

CHIDDINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Second Stage Housing Needs Survey

April 2018

Dear Householder

Chiddingstone Parish Council is carrying out a survey of housing needs in our parish. If you have a need for affordable housing please complete the survey form and return it using the FREEPOST envelope by 16th May 2018. Affordable housing is housing rented from a housing association or shared ownership homes (part rent, part buy). It can include homes designed for older people.

Why is the survey needed?

Owing to the high cost of housing in the Chiddingstone area, the Parish Council is concerned that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally are being forced to move away. You may remember completing a housing needs survey in 2015 which identified a need for affordable housing for people who have a strong local connection to Chiddingstone parish. In partnership with Sevenoaks District Council, we want to find out if this need still exists. The reason for providing local needs affordable housing is to help local people of all ages who would like to stay or return to the Parish and contribute to the village services that still exist. This letter has therefore been sent to all households in the parish.

How will the survey be carried out?

Tessa O'Sullivan, the Rural Housing Enabler from Action with Communities in Rural Kent, is assisting us with this survey. She will analyse the responses, **with all information given being kept confidential. The Parish Council will only see a summary of the results.**

Affordable housing need

To qualify for local needs housing, people would have to have a connection with, or work in, the parish. For example, you may be the son or daughter of a villager or you may have other close family ties with villagers. You may want to downsize from your current home in the Chiddingstone parish as it is too large and no longer suitable for your needs. You or a member of your family may have moved away from the parish because you had been unable to find housing within the parish, or you may work in the parish but live elsewhere. If you or a member of your family is interested in affordable housing please complete the attached survey form and return it in the enclosed freepost envelope. Completing the survey will not commit you to anything but will help us to understand the housing needs in the parish.

The short listed sites

The Parish Council and English Rural Housing Association have considered many different sites in the parish. These have largely been discounted, either because they are unavailable or because they do not satisfy the necessary criteria for rural affordable housing. The final three sites on the short list were subject to public consultation during March, and details of these sites can be found on our website www.chiddingstone.org. The short listed sites are considered to be deliverable, sustainable and suitable for a small scheme of rural affordable housing. The Parish Council would always be pleased to hear from landowners and residents who might like to suggest sites for possible future consideration. Once the site(s) has been agreed, taking into account the feedback received from the public consultation, English Rural Housing Association will commence feasibility studies and start drawing up plans of the scheme.

PTO

Right to Buy

You might have heard about the voluntary Right to Buy, where Housing Association tenants may be eligible to buy their homes. Housing Associations can decide if any of their homes are to be excluded from sale. Organisations such as English Rural Housing Association have already taken the decision to exclude all rural homes from the voluntary Right to Buy, in order to prevent this scarce resource being lost to the open market. Also, through the Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan and subsequent planning permission, any homes developed would be bound by a legal agreement, which would require the homes to be kept available to meet local housing needs in perpetuity.

This is a very important issue, so please take time to fill in this survey if you require affordable housing. If you need any further information or more questionnaires please contact the Rural Housing Enabler on 01303 813790 or email tessa.osullivan@ruralkent.org.uk

If you do not have a need for affordable housing, there is no need to complete and return this form.

Yours sincerely

Richard Streatfeild

Richard Streatfeild
Chairman
Chiddingstone Parish Council