

Leiston Community Land Trust Chair's Report 2022 to 2023

Our focus has continued to be the implementation of the urban plan vision that local architect and Trustee Simon Merrett has visualised in sketches.

We explained previously that we have three areas of initial focus split into individual projects – our Three Squares concept. We set out to deliver Church Square first as a means of demonstrating to external partners and stakeholders, Leiston's ability to deliver change. We are very pleased that a year on from it becoming publicly accessible it has been recognised by an award from the Plunkett Foundation and High Street of the Year from East Suffolk Council.

It is exciting to see Project 47 opening their doors and establishing a community project in a former empty building, thus proving that growth and investment helps to generate more growth and investment.

The second development is Market Square, the proposal to regenerate the East Suffolk Council owned land between Sizewell Road and their car park in the High Street. These plans, based on the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan 2017 centre on affordable housing mixed with small retail units and new civic space. We have presented our ideas to the landowner (East Suffolk Council) and they are very receptive. The presentation from ESC at the AGM will give an update on their plans. At the moment number 16 Sizewell Road has a demolition notice due to the building being deemed unsafe. It is sad to see it boarded up, this has been necessary due to minor vandalism and we are urging ESC to make a decision that will remove the eye sore.

The third development, Heritage Square is focused on re-use of the Town Council office in Old Post Office Square and is contingent upon completion of the Market Square proposals and is some way off. However, this has not prevented us from exploring more of the opportunities and challenges this scope of work will present. We are pleased to see that ESC have recently carried out much needed repair work to ensure the fabric of this unique building.

There has been something of a lull while the Master Plan is developed, but we remain optimistic that ESC will continue to support the opportunities the Regeneration Plan bring to Leiston.

Russ Rainger
Chair
Leiston Community Land Trust