

The Skelwith and Langdale area covers a number of small settlements in the centre of the Lake District including Chapel Stile, Elterwater, Little Langdale, Skelwith Bridge and Skelwith Fold.

When the last full housing needs survey of the area was carried out in 2011 it revealed that some villages over 80% of properties were holiday homes.

## Background

Skelwith and Langdale Community Land Trust was set up in late 2010 by a group of local residents concerned that expensive housing and limited opportunities to rent (due to the high number of houses used as holiday lettings) were having an impact on the viability of the community.

SLCLT was registered as a Community Interest Company in 2012 and start-up costs, which included legal advice on governance, were covered by grants from the Tudor Trust, South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) and Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA). The Trust aims to increase the number of local, permanent, affordable homes in the area.

The area which SLCLT covers is the same as Langdale Primary School's catchment area to reflect the link between affordable housing and sustaining rural schools. Although SLCLT have explored working outside this geographical area they haven't yet done so.

## The Project

In 2011, members of SLCLT toured the area with Lake District National Park planning officers to look at possible sites. A site at Skelwith Bridge was identified as being suitable for building.

Planning policy meant that the site was only likely to be developed as either affordable housing or housing with occupancy restrictions, which suppressed its value. SLCLT bought the land at a low cost using a grant from SLDC.



*Chapel Stile, Great Langdale*

After approaching a number of Housing Associations to discuss developing the site at Skelwith Bridge, Two Castles Housing Association (now Castles and Coasts) came forward as a development partner for SLCLT.

Work began to build three three-bedroom homes and one two-bedroom home in 2016. The properties were completed and fully occupied by October 2017. SLCLT own the freehold of the land and agreed a long-term lease to Castles and Coasts who built, let and are now managing the four houses.

This project marked the first time Castles and Coasts had worked in partnership with a community land trust and the Housing Association are keen to replicate this model elsewhere in Cumbria.

In addition to the four new homes, in 2013 SLCLT took on the long term lease and refurbishment of a three bedroom house in Chapel Stile owned by the Diocese of Carlisle.



*Church Hall Cottage, Chapel Stile.*



*Four new homes for rent at Skelwith Bridge*

The house hadn't been lived in for two years and needed modernisation which was paid for using grants from the Government's Empty Homes Community Grant Programme, SLDC and LDNPA.

The house was let at an affordable rent and has been managed through a letting agent using an allocations policy written by SLCLT.

## What has been achieved?

SLCLT volunteers have brought an existing property back into local occupancy use and created four new affordable family homes in an area where high numbers of holiday homes impact upon the sustainability of the local community.

## The Learning

SLCLT volunteers found that it took a long time to arrange the purchase and development of the site at Skelwith Bridge and that you can't overestimate the length of time it takes to complete a project!

The support of the planning authority, LDNPA, and the housing authority, SLDC, has been invaluable.

As a small group of volunteers, with limited

capacity, SLCLT have chosen not to let and manage houses themselves and they prefer not to be part of the process of choosing tenants.

In a very rural area it is still useful to develop small projects as they can make an impact. There are individual villages or valleys that have significant housing problems that local people are aware of but aren't reflected in official data which covers a whole parish or district. Local knowledge can be used to identify permanent residences and holiday homes to put together more accurate statistics.

## Contact Details

For more information on SLCLT, please contact Company Secretary, Julia Wilson:  
Email: [julia\\_lives@yahoo.com](mailto:julia_lives@yahoo.com)

SLCLT also had support from Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, which closed in 2016. However, you can contact CLT Officer Andy Lloyd by visiting:  
[www.communityhousingprojectdevelopment.uk](http://www.communityhousingprojectdevelopment.uk)

The National CLT network can also offer information and support:  
[www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk)

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