



Christow Community Land Trust

Members' Newsletter

This 9th issue of the Christow Community Land Trust newsletter is a bumper edition in which Tim Deane reports on our recent AGM and Maggie Bonnell presents a pictorial supplement covering the opening of Archers' Walk in August. I hope you enjoy it!

Corony Edwards, Chair

Annual General Meeting report

With due caution the AGM of the Christow Community Land Trust took place in the Teign Valley Community Hall on September 17th. The need for physical distancing and the wearing of masks made for a less convivial AGM than we are used to, but attendance was sufficient for the meeting to be quorate and carry out the necessary business in accordance with the trust's rules. Happily, this being an important part of the meeting, we were able - as board and membership together - to discuss the trust's current and future work.

A major part of each annual meeting is the Report from the Chair, outlining the work of the CCLT during the previous year. This is reproduced below and overleaf. Other business of note was the presentation of accounts and elections to the board.

The annual accounts showing the trust's financial position at August 31st were approved, total funds standing at over £6,000. These funds can be divided between grants (to local clubs and organisations) and the underwriting of the trust's own initiatives, while leaving a useful reserve with which to face such challenges to our community as may occur.

There were changes to the composition of the board with directors Tom Archer and John Edwards retiring, Tim Deane and Corony Edwards standing down by rotation and re-elected and Maggie Bonnell newly elected. This leaves at least one vacancy which the board would like to fill by co-option, rather than waiting twelve months until the next AGM. If you feel that you have something to offer or would just like to know more about what being a CCLT director entails do please get

in touch with our chair, Corony Edwards, or any board member – contact details are below.

The open discussion at the end of the meeting confirmed members' approval of a 50:50 split of income between funding grants and the trust's own work. It also raised the desirability of the CCLT working with other local groups on its environmental initiative. Assurance was given that this would be so, and the board will soon meet with a small number of other parties (by Zoom) to consider how to take this forward. Not having forgotten that the trust's founding remit was the provision of affordable housing we then looked at what further work in this area might be needed. Although any action has to depend on a housing needs survey (to be undertaken in the near future by Devon Communities Together) it was good to have some ideas from the floor. Aspects raised were the importance of giving priority to disabled tenants, the possibility of small wardened apartments for the elderly and the need for single bedroom accommodation as a reflection of the difficulties created by the 'bedroom tax'.

Tim Deane



More pictures and report of the opening event for Archers' Walk are on page 4

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The names, email addresses (and phone numbers) of the CCLT Directors and Board members are:

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Chair's Annual Report

Having been elected as your Chair in July 2019, this is my first annual report to you and I am pleased to say that our Community Land Trust continues to thrive with further active contributions to the community made in the last 14 months. Indeed, it has been an eventful year.

As a reminder, our remit is to

- *Maintain or improve the physical, social and economic infrastructure within the Parish of Christow and its environs;*
- *Advance education (particularly concerning asset based community development and enterprises with a community or environmental focus);*
- *Provide an opportunity for public-spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community, with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward.*

So how have we fulfilled this remit over the last year?



As you will all know, our major contribution has been the completion and opening of the new permissive footpath 'Archers' Walk'. We owe a huge debt of thanks to Tom and Sam Archer for this wonderful new community asset through their land. The site is a fascinating example of former agricultural land undergoing a process of nature recovery, creating a haven for wildlife as well as a peaceful retreat for us humans. It couldn't have opened at a better time, a few weeks into 'lockdown' and just as the bluebells were coming into flower.

The Archers' Walk project used a small amount of the £2,900 we receive from Teign Housing Association each year in ground rent for Stafford Close, but most of the construction and other costs have been covered by a grant of £3,268 from the Dartmoor National Park Authority Parishscapes fund. We will claim the second and final instalment of this grant as soon as the final job – a metal handrail on the steep bend – has been put up. DNPA have been hugely supportive of the project and are now working with Tom on the legal aspects to ensure that access will be permitted for at least 25 years and, we hope, much longer, fulfilling Tom and Sam's wishes for the path to be their family's legacy to Christow. I would also like to thank the CCLT members who volunteered to work on clearing the route of the path over the winter and helping out at the opening event in August. This was attended by around 100 people in spite of the weather and the need for social distancing, and a splendid cream tea was provided courtesy of Teign Climate Hub's National Lottery 'Celebrate25' fund.

