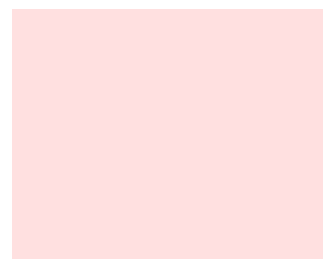
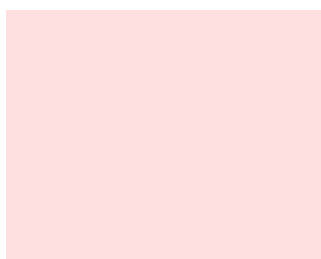
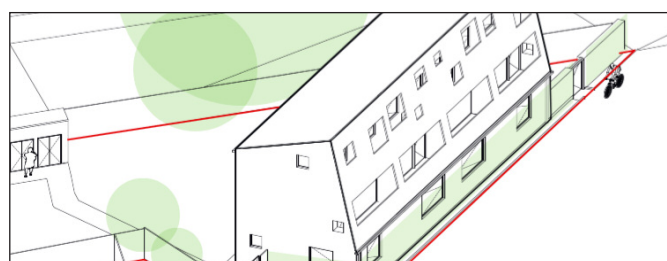
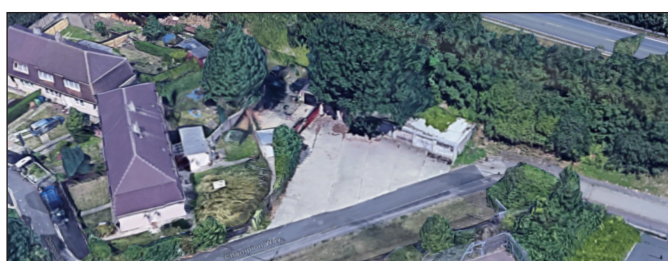


# Oxfordshire Community Land Trust

## Annual Report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020



**Oxfordshire  
Community  
Land Trust**

# Oxfordshire Community Land Trust

## Annual report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

### Directors

The Directors serving during the year were:

John Bloxsom (ex officio)  
Chris Bright  
Sue Brownill  
Jock Coats (Treasurer)  
Bob Colenutt (Chair)  
Charlie Fisher  
Deborah Glass Woodin  
Ron Gibbons  
Bryony Harrington  
Alison Matthias  
Vyvyan Salmon  
Fran Ryan (Secretary)

### Method of election

Directors are appointed by election at the AGM and may sit on the Board for a period of no longer than nine years.

Day to day management of OCLT is delegated by directors to the Senior Management Team which includes Bob Colenutt, Fran Ryan, John Bloxsom and the Finance and Development Committee which includes Jock Coats, Alison Matthias, Ron Gibbons and John Bloxsom.

#### Registered office:

55 Henley Avenue, Oxford OX4 4DJ

Tel: 07889 209 448

Email: [info@oclt.org.uk](mailto:info@oclt.org.uk)

Website: [www.oclt.org.uk](http://www.oclt.org.uk)

HMRC Exempt Charity Number: EW19031

FCA Number: 30158R

Accountant: Critchleys LLP

Bookkeeping: Marshes LLP

Banking: The Cooperative Bank



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[www.oxfordgreenprint.com](http://www.oxfordgreenprint.com)



# Activity Report

## Review of the past year

### Land and Planning

Having access to affordable land is key to the success of the Community Land Trust and Community Led Housing sector. We have had some success in this aspect this year. In April 2019, having borrowed £245K from Oursankalpa at low interest, we were able to complete the purchase of the Dean Court site from Stonesfield Community Trust. This gave us the firm basis on which to proceed with the development and secure the funding we needed. We also secured full planning for the Dean Court site and finalised the Section 106 agreement. We are currently working to finalise the access arrangements.

A second success is the developing relationship with Oxford City Council who, in November 2019, agreed to work with OCLT on a project at Champion Way in Littlemore. This is a small disused garage site, owned by the council, which would provide space affordable housing. We have been working with architects [Transition By Design](#) to develop designs and secure funding for this project. Although this is subject to planning permission being approved and OCLT becoming a Registered Provider of housing, we are optimistic about this development.

