeting social and care needs, environmental challenges, overcoming exclusion can only happen through the agency of people. This is what we mean when we speak about the power of bottom up development.

Bottom Up Values

Heart of Hastings is part and of the community, with bottom up development at its core, but we are a community benefit society with a governance structure not suited to anarchic decision making. It takes effort to live the values and BUD members are there to remind us of our aims and values. Decisions ratified in the board room will almost certainly have been chewed over in the social spaces between meetings first, but we still have a BUD rep at board meetings, and a BUD member on our board of trustees. This does not preclude differences between viewpoints and the need to understand different perspectives. It makes for a healthy tension that keeps the commitment to bottom up development vibrant.

The BUD Team: Their Perspectives

Heart of Hastings were granted a license to the Old Power Station site in 2016, and we stayed until 2019. In that time the BUD team formed.

They occupied the space, looked after it, and made it wonderful. While they were stewarding it, it was open to dog walkers, and visitors. They built a stage, a pizza oven, a bike workshop, a food garden and ran massive events including: Love Up, Spook up, Speak up, and Power Up.

It hurt to leave, but we shouldn't forget all the good, so we've asked BUD members to share

Abi:

A Good Memory

Being the elf at the Christmas Party (Care Up Ore Valley) and meeting Father Christmas. Santa described himself as a revolutionary trade unionist. In '68 he went to Paris to join the anticapitalist protests. All the events, we fed people, it was packed, and we had to have 2 sittings. There were kids running around and having fun. It was “what can we do for people?” and people came. And- the 3 girls who chopped wood in high heels most weekends. They didn't want the wood, they just wanted to use a huge axe and not be told they couldn't. Sometimes we built them a little fire.

A Challenge

People kicking off occasionally, but people do. BUD meetings “a lot of people shouting over each other that they didn't feel heard.”

A Hope

That the council will recognise the positive, the power of community, and do more to support it.

Anton: Environment And Outreach Steward

A Good Memory

The general, positive response from the public when opening up the site for the community. It was certainly a unique venue to introduce people to, and to give them hope and dreams of projects or events that they may have been considering themselves. I loved showing people how rich the ecology of the site was, and how it could have been developed and enhanced alongside affordable housing for local people. It gave me an opportunity, after my Environmental Studies degree, to carry out relevant surveys and nature walks.

A Challenge

Getting the local authorities to see that an ambitious, innovative idea does not have to be a risk and that it could be a massive advantage to a majority of the local community.

A Hope

That bottom-up projects will receive more support and recognition and will be more prevalent all over in the future.

Bob

A Good Memory

We made a community, and people are still in touch with each other. I wouldn't have made friends with some of you if not for BUD.

A Challenge

We did everything to get the land, and it feels like a betrayal. It's another example of land going for profit not homes, but it was worse because we kept on thinking it would work out, so even the good things were overshadowed.

A Hope

I hope that we can keep the good parts going, and that we get another chance somewhere else.

Cath

A Good Memory

It was so welcoming. I wasn't there at the start, but it felt like I was. There was so much positivity, a "can do" attitude. We felt we could tackle anything. People were not pushed into doing more than they could, but it was inclusive and supportive which helped people develop.

A Challenge

I thought being involved with the interviews for the executive director roles was good. It felt like it might have been outside of some of the BUD teams comfort zone, but, everyone came, and everyone was listened to.

A Hope

I hope the community feeling around local developments will continue. There are plans to build 5 tower blocks on the West Marina bathing pool site. It's not suitable for housing at all, the planned development is really intrusive, and there won't be any affordable housing at all.

Darren

A Good Memory

It was good for peoples' mental health and physical wellbeing. There being things to do, but not telling people what to do. (ed- Darren built amazing seating from pallets).

A Challenge

It was hard to get our message across to the powers that be.

A Hope

Next time they will listen to us.

Justin

A good memory

When we were working together on the stall, (2018 outreach stalls around the town centre and Ore Valley to explain to the public the Ore Valley development plans and seek feedback) interacting with the public. It felt like we were working together really well, and there were so many ideas, and a real sense of excitement, passion coming from the people who stopped and spoke with us. It felt like the team was really solid, like we were all on the same page, because we had that focus, that we were interacting with the public, and, in that moment, it helped us overcome our challenges and disagreements.

