



DECEMBER 2019

# SWCLT Newsletter

Information and news from the Strettham and Wilburton Community Land Trust for village residents and members

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## High time for a Community Land Trust news update!

The Strettham and Wilburton Community Land Trust (SWCLT) has made huge strides since it was formed in 2011. A lot has happened so I thought it was about time we gave people a refresh on the story so far as well as some of the



latest news of our work. I'm sure some people are not fully aware of what the SWCLT does and how it benefits our villages. So in this special community edition of our newsletter, we are delving into more detail, showing you how it works, what it is delivering and hearing from some of the people who are directly benefitting.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us on the details on this page, and can I also wish you a very happy Christmas!

**Charles Roberts, SWCLT Chair**

## GET IN TOUCH

Share your questions

Call SWCLT Clerk Rachel Watts, 07762 040800 or email her at [swclt.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:swclt.clerk@gmail.com)

**SPECIAL FEATURE**

# What is the Community Land Trust?

**W**hen the Stretham and Wilburton Community Land Trust (SWCLT) was founded back in 2011, it was with a clear mission for local people to help those in the community affected by the housing crisis. Central to the SWCLT is community-led development, with the aim of tackling one of the fundamental challenges of our age—people being forced from the places in which they have strong connections because of unaffordable housing. By fostering a vibrant, engaged community, empowered by having a say in the development of their area, the benefits of CLTs also go much further. This is reflected in the core aims of the SWCLT, which are:

- Affordable, secure, good quality housing allowing people to live and work locally.
- Developing community buildings, play areas, green spaces and other assets
- Fostering thriving local communities
- Creating workspace for local businesses

With property prices at historic highs compared to wages, a 'displacement cycle' has taken root where people move further away from the places they



*Manor Farm, Stretham*

work or have family ties in order to find homes they can afford to rent or buy. The community then loses vibrancy, especially if younger generations are progressively forced out, and roads and rail become more congested with people having to travel further to work or to see family and friends.

There are many working people today who do not qualify for traditional social housing, but equally do not earn the wages necessary to buy a house, and so are forced into paying high private rents. Unable to save because monthly budgets are stretched, they are then locked out of home ownership. The SWCLT is a pioneering solution, driven by local energy to help make Stretham and Wilburton sustainable villages for generations to come.

**SPECIAL FEATURE**

# And how is it helping local people?

Why do we do it?

It's because it offers both solutions for the present and a legacy that will benefit local people for generations.

The development at Manor Farm includes shared ownership and homes for affordable rent. The value of the SWCLT property

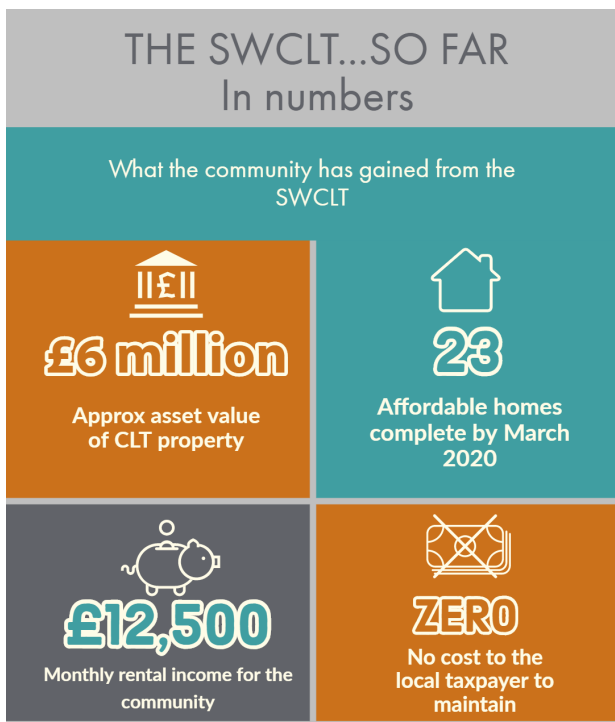
and any revenue from rents is locked to the community. This is very different from traditional social housing, where rents and assets are retained by the housing association. So far Stretham and Wilburton, has created around £6 million worth of assets

and around £12,500 monthly in rent.

