

## Affordable Housing Update April 2021

It has been a while since we issued our frequently answered questions leaflet which was delivered to all households in the Parish. Since then, we have obtained the support of a rural Housing Association (Hastoe) and re-engaged with the Planning Authority. We are now more aware of the processes and likely next steps and thought we would update you.

### 1) Available sites.

Not much has changed here and the three sites which went through to the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) in 2017 are still on the table and the land owners are engaged in the process. These sites are set out in our previous notes. It is fair to say that each of the sites has pros and cons and despite the comments from the LAA panel we have encouraged the planning authority (Dartmoor National Park Authority DNPA) to keep all three under consideration.

### 2) Village Priorities

Our most recent update in February 2021 highlighted our responses to a number of questions provided by the DNPA and set out our priorities which we hope you share. Basically, the overall priority would be to deliver the 10 high quality, energy efficient affordable homes which our community needs. There are other suggested benefits eg, wildlife habitat creation and car parking, which we would like to progress if viable but recognising that the funding for this is likely to be limited.

### 3) Future Site Selection

We had previously suggested that the final determination would rest with the community and that nothing would progress without majority support of the local community. We overstated the case. It is important to recognise that we are not professional planners and can sometimes misinterpret what we are told by our colleagues in Local Government.

It has always been the case that DNPA, who are the local planning authority, would be the body that determines any potential planning application. We as the Parish Council are a consultee to the planning process and indeed every person in the community has the right to comment on or support/object to any planning application within the district. Planning decisions are based on local and national policy, local interest and balance between benefits and harms. So, the views of the public are weighed against the other matters.

The developer (Hastoe) will now look at the available sites and then form a view on which is the most favourable from a viability perspective weighing the value of the proposed development against the normal (building) costs and unusual (additional infrastructure) costs of delivery. The site with the lowest flood risk will be assessed for viability first. Assuming one or more sites pass this viability test they would then usually enter into a constructive dialogue with the Councils and affected residents to deliver a scheme which would attract the minimum level of objection through the planning process.

### 4) Where we are now

We have given DNPA our list of priorities and the Housing Association engaged have asked the Parish Council representatives to work with them on a steering committee to guide the development. The Housing Association will now start the process of reviewing technical and financial viability. We then expect a preferred option to emerge. When this happens, we will endeavour to make sure that the reasoning behind the selection is communicated to the

community in an open and transparent way. We will then engage with DNPA and any developer to ensure that the community gets the maximum additional benefit as a result of any development.

We are all on this journey together and as your Parish Council we are trying to support and balance the needs and concerns of the community. We are often limited by what we are told in the process and at no time are we trying to withhold information from you nor are we following any predetermined agenda.

We will try and keep these communications frequent and informative and try to engage with as many parishioners as possible within the restraints of resources and Covid19.