A Challenge

What surprised me, was a general lack of interest in what we were doing by “those in power”. I was surprised that people (in authority), didn’t engage with us. We worked as a team, and part of the community, we were making things happen, but there was a lack of interest. With the decision not to award us the land I felt that, even if they (the people in power) disagreed, they couldn’t even engage with us directly to explain why, we weren’t even that important to them. we didn’t even come on their radar. I felt that, with the work we were doing, and the public we engaged with being so excited by our ideas, they could have at least come to see us, and explained why they couldn’t support us. There was no interest in us because we were not “Richard Bransons”. They have power and privilege but don’t seem to accept any responsibility for improving peoples’ lives. (Would you say it felt like disdain?) Yes, not even dismissive, worse, that we weren’t even important enough to consider. That really surprised me. I didn’t think our society was like that.

A Hope

That people in power/ leadership, when they talk so much about change at a local level, in the future, show us some support and are connected with what they claim to do (to use their power and privilege to help real people).

Tania: Ex-Trustee, Founder Of The GAP Project, HBC Councillor

A Good Memory

It was a place that was often a refuge; a haven for those battered by life’s journey, the empowerment. A place to go a place to be, many of us in life needed that haven and have now hopefully found another. Favourite events were Warm Up and Spice Up, Warm Up brought the most local people, after that it went Hastings wide and we lost local people.

A Challenge

The lawlessness, the idleness, the long term lack of support and direction, the lack of proper resolution, damage to team. Seaspace/Seachange stole the peoples’ dreams

and the borough held their hand and enabled them! Cabinet condemned us which gave them the chance to say no in July 2017 – the visit to the Seachange office gave them the ammo they needed

A Hope

I hope we will have a greenway, a way to walk that isn't too depressing., that we can avoid small depressing looking housing for the DFLs. One day, government will see its errors and let people build their own homes. I hope it's never developed by traditional developers and it's a thorn in the councils' side.

Organisation Workshop:

An approach to community organising

We planned to run an organisation workshop on the Power Station site. Because Seaspace delayed their decision on the land, we went ahead and ran our workshop in the Observer Building in May 2019.

Those who were part of the organisation workshop tell their stories in a newspaper pull-out recording their inspirations, challenges and everything in between.

The Pocket Park

When Darren French and Colleen Dawson finished the organisation workshop, they were inspired to set up their own furniture business.

They applied for a Pioneers Start-Up grant and took a lease in a WRNV cave in the alleyway, making connections with the people around them.

From there, The Alley Association commissioned them to build a Pocket Park. The vision for the park was to create a place for relaxation, casual meetings, as well as performance and fun.

The space had to be inclusive to the widest possible community of users.

Alley Association members (including tenants of Rock House and staff) wrote a

proposal, applied for a grant, and managed the project in the early stages. Designs were drawn up by Gary Baverstock, local garden designer. The grant only went so far, and Darren had bigger plans.

Darren has since given hours of free labour, and provided materials to complete the project, creating furniture and planters with reclaimed materials, sheltered seating, and a beautiful herb-garden.

What new connections will be made there?

DIY Spirit

As well as transforming a place, a CLT can empower people.

We want to do that whenever we can. After the Organisation Workshop, Michelle and Dan studied Community Organising and were paid to put it into practice with Orbit tenants in Ore Valley.

Sam trained 38 new community organisers. Out of this training, we will nurture new groups that people have identified a need for.

Some Feedback On The Training From Adur Collective Clt.

“I attended the Building Power through CO Training event on Wednesday 19th February 2020. The training that Sam delivered was comprehensive and engaging. I was challenged, enthused and I received some great take away ideas and thoughts that we are putting into action for our own newly incorporated CLT in Adur. I would definitely recommend the training for other community groups”.

Shelley And Linda Catch-Up Notes 02/07/2020

How Did You Find It?

It was challenging. There were people in the room from quite different political backgrounds to me, but I did feel comfortable to speak out.

Takeaways: Have You Applied Any Principles Since?

One of the course takeaways was to identify our values, and not just to talk about them, but to put them into action. So, we identified the importance of being democratic, and involving a diversity of community. We are working on plans to involve younger people, and thinking about how to engage with disenfranchised groups, such as those on low wages, or affected by poor educational attainment

How Is It Going In Lancing?

We have been making progress. We have registered with the FCA and set up a website, with a membership page (open to anyone living or working in the area) and we are planning a launch day in August- if we can.

Crafternoon

Crafternoon is an open, fun space for tenants to come together. We have a long term aim of developing tenant relations, but instead of formal meetings, we want to enjoy fun activities together and celebrate cooperation in its own right. We see Crafternoon as a first step towards greater tenant engagement and self-management.

We held our first session on 31st Jan 2020.

Who Was Invited?

All residential and commercial tenants of RH, Rose Cottage 39c 2c. (face to face, posters, emails, loomio and flyers under doors).

Were There Challenges?

Yes! Explaining the concept, suitable time, reminding/ encouraging/ helping people feel it's for them.

Who Came?

