

Land, Justice and Community in Great Britain

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Mike Staples 00:55

Good afternoon, everybody. Those of you that are, that are making your way in at the moment. If you wish to do so, please do note in the chat who you are, where you're coming from, and we'll give it another couple of minutes to allow people to join, and then we'll get going. Thank you. Okay, great, everybody. I think we will make a start. We're almost at 50. Seems like a good number. Welcome to the webinar, Land Justice and Community in Great Britain, which is part of the 2026 Global Community Land Trust Virtual Summit. I'm Mike Staples, I'm Chief Executive of South Scotland Community Housing, and I'm going to be hosting the event today. My organization Sosh is a community-led housing enabler working across all of southern Scotland, and we're hosting this event in partnership with the Community Land Trust Network of England and Wales, and both organizations are delighted to welcome all of you such a diverse range of people this afternoon, Great Britain holds significant wealth, particularly relative to property, both inland and buildings, but this wealth is unequally distributed and incredibly concentrated. This afternoon, we will hear from a number of contributors from Scotland, England and Wales, who will address the manner in which community ownership of land and assets is being used as a mechanism to tackle inequality and promote enhanced social justice, localized wealth distribution until sustainability, whilst also tackling the housing emergency, of course, across Great Britain, the community ownership movement is broad and diverse, and we will hear today about its roots in each country. Community land ownership in Scotland dates back 100 years, and the movement was catalyzed by historical land injustices and underpinned by land reform as a legislative priority, and in England and Wales, the movement also has a very long history, and has been particularly inspired by the community land trust movement that grew from the civil rights movement in the USA in the 1960s across the three nations, there's a diversity of approach and a diversity of governance, but our speakers today are going to demonstrate there is also a great deal of commonality around the power of community ownership to directly and effectively tackle injustice and inequality. We will hear national contexts from Scotland, England, and Wales, and then we're also going to hear from six organizations who are working at a grassroots level on community land and asset ownership too, from each country. So today, relative to the running order today, I'm going to kick off by introducing our three contributors from Scotland, and then we're going to pass over to Tom Chance, the chief executive of the CLT Network in England and Wales, who's going to introduce the English speakers and also provide the English context. After that, we're going to have a short comfort break, and then Casey from Compass is going to introduce both the speakers from Wales and the Welsh context relative to the program. We have received apologies from one of the Welsh speakers, Zainab. Casey will allow you to say a bit more about that when you introduce. Once we've heard from all of the speakers, I'm going to be facilitating a Q and A session with all six of the contributors, so we would like to encourage questions and comments from the audience, particularly from such a broad range of geographies and contexts being represented. We're going to take questions in the Q and A function at the bottom of the screen. So, can you please take the opportunity to share questions throughout the speaker's contributions, and when you do so, if you could please note who you are, where you are, your question, of course, and particularly if there's one specific panelist that you would like your question to be addressed to, so at this point I'm going to pass you over to my colleague Chris Douglas, who is the partnership and learning manager at SOSH, who's going to provide an overview of the context here in Scotland, and thereafter we're going to hear from Angela Wilson, who is the development manager at Langham Initiative, a community organization that's been responsible for the largest community land purchase in southern Scotland, the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve. Angela is also a director for Community Land Scotland. And then, for the final Scottish contribution, we're going to hear from Megan McGuinness,

who is local development manager at Applecross Community Company, community organization that promotes community development, resilience, and sustainability through asset ownership across the Apple Cross Peninsula in North West Scotland, and Megan is also the chair of Community Land Scotland as well. So, without further ado, I am going to pass over to Christ Al Gleesh to provide the introduction from Scotland. Thank you.

Chris Dalglish 08:06

Thank you, Mike. Hello, everyone. Ben, if yeah, if you could start sharing the slides, that would be great. So, well, I'd like to introduce community land ownership in Scotland, and to begin that with a little bit of history, and in talking about this, it's tempting to tell quite a simple story to trace the history of community land back to a single point of origin, but things are more complex than that, and I think I find it certainly, I find it more helpful to think of the story of community land in Scotland as being more like a family tree, so lots of diverse branches, all different, but all related, and that's why you're seeing a tree on your screen today. I only have a few minutes, so I'm just going to focus on two of the main branches as a way of introducing the story. The first is what we can call the community land movement, which has its roots in rural Scotland, and the second is the Development Trust movement, which has its roots in urban Scotland. So, we can go to the next slide. Please just wait for that to come up. So, if we begin with the community land movement, to understand the community land movement in Scotland, you have to know a little bit about our pattern of land ownership, and in rural Scotland, which, as you can see from the information on the screen, is mostly Scotland. We have one of the most concentrated patterns, patterns of land ownership in the world. So, just to give you a flavor of this, half of rural land in Scotland is owned by fewer than 900 private owners, and around half of rural land in Scotland is held in holdings over 1000 hectares, so in large scale holdings, so small number of people and organizations own land, and often in very large blocks. Our three largest private owners, between them, these three owners own 3% of Scotland, the first Anders Hol Poulsen, is a Danish billionaire with 89,000 hectares, is the largest private owner in the country. The asset management house, Gresham House, owns over 73,000 hectares, and the Duke of Buccleuch, who's a Scottish aristocrat, owns over 66,000 hectares. So these are just some statistics to give you a little bit of flavor about what I mean by the concentration of land ownership. Why is this a problem? Well, it's a question of power. The situation we have across much of rural Scotland is a small number of owners exercise an excessive degree of control over large areas of land, over the development of that land, and as a result, over the welfare and the fortunes of local communities in those areas. Next slide, please. So, community land ownership is a response to that situation I've just described, and it's part of a process, a wider process of land reform that's been, you know, has a long history here in Scotland. It's a history we can trace back to the 19th century and before. In the 19th century, it's particularly associated with the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and north and west of the country, an area which saw large scale evictions of tenants from the land by landowners, and the resistance that came in response to those evictions from people became so widespread and organized that the government's hand was forced, and the government had to respond. The UK government, so in the 1880s a new law was passed giving security of tenure to smallholders in the Highlands and Islands, known as crofters, so that's security of tenure for those small holders that didn't do anything to help people who had already been evicted from the land. So, in the, in the early decades of the 20th century, we move into a phase of land settlement. What that means is that's a process of the government acquiring land, bringing it into state ownership, and resettling people on the land, and also encouraging and compelling private owners to resettle people on their estates as well. So we have a whole range of new communities being settled or reestablished at that point in time, and it's in that context at that time that we find the first community land ownership coming into being, 1923 the Stornoway estate, which is just over 28,000 hectares in the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles, came into community ownership, and it remains in community ownership to this day, and is now home to around 11,000 people. So, quite a significant change in our land reform story. I'll skip right forward to the 1990s This is a very rapid run through the history, but after about 70 years, we had another six pioneer community estates being established in the 1990s at Melmes and Ascent,

