



SPRING 2020

SWCLT Newsletter

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

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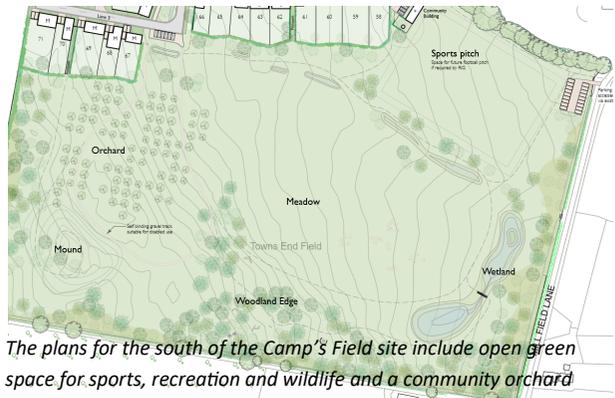
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BIG STEP FORWARD FOR COMMUNITY-OWNED HOMES AT CAMP'S FIELD



The plans for the south of the Camp's Field site include open green space for sports, recreation and wildlife and a community orchard

A milestone in bringing Community Land Trust homes to Wilburton has been reached after outline plans were submitted for 35 affordable homes as part of a 115-home development at Camp's Field.

The Stretham and Wilburton Community Land Trust (SWCLT) has also received the fantastic news that it was successful in securing a £342,505 grant to help bring the scheme forward.

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GET IN TOUCH

Share your questions

Call SWCLT Clerk Rachel Watts, 07762 040800 or email her at swclt.clerk@gmail.com

Chair's chat



I want to begin by praising everyone locally who has rallied to support those in our communities most affected by coronavirus. From cooking meals, to collecting shopping to just a simple check to see if people are ok; it has highlighted the importance of a strong community spirit. This virus is, and will continue to be, life-changing, but it has shown the value everyone places on a community which cares and is there for everyone. And although no one anticipated these times, a guiding aim of our CLT is to ensure our strong bonds continue into the future. By building homes for people with deep connections to our villages, we're helping to ensure that Stretham and Wilburton continues to be a

NEWS

A stepping stone to an

CONTINUED FROM FRONT
The grant, which comes from Homes England, the Government body responsible for increasing affordable housing, will pay for 90 per cent of the costs of planning the whole scheme. The remaining 10 per cent will be paid for by the developer.
SWCLT Chair Charles Roberts said: "The costs covered by the grant will be passed on 100% to make the affordable housing on the site even more affordable, benefitting people in our community."

The plans for Camp's Field, applied for by the SWCLT in partnership with developer Laragh Homes, are at the outline planning phase. That means another, more detailed

planning application would need to be approved before work could start.

The land is a former agricultural field owned by the Camp family, located south of Stretham Road.

If the plans do move forward as currently outlined, the 35 affordable homes would be run in the same way as the 19 already completed by the SWCLT at Manor Farm. With four additional homes due to be ready on Manor Farm soon, Camp's Field would increase the total number of affordable SWCLT homes to 58.

These are homes owned and managed by the community, enforced by a legal asset lock and protected from Right to Buy. That means the SWCLT can ensure they would be affordable

place which looks after its own. Some of these themes are picked up in this edition's special feature on our trustees and their reasons for volunteering.

I wish you and your loved ones the very best during this period. Stay safe and I hope you enjoy this update.
Charles Roberts,
SWCLT Chair

NEWS

Meeting a clear affordable homes need

There is an identified need for more affordable housing in Wilburton.

As of late 2019, 64 families were on the SWCLT waiting list for homes.

With average house prices many times higher than average wages, people who have strong connections to the two villages struggle to afford to stay. These people are then forced to live further away and suffer longer journeys to work or to see family and friends.

The scale of the problem is stark. According to 2019 Office for National Statistics figures, the median average house price in the Stretham and Wilburton electoral ward was £317,000.

The median average wage was a fraction under £25,000. That means average house prices are 12.7 times average

Manor Farm delivered affordable homes for local people



wages.

With mortgages capped at four-and-a-half times income, and with affordability assessments often reducing borrowing ability further, it is clear why home ownership or finding affordable private rents is simply out of reach for so many people.

But at Manor Farm the SWCLT has already provided 19 affordable homes for local people, with another four shortly to

follow.

A points-based system is used to assess need and in our last newsletter we spoke to some of those people with strong connections to the village and what securing a SWCLT home has done for them.

Camp's Field can help meet some of the local need through homes which are legally tied to the community. The aim is to give hope to those local people that living in Wilburton is still possible.

SWCLT monitoring coronavirus developments closely

In what is a rapidly changing picture, the SWCLT is ready to support as much as it can anyone in CLT homes and in the community more generally, affected by the impacts of the coronavirus.



SPECIAL FEATURE: MEET THE TRUSTEES

Our volunteer trustees: The engine room behind the CLT

In this edition we speak to some of the trustees about what they do and why they think the work of the CLT is important

Dr Jan Aniskowicz: 'It puts some power back in the hands of the community'

Dr Aniskowicz practised as a family GP for Strettham, Wilburton and Haddenham for around 30 years.

What initially prompted the Wilburton resident to join the SWCLT as a trustee was because of the local desire for a better doctors' surgery in Strettham to complement the main surgery in Haddenham.

As he was coming up for retirement, Dr Aniskowicz felt it was an opportune time to get involved in the newly-formed SWCLT to explore how he could support that ambition.

Since then, Dr Aniskowicz has supported the SWCLT in its wider goal of community-led development of housing, amenities and other initiatives to foster a thriving community.

