

# Alternative forms of living: Developing a community-led housing network in Wales

Final HIAA Project Report

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## Executive Summary

This document shares insights and questions from a series of Community-led Housing (CLH) workshops held at the Welsh School of Architecture between March and June 2024. These workshops provoked excitement in demonstrating how CLH can deliver quality homes within sustainable and healthy communities. They laid the foundation for establishing partnerships to work on three key themes:

- *Benefits and Affordability*: delivering inclusive mixed-tenure homes set within resilient communities
- *Planning and Finance*: the challenges of creating innovative housing within public structures that have not been designed to support such collaborative development, particularly in terms of planning and finance.
- *Design and Governance*: how the physical design of a project is linked to the needs of a group in particular geographical settings and the democratic processes that can realise these aspirations.

*We anticipate* the project will lay the groundwork for a CLH network in Wales, considering the existing experiences, expectations and concerns of different stakeholders for future research.

Takeaway insights and recommendations:

### **Workshop 1 – Benefits and Affordability**

- There is a need to document the wider benefits, processes, and impacts of CLH projects to raise awareness among different stakeholders and community groups in Wales.
- There is a need to explore broader definitions and understandings of affordability, based on local contexts and the lived experiences of communities living in them.

### **Workshop 2 – Land and Finance**

- Developing financing packages tailored to the needs of individual CLH groups is challenging due to limited funding options. More holistic funding opportunities are needed to create affordable homes where they would otherwise be out of reach.
- Accessing land and understanding the planning implications of potential sites requires access to information that could be facilitated by the government and public sector.
- CLH could be promoted as a way to deliver quality homes and contribute to creating more sustainable, resilient and healthy communities in Wales. For this, government bodies should engage more with the CLH sector and create champions to help communities understand the systems they must work within.

### **Workshop 3 – Governance and Design**

- CLH groups need to develop flexible and friendly governance structures that facilitate decision-making and the sharing of roles and responsibilities according to their values. Government and practitioners can learn from these structures and practices to support CLH projects.
- The physical design of the development must arise from how the particular CLH group defines its own needs (around community, sustainability, inclusion, work, mental and physical health, food production etc.). This facilitates how the CLH projects impact positively on the wider social, economic and environmental issues.

The discussion over the three workshops raised questions around three broad areas that can help to orientate future research on CLH:

1. **Why do it?** Why do groups engage in CLH? Why is this being done in Wales? What are the benefits for groups and the wider society?
2. **How is it done?** How is CLH currently delivered? How can statutory bodies support it?
3. **What makes it work?** What brings together the community in CLH? What design elements make this work?

## 1.0 Introduction

This report summarises key lessons and questions that came out of a series of Community-led Housing workshops held at the Welsh School of Architecture between March and June 2024. It was written collectively by the project team: Juan Usubillaga, Neil Turnbull and Juan Fernández (Cardiff University), Pat Gregory and Louise Gray (Co-op Dan Do) and Claire White (Cwmpas).

The workshops were part of a project funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the project built on research and expertise (including lived experience) of all participants, as well as long-term conversations between Cardiff University, Co-op Dan Do and Cwmpas. The project explored the potential of community-led housing as a radical housing alternative and fostered partnerships to work collaboratively around 3 themes related to community-led housing in Wales: *land*, *affordability* and *design*. These themes cut across existing research interests in the Welsh School of Architecture and the School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University.

Overall, the project aimed to set the foundations for the creation of a community-led housing network in Wales, recognising the existing experience, expectations and concerns of different stakeholders as the bedrock for future discussions and research in the field. To this extent, the workshops confronted and complemented the experiences of people involved in the processes of envisioning, designing, planning, supporting and living in community-led housing projects.

## Background and context

In the context of a housing, cost of living and climate crisis, it is imperative to explore housing alternatives in Wales.

According to the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru (CIH)<sup>1</sup>, as of October 2023, there were 139,000 households waiting for a social home in Wales, 10% of all households in Wales. As of March 2024, 13,539 of these households were assessed as homeless and owed the relief duty to help secure accommodation, showing an increase of 15% over the last two years and reaching its highest recorded figure since the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced<sup>2</sup>.