Borvan, Anna Shader, a brioche, and Noida, and Egg, all indicated on your map in the north and west of Scotland, and together they brought a further 25,000 hectares into community ownership. Okay, we'll come back to what happened after the 1990s in a second, but we can move on to the yes. Thank you. The next slide, so let me come to that second branch in the family tree that I mentioned, the Development Trust movement, and this is a story that begins in the 1970s and 1980s in urban areas in Scotland, although it's now spread to all rural areas as well. So, in the 70s and 80s across the UK, that's a period of de-industrialization and of high unemployment, and in response, some urban communities, and in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow and Greenock, some urban communities responded to that by setting up development trusts as community-led, community-controlled organizations that would take forward the regenerate, regeneration, revitalization of their communities and places. Each organization was different, each place was different, so they're doing lots of different things. I'll just mention a few examples to give you a flavor of the kinds of work they were doing in those early years. Some were focused on community service hubs, like these two examples in Glasgow on the screen. So, those are buildings from which services are run, that might be child care, community transport, youth services, health and wellbeing services for older people, or people with long-term health problems, others were more focused on business and employment issues, so running business and employment hubs again, providing services and facilities to encourage business development, job creation, and to help people into work or back into work. And then finally, we have at least one example in the 80s and the 90s, of a community trust being set up, the Woodlands Community Development Trust in Glasgow, and then going on to partner with the city government, Glasgow City Council, and with social housing providers to provide new affordable housing and other actions to take forward the regeneration of a whole urban neighborhood. Okay. Thank you. If you can move on the slide, please, Ben, that'd be great. So, with those roots in mind, let's have a quick look at what's happened since the 1990s. The last generation or two has been one of significant growth in community ownership across rural and urban Scotland. So, just to give you some official statistics to make that point, the top, the chart on the top shows you the extent of community ownership in Scotland from Scottish government figures, and in the last 25 years or so, that's increased fourfold to over 200,000 hectares. The chart at the bottom shows the increase in the number of community organizations owning land, building, and other assets, and that's increased sevenfold in the last 25 years to over 500 and I think that's an underestimate of the number of organizations now owning land and buildings. So, just to give you a sense of the journey we have been on, and are still on, and go to the next slide, please. And, of course, coming into the community, coming to ownership of the land and buildings is just one part of the story, it's just as important what you do with that land and with those buildings, of course. So this is just to give you one example of the significant growth in project delivery that communities are taking forward, in this case, community-led housing. So this is an area where we've seen really quite massive increase in the number of affordable homes being delivered by communities on community owned land with community owned buildings, so particularly over the last 10 years we're seeing a jump up into significant increasing numbers of homes, and that that rise is continuing as we go into the next five year period and spreading across most parts of Scotland. Now, if we can go forward a slide, please, Ben, so while all that has been happening, as the sector has really been growing since the 1990s we've also seen the sector becoming much more organized at national level. So, for example, Development Trust Association Scotland was established in 2003 as the national organization for Association for Development Trusts. Community Land Scotland has already been mentioned, established in 2010 as a national body for community landowners and for taking forward land reform. And then we have issues, specific coalitions and alliances being formed, one of which is the Community Led Housing Alliance, which was formed just last year, and I think has around 8080 members now across the country involved in community-led housing. What you're seeing on the screen there are three manifestos that those organizations produced in the run-up to the elections. We've just had in Scotland this month, so we have a new Scottish parliament, new Scottish government, and we've all been campaigning for greater support for community ownership. We can move on a slide, please, Ben. Okay, so finally, just to mention, before we move on to Angela and Megan, who'll tell us from the grassroots perspective, since

the 1990s another big development has been community ownership becoming really established on Scotland's political agenda. So, in 1999 the Scottish Parliament was established with devolved powers within the United Kingdom, and that parliament and the Scottish government have taken forward land reform, community empowerment agendas. We've had three land reform, new landform laws are passed: 2003 2016 2025 a Community Empowerment Act in 2015 and most recently, a Community Wealth Building Act in 2026 All of these promote the community ownership of land and buildings. So, this is this is really an ongoing part of the political agenda. They also have helped to define what we can think fairly call a Scottish model of community ownership now, because it has enough definition, and just briefly, in that model, community means everyone living in a defined geographical area, so it's the whole community, all residents of an area. Community ownership means the ownership of land, building, and other assets by a community organization, membership of which is open to all those residents in the area, and control of that organization rests with those local residents in this context, land means land in Scottish property law means everything, so it's everything from the ground surface up, so all the structures and buildings built on the land, and everything into the sky and the airspace above, and it's everything from the ground surface down to the sense of the earth in theory and Scottish law, so if you own the land, you own all of that, and ownership in this context means absolute ownership. We have a unitary right of ownership. You cannot separate out these ownership rights over these different parts of the land. What that means is that, in contrast to some countries, a community, when it takes ownership of the land and everything that goes with that cannot separate out the buildings, for example, and sell those to private owners while retaining ownership of the ground, the land underneath. You either own everything or you own nothing at all, at least in theory, in a nutshell. So, I'll leave it there with that very brief, rapid introduction. And Angela, if I hand over to you to well respond to the issues of today's webinar from the perspective of your particular community and place, Langham and the Terrace Valley in the south of Scotland. Thank you.

Angela Williams 20:12

Thanks for the introduction, Chris. And welcome to everybody on the webinar. My name is Angela Williams, I'm the development manager for the Langham Initiative, a charity and development trust based down in Dumfries and Galloway. So the picture on the screen shows an image of Langham, a middle town built up around the confluence of six rivers of three rivers. Not so long ago, there used to be 12 working mills in the town. 1000s of people would be entering into the town for work. However, there's now just one, and obviously that has led to a significant economic decline in the town. The high street is a very different position to where it was 10 years ago, but the land you can see around it is all owned by Buccleuch. Chris already referenced him as one of the three largest landowners in Scotland. Traditionally, they have owned estates throughout Scotland, including sort of many individual properties, individual homes, but over the years there has been a sort of change in their business model. If you'd go to the next slide, Ben, and if we look at the area outlined on this map, this is part of an area that's known locally as Lang and Moore, in 2019 the clue announced they were going to sell this land holding as well as some of the land that goes into the next door county. There was a huge amount of concern expressed by the local community with regard to this sale concern over what was going to happen to the land and what impact that would have on people's access, their rights to rile swimming to roam. Nobody knew who was going to own it up until that point. The idea of registering an interest in that land hadn't probably occurred to anybody. It was always assumed that the clue would own it. Following the concern, the Langham Initiative, which was already in existence as a development trust and charity, took the lead on assessing the viability of a community land buyout, and this led to a negotiated purchase with the clue. Over the course of a two or three year period, the community raised over 6 million pounds in grants and donations to crowdfunders, generating half a million pounds for this small community to purchase this land holding. This was done in two tranches in March 2021 and in November 2022 and the aim of buying this land was to establish the Terrace Valley Nature Reserve, and the broader aim of that was to contribute to the regeneration of the town through eco tourism, through providing employment, through providing other opportunities for the community to engage with

it, and I think for those involved in the campaign at that time there was a lot about actually sort of rebalancing the say the power and the influence that comes with being a landowner up until this point. The clue owned the land and the chances of using it for housing, you might be able to rent a little bit to graze your horse, you might be able to rent a little bit for the bowls club, but actually having a chance to influence for long-term use for the benefit of a town really didn't exist. So, what did we actually get for our 6.2 million pounds? We got 10 and a half 1000 acres, a mixture of moorland, pasture land, different types of woodland. Also included in this was a sheep farm, and 12,000 North Cheviot sheep, eight properties, one derelict property, and many tracks, bridges, and all the infrastructure associated with an estate of this scale. Next slide, please. Ben, I mentioned about the concern over the possible sale of the land, and who is going to buy it. Large parts of Iceland holding have huge cultural significance for the community. Here we have one of the ride outs for the annual common riding, an annual event that has taken place well over 200 years, marking the boundary of the common land going back to the 1700s when the community were in dispute with the landowner over their rights to peat cutting, their rights to cutting heather, or whatever it might be, and once a year ever since then, the community, either on foot or on horseback, have marked the boundaries of that. To say that this is an important day in the local calendar is probably a bit of an underestimate. Anybody who comes to Langham on the last Friday of July will be very well aware of how important this whole event is as a part of the cultural significance of the town. So, buying this land, we became south of Scotland's largest community buyout compared to some of the other community purchases that have taken place, particularly up in the Highlands. Culturally, this is a very different area. Community ownership, interestingly, is a new concept in the South, to a certain extent, even though many services in our town are actually provided by charities, I think we have about 60 local organizations running everything from play care to the old people's home to the local newspaper, but actually taking ownership of this land was definitely a new concept, and for some people, they were very angry that we were paying the clue estates for the land. To them, it was already ours, and we should have owned it without payment. Unfortunately, the legal process doesn't quite allow that to happen. Since taking ownership, we operate under four pillars: people, nature, climate, and sustainability, but for us it was always important that local people in the town feel the benefits of actually buying this land in a more tangible way. Next slide. Oh, might have to sort of change, look at it in a different direction. If you ask any residents in the town, and there's over 2000 of them, you will get a different response as to why this land is important. It's valued locally for very many different reasons. It's a place of work, a place of employment, both directly and indirectly. In the last year, we put over 100,000 into the local businesses. We employ seven people, some were here living in the town already, but we, the rest of us, have all moved to the town, and we live and contribute to the town. Next slide, engagement is a huge part of our work. After all, we are a community landowner, and so it's absolutely crucial that local people, whether they're a member of the Langham Initiative or not, do have a mechanism for getting involved and for having a say. We have a local board of trustees. We have worked with all the local schools and all the local volunteers. We've developed a five year action plan, which involved us attending over 50 different events in the town, just to speak to local people to get their views to listen to them, and as well we've undertaken targeted engagement on key specific projects. Sometimes it's just engaging on an idea. In some cases it might be a more formal consultation event on individual activity. Next slide, so and it's also important that we give people who might not otherwise want to get involved with a more formal consultation and give them an opportunity to find some way of getting involved, so we work with local partners, we work with the local youth group, we work with Creation Mill, a community interest company aimed at regenerating the textile industry. Interestingly, the developers of Creation Mill, they are also now the owner of the one working mill left in Langham, undertaking high-profile work for high-profile businesses around the world, such as Chanel and Prada. Next slide, but our work on the ground includes much different types of activity. Besides the farm, we're working to restore existing ecosystems, such as peatlands, native woodlands, but we're also looking to create new, and here we have a drawing picture of having undertaken the felling of Sitka spruce. We're now regenerating an area back to native woodland, creating new ponds and creating additional opportunities for wildlife to settle in the area, but also for people to explore.

