

WHY we are here



Warwickshire Rural Housing Association helps maintain the vitality of villages by providing affordable homes for rent and shared ownership, so that people who cannot afford to buy on the open market can stay close to their rural roots.

Attractive

Many villages in Warwickshire suffer from a shortage of affordable homes and this situation is becoming more acute. Property prices have risen dramatically, as the demand for houses in rural areas has grown. The attractive nature of the county and its network of motorways and transport links means its villages are attractive places to live.

Facilities

While new residents can bring new ideas, energy and enthusiasm, there is a very real danger that small communities can become unbalanced. Over time, the supply of affordable homes diminishes, along with local services, and those who suffer are often the local people themselves.

Younger people are also at a disadvantage if they cannot afford to live in the area where they grew up. If there are no homes to rent or buy locally, their only option is to look for accommodation elsewhere – usually many miles away in Coventry, Rugby or Warwick. This can put existing facilities like the school, shop and post office under threat.

Keeping villages alive

The Association aims to keep Warwickshire's villages alive by working in partnership with rural communities to provide good quality homes for rent and shared ownership, for the benefit of local people on low or moderate incomes.

If you want to discuss rural housing needs, please contact us on 01530 276545 or email midlandsrural@emha.org.uk

- We help maintain village vitality
- We actively seek to meet the needs of small rural communities
- Many villages suffer from a shortage of affordable homes
- A lack of affordable homes can put village facilities under threat
- We provide high quality homes for local people



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WHAT we do



Warwickshire Rural Housing Association helps rural communities meet their housing needs.

Guidance

We enable communities to identify the number and type of homes they need through a housing needs survey. This gives everyone in the village the chance to air their views about small housing so that the parish council can assess the level of support for a scheme within the community. We work with them to find a site and guide them through the development process. We also ensure that new homes are professionally let and managed.

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association has been working in the county since 1989, and has an excellent track record of delivery. It has provided more than 300 homes across 29 villages. We have an ongoing development programme and a dedicated, professional staff team that listens to, and works with, rural villages. Our aim is to empower local communities to secure the housing they need for their families and their future.

Responding to need

We specialise in small-scale village housing and will only provide homes where a clear need for affordable homes has been identified.

We work closely with the parish council and local community at all stages, taking note of their views and ensuring our homes are let or sold only to people with a strong local connection.

Local issues

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association designs and builds small-scale housing schemes - often as little as four homes and rarely more than 10 - to fit in with their surroundings. We recognise the specific needs and sensitivities of village communities and we are committed to working at the local level to ensure local issues are identified and addressed.

If you are interested in finding out more about our developments, please contact us on 01530 276545 or email midlandsrural@emha.org.uk

- We develop affordable homes tailored to villages' needs
- Our dedicated professional team listens to people's views
- We guide communities through the development process
- We build small-scale housing schemes to blend with their surroundings
- We have an excellent track record of delivery



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HOW we work



With limited resources and few development opportunities, it is vital that new homes are built in areas with the greatest need. We work with parish councils and district councils to establish whether there is a shortage of affordable housing in their area and, if so, how this could best be met.

Housing needs surveys

We regularly meet parish councillors and members of the community so that we can work together to carry out initial housing needs surveys and assess a community's needs.

We are working with an increasing number of parish councils county-wide, and in some cases have been invited back to progress a second housing scheme following the success of an initial development.

Strong local links

If a clear need for affordable housing has been identified in a village, and there is local support for tackling the issue, we then work with the parish council to identify suitable options.

The type of housing promoted by Warwickshire Rural Housing Association is frequently built on 'exception sites' — land which would not normally receive planning consent for housing development. Planning conditions ensure that the homes are only let to people who can demonstrate that they have strong links with the parish.

Occasionally, we will work with private developers to secure a proportion of affordable housing on their sites.

Professional

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association is registered as a social landlord with the Housing Corporation which helps to pay for some development work. It provides a sensitive and professional housing management service. We collect rent, provide residents with advice, support Neighbourhood Management, and consult residents about new policies and policy changes.