### Funding

John Bloxsom, our Development Manager, secured £116,680 of funding for OCLT from the Homes England Community Led Housing Fund over the previous two years, which has helped us move forward significantly on the Dean Court development. We received funding of £11,524 over the last two years for Dean Court pre-development activity from the Low Carbon Hub run 'Oxfutures' Fund towards making the project low carbon.

We were also successful in obtaining £10,000 from Community Led Homes to support the cost of working to achieve Registered Provider of social housing status.

John also secured REACH Funding of £15,000 to develop a business plan with a view to preparing for a community share offer. We are currently investigating the feasibility of a community share offer or revolving loan fund scheme and hope to have more news to share in 2021 about this. We are aiming to move towards a sustainable financing model to purchase land and cover our core costs through our rent revenue from our housing developments. However, in the meantime, we are working on securing grant funding, gifts and legacies.

In January 2020, we were approached by a man local to Cowley who, having seen the success of Kindling Housing Cooperative in the newspaper, decided he'd like to help create another cooperative home. As a result of meeting and talking to OCLT, he left us a legacy to enable another home to be developed in future. OCLT is pleased to have had this promise and we are very grateful to him.

### Staff

We had been lucky to beat competition to secure a £20,800 Cohesive Communities grant from the National Community Land Trust Network. This money was intended to be used to make small Community-led Housing organisations more sustainable, more diverse and more membership led. With this funding, we made a huge leap at the start of 2020 by taking on our first employee. Having cycled around the world, Graham Burgess cycled into OCLT's life in January 2020 and did a wonderful job until he left for an irresistible offer of a permanent job in the Civil Service. In the interim between recruitments, the very cool headed Audrey Versteegen covered for 1 month and did a brilliant job. In May 2020, we recruited the high energy and very efficient Alice Hemming. We are now pleased to have Alice as a permanent member of staff.

Meanwhile, John has continued using his detailed knowledge and skill to overcome the myriad of hurdles to deliver the homes in Dean Court. He also masterminded the initial application for OCLT to become a Registered Provider with the Regulator of Social Housing. This was successful in September 2019 and we are now completing the next stage detailed application form.

Having paid staff capacity and energetic people on board, has made a massive difference to what we can achieve as an organisation. We thank all grant bodies and individuals who have contributed funds to enable this to happen.

## Board

Our last strategy away day at Flos in July 2019, facilitated by Liz Goold, was a successful day, which had a good impact on how we worked through strengthening relationships and commitment.

We also strengthened the Board after Charlie initiated a recruitment campaign in August 2019 and we welcomed 3 new directors, Bryony, Chris and Alison, to the team. Bryony has brought her experience in the self build sector, having worked at Graven Hill and through her current role at the National Custom and Self Build Association. Chris has brought his much needed legal eye and Alison her long background in developing social housing. All three have got stuck in and made a considerable commitment of time, energy and expertise to help us make progress. We used their induction to the Board to strengthen our recruitment and development processes.

Our Treasurer Jock is ready to step back but is meantime doing a valiant job holding the finance fort. We did a recent recruitment for a board member with finance experience and are pleased that Piotr Smok is standing for election at this AGM.

## Members

The membership currently stands at 97 members. The majority of these joined before 2016. The membership survey in February 2020, delivered by Graham, found that the membership and directorship were generally not representative of the demographics of the local population, especially in terms of age, ethnicity and location in the county.

One of the key points coming out of the last strategy session was to develop our membership. OCLT is intended to be a member-led organisation and we felt it was a priority to broaden the diversity and expand the membership, as well as doing more to engage them in our work. It was also an aspiration to gain more support from members as an additional income stream.

## Governance

As part of the process of becoming a Registered Provider, we did significant work on our governance structures and systems. Building on the work we'd done in 2014, with support from Audrey and Alice, we reviewed and consolidated our policies, procedures and handbooks. We reiterated our senior management structure to separate out finance from operational management to get better triangulation on risk and this has worked well. We also strengthened processes around financial control and Marshes, our book-keepers, introduced us to Float to manage our cash flow.



*Charlie Fisher presenting at our January event*

## Building the movement

In January 2020, Oxfordshire Community Land Trust, the Collaborative Housing Hub, Community First Oxfordshire and Oxford City Council, held a launch event for Community Led Housing in the Assembly Rooms at the Town Hall. The event was attended by 120 people. The event was sponsored by Oxford City Council and included an address by Councillor Richard

Howlett, who also serves as the city's Cooperative Champion for the council. The event presented the [Routes to Delivery](#) report for the City Council written by OCLT and Community First Oxfordshire. It also celebrated the success of community-led housing through presentations from seven housing projects from across the county, which ranged from being established for many years to those just in the set-up phase.

