

**LEISTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
CHAIR'S REPORT FOR AGM 2019 / 2020**

Looking back over 2019/20 the CLT continued to make substantial progress with increasing support from members and stakeholders. Indeed the Leiston community responded in numbers to the recruitment drive led by Trustees Lesley Hill and Bing Boast who exceeded their target of 200 by the end of December 2019 with plenty of interest being shown in the plans on display in the Co-op and Leisure Centre.

All plans for further recruitment activity had to be abandoned as we reached March and the Corona Virus suddenly became part of our daily vocabulary with the world reduced to the size of our homes. Physical meetings were cancelled, being replaced by communal telephone calls during the remainder of March – not ideal but at least a means of continuing the development of the town centre project. Although the subject of the Update and not this Report, I was so impressed with the Trustees in their subsequent ability to adapt to on-line meetings - Zoom is now an everyday term!

Significant milestones saw success with a “Bright Ideas” funding application. This enabled Trustee Russ Rainger, supported by CLT Administrator Denise, to work with marketing company Mackman to deliver a very professional and impressive website and further reinforce our credibility to members, stakeholders and potential funders.

Trustee and local architect Simon Merrett further detailed his earlier Urban Plan and with the Board's support briefed local Landscaper's Gladwells who subsequently produced the exciting plans for Phase 1 – Church Square. Again, the Update will show the remarkable progress made since March 2020 with Trustees Jim Florance and Phil Edwards leading on the Church liaison and funding respectively.

Although it may seem that our attention has been focussed on the Church Square, Leiston Community Land Trust's main focus remains on the development of the market square and particularly on the provision of appropriate social housing with priority allocation to Leiston people. Much work continued out of the public eye and again good progress is being made on this ambitious development.

All the efforts of the Trustees have been enhanced by the support given during 2019/20 by Leiston Town, East Suffolk District and Suffolk County Councils individually and in their capacity as members of Leiston Together and by East of England Co-op. Our thanks go to all of them.

None of this would have been possible without the time, energy and commitment of the Trustees who have served the Trust and its Members beyond what should be expected of volunteers. As Chair I applaud them all, and on a personal note I have been grateful for their support and friendship. As I now step down and sadly leave Leiston to move closer to remaining family, I wish the CLT every success and will watch progress from afar.

Sammy Betson
Chair, Leiston Community Land Trust
2019/20