

TOWN.

# INSIGHTS FROM MARMALADE LANE



"IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE HOMES WERE BUILT ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS RATHER THAN THE PROFITS OF HOUSE BUILDERS, A PLACE WHERE LAND WAS ALLOCATED WITH THE BEST LONG-TERM VALUE IN MIND, RATHER THAN FLOGGED OFF TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, AND WHERE POLITICIANS' CLAIMS OF "CREATING COMMUNITIES" ACTUALLY RANG TRUE. IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING LIKE MARMALADE LANE IN CAMBRIDGE"

The Guardian

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## FOREWORD

Described by the Guardian as “the quietly radical result” of Cambridge’s first foray into cohousing, Marmalade Lane has become a widely known and lauded example of community-centred housing. Home to around 100 adults and children, today it has a waiting list of over 400 households - enough to fill the development another nine times over.

Marmalade Lane was the product of an innovative partnership between landowner Cambridge City Council, developers TOWN and Trivselhus, and Cambridge Cohousing, whose members would become the development’s future residents. TOWN and its design team, headed by Mole Architects, worked closely with future residents to codesign their homes and community spaces.

Combining the familiar form of Cambridge terraced housing with off-site manufactured timber construction, mechanical ventilation, heat pumps and a car-free landscape, the development’s 42 homes are complemented by a shared garden, a common house, play street and other shared spaces and facilities that support community life.

Five years after its completion, TOWN, with support from experts at Greengage, decided to take an in-depth look at the impact the development has had on its residents’ lives and the social value it continues to generate for them and the wider community.

We hope you find this an interesting read – a journey through life at Marmalade Lane. But more importantly, we hope that it makes you think more deeply about the impact that housing, neighbourhoods and models of community have on the fabric of our daily lives.

Building on this TOWN is bringing forward a number of other cohousing communities. If you would like to find out more, or would like to live in one of our developments, please visit [www.wearetown.co.uk](http://www.wearetown.co.uk).



# INTRODUCTION

Marmalade Lane is a 42-home cohousing development in Orchard Park, Cambridge. It was completed in 2019 and today is home to around 100 adults and children. It was developed through an innovative partnership between landowner Cambridge City Council, developers TOWN and Trivselhus, and Cambridge Cohousing, a local cohousing group that would become the future residents of the development, working with a design team led by Mole Architects.



Five years after the completion of Marmalade Lane, this report describes life in the community, and explores the impact the development has had on the lives of its residents and the social value it continues to generate for them and the wider community.

In addition to examining the outcomes specific to Marmalade Lane, this evaluation offers broader insights into the impact of cohousing as a model for living – as well as the impact of high-quality, community-focused housing and places more generally.

“COMMUNITIES KNOW BEST WHAT THEY NEED AND WANT. THAT’S WHY THEY CAN CREATE SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT PEOPLE VALUE AND WHERE THEY FEEL THEY BELONG, SUCH AS MARMALADE LANE IN CAMBRIDGE”

Living with Beauty, the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, January 2020.

Marmalade Lane has featured extensively in national press – both industry and mainstream – and in government reviews and policy guidance, including the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, the National Design Guide and many local guidance documents. The community receives over 500 study visitors per year, including policy-makers, local authorities, cohousing groups and practitioners.

Marmalade Lane has won numerous awards, including Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Regional and National Awards, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Social Impact overall award, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Silver Jubilee Cup – England’s highest award for town planning – and a Civic Trust award.

At the time of writing, Marmalade Lane has a waiting list for a home within the community of nearly 400 households, two-thirds of whom wish to buy and a third of whom would like to rent – enough to fill the development another nine times over.



“KIND, LOVING NEIGHBOURS WHO REALLY WANT TO CONNECT WITH AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER ARE THE HEART OF COHOUSING. THE CHILDREN ARE OUT PLAYING AND PEOPLE ARE CHATTING IN BACKYARDS, AND IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE”

Resident at Marmalade Lane



# HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Marmalade Lane is located in Orchard Park, on the northern edge of Cambridge, approximately two miles from the centre of the city. Orchard Park is an urban expansion to Cambridge, of around 1,000 homes, delivered from 2006. The city centre is accessible by bike in 20 minutes or by bus along the city's guided busway.

The site – originally known as plot K1 in the Orchard Park masterplan – was owned by Cambridge City Council, which, in the face of a failing housing market following the 2008 credit crunch, took a decision in 2010 to explore the potential for a cohousing project on the site. From 2010 to 2014, the Council supported the development of a design brief for a cohousing project on the site, which was prepared by prospective residents who formed a group called K1 Cohousing, now known as Cambridge Cohousing, working with advisors Instinctively Green, Cambridge Architectural Research and C20 Futureplanners.



CGI of Marmalade Lane, Mole Architects



Younger members of K1 Cohousing excited for construction to start



One of the residents of Marmalade Lane visiting the site

In 2015, TOWN, with its partner Trivselhus, a Swedish housing developer specialising in energy-efficient, factory-made timber construction, and a design team led by Mole Architects, were selected by Cambridge City Council and Cambridge Cohousing as the project's enabling development partner through a competitive tender process.

The development team evolved the design brief into a viable, deliverable scheme, securing detailed planning permission and delivering the project on a turnkey basis. The developer was responsible for the planning and delivery of the scheme, with residents purchasing completed homes.

TOWN, with Mole Architects, worked closely with future residents throughout the design and planning process to develop a scheme over which residents felt a strong sense of ownership and which met their needs. This process involved establishing a number of workstreams which focussed on distinct elements of the design, including housing, the Common House, shared external areas and environmental performance. Workshops were held around each workstream, led by TOWN and Mole and supported by the wider professional team, enabling the group to refine the proposals for the site and guide the emerging work to the point of a planning application.

Construction of the project – by local contractor Coulson Group – started in mid-2017 and was completed at the end of 2018.

The development consists of 42 homes – ranging from one-bedroom flats to five-bedroom houses – which are privately owned and are home to a wide variety of household types, supporting the intergenerational community it was built for.



Aerial View of Marmalade Lane shortly after completion

# WHAT IS COHOUSING?

Marmalade Lane is one of a number of cohousing communities in the UK. Cohousing is a mutually supportive form of living in which people occupy individual homes with additional shared spaces and facilities which they jointly manage and use with their neighbours.

Cohousing offers a model for a mixed and active community, with the potential to reduce living costs, consume less and minimise planetary impact.

Cohousing communities are intentional communities<sup>1</sup> based on five key principles<sup>2</sup> which are described opposite.



## THE FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES OF COHOUSING

### 01. DESIGNED FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION



Cohousing communities are intentional communities, designed from the outset to encourage and enable social cohesion.

### 02. A BLEND OF PRIVATE AND SHARED SPACES



Everyone has their own homes but the community shares spaces, resources and responsibilities.

### 03. COLLECTIVELY MANAGED BY ITS RESIDENTS



Residents manage their own community, looking after its maintenance and development.

### 04. INCLUSIVE AND PART OF A WIDER COMMUNITY



Cohousing groups are open to new members and often play an active role in their wider local communities.

### 05. CODESIGNED WITH RESIDENTS



Future residents are involved in shaping their homes and future community, tailoring their spaces and facilities to suit their needs.

**"MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN MARMALADE LANE IS THE COMMUNITY – THE CONNECTION WITH OTHER PEOPLE, EXPOSURE TO NEW IDEAS, THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM OF OTHER RESIDENTS, AND THE FEELING THAT A WHOLE COMMUNITY CARES FOR ONE ANOTHER"**

Resident at Marmalade Lane

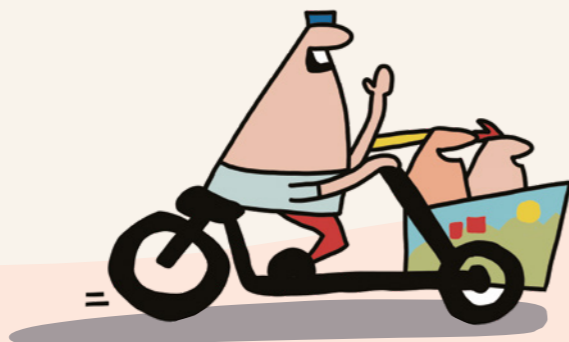
1. "Intentional" in this context means that participants have made a conscious, consensual decision to live in a different way.

2. UK Cohousing Network. "About Cohousing." UK Cohousing Network.

## CONTEXT TO THIS REPORT: SHORTCOMINGS OF THE HOUSING MARKET

This study of Marmalade Lane aims to explore how alternative housing models can offer a potential solution to deficiencies in the housing market, while addressing key societal needs for more sustainable and community focussed ways of life. Some of these issues are outlined below:

- Lack of diversity and quality in housing:** with a greater focus on market housing than any other country in the western world, one might have expected the UK's housing stock to have diversified to offer a wide range of choice and value. In reality, Britain's homes, despite being the most expensive, have the smallest average room size and are the smallest newly-built dwellings in Europe.<sup>3</sup> To make matters worse, existing English homes are also in the worst condition of all European countries, with 15% failing quality standards.<sup>4</sup> A national housing audit of 142 housing developments across England, conducted by Place Alliance, deemed three quarters of audited projects to be 'mediocre' or 'poor'.<sup>5</sup>
- Affordability crisis:** according to a recent report by the House Builders Federation, 11.3 million people in England spend more than 40% on their household income on their home - more than any other country in Europe. This feeds into a broader national issue as the cost-of-living crisis places 9.6 million people across the UK in households in 'serious financial difficulties', with 92% of households reporting that their cost of living had increased in 2023 compared with the previous year.<sup>6</sup>
- Changing family structures and work patterns:** according to the Children's Commissioner, nearly half of UK children now grow up outside a traditional nuclear family.<sup>7</sup> Post pandemic, our relationship with work has been transformed, accelerating the trend towards flexible or home-based working for many. And yet UK homes still largely follow the rigid model of the post-war semi- or detached house, rarely reflecting complex family relationships or economic activity and ill-suited to supporting changes in travel and consumption habits.
- Environmental impact:** despite an increase in energy efficiency investment and changes to building regulations, the building and construction sector in the UK is responsible for approximately 25% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>8</sup> The housing market is clearly falling short in effectively mitigating the impacts of the climate emergency, and with the government's target of 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020's, addressing this failure becomes all the more urgent.<sup>9</sup>



- Public spaces, play and nature:** in addition to housing, the UK's public spaces and streets too often fail to inspire genuine interaction. Frequently, they are primarily designed to accommodate the demands of heavy car usage, relegating pedestrians to the peripheries and leaving parents hesitant to allow their children the freedom of unsupervised play and independence – a pivotal factor in a child's healthy development.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, despite the well-documented physical and mental health benefits of time spent in nature and its newfound significance in daily life following the Covid-19 Pandemic<sup>11</sup>, analysis from the New Economics Foundation found that the amount of green space near new developments in England and Wales has declined by 40% since 2000, resulting in significant implications for physical and mental wellbeing across all age groups, but particularly affecting children.<sup>12,13</sup> According to ONS statistics, one in eight British households have no access to a private or shared garden.<sup>14</sup>
- Social isolation:** The UK also grapples with a disconcerting growing trend of adults in the UK experiencing loneliness and social isolation. In 2022, half of adults in the UK report feelings of loneliness, while 1.4 million older people in the UK are 'often lonely' and more than half of us don't know our neighbours.<sup>15</sup> The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the prevailing model prioritises private spaces over shared and public spaces, offering fewer opportunities for day-to-day neighbourly interactions and intergenerational mixing.<sup>16</sup>

The housing landscape in the UK reflects a lack of diversity in the housing market and the conservative approach of the housebuilding sector. It underscores the pressing need for alternative models that prioritise cross-generational community interactions, a culture of resource sharing and a greater sense of independence for children.

