ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Seeking to acquire land in the Upper Ore Valley to save and enhance urban woodland and green space for community use and to protect animal habitat.

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

This report covers the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Contact:

Ore Community Land Trust, Ore Centre, 455 Old London Road, Hastings, TN35 5BH
e-mail: ore.clt@hotmail.com
www.orecommunitylandtrust.org.uk
www.facebook.com/OreCommunityLandTrust

ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Ore Community Land Trust was formed in 2009 by Ore Valley Action with the purpose of:

Seeking to acquire land in the Upper Ore Valley to save and enhance urban woodland and green space for community use and to protect animal habitat.

It is a charitable (membership) organisation that has built up a considerable body of community support and has developed very good working relationships with many local and Borough wide groups and organisations.

In 2016 the Trust will be seeking to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The Trust is a member organisation of Hastings Voluntary Action.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To acquire land to protect and enhance available urban green space, animal habitat and accessible open space for community use.

2. To acquire and manage community land, buildings and associated assets for environmental benefit and sustainable development of community amenities.

3. To advance the education of the public in conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

4. To provide and assist in the provision of recreational facilities and activities for the public as a whole and for those who, by reason of their youth, age, infirmity, disablement, ethnicity, financial hardship or social or economic circumstances, have need of such facilities.

5. To organise and assist in organising community events and activities associated with the work of the Trust and to promote community development and social cohesion.

6. To help in the provision, improvement and maintenance of footpaths and cycle ways for travel to work and education and for leisure and exercise.

7. To contribute to the advancement of education, training, work experience and volunteering.

8. To involve the community in the development of the Trust and its work and in planning new projects and initiatives.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2015/16

Committee Members (Elected at AGM 2015 or continuing their term.)

Tony Polain	Chair
Becky Polain	Secretary
Meg Harmer	Treasurer
Ian Sier	Special Projects Officer
Derek Rainer	Minutes Secretary
Aubrey Ingleton	

Ex Officio Committee Member (appointed in 2014)

Cllr Tania Charman (Tressell Ward)

MEMBERS

At the end of March 2016 Ore Community Land Trust had 44 members.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Following on from last year's historic achievement in saving Speckled Wood, the re-designation of the wood as protected open space was formally adopted by Hastings Borough Council last September.

Having achieved part of our primary purpose, it is now necessary for our organisation to change from a lobbying and rescue role to that of ownership and management. Together, we have saved Speckled Wood from being lost to development and now we need to continue that work to create a community owned woodland for all ages and abilities, including play space for children, disabled access and a range of other amenities. There are also questions of long-term management to improve the health of the wood, to combat the negative effect of invasive species and to introduce a greater range of bio-diversity.

In order to achieve this Ore Community Land Trust will need to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This change in legal status will better enable us to raise funds and acquire land. We shall also need members of the local community to step forward both to take on some of the hands-on work in the wood and also to become trustees of the new charity to ensure its effective management on behalf the residents of Ore.

Tony Polain
Ore Community Land Trust Chair

ORE CLT PROJECTS IN 2015/16

Ore CLT have a number of projects in hand, but most of these have been put on hold whilst we await the progress of our application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This change in legal status will better enable us to raise funds and acquire land to make these projects a reality.

Projects at Planning Stage

- **Reactivate the allotment plots in Speckled Wood**

  Sections of Speckled Wood have been used historically for allotments. We aim to recovery these disused allotments for community food growing.

- **Ore Community Shop (with Big Local)**

  As part of their commitment to a lasting legacy, the Big Local are interested in establishing a community shop as a local amenity. Ore CLT are in negotiations to act as a junior partner in this venture.

- **Expanded Ore Village Green**

  Thanks to the generous grant funding from the Isabel Blackman Foundation and the Big Local, it was possible to engage a local landscape architect, Jeremy Linden, to arrange a survey and produce a very exciting design for a Village Green, that could be created on land below the existing Green, off Old London Road. This was produced in record time in order to allow it to be submitted with the Ore CLT presentation to DMP Public Examination.

  A survey of local opinion carried out in the summer of 2014, demonstrated strong public support for this idea.

  It is hoped that this work can be started once our CIO status is established.

Projects in Progress

- **An annual Speckled Wood Celebration Day**

  Having been instrumental in the campaign to save Speckled Wood, Ore CLT wanted to mark this victory with a celebration. As the wood is worth celebrating in its own right, it is hoped that this will become an annual event.