In the face of steadily raising housing shortages, and the climate crisis, the Welsh government committed in 2021 to delivering 20,000 new affordable and low-carbon social rent homes by 2026. As of September 2024 it is reported that slightly over 9000 of these have been delivered.<sup>3</sup> This is a significant push, and along with the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard, it means that more homes are being constructed across Wales and that these are delivered to higher standards of comfort and sustainability.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cih.org/media/wrtl2snr/inquiry-into-social-housing-supplycih-cymru-response.pdf> [published 22 April 2024]

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/homelessness-april-2023-march-2024-html> [published 5 September 2024]

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.audit.wales/publication/affordable-housing>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard-overview>

However, the housing crisis is not only a problem of housing provision, as it is reflected in official figures that show that a 35% of people in social housing in Wales experience loneliness<sup>5</sup>. In this regard, building plenty of homes, or building them to a high standard of sustainability does not ensure communities will thrive in them, or that the new developments will root within the communities where they are built. Thriving communities emerge from processes that directly involve or are led by future residents<sup>6</sup>, which can often be overlooked when the agendas are defined around productivity targets.

Recent scholarship on community-led housing outlines its semantic richness<sup>7</sup>, its current emergence from grassroot innovation and sustainable transitions<sup>8</sup>, its concern with testing ideas in real time by intentional communities<sup>9</sup>. Yet, CLH faces challenges in aspects such as financing, land acquisition, and development alternatives that remain affordable for future generations. It requires involvement of multiple stakeholders and navigating this universe is challenging for housing activists.

According to Community-led homes, out of 940 registered community-led housing projects in the UK, only 32 are located in Wales<sup>10</sup>. The Welsh experience in community-led housing is small within the UK but no exception in terms of the challenges it faces. However, it is characterised by its growth, showing a mass of projects in early stages or currently in development, but no finished or established projects. Community-led housing projects can deliver homes in different types of tenures, but the Welsh experience, through the support from Cwmpas, has focused supporting affordable housing projects.<sup>11</sup>

The Communities Creating Homes programme, delivered by Cwmpas, is the only national hub for support, information, advice and guidance to aspiring and existing groups in Wales funded by Welsh Government and the Nationwide Foundation. Cwmpas currently supports 42 groups across Wales, which account for 309 new homes in the development pipeline at the following stages of development:

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/loneliness-national-survey-wales-april-2022-march-2023-html>

<sup>6</sup> Hudson, Jim, Kath Scanlon, Chihiro Udagawa, Melissa Fernández Arrigoitia, Mara Ferreri, and Karen West. 2021. "A Slow Build-Up of a History of Kindness': Exploring the Potential of Community-Led Housing in Alleviating Loneliness" *Sustainability* 13, no. 20: 11323. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011323>

<sup>7</sup> Crabtree-Hayes, L., (2023) Establishing a glossary of community-led housing. *International Journal of Housing Policy*.

<sup>8</sup> Lang, R., Chatterton, P., and Mullins, D., (2020) Grassroots innovations in community-led housing in England: the role and evolution of intermediaries. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*. Vol 12, No. 1, pp 52-72.

<sup>9</sup> Stevens-Wood, K. (2021) *Making Community: Is there a magic formula*. In eds. C. Coates., J Dennis., J. How., and K. Stevens-Wood. *Diggers & dreamers : intentional community in Britain*. Diggers and dreamers. 12th edition. ed. London: Diggers and Dreamers Publications, pp5-12.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/join-movement/projects-map?postcode=&group=&project=>

<sup>11</sup> <https://cwmpas.coop/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/3.2.5.-CLH-Comm-Ownership-Full-2022-ENG.pdf>

Development stage		No. of groups	No. of homes
<b>Concept</b>	Groups who are defining their vision and goals as well as choosing a legal framework/status and developing their business plan.	21	98
<b>Site</b>	Groups who are actively searching for and considering the feasibility of sites, assessing the overall costs of development and securing funding	14	149
<b>Plan</b>	Groups who are engaged with the Local Planning Authority, preparing and submitted planning applications for a site they have secured either by an option or exclusivity agreement, in partnership with a developer or purchased outright.	7	62

Table 1. Scale and stage of Community Led Housing development projects in Wales (13<sup>th</sup> September 2024).