All of this stays within the villages. The rental income alone is nearly three times the Stretham Parish Council precept—the parish's portion of the overall council tax bill. And that's just on 23 homes, the final four of which will be occupied by spring 2020.

Rental income has been paying down borrowing and building capital, but that money can also be used to fund community amenities and other investments to enhance the parishes as places to live and work. For example, the CLT has a plan to create units for small businesses and local start-ups. There is no ongoing cost to the local taxpayer—these are assets that work for the whole community.

This is why the trustees do it, and why it is so effective and worthwhile.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Making a real difference to lives

The SWCLT runs a points system by which it assesses applications for homes and the higher the points scored, the more chance the applicant has in securing a property. The main factors are housing need, place of work and strength of connection to Stretham and Wilburton. SWCLT trustee Kier Petherick, who is also chairman of the Stretham Charity said: "It's when you speak to people living in these homes that you really understand the difference it makes. What comes across to me most is that sense of pride. The pride people have living in these homes, the



pride and satisfaction the trustees and members have in supporting something both innovative and effective, and the pride of the wider community that things are happening which aim to make it a better, more sustainable place to live. "We now have a community asset which is a foundation for so much more."

## CASE STUDY: Dannielle Noble and Harry Bartolozzi

Harry has lived in Stretham all his life, and works for a local roofing company. The SWCLT has helped him and partner Dannielle, together with children Makayla 2, and Finn, 1 to stay in the village, where they have a strong family support network close by. In October they moved into their second SWCLT home, a three-bedroom property, which has given the family more space than their previous two-bedroom home which they moved into in July 2018.

Dannielle said: "Without the help of CLT's affordable housing we would have struggled financially to rent a three-bedroom property within Stretham which would have meant looking elsewhere and being further away

from family." Dannielle said the affordability of the rent means they are better able to save and are planning to buy their own home in the future. Dannielle is currently a full-time mum, but also plans to return to work in the local area when the children are older.

The couple said they are very thankful to the SWCLT for accommodating the needs of their growing family by offering the opportunity of a bigger home. Dannielle added: "This is a really lovely house, ideal for our needs, and it means we can now look forward to the future without worrying about a roof over our family's head. We feel very fortunate and happy living here."

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Helping to build strong communities

## CASE STUDY: James Hoath and Tara Edwards

James Hoath has lived in either Stretham or Wilburton for 17 years, while partner Tara has lived in the village her whole life.

James is self-employed, working locally in the construction trade and Tara is currently a full time mum looking after son Charlie, 3, with a new baby due early in the New Year. With such strong connections to Stretham they were delighted when they were able to secure a two-bedroom shared ownership property at Manor Farm in February 2017. It was especially timely as they were previously renting a one-bedroom home and Charlie was still a baby. Tara said: "Without the CLT we would have struggled to find a home in the village we could



afford. In fact, we were having to look further afield for housing because we thought we would be priced out of the village. But we are now on the property ladder in a place we love and we're also working with the SWCLT to explore extending our home to accommodate our growing family. It's all made such a difference to us."

## CASE STUDY: Eloise Bright

Eloise is Stretham born and bred. Her parents grew up in the village and both sets of grandparents also live in the village. She works locally at a financial services company in Witchford and she volunteers at the village youth centre. It's fair to say Eloise's



connections to Stretham run deep, so when she secured a shared ownership two-bedroom house she was over the moon.

Eloise said: "Manor Farm is such a lovely place to live. I look out on to green space and a lake and I'm amongst an amazing community — there's even a local Whatsapp group where

everyone stays in touch. I feel there's a real sense of pride about the CLT among the people who live here because it is something that the whole community has had a hand in developing. I know many people who grew up in this area who would really struggle to live

here because of house prices and lack of housing supply, so the CLT has been vital." Eloise moved into her home in June 2017 and has not looked back. She added: "I've got everything I could want here, I'm on the property ladder, my family are in the village — I couldn't see myself living anywhere else."

