

PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

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Local Affordable Homes for Local People – Landowners we need your help

In the Parson Drove Parish Plan 2005, affordable housing specifically for people from the parish was given a high priority. The Parish Council has responded to this by initiating a project, to find a way of building 8 – 10 'Affordable Homes' in the village. The homes will be for local people, who either live in, or have some other strong connection to the village.

Other villages have already been successful in providing affordable housing for local people.

It can take a long-time for a housing project like this to be completed – this is because of the special requirements that are needed to ensure that the properties are ring fenced for local people.

This project will be led through the Parish Council.

Step 1 - Find acceptable land

We need to find land that is part of the village but is not land that is normally available for building homes. This is because the land needs to be cheap (very much cheaper than normal development land). Fenland District Council's Planning Committee can make a special exception to normal planning policy for an affordable development for local people. In this way we are able to get special planning permission that is not available to a commercial housing developer. Fenland District Council's Planning Committee has very strict criteria for Exception Sites. Sites that can be considered must be outside of the village development boundary, but close to the centre of the village. None of the properties can be sold outright so they always remain available for local people.

Step 2 - Get on the register! Now !!!!!

The homes that are built in the Exception Sites will be treated differently from ordinary affordable housing. Local village people get priority through the “Exception Site Allocations Policy”.



Please register your interest NOW! If you are a local family or individual who are struggling to stay in the village, you need to register on the Housing Waiting list which is now called “Home Link”. Go to www.home-link.org.uk or any of the Fenland At Your Service Shops to complete a form. (Please note it is very important that question 37 relating to Rural Local Connection is answered).

In the past, surveys have been conducted in the village that show that there is a long standing need for village homes for local people. The surveys provide evidence of need, but we also need to justify building homes with statistics from the Home-Link Register.

Step 3 – Get planning permission, secure funding and get them built!

Once we have found land acceptable to the Parish Council which looks like it will achieve planning permission from Fenland District Council a Housing Association will then design the homes and the layout. Prior to submitting the planning application a consultation event on the design will be held in the village to capture all community views. A formal planning application will not be made until the Parish Council have approved the design and layout.

Following securing planning permission we then need to raise funds to build the homes. The government provides some money and loans also need to be secured by the Housing Association developing the scheme.

The Housing Association builds the homes and manages the homes.

Finally, once built, the homes have to be advertised for letting though the Home-Link (See step 2). It will be necessary for local people to bid for the homes that are ring fenced for people with a local connection to Parson Drove. Personal circumstances are taken into consideration but the local connection is the way to qualify to make a bid. People with the strongest local connections are considered first, the details of this are available from the Parish Council who has a copy of the “exception site allocation policy”.

Calling all landowners your village needs you!

If you have land that you would be willing to release for the long-term benefit of the community, then please let the parish clerk Yvonne Reader know by the 31st August 2009. Once information about land has been collected then the Parish Council will assess this against a set of criteria and liaise with the Planning team at Fenland District Council. **Remember it is for 8-10 homes only.** If you would like any more information about the rules relating to Exception Sites please contact Karen Wickham at Fenland District Council 01354 622584.

We will, update you of progress in future newsletters.