Source: Data adapted and developed by authors from Cwmpas' Communities Creating Homes Programme

The chart below breaks down some of the information in the table across Wales:

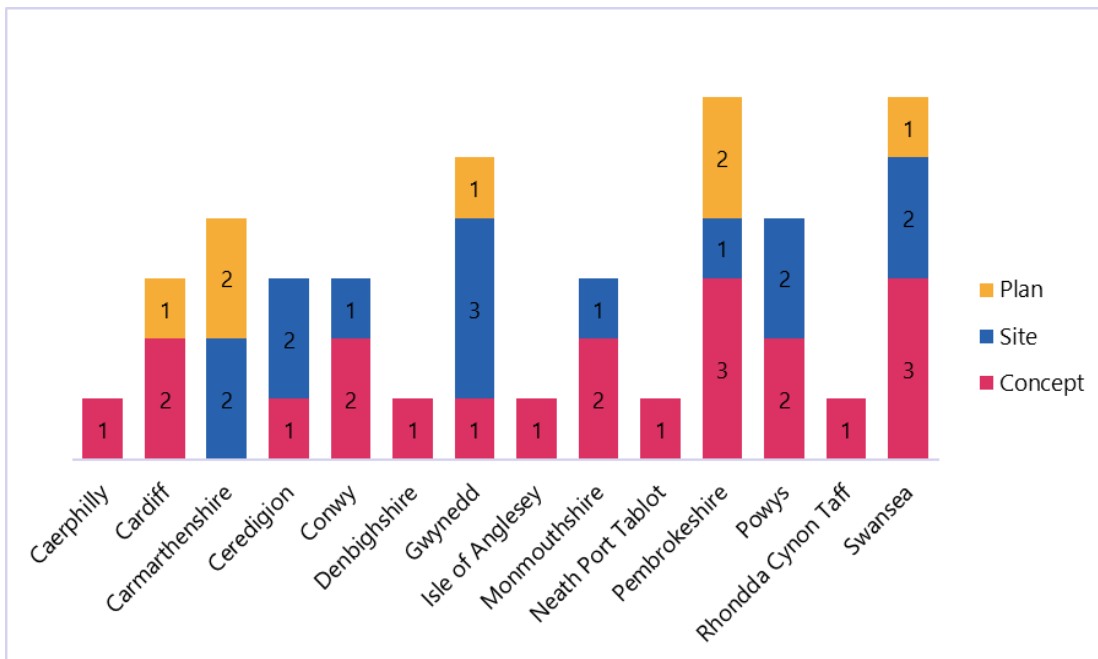


Figure 1. Distribution of community-led housing projects in Wales

Source: Data adapted and developed by authors from Cwmpas' Communities Creating Homes Programme

## The workshops

Between March and June 2024, the project team carried out 3 workshops organised around key themes:

- Workshop 1 – Benefits and Affordability [4<sup>th</sup> March 2024]
- Workshop 2 – Land, Finance and Planning [15<sup>th</sup> April 2024]
- Workshop 3 – Design and Governance [10<sup>th</sup> June 2024]

Each workshop included 2 guest participant-speakers from community-led housing developments across the UK, who talked about their lived experiences and used this to reflect on the workshop themes. We also had participants from academia, policymaking, practice and third sector organisations with experience and/or an interest in community-led housing, as well as community-led housing groups in Wales at different stages in their projects. The workshops were spaces for us to think collectively about challenges and opportunities around the themes and these, along with the contents of this report, form a guide for longer-term partnerships and future research funding applications.

## Methods

The project workshops create spaces to explore the potential impacts of innovation in community-led housing and draw on Participatory Action Research practices where ethical research goes beyond doing no harm by enabling informed action in new spaces for critical engagement<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, each workshop foregrounded the lived experience of CLH groups and oriented the discussions around the issues highlighted as important to them. The structure of each workshop included:

- Introductions
- Presentations by CLH groups on one of the workshop topics
- Commentary by practitioners
- Small group discussions and feedback
- Closing circle and summary notes by researchers in the room

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<sup>12</sup> Kindon, S. L., Pain, R. and Kesby, M. 2007. *Participatory action research approaches and methods connecting people, participation and place*. Routledge studies in human geography ; 22. London: Routledge.



