

Victory Housing Presentation to Knapton parishioners

Monday 22nd April 2013 at 6.00 in Knapton Village Hall

Present: Faith Davies Development Officer, Victory Housing; Nicola Turner NNDC Housing, Sue Howes & Matthew Gotts of Oxbury & Co, Jane Huntings & Sam Jones-Richard. About fifty members of the public.

Faith Davies introduced the team who would make the presentation and apologised for the absence of Phil Rose, Amenity Land Trust Development Manager, Foundation East.

1. Nicola Turner told the meeting that the purpose of the development of the Millennium Field was to provide affordable housing for rental by people of Knapton, Trunch, Swafeld and Bacton. There were some 170 people on the waiting list for such housing and, after consultation with the Parish Council, the present plan which VH had was for 2 x 1 bed flats, 1 x 1 bed house, 1 x 2 bed bungalow, 2 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 3 bed houses, eight dwellings in all. Recent policy changes allowed for a small number of marketable houses to be built beside the affordable housing. Land for this would be gifted to the people of Knapton. In this case there were three plots which could either be sold as plots, generating s up to £120,000 or developed by the builder, with the profit, on sale, shared by the village of Knapton. Funding for Victory Housing was currently available until March 2015.

The affordable housing was allocated to local people who have (a) lived in or near Knapton for three years (b) who worked in the parish or (c) had family there. NNDC, the owners of the land would like to have the views of the Parish Council on the proposed development together with comments on whether there were other requirements for the land or support for the proposed scheme.

2. Faith Davies explained the key aims of Victory Housing. They had built 319 new properties since 2006 nearing their target of 500. These needed to be the right developments in the right villages, which in turn needed new people to keep them

alive. Funding could be generated for village needs, such as sports halls. VH was committed to finding out what villages wanted.

3. Questions: (a) Would the beacon and flag-pole be retained? PC to decide. (b) With already empty houses in School Close, why consider building more? Graham Jones would look into why these properties remained empty. (c) Priority for Knapton people? Yes (d) Traffic flow? Highways would not make decisions on road changes until a formal planning application was put in. VH planned to put a layby in and leave the bus shelter where it was. Car parking would be increased. (e) Water? Anglia water would be approached re water supply when planning application was put in. (f) Mains Drainage? VH hoped to link into the existing system. (g) Which way did the proposed houses face? Toward the main road, but with access from an internal road. (h) Could part of the Millennium Field be left to grass? (i) Could two cars pass in the proposed access road? (j) How will people without transport manage? It was hoped people occupying the houses would have cars, or at least know of shortage of public transport. (k) Parking? VH to talk to Highways. (l) Why had VH not looked at developing land available in Paston? They had, but access was difficult. (m) Why had nearby residents been assured there would be no building on the Millennium Field in 1998? Needs changed over the years. (n) Don Venvel produced the June 1998 Knapton PC minutes in which is stated that the Millennium Field would be a wild flower meadow and the PC was to look after the land for a rural, not housing, community? NNDC had always said the land was for housing. (o) The development would be a blight on the village. GJ pointed out the huge need for affordable housing in Norfolk, he understood there were some objections, but without new incomers the villages would die. (p) Had shared ownership been looked at? No. (q) Can the housing be protected in the future so it is only for people meeting the criteria? This would only change if there was a shortage of such tenants. VH was non-profit making and the houses would never be sold. Limited exchange may be allowed and a five year review would make the best use of the available housing.

4. Neil Davies, a member of the public, suggested a referendum. Few of the audience were in favour. He had asked local people whether they were in favour of the land becoming a village green. 75-80% had said they were. He would therefore put in such an application. GJ said this would be out of time as rules had recently changed.

5. Faith Davies ended the evening by reminding the audience that in fact VH did not have to consult the village and could simply put in a planning application. They were anxious to get input from the village. It was now up to the residents to contact the PC with their thoughts. VH would be happy to attend future PC meetings to receive the thoughts of the village.
The meeting closed at 7.55pm.