

Community Housing Project for Pagham

Pagham Parish Council first considered setting up a community housing project during discussions relating to establishing a Neighbourhood Plan almost 5 years ago. Whilst studying the details of the proposed new “Strategic Housing Allocations “ within the Parish it became clear that there would be no realistic provision of truly affordable housing. Marketing proposals for one of the development sites indicated a price range of £295k to £625k. Whilst the Council will continue to resist proposals for large scale developments in the Parish, it is clear that affordable housing is required.

The Council has an opportunity to promote the establishment of a community-led housing initiative which would allow the building of a reasonable number of homes which could be sold or rented at an affordable price.

Initial investigations indicate a system of factory produced timber frame modules could be used to build advantageously priced homes to enable disadvantaged or first-time buyers to access the housing ladder. Contact has been established with an appropriate supplier of these factory units, and also with a local builders’ supply company in order to source the necessary brick/block/mortar/tiles etc.

It is anticipated that sites within the parish which are away from known flood areas and serious traffic congestion, did not involve the use of versatile agricultural land and were not near the nature reserve would be preferred. There has already been significant interest and support from local families who seek to be assured that provision can be made for affordable housing for future generations in Pagham.

The Parish Council could start the process of securing advice and initial grant funding to investigate the prospects for a community housing project. Excellent advice is available from AiRS (Action in Rural Sussex) who have recently established a Community Housing Hub. Representatives are ready to speak to the Parish Council as a precursor to a Community meeting to establish interest in involvement. The resulting project would be separate to the Parish Council and would likely take the form of a Community Land Trust or a Community Interest Company.

Ray Radmall

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