

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING AT Ó CUALANN

The goal of Ó Cualann's Cohousing Alliance initiative is to develop and support fully-integrated communities, deliver well-designed, top-quality, energy-efficient, affordable homes and to ensure its co-operative model can be replicated and scaled across the country.

Co-operative housing, properly managed, is now playing its part in resolving the housing crisis in Ireland. In partnership with local authorities, Ó Cualann is delivering affordable housing and its dream is becoming a reality.

The co-operative-housing and cohousing sector, which is currently very active all over Europe, has deep roots in Ireland and is now growing again. Post-war Ireland saw the formation of many cooperative-housing societies. Similar to the groups being supported by Ó Cualann today, they were local, self-help, home-ownership housing cooperatives providing affordable homes for their members.

From the 1950s to 1970s, many people attempting to provide for their own housing needs established successful co-ops which provided over 4,000 homes in communities of 8 to 65 homes all around Ireland.

Nationwide there is now a new and welcome groundswell of groups coming together to address their housing needs. More than 20 of these groups over the last two years have approached Ó Cualann for help in establishing themselves.

These groups include the Ardmore Grange Housing Study Group in Waterford where locals are being priced out of the market; one of the problems stemming from an oversupply of holiday homes in the area.

Other groups include:

- A local Employees Housing Co-operative in Bray where employees cannot afford to live anywhere near their place of work.
- A group of dedicated carers in Kilkenny who work with and care for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Four artists' groups in Dublin, Kildare, Limerick and Galway who are looking for live/work spaces, and many more.

Ó Cualann believes that affordable, integrated housing will continue to have a transformative effect on wider societal issues, and is willing to work in an open and collaborative fashion with



others who are committed to improving society through its co-operative housing model.

ON SITE WITH Ó CUALANN

In Autumn 2015, following an announcement that modular homes were to be built on part of the site, Dublin City Council agreed to support Ó Cualann in building 49 co-operative homes on the remaining land at Poppintree, Ballymun.

By May of 2016 the company had pre-sold and allocated all 49 houses in the development and in October the sod was turned. The first phase of their inaugural project, comprising of 17 homes, was completed by December 2017, and the second phase is now well underway, with all 49 homes to be occupied by the end of this year.

At the end of 2017 Ó Cualann was awarded two additional sites; the first close to the existing site at Cranogue Road in Ballymun and the second in Ardmore, Co. Waterford.

The Cranogue project is moving through the planning process and, with support from Dublin City Council, the company hopes to be on site in the autumn. The development will comprise of 28 houses and 11 apartments.

In Ardmore, Ó Cualann is working closely with Waterford City and County Council and will shortly submit a planning application for an integrated community of 20 new homes for 16 homeowners and four tenants.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Ó Cualann was honoured to have been awarded a 'Social Entrepreneur of the Year' award. The award, accompanied by a grant of €10,000 and a place on a business accelerator course, has opened many doors and has directly led to further generous philanthropic funding from The Lauritzson Foundation for the housing developer. Ó Cualann is also receiving generous support from TOMAR Trust, and is very grateful for all this support.

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