

A Housing Needs Survey for Barton:

At their February meeting Councillors agreed to commission Cambridgeshire ACRE to carry out a housing needs survey; they chose for it to be funded by a suitable housing association.

Background:

Barton has 42 council-owned properties (15 general, 17 sheltered and 10 equity-shared) and 8 applicants on the housing register. 11% of housing is social housing, compared to the norm of 16% in South Cambs (42 out of 373 dwellings). We would need another 18 to bring us up to the norm. All Councillors feel strongly that houses must be retained for those with a strong Barton connection.

It was felt it would be an appropriate time to commission a Housing Needs Survey, so we know how many affordable homes are needed in Barton, and the attitude of villagers towards having extra homes. It may be better to plan to meet the full need, rather than have piecemeal development.

Guest speaker, Mark Deas from ACRE addressed the Council. ACRE, SCDC and housing associations working together have experience of building small developments, a mix of market and affordable homes, on rural exception sites. He explained what a Housing Needs Survey entails. It is delivered to every address in the village, firstly to know if villagers are living in what they feel to be suitable accommodation, and secondly, if not, to establish further details and assess the critical need for affordable accommodation. ACRE produces a report and, if desired, attempts to find a site.

Here is the letter residents will receive:

1 March 2016

Dear Parishioner,

Barton – Housing Needs Survey

Barton Parish Council requests your support by completing and returning the attached survey.

The Parish Council is concerned that there may be a shortage of affordable housing for **local** people within Barton. The survey asks whether you would support the principle of providing affordable homes in the parish for people with a strong connection to the Parish and whether you have a need within your family.

This is an opportunity for you to express your views and/or highlight your needs. To ensure that all views are taken into consideration, it is important that everyone completes the form regardless of personal need. A high response rate sends a clearer message to the Parish and District Councils.

A separate survey form should be completed for each potential new household. Please contact Cambridgeshire ACRE (details overleaf) if you require additional

survey forms. We can also send forms to family members living away from Barton who would like to return to the parish.

The information that you provide is confidential. The Parish Council will neither see the completed forms nor have access to any personal information about individuals or households. The costs of the survey are being met by Hastoe Housing Association. There is no cost to the Parish Council.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance with this important initiative. The results will be reported to a future Parish Council meeting.

Yours sincerely

Patrick De Backer

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Parish Council Clerk