

MUCH Newsletter Spring 2023

## **Sustainable Living for Over 50s**

### **Building A Community for Our Futures**



### **Website Relaunch**

We have just relaunched our website at <https://manchesterurbancohousing.co.uk> (the old url will also still take you there!). We hope you like it. If you notice any broken links or anything else that doesn't seem right then please let us know.

### **There is No Magic Bullet**

As mentioned in our last newsletter (November 2022) we worked throughout 2022 to try and take forward two development opportunities. As part of this work MUCH commissioned a 'Report on Viability and Development Options' from Jimm Reed of People Powered Homes in Leeds, for the site we were looking at in Manchester. Jimm is a highly experienced development project manager and a community housing specialist consultant, who has been involved with both the award winning [LILAC](#) cohousing project and the newly completed [Chapelton Cohousing](#), both in Leeds.

The report identified some important issues around viability, caused mainly by the prevailing economic circumstances.

Simply put, the projected cost of building our cohousing development significantly exceeded the likely overall market value of the site developed as cohousing for MUCH. In addition, developer partners across the community housing sector are finding it difficult or impossible to take on this financial risk.

As a result, we know that we need to turn our attention in the short and medium term to revisiting and sense-checking location, design aspirations and partnerships with developers,.

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We have started to prepare for our AGM in early June and will be carrying out a stocktake before plotting the way forward.

There is a lot to do and there is no single magic bullet.

### **We are Recruiting New Members!**

MUCH members have a wealth of knowledge and experience, but we welcome fresh eyes and new energy for the next stage of our journey. We encourage the involvement of people aged 50-60, as current members are now all in their sixties and seventies.

If you haven't been in touch with us before, or even if you have, then do take a look at our refreshed [website](#). If our [Vision and Values](#) resonate, and you feel that over-50s co-housing might be for you, then please [contact us via the website](#) or email us on [muchmanchester@gmail.com](mailto:muchmanchester@gmail.com). Our membership application process starts with a period of getting to know each other.

### **Passivhaus**

As promised in the last newsletter, we've included a piece on the what, why and how of Passivhaus and why MUCH want to create Passivhaus certified cohousing.

#### ***What is it?***

Passivhaus, or a passive building in English, refers to buildings designed to rigorous energy efficient standards so that they maintain an almost constant temperature. Passivhaus homes are well constructed, insulated and ventilated so they retain heat from the sun and the activities of their occupants, and need little extra heating or cooling.

*"Passivhaus adopts a whole-building approach with clear, measured targets, focused on high-quality construction, certified through an exacting quality assurance process." (Passivhaus Trust)*

#### ***What are the benefits?***

For us as residents, the main benefits are increased comfort through stable year round temperatures, good indoor air quality, low energy bills and lower maintenance costs. Passivhaus buildings nearly always perform as well as they were designed to do, while homes built to Building Regulations can use much more energy than expected.

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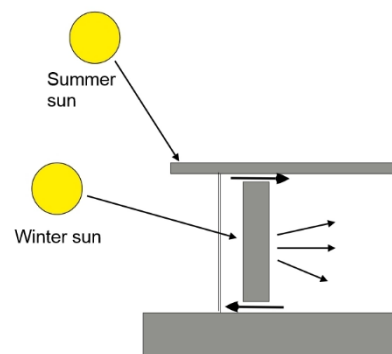


Benefits associated with climate change the reduction of peak time demands on the grid, important with the transition to heat pumps and EVs. A Passivhaus is also more resilient to power cuts, since it will lose far less heat over several days without heating than other homes. And of course it is designed to reduce the risk of overheating.

*“The multi-faceted benefits offered by Passivhaus resonate with different stakeholders. Homeowners may be interested in superior quality & comfort whilst lowering energy bills. Eliminating fuel poverty, reducing rent arrears, and achieving zero carbon targets will attract local authorities. The government may focus on the potential to lower peak demand and amplify grid capacity for a smooth transition to renewable energy.” (Passivhaus Trust)*

### **How is it achieved?**

- Orient buildings to make use of heat from the sun.
- Optimise the size and position of windows for good daylight all year, making the most of the sun in winter and avoiding overheating in summer.
- Keep the shape of the building compact to make it simpler and cheaper to build.
- Use triple glazed windows and doors to lose less heat - and keep out noise!.
- Add extra insulation – like wrapping the building in a warm woolly jumper.
- Make building airtight to conserve heat.
- Install Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (together with opening windows!). This provides filtered fresh air while recirculating heat from the stale air being removed. Asthma sufferers in particular benefit from this.
- Use the most suitable system to supply hot water and the small amount of heating still needed.



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- Certify the finished build. More quality assurance ensures energy consumption, comfort level and air quality is as designed.

Passivhaus standards are often combined with targets for net-zero and embodied carbon. It's suitable for traditional construction methods as well as Modern Methods of Construction.

### ***But it's too expensive!***

While it does cost more to build (estimated to be around 8% extra in 2019), lifetime costs have been shown to be less than for those built to Building Regulations. As well as lower energy bills, maintenance and replacement costs are reduced because of a more streamlined design and higher quality construction.

When the Future Homes standards are brought in, the gap between the extra construction cost of Passivhaus compared to the Future Homes standards will reduce.

### ***Any examples?***



*Forgebank Cohousing*

Passivhaus is an ambition shared by many cohousing groups.

Forgebank Cohousing was built just over 10 years ago. It was the first Passivhaus certified cohousing development in the UK and won a Passivhaus Award in 2013.

Cannock Mill cohousing in Colchester was completed in 2019, and became the second Passivhaus certified cohousing development in the UK.

Other cohousing groups aiming for Passivhaus certification, but not yet built, include Halton Senior Cohousing, Cohousing upon Tyne (CoHUT) in Newcastle, Manchester Intergenerational Cohousing (MICO) and of course MUCH.



*Cannock Mill Cohousing*

Building Passivhaus in Greater Manchester isn't as common as in some other parts of the country. However some new-build Passivhaus homes have been built here and others have been renovated to the equivalent standards for 'retrofit'.

Passivhaus social housing flats are currently being built in Salford and a mixed development of 120 Passivhaus homes is being planned in South Manchester. If successful these will be a huge step-change to making Passivhaus more mainstream in Greater Manchester in both public and private sectors.

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## In the (local) news

We were recently interviewed for an [article in The Mill](#), an online local newspaper. Unfortunately the full article is only available to paid subscribers.

We hope you've enjoyed this, our second newsletter. Do get in touch if you'd like to know more about any of the content.

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