## NEWS



## Affordable homes complete at Manor Farm

*Keys given to Charles Roberts at Manor Farm by Hannah Greenhow of Laragh Homes*

**W**ork has been progressing well at Manor Farm and at the end of October the CLT completed on an additional two three-bedroom houses. This now brings the total to 19 affordable homes. The properties have been allocated for affordable rent and shared ownership and are occupied by local people with close connections to Stretham and Wilburton. Meanwhile, work is continuing at pace on a further four homes. By spring 2020 we expect the four one-bed bunga-

lows to be ready for living in. All four will have wet rooms instead of a traditional bathroom, making them ideal for older residents or people with accessibility requirements.

These homes will be allocated early in the New Year.

If you are interested in any of our affordable homes or know of anyone in need of an affordable home, and haven't already completed an application form, contact CLT Clerk Rachel Watts, 07762 040800 or email [swclt.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:swclt.clerk@gmail.com).

## Progress being made on new doctors' surgery

We have been working closely with NHS England and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to progress the approved proposal for the new doctors' surgery at Manor Farm.

A meeting was held in mid-October with all parties involved, including a Trustee from the CLT. We are pleased to report that things are moving in the right direction and we will keep you updated with any news when we know more.

## NEWS

## Mayor James Palmer backs CLT housing plan

**E**ncouraged by success stories including at the Stretham and Wilburton Community Land Trust, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough James Palmer is pushing forward with plans to develop CLTs across the whole region. The Combined Authority, led by the Mayor, is setting aside funding to roll out CLTs a way of tackling the acute housing crisis across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. A dedicated team will be set up to initially engage with people and communities to build an evidence base of local need that will be taken



*Mayor James Palmer with then Housing Minister Kit Malthouse and SWCLT Chairman Charles Roberts at the Stretham CLT site*

forward to develop a business case for delivery. The Stretham and Wilburton example has been highlighted as an exemplar of the potential of CLTs.

## John Kisby inspires new village footpath naming

A footpath running through Manor Farm has been named after respected member of the community John Kisby. In conjunction with Stretham Charity, SWCLT has named the footpath, previously known as Woodland Walk, Kisby Walk.

Mr Kisby served as a Trustee with Stretham Charity, including the roles as Chair and Vice Chair for many years as well as taking up other voluntary roles within the village.

The signs have now been put up to mark his exceptional commitment and dedication to the community.

## Plans for CLT homes for Wilburton move forward

A formal planning application process to build the first CLT homes in Wilburton will be submitted in 2020. A public exhibition on the plans for Camps' Field was held on November 28.

There is high demand in both villages for CLT homes with lots of people already on the waiting list for when a property becomes available. Some people from Wilburton are already living in homes at Manor Farm.

The willingness and generosity of local landowners to engage with the SWCLT has led to the opportunity coming forward.



# Following the garden city example



*Manor Farm, Stretham, but with more than a hint of Letchworth*

The SWCLT is an innovative scheme, but it also has echoes with a movement of more than 100 years ago.

At the end of the 19th Century, garden cities were born with the first, Letchworth, founded on many of the same principles which are now driving the SWCLT. Letchworth remains an exemplar of sustainable community building to this day, attracting interest from across the UK and the world.

One of its key similarities is capturing the uplift in value of agricultural land when it is developed for housing. A landowner stands to make huge gains from land which becomes allocated for housing development by planning authorities, which is East Cambs District Council for Stretham and Wilburton. The district council has introduced a policy where land which is not allocated for housing

development can be bought by community land trusts (or other community groups) at a price more modestly above its agricultural value. The residual value is then 'captured' to fund affordable housing. If the CLT does not have any capital, a percentage of open market homes can be developed which pay for the affordable element.

This rationale allowed the original developers of Letchworth to redirect some of that value to benefit the whole community for future generations.

SWCLT began with no capital, but has 19 homes, soon to be 23, a hectare of open space, and is now developing further assets including some rented business space and a doctors' surgery. All of this is locked to the two villages, showing, like Letchworth, the power of land value capture to build strong communities.

**The SWCLT Trustees want to hear your feedback!**

For more information about our projects or if you have any ideas or contributions, including to this newsletter, please feel free to contact the SWCLT Clerk Rachel Watts on 07762 040800 or email [swclt.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:swclt.clerk@gmail.com)