Throughout this report the impact of Marmalade Lane has been assessed with these shortcomings in mind.



3. Home Builders Federation. "Housing Horizons." [Home Builders Federation](#).  
 4. Home Builders Federation. "Housing Horizons." [Home Builders Federation](#).  
 5. Place Alliance. "National Housing Audit." [Place Alliance](#).  
 6. University of Bristol. "Cost of Living Crisis: Financial Fairness Tracker." [University of Bristol](#).  
 7. Children's Commissioner for England. "The Family and Its Protective Effect." [Children's Commissioner](#).

8. UK Green Building Council. "Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap Technical Report." November 2021, p. 10.  
 9. The Conservative and Unionist Party. "The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, 2019"; House of Commons Library. "Tackling the under-supply of housing, CBP-7671." 4 February 2022.

10. Ben Shaw. "Children's independent mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action."  
 11. White, M.P., Alcock, I., Grellier, J., et al. "Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing." *Sci Rep* 9, 7730 (2019). [DOI](#).  
 12. Office for National Statistics. "Access to gardens and public green space in Great Britain." [ONS](#).

13. The Wildlife Trusts. "New report: Nature nurtures children." [The Wildlife Trusts](#).  
 14. Office for National Statistics. "One in eight British households has no garden." [ONS](#).  
 15. Age UK. "Loneliness research and resources." [Age UK](#).  
 16. Eden Project Communities. [Eden Project Communities](#).

# THIS REPORT

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report offers a 'virtual tour' of Marmalade Lane, giving an overview of the different spaces and presenting insights into the way that these are used by the community. It examines and evaluates the impacts of the development on the lives of its residents, understanding and, where possible, quantifying these impacts, using social value methodologies.

The timing of this report, five years after the scheme's completion, offers a unique opportunity to gain insight into the settled routines and established ways of life within the community. Moreover, it recognises the significant influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic during in the early stages of the development's operation.

## REPORT AUTHORS

The report has been prepared by TOWN, co-developer of Marmalade Lane, with support from Greengage, a leading consultancy specialising in social sustainability. In addition to reviewing this report at different stages of its preparation, Greengage has had particular responsibility for producing the quantitative evaluations of social value that are used throughout.

TOWN.  Greengage



## RESEARCH METHODS

The report is informed by:










- **information provided by the cohousing group** about the level and frequency of use of spaces, facilities and services within the development, drawing on the group's management records.
- **a survey of residents** carried out in 2023, examining residents' experience of living at Marmalade Lane and how the project has influenced their mental and physical well-being. 42 residents responded to this survey.
- five years of **regular engagement with the community** living at Marmalade Lane. This includes extensive visits and interactions with residents to gain a deep understanding of the inner workings of life at Marmalade Lane, providing a close view of residents' experiences, their use of facilities, and the management of the day-to-day operation of the community. This is supported by the fact that a member of the TOWN team is a long-term Marmalade Lane resident.
- **an in-depth interview with a resident** exploring life at Marmalade Lane for children and their caregivers that was conducted by Dinah Bornat, an architect, author and leading expert on child-friendly cities, as part of a piece of wider research.
- **a review of relevant research**, principally, Those Little Connections: Community-led Housing and Loneliness, a report by London School of Economics for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (November 2021).
- **a post-occupancy environmental performance evaluation** of Marmalade Lane's built environmental performance conducted from 2018 to 2021 as part of the government's Building for 2050 research programme.<sup>17</sup>
- **social value measurement tools, including the HACT Social Value Bank and National TOMs**, employed by Greengage to complement qualitative assessments. These tools, recognised nationally, aimed to quantitatively substantiate the project's impact through standardised measures. While the primary focus remains on qualitative assessments derived from resident narratives, these tools provide a structured framework for assessing and, where possible, quantifying social value outcomes.

17. Building for 2050. [Building for 2050](#).

## THEMES

In assessing the impact of Marmalade Lane, this report considers nine social, economic and environmental themes where alternative forms of housing are posited as having the potential to address the shortcomings in housing provision described in the introduction to this report.

These themes are:

-  **NEIGHBOURLINESS AND BELONGING:** social interaction, engagement with neighbours, a sense of community and reduced isolation.
-  **LEARNING:** opportunities for education and skills development, to acquire new knowledge, learn from others in the community and hone skills.
-  **HEALTH & WELLBEING:** improved physical and mental health, opportunities for exercise and a healthier diet.
-  **CONVENIENCE:** more efficient daily routines and the associated positive impacts on quality of life.
-  **CHILDHOOD:** opportunities for play, childhood learning and a greater sense of independence in childhood.
-  **COST OF LIVING:** reduced costs overall and for individual residents.
-  **CARBON, ENERGY AND RESOURCES:** the reduction of climate-changing carbon emissions in construction or operation, and ways of living that reduce environmental impacts.
-  **CONNECTION TO NATURE:** improvements to wellbeing associated with improved sense of and connection to the natural environment, and initiatives that improve biodiversity.
-  **WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFIT:** connection with the wider neighbourhood: positive impact of the development beyond the immediate resident community.

18. HACT. "UK Social Value Bank." [HACT](#).

19. Social Value Portal. "National TOMs Framework Measures." [Social Value Portal](#).

## STRUCTURE

Insights are organised under the following sections:

- Community management
- Homes
- The Common House and other shared indoor spaces
- Car parking and the car-free street
- The shared garden

Within each section, there is a detailed description of relevant aspects of Marmalade Lane, including commentary on how residents live within the development and the benefits they experience of living here. Where these benefits can be quantified – for example, where carbon is saved through sharing washing machines, or money saved by splitting internet bills – these benefits are summarised with footnotes providing detailed calculations.

Where there is a particular benefit in one or more of the nine themes set out opposite, this is identified as a key outcome, for example:

### KEY BENEFITS



### SOCIAL VALUE IN NUMBERS

Where appropriate, outcomes are also supported by a quantified social value benefit in the form of a social value proxy figure. These are measurable indicators which approximate the wider social benefits or consequences resulting from particular activities, policies, or projects, considering improved wellbeing, economic upliftment, enhanced environmental sustainability, and strengthened social cohesion, among other qualitative factors. These have been prepared by Greengage, a leading social value consultancy practice, using two recognised methodologies, the HACT Social Value Bank<sup>18</sup> and the National TOMs<sup>19</sup>. These figures are highlighted in an information box, supported by footnotes setting out the how these figures are arrived at, for example:

#### SOCIAL VALUE BANK

**£1,825**

The reduction in embodied carbon equates to £1,825 of social value.

Section 6 presents the main conclusions of the study, and the final section presents a summary of other cohousing developments, both completed and in-progress.



# OVERVIEW OF MARMALADE LANE



## 1 PLAY STREET

A car-free street provides space for residents to socialise, for plants and trees, and a safe environment for children's play.

## 2 GUEST BEDROOMS

Three guest bedrooms are available for residents to book for visiting friends and family, providing a convenient and cost-effective alternative to having a spare room.

## 3 CAR CLUB

A community-run car club provides a cheaper, more sustainable alternative to private car ownership, with nearly one third of residents not owning their own car.

## 4 COMMON HOUSE

At the heart of the development, the Common House provides a large dining room and catering kitchen for weekly community meals, birthday parties and other social gatherings. It also has a children's play room and spaces for home working, group meetings, exercise classes and film nights.

## 5 SHARED CARGO BIKE

A shared electric cargo bike is available to residents for carrying children, shopping or bulky items. Bike parking is also provided throughout the neighbourhood, in purpose-built structures and pavement cycle hoops.

## 6 GYM

A community-managed on-site gym provides a cost-effective opportunity for exercise, enabling residents to save on fitness memberships and train with neighbours, without the need to store gym equipment at home.

## 7 WORKSHOP & TOOLSHARE

A workshop provides a space for residents to undertake hobbies and repair goods. It is also home to a collection of shared tools that can be used by residents.

## 8 FOOD GROWING

A dedicated food-growing area within the shared garden allows residents to grow fruit and vegetables together and to compost waste.

## 9 SHARED GARDEN

Homes back onto a communal garden, which offers a place for residents to eat or gather outdoors, to relax and for children to play.

## 10 CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA

A dedicated children's play area is home to a sunken trampoline, a climbing frame, a slide and football area. Within the area of trees there are rope swings and other natural play elements.

## 11 LOW-ENERGY BUILDINGS

Homes are built from timber using modern methods of construction. They are triple-glazed and highly insulated and use energy-saving technologies such as air source heat pumps.

14



## COMMUNITY SHOP

A small, community-owned shop allows residents a way to jointly bulk-purchase organic food, toiletries and other goods.

13

## SHARED LAUNDRY

A shared laundry facility with extra-large, low-energy appliances, offers a cheap, sustainable and convenient alternative to owning individual white goods.

12

## HEDGEHOG HOTEL

A 'hedgehog hotel' to rehabilitate local hedgehogs is located in the shared garden alongside various other nature conservation initiatives including tree planting, bird feeding, and a wildlife pond. Bird and bat bricks are incorporated throughout the neighbourhood.

# INSIGHTS FROM MARMALADE LANE

## SECTION 01 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT



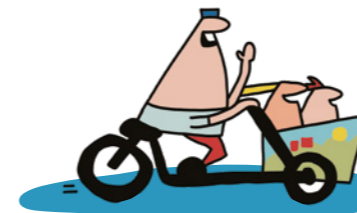
## SECTION 02 HOMES



## SECTION 03 THE COMMON HOUSE AND OTHER SHARED INDOOR SPACES



## SECTION 04 TRANSPORT, PARKING AND THE SHARED STREET



## SECTION 05 THE SHARED GARDEN



## SECTION 06 CONCLUSIONS



## SECTION 01 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Like other cohousing communities, Marmalade Lane is managed collectively by its residents. This encourages shared decision-making and a collaborative ethos, which is central to the way it operates as a place and community.



# COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Common spaces and facilities are owned and managed by residents through a limited company (Cambridge Cohousing Ltd), which is owned equally by the 42 owners of the homes within the community, and which has a board of directors comprising one person from every household. The board meets monthly to oversee and make decisions on the management of the community, to set and monitor budgets, and to take other decisions around the community's management.

The board is informed by working groups who meet regularly around specific areas of activity, including finance, estates, grounds, food and the Common House. It is voluntary to be involved in these groups but most residents do join a group, which reflects the reality that Marmalade Lane draws residents who want to be active and involved participants in the community.

The management budget is decided by a collaborative budgeting process in which working groups feed into an overall annual budget that is approved by the board. This in turn determines the annual service charge to be paid by each household.



Gardening working group building the children's playground

This compares favourably to service charges for other new developments in Cambridge<sup>20</sup>, not least since it covers items not usually included in a service charge, such as an allowance that supports the community car club and a budget for community events and activities. This cost-efficiency and value for money reflects the more proactive management ethos adopted by Marmalade Lane residents, in which cleaning, gardening, book-keeping and accounts, estate management and simpler repairs and maintenance are undertaken by members of the community rather than being outsourced.

