ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Saving and enhancing green space in the Ore Valley

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

This report covers the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

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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 2017 the Trust registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and widened its remit to include any land in Hastings, and in particular, the Ore Valley

The Charity 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 Charity 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 Charity and its work and in planning new projects and initiatives.

Board of Trustees 2017

Elected at Ore Community Land Trust AGM 2016 or continuing their term.

Tony Polain	Chair
Becky Polain	Secretary
Meg Harmer	Treasurer
Ian Sier	Special Projects Officer
Phil Morris	Membership Secretary
Aubrey Ingleton	

Co-Optees during 2017

Anton Hack	Woodland Co-Ordinator

Ex Officio Local Council Observer

Cllr Tania Charman (Tressell Ward)

Minute Taker/Legal Advisor

Suzanne Grain	Minutes Secretary
James Mountford	Legal Advisor

Members

At the end of March 2017 Ore Community Land Trust had 40 members.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

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, we have registered Ore Community Land Trust as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This change in legal status will better enable us to raise funds and acquire land.

There is much happening in the Ore Valley at present with the prospect of significant portions of land coming under the control of local community-led organisations. The next few years should prove to be very interesting,

We shall also need more 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 2016/17

Ore CLT have a number of projects in hand, but most of these have been on hold whilst we completed the transition to 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.

- **Expanded Ore Village Green**

  In 2014 we commissioned landscape architect, Jeremy Linden, to produce a very exciting design for a Village Green, that could be created on land below the existing Green, off Old London Road.

Projects in Progress

- **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.

- **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

- **Land Acquisition Plan – Speckled Wood**

  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.

  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 above. 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

- **Ore Valley: Greenway, Greenspaces and Regeneration**

We fortunate to see lots of things start to come together in the Ore Valley: aside from our own recently registered charitable status, we also have Heart of Hastings CLT to work in partnership with, plus the plans of HBC to make over transfer various pieces of land between the two groups.

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

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:

1) 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.

2) 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.

3) 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.

Ore Valley Greenway

The proposed Hastings Greenway would form a borough-wide 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.

In Ore, 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 and the Heart of Hastings CLT, 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.

So far, two design reports have been produced which cover different sections of the Ore Valley route and have been submitted to ESCC to support the case for the off-road option. These have formed a very pervasive argument for which we are hoping for a positive decision once all the land ownership issues in the valley have resolved.

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

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We would like to express our gratitude for the financial contributions made by the Big Local, the Winkle Club, the Isobel Blackman Trust and the Ore Community Shop. Without the generosity of these organisations, it would not have been possible to make progress on these projects.
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REVIEW OF THE YEAR

- **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.

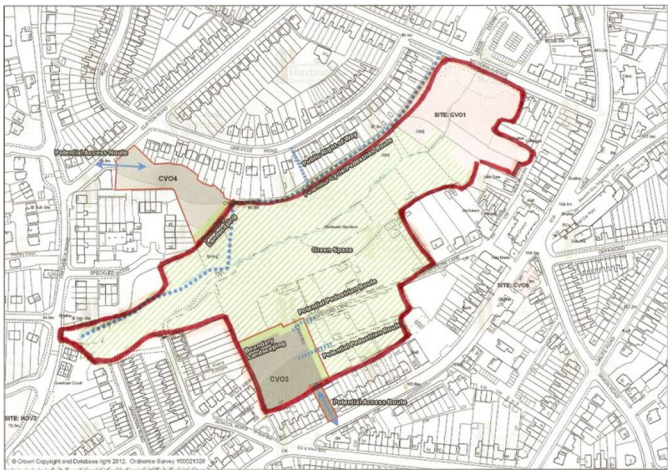
  The changes have not affected the key points in the objectives that were agreed when Ore CLT was set up in 2009.

  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 report.

- **Ore Village Green Project** – Further discussions have been held with the council regarding this land and its transfer.



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

- **Ore Valley Greenway** – We have hosted a couple of walks through the valley and took part in the Sustainable Transport Day which included some filming based in Speckled Wood. We also took part in the site meeting with ESCC, HBC, Sustrans, the Greenway Group, HARC, the Ramblers and HUB regarding the off-road route of the Ore Valley section of the Greenway.

- **The Big Local Fun Day** – Ore Community Land Trust manned an information table.

- **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.

- **Speckled Wood Spring Clean** – In March, we organised a clean-up in Speckled Wood to remove rubbish and debris that had collected in the wood.

- **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.

- **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 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	Heart of Hastings CLT
Hastings Borough Council	The Ore Centre
Hastings Voluntary Action	Salvation Army (Ore)
Ore in Bloom	Optivo Housing Association
Orbit Housing Association	Hastings Greenway Group
Sussex Coast College	TCV
Hastings & Rother Disability Forum	Hastings History House
Ramblers	