# Treasurer's Report

We are pleased to be able to add the Dean Court land to our asset list this year. Our income has significantly increased by 63% since last year, primarily through obtaining a number of grants (represented below as "interest free income") which were for Dean Court pre-development costs, staffing costs, consultancy to develop the business plan and costs involved in obtaining RP status. Our expenditure has also gone up given the new employee's salary and significant monies spent on legal and professional development for the Dean Court project.

During the year a new loan amounting to £245,000 was taken out from OurSankalpa, which is due to be repaid in October 2020 or can be rolled over at a higher interest rate. The loans balance also includes an external loan amounting to £21,800 that was granted in 2013/14 as well as other smaller loans from board members and associated individuals.

Although OCLT's finances have been more healthy than in previous years, there are future challenges in managing cash flow in the run up to the Dean Court project starting work on site given the large outlay of costs and the delayed payment arrangements from funders. However, we continue to monitor our cash flow using Float and via our monthly Finance and Development Committee meetings.

We are grateful to Critchleys LLP for producing our annual accounts and to Marshes LLP for providing the book-keeping service throughout the year.

## Summary of accounts

### Assets

Land 220,690  
Debtors 8,427  
Cash at Bank 54,053

Creditors: Amounts falling within one year (6,446)

Net Current Assets 56,034  
Loan (295,927)  
Total Net (liabilities) (19,203)

### Revenue Account

Opening Balance (16,735.97)  
(Deficit) for year (2,867.25)  
Closing Balance (19,603.22)  
Share Capital 87  
Balance (19,515.22)

### Income and Expenditure Account

Income  
Donations 9  
Interest Fee Income 110,295  
Membership Fees 199  
TOTAL Income 110,503

### Expenses

Operating Costs 47,645  
Legal and Professional 40,900  
Project Costs 24,512  
TOTAL Expenses 113,057

Surplus before taxation (2,554)  
Net surplus after taxation (2,554)  
Total surplus/(deficit) for year (2,554)

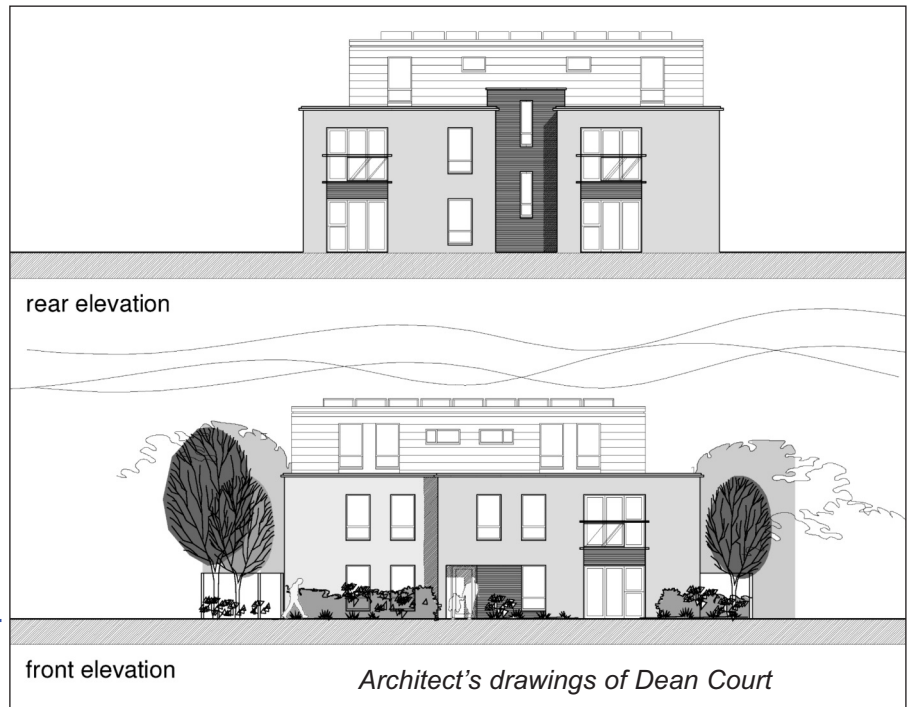
# The year ahead

## The context

Covid 19 has more than anything, exposed the inequalities in our country. This inequality is most clearly visible in the higher death rates from Covid-19 in areas of poor quality, overcrowded and often unaffordable housing compared to spacious, leafy suburbs. Providing more decent and affordable homes is a critical and urgent need. The community-led housing sector is one of the ways of doing this: homes created by people for themselves.