This management approach relies on the volunteering of residents in undertaking the tasks that keep the community operating successfully. Central to this are "Community Work Days", which take place monthly on a weekend and which, although not obligatory, are generally attended by most residents. Activities involve cleaning communal spaces, organising shared storage areas and gardening. Other management tasks and general upkeep are undertaken outside of these community work days.

Communication between residents is supported by the digital productivity and messaging platform Slack. Within this platform, dedicated channels exist for each working group to discuss, prioritise and organise tasks. Other channels enable residents to share food, household items, clothes and advice between neighbours, as well as coordinate community events and schedule use of the communal facilities.

This approach to the management and maintenance of the community offers residents a high degree of shared control and responsibility over their immediate environment. The nature of sharing tasks with neighbours helps to foster a sense of belonging and the tasks themselves are seen as community building. This approach informs many of the elements of Marmalade Lane that this report will go on to explore.

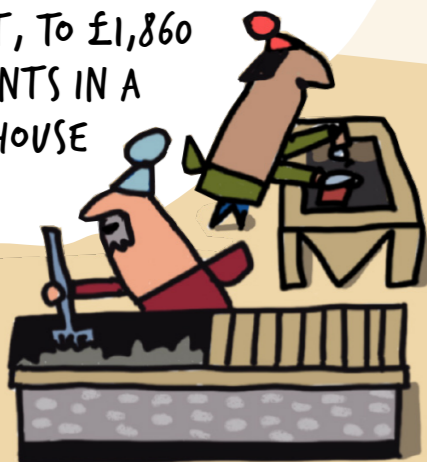


A member of the estates working group



Working in the vegetable beds

IN 2023, THE ANNUAL SERVICE CHARGE PER HOUSEHOLD RANGED FROM £756, IN A LEASEHOLD APARTMENT, TO £1,860 FOR RESIDENTS IN A FREEHOLD HOUSE



## KEY BENEFITS



20. Estate and service charges in 2023 for a two-bedroom apartment at Eddington are £3,965.36 (Rightmove)

## SECTION 02 HOMES

There are 42 homes at Marmalade Lane – a mix of two- to five-bedroom terraced houses and one- and two-bedroom, dual and triple aspect apartments. These house a total of 75 adults and 30 children, aged between 0 and 18. The homes were designed by Mole Architects in close partnership with TOWN, Trivselhus and members of Cambridge Cohousing, to ensure that their private spaces and shared facilities met their needs and family dynamics. This section explores the homes at Marmalade Lane including the collaborative design process and their energy and resource efficiency.



# COLLABORATIVE DESIGN AND CUSTOMISATION

Homes at Marmalade Lane were designed to meet the needs of a multigenerational community, consisting of a mix that includes families with children, downsizing couples and people living alone. To meet the needs of this mixed demographic while allowing for flexibility in the eventual mix of households and for adaptation over time, TOWN and Mole designed a series of house types based on customisable 'shells'. These offered future residents a high degree of choice over internal layouts and external appearance.

The approach was based on three basic terraced house types with a 7.8 metre internal front-to-back dimension and varied widths: a narrow terraced house (5.2m party wall to party wall), a wider terraced house (6.4m) and a pair of 'Tyneside' flats (7.8m, with each flat having a front door to the street). Each type could be configured over two or three storeys, selecting from a range of floor plans that allowed for control over numbers and sizes of bedrooms and bathrooms. This offered residents the chance to determine how much space they needed, and how this space was used, choosing for example between a large master



bedroom or a smaller bedroom with nursery. In total this allowed for up to 27 different internal layouts. This approach also allowed a wide variety of dwellings within a unified design and construction approach, with terraced homes ranging from 50m<sup>2</sup> one-bedroom lower 'Tyneside' flats to 127m<sup>2</sup> five-bedroom houses over three storeys.

Additionally, where loft spaces were left undeveloped they were provided with insulation in the roofline and built-in staircases, allowing for efficient future conversion to living space to meet future changes in people's needs.

Alongside the terraced homes, ten two-bedroom, 78m<sup>2</sup> apartments were delivered across three storeys in a block connected to the Common House, which provided a shared lobby and lift access. These were also customisable, offering two different layouts. A further one-bed studio apartment was also provided within this block.

**"THE KITCHEN OPTION MEANT WE COULD HAVE THE KITCHEN WE REALLY WANTED"**

In addition to space configuration, future residents were offered the opportunity to customise their homes internally and externally. This included choosing bathroom finishes from a series of options which included two different price tiers that reflected people's differing means and priorities, and a wide range of choice of kitchen finishes across a range of price points. Customers were also able to select a home without a fitted kitchen, consisting of a temporary sink to serve the purpose of building control sign-off, allowing ten households to procure their own kitchens to their own specification.



**WHEN HESTER AND DAVE GOT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT THEY RESERVED A FIRST FLOOR, TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT. BEFORE THEY MOVED IN, THEY FOUND OUT THEY WERE EXPECTING TWINS, AND NOW THE TWINS ARE OLDER, HESTER AND DAVE WERE ABLE TO EASILY EXTEND INTO THE ROOF SPACE TO MAKE ROOM FOR THEIR GROWING FAMILY.**

## KEY BENEFITS



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The homes are highly efficient in energy use, lowering energy bills and reducing environmental impact.

The terraced houses were designed by Mole Architects and built from the Trivselhus Climate Shield system; a closed-panel timber frame system manufactured in Sweden by TOWN's development partner. The system offers high levels of thermal performance and airtightness, creating warm, well-insulated homes, lowering heating bills for residents. The apartment and Common House block were built using Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT).

Triple-glazed windows and doors are incorporated throughout the development, along with mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) units – a system that efficiently ventilates and heats or cools buildings by recovering and recycling heat from outgoing air. Air-Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) are used for space and water heating – a renewable heating system that extracts heat from the outside air to warm indoor spaces. The overarching performance targets were to achieve space heating demand of 35kWh per square metre of floor area per year (35kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr). This compares with an effective requirement in the Building Regulations of the time (Part L 2013) of 75kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr and the Passivhaus Standard requirement of 15kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr.

As a result of the use of modern construction methods, the homes achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band B, leading to EPC improvements of up to six bands for many residents after moving in.<sup>21</sup> This enhanced efficiency contributes to a comfortable living environment and decreased heating bills for residents.

On average, residents have seen an improvement of approximately 2.4 energy bands since moving to the development, leading to an estimated annual energy saving of approximately £600. This saving is primarily due to reduced energy bills, with each increase in the EPC band resulting in an average saving of around £250 per year.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the homes' efficiency means they require less heating and cooling, relying on more natural ventilation methods, which in turn reduces the overall carbon footprint associated with the development.

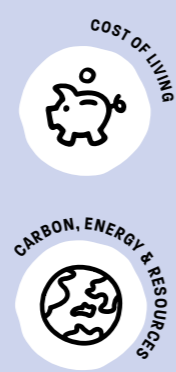
The Building for 2050 analysis found that although some homes exhibited a performance gap between the designed and as-built energy performance, principally owing to lesser airtightness than desired, residents were pleased with their homes, finding them warm and comfortable and particularly appreciating the indoor air quality produced by the MVHR system.<sup>23</sup> Some residents experienced overheating on the hottest summer days and have taken action to retrofit external shading to mitigate this. The development followed the good practice of the time in undertaking – and passing – a CIBSE TM59 overheating assessment but it is acknowledged that, were the development being built today, compliance with the new Building Regulations Part O overheating requirements would require external shading to most south and west facing windows.

**SOCIAL VALUE IN NUMBERS**

**£33,186**

Where residents have experienced an improvement of at least two EPC bands, this has generated £33,186.53 in social value across the development.<sup>24</sup>

## KEY BENEFITS



21. EPC A was not achieved principally owing to the use of air source heat pumps as a renewable technology, with the SAP calculations at the time ascribing a worse score to electric led systems than to comparable solutions involving the use of, for example, gas boilers with solar photovoltaic panels.

22. Energy Sanity. "For every full step up the ladder that you improve your efficiency, there is a potential annual saving of £250." Energysanity.

23. Building for 2050. Building for 2050.

24. HACT. EHS1623 of the HACT social value bank.

# WASTE

Shared waste reduction initiatives such as repair cafés, together with communal waste collection approaches, help to reduce residents' environmental impact and allow a space-efficient approach to refuse collection.



A 'Swish' taking place at Marmalade Lane, where residents and members of the local community swap unwanted clothes.

Marmalade Lane was originally designed to incorporate six communal bin stores, each with shared 'Eurobins'. Residents have reduced their waste production by using the large community compost facility in the garden, recycling clothes within the community, and sharing food and household items between neighbours. Initiatives such as the community's repair cafés help to prolong the lifespan of household items and in turn reduce the waste generated by the development.

This reduction in waste has allowed for two of the original six communal bin stores to be decommissioned and they are now used as community storage spaces. Furthermore, residents share tip runs, reducing the transport emissions associated with waste disposal and improving local air quality.

## KEY BENEFITS



# WATER

Homes are designed to reduce water use, which, together with community initiatives to raise awareness about water consumption, has helped to lower the environmental impact of the development.

At Marmalade Lane, water consumption is minimised by the installation of low flow water fittings on all taps and showers. Additionally, the collective use of modern, resource efficient washing appliances in the communal laundry room, rather than personal machines that may be less efficient, has a positive impact on operational energy and water use across the site.

One household's water bill reduced by 32% since moving to Marmalade Lane, which they attributed to the shared laundry facilities and the impact of aerated water flow. In 2020, residents shared information about their household's water consumption, the findings show that on average water consumption at Marmalade Lane, amongst those responding, amounted to 62 litres per day per person, which was under half the typical UK usage of 140 litres.

Having a communal garden, as opposed to multiple private gardens, reduces the need for watering per household. The measures implemented to reduce water consumption on site reduce pressure on natural resources and support sustainability.

**ON AVERAGE, WATER USE AT MARMALADE LANE AMOUNTS TO 62 LITRES PER DAY PER PERSON, UNDER HALF THE TYPICAL UK USAGE**

## KEY BENEFITS



## SECTION 03

# THE COMMON HOUSE AND OTHER SHARED INDOOR SPACES

A key feature of Marmalade Lane – in common with cohousing more generally – is that it provides shared spaces which are owned and managed collectively, by the community. These are additional to and complement residents' private spaces, and are key to encouraging social interaction, providing opportunities for an array of community activities.





# THE COMMON HOUSE

The 'Common House' is a 396sqm building located at the heart of the development, facing on to the shared garden, and provides an informal extension of residents' own homes. It offers a natural arrival point for visitors and, by virtue of its distinctive architecture and focal location, mirrors the traditional function of a village hall in a small community. It also shares a lift and stair access with the apartment building which, as well as being spatially efficient, provides easy access for the predominantly older residents of the apartments to the most important social spaces.

On the ground floor of the Common House there is a large dining room and a catering kitchen, providing space for community meals and gatherings, alongside other spaces including a playroom for young children with soft play furniture, books and games, and a communal laundry room.

On the upper floors are three guest bedrooms, which can be booked by residents for visiting friends or relatives, alongside two flexible rooms which provide spaces for meetings, reading, groups activities like film nights and home working.

The kitchen and dining space are used most often for community meals (described in the next subsection). Residents also make use of the dining room and kitchen for family gatherings, birthday parties and other events and celebrations.

Monthly residents' meetings are attended by all households in the Common House, as well as more frequent community management discussions focused on specific aspects of community life.

Flexible spaces on the upper floors provide for a range of smaller activities such as weekly Jujitsu and yoga classes and other exercise activities, as well as providing a space for reading, smaller meetings and gatherings, and film viewings. These also provide space for home working, with five households currently using these spaces to meet colleagues instead of travelling to a place of work, and for focused, private study. The spaces are designed to accommodate a range of uses to support the needs and priorities of the community.

The Common House is an important space for children. There is a dedicated playroom with a play kitchen, cushions and books, that offers a separate – but connected – space for children to spend time, including during shared meals and other events. Arts and crafts activities are often offered on a voluntary basis by members of the community for children. A piano is used by four households within the community for shared music lessons for children and adults, offering a cost-effective approach that avoids the need for a piano in the home.



Residents enjoying the Common House

Although its main purpose is to serve the members of the cohousing community, the Common House is occasionally made available for use by immediate neighbours and residents of the wider area, providing a valuable local resource. For example, Repair Cafés and 'Swishing' events are hosted there by the cohousing group in collaboration with the Transition Cambridge sustainability group, allowing Marmalade Lane residents and other local residents to repair broken appliances and swap unwanted clothes, promoting circular economy principles and offering a practical local benefit. The Common House is also used by local drama groups and other local organisations. The Common House has been previously opened to Ukrainian refugees, providing a space for them to meet and eat together.

In our survey of residents, 100% of respondents indicated that they made use of the Common House. The main purposes reported included for meetings (96% of respondents), events (89%), and gatherings (87%).

The Common House plays a key role in fostering neighbourliness and a sense of belonging by creating daily informal social interactions among residents. By opening up the space to the wider community, the development provides a free facility for local people to use. It also serves as a space-saving solution for residents, alleviating the need for individual homes to accommodate larger gatherings, dining, and recreational activities. It has particular benefit to families with children, offering a dedicated, safe space for play and learning. And it supports wider sustainable living by enabling knowledge and skill-sharing both between residents and with the wider local community.

"MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT MARMALADE LANE IS BEING ABLE TO HAVE A SOCIAL LIFE JUST A FEW STEPS FROM MY HOME AND BEING ABLE TO BE ALONE ALSO WHEN IT SUITS ME"



100% OF RESIDENTS USE THE COMMON HOUSE

KEY BENEFITS



# COMMUNITY MEALS

A fully-equipped catering kitchen in the Common House supports a programme of regular community meals that allow residents to eat healthy, reasonably-priced food together in the shared dining room. These are prepared by residents on a voluntary basis, with a dedicated subgroup of residents having responsibility for planning menus, sourcing ingredients and preparing meals, including both those who are experienced in food preparation and others who wish to learn.

These shared meals take place once or twice a week and are generally attended by around 20 residents and their guests, with over 100 meals being prepared each month in total. Around three quarters of households (29 households) participate in these shared meals at least monthly. Community meals largely ceased during the Covid pandemic but are building back up with the community aiming to increase their frequency and size.

Meals are healthy and sustainable. They are vegan or vegetarian and use sustainably-sourced ingredients, making use of food grown in the community garden, reducing the environmental impact associated with food production and transport helping to reduce residents' carbon footprint<sup>25</sup>. Food waste is composted on-site in the shared garden. Residents can purchase portions of food to eat at home or save for a later date.



**OVER 100 SHARED MEALS ARE PREPARED EVERY MONTH**

There is a charge of £3.20 per meal, providing an affordable, sociable and convenient option for residents and an alternative to eating out.

Community meals provide an opportunity for neighbours to spend time together, contributing to neighbourliness and belonging. They also provide a learning opportunity for people without prior culinary knowledge to learn skills from more experienced members of the community.

**"SINCE MOVING TO MARMALADE LANE, I'VE LEARNT MORE ABOUT VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN COOKING. GOOGLE DOCS, SLACK, AND A WHOLE HOST OF APPS"**



Residents preparing and sharing meals



25. IPCC. "Plant-based diets have a lower carbon footprint." In Special Report on Climate Change and Land, Chapter 5: Food Security.

## GUEST BEDROOMS

On the upper floors of the Common House there are three shared guest bedrooms. These are available to all members of the cohousing community to reserve for visiting friends and family. Reservations are managed through a shared spreadsheet and the hosting resident takes responsibility for cleaning the room and washing the linen after the stay. On average, each household uses the guest bedrooms for approximately eight nights per year – a total of 336 nights per year.



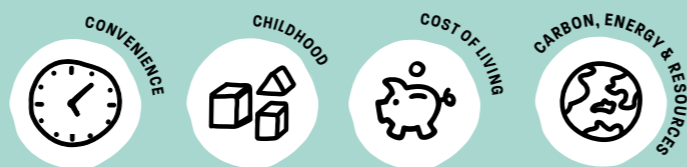
76% OF RESIDENTS USED THE GUEST BEDROOMS IN 2023

As well as being a convenient way to put up guests within the community itself, this space serves as a cost-effective approach to hosting. With a charge of £7 per night per room, this is highly affordable when compared to a typical local budget hotel cost of £70 per night.

The availability of guest rooms also means that residents of Marmalade Lane are less likely to need to maintain a dedicated spare room in their own home for infrequent visitors. Instead, residents are able to meet their spatial requirements through smaller, and more affordable, homes. For example, owning a home that is one 10m<sup>2</sup> bedroom smaller in this location may reduce a house purchase cost by around £50,000 translating to a monthly saving of approximately £200.<sup>26</sup> This saving in space equates to a carbon reduction of approximately 16tCO<sub>2</sub> based on the average carbon footprint of a new home.<sup>27</sup>

When not in use for guest stays, the guest bedrooms serve other purposes, including additional remote working space.

### KEY BENEFITS



26. Calculated estimate. At a rate of £5,000 per m<sup>2</sup>, an additional room of 10m<sup>2</sup> could cost the resident an extra £50,000, adding around £218 to monthly mortgage payments (rate 5.25%).

27. Calculated estimate. MIT Climate. How much CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted building a new house? [MIT Climate](#).

## COMMUNAL LAUNDRY

On the ground floor of the Common House is a laundry room providing a convenient, cost-effective alternative to domestic white goods that helps free up space in the home and encourages informal daily interactions. It provides four extra-large washing machines and one low-energy tumble dryer, offering a cheap, sustainable and convenient alternative to each household owning white goods.

Every private dwelling was provided with a washing machine connection in recognition that some people prefer private laundry facilities. While some do, the use of the shared laundry has risen steadily and it is currently used by 32 households (76%). Residents are charged 85p per wash cycle, and £1.70 per drying cycle, recorded via a dedicated app designed by a member of the community. This charge contributes to overhead costs and covers the costs of energy, water, repairs and the eventual replacement of the machine. This enables households to reduce living costs by not having to purchase white goods (a potential average saving of approximately £650).<sup>28</sup>

“SHARED LAUNDRY GIVES YOU SPACE BACK”



28. Average appliance costs. The average cost of a washing machine is around £350, and a tumble dryer is around £300, saving each household up to £650. In *The Wash*. How Much Electricity Does a Washing Machine Use? The average washing machine will use 174.46 kWh per year (assuming 220 cycles per year), cost £52.34 per year based on average electricity prices for the price cap period from 1 July 2023 onwards. [In The Wash](#).

This amenity brings environmental benefits. Because these shared washing machines have a 12kg capacity, in contrast to the standard 7kg of typical domestic machines, residents are able to launder more items in one wash, reducing the number of loads of washing for each household and in turn reducing associated energy and water consumption. Additionally, by reducing the number of privately-owned white goods in the community, there is a reduction in embodied carbon of approximately 7.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>29</sup>

90% OF RESIDENTS USED THE SHARED LAUNDRY IN 2023

This communal amenity offers a substantial space-saving benefit within individual residences – a washing machine takes up 0.6m.<sup>3</sup> This reclaimed space can be repurposed to cater to various storage needs.

The shared laundry also plays an important role in encouraging daily interactions between residents, offering an opportunity for informal interactions with neighbours.

### SOCIAL VALUE IN NUMBERS

£1,825

The reduction in embodied carbon equates to £1,825 of social value.<sup>30</sup>

### KEY BENEFITS



29 & 30. National TOMs. The reduction in the number of white goods across the site has an embodied carbon saving of 7.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, which equates to £1,824.73, according to NT31 of the National TOMs.

## COMMUNITY SHOP & FRESH PRODUCE DELIVERIES



Children inside the community shop

The shop operates on an opt-in basis, with 31 households (74%) participating. It is run wholly by residents on a cooperative basis. It is unstaffed: residents who participate enter the shop with a passcode, take their shopping, and log it on a tablet provided – a contemporary version of an honesty box. Credit is given to each participating household in advance, which can be topped up monthly. The average monthly spend per household is £57 per month.

Groceries at the community shop are sold on a wholesale cost basis, with a maximum 5% margin to meet minimal overhead expenses. This approach ensures affordability and accessibility for the community.

74% OF RESIDENTS USE THE COMMUNITY SHOP

Under the apartment block there is a windowless storage space, originally provided, but not ultimately required, for the storage of large hobby equipment. The community has therefore been able to create a small community shop here, allowing residents a cost-effective and sustainable way to bulk-purchase food, toiletries and other goods.

The shop was established during the Covid-19 pandemic, driven by the collective objective of providing essential supplies to residents and reducing the need to travel beyond the site. Owing to its success, the shop has become a permanent feature of the community's infrastructure – something that wasn't envisaged from the outset of the development.

The community shop provides a range of staple foods, including dry goods such as flour, pasta, tinned goods, nuts, crisps and cooking oil. It also provides fresh produce, coffee and cheese. The food is locally and ethically sourced, often organic and with an emphasis on low/no-waste, contributing to more sustainable diets and food shopping among residents.

The shop also supplies household goods such as washing-up liquid and shampoo in bulk dispensers for use with refillable containers, offering a convenient way to shop ethically and to reduce packaging.

Marmalade Lane residents also have a collective membership to a local, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme. This enables the community to pay for its share of produce at the start of the growing season, and to receive seasonal, locally-grown, organic vegetables, throughout the year.



Fresh produce delivery from the Community Supported Agriculture scheme.

"MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN MARMALADE LANE IS THE COMMUNITY – THE CONNECTION WITH OTHER PEOPLE, EXPOSURE TO NEW IDEAS, THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM OF OTHER RESIDENTS, AND THE FEELING THAT A WHOLE COMMUNITY CARES FOR ONE ANOTHER"

CSA schemes enable farmers to plan their crops more efficiently and reduce waste as they know the number of shares they are growing for at the start of the season. The vegetables are delivered monthly and are distributed from the Common House between 18 participating households, plus a member of the local community and the community's yoga teacher.

Having a shop on site and a regular delivery of fresh produce provides a convenient way for residents to top-up their weekly shopping, reducing trips to the local supermarket.



### KEY BENEFITS



## COMMUNAL GYM

A community-managed on-site gym provides a cost-effective opportunity for exercise, enabling residents to train with neighbours, while saving on gym membership without having specialist equipment in the home.