The project team acted as facilitators during the workshops and used the notes to create the workshop summaries included in this report. These were shared with all participants, as background information for the following workshops.

## Structure of the report

The report is structured in six sections. Section 1 introduced the project and its background, while sections 2 to 4 briefly summarise the discussions of each workshop. Section 5 outlines key areas where further research is needed to support the development of Community-led Housing projects in Wales, and section 6 will include conclusions and final reflections from the dissemination event

## 2.0 Notes from Workshop 1 – Benefits and Affordability

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Welsh School of Architecture

The first workshop had 24 participants who came together to discuss the benefits of community-led housing and challenges associated with affordability. We started with guest talks by **Frances Wright from Marmalade Lane, Cambridge Cohousing / TOWN**, and **Adam Land from Gŵyr Community Land Trust**.



Figure : Workshop 1 - Benefits and Affordability. Photo by Juan Fernández (2024)

Workshop discussions revolved around the following key themes:

### The need to document wider benefits, processes, and impacts of Community-led Housing (CLH) projects

The first key theme found in workshop discussions related to how we document and communicate the benefits brought by CLH projects, as well as their processes. This included highlighting CLH as:

- An opportunity to address planning concerns, issues, or strategic priorities in local development plans in different local authorities in Wales.
- A way to build homes and places, not just housing, also bringing benefits to participating communities. This involves creating a shared vision and working together to achieve it.

- An opportunity to bring services or address needs in the wider community. This involves thinking about the relationships CLH groups want to establish with their locales.
- Something that can bring wider benefits to other stakeholders involved, and Local Authorities, as it can help them address waiting lists and use pieces of land that are less attractive to developers (among other things).
- Something that addresses broader questions and brings benefits linked to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- Diverse and complex, where a clear understanding of its key stages is critical to offer significant support to future CLH groups.

#### Key questions highlighted from the discussions:

1. How can we raise more awareness of CLH among different stakeholders and community groups in Wales?
2. How can we build a collection or archive of CLH case studies in Wales that can be useful for stakeholders and community groups interested in developing CLH?

### The need to explore meaningful definitions/understandings of affordability.

The second key theme in the workshop came out of discussions around affordability and how we should examine the term more closely, going beyond established definitions in research and planning policies. This included:

- Unpacking what affordability means to different CLH groups, in the context of local authorities varying definitions of affordability.
- Exploring structures of ownership and equity that might support affordability in perpetuity.
- Finding ways to fund shared spaces and facilities in CLH developments, especially where this might conflict with traditional understandings of affordable housing and existing funding models.
- Exploring the potential of subsidising shared spaces through returns on market housing on site, section 106 obligations that include wider community use or loan finance that is serviced by resident's paying a service charge, among others.
- Exploring alternative ways of accessing public and private land, including that which might not be available or attractive for developers such as brownfield sites, land owned by other institutions like the coal authority, etc., where lower costs can help deliver affordability.
- Exploring different sources of funding and support available for CLH communities to innovate, coming from Local Authorities, developers, housing associations, the wider public sector, etc.

**Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

3. How can we foster a more enabling public sector for CLH projects?
4. How can we re-conceptualise affordability in a way that is useful and accounts for existing and potential innovations in CLH projects?

## CLH as a way to address broader societal challenges.

The third theme in the workshop relates to broader societal questions and how CLH offers an opportunity to examine them and potentially address them in innovative ways. This includes:

- Exploring how to scale up CLH to address the housing crisis, considering that there are over 139,000 people on the housing waiting list in Wales. This involves exploring building in higher densities, using land that is less attractive/unavailable for developers, or reclaiming inner-city areas.
- Finding ways to persuade local and national authorities that CLH is something that can be done at scale. This involves developing case studies, engaging in policy processes, and making the case to use planning tools and regulations for CLH (e.g., section 106, land value capture, etc.).
- Exploring the ways in which CLH can help tackle the Climate Emergency and bring benefits for the well-being of future generations (relating it to the Well-Being of Future Generations Act).
- Recognising that CLH foregrounds collective values of sharing resources that extends beyond the confines of place to engage with wider communities.

**Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

5. What models or opportunities can enable CLH to scale up to the level needed to address the housing crisis in Wales?
6. In what ways can CLH help tackle the Climate Emergency?

## 3.0 Notes from Workshop 2 – Land and Finance

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – Welsh School of Architecture

The second workshop had 31 participants who came together to discuss the challenges associated with finance, land acquisition and the planning system in Wales when it comes to community-led housing projects. We started with guest talks by **Judith Griffies from Bridport Cohousing**, and **Adam Land from Gŵyr Community Land Trust**.



Figure : Workshop 2 - Land, Finance and Planning. Photo by Juan Usubillaga (2024)

Workshop discussions revolved around the following key themes:

### Developing financing packages , tailored to the needs of individual CLH groups.

The first key theme in the workshop related to the challenges of financing and how CLH groups navigate the limited universe of funding options, often in very creative ways. This includes:

- Mixing sources of income, such as grants, loans, donations, and community contributions.
- Accessing grants that are specific to elements of the CLH development (e.g., renewable energy systems, enhancing biodiversity, etc.).

- Staging of financing along the different moments in the CLH development process, including funding for running the organisation, funding to cover planning and site acquisition, and funding for building.
- Consideration of funding stability in the future to cover management and repair costs.
- Introduction of membership fees and need for transparency and clarity on spending.

**Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

7. How can the CLH sector be supported at a government level with holistic funding opportunities to create affordable homes where they would otherwise be out of reach?
8. In what ways can the expertise developed by CLH groups when navigating the finance landscape be shared with other CLH groups who are earlier in the process?

### Accessing land, competition, and planning implications of sites.

The second theme in the workshop came out of discussions around land acquisition and planning requirements, as these are closely tied together. This includes:

- Deciding whether to compete with private investors in the land market or acquiring land off market.
- Liaising directly with landlords and negotiating with an ethical footing – tapping into the social consequences of ‘selling out’ to developers.
- Potential of using Community Land Trusts to access land without paying full development prices.
- Considering what makes a site suitable for a CLH group, both in relation to group requirements but also planning restrictions.
- Exception sites and the long-term planning implications of being in an exception site (e.g., requirement to have 100% affordable housing).
- Potential of acquiring sites that are less attractive to developers, or publicly-owned sites via Community Asset Transfers.

**Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

9. How can access to information on potential sites for CLH projects be facilitated by the government and public sector organisations?
10. How can experiences of acquiring land off-market be shared among CLH groups and different stakeholders who might facilitate the process in future CLH projects?

## Political will, pioneering and the power of exemplars in CLH.

The third theme in the workshop relates to wider political questions and how CLH could be promoted as a viable way of delivering quality housing in local authorities in Wales. This includes:

- Exploring how CLH project costs compare to costs of affordable housing investments, housing benefits, etc.
- Exploring ways in which CLH could be tied into existing developments and planning policies (e.g., section 106).
- Mapping out the costs of different existing CLH projects at their different stages of development (mapping out their financial journey)
- Having a successful CLH project in Wales as an exemplar to show that things are possible in the Welsh context.
  - o Bringing government and Local Authorities on board.
  - o Reassuring local authority planning teams.
  - o Sharing knowledge with other CLH groups or people interested in CLH.
- Promoting CLH as a vehicle for ethical investment.

### Key questions highlighted from the discussions:

11. How can statutory bodies be encouraged to engage with the CLH sector more and create champions who can help communities understand the systems they must work within (e.g., planning, affordable housing need, local housing strategy)?
12. How can we document the process of CLH groups in ways that help influence decision-makers and increase support for CLH projects across Wales?

## 4.0 Notes from Workshop 3 – Governance and Design

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Welsh School of Architecture

The third and final workshop had 35 participants who came together to discuss the challenges associated with governance models and design in community-led housing projects. We started with guest talks by **Judith Griffies from Bridport Cohousing**, and **Ali Taherzadeh and Aiman Rahim from Rhisom Housing Co-operative**.



