

## **1. Background**

During 2021 there was extensive discussion with Swanton Abbott Parish Council and Anna Clarke (Community Housing Enabler from NNDC) regarding the possibility of bringing a small affordable housing development to the village. A site search was conducted by Anna which resulted in a landowner coming forward prepared to make land available in the village. With the Parish Council in support for the project, NNDC held a public consultation in September 2021 to talk with the community about this opportunity and to ascertain support from residents.

In November 2021 Anna provided a report to the Parish Council meeting which included the results of the public consultation. This showed support for the affordable housing project with a number of local residents expressing interest in getting involved in a Community Led Housing project. The report also set out what could be the next step to the project. The Parish Council agreed to the next step in Anna meeting with the interested residents to explore the subject of Community Led Housing. It was agreed also that reports on progress would be fed back to the Parish Council to share with the wider community.

### **Community Led Housing interested residents meetings**

The first meeting with the interested residents took place on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. At the end of this meeting the residents asked if they could find out more through meeting with a Community Led Housing technical advisor. Anna arranged for them to meet with a technical advisor along with Rik Martin (CEO of Community Action Norfolk) who is the Norfolk lead for the Community Led Housing hub – Eastern Community Homes.

This second meeting took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Whilst recognising there is community support for an affordable housing development, the interested residents were mindful of the concerns in the village about other issues relating to the proposal, one of which was flooding which has been reported being experienced by some residents.

As part of the discussion Rik Martin offered to meet with the Parish Council and wider community to hear more about the residents concerns. Rik has a wide-ranging remit working with communities with much knowledge gained after working for many years in the Norfolk area.

### **Communication with the Parish Council**

Anna Clarke wrote to the Parish Council to provide an update following meeting with the interested residents, asking if Rik Martin could be invited to a Parish Council

meeting to explore how he could help the Swanton Abbott community. The Parish Council was asked if they had any matters which they would welcome as part of this discussion, given their insight to local community concerns.

The Parish Council discussed the offer from Rik Martin at their meeting in July 2022 and asked that Anna Clarke organise a public meeting.

## **2. Public meeting**

The public meeting took place on 21 September with invitations posted to each home in the parish. The meeting was well attended, with a wide-ranging discussion. One of the points, raised by several attendees, was that not everyone in the village had been able to voice their view on the proposed affordable housing development. The meeting heard that some had not known about the public consultation (flyers had been hand delivered) or were not able to attend. Anna and Rik agreed to talk about how further consultation could be facilitated but being mindful of associated costs. Residents also raised the issue of using better ways to communicate with the community other than Parish Council meetings.

## **3. Affordable Housing proposal - Community survey**

The usual process, for an Exception Housing Site affordable housing development proposal, is to engage with the Parish Council, and subject to agreement hold a public consultation. As part of the consultation event a survey form is used to ascertain views to the proposal. The results are then reported back to and considered by the Parish Council for a decision as to how to proceed. For Swanton Abbott this was conducted in Sept 21 with a report back to the Parish Council in Nov 21.

A further early stage survey is highly unusual but given the discussion at the recent public meeting it was agreed that this would be discussed.

Following this further discussion, it was agreed a second survey would be facilitated by NNDC. Anna Clarke would organise the production of the flyer, posting one to each household in the village, receive completed forms and conduct analysis. The survey included a pre-paid return envelope.

The Parish Council were informed and the survey form was distributed by Royal Mail in early November 22.

There have been some limited comments with regard to this second survey process. It would be useful to be clear that this is a survey to each household, not a vote or a vote for each adult in the village. NNDC understands that there has been a previous referendum conducted in respect of the previous larger market led development proposed for land at Long Common Road/The Poplars. This was a different proposal and a decision was taken by the Parish Council at the time to hold a referendum.

#### 4. Communication with community

The issue of communication with the community was mentioned at the September 22 public meeting. NNDC asked the Parish Council what other forms of communication could be used to better communicated with residents. The Parish Council advised that they would publish the survey results on the Parish webpage, parish notice boards and the Hub which is a Facebook page used by many residents.

#### 5. Available sites

The land to the north of the village on Long Common Lane/The Poplars has for some time been the only land where the landowner is prepared to consider making available for a small affordable housing development.

Following the September 22 public meeting a further landowner came forward who also wished to consider making their land available This land is situated on Aylsham Road.

As there are now two landowners considering making their land available, an additional question was posed as part of the second survey, to ask if residents had a preference.

#### 6. November Survey Results

192 survey form were posted out and 76 of these survey forms were received back.

Not all were completed fully to enable analysis and there were photocopies made and submitted.

The following have not been included in the result boxes below.

- Three forms did not have responses to the question 1 on the survey
- Two forms were photocopied, completed and returned

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Do you support the need to build affordable housing for the community?</b>	36	37
<b>2</b>	<b>Do you support the idea of this being an affordable community-led housing scheme?</b>	27	41
	<b>Do you want to explore this opportunity and get involved with a project?</b>	9	N/A
<b>3</b>	<b>Do you have a preference for Site A?</b>	29	29
	<b>Do you have a preference for Site B?</b>	18	37

#### **Question 4 – Do you have any further comments?**

One third of respondents expressed concerns about the drainage, both surface and foul water problems in the village – the majority of these are those not in favour of the proposed affordable housing development.

There are a few residents mention that if these issues can be resolved they could support an affordable housing development.

There are a number of comments generally about lack of infrastructure – some indicated poor/narrow highway and increased traffic, with a few residents indicating lack of other amenities. Lack of shops and poor public transport are mentioned by a few.

A little under a third of respondents commented on one or both sites with mixed views in favour or against – more commented where in favour of an affordable housing development.

#### **7. Next Steps**

No other action has been taken in respect of the project, other than provide feedback to the Parish Council and wider community.

NNDC asks the Parish Council to consider this report and provide a recommendation as to how to proceed in respect of the proposed affordable housing project, given the results of this community survey.