

# TCLT – Tenterden Community Land Trust

**In late November the community of Tenterden gathered to discuss and debate the prospect of new affordable homes organised by the Tenterden Community Land Trust (TCLT).**

**CommunityAd** wanted to find out more about the intentions of the group and how they would implement new 'genuinely affordable' housing, thankfully, we had the pleasure of Tessa's time who is an accredited housing advisor who has been working for the TCLT since May 2019.

## So, Tessa, what is your role within the 'Tenterden Community Land Trust'?

I am the Rural and Community Housing Manager at Action with Communities in Rural Kent. I'm also an Accredited Community Led Housing Advisor; my role is to provide advice and support to community led housing groups.

I also work with local authorities, housing associations and parish councils to develop Local Needs Housing, which is affordable (mainly rented) housing for people in villages; the nearest such scheme to Tenterden is in Rolvenden. This is not a CLT but it is a way of providing the type of affordable housing that people in villages need.



## What are the aims of the TCLT and how is it hoping to implement the aims?

TCLT wants to provide genuinely affordable housing for people with a connection to Tenterden and St Michaels. This will prevent people having to leave for housing elsewhere, enabling young people and families to stay, keeping the community alive and diverse. Very often what is described as affordable housing is not actually affordable; there is a shortage of social housing, and private rented housing can be expensive and in high demand.



A CLT can ensure that the homes they develop are truly affordable, remain affordable in perpetuity and are only for those who have a connection to the town.

TCLT will identify what types of affordable housing are needed through a housing needs survey. They will need to find land on which to develop the homes; this could be land on its own or possibly on a site where a larger development is planned; this would ensure that the affordable element of the development provides what is actually needed in Tenterden for local people. They will consult with members of the CLT and the community to ensure their proposals are supported. They will also need to raise funds to develop; there are various sources of funding and ways to finance CLTs.

**A public information event was held recently, how did it go with the locals? What were the reactions like to what was discussed?**

The event went very well; reactions were positive and people discussed the difficulties they, or people they know have in affording properties in Tenterden, either to buy or to rent. They spoke about relatives having to move from the town to cheaper areas. I think everyone these days knows that house prices are out of reach for many people and they get the need for more affordable and secure housing. People I spoke to felt that a CLT was a good idea and a good way to provide the type of housing that is needed in perpetuity. They liked that it's a community project and that anyone who supports its aims can get involved. Around 45 people signed up to be a member of the CLT.



**How important is it to the TCLT to maintain the natural beauty of Tenterden?**

TCLT want to find a site that the majority of the community support, acknowledging that finding land won't be easy. The members of the Steering Group all live in or have strong connections to Tenterden and they are all sensitive to maintaining its natural beauty. The challenge will be finding a site that meets the housing needs of the community while at the same time being generally acceptable to the community, but this is what the CLT will strive for. The very nature of a CLT means that it has community support; although it would be unrealistic to expect that everyone would support a specific site, the aim is to find general consensus.

**What makes Tenterden such a pleasant community to be a part of?**

I don't live in Tenterden so am probably not the best person to say, but I've been coming here since I was a child, having previously lived in Pluckley. I find that it has a nice feel, not too big but large enough for it to be a vibrant place. Everyone that I've met seems to care about their community and wants to keep it a place where all can continue to live.

Community Land Trusts are a form of community-led housing which also includes cohousing, co-operatives and self-build. To find out more you can visit our website: [www.ruralkent.org.uk](http://www.ruralkent.org.uk) and like our Facebook page; Kent Community Led Housing.

