

Film showing, Dispossession, Thursday 22nd March

We are delighted to invite you to a special showing of the powerful documentary Dispossession, at the Trades Club in Hebden Bridge, Thurs 22 March, 8pm. The event is free (donations invited).

The film examines the decimation of social housing in recent decades and gives a voice to people in communities that have borne the brunt of the lack of decent housing. Big Issue has called the film the most important British film since I, Daniel Blake.

This is a joint initiative between the CLT and Unite Community (part of Unite the Union) and we are grateful to Unite's John Coan who has done the work of organising this event. The CLT is planning a series of other events for the Spring focusing on different aspects of the housing crisis.

Share issue 'pledge' leaflet launches

Thank you if you came along early in February, when we launched our community share 'pledge' leaflet at Hebden Bridge Town Hall. We were pleased to have such a good turn-out and heartened by the interest shown.

You'll know if you were there that we are planning to launch an ambitious community share issue in the summer, to raise £500,000 in investment from within the community to help fund the proposed Hebden Bridge development of affordable homes to rent. (You'll also know that we won't be asking for anyone's investment until we have planning permission and have completed work on the share prospectus.)

If you are prepared to take a small quantity of the 'pledge' leaflet to pass on to friends, colleagues and neighbours, please let us know by emailing info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk

'Pledges' total reaches £90,000

We're very pleased to be able to report that, as at the end of February, we had received 'pledges' from thirty people, together totalling £94,720. This is a much faster response than we'd imagined possible. A big thank you to all thirty of you. (The word 'pledges' needs inverted commas, because as you will have gathered there is no legal commitment involved at this stage).

£500,000 will be the largest community share issue ever attempted in Britain for community-led housing, but with this very early level of support we're feeling increasingly confident that we will get there.

Community Foundation for Calderdale also expect to invest

We're also delighted to say that, following discussions with two of the trustees and the CEO of the Community Foundation for Calderdale, the Foundation's trustees have taken an in-principle decision to invest £100,000 in the Hebden Bridge development. This is subject to discussions on the terms, but is a very welcome fillip to the CLT. Investment from CFFC will be a valuable additional source of investment capital for what we're planning to do. (And it is thanks to CFFC that the largest individual pledge so far, for £25,000, has come in).

News from Walsden

The land at Walsden is ready for the start of our first development (six independent living bungalows) and we are just waiting now for Homes England (what was the Homes and Communities Agency) to process our application for 'Registered Provider' status. We have already been successful in our application for Investment Partner status, which means we can access Homes England grants for affordable housing to rent.

News from Hebden Bridge

You may have seen site investigation work happening on the land off Heptonstall Road (the former High Street) where we hope to build 23 new affordable homes. We have commissioned surveys to explore the underground make-up of the land, slope stability and drainage. Once the reports are in we will have a better of cost of the development and the foundation and piling approach.

The results are expected shortly but the initial view looks promising. Obviously we need to complete this work before we can apply for planning permission, which we hope to do in the spring.

Our AGM will be on Saturday April 28th

Diary alert! The CLT's AGM will be on Saturday 28th April, at 10.30am (for refreshments) and 11am for the meeting itself.

We will be meeting in the Waterfront Hall in Hebden Bridge's Town Hall (We were originally hoping to meet in Todmorden (we like to do these things turn-and-turn-about) but the obvious venue the Fielden Hall was already booked and we have failed to find anywhere else free that day. Apologies to Todmorden friends and supporters who will have to make the journey along the valley (next year hopefully the Tod College will be up and running in community hands).

The AGM is important. The CLT is a democratically-led member organisation (technically a charitable 'community benefit society'), and this is the main chance for our members and supporters to get together to discuss how the CLT is progressing.

Time to get more involved?

The AGM is also the time when hold elections for the board of trustees (a third of the board is elected each year). Although we feel that the trustees have been working

well together, we are also always on the look out for potential new trustees to join us. We're also keen to ensure the board of trustees is adequately diverse in its make-up and are particularly interested in increasing the number of younger trustees. We also have a slight gender imbalance (more men than women at present) which ideally we'd like to resolve.

If you feel you have the time and interest to get involved in the exciting (and sometimes exhausting) work of getting affordable homes built locally under community control, please let our secretary Andrew Bibby know on info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk. We are always pleased to welcome potential trustees as observers at our monthly trustee meetings, so that you can see for yourself what we are like and what we do!

Welcome to Lynda

Following two board meetings where she sat in on proceedings, we have unanimously co-opted Lynda Bruce as a fellow trustee. Lynda, who lives in the Calder valley, has worked for over twenty years for many different housing departments and is at present working in Kirklees helping provide services to homeless households. Co-options run until the next AGM so Lynda will be standing for election on April 28th, as will the other co-optee we have made this year, our treasurer Karin Lowson.