

Nith Valley Leaf Trust and South of Scotland Community Housing

Closeburn community-owned Passivhaus Project

15 July 21

**sosch.**  
South of Scotland  
Community Housing



NVLT



NVLT is a Community Development Trust based in the village of Closeburn near Thornhill, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland, established with the following objectives:

- To identify the needs and requirements for a sustainable community
- To manage community land and assets for the benefit of the community
- To advance community development including urban and rural regeneration
- To assist in providing recreational activities and facilities
- To improve living and environmental conditions for a healthier lifestyle
- To increase awareness to the local community about the environment, culture, heritage and history
- To advance environmental protection and preservation of the natural environment

## South of Scotland Community Housing (sosch)

- DGSCHT - charity established in 2006 to address shortfall in rural housing supply in rural SW Scotland – response to study by Shelter.
- Support, facilitate and enable affordable community-led housing delivery within the context of community-ownership of land and assets and Land Reform. Community focussed, but also work with landowners and employers.
- Focus on solutions that target local needs and allocations, but also repopulation. Longterm project lifecycle support to communities
- Strategic engagement with Scottish and Local Government and a range of national agencies and organisations
  - Strategic Partnership with Local Authorities, RSL's, developers and SOSE
  - Engagement with Community Land Scotland / Scottish Land Commission, etc
  - SOSCH CLH – supported by Nationwide Foundation
  - Lottery Project – CLH Design Guide for Post-Covid Living
- Focus on wider impacts of community ownership – local economic impact, facilitating opportunity, ageing demographic, social benefits, support to local services, climate change, resilience
- Strategic shifts and support to urban communities encompassed in conversion to **SOSCH** – Nov 20

## SOSCH Engagement with NVLT

- Project one – Rural Housing Burden acquisition in 2016 – established NVLT as community landlord
- Community Action Plan underpinned ongoing recognition – and desire to address – key issues in community:
  - Support to local service provision, in particular Closeburn Primary School
  - Objective to reverse outward population shift and, in particular, to bring new families – with local connection – into the community
  - Wider strategic objective around community-led response to Climate Emergency
  - Acute awareness of high levels of fuel poverty
- 2017-18 – site identification, followed by HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMAND ASSESSMENT
- Identification of gap site in ownership of D&G Council, commencement of project development / business planning / viability assessment
- Support to passivhaus project – 2017 to completion in 2020

## Key Elements of Project Development

- Early clarity around project objectives – (i) homes for families, (ii) highest possible standards of sustainable design – target of PASSIVE CERTIFICATION
- Community Asset Transfer – submission of Business Plan to D&G Council
- Scottish Land Fund – Stage One Application to support project development
- Rural Housing Fund – Feasibility Award
- Appointment of Design Team and “Passivhoos” partnership
- Planning and building warrant secured
- Ongoing community engagement
- Team approach - NVLT and SOSCH, working closely with John Gilbert Architects

## Key Elements of Project Delivery

- Scottish Land Fund – Stage Two Award for site acquisition
- Rural Housing Fund – full grant award
- Capital package supplemented by Community Windfarm Benefit Funding and Loan from Ecology Building Society
- Contract with Stewart and Shields (main contractor)
- Opportunities for local contractors
- Site challenges
- Challenges of Covid-19
- Scotland's first community-owned passive homes completed September 2020





NOW under  
ownership of  
the community!

***Previously Council-owned  
land at Castle Crescent,  
Closeburn***



NITH VALLEY LEAF TRUST  
CLOSEBURN  
CASTLE CRESCENT  
AFFORDABLE HOMES PROJECT

EAST ELEVATION



NITH VALLEY LEAF TRUST  
CLOSEBURN  
CASTLE CRESCENT  
AFFORDABLE HOMES PROJECT

NOth ELEVATION VIEW  
FROM PLAYGROUND  
OPPOSITE SITE  
[SUBSTATION HERE]





## What is Passivhaus?

Passivhaus buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling. They are built with meticulous attention to detail and rigorous design and construction according to principles developed by the Passivhaus Institute in Germany, and can be certified through an exacting quality assurance process



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## NVLT Passivhaus – Post-delivery

- Application of localised Allocations Policy
- Monitoring of building performance and impacts on tenant quality of life
- Passive certification – Feb 21
- SURF Awards 2020 – “Housing and Regeneration” - WINNER!
- NVLT working with SOSCH to consider next housing project





## Outcomes - Community Impacts

- Rural regeneration - supporting a resilient community
- Increased population - supporting local services, especially the primary school
- Sustainable revenue income from rent towards other community projects
- Community-owned low-impact housing set at affordable levels for the long term
- Drive and motivation for further sustainable, ethically driven and environmental conscious development projects
- Increased response to surveying due to positive outcome of an ambitious project
- Attractive and colourful architecture on previously derelict / disused land
- Multi-generational family support networks through community-minded allocation policy.
- Direct community-led response to climate emergency.





# Outcomes - Tenant Impacts

- Security of tenure and localised Allocations Policy
- Affordable rent – “social” rent levels and low running costs
- Very low energy bills (approximately £300 per year) therefore addressing fuel poverty
- Low / no energy consumption to obtain comfortable temperature levels throughout the year.
- Filtered air due to MVHR system – health benefits
- Ability to remain in area they have connections with (family / friends)
- “bright and light home” with large windows opposite play-park
- Sense of pride and reduced anxiety due to having low carbon and environmental footprint



# Wider Impacts & Outcomes

- Addressing Climate Emergency through community-led housing
- Strengthening networks and relationships with partnering organisations including local ward officer, Scottish Government, funders, supporting organisations and other community development trusts (across Scotland).
- Established working relationship with SOSCH to consider further housing developments
- For SOSCH – establishment of a passive model that can be rolled out to other communities
- Increased revenue and turn-over for NVLT can attract wider funding opportunities and investment in other forms of community regeneration
- Increased community engagement with NVLT have led to more ambitious targets. Currently working with Closeburn Gala committee to gain community ownership of 2.5 Hectare school playing field to manage to higher level and gain further community-use and revenue from events, sports and outdoor learning
- Prestigious SURF Award leading to wider education, knowledge sharing and confidence in community-led affordable Passivhaus-standard housing

Mike Staples, Chief Executive, sosch  
[mike.sosch@outlook.com](mailto:mike.sosch@outlook.com)

@SOSCHChiefExec

@SOSCommHousing

07775957702

Jakob Kaye, Project Officer, NVLT

[Jakob.nvlt@yahoo.com](mailto:Jakob.nvlt@yahoo.com)

@LeafNith

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