ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Saving and enhancing green space in the Ore Valley

NEWSLETTER - September 2017

Ore Community Land Trust is now registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) - Charity. Reg. No. 1171507

Following a detailed application to the Charity Commission to register Ore Community Land Trust as a CIO, registration was agreed early in 2017 subject to revisions to our objectives. These were adopted by Ore CLT members at the Extraordinary General Meeting in April. The changes have not affected the key points in the objectives that were agreed when Ore CLT was set up in 2009.
They define Ore CLT as a charitable organisation that aims to make use of green spaces in the Hastings area for the benefit of residents. This widens our scope as we are keen to take on other green spaces and woodland in the Ore Valley, although our primary aim is still to bring Speckled Wood into community ownership.
This means that Ore CLT is bound to protect any green spaces that it owns from any development other than a low impact project that would enhance the value of the woodland & green space such as the Ore Village Green, the Greenway route or a small visitors centre.
We have also had a new logo designed, which is at the top of this newsletter

Community Land Ownership - Vital for Long Term Protection of Speckled Wood

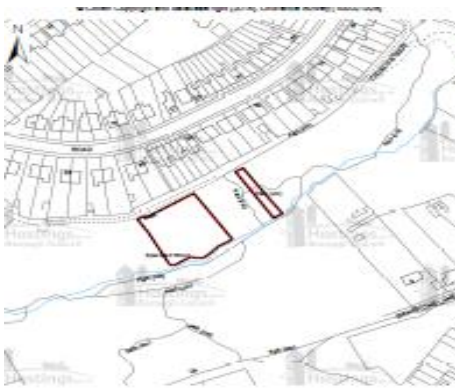
The 10 year campaign to save Speckled Wood from development resulted in a spectacular success in February 2015, when the Planning Inspector decided that the new Hastings Local Plan should redesignate almost all of Speckled Wood as protected urban green space. However, it is very important to recognise that this does not guarantee that Speckled Wood will remain a woodland valley for community use forever.
Firstly the Local Plan period lasts until 2023 and a change of control of Hastings Borough Council or policy review could, theoretically, reverse some aspects of this protection in the next Local Plan.

Secondly a revision of Government planning policy could, at some stage, introduce regulations to force local authorities to make some green spaces available for housing development in the same way that Green Belt land is coming under pressure.
Finally, most of Speckled Wood is in private ownership and the majority of the land is owned by two 'would be' developers (although they cannot develop this land while the current Local Plan is in force).
Clearly the only way to secure the long-term future of Speckled Wood is by community ownership of the land and that is what Ore Community Land Trust was set up to do.
Now that we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation we can own land in trust for the community and we are setting out on a program of acquiring land in Speckled Wood with support from Hastings Borough Council. A summary of our initial land acquisition plan is set out in this Newsletter and is underway!

Land Acquisition Plan - 1st Phase

The first stage in this plan is to have two plots of Council owned land transferred to Ore CLT. These two plots are shown in the section map below and are between Church Street and the stream along the valley floor. The larger plot is ideal for the provision of a much-needed base for Ore CLT and our volunteer teams as explained below. This transfer of land should be completed before Xmas and we are grateful for the help that Hastings Borough Council is giving Ore CLT to meet our aim of creating a community woodland and public amenity space.
The next plot of land we hope to buy within the next 6 months is a larger privately owned plot to the West of the larger Council owned plot. This is covered in Japanese Knotweed and we will need to start a program to eradicate this - a difficult 3 year task!
We are also in discussions with another land owner over the acquisition of a useful strip of land, which along with the land mentioned above would enable the planned Greenway route through Speckled Wood to be constructed when funding becomes available.

Apart from the Council owned land, we will need to raise funds for the purchase of other areas of land and associated work and for the Knotweed treatment. We will be making grant applications and seeking other sources of funding



Site Office Base and Volunteer Project

This exciting new project will provide a resource that we have long been wanting to obtain - a place to store our tools and act as a base for volunteers for shelter and refreshments.
The idea is to use the larger plot of land to be transferred from Council ownership to locate a steel site office (similar to a half-sized shipping container but with windows and internal lining) The location beside Church Street will allow vehicle access to bring in equipment and remove collected rubbish and cleared undergrowth.
If all goes according to plan this base should be in use from the spring of 2018 and will then allow us to launch a volunteer recruitment drive to involve local residents of all ages in the work to clear footpaths and undergrowth and start a program to enhance the areas of land that Ore CLT plans to acquire. We will be working with the local Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to provide training in woodland work and to develop a plan for enhancing Speckled Wood and our projects for community amenities such as the Ore Village Green, the Greenway and the restoration of the allotments behind Old London Road.