The gym is located on the ground floor of the south-west corner block in a compact, flexible space. It has been established by pooling equipment that was already owned by members of the community when they moved in.

The gym is used regularly by 20 members of the community, with others also using it on a more occasional basis. The gym provides residents with convenient access to exercise facilities and encourages regular physical activity, helping to support more active lifestyles.

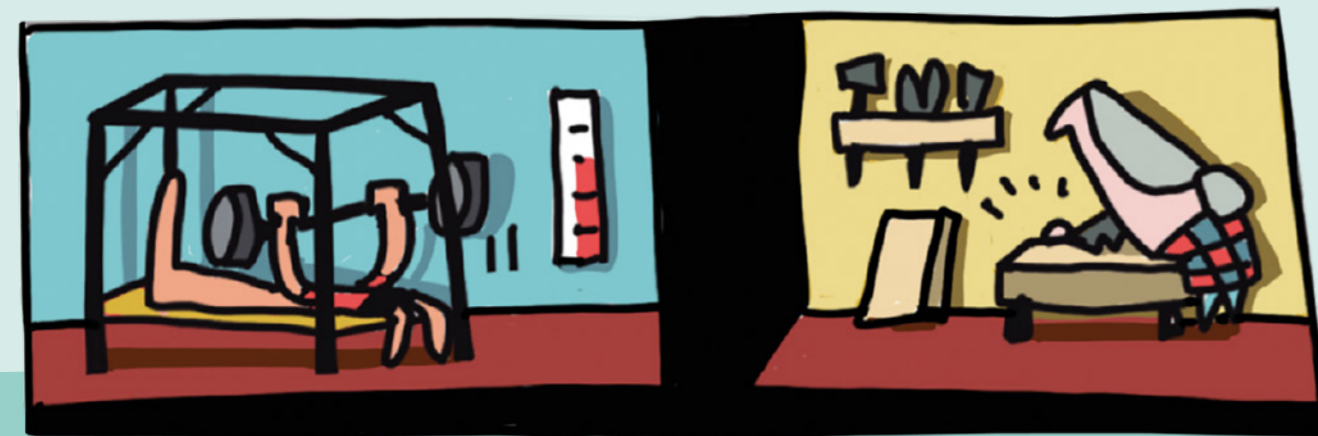
The gym at Marmalade Lane is free for residents to use, offering a cost-effective solution for those wanting to access fitness facilities, in comparison to local affordable gyms that typically cost around £25 per month. It also alleviates pressure on individual homes needing to maintain space for exercising and storing exercise equipment.



Gym equipment at Marmalade Lane

The shared gym sessions also create opportunities for residents to come together for fitness activities, fostering social interactions and a sense of community and allowing residents to train together and share knowledge and skills with their neighbours.

“THE GYM SAVES MONEY BUT IT IS ALSO JUST SO CONVENIENT, IT DEFINITELY MEANS I GO MORE CONSISTENTLY. I USED TO OWN A GYM AND ENJOY SHARING WHAT I KNOW AND COMMITTING TO GOING WITH MY NEIGHBOURS KEEPS ME HONEST”



### KEY BENEFITS



## WORKSHOP AND TOOL SHARE

A shared workshop provides a space for hobbies, repairs and sharing tools, helping to save space in the home and allowing residents to work with and learn skills from their neighbours.

The workshop is located adjacent to the gym in a ground floor space accessed from the shared garden. It provides a well-sized, flexible space for a range of crafts and DIY activities, with various tools and workbenches. It provides a valuable facility for residents to undertake hobbies that require a significant amount of space, are messy, noisy or which are otherwise less suitable to take place in homes, such as woodworking, pottery, bike repair and other arts and crafts activities.

The workshop space provides a community tool share, which includes a wide range of electric and manual tools for domestic use. This shared resource minimises the need for residents to allocate space in their homes for storage, leading to both cost and carbon savings as they collectively share these items instead of purchasing their own.

The workshop also provides a space where residents can repair broken items for themselves or for others in the community, contributing to a culture of repair and circularity among residents.

“PEOPLE ARE GENEROUS WITH THEIR SKILLS AND TALENTS”

It is also a place of learning and skill development: residents learn practical skills from their neighbours. It serves as an outlet for creativity and contributes to neighbourliness and belonging by creating opportunities for residents to interact and collaborate on projects and share expertise.

### KEY BENEFITS



Shared workshop space

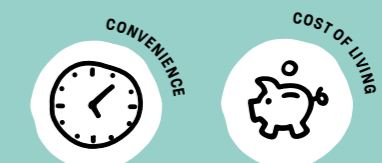
## COMMUNITY Wi-Fi NETWORK

A site-wide, community broadband network provides affordable, convenient internet for all residents.

All residents at Marmalade Lane have access to a community-run, site-wide broadband network in their homes, and with free wi-fi provided in the common spaces. This is a bespoke, fibre network that has been installed by members of the community using ducting that was specifically designed into the project at construction stage. It was set-up and is maintained by volunteers within the cohousing community.

This service is available at £9.50 per month per home and residents are charged through their monthly service charge payment. This initiative generates an average annual cost saving of £208 per household, as each household does not have to go to a private internet provider.<sup>31</sup> It also offers a convenient option for residents, as their internet connection is already established and maintained within the community itself.

### KEY BENEFITS



31. U Switch. UK Broadband Statistics 2023. The average cost of broadband in the UK is £26.90 per month, as of 2023. U Switch.

## SECTION 04 TRANSPORT, PARKING AND THE SHARED STREET

At Marmalade Lane, in common with other cohousing developments, an emphasis has been placed on creating a safe, pedestrian-focussed environment that facilitates and maximises opportunities for social interaction. This is achieved by reducing the dominance of car movements and parking, and encouraging more active travel options. Parking provision has been reduced to a minimum and is located to the edge of the development.



## CAR PARKING DESIGN AND OPERATION

Car parking is carefully managed by residents to reduce the space it takes up, encouraging shared, sustainable alternatives and freeing up space for other uses.

Space for car parking at Marmalade Lane was reduced to the minimum allowable through negotiation with the planning and highways authorities. At the time of its construction, 53 parking spaces were provided (42 for residents – one space per household, and 11 for visitors). 36 of these spaces are sited in a parking area at the eastern edge of the site which backs on to the similar area of an adjacent development. Of the remaining 17 spaces, 11 were 'wrapped' around the southern boundary within the courtyard garden using permeable rubber matting which allowed plants to grow through it, and six are located on Marmalade Lane itself, although these are not marked or visible and have never been used.

ONLY 12% OF THE OVERALL LAND AREA IS GIVEN TO CAR PARKING AND CIRCULATION

This spatial approach means that only 12% of the overall land area is given over to car parking and circulation, compared to 38% on the adjacent plots in Orchard Park which are developed under a more conventional approach based on rear parking courts, allowing the difference in land take to be reapplied to alternative uses – principally a large, shared garden (see following section) and the car-free lane.



A children's play area has been created instead of 11 car parking spaces that were originally designated for this area

Since the development's completion, shared mobility initiatives implemented by the cohousing community (examined below), together with a proactive, community-led approach to managing parking spaces, have proven a reduced level of operational need for vehicle parking, facilitating the permanent release of 11 car parking spaces at the south-east corner of the site into the landscape. This area now hosts children's play equipment, including a slide, a sunken trampoline, climbing frame, and designated football area, as well as mature trees and fruit bushes. This reconfiguration of space further contributes to neighbourliness and belonging by providing residents with more space to safely meet, socialise and for children to play, developing the community feel of the site. Furthermore, by moving cars down the transport hierarchy on site, residents are encouraged to consider other modes of more active travel over the default car journey.



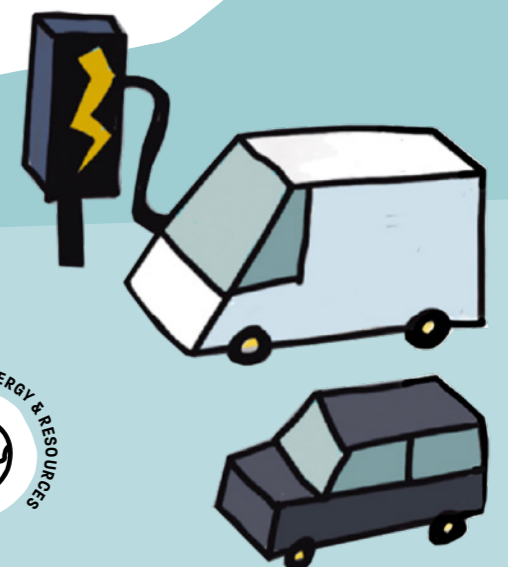
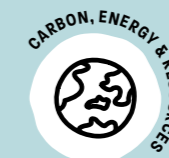
A resident with one of the community's shared vehicles



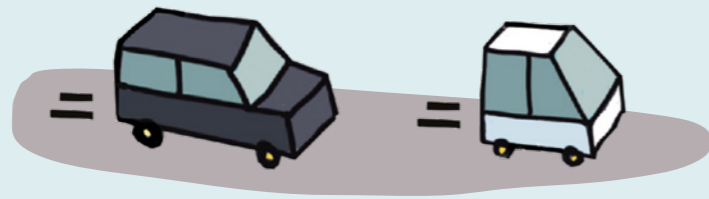
Aerial comparison of space given to parking and circulation. Left side of image shows neighbouring Orchard Park. Right side of image shows Marmalade Lane.

"THE BEST THING ABOUT MARMALADE LANE IS THE GREAT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY – THE SHARED CARGO BIKE, COMMUNAL MEALS FROM THE ALLOTMENT PRODUCE, THE COMMUNAL COMPOST, THE CAR CLUB, THE 'SHOP' AND VEG DELIVERIES"

### KEY BENEFITS



## COMMUNITY CAR CLUB



A shared car club, community owned and operated, provides a cost-effective, sustainable alternative to car ownership or second car ownership for many residents.

The car club offers four cars, including one electric, one hybrid and one efficient smart car for two people. This is an opt-in service, currently shared by 16 households (38%), which has allowed a number to limit their car ownership to just one vehicle, or even relinquish car ownership completely. Since the scheme's inception, car ownership has reduced by 16%, as six households have given up their personal cars. Another three households have been able to maintain their non-car-ownership status, despite the site's edge of city location, meaning that 31% of households at Marmalade Lane do not have a private car. The reduction in private car ownership and the use of electric and hybrid vehicles significantly lowers the environmental impact associated with transport.

The fixed cost of being part of the car club in 2022 was £465 (comprising £315 standing costs and £150 depreciation), with running costs of 50p per day used plus 28p per mile and with a charge of £10 for overnight use. This presents a cost-competitive alternative to private car ownership, allowing residents to save on various expenses associated with car ownership, such as insurance, road tax, maintenance, fuel, and repair, with the average annual running cost for a car in the UK being £2,616.<sup>32</sup>

"THE FLEXIBILITY TO TAKE THE RIGHT CAR FOR THE SPECIFIC JOURNEY HAS BEEN UNEXPECTED BENEFIT OF THE CAR CLUB"

The provision of a car club in the development itself is a convenient option compared to joining a local car club scheme, with residents able to pick up a car within minutes of reserving it. Child seats are conveniently stored in the Common House for families using the car club.

The use of electric and hybrid vehicles, along with the decrease in private car ownership, contributes to improved local air quality. This has positive health effects not only for residents but also for the broader local population.

