

Press release, Mon March 4 2019

Building work starts on six new bungalows for local older people

An innovative community-led housing initiative which will see the construction of six new independent-living bungalows in Walsden gets under way on Thursday March 7th.

The bungalows, which will be let on affordable rents to local older people, are the result of a successful partnership between the Calder Valley Community Land Trust, the Todmorden-based almshouse charity John Eastwood Homes and Calderdale Council.

The Walsden project is the first development for Calder Valley Community Land Trust, and as such represents a real landmark for the organisation. The CLT was set up in 2014 as a charitable community benefit society to bring affordable housing to the upper Calder Valley, under direct community-led control. The CLT now has over a hundred local people who support its work and have become members.

Under the scheme, four of the bungalows will be owned and run by the Community Land Trust, while the remaining two will be owned by John Eastwood Homes. The almshouse trust, set up under the terms of Todmorden resident John Eastwood in his will, already operate twelve similar bungalows in Walsden. The land for the bungalows has been gifted to the CLT by Calderdale Council, which has worked closely with the organisation since its incorporation.

Andrew Bibby, Secretary of Calder Valley Community Land Trust, said: "We're delighted to have arrived at the point where we can demonstrate that community-led housing actually delivers results. The new bungalows will be energy-efficient, cheap to heat, and designed to meet the needs of older local people. They will be homes which we know will be much loved by their residents."

Chris Barker, Trustee of John Eastwood Homes, said: "We know already how much demand there is for bungalows like this in Walsden and Todmorden. We are thrilled that very soon another six bungalows will be taking their first new residents."

Cllr Dan Sutherland, Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Environment, said: "We are really pleased to support this scheme as part our commitment to providing much-needed, quality, affordable homes in communities across Calderdale. This has been a real partnership approach and a great example of community-led development, showing the steps that local people can take to tackle housing needs together."

The development, which will cost about £800,000, is being funded in part from the reserves built up through prudent financial administration by John Eastwood Homes, in part through government grants made available through the Homes England agency, and also through other grants and loans. The Quaker Housing Trust is contributing £45,000 in loan and grant finance, and around £60,000 is being lent by local people investing in the CLT through a community share issue. Calderdale Council is also making a grant, in exchange for nomination rights.

The help and support of Homes England during the planning of the project has been another crucial aspect of the success of the venture. The Walsden development represents one of the first investments by Homes England in a community-led housing development in this part of Yorkshire.

Richard Panter, from Homes England, said: “We’ve worked with the Land Trust from its inception and are pleased to have been able to fund these new homes for older people in the Calder Valley. The Walsden development is a great example of Homes England’s commitment to increasing the supply of affordable homes which will help residents to continue living independently.”

Note for editors

Photographic opportunity: there will be a ceremony to mark the ‘cutting of the first sod’ on **Thurs March 7th at 10am** at the site (Birks Lane, Walsden).

For more information contact Andrew Bibby, 01422 844026

CLT website: www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk