

**Eden Build your Home, Build your Community
Lancaster Cohousing**



**Build your Home,
Build your Community**

Thursday 4th July 2019, Rheged Centre, Penrith

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Lancaster
Cohousing



Lessons for cohousing – and for affordable homes

Eden DC: build your home, build your community
July 4th 2019

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Lancaster Cohousing - people

- At Halton, 3 miles east of Lancaster
- Mixture of locals and people from further afield
- Ages - 1y to retired
- Wide range of background
- Want to live, broadly, in a more social, ecological and sustainable way (with some different priorities, in detail);
- Willing to share; and to contribute to running things

An 'Intentional' community

Lessons for cohousing – and for affordable homes

1. **Energy and poverty:** make homes easy and cheap to run: zero carbon and very low energy cost
2. **Sharing by design:** plan schemes as communities, not ‘suburbs’: enable sharing, for sustainability
3. **Community building:** building your living community is different to achieving ‘the build’

How can we empower and support the poorest and most vulnerable in our society, to make a sustainable, zero carbon transition?

1. Energy and poverty: make homes easy and cheap to run: zero carbon and very low energy cost – build to *Passivhaus* standard

Win-win-win outcomes:


- **People:** very low fuel bills (incl. no gas standing charge), avoid fuel poverty, good health, no dampness. A snug, healthy, comfortable home provides a safe base for living from;
- **Planet:** Zero CO₂ emissions, or net positive (with solar PV etc);
- **Managers:** well-built homes; happier families who take care and stay longer; minimises rent arrears, tenant voids, maintenance, repair hassles and costs.



2. Sharing by design: plan for community, not 'suburbs'



**Lancaster
Cohousing**

- 35 private homes, plus shared communal buildings  (plus 6 freehold homes)
- [nearly] all outside green or paved space is shared, managed as a community

Sharing by design: socialising, transport, food, washing, re-use

Common house



Outside space



Car club + bikes



Food store:
organic, low-plastic food
bought wholesale; say
 $\frac{1}{2}$ (or more) of
weekly shop?

Laundry



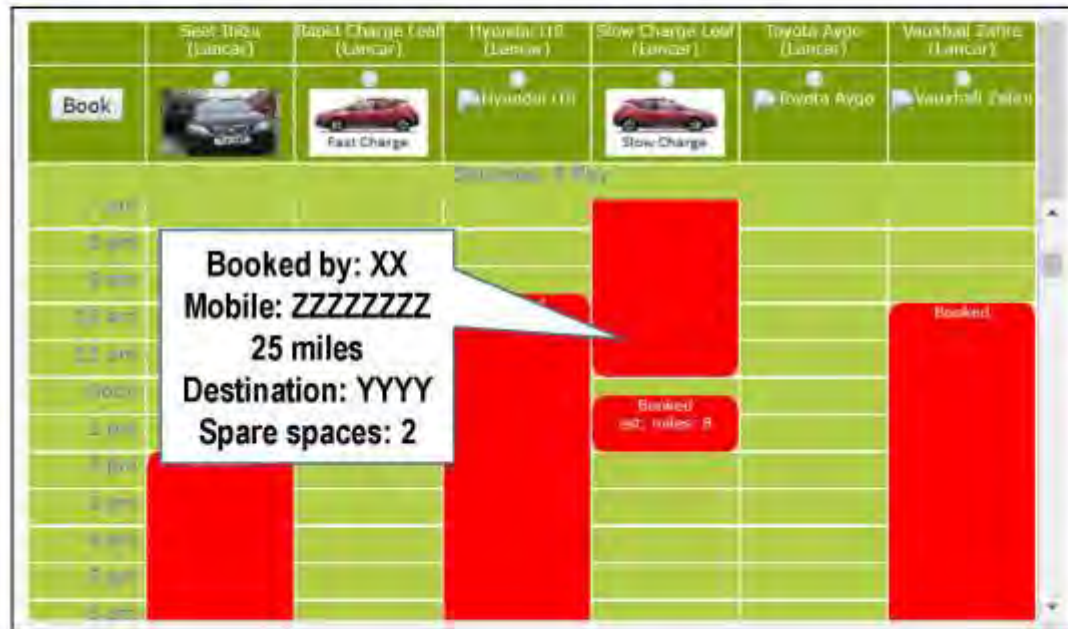
'Boutique':
offering stuff
for direct re-
use; rest taken
by Oxfam if
not locally
re-used.



How many of these can be helped to happen, after occupation, in any community scheme?

'Lancar' car club – key features for successful sharing?

- clever website makes it very easy to book a car
- and also enables *car and trip sharing*



25-30 homes have given up their private cars:

- 35 households, 55 residents
- 15 parking spaces
- 6 'Lancar' cars (2 electric)
- 5 private parking places – 4 currently allocated
- 4 visitor spaces



2. Plan schemes as communities - applying 'sharing by design' for affordable homes and new cohousing



As Proposed Site Block Plan **OPTION 3**

Two planned schemes at Halton

- Cars round outside, maximum shared green space, minimum tarmac
- Layout can enable neighbours to get to know each other, and to collaborate in use and maintenance of the shared community green space
- Members can help in design choices
- Green space can be used for shared food growing
- Shared resources: potential to provide shared transport, maybe a Car Club?

3. Community building: building your *living* community is different to achieving 'the build'..

Develop Vision, plan and build

Strong, focussed Vision; entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking, needs 'plan, design & deliver' skills

Vision
Intergenerational cohousing community
Built on ecological values
Encourage social interaction
Cutting edge example of sustainable design and living
Close links to the wider community

Transition in what 'building community' means: newer members, more people, change in focus

Occupy, live the Vision in detail; support, and thrive

Translating the Vision into detail, for shared well-being; more members and diversity is a strength, but brings a range of views to be reconciled; and more risk – averse? Needs nurturing, socialising, conflict resolution skills

What to do about this?

- for cohousing, expect this change; plan for the 'living in' stage;
- for all community schemes, plan and act to create community at this stage too.

Summary: lessons for cohousing – and for affordable homes

1. **Energy and poverty:** make homes easy and cheap to run: zero carbon and very low energy cost: *build to Passivhaus standard – a win-win-win for people, planet and management*
2. **Sharing by design:** plan schemes as communities, not 'suburbs': enabling sharing for sustainability – *and using cohousing examples, how much can we do this for non-'intentional' communities, too?*
3. **Community building:** building your living community is different to achieving 'the build' – *for cohousing, expect this change; for all community schemes, make this part of the plan, too.*

Good, healthy, affordable, homes, in supportive communities, provide the bedrock for everyone to thrive to live fulfilling, in-control lives, through difficult times. This must include the poorest and most vulnerable..