

About CLTs

Community land trusts (CLTs) are set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community, like community enterprises, food growing or workspaces. CLTs act as long-term stewards of housing, ensuring that it remains genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now but for every future occupier.

Why CLTs?

People set up and join CLTs for all sorts of different reasons.

It might be that there is a lack of affordable homes for young people or families in the village or neighbourhood, where local people are having to move out of the place they call home, and communities want to do something about it.

Or it might be that the area has suffered years of decline and disinvestment, leaving empty properties and blight, and the community want to bring homes back into use and turn their neighbourhood around.

Or it might be that the community is doing a Neighbourhood Plan and they want to take charge about how that Plan is then delivered.

In all these cases, the community wants to make their area a better place to live, and they want more control over how that happens.

The Community Land Trust movement in 2019:

- There are 263 legally incorporated Community Land Trusts in England and Wales.
- 935 CLT homes have been built to date
- More than 16,000 community led homes in the pipeline
- Over 17,000 people are members of CLTs

Community led housing

Community land trusts are one form of community led housing, other types include cohousing, development trusts and housing co-operatives. Projects that are genuinely community-led all share common principles:

1. The community is integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions like what is provided, where, and for who. They don't necessarily have to initiate the conversation, or build homes themselves.
2. There is a presumption that the community group will take a long term formal role in the ownership, stewardship or management of the homes.
3. The benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

Developing non-housing assets

Community Energy Generation

Community groups are considering how they can make their communities more sustainable by generating renewable energy. This not only satisfies the appetite in many communities for caring for the environment, but it also provides an opportunity for a CLT to generate income.

The technologies most suitable to a particular location will depend on a number of site specific factors, including the size of the development and its heating and electricity requirements and the natural resources available to it within the land boundary.

Food and Farming

Some CLTs have made land available near to the homes built for allotments, and some groups have larger ambitions for community owned farms. CLTs can also set up community shops, take over the local pub, develop workspaces or other community assets or enterprises.

Defined in law

CLTs are not a legal form in themselves (like a Company). However, CLTs are **defined in law** so there are certain things that a CLT must be and do:

- A CLT must be set up to benefit a defined community;
- A CLT must be not-for-private-profit. This means that they can, and should, make a surplus as a community business, but that surplus must be used to benefit the community;
- Local people living and working in the community must have the opportunity to join the CLT as members;
- Those members control the CLT (usually through a board being elected from the membership).

CLTs have to take on a legal form that works for them. For more information about the different legal formats contact the National CLT Network.

(Extract from National CLT Network website www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk)