

COLYTON & COLYFORD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

PRESS RELEASE

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New trust aims to drive affordable homes

The urgent need to provide young families and local people in housing need with affordable homes that enable them to make their long term futures in Colyton and Colyford has gained momentum with the setting up of a community land trust to press the cause.

Following a public meeting in April to explain the concept to the wider community, volunteers came forward to form an initial steering group with the support of the Colyton Parish Council. The group has benefitted greatly from professional advice from the Wessex Community Land Trust Project (WCLTP) and Devon Communities Together.

The initial focus for the newly incorporated Colyford and Colyton Community Land Trust will be the former Ceramtec industrial site in Sidmouth Road, Colyton. The site has been bought by Homes England with plans for up to 80 new homes together with employment space. A yet to be agreed proportion of the homes will be affordable, and the aim of the trust is to assist their delivery and ensure that they are ultimately let to local people.

A housing needs survey undertaken for Colyton Parish Council in October last year revealed a need for 36 affordable homes within the parish over the next five years. The cheapest house on the local market at the time of the survey cost some £220,000. There were only five homes for sale at less than £300,000 and none at less than £200,000.

“It is crucial that we tackle this important issue and provide homes at a level of affordability that enables those who have grown up in the town to make their future here,” says the trust’s acting chairman, Charles Hill. “This isn’t just about young people, it is about maintaining a diverse and vibrant community for people of all ages.”

He added: “We have opened initial discussions with Homes England on the Ceramtec land and made clear that we want to work with them to bring about the development of a site that is key to Colyton’s future. There will inevitably be compromises to be made along the way in order to satisfy all that is hoped for from this site in the way of homes, car parking, work space and open space. We also recognise that the housing element has to be commercially viable to attract a developer. Our hope is that we can facilitate the wider development by agreeing to take delivery of the affordable housing element in partnership with a housing association.”

He stressed that while the initial focus was on the Ceramtec site, the trust could ultimately bring forward other sites for housing if the need was not met. It could also facilitate and manage assets such as open space and renewable energy that benefit the community.

The trust is holding a launch meeting at the Reece Strawbridge Youth Centre in Colyton on Saturday 21st July at 10am. Membership is available to local residents over the age of 16 at a nominal cost of £1 per share. Further information is available from the trust's facebook site and by emailing candcclt@gmail.com.

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