Sadly the Government [Planning for the Future](#) report does little to highlight Community-Led Housing. More critically the scrapping of S106 is a big concern for many in the movement. S106 monies have provided the funding for most affordable homes in our region and its inclusion in a general infrastructure levy to be paid by developers may be less effective. It is unlikely that this will cover all costs and it will set up competition between affordable housing and other forms of infrastructure such as schools and open space. Viability, which was modified by the 2018 changes to the NPPF, will become more powerful again so it is likely that there will be a reduction in affordable homes unless the government increases grant availability. Although there are quite a few references to affordable housing in the White Paper, there is a fundamental failure to revise the planning system to enable it to be delivered. These proposals as they stand are likely to make the situation worse.

OCLT is amongst the many organisations who are concerned about the likely impact on the numbers of affordable homes built in future. For more information, read responses to the report, which includes pieces by two of our Directors Bob and Sue, here.



## The Dean Court Project

Top of the agenda for several years now has been delivering the Dean Court project. The vision of a cluster of community-owned and run, eco homes that are beautiful, light and warm is attractive. The challenge though is not to be underestimated. Having cleared so many hurdles, we now face a final giant one, which is to secure the remaining funding. The project has many abnormal costs due to it being on a small constrained site with access that has been both expensive and involved a process of negotiation with the owners, The Vale of The White Horse. The installation of services on the site has also been expensive. We also anticipate implications from what is the greatest international challenge known thus far, the Covid 19 pandemic. Despite this we have recently gone out to tender for building contractors and we are hoping to begin work on site by early 2021. Our aspirational completion date is late 2021.

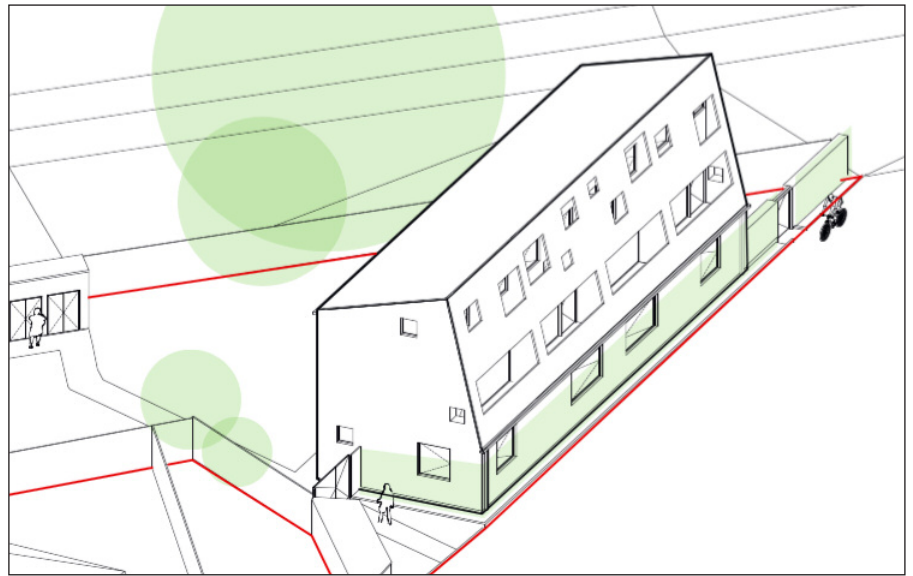
## The Champion Way Project

As we announced earlier in the year that OCLT is working with Oxford City Council and Transition By Design to develop a small disused garage site in Littlemore. The current designs include 4 housing units of 1 - 2 bedrooms. Having learned a great deal from doing the Dean Court project, especially what pitfalls to avoid, OCLT is looking forward to delivering a second beautiful and affordable eco-development for local people in housing need. We are currently at the stage of investigating funding options for the remaining pre-development costs and obtaining planning permission. If successful, we hope it could become a pilot for creating much needed housing on other small garage sites within the city.

## Building better relationships with key stakeholders

Underlying both the Dean Court and the Champion Way projects are relationships with the local authorities, Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxford City Council respectively. We see them as major stakeholders in our efforts. We are also making overtures to other local authorities and registered providers with a view to building stronger working relationships. We believe that the land trust and community-led housing models offer a different way to recover from the Covid pandemic.

We continue to work closely with the Collaborative Housing Hub, who have been supporting groups to set up land trusts and housing cooperative projects across the Thames Valley region. We also plan to bring together a range of housing and homelessness stakeholder organisations alongside the Collaborative Housing Hub through quarterly networking meetings in order to advocate and grow a more cohesive movement.



*Champion Way - the design above and a photo of the site below*



We also have good links with other CLTs in the area, particularly Thame CLT and Hook Norton CLT, who have achieved so much in such a short time. We are also developing connections with Good Food Oxford to explore access to land for food production and The City Council's Waterways Officer to investigate opportunities for land for boat moorings. Later in the year we plan to do more community organising work to build links between communities in housing need or those opposing unsustainable housing developments in their local areas.



OCLT 2019 Strategy Day

## And always..... the search for land and suitable houses

We are always on the lookout for pockets of land suitable for community-led housing using the Community Land Trust model. We are particularly interested in small pockets of land to create small clusters of flats similar to Dean Court or houses that could be bought by OCLT and converted into a housing cooperative such as Dragonfly or Kindling. We have learned from the past that we can't compete on the open market, so the ideal scenario is where a landlord

approaches us to work with them to dispose of the land or house off market. Our ambition is to hold multiple pockets of land and houses for permanently affordable homes for local people, in a parallel existence to the speculative market. We acknowledge that this is not a comfortable place to be but we have faith that there are enough philanthropic landowners out there to make this happen.

## Growing our Membership

Our aspiration, from our last strategy day, to be true to being a membership organisation and grow and diversify our membership is going to be part of a piece of work funded by the Cohesive Communities Fund and led by Alice Hemming. Some of the plans she will be developing will be a programme of events and communications work to showcase what we are already achieving with our housing projects, as well as how land trusts can be part of the solution in the post-Covid recovery.

We also want to improve the membership experience through using a more user friendly online system as well as offering members more chances to get involved in our activities. We are excited to be launching an opportunity for members to financially support the important work of OCLT through a new supporter scheme.

## Funding

Several projects have been missed altogether or delayed (e.g. Dean Court) and there are many other opportunities missed because of lack of access to both development and capital funding. Therefore, we are hoping to develop more sustainable and accessible funding streams. OCLT has often wished for a revolving loan fund such as that used in Scotland to successfully underpin a huge growth in CLTs particularly in the Highlands. We are actively involved in early stage discussions about developing such a fund for the county.



# The Board 2019 - 2020

## **John Bloxsom** Development Manager (ex-officio)

John Bloxsom is a housing professional with wide ranging experience in housing strategy and development, community housing, and project and programme management. John is an independent practitioner and former Head of Housing at Local Authorities. He has supported housing partnerships, development programmes and neighbourhood plans. John is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing, a qualified project manager and he holds a Master's in Business Administration.



## **Chris Bright** Director

Chris is a Solicitor, and runs a business he founded that invests in and develops residential property, as well as letting and managing a mixed portfolio of market and affordable rented homes. He is Chair of Teachers' Housing Association, which is active in general needs and sheltered housing and he was previously a trustee of The Porch – a day centre in East Oxford for the homeless and vulnerably housed. He is committed to working to ensure we maintain cohesive communities with affordable housing for all and has lived in Oxford for over 25 years.



## **Dr Sue Brownill** Director

Sue is a Reader in Urban Policy and Governance at Oxford Brookes University, whose research and teaching interests focus on the interaction of communities with urban planning and regeneration. Sue has been a board member of Oxford Citizens Housing Association since 2003 and before moving to Oxford worked with community organisations in London's Docklands.



