

CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Housing Needs Survey

November 2015

Dear Householder

Owing to the high cost of housing in this area, the Parish Council is considering whether there might be a need for additional affordable housing in the Chiddingstone Parish so that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally will not be forced to move away. This type of affordable housing is also known as local needs housing; they are homes that can be rented or part bought (shared ownership) from a Housing Association. The reason for providing local needs housing is to help local people of all ages who would like to stay or return to their parish and contribute to the village services that still exist.

We are sending out this Housing Needs Survey to assess the demand and gauge the level of support a small scheme might have in our community. Tessa O'Sullivan, the Rural Housing Enabler from Action with Communities in Rural Kent is assisting us to carry out this survey. **The survey will be analysed by the Rural Housing Enabler, with all information given being kept confidential.** She will then give a summary report to the Parish Council.

Depending on the outcome of this survey, we may try to find a suitable site within the parish of Chiddingstone.

The most likely type of site would be what is known as a 'Rural Exception Site', within or on the edge of the village whereby:

- All homes on the site are owned and managed by a Housing Association
- Local needs homes are either rented or part-sold (shared ownership) to tenants
- Only households with a genuine local connection are eligible to be tenants of local needs housing

Under the newly introduced extension of Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants, Housing Associations will be allowed to exercise discretion about whether to sell local needs homes in rural areas. If they do not, they will have to offer the tenant the opportunity to purchase an alternative suitable property elsewhere instead. Rural organisations are lobbying Government for legislative protections that do not permit the Right to Buy for properties on rural exception sites so that only the option of buying elsewhere is available; this is to protect the scarce number of rural affordable homes being lost to the open market. Members of the Parish Council wish to establish the housing need in the parish before proposing a scheme. This survey will establish the parish need and the parish view on the importance of a rural exemption to the Right to Buy. Please be assured that the Parish Council will take this into account if a scheme is required to meet the need.

Once a site is found a village consultation event will be held so that residents of the parish can view and discuss the proposals and put their views forward.

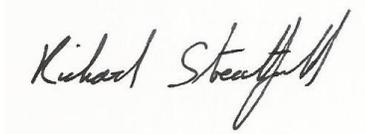
This is a very important issue, so please take time to fill in this survey. Even if no one in your household has a housing need, we want to know your views.

Please return this form using the FREEPOST envelope provided by 7th December 2015.

PTO

If any further information or additional questionnaires are required please contact the Rural Housing Enabler on 01303 813790.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Streatfeild". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Richard Streatfeild
Chairman
Chiddingstone Parish Council