



DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR FY 2024, ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2024

The purpose of the Holme Valley Community Land Trust (CLT), trading as **EcoHolmes**, is to build affordable low-energy homes for the community by the community. This is the fifth annual Directors Report of the Holme Valley Community Land Trust and covers the year 2024.

OUR TRUSTEES / DIRECTORS

- ✓ meet regularly to discuss the strategic direction of the EcoHolmes CLT in the Holme Valley.

OUR MISSION

- ✓ Is to work with people of the Holme Valley to hold property and create sustainable and affordable homes in vibrant communities.

OUR VISION

- ✓ to be widely recognised for innovative community-led developments that meet local housing and social needs . The homes and community buildings run by the CLT will be affordable, accessible and demonstrate best practice in both sustainable building and respect for local heritage .

2024 Community Land Trust (CLT) WORK.

Members:	Subscribers:	Trustees/Directors:	Board Meetings:
119 (+9)	337 (+7)	7	6
Working Group Meetings:	Sites and Technical	Members and Community Engagement	
	6	6	



The year was focused on **progressing the project to build ten affordable homes at the Chippings site on the edge of Scholes Village**. Planning for the project was sought in July 2022. Full planning permission to build the project was received in October 2024.

During 2024, anticipating a positive result to the planning application, our development partner, Connect Housing ran a tender process for the build with tender documents issued to 4 builders in June 2024. By late summer, the only quotes received were significantly higher than the estimates produced at the design stage of the project.

What emerged is that the Chippings scheme has faced two significant challenges. Firstly, the two years to achieve planning consent, coinciding with difficult construction market conditions, has resulted in increases to the cost of build, and secondly the tenderers raised queries about the stability of the quarry cliff face and the ground remediation work, which increased their own cost risk provisions. The effect of these factors was to potentially significantly increase the build cost of the scheme, to a point where without reduction, the ability to rent the homes at a social, or affordable rate was threatened, and also to miss last year's window for the limited government grant funding available.

The relationship with our housing association partner for the scheme, Connect, has grown in the face of these challenges and potential solutions to the challenges are being found. The work of 2025 will be to reduce the perceived ground risks posed by the site, and hence the build price, by further ground investigations and enabling works, and to secure the Government grant available for affordable housing from Homes England.



The other specific project under consideration in 2024 was the **repurposing and retrofitting of the old Council Office building in Holmfirth**, currently vacant. Kirklees Council had indicated an intention to sell this property as long ago as 2023, and we notified them of our interest. Accordingly, we had funded the creation of a design and feasibility study to repurpose the property into residential energy-efficient 1 and 2 bed flats for affordable rent.

This study indicated that, due to the likely retrofitting cost, the project could not be made self-financing and would require significant subsidy/grant funding for the residential units to be able to be let at affordable rents. Furthermore, the promised auction of the property has not materialised, and we await news on the sale process.

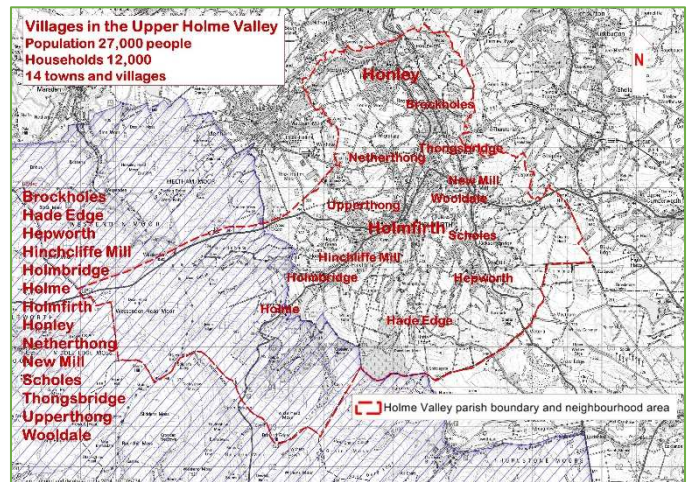


A successful community event was held in Honley in January 2024 with good engagement and several helpful suggestions made by attendees.

In September 2024, the Trustees recommitted to the direction and policies of the Trust in a half day awayday discussion and in November 2024 we had a stall at the Big Community Event in Holmfirth which successfully publicised our work and gathered additional support.

A key element of gaining the planning permission for the Chippings site was having a detailed **housing need study (HNS)** based on detailed survey work and assessments to demonstrate the unmet need for housing in the Scholes area.

In order to support future planning applications, EcoHolmes are engaging with a partner, Arc4, who carried out the Scholes HD9.1 postcode HNS study and can provide similar studies for other areas in the Holme Valley. We are currently seeking funding for carrying these studies. This information will guide our efforts as to where to seek to build EcoHolmes in the Holme Valley, as well as providing useful evidence on the unmet need for affordable housing in the Holme Valley.



We continue to **seek new Members and Trustees** to help with our work. We would be particularly interested in **suggestions for or offers of land or sites** which may allow the building of future EcoHolmes for those local people in need of affordable housing in our community.

The Trustees/Directors
EcoHolmes CLT