

To: **Hertfordshire Parish Councils' Chairs**

December 2019

Dear Chair

Affordable Rural Housing in Herts UPDATE CDA Herts, Hertfordshire's Rural Issues Charity

Some rural communities in Hertfordshire face development they find unwelcome and fails to meet the needs of local people. We want to remind you that we can help you take back some control and provide evidence to match local housing need with housing delivery. We do this through **Affordable Housing Need Surveys**. *Our surveys can help to bring forward new affordable housing if there is need and support for it.*

❖ **Why work with us?**

CDA Herts is an independent Hertfordshire-based charity, working in rural communities for over 50 years. We have achieved success in Hertfordshire by providing evidence to support affordable housing provision on "**rural exception**" sites: (These can allow limited affordable housing for local people on suitable land, not usually available for development, with evidence of local housing need.)

❖ **Help with Neighbourhood Planning through Housing Surveys and Assessments**

Our surveys can help communities who are producing Neighbourhood Plans. They give evidence of real housing need that is difficult for developers and planners to ignore. The surveys can help to set out the type of affordable housing needed in the community.

We can also help neighbourhood planning groups by producing **Housing Needs Assessments** which look at available data to provide a picture of future housing need.

❖ **How do our Affordable Housing Need Surveys work?**

We gather opinions, online and in writing, from local people (usually every household in the Parish is asked to contribute) and invite people in real housing need to come forward and tell us about their situation. We report the survey results, setting out what affordable housing is needed. We can also provide follow-up advice on how local need might be met.

❖ **East of England Community-led Housing Hub – Eastern Community Homes**

We are creating a Community-led Housing "Hub" for the East of England. This will give practical help and advice, from concept to delivery to communities who are looking to bring forward projects for community benefit. Community-led housing can potentially provide an opportunity to retain ownership and control of housing by the community. We'll tell you more when the Hub is fully up and running.

If you are aware of local groups who are interested in exploring Community-led Housing, and may need our help and advice, we'd love to hear from you or them. Information about our new **HUB can be found on our website**. Look out for training and events that will be announced in 2020.

❖ **Not so many "NIMBYs"**

We respect the reservations that many people have about more housing. However, when we ask, typically over 85% of respondents support some form of affordable housing in their communities (five units or more). People report concern about the lack of affordable housing in their communities for friends, children, families and neighbours who need it. We hear about real hardship as well as opposition to "Executive" homes, accessible only to the few. **We can do something about this.**

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❖ **“I want to maintain the character of my Community”**

We understand that the character of a rural community is precious. In reality, affordable housing need not be ugly, out of character or scale to the village. We know that for communities to continue to survive and thrive, a mix of people is needed, with some doing vital work on low wages. These people also need decent, affordable homes to live in.

❖ **Meeting the challenge of climate change**

New affordable homes should be more energy-efficient than much existing housing stock. Well-insulated homes are also much more affordable as well as comfortable to live in. We increasingly hear concerns about the environment and climate change and an awareness of the importance of energy efficiency from communities. Affordable home provision contributes a small but positive step in helping to tackle climate change.

❖ **HAPTC Annual Conference**

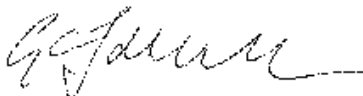
We hope to meet you at the HAPTC annual conference in Summer 2020 where we will be glad to explain more about what we can offer.

❖ **What can parishes do NOW?**

The Housing needs of Hertfordshire are challenging. We welcome the opportunity to talk to you and your community to see how we can help you meet the housing challenges you face head-on, whether you are considering helping more local people access affordable housing, or if you are thinking about producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Please contact Giles Meredith on 01992 289055 or email giles.meredith@cdaherts.org.uk to discuss how we at CDA can work with you to help people in your community meet their housing needs. Please see our [affordable housing leaflet](#) which explains more about how we could help you.

Yours faithfully



Giles Meredith
CDA Herts - Rural Housing Enabler