1 residential tenant, 2 commercial, 2 staff facilitators, others popped in or expressed interest in coming the next time, or gave apologies as unable to make it.

How much did it cost? session space (£12), promotion (£1), snacks and materials (£2)

[Will We Run It Again?](#)

Yes! Take up was small, but really valuable. Mixing among different residential and commercial tenants sparked some good conversations. Connections made between people lead to bigger and better things that we can't predict! We expect that if nurtured, and the format slightly tweaked, this could continue to be valuable. (e.g. amend offer to take into account suggestions- such as really simple activity options, a shared activity, a purposeful activity- such as decorations for the 2020 village fete or to brighten up RH foyer).

We ran a second Crafternoon event in February and even more people came, sadly, we haven't been able to run anymore due to Covid .

[Learning Visits at White Rock](#)

We are always learning about the power of collaboration. Our partners in White Rock invited us to co-host learning visits throughout the year. Visitors gave plenty of feedback, on postcards and on twitter.

[Number 12 Claremont: Inclusive, Creative Neighbourhood Hub](#)

[12 Claremont Window Is Activated](#)

Project Artworks Hastings (PAW) is an artist-led organisation. They work with children, young people and adults who have complex support needs, on a wide range of creative projects.

PAW will be taking up a lease on No.12 Claremont, but in the meantime, they and their artists have installed gorgeous works of art in the window. The window displays have brought beauty, colour and life back to this part of Claremont. Passers-by and

the local community have been enjoying them for several months. We're looking forward to the opening of the gallery and the future development of the building (to include live-work spaces, artists' studios and more). We're also looking forward to opportunities to work together on projects

[Who Owns Rock House?](#)

In 2019 Heart of Hastings took a one-third shareholding in White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (WRNV).

Annie, the tenant board member of WRNV explains in a video how important that development is for the vision of long-term community ownership.

[What do we mean by the ecosystem?](#)

Annie Prime explains what the eco system is in a video.

The eco system is a collection of organisations who work together to further common goals. These goals are, community ownership or involvement, inclusion, affordable and accessible spaces.

The current eco system organisations are:

- White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures
- Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust
- Project Art Works
- Leisure and Learning
- Living Rents
- Meanwhile Space
- The Alley Association
- Jericho Road Solutions

[Trinity Triangle Heritage Action Zone](#)

We need to keep finding resources to make our vision for White Rock happen. 2019 saw Heart of Hastings, and our ecosystem partners, campaigning to bring a Heritage

Action Zone (HAZ) programme of regeneration to Hastings.

Now that we've been successful in securing the project via Historic England, we're happy to look to the future and the work ahead. Our High Street Heritage Action Zone will be run in partnership, led by the local community with a bottom-up approach. We want the people of Hastings to help us shape it, and we want those who are normally left out to have their opinions heard.

Why did we win the bid?

Out of the 68 Heritage Action Zones running in England today, only two are run by community groups (rather than local authorities). The Trinity Triangle HAZ in Hastings is one!

Our approach demonstrated: Community Led, Bottom Up, Inclusive, Creative, Local Benefit, Learning

How can you get involved?

Contact Heart of Hastings to get involved. Phone Shelley on 01424 235901.

We Made A Film

The Independents' Day documentary was made by local filmmakers, Eggplant Films. Businesses in the Trinity Triangle told us what makes the area, and their community, special—and how they've coped during lockdown.

Last Year in Numbers

- 157 Members
- 911 Supporters
- 12 Newsletters sent to 1068 people
- 4.5 Staff
- 8 Board Members

- £240,000 grant money bought into Hastings
 - £290,000 spent on charitable activities
 - £15942 to adapt a flat at 39 Cambridge to accommodate a tenant with mobility needs
 - £2 million grant agreed for a 4 year regeneration programme for Trinity Triangle Heritage Action Zone
-
- 1 building (39 Cambridge Road)
 - 4 tenants
 - 3 at Living Rents (based on local income)
 - 1 at Local Housing Allowance rate

The Future

12 Claremont

- 4 homes and workspaces, a community space
- an inclusive art gallery & studios (with partners Project Art Works)
- Hastings' first adult changing space

Observer Building

- 15 capped rent flats
- 3 floors of leisure/retail/learning space
- workspace floor
- public roof garden

Future Projects

- Safer Streets St Leonards
- Emerging Futures—in the Observer Building
- Trinity Triangle Heritage Action Zone
- Another Organisation Workshop

Find out about

- Becoming a member
- Volunteering
- Joining our mailing list or to ask us anything

Shelley 01424 235901 or shelley@heartofhastings.org.uk

Thank You

Thanks a million to all of you who have been involved this year for your support and enthusiasm.