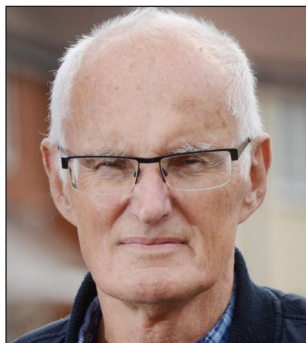
## **Jock Coats** Treasurer

Jock's first career was on the Stock Exchange culminating in private client equities portfolio management. He now works in IT support and development, moving to Oxford in 1993 and to Oxford Brookes University in 1996. Jock served on the City Council for three years up till 2002 and with Fran was a founder member of OCLT in 2003. He has been a governor of Oxford Brookes University, chair of the Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Forum and a director of Social Enterprise South East (SE2 Partnership). He has recently completed his first degree in Economics and Politics.



## **Bob Colenutt** Chair

Bob is a housing and planning researcher with a career in community planning and local government regeneration. He was involved in the campaigns which led to the community-led Coin Street housing development on the South Bank in London. In May 2020 his book [The Property Lobby](#) was published. He has lived in Oxford for the past 10 years.



## **Charlie Fisher** Director

Charlie joined OCLT as Project Manager in July 2014 and since finishing this role has continued to participate as a director. Charlie trained as an architect specialising in development and emergency practice and is currently researching affordable housing delivery models for a PhD at Oxford Brookes. His experiences of working for local architecture practice Transition by Design, his passion for housing issues, residential design and participatory techniques, together with his growing expertise in affordable housing, make him an invaluable member of the Board.



## **Deborah Glass Woodin** Director

Deborah is a community activist and joined the Board in 2017 to support the Irving Building Project. Deborah first trained as an Occupational Therapist in Oxford in the early 80s, then worked and campaigned in the Middle East for seven years. She returned to Oxford in 1992 becoming a City and then a County Councillor. Apart from her interest in addressing the challenges of housing in Oxford (through Co-housing and the Land Trust) she is part of Oxford GreenPrint workers co-op, is a founder member/manager of South Oxford Farmers and Community Market and director of Hogacre Common Eco Park and is working to set up a local micro-dairy. She is a widow with two children, now young adults and lives in South Oxford.



## **Bryony Harrington** Director

Bryony is the Head of the Right to Build Task Force, a government-supported body dedicated to helping local authorities, landowners and community groups to scale up opportunities for homes designed by those who live in them. Bryony joined the Task Force from Graven Hill, the UK's largest Custom and Self-Build development where she helped coordinate the project through the early stages of its set-up, well into the sales and construction phase. Bryony has always hoped to build a home on her family farm in North Oxfordshire and is an ardent believer in the power of community-led housing and self-build to improve lives. Before Graven Hill she spent seven years in the music industry, travelling the world as a Tour Manager for bands and running a live music production company.



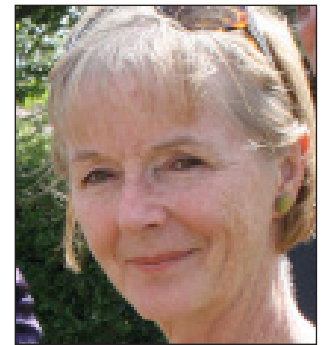
**Alice Hemming**  
**Co-ordinator**  
**(ex-officio)**

Alice joined OCLT in May 2020 as the part-time Coordinator. Her professional background includes supporting community organisations at The CAG Project Oxfordshire; doing community-led green space development at Groundwork London and setting up The Children’s Allotment, a childcare cooperative in Oxford. She is a voluntary Director of Makespace Oxford. She also lives in Dragonfly Housing Coop in Oxford and is involved in the Radical Routes housing cooperative network.



**Fran Ryan**  
**Secretary**

Fran is a freelance Chartered Occupational Psychologist and works part time in Human Resources in the private and public sectors. She previously had 13 years management experience in financial services. Although not a housing professional Fran has developed considerable expertise in alternative approaches to affordable housing provision and is particularly focused on reducing housing inequality.



**Alison Matthias**  
**Director**

Alison has had a career in housing property development for housing associations. She has 20 years of experience including project management of housing development schemes: large scale major repairs and re-improvement programmes, multi-million pound new-build housing development programmes, developing and managing housing for vulnerable people, and developing housing for older people. She has housing management experience for an Inner London local authority. As Development and New Business Director at Oxford Citizens Housing Association she managed development programmes and procured new business. She has project managed stock transfer of a local authority estate to a Registered Provider.