Alongside this was the three miles of new footpaths that were developed as part of this, now being increasingly used by the local community, and the next slide, but fundamentally in all this is that it's a place that people can call home. The properties that we own are rented out to local people. We're in the process of just starting our first refurbishment, having worked very closely with Sasha over the last three or four years, and the people to have this place as a home, not just in the short term, that they can live here for the rest of their lives is hugely important. The last slide, please, Ben. So, our vision of a community-owned landscape, rich in nature, with people at its heart. We hope in 50 years' time, when we show this photo, you will see restored peatland, new native woodland, thriving bird, animal, and insect life, more housing, people living, working, and enjoying this landscape, and fundamentally challenging, and making sure that that land is here for the benefit of local people. Thanks very much.

Mike Staples 31:54

Thank you for passing over now to Megan. Thanks,

Megan MacInnes 31:58

thanks Mike, thanks Chris and Angela. It's a pleasure to be here, so I'm the development manager of the Applecross Community Company, which is the only development trust in Applecross, which is a 26,000 hectare peninsula up in the northwest Highlands of Scotland, with a total of 260 people living on it. Since 2008 we've been delivering a range of different community development projects, and this works critical, not just in terms of responding to local community needs, but because without concerted effort, the very future viability of this community is in question, due to projected depopulation, falling school roles, aging demographic, and crumbling infrastructure, shrinking public services, the community has identified three priorities from which we are now, which now form our local long-term action plan. One is, unsurprisingly, affordable housing. The second is boosting the local economy, and the third is around community and wellbeing. And, as an audience of those involved in community land trusts, you will all know that delivering each of these requires land. However, land ownership in Applecross is highly concentrated. Over 95% of that 26,000 hectares of land is owned by a single entity, and as such, it's very much a kind of reflects those wider patterns, trends of inequitable land ownership that Chris already talked about, and it's a very good example of the fact that complete control of land over who gets access to it, who controls it, who gets to make decisions about it, has a hugely important impact on local people and the local economy. Unlike the Langham Initiative, the Apocross community, so far has decided not to try and buy the entire peninsula, but acquire small and strategically important sites, which have social or economic or environmental development potential. So, over the past 18 years, we've little by little, we've now acquired about 17 and a half hectares of key land and assets, so what have we done with that? Well, Ben, can you take us on to the next slide, please? So, on the left-hand side are some examples of core public services that we deliver based on that land and assets. These are services and infrastructure which are often taken for granted in more populated areas, so we own the local filling station, the public toilets. We have a community broadband network that provides essential internet access to a wide range, wide geographical area, and we also provide the community transport and school transport services. And then on the right hand side are some of the community development projects that we are delivering through community ownership. We have a community-owned hydro project, which generates income that can help to support our activities, in which we reinvest into the local community. We are delivering affordable homes. This photo is of three affordable homes we delivered in 2020 and we've just submitted, submitted a planning application for 14 more houses, and we also have a community garden and allotment site, and a 14 hectare community woodland. If you can go on to the next slide, Ben. Thank you. Now that's all brilliant, and we're doing some fantastic work, but Chris particularly asked me to kind of drill into a bit some of the challenges that we're facing as a community land ownership group in the North West Highlands. One of the, one of the key challenges is with such a small population, only 260 people, keeping the development trust going in the face of volunteer fatigue and in this face of really restricted sort of numbers of working age adults is a real challenge, but I wanted to talk more around the challenges associated with land and the

wider economic climate this afternoon, so despite living in such a large area with so few people, the highly concentrated pattern of land ownership means it's been extremely challenging for us to access land, and it's not just for us, it's also impacting on local families and local businesses who want to expand. After a decade of failed negotiations with the landowner by the community company to acquire land on which to build affordable housing, it was only once a partnership was formed with the Highland Council and the local community council and others that we were able to develop the community land use plan, the illustrations on the slide here, and through that identify viable sites on which we could develop houses, and the 14 houses that we've just submitted in the planning application for work came out of that process, and I think that really highlights for us why further land reform in Scotland is needed to give communities greater powers to access and fire land, but for those of you who, the community land trusts on the webinar, as you know, acquiring land is really only the start, and because community land owning organizations across Scotland are operating in an increasingly challenging financial context, we're being expected to do more in terms of stepping up to deliver more public services in a, in a, in an era of austerity, austerity which is really impacting heavily on our, on our own economic financial resilience. The external funding landscape is becoming more challenging, which means that, ironically, we are having to rely on a greater extent on income that we can generate from our local social enterprise activities, which means constantly trying to find the back balance in terms of the prices that we charge customers, who are basically our local community, for the services we provide, the filling station, the affordable homes, and broadband services, for example. The other thing I want to mention is remote and rural areas like this in Scotland also suffer substantially from major infrastructure constraints, so I already mentioned the Community Hydro project that we set up back in 2014 and 15, which, and we intended for that project to generate adequate income for us to cover our core funds and therefore be less reliant on external grant funding. Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case, because the national grid constraints in the local area mean we can only sell half of the gen of the electricity that we generate, which has meant that we were still reliant on grant funding to some extent, and that's extremely frustrating for a community land ownership when the wider infrastructure is inhibiting and is restricting our own efforts to try and improve our own resilience and sustainability. Ben, if you want to go to the final slide, so I just wanted to finish on the point that, nevertheless, we still are optimistic about the future. The land and assets that we own enable us to generate and retain the wealth that we generate locally. It enables us to reinvest that in our community and local businesses, our school role has finally stabilized, and our resilient broadband network is finally enabling young folk to be able to move back and stay here. We just now need to build the houses that they can, so more of them can come. So, I want to finish there, and I'm happy to take questions when we get to that part of the evening's event. Thank you,

Mike Staples 39:24

thank you, Megan, and thank you to all our speakers so far on the point, Megan, you've just made. Can I just remind everybody to please share your any questions that you have in the Q and A box, and we'll pick them up later on, so we're now going to pass over to Tom Chance to introduce the English context.

Tom Chance 39:51

Thank you, Mike. And good afternoon, Jocha Prananda. So I'm Tom Chance, I'm the Chief Executive of the Community Land Trust Network for England and Wales. I'm just going to introduce the English section, and you'll hear Casey, who will give the Welsh introduction, and you're going to hear from me in terms of the national overview, and then from two leaders of CLTs in very different contexts in England to get a flavor of the ways that they're responding to in justices in land ownership in their communities with In Ketchio Koko Uru Aru from Brent CLT, which is in northwest London, so sort of in a city-ish neighborhood where they've just got planning consent to develop some new social housing, and then from Christine Eden in Gloucestershire, which is sort of relatively affluent rural part of England, where she's just recently completed some social housing. So, if I can have these slides for the English world section. So I want to just start by reflecting on what Chris described as the Scottish