31% OF HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT OWN A PRIVATE CAR



### KEY BENEFITS



## CYCLE PARKING AND SHARED CARGO BIKE



Marmalade Lane's design makes it easy for residents to cycle regularly. There is extensive provision for cycle storage throughout the community, with a total of 83 parking spaces in three secure bike stores and with cycle hoops outside most homes. Residents can carry out bike maintenance in the community workshop, and a shared bike is kept at the closest train station, Cambridge North, for visitors to use.

Residents at Marmalade Lane have access to a community-operated, shared electric cargo bike, acquired following a successful grant application. The e-cargo bike provides space for children to sit and to transport shopping or other bulky items.

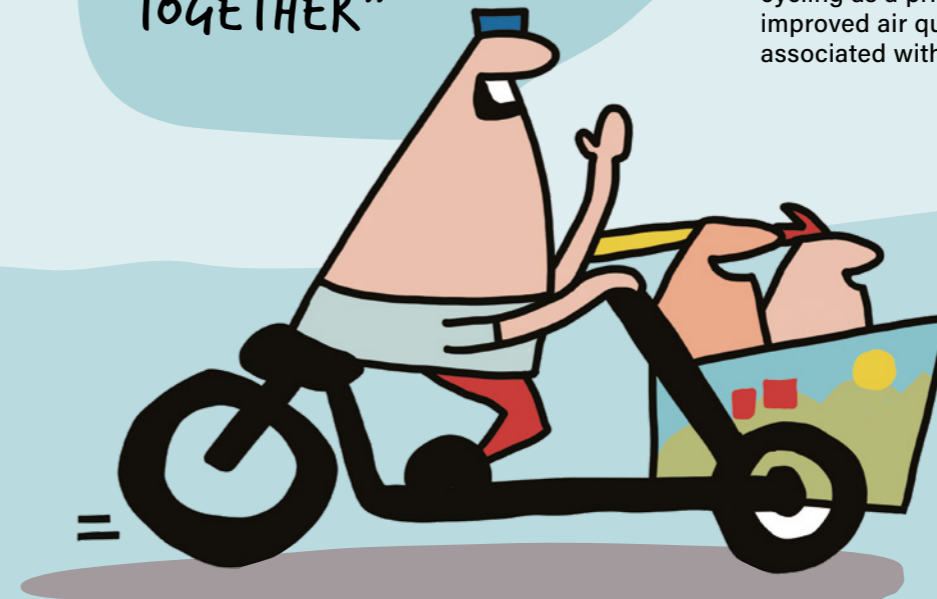
"IT IS A GREAT WAY TO GET AROUND CAMBRIDGE WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN. MUCH EASIER THAN TAKING LOTS OF BIKES OR A CAR TO THE CITY CENTRE"

The cargo bike is also available for use by residents from across Orchard Park who are able to book the bike for journeys in the same way as residents at Marmalade Lane. The cargo bike is used an average of 26 times per month.<sup>34</sup>

The e-cargo bike enables residents to replace certain shorter journeys that would otherwise be taken by private car; including school runs, shopping trips and other leisure outings, generating a monthly carbon saving of 19kgCO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>35</sup>

Active travel, such as cycling, contributes to residents' overall health and wellbeing. Furthermore, promoting cycling as a primary mode of transportation supports improved air quality and reduces local air pollution associated with exhaust fumes.

"WE MEET UP BEFORE SCHOOL & THEN CYCLE TOGETHER"



### KEY BENEFITS



### SOCIAL VALUE IN NUMBERS

£9,785

The reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with private car ownership leads to a tangible social value, estimated at £9,785 according to the National TOMs<sup>33</sup>

32. The Car Expert. UK average car running costs. "The average cost of running a car in the UK ranges from £160 and £218 per month"; saving each car-less household up to £2,616 annually. [The Car Expert](#).

33. National TOMs. Calculated using NT31 of the National TOMs.

34. Based on usage for September 2023. As recorded by the community.

35. GOV.UK. Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors 2023. [GOV.UK](#).



# CAR-FREE PLAY STREET

A car-free street running through the development – Marmalade Lane itself – provides space for natural planting, children’s play and neighbourly interaction, including with passers-by who are welcome to walk and cycle along it.



The design of the Lane prioritises a sociable, friendly atmosphere, with open rear gardens, low boundary planting, and benches. At each end, large, moveable, wheeled planters are in place to limit vehicle access, except for where necessary for specific needs or deliveries. The public are welcome to walk, scoot and cycle through the lane and often use it as a pleasant shortcut through the local area.

For children, the Lane offers a safe environment, without cars and overlooked by nearby properties, for a variety of play, including imaginary games, chalk drawing and ball games, supporting childhood activity and development and promoting a degree of independence from a young age. It also provides a safe space for scooting and cycling, allowing children to learn these skills in a car-free environment.

For adults, the Lane enables daily encounters and casual conversations with neighbours. It played an important role during the Covid pandemic, with chairs and sofas brought out into a covered area by the Common House to make a place for residents to socialise and meet safely while restrictions were in place. This seating area has remained and is well used.



Marmalade Lane runs east-west through the development, fronted by the front doors of homes on one side and rear gardens on the other; an unusual layout but one that works very well in a cohousing context. While there was no requirement in planning for a street through the development, with the site bounded by public roads on three sides, it was an important part of the design brief as Cambridge Cohousing members wanted the community to be permeable to members of the public and to have a more intimate outside space that complemented the larger, wilder shared garden. Marmalade Lane is not adopted but it is ‘tracked’ so that, if necessary, an emergency services or delivery vehicle can access it.

“I LIKE PLAYING WITH ALL THE KIDS IN THE LANE... THERE ARE NO CARS”



The car-free lane

“BY 18 MONTHS, CHILDREN ARE SCOOTING BECAUSE THE TERRAIN IS TARMAC. SO THEY GET ON THEIR WHEELS. THEY PREDOMINANTLY DO USE IT AS A KIND OF IMMEDIATE BACK GARDEN”



KEY BENEFITS



## SECTION 05 SHARED GARDEN

At the heart of Marmalade Lane lies a shared garden of 0.25 hectares. It is used by residents for relaxing, play, socialising and food growing, providing a communal outdoor space that is additional to private gardens and balconies.



## SHARED OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

The shared garden is an important space for relaxation and social interaction. This is reflected in its design: a large south-facing terrace is located to the rear of the Common House, with shade and seating that serve as an extension to the indoor dining space. A fire pit with straw bale seating lies at the centre of the garden, with various picnic tables and seating distributed throughout the space for informal outdoor gatherings.

The garden is the setting for a range of events, particularly in the spring and summer, including community sports days, BBQs and pizza parties which make use of a community-owned, outdoor pizza oven. The garden is used to host an annual party for the neighbouring community in Orchard Park. It also supports physical wellbeing, hosting an outdoor circuits class.

The natural qualities of the space, including the substantial area of mature trees that runs through it, support relaxation and provide a connection with nature for residents.



Vegetable growing areas

11% of residents reported that they use the shared garden specifically for outdoor socialising. This is relatively low compared to those who use it for relaxation (64%) and gardening (67%) – suggesting that this space is more associated for residents with relaxation and more productive uses (albeit which in themselves may have neighbourliness and wellbeing benefits) than specifically for socialising.

67% OF RESIDENTS USE THE SHARED GARDEN FOR GARDENING

“YOU’LL HAVE A GROUP OF ADULTS MAYBE SITTING AND HAVING A GLASS OF WINE. AND THE CHILDREN WILL JUST BE MILLING AROUND UNTIL YOU GET BORED OF THEM AND MAKE THEM GO TO BED”

“WE PUT UP A TENT AND THE KIDS HAD A BIG SLEEPOVER”



### KEY BENEFITS



# COMMUNITY GARDENING, FOOD-GROWING AND COMPOSTING

Spaces for food-growing allow residents of all ages to be involved in growing fruit and vegetables, encouraging healthier diets, supporting connections to nature and allowing neighbours to work together and share skills.

A dedicated area for food production is located to the south of the shared garden, consisting of nine narrow growing beds separated by paths. The growing spaces are used throughout the year for fruit and vegetable production. The plots are overseen by a dedicated working group made up of residents, with regular involvement of wider members of the cohousing community. Monthly community days are held to cover any additional gardening tasks, alongside other cleaning and maintenance activities in the community.

A chicken coop is located to the south east of the garden, with rescue hens providing eggs that are sold in the community shop.

The fresh produce grown here is used for the community meals and for individual consumption. The availability of fresh produce grown in the garden promotes healthier eating habits, encourages residents to eat seasonally and reduces the environmental impact associated with the transportation and distribution of food.



Shared allotment beds

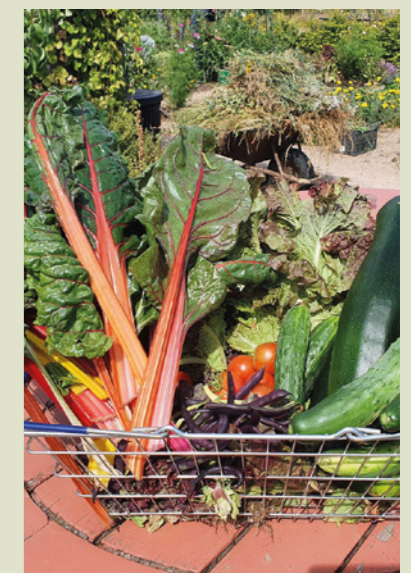
"I NEVER PLAY IN MY OWN GARDEN. I CAN GET AWAY FROM MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS"



Bulb planting in the local area



Dedicated food production area



Produce from the shared garden

Gardening – both food-growing and in the wider shared garden – is a very important feature of life at Marmalade Lane, with 67% of residents stating that it is an activity they participate in. This is considerably higher than the UK average of 40%.<sup>36</sup> Engaging in gardening activities contributes to learning and impacts physical and mental wellbeing, it also forms an opportunity for informal socialising in the community.

Planting and outdoor maintenance extends beyond the boundaries of the cohousing development, where efforts by Marmalade Lane have led to the raising of funds for planting 5,000 bulbs and fruit bushes at the eastern end of Orchard Park. And, clean-up initiatives such as the community's 'Rubbish Rambles' have improved neighbouring bridleways and local streets.

Communal gardening supports neighbourliness through shared endeavour; it also allows for more experienced gardeners within the community to share knowledge with others, contributing to learning outcomes.

Children are also involved in gardening at Marmalade Lane. In interview, one resident described a 'whole posse of small children planting seedlings'.

## SOCIAL VALUE IN NUMBERS

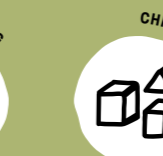
**£43,741**

participation in community gardening equates to £43,741 of social value according to HACT.<sup>37</sup>

Organic waste produced through gardening is composted in three large compost bins. These also provide for composting of domestic waste, with residents making use of these for kitchen and garden scraps.

The management of the garden is based on permaculture principles, which places a focus on nature-based approaches, with a diversity of crops and plants which contributes to overall biodiversity, increasing the resilience of the site to extreme weather and soft landscaping failure.

## KEY BENEFITS



36. Bisgrove and Hadley. (2002). "In the UK, there are estimated to be 27 million people, approximately 40% of the total population, who actively participate in gardening."

