



POWERING UP COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER LOCAL WELLBEING

Community Case Study: Paekākāriki Housing Trust



This case study was curated to spark thinking about local structures and approaches that can enable communities to improve their own wellbeing. It's part of a wider Think Piece commissioned by the Western Bay of Plenty District Council.

See https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/ic_resource/powering-up-communities-to-deliver-local-wellbeing/ for the full report.

Cover image sources: Paekākāriki Housing Trust (top left), The Community Led Development Trust (top middle), Te Puna Oranga o Ōtaki (top right), McLaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (right middle), Environment Network Manawatū (bottom right), Focus Paihia (bottom left).



PAEKĀKĀRIKI HOUSING TRUST
A GOOD COMMUNITY IS NO ACCIDENT.



CASE STUDY: HOMEGROWN HOUSING SOLUTIONS IN PAEKĀKĀRIKI

Name	Paekākāriki Housing Trust
Location	Paekākāriki, Kāpiti Coast.
Community Context	<p>Paekākāriki is a coastal village of 1,800 people with a strong, proactive community whose members look out for each other. Increasingly experiencing gentrification, it was a largely working-class town with a small bohemian population consisting of a high population working for the railways, which also provided a significant amount of housing. Now it is more of a mixed, but middle-class/high-income town, still with a small bohemian population.</p> <p>More recently a new escarpment walking track has seen more visitors to the area and has led to an increase in eateries along the main road.</p>
Legal Structure	Community Trust with nine trustees.
Started	2016, became legal entity in 2018.
Vision	Help ensure a strong, diverse and connected community by assisting those people in need to access affordable and appropriate housing in Paekākāriki.
Mission	Homegrown housing solutions, community created by many people giving what they can. Recognising and supporting the special connection that Mana Whenua, Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki have to this land.
Values	Local solutions for local people
FTE	One paid co-ordinator working one day per week and one administrator for one day per month.
Turnover	\$29,000
Relationship with local government	Core work does not cross over with Council, however, loads of potential in future directions and networking for similar goals.
Interviewed for this case study	Sam Buchanan and Helen Burch

JOURNEY TO DATE

With a shared passion for retaining diversity and by looking at opportunities and challenges through a lens of social equity, the Paekākāriki Housing Trust (PHT) are active facilitators, strategists and advocates who work alongside their community to imagine and realise practical win-win solutions for those experiencing housing difficulties in Paekākāriki.

While Aotearoa is undeniably in the grips of a housing crisis and Paekākāriki village is by no means the most affected place in the country, locals felt moved to take on the responsibility of engaging with the housing issues members from their community were facing. Knowing they can't fix the market forces that are driving the crisis, the village has a culture of connectedness and care and felt it could respond with innovation and community-led housing solutions. Through each project being taken on, PHT are learning how to better support their community and become better Treaty partners along the way.

PHT was sparked by a collective frustration felt when a valued local resident and teacher aide and her whānau were being forced to leave her rental property of 16 years, due to it being up for sale. The Trust set themselves up in 2016, at a time when there were only 49 untenanted rental properties advertised and available for a population of around 50,000 across the wider Kāpiti district.

To engage the community and gather a sense of local support for community-led housing solutions, a survey was circulated to local residents asking if anyone could contribute to the collective purchase of local houses or in other ways. Alongside this a Give a Little page was set up to start building up a community housing fund. The Trust managed to convince the owners of the house noted above to sell the house to the Trust at a reasonable price (\$450,000). After commercial banks refused to lend to PHT, a new community housing provider, funding to complete the house purchase was enabled through contributions from 30 generous local investors who were offered a 4% interest rate over a 5 year period. This enabled time for the Trust to set itself up and has enabled the valued local family to buy back their house over a five-year period, at the same price. Local investors were also given the opportunity to donate their interest back to the Housing Trust – which some of them did.

Sam Buchanan, PHT co-ordinator speaks of the massive amount of goodwill in the village and how this harnessed the urgency to do something in response to a very local situation. He has seen many whānau leave the village because of housing related issues and got involved with PHT in response. He and others shared concerns that housing issues were threatening the whole personality of the village. He firmly believes that communities have far greater capacity to make change than they think they do.

"It is our great hope that our housing models will shine a light for other communities."

Formed in 2016 by a small group of locals, PHT purchased their first house through 100% funding

4

from their community and more recently has worked in a unique way to partner with local iwi Ngāti Toa Rangatira’s social housing arm to purchase a further property from Kāpiti Coast District Council. Through the Covid-19 lockdown, the Trust worked tirelessly as an emergency housing provider and as a payoff, now manage a small clutch of rental properties in the village. They continue to commission environmental work to understand the housing capacity of the whenua (land) and awa (river); explore housing funding models and design principles; and continue to build relationships with central and local government.

“What gives us opportunity now is that we have a track record, are reasonably well regarded and can point to a few positive outcomes. Strengths give you opportunities.”

Success from the first two properties saw the pattern of wanting to achieve more for locals in housing spaces. The Trust now offers property management services for local landlords and see this as good business.

“The Trust has not tried to see the negative in our great diversity and see we can benefit if we can swing people the right way. There is a lot of wealth, and we can do something similar again and people will be behind us.”

ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

The Trust meets regularly and also schedules hui with the community to keep bouncing new housing ideas, and to keep in contact with those interested in housing issues. PHT also recently hosted a community hui to look at options and proposals for denser housing to further determine what Paekākāriki might look like in the future.

A paid PHT co-ordinator works one day per week and an administrator around one day per month.

“We are locals, taking care of locals, generating profit to solve our housing issues, working to keep our community vibrant and diverse.”

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

“We kind of limp on thinking we have 6 months funding, but we keep on going.”

Funds from PHT’s tenancy management service are used to fund the Trust’s co-ordinator. However, funding often fluctuates, for example while earlier there were seven local rental properties being managed, now there are four. A large part of the role, says Helen Burch, PHT’s administrator and rental property manager, “is talking to landlords about what we do and showing them how the fees

go back into the community.“ PHT is able to manage all the logistics of a rental property with the bonus of having locals at hand to address issues that arise, and ensure tenants are cared for in a more holistic way as part of the village.

With holiday homes now popular as Air BnB rental properties, the Trust also tries to encourage local people to rent their properties rather than having them vacant for long periods of time as holiday rentals. While the return is often lower, PHT can help both the landlord by having the property managed locally and funds generated can go back into the community. This also ensures locals have access to a home to live in.

“It feels like a drop in the ocean, but lots of drops make an ocean.”

PHT recognises the increased need for affordable housing, for example those who are downsizing and do not want to leave the village, those whose requirements have changed and now only need a small space, and others who want to be independent and do not require care but also don't have a lot of money to rent houses. Demand has grown for 1-2 bedroom, self-contained flats which are not available in the village.

A resource kete has been developed for property owners to help navigate the challenges of adding secondary dwellings onto existing properties. The kete includes examples from residents who have been through the development process and includes their interactions with builders, architects and how to manage both building and consenting processes. This is another great example of Paekākāriki taking a local problem and finding local solutions, while also developing resources to assist others along the way.

Exploring different models for funding and financing and how to support locals who are thinking of adding a dwelling are new areas the Trust is looking into, all with the broader aim of supporting diverse housing situations and needs in Paekākāriki.

“It is our ambition that that the more we engage in these issues and stitch up the fabric of our community, the more resilient we will be to the shocks and bumps ahead.”

OPPORTUNITIES:

- There are so many ways to tell stories, using art and creativity to connect with people and provide multiple responses to similar situations to advance objectives and ensure everyone has a seat at the table.
- Paekākāriki Housing Trust recognises mana whenua's unique connection to the land and there could be opportunities to assist in bringing mana whenua back to their land through the Trust's aims. This is especially important to PHT and much work has been done to understand

and support local mana whenua, Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki , and their aspirations, such as the idea of building a Marae in Paekākāriki and bringing their whānau home to Paekākāriki to live.

- The biggest opportunity to collaborate and grow local housing solutions could be with Ngāti Toa Rangatira. PHT is looking for potential funders and investors to support this, keeping the conversation going and active.
- Different models for funding and financing, including seeing what else is available and happening across the motu and seeing how PHT can leverage this.

CHALLENGES:

- What the Trust really wants to do is to continue to purchase houses, but this has become harder and harder as house prices soar – median house prices in the village have doubled in recent years.
- Banks were very difficult to work with, with PHT having to jump through many hoops before desired loan finance outcomes were achieved. Residents had offered to put their own houses up for collateral to relieve financial pressure on PHT.
- The traditional housing purchase model focused on individuals raising deposits and taking out a mortgage does not allow for innovative community-led alternatives. Banks need to be challenged to play their part in addressing Aotearoa’s housing crisis by being open to alternative purchasing models and arrangements.

ADVICE FOR COUNCILS AND OTHERS LOOKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT DELIVERY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:

“How do we resource this community and keep jobs here, Council have no thinking on how you resource communities, it’s often outsourced which excludes locals.”

- Acknowledge the local intelligence that sits within communities and can get things done faster and more efficiently simply because vital relationships are already in place in small communities. Fostering local relationships and connections needs to be ongoing and is essential for community wellbeing and development, especially in times of emergency. Talk to local communities first and take note of local strengths.
- Community pride and sense of ownership is evident in the local facilities which are key gathering places and often the heart of the community. Community-led and managed facilities like the local community hall in Paekākāriki are often in a better state and better used than council managed ones.

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