

Press release

First partnership between almshouse trust and community land trust reaches successful conclusion

A unique first has been achieved in the West Yorkshire town of Todmorden with the completion of a development of six independent-living bungalows, built through the combined efforts of two local community organisations.

Calder Valley Community Land Trust, a community benefit society with charitable status, has worked in partnership with the Todmorden-based almshouse trust John Eastwood Homes, created fifty years ago by a local man who left money to house older people in his home town. Under the partnership arrangement, John Eastwood Homes acquire two of the new bungalows, to add to their portfolio of twelve existing bungalows. The Community Land Trust will retain the other four bungalows, although all six will be managed by John Eastwood Homes.

The bungalows, which are in the village Walsden near Todmorden, have been designed to be energy-efficient, and efforts have been taken to ensure that the site is equipped with a sustainable drainage system, using among other things permeable tarmac. The project has cost in total around £900,000, of which John Eastwood Homes is contributing two-sixths of the total cost. The Community Land Trust has raised the remaining £600,000 in a financial package comprising £240,000 from Homes England's Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme, a grant and interest-free loan from the Quaker Housing Trust and a £40,000 grant from Calderdale council, who also gifted the land. Local people have contributed £94,000 for the development, in the form of withdrawable 'community share' capital. Commercial borrowing of £170,000 completes the funding package.

Calder Valley CLT is unusual in the community land trust movement in that it has successfully been granted Registered Provider status by the Regulator of Social

Housing. This means that the CLT has been able to draw down Homes England grant funding directly. The CLT will also act as the landlord to the tenants.

Simon Brearley, chair of Calder Valley Community Land Trust, said: “We are naturally thrilled to have completed our first development and to be able to provide quality new homes to older people in considerable housing need. Our pleasure is tempered though by the knowledge that there are so many other local older people in significant housing need.”

John Eastwood Homes’ treasurer Chris Barker said: “We’re delighted to have worked with the local community land trust so that, together, we have managed to provide six much-needed bungalows for our local older people. We believe the almshouse movement and the CLT movement are obvious partners in the development of more community-led housing.”

Calder Valley Community Land Trust, a member organisation with currently 160 local people as members, is now planning its second development of affordable housing locally. The Trust is also the legal custodian of a grade-II listed community centre in Todmorden.

More information

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Photo captions:

a. The Mayor of Todmorden Cllr Ken White (L of photo) and the Mayor of Calderdale Cllr Dot Foster (next left) at the community ‘open days’ event at the new bungalows on February 29th. Beside them is Simon Brearley, chair of Calder Valley Community Land Trust, and Neil Anderton, chair of John Eastwood Homes, the two local community groups behind the venture.

b. An ornamental cherry tree is planted by the Mayor of Calderdale Cllr Dot Foster and the Mayor of Todmorden Cllr Ken White.