context, and maybe draw some contrasts with England, so like Scotland, England has a long history of politics around land, and you go back over 1000 years, and many revolts, and the Civil War, and other things in which land was a significant factor, but unlike Scotland, for the last 100 years, it really hasn't been a political issue in the same way, there has been no recognition of this as being a major national priority. There's no legislation on it, and to give you an indication of that, our UK government recently consulted on a new land use strategy for England, and then that they acknowledge in the, in the foreword that land use in England is highly, or land ownership in England is highly concentrated, but then did absolutely nothing in the strategy to address it. There was no sense that was a problem that needed to be addressed. It's just acknowledged. So, we don't have the same politics of land in England, but there is a real move toward community ownership, and so that's really more where we position. Anyway, you'll see that the Community Land Trust movement has had traction in England. I sort of go to the next slide, please. So this just gives you an overview, a sense of community land trusts in England. There are getting on for 315 incorporated in England and others in Wales, and they own about 2200 assets. The main asset type is affordable housing, of quite a variety of types, and you can see a mixture of rental homes and forms of ownership, and then a wide variety of other community assets. So, in this sense, very similar to our speakers from Scotland, interested in green space, community hubs, business units, pubs, post offices, as well as housing, but it's quite small in numbers as a proportion of the overall numbers of homes or other sorts of assets in the UK, and what community land trusts choose to focus on in their own communities really, really varies significantly, and the way that they think about the injustices that they're looking to address very significantly, because there's the UK is very economically demographically diverse, and so we see in some places CLT is very present in communities that have suffered a lot of disinvestment, and there's a lot of deprivation, and their intention is to develop without displacement, to borrow a phrase from the US CLT. In other places where there's affluence, there's too much money coming, too much capital coming into the market, and it's displacing people, or people can't afford to live there, and so they're looking to anchor the community in a place that otherwise would become very exclusive. Next slide. the thing that unites them across all these contexts in the English context is really community power, and what we mean by that is that there is an overwhelming sense wherever you go in England that the changes in land use have are having often a negative effect on those local areas, and that people have no real voice or control or power over what happens. There's a sense that the state and the planning system and other tools are just failing to regulate or shape the way that land is being used to meet needs, and then you can find many, many injustices that result from that one of which is simply that lack of agency and voice that people feel totally disempowered, and then also that it tends to mean that people on low incomes can't get access to housing, or that they have very little agency over their housing, or that people trying to run business, small businesses get priced out of their business units, or you name it. All these different things are a consequence of that lack of control and power over how land is used, and there's also very deep distrust of the institutions that we have in England to try to do this. So, most startling proportion of people don't trust local government to make decisions that will be positive for them in how land is developed, and almost nobody trusts developers to do it. So, this is really the context that unites all of the community land trusts across England and probably across the whole of the UK. Next slide, so the work of the community land trust network is really focused on responding to this crisis of democracy and agency and accountability, but interestingly, it's not just in the market, it's also that, again, in contrast to Scotland, in England, there's a people use the term community very loosely, and past movements like the Development trust movement that Chris described in Scotland, the move towards a community right to buy in England don't have any sort of legal framework of the kind that Chris described, and so you can be called yourself a community organization, but have no membership, have no control for local people, no accountability to local people. You can basically just be a social enterprise or in an organization that, in other respects, might be doing great things, but isn't really community owned. And then out well beyond the kind of community sector, we particularly see in the way that we do things like affordable housing provision in England. Now we have a very strong history of providing municipal housing through local councils and housing associations

compared to other countries. We have a very high proportion of social and affordable housing in England, but the communities that are around that housing and the tenants living in that housing have very little power. There's very little accountability as to how that housing is run, so that that thread of democracy and agency accountability is really key for our movement, and the reason why the movement really got going in the 2000s so very recently, just in the last 25 years, similar to the sort of timescale that Chris described with the recent legislative program in Scotland. The other thing for us is that the community ownership in England tends to be framed as a solution to austerity, so since the global financial crisis in 2008 local government in England has had its spending power cut by over a third. Local government is already pretty powerless in England, can be an unbelievably centralized country, and that has meant the closure of youth centers, the loss of key kind of social infrastructure in many, many places, and people have described community ownership as stepping into that gap and trying to keep things going, but compared to that, the narrative that Chris described in Scotland, that much more ambitious agenda that actually communities could be taking ownership of significant amounts of land and assets to drive regeneration, so that sort of ambition just isn't there in most of the debate in England, and so we're also trying to bring that in, so this could be about structurally changing the power of communities in how land is used. So to that end, as a network, we're both sort of both a membership movement and grassroots movement, but also looking to rewire that policy system. So, in 2008 we got community land trusts defined in law for England and Wales, because there's a separate legal system in Scotland from England and Wales, and then various pieces of legislation and policy in subsequent years. So, for example, governments trying to widen the right of tenants of social housing to buy their properties, so they're no longer affordable, and we've protected community land trusts from that, so community land trusts can keep homes affordable in perpetuity. The government has moved to try to ban leasehold, and Chris described how in Scotland you can't own, you can't separate the ownership of land and homes, and it's the same in England, but we use leasehold law to simulate that, where the community land trust is only giving people leasehold ownership of their homes or business units, or whatever it is, and the CLT can retain control of it. The government, for various reasons, is trying to ban that, and we've exempted community land trusts from those measures, managed to get definition of community-led development into national planning policy, and also it's now a priority in the government's new 10 year funding program for affordable housing across England. So, some success in beginning to reflect these things into these systems in England to promote a model of what we think to be genuine community ownership and agency and voice and power in how land is used, so I'm now going to hand over to Nkechi to give you the first of two perspectives on what this then means in different contexts, so Nkechi, over to you.

Nkechi Okeke Aru 49:39

Sorry, I was trying to unmute myself. So, my name is Nkechi. I'm the chair of Brent Community Land Trust, and I've been the chair for about the past 18 months, but I've been a member for about six years. I only have one slide today to try and kind of summarize, especially for people who are visual, our approach to social justice and community-led homes with Brent CLT. When, as a society, some people talk about social justice, they often focus on the output, so you know what gets done or built in our case, and how much of it, but for us at Brent CLT, this doesn't really address some of the systemic or structural barriers that we know affect access to affordable housing, so treating everyone equally doesn't always do enough to address some of these barriers. The concept of equity moves us further along by giving people what they need to tackle some of these barriers and feel empowered to affect change. So, for us, true social justice is not just about what we build, but how we build it, and who gets to shape it, similar to what Tom was speaking about just now. So, the Community Land Trust movement for us in Brent CLT provides an opportunity to achieve this. The London Borough of Brent is in northwest London, and it's one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, and in London as well. Around 65% of residents are from black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds, and over 150 languages are spoken in Brent, but alongside the diversity is the reality of the housing crisis. So, in Brent, one in six households is overcrowded. The average private rent is almost 2000 pounds a month,

and there are more than 36,000 households waiting for social housing. So, for many people, secure housing isn't really affordable, and it doesn't just affect individuals, it means entire communities, and particularly in Brent, where they've been waves of immigration and communities that come into the borough, they're affected by this housing crisis as well. So, Brent Community Land Trust was formed in 2020 as a response to this, and our first site is in the Stone Bridge, Stonebridge area of the borough, which is one of the most deprived areas, so the housing pressures are felt even more acutely, and we've managed to negotiate with the council that they will transfer to us land, but there are pressures on land across the borough as well, so it's a very small site, and when I was listening to everybody else talking about the number of hectares that they've been able to buy, ours is 516 square meters, so it's not a huge point about something in hectares, but we think it's a small site, but it can make a big impact and a big difference to the borough, and from the beginning we made a deliberate choice, so residents wouldn't be passive recipients, but they'd be active participants, and early on we established a community panel that really reflected the borough's diversity, so not just as a formality, but they had a decision making role to help shape the vision of our first project. We've also tried to go beyond formal meetings, so we hosted supper clubs in our local restaurants, we carried out outreach on site, we've collaborated with University College London to conduct research, and we show up at community events, because for us meaningful participation starts with meeting people where they are, and through these conversations we've heard real experiences, so families who are living in overcrowded homes who want their children to stay locally, but live independently. We've heard from single people who feel overlooked by the system, and also from local residents who the concept of community-led housing feels distant or abstract. So, instead of us expecting people to fit into a process, we're trying to build a process around people, so they understand and come on board, and so residents and volunteers have been involved at every stage through our design workshops to our policy decisions, and they've gained insights into architecture, planning, sustainability, and so we're all developing skills in those areas, and areas like governance and finance and project management, so it's not just consultation for us, it's participating with a purpose. As a volunteer-led organization, we're also learning as well, so learning about leadership and representation and what it means to truly reflect the communities that we serve. For me, this work is also personal, because I grew up in the borough and I joined the CLT because I was facing the reality that I couldn't afford to live in the borough with my husband and my kids, and I knew that many others were facing the same challenges. So, more than just a housing issue, there are kind of systemic issues and challenges that risk displacing people from entire communities and affecting future generations. So, that's why for us kind of representation and participation really matters, and community land trust help to do something powerful and help redistribute this power, so that people who are affected get to shape and build and define the future of the places that they live in. So today our first scheme is moving through the planning process, and if we're successful, we'll deliver 19 affordable homes, and we'll rent them at what we call social rent, but the impact for us also goes beyond those homes, so we're building skills and confidence and social capital, and so the development process is also a way to educate and empower, and in doing so, we're redefining what it means to belong, and so that people are heard and included, and have power and agency, so that we really all together go on that journey to achieve social justice. So, I'll stop there, and as and as if there are any questions, I can pick them up in the Q and A at the end.

Tom Chance 55:47

Thanks, Nkechis. Great. And so then in a very different part of UK, but similar, and it's also very expensive. Kevin Christine from Marshfield CLT.

