



Dear Residents!

If you would like to join the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, please contact the Parish Clerk. We would particularly like help from residents interested in developing ideas for community-led housing and affordable housing. Now, please read on

Sustaining rural villages: Affordable housing for the future of your parish

It is vital there are homes that are affordable to everyone in rural areas. Land values and house prices remain incredibly high, especially at the moment, post-Covid and the gap between rural property prices and local wages continues to widen. Coupled with higher costs of living and rising energy prices, this leaves many unable to remain where they grew up or have support networks.

With this in mind, this summer, Tollesbury Parish Council worked with the RCCE's Rural Housing Enabler to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) which went to every household in the parish. RCCE is an independent charity providing impartial support to communities across Essex to ensure that our rural communities remain sustainable for the future, whether that be helping younger families and young people to live in rural areas where their support networks are or assisting older people to downsize and remain adequately housed as their needs change. An HNS survey was also run in 2017 but it was necessary to now update this information.

The aim of the survey was to determine the existing and future levels of housing need for local people in the parish. It also contained survey questions from the Tollesbury Climate Partnership. All households in the parish received a survey to complete and return, alongside the option to complete the survey online. **The Parish Council would like to express their sincere thanks to all residents who responded to this piece of work it really has been incredibly useful.** This survey provided evidence that there are households in your community that could really benefit from alternative, more affordable housing so that they are not priced out of the parish.

KEY FINDINGS

- The survey had a fantastic response rate of 32% - which was up on the 2017 survey (28%). The current Essex average is 25%.
- There was good support for a small development, with 66% stating they would be supportive of a small development (4 - 8 homes) which is primarily affordable housing for local people.
- There was general support for limited housing for the local community, more particularly the younger local generation and their families alongside those looking to downsize, whilst hoping any development will not be too large and unsympathetic to its surroundings. Impact on the road system was of huge concern, with communities preferring any new development to the west of the village for this reason (this is consistent with the 2017 survey).
- There was good support for a Community Led Housing project with 23 respondents stating an interest in being personally involved in bringing a scheme forward.

- There was strong support for ensuring that any new developments minimise climate change and that they maintain and enhance the connectivity of wildlife corridors. There was also strong support for renewable energy to make Tollesbury self-sufficient with 84% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this.
- Twenty-six households declared that family members had been forced to move out of the parish due to a lack of suitable accommodation in the parish.
- In Part 1 of the survey, 79 households indicated that they had a need to move to alternative accommodation within the next 5 years. (It's interesting to note that this shows a significant increase of 34 households since the previous survey in 2017).
- Of those 79 households, 51 wished to remain in the parish (although there was only sufficient information to assess 28 households).
- The main reason respondents had a desire to move to alternative accommodation was to set up their first / independent home (31%) followed by those looking to downsize (27%). This was the other way round in the 2017 survey interestingly, with more looking to downsize (29%) followed by those looking to set up their first home (24%).
- Two-bedroom houses were the most preferred property size (59%)
- Recommended local affordable housing need, of those that could be assessed, has increased since 2017 and now stands at up to;
 - 8 affordable rented properties (6 required in 2017)
 - 4 shared ownership properties (4 required in 2017)
 - 1 discounted market sale property
 - 1 First Homes property

At RCCE we believe communities have the power to influence change and with this new information the parish council is considering looking at their options for providing a small bespoke scheme to support residents in housing need. This is only the start of the process. The Parish Council are considering a Rural Exception Site and also a Community Led Housing Scheme – potentially in the form of a Community Land Trust. Community Land Trusts give ordinary people the means to steward land for local wellbeing; developing and managing homes and other assets important to their local community.

Eastern Community Homes supports communities to deliver Community Led Housing projects across the East of England and Laura Atkinson is also the Community Led Housing Advisor for ECH covering Essex.

FIND OUT MORE;

<https://easterncommunityhomes.com>
<https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>



**WATCH Community Land
Trust Network video on CLTs**

More information will be released on this aspiration in the near future, however in the meantime, **if you are one of the 23 households that stated they were interested in being involved or would like to be involved in this aspiration, please contact Michelle Curtis 01621 869039 or by email tollesburypc@btinternet.com in the first instance.**

For more information or to ask any questions to please do speak to the Parish Council on Michelle Curtis 01621 869039 or by email tollesburypc@btinternet.com or feel free to contact Laura Atkinson, RCCE's Rural Housing Enabler and Community Led Housing Advisor on 01376 57330 or by email laura.atkinson@essexrcc.org.uk