37. HACT. HOB1601 of the HACT Social Value Bank.

# PLAY SPACES

Formal and informal outdoor play spaces provide a wide range of opportunities for children to play and explore independently.

Opportunities for children's play are embedded throughout the shared outdoor spaces at Marmalade Lane. They include a dedicated play area to the south of the garden, which has been established on an area of land that was originally designed and designated as overflow car parking, but which, through the shared mobility approaches set out above has become surplus to requirements. This space is now home to a full-size sunken trampoline, climbing frame, landscaped mounds and slides. Within the area of established trees at the centre of the garden are rope swings and other natural elements that encourage imaginative and unstructured play. This play space benefits from installed street lighting so that children can continue to use the play areas in the dark winter evenings.



Play Area

"WE PLAY HIDE AND SEEK IN THE BIKE SHEDS AND IN THE TREES"

With a total of 30 children aged from 0-18 years living at Marmalade Lane, the garden is regularly used by families and children for play. The shared garden provides a safe, free and open green space for children to play in (and for parents to relax while overseeing their children playing). The natural surveillance provided by the homes overlooking the garden means that children can play independently and safely.

The variety of play spaces provide children in the community with an opportunity to connect with nature from their early years.

"THE KIDS ARE PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS OUTSIDE"

30 CHILDREN LIVE AT MARMALADE LANE



Private gardens overlook shared spaces



Central meadow play area



A view of the shared garden from a resident's private back garden



KEY BENEFITS



# BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT

Several measures have been implemented to provide and protect wildlife habitats. These include bird boxes, a bird feeding area and a pond, shelters and a feeding area for rescued hedgehogs. The community has organised a 'Meet the Hedgehogs' event for three classes of a local Primary School. The community's monthly budget has a specific budget allocation for bird seed. Alongside the four rescued chickens that consume food scraps, reducing the amount of organic waste that needs to be disposed of elsewhere.



Happy chickens at Marmalade Lane

Proactive management of the shared garden supports a range of on-site biodiversity initiatives, including planting, bird-feeding and nature conservation, supporting local ecosystems and offering residents a connection to nature.

The gardening is shared by the community and residents work to protect and enhance biodiversity on site, supporting existing populations and habitats and creating new spaces for wildlife to thrive.

Since moving in, the cohousing community has planted fifteen more mature trees as well as preserving a historic copse in the centre of the garden; half of this copse is preserved for nesting birds and the other half is left for other wildlife. Residents have planted and maintained a rich wildflower meadow which supports a range of species, including pollinators. Residents have also created a small pond for other wildlife.



Bricks were incorporated providing homes for bats and birds

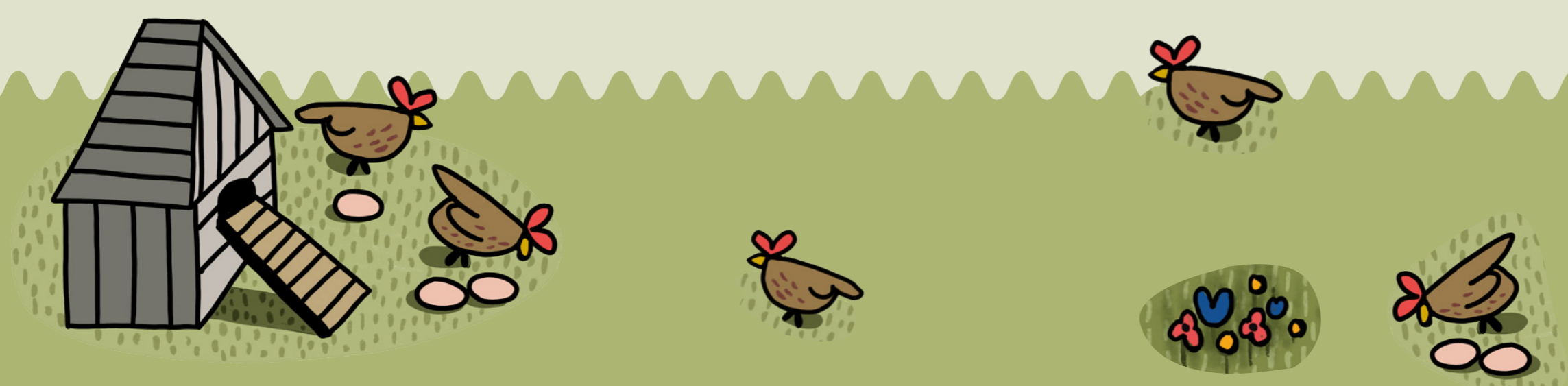


Caring for injured hedgehogs



Mature fruit trees

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY AT MARMALADE LANE INCREASES THE SITE'S RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE MIXTURE OF HABITATS WITHIN THE GARDEN AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CHICKENS SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING.



## KEY BENEFITS



## SECTION 06 CONCLUSIONS

This section draws together key conclusions from the sections above, grouped under the assessment objectives. Here, we have any quantitative evaluations of the project, including any cost savings per household where available, and any associated social value proxies.



## ☕ NEIGHBOURLINESS AND BELONGING

Much like other cohousing communities, residents of Marmalade Lane are drawn to this shared way of living as they are deeply committed to, and value, community. A sense of community defined as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together”.<sup>38</sup> This community spirit is by far the single aspect of life at Marmalade Lane that is most valued by the development’s residents with 88% of respondents describing it as the ‘best thing about living at Marmalade Lane.’

This sense of community stems from the collaborative nature of the design process through which residents jointly shaped the neighbourhood. It is reflected and supported by the design of the neighbourhood – which places emphasis on shared spaces and facilities and enables many daily interactions between neighbours, ranging from community meals and events to informal encounters visiting the laundry, tool share or community shop. The community-based management approach further reinforces this sense of belonging, with residents giving up their time to actively participate in various aspects of community life, such as preparing meals and maintaining the shared garden.



The strong sense of neighbourliness and belonging generates significant quantitative social value. In our survey 98% of residents said they regularly stop and talk with people in the neighbourhood, generating £210,304 of social value.

“WE WORK THROUGH SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND NEED BY TALKING AND UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER”

Furthermore 96% feel they could go to a neighbour if they need advice about something, contributing to a further £121,098 in social value.<sup>39</sup> Active involvement in tenant and social groups, reported by 73% and 76% of residents respectively, generates £333,694 of social value.<sup>40</sup>

Research undertaken by the London School of Economics supports the positive impact of cohousing and other forms of community-led housing (CLH), on reducing loneliness, concluding that those involved in community-led housing were ‘significantly less likely to feel lonely than similar members of the general public;’ and that “residents’ perceptions about their



A table tennis tournament on the lane

own communities were significantly more positive than those of the control group about their neighbourhoods.’ As with Marmalade Lane, that research points specifically to a ‘joint endeavour’ that is involved in designing the community in the first place, together with the ‘purposeful design of environments that support social interaction – both casual everyday interactions and more formal socialising – while maintaining privacy.’



## 📖 LEARNING

Marmalade Lane offers many opportunities for learning and skill sharing. Members of the community bring their individual skills and abilities to all aspects of the community’s life, from cookery and gardening to IT. Working with their neighbours through working groups, community work days or on one-off projects, there are many opportunities for people to learn from more experienced neighbours. This knowledge-sharing extends to the children in the community who can learn from the intergenerational community they are part of as well as help older members of the community and younger families. There are also opportunities for residents to learn more about sustainable choices – in terms of building materials, systems and methods through the codesign process and lifestyle choices such as food cultivation, active travel and minimising landfill waste.

“I MOST VALUE THE NEIGHBOURLY HELP AND SUPPORT THAT COMES WITH TRUSTING YOUR NEIGHBOURS”

## ❤️ HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Beyond the vital contributions to wellbeing that are offered by being part of a strong community, Marmalade Lane offers practical opportunities for healthier lifestyles. There are opportunities for formal exercise – including shared and individual training sessions in the communal gym, as well as yoga and exercise classes in the Common House. There are also opportunities for informal exercise, such as gardening and by encouraging and enabling residents to cycle more frequently.

This is demonstrated by the survey findings: 78% of residents having regularly participated in physical activities at least once a week for at least two months, which is higher than the percentage of adults who are physically active in the East of England region (68%) as of 2021/22.<sup>41</sup> The relatively high levels of physical activity amongst residents offer multiple positive impacts on mental and physical wellbeing, including reducing risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. This is also reflected in social value calculations. Frequent participation in mild and moderate exercise on site has resulted in the creation of £302,344 of social value according to HACT.<sup>42</sup>

38. McMillan, D.W.; Chavis, D.M. (1986). “Sense of community: A definition and theory.” *Journal of Community Psychology*, p14.

39. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank codes ENV1410 and ENV1607.  
40. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank codes SOC1601 and SOC1602.

41. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. (2022). *Fingertips Public Health Data; Local Authority Profiles*, Cambridge.  
42. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank code SPO1607.



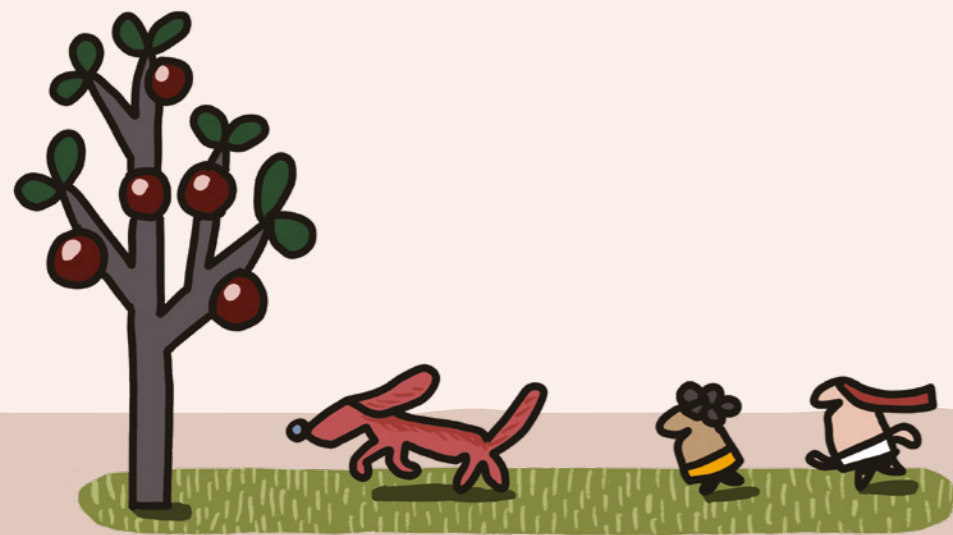


 CONVENIENCE

“I THINK OF IT AS A ONE-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD!”

The wide range of events, facilities, resources and services available within the cohousing community enhance the convenience of residents' daily lives. The community car club, shared laundry and toolshare present practical and convenient alternatives to individual ownership, storage and maintenance of cars, appliances, tools and machinery. Shared spaces such as the Common House, workshop and gym offer a wide range of amenities on people's doorsteps. The community shop provides a valuable resource for quick and easy shopping without the need to go further afield. With a regular programme of community events, residents have access to a variety of exercise classes, film viewings and shared meals, eliminating the need for extensive planning or travel.