Figure : Workshop 3 - Governance and Design. Photo by Juan Fernández (2024)

Workshop discussions revolved around the following key themes:

### Developing governance and decision-making structures.

The first key theme in the workshop related to the challenges of developing organisational structures in CLH groups that facilitate decision-making and the sharing of roles and responsibilities according to the group values. This includes:



- Exploring dynamic governance models such as sociocracy in Bridport which is grounded in the principle of everyone's voice matters
- Agreeing on groups' aims, roles, responsibilities and processes early on
- Adopting decision-making processes that reflect the principles and needs of the group, including:
  - o Processes for small decisions (e.g., using chat groups)
  - o Processes for big decisions (e.g., consensus, consent-based decision-making)
  - o Processes to incorporate objections and disagreements
  - o Processes to resolve disputes
- Need for adaptation and continuous learning
  - o Processes and structures change/evolve as the group changes/grows
  - o Value of adapting processes according to group's needs
  - o Ongoing learning on what works, for whom, and under which circumstances
- Benefits of clear governance structures including transparency, empowerment of all members, shared responsibilities.
- Structures and processes set up to prevent latent power (tyranny of structurelessness)

#### Key questions highlighted from the discussions:

13. What tools can help support good decision making in CLH groups, and what are the different ways in which they need to work (e.g., over time, across different groups sizes, etc.)?

14. In what ways can government, practitioners and professionals learn from and engage with these decision-making practices to facilitate CLH projects – and to what extent might they also implement this learning in other areas of influence to share power?

## CLH values and design

The second theme in the workshop touched on the relationship between governance and design, especially in how organisational values translate into design principles and how the physical design of CLH projects can have a profound effect on organisational structures. The design of CLH developments is interlocked with the CLH group's governance. This includes:

- Agreeing on values and embedding them into the CLH group's everyday life (e.g., trust, radical care, pluriversality)
- Community engagement: linking with other community groups, activist organisations, and the broader society beyond the CLH
- Reflecting community values through the physical design including shared spaces that may be open and welcoming to non-residents

### **Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

15. How can we motivate design professionals, practitioners, and government, to become familiar with CLH norm and values and take them into consideration when a project is being developed?
16. To what extent might CLH norms and values inspire innovation in the wider society, and champion mutual support and collectivism as an antidote to individualisation and the atomisation of society?

## **Design**

The third theme in the workshop relates to the physical design of CLH developments and the development of a design brief that is tailored to the needs and requirements of the group, but also considers how these might change over time. This includes:

- The importance of the location and design of the CLH in relation to the needs of the community and the broader context in which they are embedded (e.g., being involved in local activism, having spaces for food production)
- Designing life-long homes, addressing questions such as:
  - o How we are all temporarily abled and our bodies might have different requirements/needs as we grow older
  - o How household structures change over time with people having children, children moving out, etc.
- Exploring the importance of sharing resources, food, spaces, green and productive areas in the physical design of CLH developments
- Demonstrating that the diversity of CLH projects reflects a new way of doing things, as developments can be realised in many different ways with similar principles
- Understanding the impact that seemingly small design decisions such as the location of front doors or the building of benches on facades can have in everyday life and community activities

### **Key questions highlighted from the discussions:**

17. In what ways can design professionals translate the aims, norms and values of CLH groups into placemaking and the physical environment?
18. How might CLH projects impact positively and more widely beyond the confines of their land (ecologically, politically, socially, economically)?

## 5.0 Outcomes

The discussion over the three workshops raised many questions around Community Led Housing. Three broad areas, or themes, emerge from this work that can help to orientate future research/practice/policy around Community Led Housing.

1. Why do it? Why do groups engage in Community Led Housing? Why is this being done in Wales? What are the benefits for groups and wider society?
2. How is it done? How is Community Led Housing delivered currently? How do statutory bodies understand, support and facilitate CLH?
3. What makes it work? What 'creates' or brings together community? What tools can help support good decision making in CLH groups, and what are the different ways in which they need to work (e.g., over time, across different groups and different group sizes, etc.)?

### Part I: Why do it?

1. To what extent might CLH norms and values inspire innovation, mutual support and resilience as an antidote to individualisation and the atomisation of society?
2. What models or opportunities can enable CLH to scale up to the level needed to address the housing crisis in Wales?
3. In what ways can CLH help tackle the Climate Emergency?
4. How can we re-conceptualise affordability in a way that is useful and accounts for existing and potential innovations in CLH projects?
5. How can we foster a more enabling public sector for CLH projects?
6. How can we raise more awareness of CLH among different stakeholders and community groups in Wales?
7. How can we build a collection or archive of CLH case studies in Wales that can be useful for stakeholders and community groups interested in developing CLH?

