

Some highlights from Rural Housing Week

We've come to the end of Rural Housing Week and we want to share some of the week's highlights. There is a serious lack of affordable homes in rural areas but there are also some great people and organisations working to understand the challenges and to provide homes can be a genuine asset to rural communities.

Rural Housing Week Newsletter from Surrey Community Action

We have published our Rural Housing Week newsletter which includes stories on recently completed small rural housing developments and explores the potential of rural exception sites. We also speak to Sadie, who has recently moved into a new home at a rural exception site in Hambledon.

A new design guide from English Rural Housing Association

English Rural Housing Association launched a new [sumptuously illustrated design guide](#) which has been endorsed by HRH The Princess Royal. It aims to transform the approach to affordable housing in rural communities. It champions the idea that beauty and affordability can coexist and provides a practical toolkit to enable rural communities take control of their housing.

The 'Rural Life Monitor 2024' from the National Housing Federation

The National Housing Federation published its [Rural Life Monitor 2024](#). The document describes how a lack of affordable housing in rural areas is affecting communities, setting out the current situation and, through several case studies, provides interesting examples of what housing associations are doing to address the challenges. Case studies include:

- A story of a young couple working in agriculture being able to buy a shared ownership home as a result of a new small housing development by English Rural Housing Association;
- A community-led organisation that worked with their parish and county councils and partnered with a housing association to provide new homes for their community at the highly energy efficient Passivhaus standard.

A new government!

We have a new government and Strutt and Parker have [published this article](#) analysing what some ministers' key statements may mean for planning and housing. The section on planning and housing starts about halfway down the article.

A Long-term plan for housing – webinar

Our Rural Housing enablers Nicola and David attended the National Housing Federation's webinar entitled "Why rural communities need a long-term plan for housing". The speakers were all very involved in addressing challenges in rural areas and they were genuinely inspirational.

The webinar explored how a lack of affordable housing is affecting rural areas and discussed actions that could deliver appropriate homes and help invigorate rural communities and the rural economy.

Mark Pagnell, economist and chair of English Rural Housing Association made a strong case for considering rural areas together as a region of the country. When one does this opportunities for improving rural communities, economy and housing quickly emerge.

Kerry Booth of the Rural Service Network pointed out that Government spending per head is much higher in urban areas than in rural despite the fact services cost more to deliver in rural areas. She set out several asks for Government.

Nik Harwood of *Young Somerset* described how young people experience the lack of housing in rural areas, the disruption it causes them and the community value that rural affordable housing can deliver.

A summary of the presentations together with a link to a recording is available [here](#).^{add link}