Hastings BC Plans for the Transfer of Green Spaces in the Ore Valley

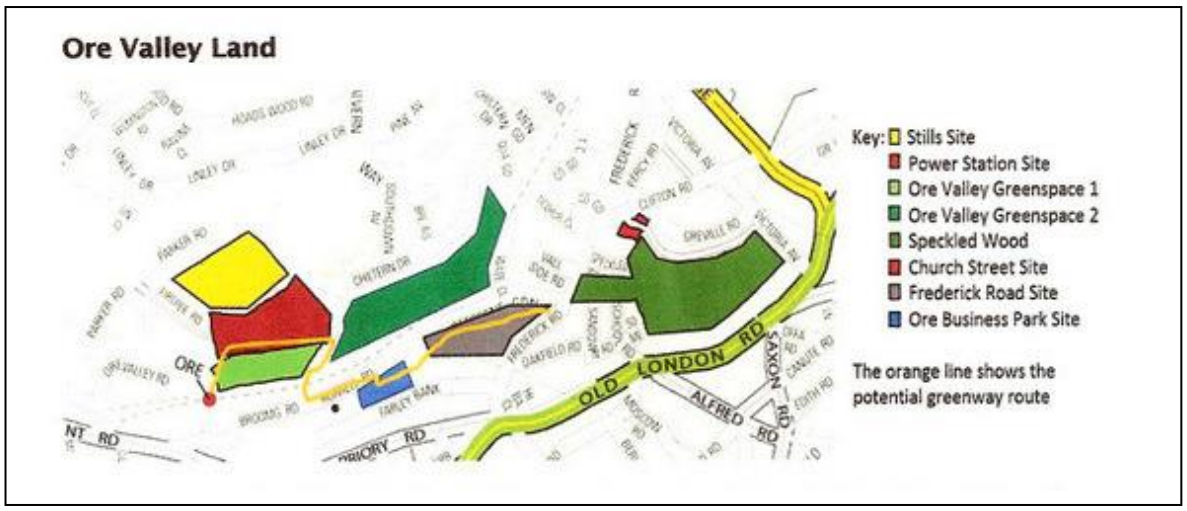
This is certainly the most encouraging initiative for securing the future of all of the green spaces in Ore Valley from Ore Station up to Victoria Avenue. It has recently been put forward by Tressell ward councillor Peter Chowney and would involve:

- The transfer of ownership of 2 areas of protected green spaces (mostly woodland) in the Lower Ore Valley from Seaspace to Hastings Borough Council and then on to Ore Community Land Trust.

- The allocation of funds held for improving and maintaining green spaces in Ore Valley to enable Ore CLT to tackle this work throughout the Ore Valley. This would be in collaboration with other organisations, community groups and volunteers already working on environmental projects and public access paths. One area of green space has been fenced off and inaccessible for decades.

- The opportunity to employ a woodland manager and a project co-ordinator to provide the much needed support for the hitherto entirely voluntary effort and to ensure that the more demanding projects can be embarked on.

Ore CLT is very keen to use this valuable opportunity to extend green space community ownership and to allow it to tackle the task of acquiring land in Speckled Wood and providing amenities for local residents. We very much hope that the land transfer and release of the funding can happen in the near future once Hastings Borough Council has assessed the plan and made its decision.

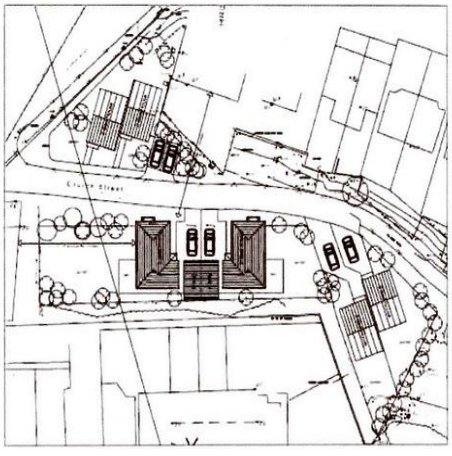


More information is provided on the Facebook page of the Tressell Ward Councillors - www.facebook.com/tressell

The old Power Station Site - A Community led Regeneration Project

The Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust (HoH CLT) is occupying this site, on a licence, to work up plans to develop homes, workspaces and community facilities by involving local residents as a 'ground up' approach to regeneration. HoH CLT is seeking to take over the site and raise the necessary capital for this work.