Alison also has twelve years of experience in Housing Policy and Strategy at Homes England, managing policy on environmental sustainability and existing homes. She completed a secondment as an Area Manager at HE, managing funding contracts with Registered Providers.

**Vyv Salmon**  
**Director**

Vyvyan lives and works in Oxford and has over 40 years’ experience in managing residential and small-scale commercial property. He is currently self-employed managing a small residential property portfolio. He has extensive knowledge of town planning having been a lecturer in Economics for Estate Management and Town Planning students at Oxford Brookes University 1973 to 1989. He has extensive board director experience and is currently a Board Member of South West Foundation.



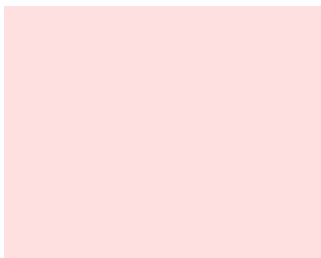
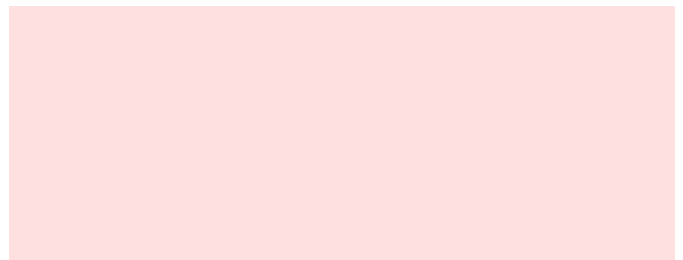
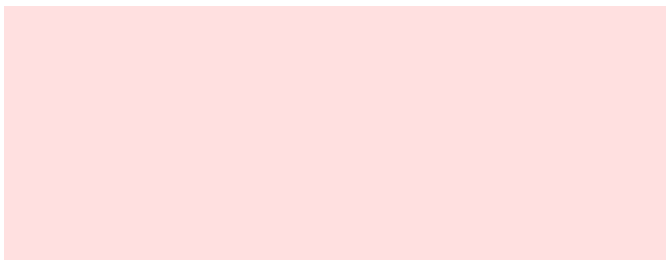
# Oxfordshire Community Land Trust

## 2019 - 2020 Annual Report

OCLT exists to promote and secure community-owned land for permanently affordable homes, business premises and other facilities for community benefit.

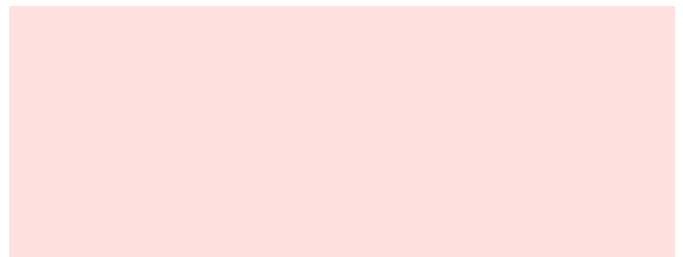
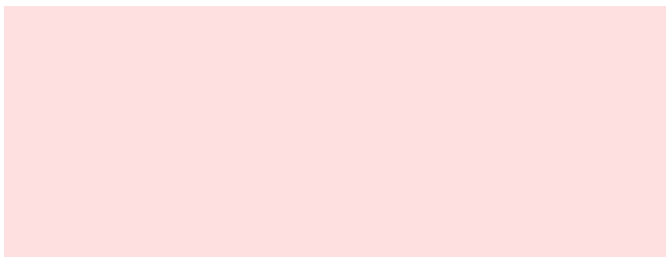
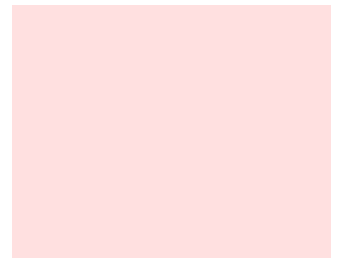
It aims to work with local communities to gradually build this sector county-wide with its current major focus on Oxford.

It is a community benefit society and its Rules state that any surplus must be ploughed back into community assets. It is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).



**With thanks to the following for their continued support:**

Homes England, Low Carbon Hub,  
TSH Architects, Reach,  
The National Community Land Trust



**Oxfordshire  
Community  
Land Trust**