



New homes for your village

Developing in Partnership with English Rural





English Rural, the specialists in rural affordable housing...

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Newdigate, Surrey.



*Hambledon,
Surrey.*

A uniquely rural focus....

English Rural Housing Association was formed in 1992 as a specialist provider of rural affordable housing and now owns and manages around 1250 homes in 150 villages, mainly in the south of England. Working with and for smaller rural communities, we have successfully developed new homes in over 40 local authorities and are recognised nationally for our exclusively-rural focus: we do not work in towns or cities.

Our success is built on trusted and longstanding partnerships with parish councils, local authorities and landowners. We are proud to be able to say that all our homes are occupied by people with a proven local connection, and that no English Rural affordable home has ever been sold on the open market, either through Right to Buy, or anything else.

A strong and reliable partner in uncertain times...



English Rural delivers services through a network of home-based staff and its offices in London, Guildford and Essex. Our Royal Patron is HRH The Princess Royal, who takes a keen interest in our work and regularly attends the formal opening of our new developments.

English Rural is a registered housing association. We work closely with government agencies, receiving public grant to help us to invest in new homes. We control and manage our own development programme. Our sound financial status and continuing commitment to rural affordable housing has enabled us to ensure that funds are readily available to respond to new development opportunities.

We hold the highest ratings (“Regulatory Judgements”) from the Regulator for Social Housing, for both Viability (“V1”) and Governance (“G1”).





Slapton, Bucks.



Ashurst Wood, Sussex.

Supporting rural communities...

Most of our developments are carried out on 'rural exceptions sites', using planning policies which allow small scale developments on what is usually agricultural land – with the proviso that the affordable homes reflect a proven local need, are occupied by local people, and always remain affordable.

We believe in community-led development, working with the local community, normally via their Parish Council representatives. Our approach involves dialogue and consultation with landowner, parish council, local authority and other stakeholders. As a result the small schemes of affordable homes which we develop take due account of the views of the community in terms of site location, access, appearance, number and types of homes, and range of tenures.

Some villages wish to go further and seek to keep a long-term legal interest in their affordable homes. This can be done, and we work with organisations such as local Charitable Trusts and Community Land Trusts to achieve this.





Dunsfold, Surrey.



Lynsted, Kent.

Bespoke local solutions....



St Margaret's, Kent.

We know that every village is different and that each community may have their own ideas on how best to deliver new homes for local people. Our long track record of working exclusively with smaller rural communities means that we recognise that there is no single standard model for such projects.

Finding suitable land for a project can appear daunting, but is rarely an insurmountable problem. We work with landowners of all kinds, including government departments, national bodies such as the Church Commissioners and the National Trust, local and regional authorities, country estates, farmers and individual landowners large and small.

We pride ourselves on our ability to create bespoke local solutions to meet an identified housing need, including recognising the vital part that landowners play in any project.

In addition to our main development programme we also work with private housebuilders who have affordable housing obligations as part of a larger development. On these S.106 quota sites, we acquire the homes and ensure that they are prioritised for local people.

Our specialist skills and strong reputation mean that other smaller rural providers often choose to work with us, taking advantage of the development, housing management or other services which we can offer.



Rolvenden, Kent.

Innovation at the heart of rural housing...

Some perceptive and far-sighted communities are recognising that a local housing needs survey can stimulate a wider debate about the present and future demand for all types of homes within their village. Responding to requests for a wider range of homes, English Rural schemes can offer 'something for everyone', including a range of different size and type of homes, together with a variety of tenures – all with priority for local people. Our "Village Homes" schemes have been welcomed as supporting the future sustainability of the communities concerned.

Another example of innovation to delivery involves the introduction of "Custom Build" plots on selected sites. These individual serviced building plots are sold at market value to local people interested in building their own homes. Money generated from these sales is used to help subsidise other affordable homes for the village. As with all our homes, priority is always given to local people.





CASE STUDY: The Wickham Bishops Village Homes Project

Once a need for affordable homes had been established, Wickham Bishops Parish Council saw an opportunity to meet local wishes for a wider range of homes for local people, including older households looking to 'downsize', as well those seeking affordable home ownership or homes to rent.

After a search for suitable sites, followed by local consultation, a site was identified which was just outside the village settlement boundary but very close to all local amenities. English Rural agreed to approach the local landowner and thereafter acted as "trusted intermediary" between the various parties. With the benefit of compromise and goodwill on all sides, an agreement was eventually reached between the parish council, the district council, the landowner and English Rural, which allowed the project to meet its aim of providing 'something for everyone'. The final project comprised:

- ***Two bungalows for Discounted Local Sale* to local people***
- ***One house and one bungalow for shared ownership to local people***
- ***Two flats, three houses and three bungalows for rent to local people***
- ***Four bungalows for market sale to local people***
- ***Eight houses and three bungalows for general market sale***

*(*Discounted Local Sale: homes sold with a permanent locked-in discount)*

The project thus responded to local wishes for an improvement in the range of homes available in the village, allowing and encouraging local people to remain in the village even if their circumstances change.