Ore CLT has been working with HoH CLT to help with green space work and planning and setting out the Greenway route from Ore Station, which HoH CLT is committed to making a reality. This Greenway route will eventually link up to the planned Speckled Wood Greenway. This productive link between two Community Land Trusts - one to tackle homes and facilities and one to tackle green spaces, woodland work and habitat conservation - is becoming an more formalised alliance and together will transform the Ore Valley into what will be a ground breaking community led venture



Small Housing Development
- Clifton Road end of Church Street

This development site is at the junction of Clifton Road and Church Street and is on the only area of land that retained its housing development status in the new Hastings Local Plan.

Planning permission was given for 5 houses in January 2017.

While Ore CLT has not supported this or any development in Speckled Wood, we did not vigorously oppose this application as it has little impact on Speckled Wood and will not cut off Church Street.

The loss of the grassed triangle of land next to Clifton Road is regrettable.

However exaggerated rumours and information have been circulating that this threatens a much wider area of Speckled Wood. This scare mongering is entirely false.

Woodland Work, Volunteer Co-ordination & Speckled Wood Newsletters
- a thank you to Derek and Karen

We want to use this Newsletter to thank Derek who was a committee member of Ore CLT since it was formed. In addition to taking committee minutes, Derek worked with Alan to construct all of the steps in Speckled Wood and the bridges and with volunteers to keep footpaths clear. Derek gave up his role as trustee in February and a presentation was made to him at the General Meeting in April.
Karen, who became an Ore CLT trustee in 2016 and has now left the Committee, is much appreciated for her hard work both as a regular volunteer working in Speckled Wood and for producing the excellent Speckled Wood Newsletters from last November to June of this year. She also organised a very successful rubbish collection this year and has undertaken a number of other tasks.
Karen is continuing to work with other volunteers in Speckled Wood and they usually meet on Friday mornings at the Green next to the salvation Army Hall - if anyone would like to join them. There is always plenty to do to keep footpaths clear, repair steps and deal with fallen branches etc

Speckled Wood - Footpaths and Information Leaflet & Ore Trails

We are very grateful for a grant we have received from the Hastings Old Town Winkle Club. This is going to be used to have a leaflet produced showing footpaths and access points to Speckled Wood.
This has often been requested by people who are not sure of the footpath network or how to get into the woodland valley. In fact there are 8 different access points and an extensive network of footpaths in addition to the much used Church Street track.
The leaflet should be completed later in the autumn and we hope to use it as part of a walking festival to celebrate the Ore Trails walks from the Ore Centre.
There are 3 trails starting from the Ore centre and running by North Seat and around the Country Park. Leaflets are available from the Ore Centre and the Ore Branch Library

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ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL FORM (2017)

SURNAME: …… FIRST NAME(S):…….

***ORGANISATION (if applicable):* …….**

ADDRESS: ……

…… POSTCODE: …….

TEL. NO(s): …….. E MAIL: ……..

SIGNED: …..... DATE: ……

Annual membership Subscription:

Individual £ 5 - Unwaged, Retired, Student £ 2 - Junior (under 16 years) £ 1

Organisation £ 20 - (cheques payable to *Ore Community Land Trust*)

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Ore CLT - AGM - Saturday 30 September - 10.30am

at the Salvation Army Hall, Old London Road, Ore

This will be our first AGM as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and we hope for a good turn out from Ore CLT members and from supporters and residents of Ore Village & Ore Valley. This will be a public AGM and we will be presenting our Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year 2016/17 and electing trustees.

After the formal part of the meeting we will have a discussion session about our 5 year plan for our work including the community ownership of Speckled Wood.

We have also asked Jess Steels from the Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust to join us to explain the community led plans for the old Power Station Site and answer questions.

Ore CLT Trustees Would like More Members to Join the Committee

We are keen to encourage local people, particularly those with useful skills and expertise to join us. We will need help with the process of acquiring land, developing woodland management plans and projects, organising events, fundraising and other tasks.

If you would like to help, we could co-opt you onto the committee. You may also want to consider becoming a trustee at some stage.

If you want to discuss this, please contact Tony or Ian - e mail: ore.clt@hotmail.com or telephone (Ian) mob: 077924 92583

Ore CLT Membership Subscriptions Due from April 2017

If you have not paid your membership subscriptions for the current year you are not alone! Neither have half of the trustee committee. We have been a bit slow to send out reminders due to other pressures this year but there is a renewal form at the bottom of the previous page of this Newsletter and we very much hope you will continue to be an Ore CLT member (& be able to vote at the AGM) and pay your subs.