We involve residents in the running of Warwickshire Rural Housing Association by reserving places for them on the Committee of Management. We have also set up a Residents Sounding Board to give our customers the chance to have more say in the way the association is run. We also maintain our housing stock by carrying out regular maintenance work.

If you are interested in undertaking a housing needs survey, please contact us on 01530 276545 or email midlandsrural@emha.org.uk

- We help determine whether there is a need for affordable housing
- We carry out surveys and report back on our findings
- We help identify suitable sites
- We involve the community in the design process
- We provide a comprehensive housing management service
- We involve residents in the management of their homes
- We continually invest in our properties



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WHO we are



Charitable

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association works actively to meet the needs of small, rural communities. We provide and manage properties throughout rural Warwickshire by working in partnership with parish councils, local authorities, landowners and other organisations, to develop new housing schemes.

Organisation

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, which has charitable status, is run by a Committee of Management with members giving their time and services free of charge.

Membership is drawn from local authorities, other housing associations, the Rural Community Council, parish councils and our residents.

Staffing and support is provided by Midlands Rural Housing, an organisation dedicated to providing solutions to rural housing problems.

Working together

The Association works closely with the Northamptonshire, Peak District and Leicestershire Rural Housing Associations to create a strong new partnership across the East and West Midlands.

The partnership aims to pool the resources of the members, enabling them to work together to meet new challenges and to maintain the profile of rural housing both regionally and nationally. This also enables us to benefit from a wider range of professional skills and experience.

Partners

We welcome approaches from individuals, parish councils, landowners, local authorities and other housing associations who recognise the need for affordable village housing and are willing to work with us to achieve our aims. Please contact us to find out more.

If you would like more information about Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, please contact us on 01530 276545 or email midlandsrural@emha.org.uk

- Our committee has strong links with rural Warwickshire
- They give their services and time free of charge
- We work in partnership with three other rural housing associations
- We also work with other like-minded organisations to achieve our aims



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CASE study – Long Compton



Where: Kingstone Farm in the picturesque village of Long Compton in South Warwickshire.

What: Warwickshire Rural Housing Association has developed four houses for letting to local people at affordable rents. The homes were built in natural stone and designed with architectural details to help them blend in with existing properties. The homes were approved under exception site policies which allow small developments of affordable housing outside normal village boundaries. The homes are only available to people with close family or work links to the village.



Why: In 2002, the association was approached by Long Compton Parish Council, which was concerned at the soaring house prices in their village, coupled with a shortage of properties to rent.

How: After consulting with local residents and carrying out a survey of housing needs, Warwickshire Rural Housing Association formed a working partnership with Linfoot Homes. The company built the affordable houses as part of a development of nine homes, with the approval of Stratford District Council. The scheme also includes refurbishing the farmhouse and former stables on the site. The land was provided by a local farmer.

When: Building began in February 2005, with residents moving in at the end of the November.

Who: One of the first tenants to be allocated a home at Kingstone Farm was Kerry Warner. Kerry had lived in the village all her life but was forced to move away when she could not afford her own home there. Her parents and grandparents come from the village and still live there. Her elder sister - Emma - has moved into a neighbouring property in the development. "It is really nice to be back in the village," said Kerry, who has a son Kai, "It is good to be closer to my family again."

Other new residents include Katie Turner, who was 10 when she moved into the new property, and her mum Mary Read. Katie is the fourth generation of her family to attend the village primary school and her grandfather on her mother's side can trace his family's ties to Long Compton back to the 1600s. Katie and five friends from Acorns Primary School helped plant a tree to mark the opening of the new scheme.

"We are very proud of our village. It has a church, the pub, a thriving school and a village hall," said Councillor Philip Boreham, chairman of the parish council. All of these things are joined together by one special ingredient – and that's the community and especially the spirit that comes out of the community."

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association is keen to hear from anyone with an interest in rural housing. If you are a landowner possibly interested in providing a site for a development of affordable rural homes, please contact us on 01530 276545 or email midlandsrural@emha.org.uk



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