

Sustainable Living for Over 50s

Building A Community for Our Futures

At our September General Meeting we welcomed new member Mark.

We also agreed many of the details of a new Associate Member status, and expect to welcome our first Associate Member very soon. Get in touch to find out more.

Open Socials

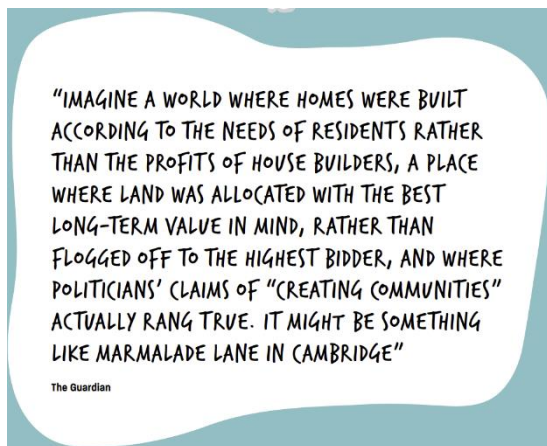
Several people have asked if we hold open meetings for people wanting to find out more about MUCH. In response, we have planned a couple of informal get-togethers during the remainder of 2024.

Please RSVP to this email to let us know if you're intending to come along to one of these, so that we know how many to expect, and can let you know if dates change.

The first is taking place on **Wednesday 6th November** between 1 and 3pm, at Station South 975- 977 Stockport Road, Levenshulme M19 3NP.

The second will be on **Saturday 7th December** between 1 and 3, at the café in Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street M2 3JL.

Marmalade Lane Post-Occupancy Report



It's five years since residents started moving in, and TOWN have published a post-occupancy report – [Insights from Marmalade Lane](#).

"In this report, we gain an insight into life at Marmalade Lane – exploring how the 100 adults and children who live there today make use of the shared spaces, resources and facilities. We reflect on how the design encourages sustainable living and fosters connections with neighbours, examining how the unique

closeness of a cohousing community adds to resident's quality of life."

Community living in medieval Belgium

This summer one of our members cycled through the historic Beguinage community at Leuven near Brussels, Belgium. Unlike the Beguines, MUCH membership is open to both men and women and we will not be required to be celibate, although some of us might be interested in lace making!

Elements of CoHousing have a long history, sometimes 'born out of necessity', like the 'parish ovens' that were a feature of poor urban areas in the Depression.

In other eras groups have found security and community.

Some see the Beguines as a 13C spiritual or 'mystic' movement - though social forces contributed. Here is a history:

'The beguinal movement began among upper-class women and spread to the middle class. In addition to addressing the spiritual needs of its adherents, it responded to socioeconomic problems caused by a surplus of unattached women in urban areas. Most Beguines lived together in communities called beguinages.

In Germany groups of up to 60 or 70 women lived together in houses; in the Low Countries they usually lived in individual houses within walled enclosures—"towns within towns." Most supported themselves, often by nursing or cloth- or lace-making, and they spent time in religious contemplation. Beguines promised to preserve chastity while they remained in the community, but they were free to leave it and marry.'(Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Given their 'marginal' status, Beguines could be discriminated against and the movement eventually died out.



Window on Lindow - A living Art trail on a living Bog.

by Vera, MUCH member

The temporary Art trail around Lindow Moss was devised to commemorate the forty years since the discovery of Lindow Man in 1984 and the commencement of the restoration of Lindow Moss into a living bog in 2022.



The art trail has been so popular that some items will stay in place over the winter, but even without the art the walk around the edge of the bog is worthwhile. The first time I went it was shocking to see the dark peat, firm and dry - it has been drained for commercial peat cutting until recently. Four days later, after not very heavy rain, I returned to find a spongy puddle-riddled bog. The path was muddy and challenging in places and I felt no temptation to stray off onto the now wet peat.

The Lindow Moss Heritage Trail is a 3.5 mile walk starting on Lindow Common where the paths are easy to walk on. If you continue to the area around the bog the path is more uneven and can be muddy. Both the Common and the Moss

are surrounded by trees so as Phil Barton, curator of the Art Trail said, you can see few signs of the 21st century from the bog, apart from the Art works and the planes leaving the nearby airport.

The wonderful Great Little Red Bus café on Racecourse Road provides snacks, beverages and toilets which rounded off our visit very nicely - sadly this is not open in the winter months.

Lindow Moss is 10 miles south of Manchester City Centre and is worth a visit at any time of year if you like a flat walk.

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UK Cohousing Summit 2024

by Sian, MUCH member

I recently attended the Summit with Rachel the Project Officer at GM Community Led Homes – full report [here](#).

We travelled down to London a day early, and had a look (from the outside) at the following community led housing schemes.

- [Copper Lane Cohousing](#) consists of 6 custom built family homes in Stoke Newington, and was completed 10 years ago. It has a shared courtyard, with a shared space below. Planning permission excluded car parking, and even prohibited residents from applying for resident parking permits for the surrounding streets - a real commitment to 'active travel'!

- [Citizens House](#) is an 11-home, genuinely and permanently affordable housing project in Sydenham (near Brasted Close), and is London CLT's first direct development. Residents moved in during 2023. Home prices are set at rates that are accessible for people on average incomes in Lewisham, and when residents move out, they must sell at a similar level, giving new local families a chance to buy a home they can afford

- the 36 home [Church Grove](#) mixed tenure development has been built with Community Land Trust RUSS in Lewisham. The homes are sustainable, customised, high quality, permanently affordable and partly self-built in order to reduce construction costs. They provided opportunities for training in construction for self-builders as well as apprentices and volunteers from the wider community. The range of houses and flats of different tenures, sizes and levels of self-build have created a truly mixed community made up of people from diverse backgrounds in the local area.

The Summit itself took place in the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre, and focussed on co-design techniques and learning from The Netherlands.

Contributors included architects Archio (Angel Yard), Mole (Marmalade Lane), Triangle (Housing 21's Chain Walk, Birmingham), Barefoot Architects (Bridport); researchers from the Open University; developers TOWN; UK Senior Cohousing Ambassador Maria Brenton; visitors Flip Krabbendam (Architect and cohousing resident) and Tijmen Kuyper (Cohousing Design Advice) from the Netherlands.

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The architects told us about their approaches to co-design with a community, explaining their models for ensuring the local community or future residents are both heard and listened to, and shared some useful tools.

The Dutch visitors spoke animatedly about the Dutch model of cohousing, including a case study of a group of young people who hadn't considered how their needs might change when they became parents or when they grew older, and whether the layout they currently wanted would continue to work for them in the decades ahead. The experienced Architects helped avoid some costly mistakes

After the presentations came a Q&A session. At one point Tom Chance (National CLT Network) threw in a challenge, asking that since the residents taking part in co-design may not even represent the initial residents, let alone future generations, is there a need to co-design? Unsurprisingly this led to a lively discussion! My view is that as well as co-design tools helping architects understand a group's priorities, it can be invaluable for a group in understanding site and planning constraints.



Few would doubt though that co-design helps a cohousing group to strengthen their bonds and take ownership of their future homes.

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

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