

Case study: Affordable housing benefits rural Northamptonshire residents



Background



Collyweston is a Northamptonshire village, three miles south-west of Stamford. It is a beautiful rural community with a flourishing pub and a lively shop run by volunteers. It has historical roots in the slate industry, but today many residents commute to local towns, including Peterborough, Corby and Kettering. High house prices were making it unaffordable for young families and older people with limited incomes.

A housing needs survey commissioned by the parish council in 2010 identified a need for six affordable homes.

Project

Since 1992 Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association (NRHA) has been providing affordable homes in for local people and families who would not otherwise be able to afford to live within their own communities. Working closely with Collyweston parish council the NRHA team acquired a site on The Drove which had historically been a slate quarry. The team worked closely with the parish council to design six homes which were in sympathy with existing homes in the village.



The development comprises three 2 x bedroom homes and three x 2 bedroom bungalows for affordable rent. They conform to level three of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. They also meet the Lifetime Homes standard, which ensures that homes are accessible and inclusive and will adapt to the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.

A resident's story



Sheila Barr is one of the new residents at The Drove. Living in private rented accommodation in Corby since she was widowed, she was keen to be closer to her family in Collyweston and declining health meant she needed a home which suited her limited mobility. Persuaded to apply for one of the new homes by her son, who already lived in the village, she was pleased and relieved to be allocated a bungalow on the brand new development.

She said: "My new home has been built to a very high standard, the garden is low maintenance, and the view from the lounge is over open countryside, which is lovely. The Collyweston community is very friendly and I'm so pleased that I'm now close enough to my family that my grandsons can call round!"

NRHA Chairman Christopher Sparrow said: "It's always a pleasure to talk to new residents and find out what a difference their new homes are making. Whilst it is vital to build new homes that are a sympathetic addition to an existing community, this is just the start. Enabling residents like Mrs Barr to find a suitable place to live is a critical part of our work."

Additional benefits

The project had additional benefits for local carpenter, Matt Denham. After retraining following an industrial accident, he received a flyer through his door from contractor Whiterock Homes, explaining that they were about to start building on the site close to his home. He contacted the company, outlining his skills, and was rewarded with a job fitting kitchens, doors and banisters.



Funding

The development was funded by £154,000 grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, and emh homes acted as the developer. The remaining funds were provided by NRHA.

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