Christine Eden 56:00

Hello, everyone, I'm Christy Dean. I've been chair of Marshall Community Land Trust since it began in 2016 which sounds like a long time, but it's needed - it's needed consistency of the strong will to keep going for during that time, and so I'm just going to run through some points, which in many ways interestingly reflect things we've just been talking about, because although we're moving from Central

London out into the rural community of South Gloucestershire, the same sorts of issues exist when it comes to thinking about land and ownership of land and who land is used for and on behalf of, so Marshall Community Land Trust actually began because there was yet another developer who wanted to build houses in the village. We've had a lot of sort of new estates ring what is a sort of 17th, 18th century high street, and they have all erected increasingly three, four-bedroom executive time houses, and another one moved in claiming that they wanted to make a few affordable houses in it, and the village said, "No, we don't want this. It's changing the village to an extent that we think is not appropriate. And there was a huge Ferrari in the village, petitions signed, general meetings, and a general sense of "get lost, and the developers got lost, but that left behind a recognition that there was a real issue in the community about people who'd been born and brought up in Marshfield, and who then found they couldn't afford to stay in the village. We were becoming part of a process, really, of gentrification, and we were excluding considerable numbers of people for whom Marshfield was home and who contributed significantly to the local economy, and at the same time there was also a belief that as a community of 1700 people we wanted to have some say about housing in the village and what housing was for and the people who had access to the housing rather than have it imposed upon us, and out of that we held a village meeting. A CLT community land trust was born. Anyone who wanted to at that time could join the steering group, and anyone who wanted to was then able to move on when we got registered formally to be a member of the CLT committee, so that twin issue about whose needs will be met in the village and to what extent did the village want to take control of its own housing. Those were the big prompt issues for our CLT, and we gained support across the village, partly because everyone was consulted right from the beginning, but because everyone recognized that the village had become unbalanced, it had become a place where lots of people were having to leave it, and people just felt that it wasn't appropriate, and that the way in which developers operated was something that they didn't want to see any more in the village. Interestingly, we've had a recent developer putting in an application, and it's received as many objections as the CLT planning application received support, so there's still quite a strong sense of being concerned about developers, as Tom noted earlier. So we, we set ourselves up as a CLT, and we set about developing what was originally intended to be a mixed tenure site. We were going to have three market houses, three houses for the man who let us have the land in return for three planning applications approval, two shared ownership, and 12 social rent houses, one way and another, the social rent haven't has worked, but the shared ownership didn't, the market houses didn't, and what we finished up with is 1515 houses social rent with passive house energy systems, so they're cheap to run, set in a beautiful spot in the village, so we have actually been very successful, and people moved into those houses in the last three months. What we have seen very clearly in this process, that there's what I've termed in my sort of brief summary a hidden inequality, and there was a tranche of people within the village for whom this significant market development of the village was not, it was not available to them. They didn't earn enough. Rural wages tend to be lower than urban wages, and we had a lot of people who were not able to buy the houses that were being built, but these people also were not getting picked up by the local authority system, they weren't sufficiently a crisis, which is a terrible thing to have to say about our housing, but it's a reality, so they were lost in that sort of limbo of can't buy a house, can't get a social house through own choice, as it's called in South Gloucestershire, and that's the group of people who we have been able to provide housing for by building houses which are available for people under a rural exception site who have a local connection to the community, and that's been a really important thing, because when you are in a rural community, housing is not just about somewhere to live, it is about the relationships you have within the community, so I have said that our houses take us beyond housing because they allow people to stay embedded in networks, which are really significant in rural communities, where many services aren't available. They have allowed people to remain embedded in childcare, elder care relationships, they've allowed people to go on working in what were frequently poorly paid part-time work within the community, and therefore they have, we have made a real contribution to the strength and viability and resilience, I think, of our community. One group that we've been particularly significant for has been for the issue of gender, in that there is a gendered issue

around housing, and it's particularly visible in rural communities. Women face poverty levels greater than men because they often are because of pay gaps, which still exists very much so, because of the fact they often have to do part-time work, and because they are taking on care responsibilities, and out of our 15 houses, we've got eight where the tenancy is in the name of a woman only. Three of those are single women, and the other five are female-headed sole parents, and within that, we've got several of them doing part-time work within the village, which contributes to the village, but also contributes to their sense of contributing to the community, so we feel that that secure social rent that we've been able to offer through our houses is part of family stability, it's part of community participation, it's part of meeting employment needs in a community, so we feel very much that we have touched on many of those very big issues, because we have shown that common common ownership of land allows you to do things on behalf of the community, we've shown that you can meet particular needs which don't get met by the market, we've shown that we can particularly help in gendered family problems, and we've also shown, I think, that we can contribute to the overall viability of the community and its resilience over time. One other thing that Tom said struck quite a chord, which is that you can have policies which argue for community-led housing, but very frequently they are saying that they approve a social community-led housing, they'll provide something like a rural exception site, but what they don't usually do is provide access to land, and although we do not have the issue that Scotland has, I think that issue about getting access to land in order that there is common good being used, that lands being used for common good, is very important for us, but in our own little way, in Marshfield, I feel that we have been an instrument of social justice. We've contributed to the diversity and well-being of our community, and it's been quite a hard battle. We had COVID, we had breakfast, breakfast, breakfast. That's where we started from. We had breakfast. We had issues of non-viability, but we now have 15 houses, which people are living in and are truly happy with. We have swift boxes that swifts have chosen to live in. We've got hedgehog highways, we've got passive house. We have something that I think the village of Marshfield is extremely pleased to have, and that we can feel very proud that we've contributed in a small way to helping people who needed it have homes that mean they can be part of their community. I was going to show you one more last slide, please, Ben, to show you the difficulties of ownership, the site that you can see there in the foreground is our houses, and you can see that we haven't been able to build on the ground, which would have got us close to the village, and we haven't been able to build all around the houses a bit further in the village, and that's because they are all sitting there waiting to be able to sell their houses for commercial housing, which will bring in vast amounts of money. So, in the end, we had this arrangement with the landlord, who is a farmer, for he had three houses, which, in fact, his children are going to live in, and in return, we had the land, but ideally, we should be one field up, because that's where we should be, and until local authorities start actually doing some compulsory pledges of land for community-led housing, I doubt that we'll get much closer. So, there we are. Thank you very much.

Tom Chance 1:06:00

Thanks, Christine, that was great. So, we're going to take a short five minute break, just because two hours on a Zoom webinar is a long time for anyone to have to sit still. And when we come back, Casey will introduce the section on community land ownership in Cymru or Wales. So, see you in five minutes,

Ben Harris 1:06:22

do What

Casey Edwards 1:11:10

Okay, I think by my watch that's five minutes, I can totally see the panelists coming back, so hopefully everyone's had a chance to stretch their legs and grab something to drink. Pronouna pow. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Casey Edwards. I'm a community-led housing program manager at Compass, a Welsh charity working with communities to help build a fairer, greener economy and more

