

Breathing new life into Bainbridge Chapel

Affordable homes delivered by the community, for the community

The Story

In September 2024, Bainbridge Methodist Chapel reopened its doors - not as a place of worship, but as two affordable homes for local residents. Led by the Upper Dales Community Land Trust (UDCLT) and supported by the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) programme, this community-led project shows how rural places can take housing into their own hands.

It's the UDCLT's first completed scheme, and one that's already making a difference.

"We have such wonderful memories of this chapel. Now it's something we can celebrate again as it's still very much part of the community."

– **Councillor Yvonne Peacock**, UDCLT Member

How it Started

Back in 2018, a Housing Needs Survey carried out by the Rural Housing Enabler identified a clear demand for affordable homes in Bainbridge and surrounding villages. The Methodist Chapel was highlighted as a potential site - but when the Methodist Circuit chose not to develop it, the newly formed UDCLT stepped in.

With funding from the former Richmondshire District Council, the Trust bought the chapel in November 2021 and partnered with North Star Housing to carry out the sensitive conversion.

"This project succeeded because the community and Chapel supported it from the start."

– **Amanda Madden**, former Rural Housing Enabler

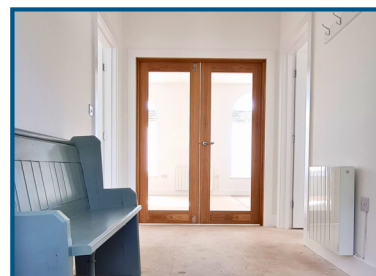
The Role of the Rural Housing Enabler

The RHE programme provided early and ongoing support:

- Delivered the original Housing Needs Survey
- Identified the chapel as a potential development site
- Connected UDCLT with partners and funding
- Continued to support future planning and site identification.

"It's a brilliant example of what's possible when organisations work together."

James Walder, CEO, North Star Housing



Impact in the Dales

The new homes, managed by North Star Housing, were let to local people through the North Yorkshire Homes Choice policy. Both residents had a strong local connection - supporting the aim of helping people stay rooted in their community.

"We face big challenges in the Dales. Well-designed, affordable homes incorporating sustainable technology contribute to environmental goals and enable local people to stay connected to their communities."

Stephen Stubbs, Chair, UDCLT

Projects like this support long-term sustainability in rural areas - ensuring that young people, essential workers and families have the opportunity to live locally in homes that are both affordable and energy efficient.

Looking ahead

This is just the beginning for UDCLT. With support from the Rural Housing Enabler programme, Yorkshire Dales National Park and North Star Housing Group, the Trust is working to identify more small sites for affordable, community-led housing.

"We still see a need for affordable homes in Bainbridge and across the Yorkshire Dales. This project shows what's possible."

Rachel Tait, Rural Housing Enabler

Could you help?

Do you have a small piece of land you'd like to see used for community benefit? If so, get in touch with the RHE team: ruralhousingenablers@northyorks.gov.uk

See the project gallery: www.udclt.co.uk/bainbridge-gallery

Contact the RHE team at ruralhousingenablers@northyorks.gov.uk