“Attractive, spacious and comfortable low-energy Eco-homes, based on a Fabric-First approach and the principles of passive design”



Goodnestone, Kent.

Attractive

At English Rural we pride ourselves on the quality and standard of construction of the homes we provide. We understand the significant impact that any development of new homes can have on a small rural community and work hard to ensure that our homes are both attractive and cost-effective. Every village is unique and our schemes reflect this - we do not have standard house types or a standard site layout. Instead, our approach is contextual, with developments respecting their surroundings and locality, designed to draw inspiration from local buildings and often built using materials typical of the area.





*Thorpe-le-socken,
Essex.*



Smeeth, Kent.

Spacious and Comfortable



Godmersham, Kent.

Everyone loves a home with space. Good sized rooms suitable for modern living and offering flexibility for the future. Kitchens with generous working space as well as a place to sit and eat meals. And plenty of storage.

The government has recently introduced new space standards for housing but these are not compulsory and many homes continue to be built to a lower standard, with less space.

English Rural homes are carefully designed to offer great layouts which will always exceed the government's recommendations for both room sizes and storage.

Our homes are warm in winter and cool in summer, with good daylight to all rooms, and provide excellent internal air quality to help combat allergens and avoid problems with condensation.





Burstow, Surrey.

What is an Eco Home?

The words Eco Home are in frequent use, although there are many definitions of what they mean. When judged by the standards of even ten years ago, all new homes today could be considered as Eco Homes, as Building Regulations have ensured that modern dwellings have a reduced carbon footprint and consume less energy. Our environmentally friendly homes are designed and built using sustainable materials and low impact technology, to promote comfortable and healthy homes for life.



East Horsley, Surrey.

What do we mean by “Fabric First” and “Passive Design”?

Firstly, by using Fabric First Passive Principles we can already achieve a big improvement in energy performance over that required by Building Regulations, to a level much closer to the full Passivhaus standard. Although only a small additional improvement in energy performance would be required to be fully Passivhaus compliant, the extra benefit to our residents would be minimal and we believe the significant costs involved are better spent elsewhere, for example on additional space and storage.

- ***Plenty of insulation: walls, floors and roofs are insulated to a standard significantly in excess of that required by Building Regulations***
- ***High performance doors and windows: double or triple glazed, with minimal thermal breaks, filled with low-conductivity gas and/or having a low-E coating to minimise radiant heat loss from inside to out***
- ***Excellent airtightness and careful attention to reduce thermal bridging (ie at junctions of building elements where heat can ‘leak out’)***
- ***Excellent internal air quality: simple, effective and almost maintenance-free heat recovery ventilation fans in kitchens and bathrooms help to provide continuous all year-round ventilation and recover heat from the air normally lost through extraction***

Many people have heard of Passivhaus, a quality standard for Eco Homes which originated in Germany in the 1980s. Passivhaus extended the principles of Fabric First to a level where the fabric of the building, without any added technology (hence described as ‘passive’) is so well-insulated that only minimal energy is needed for heating. Although Passivhaus continues to have its supporters, English Rural do not believe that it is the right approach for our homes. There are two main reasons for this:



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Secondly, improvements in airtightness have led to the need for more complicated solutions to maintain internal air quality and avoid overheating – even though Fabric First Passive Principles are all about keeping the building simple and avoiding technological add-ons. Whole-house mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems can be costly, as well as complicated to operate and maintain. The English Rural solution combines the need for airtightness with heat recovery and simple-to-operate ventilation. As a result our homes can provide our residents with the perfect balance between comfort, ease of use and low running costs.



*Mersham,
Kent.*



Smarden, Kent.



Chiddingfold, Surrey.

Why our Partners choose to work with English Rural

- *Our unique rural focus and national reputation*
- *Our financial strength and reliability for delivery*
- *Our support for, and investment in, small rural communities*
- *Our promise to always give priority to local people*
- *Our commitment to ensuring that affordable homes remain affordable for future generations*
- *Our willingness to innovate and to find bespoke solutions*
- *Our unique range of alternative tenures*
- *Our product: attractive, spacious and comfortable low-energy Eco-homes*





ENGLISH RURAL

English Rural Housing Association

7A Strutton Ground, London SW1P 2HY

Tel 020 7820 7930 <https://www.englishrural.org.uk>