equal society. Today, I'll be sharing a brief overview of some of the key historic and current land justice issues in Wales, and how communities are coming together to respond to them by reclaiming control to shape their own futures. Later, we'll be hearing from Gareth Yoan from Pedro Ashan, discussing the role that community land trusts can play in language revitalisation in a rural area, and unfortunately, as Mike has already said, unfortunately, Zayna Perishy from Cardiff Community Land Trust cannot be with us this afternoon, but we hope that we will be able to share more about the incredible initiative, their incredible initiative led by women in Cardiff following the event, so we'll kick off with my little bit of historical context, and then I'll hand over to Gareth to hear more about their CLT, and for those of you not familiar with Wales or Cymry in Welsh, we are a country in Great Britain with a population of just over 3 million, most often associated with dragons, poetry, and song, and sometimes Gareth Bale, and a while Gork, if you're a football fan, but when I think about land justice in Wales, a Welsh word comes to mind that actually has no direct translation to English, which is Carneven, so Canevin often translates as the place where we feel we belong, where the people and landscape around us are familiar, and Welsh communities have always had a strong connection to their land and place, or they can never in land is memory, identity, language, and belonging woven into the lives of our people. As Saunders Lewis once said, without land there is no Wales, but so often the power to decide what happens to that land and in those communities lies elsewhere. So, Wales was annexed by England in the 13th century and has endured centuries of unequal land ownership and control, leading to cultural, linguistic, and economic disparity. This is perhaps worst exemplified by the flooding of Trewern, a Welsh village that was drowned to create a reservoir to provide water for the people and a city in a different country. The Welsh-speaking community were displaced, dispersed, and disregarded, a reflection of what was happening to the culture, language, and identity across the wider country, or by the extraction of our vast natural resources, coal and slate, that we're so often proud of, but where the profits and benefits of those industries were not often seen or kept in the local community. In more recent histories, the boom in second home and holiday let ownership have decimated some of our strongest Welsh speaking communities, causing acute shortage of affordable homes. These practices have often left communities powerless and constrained by poverty, but this story is not only one of loss, it is also one of resistance, action, and renewal, and while we don't have a long history of the community land movement, like in Scotland, as Tom explained, we are growing into it, like in England. So community land initiatives across Wales are, have, and are responding to this legacy by taking land and assets back into local democratic control. Communities are using tools like community land trusts and cooperatives to develop affordable homes, bring empty buildings back into use, and keep, keep wealth rooted locally, like Tower Colliery, perhaps the UK's most famous worker-owned enterprise, where the miners bought their own pit and managed collectively in the 90s, or come date, that's tiguanes in North Wales, one of Wales's first examples of community-led housing established in the 70s by local people to provide affordable homes for the rural community there. These are pioneering communities that are meeting local housing needs creating jobs, supporting resilient economies, and strengthening long-term community wellbeing. At Compass, as the national hub for social enterprises, co-ops, and community-led housing, we've worked for over 40 years to create a fairer, greener economy and a more equal society. We believe our economy and society should work differently to tackle poverty and inequality, with more businesses using their profit for good, and for all communities to feel empowered to shape their own future. So, alongside similar movements in Scotland and England, we are part of a growing UK-wide push to democratize land and assets. We've long called for Welsh government to legislate for a community right to buy, as they have in Scotland, to give local people real power and control over their areas and community assets. Communities in Wales remain the least empowered in Great Britain and have been consistently consistently left behind other nations on community ownership rights and enabling legislation. The UK government, as Tom mentioned, has further developed these rights and legislation that applies in England, so Wales is even, is falling even further behind. We've also lobbied about the role that community land trusts can play in creating a fairer, more equal land system that puts communities at the heart of democratic decision making. As Wales is only community-led housing hub, we play a role in supporting those community

land trusts and wider community-led housing movements to grow, and we'll shortly hear from the incredible, incredible projects working on the ground to bring those projects to life. But just to end, before I bring Gareth in it would be remiss of me not to talk about the historic Welsh election that took place a couple of weeks ago, with Plaid Cymru forming a government for the first time in 100 years. The new administration has committed to enacting a community right to buy and have pledged to give Welsh communities more power in the decisions about their local area and their land, including the devolving the current estate to the Welsh Welsh government, yet another example of how little we have over our over our assets in in current circumstances. Hopefully, these commitments signal a profound shift towards a decentralized and community first approach to land justice in Wales, Cymru. I can certainly say that we're all feeling a little bit more hopeful after that election result a couple of weeks ago. So, Dirk and Bowie Auen and Brandor, thanks so much for listening. Hopefully, I provided you with a small overview of the current challenges and opportunities here in Wales, and I'm going to bring in Gareth Ioan from Pedrasan to talk about the work that they're doing in West Wales to create affordable homes for local people.

Gareth Ioan 1:18:34

Thank you for the invitation. My name is Gareth Ioan. As Casey indicated, I'm secretary of the Perashan CLT, based in south west Wales, and I'll be speaking to the paper which I prepared through this to this conference, entitled Community Land Trust and Language Revitalization in Wales, and I'll try to summarize that paper for you now. My first, firstly, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this conference, and thank all the other contributors for their interesting presentations. Just to give you some context, Casey has already done so to some extent, but for those of you who are unfamiliar with Wales, Wales is one of the four constituent parts of the Democratic Kingdom. We have existing national history, culture, language

Ben Harris 1:19:44

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Gareth Ioan 1:19:51

about one in every five of waves is 3 million populous, and by an increasingly young language community within a proudly bilingual society. Welsh remains the main medium of social interaction in many parts of southwest mid and northwest Wales. It's an official, it has official status in Wales and is supported by the Welsh government and enjoys cross-party support in the Senate. Well, following concerns over the future of Welsh in the 1960s numerous legal, strategic, and cultural measures have been implemented over the years to stabilize and revitalize the language. The current public policy aim is to increase speakers of Welsh 1 million by 2050 I suppose if we brought back the diaspora to Wales, we'd probably reach that easily, but there you go. Considered a marginalized and minoritized language efforts to promote Welsh have always been framed in terms of social justice, and much of a significant development seen over the past 60 years have been instigated and promoted by civil rights groups as well as cultural amateurs, recognizing the fundamental influence of economic factors in the vitality of minoritized and regional languages. One of the recurring slogans used by activists over the decades has been Thai Aguay I Gadurias homes and work to save the language, facing increasing demographic mobility, by which I mean the double-edged sword of a the outward economic migration of younger generations from the rural heartlands of West Wales, and be the in-migration of generally older people, mainly from England. Homes and housing has always been a key issue in rural Wales during the 1970s and 1980s a number of housing associations were formed to realize the campaign slogan Local Homes for Local People. Casey mentioned tide Gwyneth earlier, the underlying tensions relating to the housing market in West Maples, in West Wales, read Maine, and they, as they do in many other parts of the British Isles, actually, and they include, as you will be very familiar with, I suppose continuing demographic mobility inflated house prices in rural and coastal communities, which exclude local

people on the preponderance of holiday homes and holiday threats in such areas. These factors produce a dearth of affordable accommodation for the local populace, the Welsh National Government and our local authorities have recently responded with a variety of policy initiatives in an attempt to influence regional housing markets with a view to increasing affordable housing for local people, be it through increased rental stock or via increased opportunities to buy homes at affordable prices. Well, it was against this backdrop and background that in 2023 the group of concerned citizens in the Kai Wen Drs area here became a community consultation exercise that saw the establishment of the Pedar Chan CLT. Establishing Pedro Can has been seen as a preemptive development to ensure that a local vehicle was available should new opportunities arise in terms of securing local homes for local people. It was also seen as a means to raise awareness of pertinent issues to inform the local population of local housing matters and to advocate on the behalf, however, Peter Shan's objects were designed to include wide remit, which includes facilitating renewable energy projects, social and economic regeneration, and in particular, projects which foster the continued vitality of the Welsh language and culture in this area. The establishment of Peterland CLT as a vehicle to combat social and economic threats to the Welsh language is by no means unique. Its establishment is part of a growing trend in both North West and South West Wales, which has seen local communities realizing anew that the future as Welsh speaking societies lies in their own hands. Many community-led initiatives have been established in recent years in the Welsh-speaking heartlands, and among them, community land trusts. CLTs can facilitate local agency in housing matters, which can contribute positively to local language planning initiatives. Finally, efforts to secure the vitality of Welsh are part of a worldwide dynamic in favor of minority and regional language communities in general, a dynamic that attempts to restore a measure of social justice to minoritized communities, these issues are universal. We believe that the CLTs of West Wales can play a small part in that universal cause for social justice. I thank you for listening. Diocle Brando, the paper expands on these points again, and I am very willing to pick up some of these points in the Q&A. Diocle Maria, thank you very much.

Mike Staples 1:27:02

Thank Well, thank you very much, everybody. We've heard from an incredible diversity of different places within the United Kingdom, if, if nothing else, but every one of these inspiring stories really underpinning the point that community ownership of land brings incredible power and influence, and really useful, I think, to pick up on some of those commonalities. We've received now quite a lot of questions through the Q and A box. So, thank you to everybody, and we can see that a number of them are being picked up on and answered. It's quite possible we're not going to get through everything for any of the questions that we don't get to. We will come away from this and respond separately, and we're going to try and pick up on some of the kind of more strategic issues that have been raised, and Janet from London Community Land Trust, we're going to kick off there with quite a big question, I think. Janet's asked, given the strong public interest in community land trusts, what practical steps are needed to grow the movement nationally, and what would persuade central government, local authorities to provide enhanced policy support and more funding, and I guess also for Scotland and Wales, the devolved governments, as part of that conversation, as well. Janet has asked that question specifically about London, within the context of gentrification and displacement of people like key workers and young people who are priced out of the market, but I think what we're going to do is put that question to to each of the nations, perhaps Tom, if I could start with you from an English context, and managing an organization, a membership organization in England and Wales, who are perpetually thinking about the growth of the sector, what needs to happen if that can be answered briefly? I don't know, but yeah,

Tom Chance 1:29:28

thanks Mike, and thanks Janet for the question. I mean, a lot needs to happen. The big picture is that across the United, across the British Isles, we have an extremely concentrated house building market. It gets ever more concentrated each year, and the government tries to improve the quality by just

making it ever more complex and regulated, which makes it ever harder for people to come in and do something new. And Janet gives a very specific example of what sorts of affordable housing can be permitted under the current government affordable homes program, and that all the thinking is really driven by large social housing providers, and it's very, very hard for people to come in and try and do something a little bit different. We published a manifesto before the last UK general election in 2024 in which we set out people interested to go and read that gives the sort of flavor of the sorts of policy changes we need to see in England and to some extent in Wales, or what the British government needs to do to enable the Welsh government to do devolved matters. The bigger answer really is it comes back to this question about power, and the Community Land Trust Network was formed both because we feel that communities need power, but also there was a recognition from the communities that formed the network that they need collectively to have power nationally to be able to influence government and the private sector, and so Janet mentions in her answer the community housing fund, which is an example, another example in the list of things that we collectively can do by lobbying our MPs, and, and, and having power with government to shift that system, and what we need to do is to continue building that power as a movement collectively to have influence over the national governments in the UK to get some of those policy policy changes through, and really crucially to get government to respond to the views and needs of communities rather than the needs of industry, which is where they tend to listen.

