

Communities working together to ensure all residents can afford to live locally

Community led housing sees residents within a community playing a leading role in addressing their own housing needs.

In rural villages, housing is sometimes too expensive or not the right size to suit people's needs. Some people can't afford to move back into the village or have no option but to move out, when their circumstance changes, to more affordable towns. This breaks up communities, increases social isolation, and perpetuates unaffordable housing.

Community led housing aims to address these issues. It puts local resident's needs at the fore of what housing is being developed, ensuring the village thrives both now and for generations to come.

On 16 March more than 20 people from across Hambleton & Ryedale came to Husthwaite Village Hall, eager to hear how they could create the accommodation needed to ensure their village could adapt and thrive.

With questions like "How can we ensure our young families can afford to live in our community?" and "How can our older residents afford to downsize, but still stay in the village they love?" the hall was abuzz with questions and anticipation.

Leah Swain, Chief Executive of Community First Yorkshire who lead on community led housing in North Yorkshire, opened the meeting explaining how the concept works, emphasising community involvement from the offset and how each project was unique to each individual village.

Martin Booth of Hudswell village in Richmondshire talked us enthusiastically through their successful scheme, which started with a community pub, and moved on to providing affordable family homes for two young families who might otherwise still be living with their parents, and an elderly resident so she could live near her daughter.

Amanda Madden, Rural Housing Enabler for the Hambleton district inspired all with her can-do attitude, talking the group through the first steps of assessing local housing need and highlighting successful affordable housing schemes throughout the region.

And Chris Owens from Brafferton & Helperby Community Led Housing Group told us of the huge strides that had been made towards delivering affordable houses for local people, young and old, in their community after a local landowner was awarded planning permission for a development on the basis that 50% of housing was affordable. The group is in the process of registering a Community Benefit Society with the Financial Conduct Authority, which would take ownership of some or all of these affordable houses in perpetuity, for the benefit of the community.

Graham Brookfield from Homes England talked us through some of the funding available to community led housing schemes right now, and Hayley Johnson from Community First Yorkshire finished off with details of the wide range of support available.

All in all, attendees came away with a deeper understanding of how to set up a community housing group, how to assess the housing needs of local residents, what funding and support is out there, and all the right contacts to ensure their own village could start the process of providing homes in the near future and for years to come.

For presentations from the day, videos and case studies of successful community led housing schemes, plus information on funding and how to get a scheme started see: communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk/projects/community-led-housing

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To chat through any queries you have, get in touch with Hayley Johnson, Community Led Housing Development Officer, Community First Yorkshire
01904 704177 Hayley.johnson@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk