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Thank you for taking an interest in the Hartwood Project, we hope that the information and ideas provided here will serve to stimulate debate and encourage you to become more directly involved.

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Spread the word

What is Hartwood?

I suppose the honest answer would be we are still finding out... Perhaps the biggest obstacle to our transformation to a resilient, saner future is the uncertainty regarding our own abilities. Corporate 'morals' require we are not taught practical knowledge of what we need from our environment, where to find it, and how to fashion the things we need to live from it. Why construct when you can consume? Such an attitude is understandable applied to fancy high tech toys, but extended over the basic necessities of life, it becomes something else, a helpless juvenile dependency on market forces to feed, clothe, house and protect us.

Not all of us want to remain children forever. Hartwood is not for the faint-hearted. If you need certificates and **authorisation** signed in triplicate to be yourself, or seek security by doing what you're told, trusting your well being to those who claim to know better, stop reading now. Pleasant dreams await you.

With the future of pensions and other welfare provisions looking decidedly fragile, fuel poverty, food shortages, disease and environmental collapse looming, it makes sense to increase your resilience to the future. To unhitch ourselves from the global roller coaster enough to stop feeling queasy about the ride. To begin the decades long effort needed to recover some sanity in the way we live our lives in this fragile skin between bare rock and airless vacuum.

Either you have wakened from the dream sufficiently to realise the truly fragile crust we walk, the imperative for determined action to reach solid ground before it is too late, or you are still dreaming, imagining a few half-hearted gestures are sufficient to bring you to safety. The least you can do is step aside and let us make fools of ourselves.

Even if we are misguided and paranoid, what harm does it do to let us build our arks, to feed and protect our children from a flood that never comes? You can laugh at us on the TV or over a glass of wine at dinner while we toil in the fields and orchards. And if it turns out to be you who are misguided and complacent, there will be no need for argument.

The system we find ourselves embedded in is decaying from the inside. Though there is life in the limbs yet, the heart is dead. We wish to use that remaining life to fashion a way of being that incorporates the best of present and past, and reach for a future almost forgotten in the long nightmare that has engulfed humanity since the catastrophic end of the last ice age. Our true history is only now being uncovered. We are more intelligent, capable and righteous than recent 'civilisation' would lead us to believe. None of us are perfect, but we are all capable of flooding this world with light, we all seek happiness, and by standing together we can disallow abuse, intolerance and oppression, should we choose to. We are giants lulled to sleep with whispers telling us we are meaningless midgets. The 'triumphs' of our current civilisation are correspondingly tawdry and minute.

Hartwood is about much more than food and a roof over your head, but without these you cannot achieve anything of mortal value. Producing your own food, building a real, affordable home in a secure community of your own sounds great, but impracticable. Would it be safe? How could I find the time to learn, won't it be a lot of hard work, how could I hold down a job and provide for myself? Where will I get the money?

Time is money, say the suits. If so, then of the two, time is preferable because it is a guaranteed income without a boss, no price fluctuations and no government save my own.

Surely a basic requirement of any advanced civilisation should be the ability to enable all its citizens to have somewhere to call home? A place of rest free from obligation and insecurity. Why is it that still after hundreds, even thousands of years, for most, to consume a home is the only choice, and why does that 'choice' require submitting to years of servitude to debt and employment? A price inflated a hundredfold or more by the extortionate cost of 'authorised' building plots, many, many times the actual construction costs. Add thirty years compound

interest on a substantial sum, and the obstacles to even that small measure of freedom become insurmountable for many, particularly as you age beyond your mortgage-by date.

Using your own time, a single year or two is sufficient to build a complete home, easier still with the help of neighbours. No crushing mortgage stretching forever, no parasitic landlord, free to get on with the rest of your life. Hartwood has researched practical options, and offers various plans for enabling small scale low-impact village construction. It is entirely possible to create small villages where all materials are provided, residents paid for their labour in constructing homes and other facilities, the resources and facilities all community owned, much infrastructure community built, many services community provided. All this is possible, but is unlikely to be allowed. Freedom is never given. It has to be taken. Read any history book.

You do not need loads of money to make this happen, you need a mix of enthusiasm, vision and a willingness to learn and work, with temporary financial help from those who have assets to spare for a while to create a future they are proud to bequeath. We need land, we need people who will get their hands dirty, who will work in the rain and mud to hew a village from a forest. We need some money as gift or on loan and we need people willing to act now, prepared to stand against corruption and ignorance to achieve what needs to be done. Visit our forums to learn (and contribute) more of the practical details.

We intend to:

- Purchase undeveloped uplands, typically forestry plantation, and form co-operatives to each own, construct and maintain self-build low-impact villages, preferably in clusters.
- Sustainably use resources on site such as stone, water and timber for building and to generate energy: wind, sun and water. Re-forest, intensively compost to replenish and cultivate as much of our own food and energy as possible.
- Collect green waste, trashed windows, sinks, timber etc. as direct recycling. Refurbish, re-use and rebuild. Create pasture, field and refuge, homes, workshops and beauty amongst the forest. Learn to trust and rely on each other. A community without shared work is a meaningless one. Prepare for the hard times to come.
- Rise above private ownership of land or permanent structures. We are eternal tenants of creation and must mirror this in our communities, if we wish to maximise harmony, fulfilment and sustainability. Recommended legal structures abolish speculation by residents selling off community property piecemeal to others lacking community involvement. Land is always the sole source of life, hence land ownership is inescapably life ownership and when one owns or controls the life of another against their will, conflict will inevitably ensue.
- Work with planning where possible, go retrospective where the suits try and keep us in our cages. Regenerate the deserts created by centuries of over-exploitation, greed and debt to become fruitful, wild and protecting. Devote ourselves to minimising unnecessary toil, eliminate servitude and rediscover the vast potentials of the human condition, half divine and half mortal. Reach for the light, discard the toys and lazy habits we use to stifle the darkness. Evolve or perish.

The income to create all this comes from rents paid as time, money or produce, for use of

community property. Although homes, shops etc. are legally rented from the IPS co-operative, all rent-paying residents are also voting members of the land-owning body, both tenant and landlord, and as such responsible for setting rents, deciding how rents are spent to maintain a pleasant place to live. e.g. purchase materials for construction of the co-op's homes and other buildings, pay wages for that construction, raise money through loan stock and much more. The community can then provide communal facilities such as tractors, a launderette, school or local bus service and community workshops/meeting spaces etc.

With authorised planning permission, residents also become eligible for local housing allowance. This can be used to subsidise permanent public housing, with a reducing cost over time, and is a more ethical, efficient and responsible way of spending public money than continually pouring large amounts into the bottomless pockets of private landlords and bankers, as is currently enforced.

The aim is to redistribute our weight over this land. Even today 94% of the UK remains 'undeveloped' land. We are herded into urban reservations resulting from historic brutalities we have almost forgotten, yet we live with the profound consequences daily.

There is more than enough room for us all, and we will not stick out like windmills. No system of production is more efficient than small-scale horticulture and mixed farming, and wherever we go we bring the means to restore the land we inhabit, providing we put our minds, time and spirit into it.

We need not abandon the best of modern life, only the worst. The work before us is immense, but not overwhelming. Through co-operation, humanity has achieved anything it set its intent to. Only through relentless competition have we reduced ourselves to the tawdry and dispiriting mess we now find ourselves in up to our necks.

Hartwood's members are a diverse collection of individuals none of whom is aligned with any one political or religious system. We do however acknowledge the crucial importance of spirit in our day to day activities and philosophies. While acknowledging that spirituality means many things to many people, we wish to play our part in the amazing transformations which are now taking place around our planet. It's not all doom and gloom by any means. We live in a troubled but also truly privileged time where consciousness would appear to be evolving at an unprecedented speed. If, like us, you wish to live a life where reverence for nature and an appreciation of the sanctity of all things imbues your activities every day, come and join us in the creation of our vision.

Hartwood News

Funraising up the Cobbler



A small but significant number of our members managed to raise £250 on Sunday the 13th of September, after our last General meeting, by intrepidly climbing up the formidable precipices of the Cobbler Mountain to the north of Loch Lomond. The money raised will go towards Hartwoods ever increasing communal funds. Well done to (from left to right) Peter, Steve, Ben, Leanne, Sara, Fiona, Paul and Elidh (behind the camera) for making such a great effort, and a heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed their hard earned cash to make this a successful fund-raising expedition. That's Ben on the rock planting the Hartwood flag. Up the Cobbler!

Community Land Trust status imminent

After months of deliberation, we have finally reached consensus on what colour the tea mugs should be, and over a cup of same immediately finalised our mission statement, chosen officeholders, and put our names on the dotted line to soon officially become Hartwood Community Land Trust. This will guarantee any land we acquire will be forever out of private hands. It will also enable us to expand our efforts in several directions, seek funding for tools, research and publicity, and give us some legitimacy in the eyes of the various bodies we will have to deal with.

Up and coming Hartwood events

The next General meeting is planned as a two day event over the 5/6th of February at the bunkhouse in the forest of Ae in Dumfries and Galloway ([venue details](#)). the cost will be £10 per person including two nights accommodation and all food. We hope to make this an assembly for all those seriously willing to take direct, constructive action to fashion a better future for themselves. Not protest, not begging for crumbs of our inheritance, just positive hands-on creation. It will be an ideal opportunity to get to know Hartwood and its members better in the relaxed atmosphere of this magical place.

We are all looking forward to an exciting weekend of discussions, music and walks in the beautiful surroundings. The bunkhouse sleeps around 40 people so there will be plenty of space if you would like to come along. There will be entertainment for the children and adults alike. All are welcome and the agenda will be constructed on the forum beforehand (Events section). Hope to see you there. If you would like more information now, please email:

info@hartwoodcommunity.org or visit our [forum](#).

Hartwood are planning a club night extravaganza in the new year to raise money for our ever increasing Community Fund. There will be a number of local DJ's and musicians providing the music, and outrageous things to do to amuse and titillate your senses. The event will be staged at one of Glasgow's foremost underground clubs and by all accounts it is shaping up to be a night to remember. We will be sending you more details when the lineup is solid air. We hope you can make it and are looking forward to another successful fun(d)raiser dancing the night away. Bring it on.

Hartwood's online forum is live NOW

Hartwood's forum is now live online for you to interact with members and get all manner of information about what's happening on the front line. It will ultimately be an integral part of the Hartwood web site when it is published. You can visit the forum [here](#). Feel free to browse the various topics, sign up and take part, it's easy. If you use RSS you can tailor your forum watchlist and subscribe to our newsfeed. If you register to use the forum you can apply to join the working groups by clicking on the appropriate link at the top of the main page.

Joining the core working groups of Hartwood will give you access to many topics not available on the public forums. Why not pop over and take a look around?

Hartwood web site launch set for the new year

The geek team at Hartwood have been hard at work putting together our new web site. We expect to launch ourselves into the virtual arena at the beginning of 2010. None of the team are willing to speak about the exact timing (we must assume this is top secret!) We are however confident that the site will be full of intriguing twirling things and sparkling insights for you to feast upon. We will provide more precise information on this topic if we can get them to talk but presumably they are too busy right now to confront the press! One thing we can disclose is that there will be wikki (sounds a bit dangerous) pages for you to contribute your own ideas if you want. Should be an interesting flow of consciousness we hope, giving us all a chance to voice our opinions to the world. Feel free to make a contribution when the time comes.

Spread the word

Bring along your family and friends

All of us at Hartwood want to make a difference and presumably so do you as you are subscribed to our mailing list. That is just the first step towards participation. You are the people with ideas and concepts, digging and doing, moving and shaking, dreaming and creating, pushing the boundaries. We welcome your support with open arms and hope that you will join us for the ride. There are no limits to what we can achieve if we help to free each other and work together. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever does." Margaret Mead.

A final word from the poet Khalil Gibran. "Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls."

A heart felt thanks from Hartwood.

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