This year's AGM comes hard on the heels of a very depressing and alarming UN report on the international community's failure to meet every single one of the targets set a decade ago for wildlife and environmental protection. Many of you will have watched David Attenborough's equally alarming programme 'Extinction' on BBC1 on Sunday. In December 2019, the CCLT directors convened for a special meeting to discuss our future aims and purpose, within our broad, constitutional remit. We agreed at that meeting that the Trust has a duty to lead and support those in Christow and its environs who want to play their part in addressing these linked climate and environmental emergencies. To that end, we agreed to recognise that there is a climate and environmental emergency and we hope to commission an environmental or ecological survey of the parish. As soon as the current pandemic restrictions allow, we would like to organise some locally-focussed 'people's assembly' type events and, if people wish, to help with

the construction of a local climate and environmental action plan. When we do this we want to involve as many parishioners as we can, making sure that all voices are heard, and that any proposals are both fair and affordable. The role of the CCLT will not be to dictate actions to be taken, but to provide strategic leadership, co-ordination and assistance in securing funding for projects that help to deliver the parishioners' agreed priorities and actions. We also agreed that future foci for our activity might include work to address social isolation and loneliness, and further provision of affordable housing, both to be investigated further. Initial enquiries have revealed that there is not a perceived need for additional housing in Christow at this time but I would welcome your views on these proposals, either during agenda item 6 or in our open discussion after the formal meeting closes.

The sale of the Artichoke Inn in January prompted concerns about its future and as a result we applied successfully for both the pub and Christow Stores to be recorded as assets of community value by Teignbridge District Council. This means that should either of these come up for sale, the community will be given the right to an extra six months to raise funds to bid for their purchase.

At last year's AGM I put forward a proposal for a Teign Valley website. Several people expressed their reservations but a majority voted in favour of us continuing to explore this idea. Having found that CCLT member and Christow resident Ted Miller had the skills to create a prototype, events overtook us in March. We decided to launch the site early as a place to put information about Covid-related community support as well as the three Teign Valley parish magazines at a time when delivery of the printed copies was not felt to be safe. The site has grown a little since then but has scope to do much more, and Ted and I would welcome your ideas. At present the site does not need CCLT funding.

As in previous years, CCLT has continued to support other groups and organisations in the form of grants. At the 2019 AGM the members present expressed their wish for 50% of the available annual funds to be allocated to community groups with the balance going into our reserves. As it happens we received just two requests for funding. £550 was awarded to Teign Teens and £100 to the new Teign Valley Larder, meaning that we have been able to move additional funds into our reserve account. We feel it is important to start to build our reserves now, not least in case we ever want to help the community to exercise their right to bid for one of the newly registered assets of community value.

With regard to Stafford Close, we continue to receive requests for visits from other aspiring community land trusts, students of town planning etc. We have been working with Teign Housing Association and a specialist lawyer (paid for by them) on a variation to the lease agreement for the land. This will enable Teign Housing to use the buildings at Stafford close to secure loans for new social housing developments elsewhere. The change to the agreement introduces an extremely small risk that in the future the properties might be sold at full market value but we are assured by experts that this the likelihood of this is extremely remote.

Let me close by thanking all of my fellow Directors and you, the members, for your support over the last year. I especially want to thank John Edwards and Tom Archer for their service to the community through their involvement with the Land Trust as directors as they are now retiring from the Board. Tom's work as treasurer has been invaluable and I have greatly appreciated his advice and support during my first year as chair. We will miss his contributions, along with the unique perspective and healthy doses of realism that John has always brought to our meetings.



Corony Edwards

Presented at the AGM on 17th September 2020

From the left: John Edwards, Tom Archer, David Broomfield and Rowan the dog walking the route of the proposed footpath in May 2018.

The Opening of Archer's Walk Saturday 15th August 2020



It is so good to be able to report that a significant community event actually took place this summer among all the cancellations and postponements necessitated by COVID- 19 restrictions. Planned on the date of the cancelled Christow Show and despite the torrential rain that chose to break the longstanding drought that day - what is it about that mid -August Saturday! - around 100 people turned out to celebrate the completion of this project and the opening of Archers' Walk.



Funded by grants from the CCLT, DNPA and Teign Climate Hub's National Lottery 'Celebrate25' fund, the project enabled Tom and Sam Archer's wishes for a path to be created that would serve as the family's legacy to Christow.

The opening event was marked in style. There was a speech by Tom on the history of the site and area and guided walks and talks on the ecology and wildlife by Elliot Fairs, the Parish lengthsmen, and Fiona Freshney, a longstanding CCLT member and volunteer. Fiona also prepared an excellent flyer* with information on the site.



There was a splendid cream tea and live music to entertain.



*If you didn't get a copy of the flyer on the day but would like one, please email Coronny.

Members of the Archer family were able to rest on the oak seat installed in memory of Tom's wife, Carol, who sadly passed away in 2019.



Happy faces were everywhere.

Or perhaps not quite everywhere!



A huge vote of thanks must go to the Archer family, to the funders and to all who volunteered and worked over the winter to clear the route for the path, to erect the gazebos that protected the cream tea from being washed away, those who provided the cream tea, all those in the background that made it happen and the indomitable spirit of all those who turned out to enjoy the afternoon.

Maggie Bonnell

Photos courtesy of Alison Vaughan