"I have seen over the years the growing threat to the future of our community of younger people being forced



out by high house prices away from their families and having to drive long distances to work," he said "Not everyone wants to move away to live in cities and nor should they have to."

Dr Aniskowicz said it was important to be able to keep, for example, experienced tradespeople in the communities in which they work. Currently, those on average or lower wages struggle to afford to live in the parishes.

"I see the SWCLT as a chink of light in a system which is too centralised," he added.

"There is disempowerment across local communities in terms of shaping their future. But the SWCLT has worked together and delivered housing which is more than just about developer profit. The properties are not just cheap and tawdry boxes; they are quality homes to be proud of, offering affordable living for people with connections to Strettham and Wilburton.

"Furthermore the homes owned by the trust generate income to support further community initiatives as well as being available for future families. I've always believed that in both work and in life that if you give people responsibility for something, they respond by doing better and achieving satisfaction from their contribution.

"Ultimately, what has been created, and what is being created, is long-lasting and it challenges the convention of the top-down planning and development of communities."

SPECIAL FEATURE: MEET THE TRUSTEES

Tup Dodson: 'It's about ensuring young people can still live here'

Trustee Tup Dodson's connection to Wilburton couldn't be stronger.

Her parents and grandparents were from Wilburton, she was born and grew up in the village, her sisters live in the village, one of her daughters lives in Haddenham and her youngest daughter is building a house in Wilburton.

This kind of strong inter-generational family connection to a village used to be common. But in today's world, it is disappearing fast. Often young people choose to move away for career reasons, but there are many who would still like to live in the places where they feel a strong bond. But increasing house prices mean young people, particularly those on average or lower wages, find it impossible to afford to live there. Stretham and Wilburton are prime examples.

For Tup, the SWCLT has offered a solution - truly affordable housing for people with strong family or work connections to the community.

She said: "My daughters have been fortunate to be able to stay here, but before the SWCLT I just couldn't see how youngsters would be able to stay living in the village. It simply wasn't fair."

Tup has been on Wilburton Parish Council for 37 years and when she was first explained the concept of the CLT, she was excited.

"I won't pretend it has been easy to get to where we are today, but when you see those young people and families living at Manor Farm, and what it has done for them, it makes it all worthwhile. There is green space, the community is mixed and the quality of the homes is fantastic."



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Tup said it was vital for a thriving community that younger people can afford to stay. She is a school governor at Wilburton C of E Primary School and said, for example, that the school is currently under-subscribed with children.

"The potential for the SWCLT to support this community is huge and I'm excited at the prospect of Camp's Field. The late Mr Camp was a big supporter of Wilburton and I'm confident the SWCLT can bring much-needed new housing and valuable green space that will benefit the whole community."



Manor Farm: An example of what's possible

SPECIAL FEATURE: MEET THE TRUSTEES

Dr Tina Barsby: 'It is about building strong, caring communities'

We live in an increasingly global and ultra-connected world. But at the same time the sense of a strong, supportive local community has come under threat.

For trustee and long term Stretham resident Dr Tina Barsby, the SWCLT has the power to spur a renewal of that local spirit and togetherness.

The outbreak of the coronavirus has brought into sharp focus the importance of caring communities who are prepared to look out for each other in tough times.

Tina's passion for fostering stronger communities in part stems from personal experience. When her husband died 18 years ago, she felt hugely supported by people in Stretham who were prepared to do anything to help. From providing cooked meals to collecting shopping or simply spending time with her, they were there for her.

"It brought home to me just how important the role of the local community is in supporting people and their wellbeing," said Tina. "People stepped up for me at the worst of times and I'm determined that we maintain a community which is there for each other. The SWCLT is one way we can help support that."

Tina, who has lived in Stretham for 30 years, and has served as a parish councillor and school governor, said she very quickly realised the potential of the SWCLT concept and wanted to become a trustee.

"The project began simply as a desire to get

some much-needed affordable housing under the control of the village community," she said. "We wanted a strong local say on how the community developed and we wanted new homes to be designed in a way which looked right for the village. And we wanted to help those people who have grown up and have connections here who feel priced out of staying in the community.

"Manor Farm has really delivered on the initial ambitions of the trustees. I do feel it has fostered that community spirit too. It is a mixed community which accommodates young working people and families. I was really pleased, for example, when I was able to get a local tradesperson, who lived in a SWCLT house, to do some work in my house. It's a small thing, but it all helps with building vibrant, healthy communities."

And Tina, who works as CEO of Cambridge crop science organisation NIAB, is also mindful of the responsibilities which come with being an SWCLT trustee.

"When you are a landlord there are all sorts of challenges that will emerge over time," she said.

"But the benefits are worth it. We are still a young trust and there is great potential to support further community assets, such as our ongoing work to help deliver a new doctors' surgery.

"The Stretham Charity houses are an example of the potential longevity of local initiatives like this to benefit people and support a thriving community for generations to come."



The benefits of the Community Land Trust way

The graphic to the right illustrates a key difference between the usual way villages are developed, often through major builders and planning agents, versus the SWCLT way.

The SWCLT work at Manor Farm has so far delivered revenue and income which is legally locked to the community, to benefit them now and in the future.

Unlike most developers, the SWCLT considers longer term community assets at the planning phase, like recreational space and business space, which can be seen with the Camp's Field outline plans.

The affordable homes will remain for the benefit of the community in perpetuity, helping the community thrive now and in the future. By contrast, conventional



developments offer no community asset legacy, with affordable homes delivered through housing associations only. The monthly rental income can be used to support

community initiatives in the future, such as any recreation, health, education, transport funding which is deemed needed by people in Stretham and Wilburton.

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

