

Halton Senior Co-housing Project



Summer 2022 Newsletter



Wild strawberries decorating the banks of the Senior Cohousing site.

Weekend Retreat June 11th and 12th

It was a great open weekend! Lovely to meet-up with people we'd only seen on Zoom! Good conversation, good food, and a good time. We had a tour of Dora & Janey's LCH house (thank you Dora!), and then of course our Membership Interview ... which wasn't at all intimidating. In fact, we enjoyed it as it gave us space to express our bubbling enthusiasm for the project. It was fabulous news when we heard we'd been accepted as Members. We're so looking forward to getting involved in meetings, contributing to the running of the project, and, of course, in time, living in Halton. Each time we visit, we are reminded by how lovely the setting is, and how many interesting and worthwhile things there are to be involved in and contribute to.

To cap off the day, Maria Angelis from LCH had a film night in the LCH common house, (which reminded Ruth of her days on a kibbutz – every Tuesday night the projector screen would be set up in the refectory and there would be a film). We highly recommend ‘The Power of the Dog’ – we were still talking about it for days afterwards!

Thanks to Marion for the loan of her flat. We had the long drive back to Herts on Sunday. We shared a lovely breakfast in the sunshine at the Red Door with fellow co-housers (we like the Red Door too!) and look forward to more of all this in the future. Both articles from Cliff and Ruth.

“The Power of the Dog”

I’ve seen a few of Jane Campion’s previous films (“An Angel at my Table”, “The Piano” and “The Portrait of a Lady”) and am always impressed by her work. Her films are usually intense viewing and “The Power of the Dog” is no exception. The huge, empty and often inhospitable landscapes in which the action takes place, serve to intensify the interactions between people. Peter is the bright teenage son of Rose, a widow running a boarding house and restaurant in a fledgling town in Montana. Rose has caught the eye of George, one of 2 brothers who have inherited their parents’ ranch. George gently pursues and proposes to Rose. Phil despises his brother George and makes known his disdain at George’s tender feelings for Rose; he accuses Rose of being a ‘cheap schemer’ and just after George’s money, and ridicules Peter as weak and effeminate.

Early on, there’s a terrible scene where Phil, learning of his brother’s marriage, whips his horse, calling her a whore. My heart sank. I can’t bear animal cruelty of any kind, real or acted. Phil’s actions, based so much on what constitutes “a real man” in that society, goes unchallenged. My hopes were not high for a happy ending, especially as Rose takes to drink under the constant pressure of Phil’s sneering and undermining.

No plot spoilers but you, as much as I, will be relieved to know that Phil gets his come uppance from the person he least suspects to be able to serve it to him. The film deals with issues of masculinity, shame, and power, and the bleak, empty landscapes underscore the conflicts at the centre of the film.

Thank you to Maria Angelis at LCH for generously sharing the film with us and others. I love going to the cinema for the social, shared experience of that. The added bonus of the film night at Halton was the opportunity to share views and ideas about it afterwards, before our short stroll "home".

Other Weekend Events

Some members visited The Plot, where potential market gardeners learn how to grow organically. Several new interested people visited and those who could not make the weekend will pop round when they can. Members are often on hand to answer questions and chat over coffee.

Ann Presents to UK Cohousing Network

A number of developing cohousing groups gave a three-minute presentation about how their group's project was progressing. I gave the presentation for Halton Senior Cohousing. It felt very affirming to be speaking about what we had accomplished, getting the site, the architect's plans, having Planning Permission and appointing the building contractor. I did slides to show where Halton is, a photograph of the group while on a social weekend, an ariel view of the site, and used the landscape drawing of how the site will look when completed. To my relief I had positive feedback from Chris, our project manager, and Mike, the organiser, on how I'd done the presentation.

Previously I was involved in trying to get another senior cohousing project started in Glasgow, which never got a site and was laid down after six years work. I am so grateful to have Chris Coates as our Project Manager, who has talked us through all the hurdles we had to get over to get here.



Patience and Perseverance

The two P's we are developing as we await the final quote from our preferred contractors. We had hoped this information would be with us by Easter, then by the end of April, then end of May, and finally we are almost there.

Everyone is aware that sub-contractors and supplies are in short supply and often only giving quotes for a week at a time. While we wait, we are working out many of the fine details. Hopes are high that soon we can start building.

Service Teams

Which team will new members join? Ruth suggested a Food Team which could look after our mini-Suma shop and oversee shared meals. Perhaps also the plethora of cookbooks we will be adding to the library? Another option would be a Transport Team. Sue and Dora agreed to join the Transport team with Ruth. We look forward to hearing more on car sharing and disabled facilities for the site.



Marketing Team

Thanks to Dora we are now advertised on the rolling screen in the local community centre.



Janet and Judith paid a visit to Ikea to check out kitchen options. They have an appointment with the designer next week. Miranda will soon be flying the drone to get footage for our web site. Plenty to keep us busy.