- **Ore Valley Greenway - Route Design Speckled Wood Section.**

  The proposed Hastings Greenway would form a largely traffic-free network of leisure, amenity and utility, walking and safe cycling routes, which will also be accessible for people with disabilities. It would bring huge benefits for sustainable and cheap transport, health and fitness and social opportunities. The planned routes run from the Town Centre to Ore, Silverhill, Hollington and Mayfield and the Conquest hospital.

  A project to design and undertake a full public consultation on this key part of the Hastings Greenway network was taken on in 2014. A project group of local organisations was set up and a successful grant application made to the Big Local North East Hastings fund.

  These shared routes for walking and cycling and with disability access, run from Ore Station to the Ridge via the Broomgrove Estate on one side of the rail corridor and to Ore Village via Speckled Wood on the other. They have been adopted by Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council for the Hastings Local Plan and the Hastings Walking and Cycling Strategy. Future funding for the construction seems to be very likely.

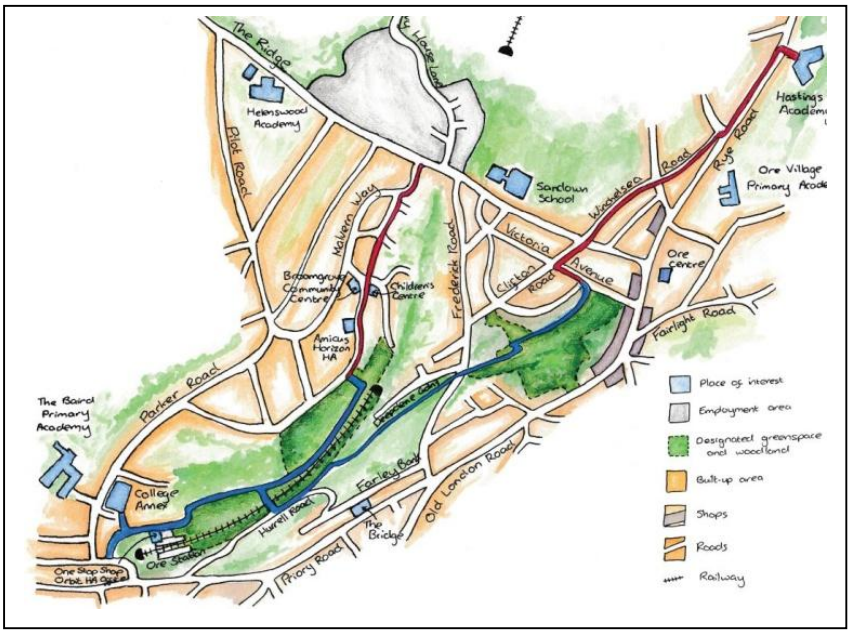
  The Ore CLT contribution, working with the Hastings Greenway Group, is to get the design and costings for the routes and carry out community consultation so that a strong case for funding can be made.

The first part of the funding, courtesy of the Big Local, was received earlier this year. This enabled us to commission a design report from Earthscapes Design on the Speckled Wood section of the route.

The report will cover much more than just the actual design and will address concerns regarding terrain, and gradients plus ecological concerns such as Japanese Knotweed and the local badger population. We expect to be in receipt of the report sometime in August. We shall be inviting public opinion on the report before moving on to the next stage of the process, which is to seek funding for the route's construction.

We have also engaged in early conversations with the Heart of Hasting CLT over the greenway route in the lower valley. HOH CLT have ambitions plans to develop the old power station site by and for unemployed, local people. They are very interested in the benefits that the greenway could bring for access to that area. There is also the possibility that our project may generate some employment for their members.

We have already established a positive relationship with HOH CLT and expect to be working closely with them in future.

