

Martin Collett, Chief Executive,  
English Rural Housing Association

## **Building community-led affordable rural homes**

***CPRE Sussex***

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2019**



# A uniquely rural focus

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- Formed 1992, currently 1,250 homes in 150 villages across 40 local authorities
- Trusted and longstanding partnerships with Parish Councils, Local Authorities and Landowners
- All our homes are occupied by people with a proven local connection
- None of our homes have ever been sold, either through Right to Buy, or anything else



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# Housing associations - strong & reliable partners

- Primary providers of affordable homes and close partners of local planning and housing authorities.
- Work closely with government agencies, receiving some public grant to invest in new homes. Strong financial status with funding readily available.
- Long term businesses with social purpose and community focus.
- Flexible and innovative.
- Regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing.
- Different in scale, approach and focus.





# Our Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

Our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, continues to **advocate** the work we do and is a great asset to the organisation and the wider affordable rural housing sector. The Princess regularly attends and speaks at events on our behalf.



# Supporting rural communities

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- **Rural Exception Sites** : small scale developments providing affordable homes to meet a proven local need; always occupied by local people; always remain affordable.
- **Community-led** development: working with the local community, consultation with all stakeholders on-site location, access, appearance, type and number of homes, range of tenures
- Homes are usually owned by the association but other solutions are possible, including local **Charitable Trusts** and **Community Land Trusts**



# Bespoke Local Solutions

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- Every village is different, often requiring **bespoke** and **imaginative** local solutions to address housing need
- We work with **landowners** of all kinds, including government departments, national bodies such as the Church Commissioners and the National Trust, regional and local authorities, farmers and landowners large and small



# The main challenges...

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- Land availability and cost;
- Finance and investment;
- Affordability and access to mortgages;
- Approach to allocations – local authority policy and CBL;
- Resource Capacity;
- Local Politics and NIMBYism;
- Planning, Infrastructure and Viability;
- Approach as unitary authority.



# Innovation at the Heart of Rural Housing

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## **“Something For Everyone”**

Our Village Homes schemes can offer a wide range of different sizes and types of homes, together with a wide variety of tenures – all with priority for local people

## **“Custom Build”**

On selected sites, individual serviced building plots are sold at market value to local people interested in building their own homes. Money generated from these sales is used to help subsidise other affordable homes for the village.



# Makmurdo Place, Wickham Bishops

Unique local partnership emerging from local farmer and parish council, with Linden Homes, English Rural and Maldon DC

## Affordable

4 x 2 Bedroom Bungalow (discounted market sale)

2 x 2 Bedroom (shared ownership)

4 x 2 Bedroom Houses (Affordable Rent)

2 x 1 Bedroom Bungalow (Affordable Rent)

2 x 1 Bedroom Flats (Affordable Rent)

## Market

13 x Houses & Bungalows

Rural Exception Site

Zero public grant

Total affordable scheme costs £1.95m  
(free land, £250k developer contribution,  
£575k sales income £1.125m loan)



# Magdalene Rise, Bolney

**Partnership with parish council**

Affordable

4 x 1 Bedroom Flats

2 x 2 Bedroom Flats

4 x 2 Bedroom Houses

2 x 3 Bedroom Houses

Rural Exception Site

Strong support from local community and enabled succession planning of local dairy farmer



“Attractive, spacious and comfortable low-energy homes, based on a Fabric-First approach and the principles of passive design”

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- Every village is **unique** - we do not have standard house types or standard site layouts
- Our developments **respect their surroundings** and the locality, drawing inspiration from local buildings and materials



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# Spacious & Comfortable

- Every village is **unique** - we do not have standard house types or standard site layouts
- Our developments **respect their surroundings** and the locality, drawing inspiration from local buildings and materials
- Homes with **space** for modern living and **flexibility** for the future
- Great **layouts** which exceed the Government's national recommendations for room sizes and storage
- **Warm** in winter and **cool** in summer, with good daylight and internal air quality, achieved by using fabric first approach.

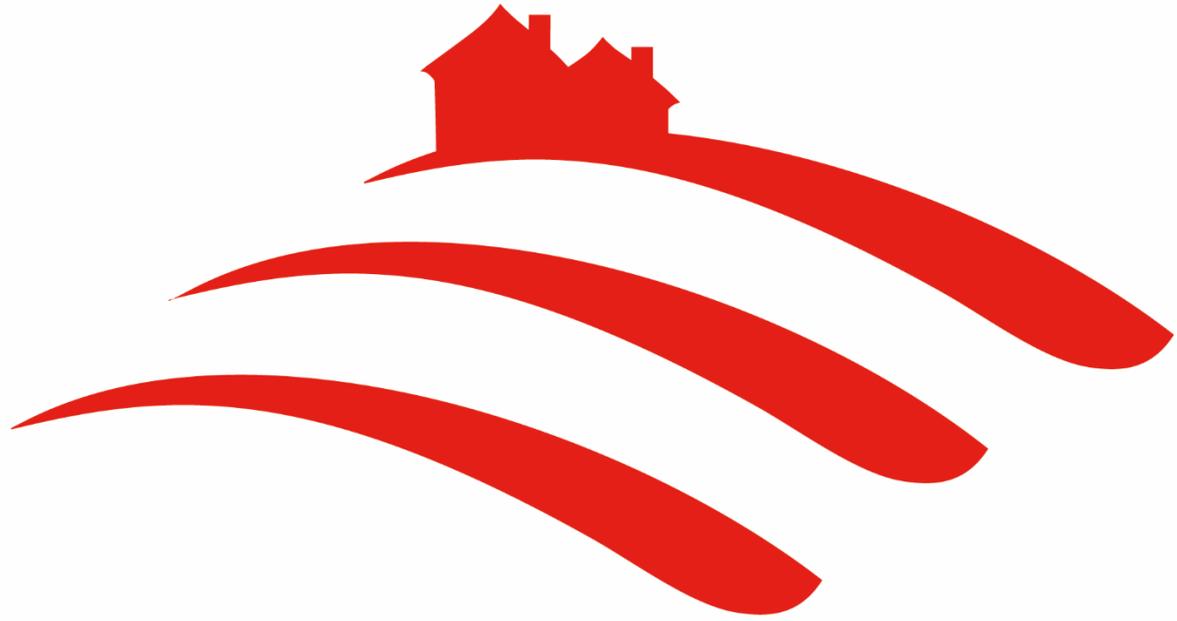


# What do we mean by “Fabric First” and “Passive Design”?

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- “Doing the **simple** things well”
- Focus on the **structure** of the building, rather than complicated technology or gadgets
- Insulation, windows, airtightness, boilers, maintenance-free heat recovery
- Homes provide perfect **balance** between comfort, ease of use and low running costs





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Thank you