

Housing Event speech, Rheged 4th July 2019

Good evening everyone. My name is Maddy Teasdale and I am the Chair of Patterdale Parish Community Land Trust. Firstly, I would like to say thank you to the organisers of this event for inviting us to be part of it. The establishment of our community land trust is the result of several years of hard work by a dedicated group of local residents, so I am grateful, and also very proud to be able to tell you about our journey so far.

Many of you will know where Patterdale Parish is, but I thought it would be useful to give an overview of our area for those who aren't familiar with it. Our parish sits at the head of Ullswater, under the shadow of the Helvellyn mountain range, and is home to around 300 people but visited by hundreds of thousands more every year. Our beautiful landscape, shaped by over a thousand years of farming, forestry and mining, attracts visitors for lots of different reasons. It also means that many people want to make it their home either permanently or for just some of the year. Around 50% of the properties in the Parish are now holiday lets or second homes. For example, a group of 20 small terraced houses that once housed miners and their families, now only have 3 permanent residents. These houses now sell for at least £350,000, totally out of reach of local people, whose families perhaps once lived there, but who still live in the valley, mostly in rented accommodation. The average household income for the parish is just over £36000, and the average house price is £359,000, meaning that the house prices are 9.8 times the mean annual household income.

Young people have to remain living with their parents or move to town to be able to afford a place of their own. High house prices and private rents make it very difficult for businesses to employ and retain permanent experienced staff as there is nowhere for them to live long term other than staff accommodation. We are unable to provide carers to our ageing population, many having to move into residential care, and when an event such as Storm Desmond happens when we were cut off from the outside world for 2 days, we have a reality check on how dependent we are on the younger generations in the valley to help with the hard physical work of clearing debris and shovelling mud, invaluable assisting our older population.

Our housing group was first loosely formed in 2012 following a public meeting held to discuss a local lettings policy for the properties in the village owned by Eden Housing Association. Some of their newer housing was covered by a Section 106, restricting the letting to local permanent people in the parish and surrounding area. However, some of their older properties were not covered by this and meant that they were open to the whole of Cumbria. This was obviously frustrating for local people in need of housing who already lived and worked here, so we worked closely with Eden Housing Association and the parish council to develop a local lettings policy for Patterdale

Parish. This policy was formally adopted in 2013 and is certainly doing the job it was intended to, with all properties being let to people from the parish so far. This was the first achievement of our then very informal housing group, and from then we have been working hard to protect and provide affordable housing in the parish.

In recent years the scale of the problem has become apparent to the authorities and policy makers, and they all became very aware of the long term, detrimental effect of losing our local communities. Slowly this awareness and concern converted into action plans, and funding becoming available to help tackle the issue. In 2015 the Ullswater Valley Local plan identified Affordable housing as an issue that the local community wanted to do something about. This gave the housing group the evidence to take things forward, and to help us do this we asked our local Community housing adviser if he would work with us to help us to try and make something happen. He was able to provide us with 3 days funded by the National CLT network. Even for a committed proactive group we knew it was a lot to take on, we are all volunteers with work and family commitments, but we decided to push on.

One of the first actions we took was to invite the local National Park planner to come to the parish and walk around with us to identify possible sites that would be acceptable to him and fit with national park policies. This was very useful and constructive and led to us talking to landowners to find out which sites would be available for possible housing development.

The next step was to identify housing need in the parish. About this time, luckily for us, Eden District Council received their share of the Community Housing Fund, and this meant we had access to funding for the survey, and also access to their Housing policy and project officers. Working closely with them we designed and then distributed a housing needs survey to the parish in March 2018.

Through the fund we were also able to apply for the costs of employing our adviser for ongoing advice and support, and for the costs of becoming legally incorporated as a community land trust. The National CLT network were able to give us advice and support through this process, providing us with the model rules for the incorporation and organising this. We chose to become a noncharitable Community Benefit Society and have 7 directors and 4 other members, though this is increasing all the time as people become aware of us. I feed back to the public about the progress of the CLT at the parish council meetings, we have a Facebook page (Ullswater Affordable Housing) and are in the process of developing a website with funding provided from the national CLT network.

It became clear from the survey results that the level of housing need in the parish was high and we were justified in wanting to develop affordable homes. We had a great return rate of 48% and of the 109 surveys returned, 25 respondents stated they were in need of affordable housing and needed to move within 5 years, and 7 stated

they needed housing now. The preferred tenure was 2 bedroomed properties, and mostly needed for young people and small families.

We now had to decide on how we were going to develop the properties. As a parish council managing a cottage that had been left to the parish after the first world war, we were all very aware of the time and effort this took and knew that we did not want to develop and manage properties ourselves. The main aim of the CLT was to provide affordable, local occupancy homes in perpetuity, and decided that one of the best ways to do this would be to use a development lease model in partnership with a housing association. This way our CLT would always own the land and we could ensure the properties would never be sold.

We asked Eden Housing association if they would like to work with us and as we had already worked closely with them in the past it was easy to build on this relationship, and we knew they had also done other developments in other Lake District villages. We initially met to discuss the development lease model approach that we wanted to take and have since met several times to discuss the process and go into more detail of how our partnership will work both on the ground and in legal terms. Our aim is for the CLT to purchase the site subject to planning permission, and for EHA to lease the land and develop and manage the properties.

We have been fortunate that the funding for our CLT and project has been provided from the National CLT network and the Community housing fund through Eden District Council. The land acquisition costs will also be covered by the fund and this is hugely helpful in freeing up money to go towards getting the right build and finish for the development, such as for stone facing. We have discussed with Eden Housing association what we would like the development to look like and we all agree that due to the sensitivity of the site the design and finish is probably the most important aspect of the development. We want the local community to agree to and like the development and be proud to have it in their village as a brilliant example of how community working partnerships can be a way to provide well designed affordable housing for our future generations.

At a meeting I was once asked by a very disgruntled older gentleman who had retired to the area, why I was pushing for affordable housing here, 'we had no places to put housing 'like that''! I replied that I had spent most of my adult life trying to find an affordable, secure home in the place that I was born and grew up, where my family and friends were, and where I wanted my children to grow up in so they continued the connection to the land and our history here. I was the first generation of my family that have been in this valley for 200 years mining and farming, unable to afford to buy a home here. I worked as a qualified health professional, my husband works in his family business and there are many more people just like us in the Lake District. We don't feel that we deserve to live here, it's just that we are part of here and it is part of

us, just like the hefted Herdwicks on the fell. The Lake district is a very special and unique place with a unique dialect, culture and history. With the loss of local permanent communities, you don't only lose those things used by them, such as schools, shops, and local services; you lose the local culture, dialect and knowledge of our history. The children never learn about the history of their landscape and community for them to pass on the knowledge to their children, they don't get to hear the dialect spoken amongst the hill farmers, or listen to the stories and banter about folk and places when sat in the local pub at a village gathering, quietly listening, waiting to be taken home: but only when the singing has finished.

I hope this has been useful and thank you for listening.