



# Stow Community Land Trust

## News

Spring 2024



### Stow Community Land Trust

Stow CLT is a charitable organisation – set up and run by volunteers – with the aim of providing truly affordable housing for local people. Stow CLT is a member of the Community Land Trust Network. Anyone who shares our objectives can join for a membership fee of £1.

#### Land Acquisition – Update

Bayhill Developments received planning permission last December to develop a piece of land north of Oddington Road and to the east of King Georges Playing Field.

Between that site and the backs of the properties in Griffin Close lies a strip of land which has been promised to the CLT – this will enable us to provide our first development of truly affordable housing for the people of Stow, something which everyone agrees is sorely needed. Contracts have yet to be exchanged but, with good will on all sides, this should be readily accomplished.

Obviously, we will need to apply for planning permission and will need to raise substantial funds for the legal costs and the planning application. Members of the Cotswold District Council planning committee and the Council Leader, Joe Harris, are all aware of how much truly affordable housing is needed in this area, and we are, therefore, optimistic that planning

permission will be obtained.

We'll update you on progress in the next (Summer 2024) newsletter. In the meantime, our Chairman, Dr Nigel Moor, hopes to address the Stow Town Meeting at the Social Club on 22 May and the full Town Council Meeting at the Youth Club on 30 May, in order to update everyone with our proposed development.

#### Stow Town Council - Grant

Stow Town Council has just generously agreed to make a grant to the CLT of £1,500. We are very grateful for this contribution, which will help us publicise our plans and raise funds for the next stage of the development process.

#### Future Board Meetings

There will be a formal (public) meeting of Stow CLT Board at 7pm on 13 June 2024 at Stow Youth Centre (Town Council Building), Fosse Way, Stow-on-the-Wold GL54 1DW. Everyone, including Stow CLT members and members of the public, is welcome to attend.

### Stow CLT

#### Chairman

Nigel Moor

#### Deputy Chairman

TBC

#### Secretary and Treasurer

David Germaney

#### Board Members

Ben Eddolls

John Holmes

Nigel Surman

Liam Ratcliffe

Helen Middleton-Price

Dilys Neill

Paul Girvan

Simon Clarke

Greg Forster

#### Co-opted Board Member

Naomi Cull

#### Consultant Architect

Tim Carter

**Stow CLT website:**  
**[www.stowclt.org.uk](http://www.stowclt.org.uk)**

## Hardship in rural Britain

In November last year, Dr Stephanie Denning of Coventry University published her report *Hidden Hardship: Everyday Experiences, Coping Strategies, and Barriers to Wellbeing in Rural Britain* (<https://hiddenhardship.coventry.ac.uk/>), to

assist policymakers and community leaders better understand rural hardship in the North Cotswolds. The report was based on research with people experiencing hardship in this area.

Rural hardship is often hidden because of the relative affluence experienced by the majority, and the high levels of tourism in the area; this caused some participants to feel stigma and shame.

Hardship usually reflects daily struggle more than one-off 'emergency' situations, and the causes can be summarised as 'lacks of', including government support and investment, employment, and transport. To help people cope, huge importance was given to informal support networks with friends and family, in addition to support offered by local groups, although these could be difficult to access with limited transport options. Furthermore, barriers to improved wellbeing were often perceived as outside people's control, which makes it difficult for people to envisage their circumstances improving. These obstacles included problems with transport, lack of government support and investment, and matters relating to inequality.

The report made five conclusions and associated recommendations:

**1. Rural and urban hardship are not the same, and each pose different challenges.**

Whilst local organisations often

recognise this and adapt accordingly, there needs to be more tailored national government and voluntary sector responses to rural hardship.

**2. People's experiences of hardship often reflect ongoing daily struggles, rather than one-off 'emergency' situations.**

More formal strategies to respond to people's daily struggles are needed through the government and voluntary sector, to provide ongoing formal support. Additionally, support is needed for individuals experiencing hardship to address the high cost of rural living. It would help if regular Job Centre appointments took place closer to where people live, or were carried out remotely, eg: by phone.

**3. Many of the research participants living in hardship experienced challenges with physical and mental health. Many had difficulty accessing medical appointments.**

People need access to transport for medical appointments, particularly from villages where there is no GP surgery. Of course, it would be best if local GP practices re-opened/stayed open in small rural communities.

**4. Rural hardship in the North Cotswolds is often hidden for the wealthier majority. This is played out in the contradiction of the strength and support of rural communities, yet with people in hardship experiencing or fearing stigma and shame.**

Local organisations could raise awareness in rural areas that people are experiencing hardship, and sensitively give a voice to those people. To help this, local organisations can host the Hidden Hardship research exhibition to raise awareness – for more details see <https://hiddenhardship.coventry.ac.uk/index.php/next-steps/>. Moreover, faith

groups and faith leaders (notably the Church in rural areas) can play a crucial role in raising awareness and challenging false stereotypes of hardship.

**5. The 'lacks of' that cause and affect rural hardship should be addressed in local and national government planning.**

Local residents should be empowered to change and influence, rather than feeling things are outside their control, making it difficult for them to envisage a more positive future.

The particular issue with the lack of and unreliable public transport needs addressing: there are several local community transport schemes, but further research is required to understand why these are less likely to be used by people experiencing hardship, and how to improve it. Moreover, more national government investment is needed in rural areas, including more affordable housing and investment in amenities and infrastructure.

## Resignations from the Board:

### Steve Watson

Over the last 5 years or so, Steve has been a phenomenal source of advice to Stow CLT. Unfortunately, he has resigned as our adviser in order that he can concentrate on advising other CLTs in the south-west of the country.

We cannot sufficiently express our thanks to him for his encouragement and dedication, and we wish Steve the very best for the future.

### Kim Girvan

Kim has resigned from the board due to pressure of work. We shall miss her American can-do, kick-ass attitude!