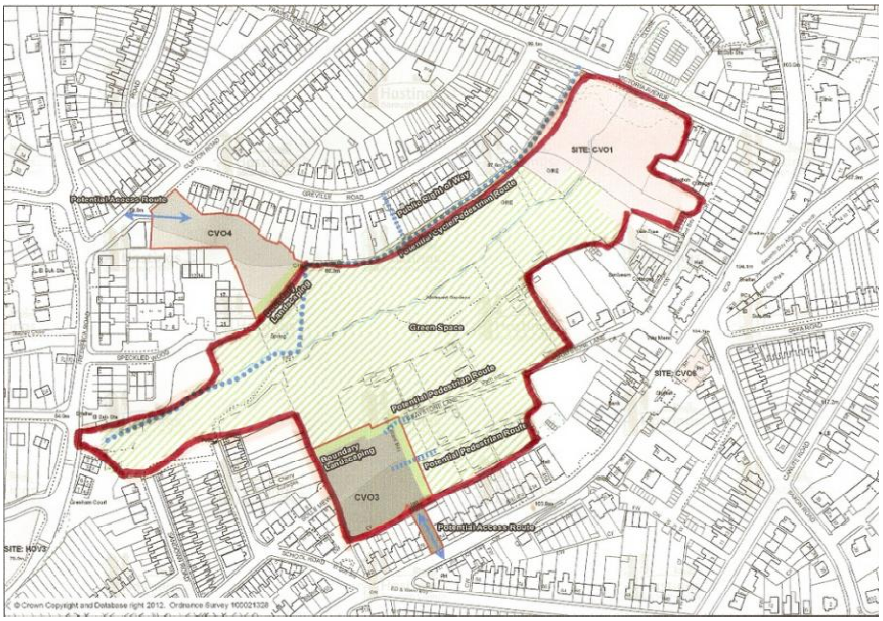


We would like to express our gratitude for the financial contributions made by the Big Local and the Ore Community Shop. Without the generosity of these organisations, it would not have been possible to make progress on these projects.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

- **DMP** - The big news of the year of course is the culmination of the process to have Speckled Wood re-designated as protected open space.

  Hastings Development Management Plan was adopted at a full Council meeting on the 23rd of September, 2015. The area of Speckled Wood that will now be protected from development includes the site next to Victoria Avenue and the small site behind School Road, as recommended by the Planning Inspector at the DMP Examination. Only the small area of land from Clifton Road is designated for housing development.



  This means that almost all of Speckled Wood must be kept as urban green space, which is a great victory for the 10 year, community campaign to save this important woodland valley.

- **Ore Village Green Project** – Further meetings have been held with the council regarding this land and its transfer is on hold until our CIO status is in place.

- **Publicity** has continued, via the Ore CLT web site and Facebook page, and by the use of the Ore CLT notice board above the Green.

- **Membership** - Ore CLT membership was increased by 19% during the last year.

- **Public Meetings** - Ore CLT has held two public meetings. Our AGM last June and a Christmas function last December. Both meetings were very successful and proved popular with the public.

- **Ore Village Fair** – Ore CLT once again organised and managed the village fair at the Ore Centre in May

- **Financial Health** - Ore CLT is financially sound and continues to make funding applications for the development of its role and projects and for land acquisition costs and conservation and enhancement work.

- **Ore Valley Greenway** - the past several months has seen work conducted on behalf of Ore Community Land Trust to produce a design report for the Speckled Wood section of the Ore Valley Greenway.

- **Speckled Wood Footpath Network** – Ore Community Land Trust has been working in conjunction with the Ore Valley Floorers to maintain and extend the footpath network in the wood.

- **The Big Local** – members of the Ore CLT committee attended a Big Local Away Day in February. The subject of the event was “Planning and Implementing Environmental Projects” which proved very useful and informative. ORE CLT also manned an information table at their AGM.

  Ore CLT is also in negotiation with Big Local in respect of being a junior partner in the Ore Community Shop project.

- **Charitable Incorporated Organisation** – Policies and procedures have been put in place in anticipation of our conversion to a CIO.

- Ore CLT is still actively developing its role and hopes to acquire land in Speckled Wood. In addition, Ore CLT is in liaison with Heart of Hastings CLT regarding a role in developing the lower Ore Valley.

I would like to thank the organisations that we work with for their support and help, and the ward councillors in Tressell and Ore wards who have been very supportive and provide valuable assistance and information.

In addition I would like to thank the other committee members for their work and, of course, all Ore CLT members and supporters.

ORGANISATIONS & GROUPS THAT ORE CLT WORKS WITH:

- Big Local - North East Hastings
- Hastings Borough Council
- Hastings Voluntary Action
- The Ore Centre
- Salvation Army (Ore)
- Hastings Greenway Group
- Ramblers
- Ore in Bloom
- Amicus Horizon and Orbit Housing Associations
- Sussex Coast College
- Hastings & Rother Disability Forum
- Hastings History House