### Part II: How is it done?

8. How can the CLH sector be supported at a government level with holistic funding opportunities to create affordable homes where they would otherwise be out of reach?
9. In what ways can the expertise developed by CLH groups when navigating the finance landscape be shared with other CLH groups who are earlier in the process?
10. How can access to information on potential sites for CLH projects be facilitated by the government and public sector organisations?
11. How can experiences of acquiring land off-market be shared among CLH groups and different stakeholders who might facilitate the process in future CLH projects?
12. How can statutory bodies be encouraged to engage with the CLH sector more and create champions who can help communities understand the systems they must work within (e.g., planning, affordable housing need, local housing strategy)?

13. How can we document the process of CLH groups in ways that help influence decision-makers and increase support for CLH projects across Wales?

### Part III: What makes it work?

14. In what ways can government, practitioners and professionals learn from and engage with these decision-making practices to facilitate CLH projects – and to what extent might they also implement this learning in other areas of influence to share power?
15. How can we motivate design professionals, practitioners, and government, to become familiar with CLH norm and values and take them into consideration when a project is being developed?
16. In what ways can design professionals translate the aims, norms and values of CLH groups into placemaking and the physical environment?
17. How might CLH projects impact positively and more widely beyond the confines of their land (ecologically, politically, socially, economically)?

