

Our news, April 2021

June 5 will be AGM day

We're a democratic organisation, ultimately under the guidance of our 254 members, so our AGM is an important part of our governance. This year, we've decided to hold it again by zoom. The date and time is 11am on Saturday June 5th.

Registration will be via booking on Eventbrite and we'll mail our members shortly with the link. (If you're not a member, now is the time to join!)

Looking ahead

The CLT's trustees have been discussing recently how we can work strategically to ensure the CLT develops strongly over the next five and ten years. This is involving us, among other things, in discussing our vision for the CLT and the values which we believe it should embrace. (We held a trustee 'Awayday' by zoom at the end of last month to talk things through).

This is work in progress, and we'll be sharing our thinking to date with members at the AGM - when we'll also be inviting your own thoughts.

Coming soon: Our first employee

We've mentioned previously that we have been successful in obtaining funding from The National Lottery Community Fund over the next three years, which will enable us to move for the first time from an entirely volunteer-led organisation. This is part of our growing up process!

Applications for the post of our **Executive Manager** will open in June and of course we'll make sure everyone who gets this newsletter is informed.

Thinking of becoming a trustee? Or of joining our Advisory Panel?

With the AGM approaching, this is an ideal time to put yourself forward as a potential trustee of the CLT. We expect to be electing at least one new trustee to join the board at the AGM. Don't be shy: drop our secretary Andrew an email, at info@caldervalleyclt.org.uk.

And please remember too that we have established an Advisory Panel, of people with particular skills or experience who we can approach when we need advice. Given our forthcoming role as an employer, there's a vacancy for someone with HR experience. Again, let Andrew know if you're interested in joining the Panel on the email above.

Empty properties

As well as continuing to try to progress the proposed new developments we've been working on in Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, we're also keen to maximise the CLT's potential role in bringing empty properties into use for housing.

We know that there are some ugly eyesores in the valley (old pubs, for example), which it would be great to bring back to life. But this can be tricky: buildings are often held in land banks by commercial owners looking for commercial gain.

Nevertheless we may soon be able to make a start on a small number of empty flats and cottages which are owned by Calderdale council. We're discussing the way forward with Calderdale officers. More news we hope soon.

Everyone knows now of the Calder Valley!

Well, that's probably an exaggeration, but we've been sharing our experience here with other CLTs and community-led housing groups around the country. Our trustees have been talking at events and webinars recently run by CLT groups in, for example, Cornwall and Liverpool. And we had a 'visit' (virtually!) the other day from the CLT group in Uppingham, Rutland, who wanted to know about our work.

(We tend to begin presentations by explaining that the Calder valley is the place where Happy Valley and Last Tango in Halifax have been filmed!)

Preserving the HB signal box

After a year or so when almost nothing happened, we are pleased to be able to report that there is a lot of energy back in the project, which is trying to find a long term sustainable solution for the now-decommissioned (and listed) HB Signal Box. The CLT convened a well-attended zoom meeting a few days ago. Our role, as we see it, is to apply for the necessary funding (we have some funding already promised from the Railway Heritage Trust), to work with our architect to get listed building consent and then oversee the necessary site work, and to be the legal custodian of the box. We are proposing a 25 year leasehold arrangement with Network Rail.

But we don't think it's the CLT's primary role to look after the box on a day-to-day basis once the initial work is complete, or to develop the very important educational heritage side of things. So we're delighted that a new group, Hebden Bridge Signal Box Preservation Group, is close to becoming a reality.

The relationship between the CLT and the Preservation Group will be similar, we hope, to the very successful relationship we have with the Fielden Centre Association: we are the legal custodian of the Fielden Hall and houses, and the FCA runs the centre and ensures it is a well-used community resource. (Don't forget that the Fielden Hall will be once again open for events very soon!)

To make contact with the Preservation Group (and to get an invite to future meetings) email us on info@caldervalley.clt.org.

Are we up to standard?

As one of the few CLTs which have successfully become a Registered Provider of Social Housing, we have to undertake a detailed internal audit once a year to ensure that we are meeting all the many different requirements imposed on RPs by the Regulator. Our treasurer Karin leads on this and her briefing paper was on the agenda at our April board meeting. Our conclusion? We looked at all the obligations placed on us carefully and decided – yes, we are fully compliant.

Have you moved home?

If you are a member or member-investor, please do make sure that we know if you have moved house. Tell us too if your phone number or email address has changed.