

# 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)

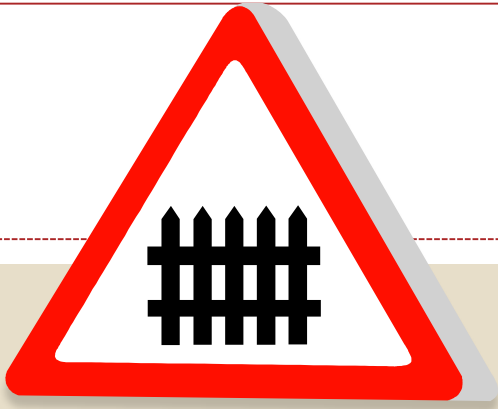


# Changes in ministry



- 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

Tim Wade, Head of Development, Rooftop Housing Group  
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