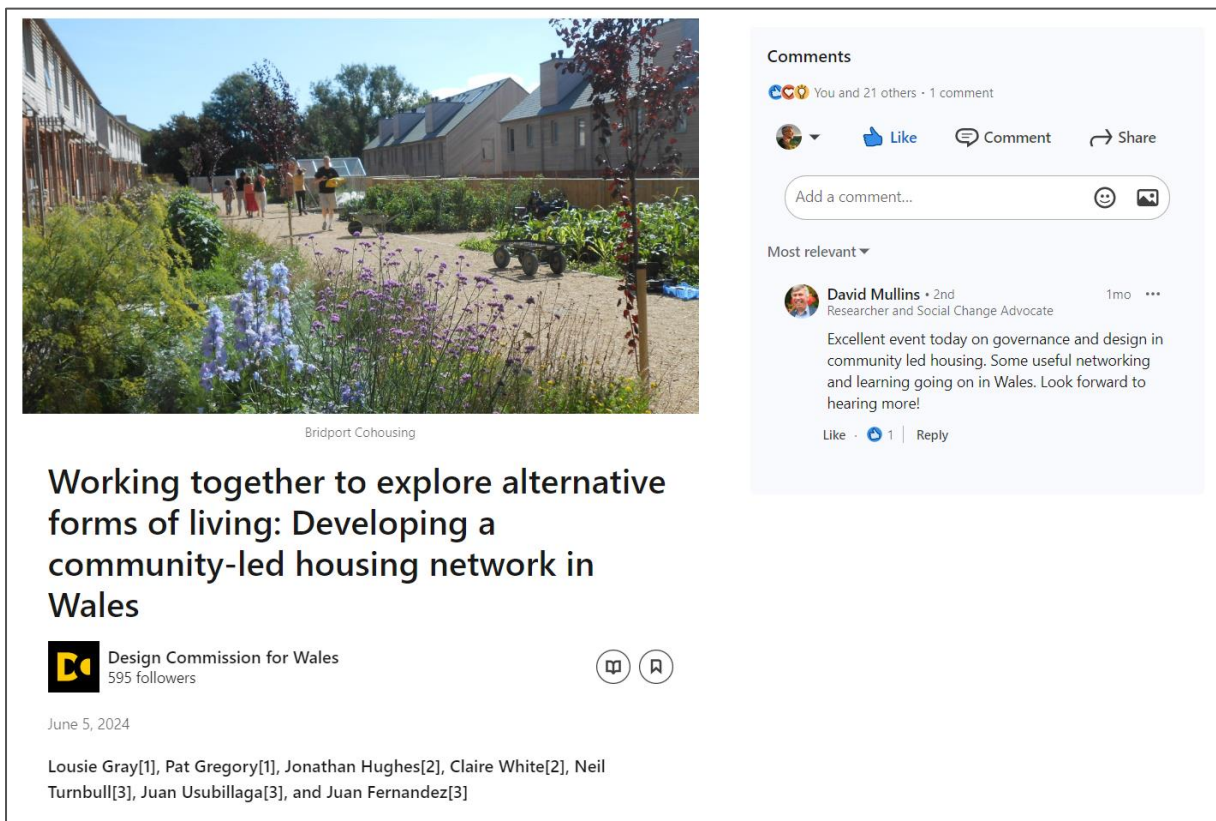


Figure 2. Screenshot of LinkedIn post published by the Design Commission for Wales.

Source: LinkedIn (2024)

Impact: Our project has gathered wider attention throughout its duration, including,

- Project team invited to write a LinkedIn post 'Working together to explore alternative forms of living: Developing a community-led housing network in Wales' ['Working together to explore alternative forms of living: Developing a community-led housing network in Wales'](#) for the Design Commission for Wales
- Project team members invited to sit on the Bevan Foundation Housing Advisory Group.

Funding application idea:

- Participatory Action Research methodology and documenting past case studies
- Understanding CLH as more than housing – urban design. The spatialities of housing and infrastructures of care and support.
- 3 work packages where more research is needed:
  1. Designing governance and autonomy
  2. Designing housing as urbanism
  3. Designing infrastructures of support

## 6.0 Conclusion and final reflections

On Monday 21st October we held our dissemination event at the Grange Pavilion in Cardiff, which brought together the emerging network to showcase local CLH groups who had contributed to our 3 workshops, reflect upon key issues and questions coming out of the workshops, and open a discussion around four themes to continue the work of the CLH network moving forward: 'Community', 'Professional/private sector', 'Public sector', and 'Research'. The following is a brief summary of these discussions:

### **Community – Networking and mutual support for local CLH groups**

- How CLH groups can develop their collective voice to have a greater impact on policy and share information.
- An independent peer-led CLH support group to be developed alongside Cwmpas and existing networks.
- Exploring tools for CLH to find and contact each other such as the CLH group-led social media group (Facebook?) and introducing quarterly online meetings
- How could CLH groups be financially supported? E.g., a membership body allowing groups to pool resources.

### **Professional/private sector – A CLH 'professional network' for Wales?**

- If there is potential, to build on the experience and enthusiasm of professionals working with or willing to work with CLH groups to participate in networks and even form a consortium to collectively offer services to the groups.
- CLH groups need alternative funding routes, tailored to their requirements, and help navigating changing policy/support landscapes

### **Public sector – Promoting CLH in the Welsh public sector**

- Aspiration that local authorities become enablers – including, visible/contactable CLH champions, help with finding land, planning (including Local Development Plans) – this involves 'getting them round the table to talk', and engaging in sociocracy – or other non-hierarchical working practices.
- Explore improving access to existing funding e.g., Social Housing Grant, Land and Buildings Development Fund to provide CLH homes.

### **Research – identifying crucial research to support CLH in Wales**

- Demonstrating value: Documenting/gathering evidence of social benefits of CLH projects throughout their lifecycle.
- Futureproofing: How to achieve long-term sustainability of projects and lock-in social benefits?
- Understanding best practice: what conditions enable successful outcomes in CLH projects. What works, for whom and under which circumstances?
- Making the case for Wales: participants asked "why doing it in Wales? Why hasn't this happened yet?" Why hasn't CLH gathered more pace in Wales yet? What are the barriers? Addressing the mismatch between policies and actual delivery of projects on the ground.

Overall, we followed a Participatory Action Research approach to create spaces where lived experiences, challenges and questions were put at the centre of thinking on how future research could contribute to the work of CLH groups in Wales. In this sense, bringing guest speakers from CLH projects across the UK allowed us to reflect on the journeys of different groups and what knowledge or resources could be shared among them to create a CLH network. This also fostered new connections between groups, and between them and local practitioners.

A key challenge, however, was getting the voice of local authorities in the room as they are key stakeholders in CLH development processes. There is a need to further explore and understand the institutional barriers that prevented them from engaging in our workshops and make it difficult to get on board with CLH projects.