Mike Staples 1:31:30

Thanks, Tom. Megan, you are coming at this both from the perspective of being the chair of a national community ownership organization, but also as a community representative in Scotland, we've, we've come a long way around the number of people and the increase in geography, but we need to keep that momentum going, and we have a new government. Also, what do we need

Megan MacInnes 1:32:03

to do? Yeah, I mean, I think you know, as Chris highlighted in his presentation, the there's a the long standing driver and movement for community land ownership in Scotland has been up in the North West Highlands, and in the islands there has been lots of efforts to demonstrate the benefits and impact, positive impacts that result from that in the south of Scotland and in urban areas, and now we're seeing, in terms of the actual data trends, the growth of community ownership of assets and land is much, it's increasing much faster in the south of Scotland and in urban areas, albeit smaller sites and less focus on land and more focus on assets, acquiring buildings and things, so there's always a need to grow the movement, but actually one thing I wanted to pop up, pick up on Chris was the second part of Janet's question, which is what do you need to do to persuade government to respond to that, because I think arguably in Scotland we've seen from recent polls a huge difference between the degree of ambition within the Scottish public for greater and more progressive land reform in comparison to the response from the government. We saw a land reform bill passed in 2025 which was frankly a damp squib, if that's a technical legal term, and we've seen a set of cabinet ministers announced just yesterday, following the Scottish government election, which doesn't even, where no one across any ministers has land reform in their title, it's not even clear which cabinet secretary is going to be responsible for land reform. So I think the case, the thing that we need to do in Scotland now is to make the case for community ownership and achieve a degree of political will and political ambition within government to to give us the land reform legislation and policies and processes which is fit for purpose and actually matches that demand, so that's where I think that the progress needs to be made now is in terms of building political will to have a legislative framework, which is actually what we need on the ground.

Mike Staples 1:34:10

Great, thank you. And Casey, same question for you. You have a new government who potentially are going to be a very different government, and a period of opportunity to build further in Wales.

Casey Edwards 1:34:25

Yeah, absolutely. And, like I said, we've, like, Cymru have already committed to enacting the right to buy in Wales, but I think what is really key for us now is to actually learn from places like Scotland and England, as they go through the process and develop something that is bespoke and works for Wales, not just taking it off the shelf, and because you know I've spoken to enough colleagues in Scotland to understand some of the challenges and hurdles that come with the legislation there, so I think it's now time for the Welsh government to learn from those kind of things that perhaps don't work as well, and actually, you know, develop something that works for, for us specifically. So, yeah, there is a real opportunity now, I think, to build on that. And, yeah, it's in their first 100 days, so they developed a first 100 days in government document, and it's actually in there, although similar to similar to the Scottish situation, we don't actually know which cabinet secretary will be taking this work forward, as it's not particularly clear from the titles as of yet, but fingers crossed, then there's a whole kind of movement in Wales that will be pushing the government now to ensure that this happens. I suppose the benefit that Plaid Cymru have is that it has cross-party support, so it was in several of the manifestos in the lead up to the election, so it does, you know, on the ground it feels like it could be a really quick win for Plaid Cymru to actually get this through and you know ensure that the people of Wales feel kind of in parity to other nations across across the UK, and yeah, I suppose specifically for kind of community-led housing and community land trust growing that movement, and I noticed there was a comment in the, in the Q and A about kind of how you work with, I suppose, more deprived communities - I never liked that term - but kind of communities that don't particularly engage in this kind of work. I think you know what we need is a really easy route for communities to be able to develop community land trusts and affordable homes, so take removing some of the key barriers of land funding planning. So I think the easier that you can make it for people, then the more people that will engage.

Mike Staples 1:36:39

Thank you all. I'm going to pick up on another question, which was specifically for you, Nkechi, relative to Brent, but I think we'll, we'll ask across the nations, and it's about collaborative working and building trust within your community, picking up particularly on the point you made about improving agency and empowerment. Comment is a lack of trust is a major issue between undeserved communities and institutions, but also between community groups with limited resources. So, how did you go about building trust within your community?

Nkechi Okeke Aru 1:37:20

I was just typing a long answer to that, so we, some of it is luck, to be honest with you, but we grew out of what was a neighborhood forum, so it already had brought together residents and community groups that were interested in the planning process, and so those discussions about affordable housing and the impact of the lack of affordable housing or had already started happening across the community. What we have been doing as a separate organization is maintaining those relationships with the neighborhood forum, but other also other local community groups and being visible, so we're have done things on the street, for example, we attend the local homelessness forum, we're part of the Brent, is a borough sanctuary, so we are part of those meetings as well. So we are getting the message out that we exist and letting people know what we do, and everybody seems to understand that housing is a real issue in the borough, and they understand that as an issue, and are willing to support that. I think the challenge we've had is actually in the, in the competition for funding, especially for local government revenue funding, grant funding, where there's a range of different organizations, and how we position ourselves as community land trust that it's in a certain stage of a planning process, and try and identify projects that will be suitable for local grant funding versus all the other needs that are

relevant in the local authority as well, so I don't think we've cracked the kind of revenue funding side, but in terms of collaboration and working together we are we are working well with others, and there's also something called a radical place leadership program in our borough, as well, so different organizations are concentrated around a place, so we're registered in a particular ward of the council, and all of us are working together to think through how we tackle some of these housing challenges, social challenges together, from preventing homelessness to have to housing people at the other end.

Mike Staples 1:39:27

Thank you, Angela. You managed to succeed in buying significant amount of land within a community that was very much used to being living in the shadow of a domineering landowner and being part of an ecosystem dominated by that landowner. How did you build trust within the community to bring people together around the idea of buying the land?

Angela Williams 1:40:09

Yeah, I think had we actually tried to engage folk in registering and interested in land, or even just talking about a community land purchase before the clue had put the land on the market, I think we'd have got nowhere. It would have been incredibly difficult. I think the clue putting the land on the market was put a firework up everybody. It was a whole whole for press. A separate news sheet was sent out by the local paper. There was the level of concern in the town was significant, because it had just never occurred to them that this would happen. The clue would own it. We could have a common riding on it. It would be there. It was ours, but just the clue happened to own it, and I don't think anybody had really explored the issues around, say, in Langham. No new housing has been built in the last 30 years, apart from a couple of private houses, and so I don't think people were equating what if you have control on the land, what you can actually do with it, and so, and we're just really sort of emerging from that and starting some of those conversations about it, and it, there is a lot of trust to build up, we've got the staff team who, who work here in the office, some are local, some aren't, and I think it's fair to say sometimes the suspicion of people coming in, which I totally get, and so we've, we've had to walk that and navigate that tightrope quite carefully, and there will always be some people who don't think there can be benefits, even if we gave them it gold plated, it would, you know, it wouldn't, it wouldn't be good enough, but slowly, bit by bit, we are getting people engaged with the fact they can have a say, and that they can hopefully see a difference being made, and maybe they can influence things.

Megan MacInnes 1:42:28

Mike, you're muted.

Mike Staples 1:42:32

Sorry, didn't even notice myself doing that. Gareth, sorry, I'm going to come to you last around the question of building collaboration and trust, you're working in the context, particularly of the Welsh language and community development coming together. How are you working to build those points of cohesion within the community that you're working in?

