

Faith in Affordable Housing

**Tracey Bessant
Project Coordinator**



USING CHURCH ASSETS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING





How FiAH evolved



- *Faith Inaction (2006)*
- *Affordable Rural Housing Commission Report*
(Defra, 2006)
- FiAH guide 2007
- Funding for project workers
- Steering Group (Diverse membership)

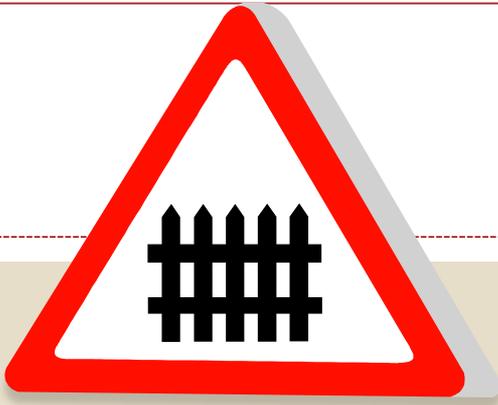


Changes in ministry



- Ageing congregations / fewer stipendiary clergy
- Underutilised buildings / land = drain on scarce resources
- Aim – reduce overheads & increase community engagement

Perceived barriers



- It's not something we've considered (3%)
- There's no local support (10%)
- Planning constraints get in the way (13%)
- There's no funding (6%)
- We've no land available (10%)
- We need to make money (10%)
- It's too onerous and time consuming (16%)
- Charity law doesn't enable us (29%)

Base for this question: 26 respondents (19 C of E)



Charities Act (1993, Section 36)



- The Doctrine of Christianity enables the ‘best value’ test to be passed.
- Written objectives don’t need to provide specifically for those in housing need.
- If a disposal is furthering a charity’s purposes, then it can be made at less than best price.

Charities Act (1993, Section 36)



‘Many people would understand that part of the doctrine of Christianity is the assistance of poor and needy people and therefore activities towards those ends could be seen as a means of advancing Christianity.’

Charity Commission (England and Wales), 30 May 2008



How does FiAH help churches?



Encourage

- Highlight the need
- Look at options
- Share examples
- Emphasise spiritual duty to use resources for those in need and its benefits
- Face perceived difficulties

Facilitate projects

- Find partners
- Independent

Help to overcome obstacles

- Reconcile differences
- Balance social and pragmatic objectives
- Advice and guidance

FiAH referrals



- 14 units constructed (CofE)
- 50 pending planning permission (Baptist; CiW; CofE; Quaker)
- 50% of referrals = rural; but more success with urban
- 40% referrals unsuccessful – planning and financial viability
- Highest number of active cases – Wales and SW
- Increasing enquiries re churches than land
- Growing demand – building relationships



Contact



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Rural Services Network Alternative Service Delivery

Tim Wade, Head of Development, Rooftop Housing Group

14 January 2014



Rooftop



Awarded three stars
for 'Excellence'

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Rooftop Housing Group

- Formed in 1994 as Evesham and Pershore Housing Association
- 4020 homes transferred from Wychavon District Council
- RHG created as Parent Company in 2003
- Registered Social Landlord/ Registered Provider with a three star rating from the former Audit Commission

What do we do?

- Meeting the housing needs of local communities and providing excellent quality services to residents
- Mainly in South Worcestershire but expanding into Gloucestershire with Health Trusts, providing staff accommodation
- Our stock has grown by 50% and our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- We enjoy high levels of satisfaction from our residents and key stakeholders value our success at finding solutions for complex housing issues

Faith in Affordable Housing

- Recognised as a leading provider of affordable housing in Gloucester
- Approached by FiAH to see if we would be interested in working in partnership
- Timing coincided with the Homes and Communities 2011-15 Funding Round
- Introduction to Gloucester Diocese
- Feasibility work on a number of sites
- FiAH a key stakeholder in the Project Team

Gloucester Diocese

- St Stephen's Vicarage
- St Stephen's
- St Aldate's
- And some more...

St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the site



St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the history
 - Brownfield Site
 - Used by Gloucester Diocese as a vicarage with extensive grounds
 - Vacant and in disrepair following the amalgamation of churches in the local area
 - Magnet for Anti Social Behaviour
 - Previous approved planning application not started

St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the brief
 - Demolish the outmoded vicarage
 - Provide a new four bed detached vicarage
 - Provide ten, one bedroom apartments
 - Five, three bedroom houses
 - Parking spaces
 - Amenity space
 - Use the apartments as accommodation for younger people
 - Use site as part of RHG's Homes and Communities Agency funding package

St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the process
 - Agree the brief with the Diocese
 - Approach the Local Planning Authority to gain their initial support
 - Design a feasible and viable scheme
 - Agree Heads of Terms with the Diocese
 - Consult with the local community
 - Submit a full planning application
 - Agree Planning Legal Agreement
 - Conclude sale and transfer with the Diocese
 - Start on Site
 - Claim grant funding

St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the proposal



St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – the proposal



St Stephen's Vicarage

- Frampton Road – summary and conclusion
 - Redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site
 - Re-provision of a new, efficient vicarage
 - Creation of much needed affordable housing for rent, part sale and support to younger people
 - Use of Homes and Communities Agency grant funding
 - Capital receipt for the Diocese
 - Good starting point for further partnership working
 - FiAH brokered the introduction
 - FiAH mediated the deal
 - RHG facilitated the use of the brownfield site

St Stephen's Vicarage



Thank you

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