“IN MY OLD HOUSE I COULDN'T JUST PLAY WITH MY FRIEND, IT HAD TO BE ARRANGED”



 CHILDHOOD

Marmalade Lane offers an environment for children to thrive. Dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces, including the Common House playroom and garden play areas, offer safe and convenient amenities for children that are close to home. More generally, the shared spaces at Marmalade Lane – in particular the shared, car-free street and communal garden – offer a rich variety of spaces where children can play and explore, from an urban street to wild, natural areas – spaces to ride, climb and explore, alone or with friends. These are well-overlooked by the surrounding homes, allowing children to play and roam more independently from an early age.



Perhaps more importantly, children at Marmalade Lane benefit from the presence of a community that cares for and values them, prioritising space for them and offering support to children and parents, whether through providing crafts or gardening activities, or simply helping with childcare.



Children and families playing in the car-free lane

“I THINK IT'S VERY LIBERATING BEING IN A SPACE WHERE CHILDREN HAVE SO MUCH FREEDOM BECAUSE YOU CAN SEE HOW BENEFICIAL THAT IS”



 COST OF LIVING

Homes at Marmalade Lane are designed to be cost-effective in operation, by using minimal energy. The saving in energy bills associated with each EPC band improvement is around £250 per year, with each household reporting an average improvement of 2.4 bands.<sup>43</sup>

Shared services and resources offer a range of practical ways to live more cost-efficiently. For example, the car club allows for the costs of car ownership to be shared with neighbours, allowing residents to save up to £2,616 annually through a mix of car insurance, road tax, depreciation, MOTs, servicing, parking, fuel and repairs.<sup>44</sup>

Working on similar principles, the toolshare provides access to a wide range of tools and machinery without the need for residents to purchase or maintain them.

For those who use the community shop, there is a collective saving of 189 monthly shopping trips, and a saving on weekly grocery bills as households are able to purchase some of their daily goods at wholesale price.

All residents have access to a community-run site-wide broadband network in their homes, and Wi-Fi in the common spaces, providing, fast and affordable internet, that is maintained by volunteers, generating a social value of £70,896.<sup>45</sup>

Shared spaces also benefit residents' living costs, by serving as an extension to people's homes, providing shared additional living space, home working space and guest rooms for visitors. All of these reduce the pressure on dwelling space, allowing residents to have smaller, more cost-efficient homes.

Community-based management brings an expectation that people will volunteer their time in managing shared spaces and contribute to community. All residents benefit from a management approach that is not only empowering, but also highly cost-effective when compared to third party estate management.

 CARBON, ENERGY AND RESOURCES

Marmalade Lane is designed to be a low-carbon, environmentally-sensitive development. Embodied carbon is minimised by the extensive use of timber, while operational carbon is reduced by high levels of insulation and airtightness that lower heating requirements, together with the Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery units and Air-Source Heat Pumps which help to provide environmentally-efficient space and water heating.

This energy efficiency is recognised through social value calculations: where residents have experienced an improvement of at least two bands in their home's Energy Performance Certificate from their previous dwelling, this has generated £33,186 in social value.<sup>46</sup>

Beyond the home, shared resources in the community help to drive down carbon – for example, the reduction in the number of white goods across the site has an embodied carbon saving of 7.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, which equates to £1,824<sup>47</sup> of social value according to National TOMs, while community measures to reduce private car ownership have resulted in a saving of 40 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, which equates to a further £9,785 in social value.<sup>48</sup>

More generally, Marmalade Lane has a deeply-rooted culture of sustainability that enables more environmentally friendly living among its residents, including shared food production, vegetarian shared meals, organic, locally-sourced group-based food purchasing and low carbon travel initiatives.

“MY BEST THING ABOUT MARMALADE LANE IS THE COMMUNAL GARDEN, ESPECIALLY NOW WE’VE MADE IT REALLY WILD”

“THE BEST THING ABOUT MARMALADE LANE IS THE GREAT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY – COMMUNAL MEALS FROM THE ALLOTMENT PRODUCE, THE COMMUNAL COMPOST, THE CAR CLUB, THE ‘SHOP’ AND VEG DELIVERIES”

 CONNECTION TO NATURE

Nature is at the heart of life at Marmalade Lane. The 0.25-hectare shared garden is designed and managed on permaculture principles, with a mix of food-growing, wildflower meadow and retained wild area around mature trees and hedgerow. Residents value this connection to nature in the context of a wider urban setting, with around two thirds of residents being actively involved in gardening activities (conferring a social value of £13,158).<sup>49</sup>



Pollinator friendly planting on the edge of the lane



Vegetable area and wildflower meadow

These activities include maintaining a rich, wildflower meadow which supports a wide range of species, including pollinators, which promotes biodiversity, increasing the site's resilience to climate change. Extensive bird feeding helps to support local bird populations. Other initiatives including rehabilitating hedgehogs and bulb planting in the surrounding area help to support wildlife and enhance local green spaces.



43. EPC A was not achieved principally owing to the use of air source heat pumps as a renewable technology, with the SAP calculations at the time ascribing a worse score to electric led systems than to comparable solutions involving the use of, for example, gas boilers with solar photovoltaic panels.

44. The Car Expert. UK average car running costs. “The average cost of running a car in the UK ranges from £160 and £218 per month”; saving each car-less household up to £2,616 annually. [The Car Expert](#).

45. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank code FIN1407.

46. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank code EHS1623.

47. National TOMs. Calculated using NT31 of the National TOMs.

48. National TOMs. Calculated using NT31 of the National TOMs.

49. HACT. Calculated using the HACT social value bank code HOB1601.

## WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS

A key quality of Marmalade Lane is its commitment to engaging with the local area and improving the wider place of which it is part. Through both individual and collective volunteering activities and organised outreach programmes - such as raising funds for charities and food banks and opening up their shared spaces to host events for the local community, the community has a positive impact beyond its immediate residents.

The local area has benefited from litter picking initiatives, bulb planting, the introduction of a shared electric cargo bike scheme and the installment of a publicly accessible defibrillator. The community is keen to (and plan to) expand their outreach, acknowledging the need for cohousing communities to look outwards as well as inwards.

The community's engagement with their wider community enables residents to forge meaningful connections within their neighbourhood, fostering a sense of belonging and having a broader impact for others in the local area.



### FINAL NUMBERS

THE ENVIRONMENTAL,  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
BENEFITS OF MARMALADE  
LANE ARE VAST,  
THE CUMULATIVE  
SOCIAL VALUE FIGURE  
TOTALS TO £1,054,103



## CASE STUDIES

This report has focused on the activities and outcomes specific to Marmalade Lane, however, unsurprisingly cohousing is a growing movement in the UK with people seeking out a more supportive, community-focused way of life. Some case studies of cohousing projects, both completed and in progress, are detailed below. Many of these, some being brought forward by TOWN and some by others, will generate impacts similar to those explored in this report.



### 1. LILAC

LILAC (Low Impact Living Affordable Community) is situated on a former brownfield site in Bramley, Leeds. It incorporates 20 private homes alongside shared facilities such as a Common House, guest rooms, and a shared garden with an allotment. A portion of the homes are reserved for low-income families. LILAC's homes are built to Passivhaus standards, minimising energy consumption and drastically reducing residents' utility bills. The buildings are oriented to maximise natural light and incorporate high levels of insulation.

[www.lilac.coop](http://www.lilac.coop)



### 2. ANGEL YARD

Angel Yard is a planned cohousing community in the St Augustine's neighbourhood of central Norwich, offering 34 homes and shared amenities for a mix of ages. TOWN's development, which received planning permission in 2024, will offer a mix of apartments and houses, together with a Common House and shared garden.

[www.angelyard.org.uk](http://www.angelyard.org.uk)



### 4. MILLERS' FIELD

Drawing on cohousing principles, TOWN are working with Mole Architects and a 'building group' of future residents to design a new community, close to the heart of Oundle, a historic market town in Northamptonshire. Currently at planning stages, the development will provide around 14 carbon-neutral homes for families and older people.

[millersfield.co.uk](http://millersfield.co.uk)



### 3. NEW GROUND

New Ground is Britain's first cohousing community exclusively for women over 50 - the Older Women's Cohousing Group (OWCH). Situated in North London, it is comprised of 25 flats with 26 residents including one married couple. Eight of these homes are social rental units. The homes overlook a shared garden and a common room used for weekly shared meals and many other activities. There is a guest room for visitors.

[newgroundcohousing.uk](http://newgroundcohousing.uk)



### 5. STILL GREEN

Currently at construction stage, Still Green is going to provide 29 homes for people aged 50 and over, with shared spaces and facilities. It is part of TOWN's wider Love Wolverton project with Milton Keynes City Council in the town of Wolverton.

[stillgreencohousing.org](http://stillgreencohousing.org)



## ABOUT TOWN



## USEFUL LINKS

**Those Little Connections: Community Led Housing and Loneliness** - a report by London School of Economics for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). November 2021.  
[View report](#)

**Building for 2050 report** - a research project funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), delivered by AECOM, that examines the drivers, attitudes, barriers and challenges relating to low cost, low carbon housing. November 2022.  
[View report](#)

**TOWN**  
[wearetown.co.uk](http://wearetown.co.uk)

**Mole**  
[molearchitects.co.uk](http://molearchitects.co.uk)

**Trivselhus**  
[trivselhus.co.uk](http://trivselhus.co.uk)

**Cambridge City Council**  
[cambridge.gov.uk](http://cambridge.gov.uk)

**Instinctively Green**  
[instinctivelygreen.co.uk](http://instinctivelygreen.co.uk)

**Marmalade Lane**  
[marmaladelane.co.uk](http://marmaladelane.co.uk)

**Greengage**  
[greengage-env.com](http://greengage-env.com)

**UK Cohousing Network**  
[cohousing.org.uk](http://cohousing.org.uk)

**HACT**  
[hact.org.uk](http://hact.org.uk)

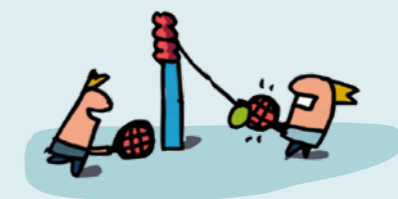
**National TOMs**  
[socialvalueportal.com](http://socialvalueportal.com)

Join the TOWN cohousing mailing list  
 → [www.wearetown.co.uk](http://www.wearetown.co.uk)

TOWN is a profit-with-purpose developer with a mission to build good places for better lives.

With projects ranging between small sites and whole new communities under development across the UK, TOWN works with local authorities, landowners, investors and communities to make places that improve people's quality of life, enable more sustainable ways of living and improve wider places they are part of.

TOWN is the UK's leading developer of cohousing communities: building on the success of Marmalade Lane, it has over 150 homes in progress across six new cohousing developments, with others in the pipeline. This report provides important insights and learning that will inform these and future developments.





## TOWN.

To find out more about Marmalade Lane or TOWN please visit [www.wearetown.co.uk](http://www.wearetown.co.uk)

To find out more about Cambridge Cohousing visit [www.marmaladelane.co.uk](http://www.marmaladelane.co.uk)

This report is based on information and statistics accurate as of 2023.

Thank you to Marmalade Lane residents for cooperating with TOWN to produce this report. Their contributions, including insights and photographs, have been essential in capturing life in the community.

All Illustrations © Lisa Holdcroft [www.lisaholdcroft.com](http://www.lisaholdcroft.com)  
LILAC image on page 67 ©Andy Lord.