Gareth Ioan 1:43:01

Yeah, certainly, just to pick up on what Casey was saying earlier, we certainly need to touch up with other parts of the romantic and public policy, and also in terms of infrastructure and resources available for the sector, but I think in Wales CLTs are generally seen to be quite a novelty, it's quite a new thing, probably Casey would pick me up on that, but certainly in our parts it's quite a new initiative, we actually had a public meeting last night regarding a piece of forestry that's come up for second in the local area, and it's very difficult to get people's minds and thoughts around what the possibilities are, and I think others have indicated to Game to raise the ambition, in a sense that they actually have agency, or there's possibilities there within CLTs and other forms of community ownership to actually gain agency

and control and regain some power over their own futures, so it's CLTs, in a sense, is just seen as one tool, maybe in a range of other modes and vehicles that are gaining some traction in the Welsh-speaking heartlands the last few years, and again, just to echo what Casey said, the new government, that we are the Pine Company government, they've promised a few things for, for any people that are not, not, not disappoint, but it is key, I think in Wales, certainly, as elsewhere, to engage with communities, get that little going, and within many of these communities, which are suffered in justice over the years in many forms, economic, social, as well as cultural, that's that's key, really in unlocking the airport potential.

Mike Staples 1:45:32

Great, thank you very much. Going to take one more, which may be the last. Joanna from the Housing Agency in Ireland has asked a question specifically to Scotland about how we go about securing permanent affordability in homes that are community owned, but I think there's going to be some different perspectives in different countries on this. Could I start? We'll come to Scotland last. Maybe could I start by asking you, Christine, in your development that's completed, how have you secured the affordability for the people that live in the homes,

Christine Eden 1:46:24

well, the affordability for the people who live in the homes has been relatively straightforward, because, um, we have done it with, you know, we had a rural exception site, which is specifically allows you to build in places which otherwise you couldn't build in, and also allows you to develop a local lettings policy, which means that the local authority do the affordability testing, and that that's but the priority is given to people with local connection, which really does make it a very particular and special sort of policy level. The difficulty with all these policies is what else goes with them that allows you to do it? If it takes us 10 years, it's because we've had to fight so many battles in the process for a small group of houses, so the affordability, in a sense, was written into the policy, but the issues about finding land which was affordable, finding the grants which were affordable, finding a way of dealing with it, or that is very, that is on top of that fundamental question about local authorities defining affordability. So it is quite complicated. I think we've got at the moment South Gloucestershire Council, for example, have said in their local plan that they believe that new housing in the village where I live should be handled by the CLT, which is a lovely vote of confidence, but it doesn't actually solve any of the problems, and the policy without any recognition of effective implementation, I think, is very problematic.

Mike Staples 1:47:57

That's a, I'm sure, a statement that resonates with everybody. Thank you, Casey. Locking in affordability in the Welsh context.

Casey Edwards 1:48:10

Yeah, so I think for us the legal structures of these projects are really key. Obviously, there are certain structures that lend themselves to locking in that affordability better than others, clearly you can put covenants and clauses on the land purchase and the kind of planning process as well. So, yeah, the kind of key ways that we ensure those homes are affordable. We had a really great change in legislation of years ago now, actually, of our national planning policy framework, where it was written into that document that community-led community-led projects can and do deliver affordable homes alongside registered social landlords, so the Welsh equivalent of a registered provider and local authorities, so really great to see that change, kind of in national legislation, but then, as Christine was saying, that the kind of the actual challenges of implementing that policy then is very difficult, so we've had examples where local authorities are kind of completely disregarding that planning policy, that national planning policy, and just doing their own thing, so yeah, that they're the kind of key ways that

we actually ensure that the homes are affordable in perpetuity, but yes, it doesn't necessarily overcome some of the challenges still faced of actually on the ground delivery, I would say.

Mike Staples 1:49:41

Thank you, and finally, Angela, I think you've answered this in the chat relative to your own projects, and Chris, can I ask you to comment on this relative to the kind of the national context, and particularly your experience of putting together the Community Led Housing Alliance, and in Scotland.

Chris Dalglish 1:50:02

Thanks, Mike and Joanna. I'm assuming your question was sparked, given the way you phrased it around my comments around property law in Scotland, and we don't have, or no longer have, the freehold and leasehold system that you get in some other countries, which allows you to the community to retain ownership of the land, while in effect selling off the buildings or leasing them off long, long term. In that way, I mean, Angela, I think Megan, you picked up on this in the Q and A, there are answers. Well, I'm just really to pick up on some things, just saying. I think this, in general, there's this number of key things to mention. The first is the community ownership side, in the community retaining ownership, not selling off the buildings, because I've explained when you sell off a home in Scotland, you sell off the land and all that goes with it. So, I mean, Mike, you've mentioned with the Community Led Housing Alliance, we did a census of community-led housing in Scotland last year, first time it's ever been done, which has given us really good insight into what's going on, and 90% of the community provided homes in Scotland are being retained in community ownership and rented out. They're not being sold into private ownership, affordable or otherwise. They're retained for rental, and actually, in the south of Scotland, where Mike and I work, it's 100% That's the only model you get with community-led housing is rental, so they stay in the community's ownership, and that allows the community organization to protect the affordability. So rentals and affordable rentals, affordability is a key consideration. So that's one thing where homes are sold off, so that other 10% nationally, the land goes with the building. We do have their legal mechanism, the rural housing burden, which Mike, I suspect you're the best placed person to explain, but it's, it's something that's inserted in the title of the property, which means that when it's then sold again onto the market by the private owner, there is a kind of a lock in there about, you know, a nonprofit organization being able to take first refusal, having the house back, you can sort of lock in affordability through that legal mechanism, so it's our mechanism that controls future sales. The other thing to mention, this again, which I think picked up in the discussion on the written discussion, is conditions of grants and policy, public policy, you know, so public money going into these projects, there will be conditions around affordability being locked in and retained. Megan, I think you mentioned in the written comments, though there are lots and lots of practical challenges, as everyone's mentioned, around financing projects and keeping them affordable over the long term, but I think those are some of the key things, Mike, that I would mention around how it's done in the Scottish system.

Mike Staples 1:52:39

Great, thanks, Chris. And I'm not going to say anything about rural housing burdens, or Tom will not have time to wrap up. Try to get to as many of the questions that haven't been answered. If we've missed anything, I apologize with Ben at the International CLT Network. We will be going through these and making sure that we do come back on anything that we have missed, so thank you all again. I am going to now pass over to Tom Chance to wrap up proceedings.

Tom Chance 1:53:14

Well, Jeff, thank you, Mike, and thank you to all the really great questions and comments in the chat, and to our wonderful speakers, I wanted to come back to the tree that Chris stuck up at the start, because part of the inspiration for us in organizing this webinar with this range of speakers today was

thinking about the roots of the CLT movement, and from a UK perspective, and with the International Center, this wonderful website with CLT Roots, and the sort of story of the Community Land Trust movement in the United States. One of the roots in the American story goes back to the Garden Cities movement in the UK, and then we think about the roots of the CLT movement in England and Wales as drawing from that inspiring example from the civil rights and peace movements in the United States, and then what subsequently happened over many decades, and still inspires us today, but also we have other roots of our own, and that diversity of roots is also reflected, as Chris really beautifully put it, in the branches that then grow from this tree in the community land trust movement across the British Isles, and each of those branches reflects a different lived experience, different cultural practices, different in justices in the different parts of our nations, and for us it's important to uplift and share this diversity of experiences, because it's the whole point of the community land trust movement, you know, it'd be terrible for me to come along and try and tell you everything about the community land trust movement in England, rather than giving space for different voices to give you a flavor of the sorts of ways in which in justices in land manifest themselves in different parts of England or in Wales or in Scotland. So, I think I hope you've enjoyed this webinar this afternoon, and it gives you a bit of a sense. If you are inspired and interested, you will find lots of information on different websites about the diversity of community land trusts across these three nations. And, of course, we haven't included or spoken about Northern Ireland, where there's an active development trust movement and other things as well. If you were really interested, and you wish you'd like to know more about the stories that you've heard today, or if you want to hear from Sayen and Cardiff, who sadly couldn't be with us, we are going to publish articles by each of the speakers, these six speakers from the different perspectives on the International Center website, and so you'll get that link in due course later in the summer. I think it's a bit of time for us to get all that processed and online, but I hope that'll come to all of you who've attended or registered for this webinar. We'll also be showing the slides, which was a question in the Q and A for those of you who didn't quite catch some of the finer detail of some of the presentations. And finally, when you leave this webinar, there will be a brief exit survey, and we'd love it if you could fill that out to give us some feedback on this, and I will now leave you to enjoy the rest of your morning, or evening, or afternoon, or wherever you are in the world, and I hope to see you again soon. Thank you very much.