**Commencement of the affordable housing scheme at St Ann’s Chapel**

The affordable housing scheme on land at Holwell Farm has now commenced and is expected to be completed by May or June 2023. This is the first affordable scheme within South Hams for over a century and it has been designed specifically to meet the housing needs of people living in the local area, with priority being given to those with a local connection to the Parish of Bigbury, followed by those with a local connection to the adjoining parishes of Ringmore, Aveton Gifford and Kingston.

The scheme was initiated through the Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan with the need for an affordable housing development close to St Ann’s Chapel being initially identified through the response to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire and a Housing Needs Survey.

The site, which lies to the rear of the Holywell Stores, was considered by the local community to be the most appropriate site within the area as it could provide safe pedestrian access through the site to the Holywell Stores, the Memorial Hall, children’s playground and the school bus stops. The road access, being to the north of the village, also minimised the traffic through the village.

The preliminary work, including the selection of the Architect and other consultants and the preparation of the original draft layout and design, was carried out by Bigbury Parish Council. However, in order to progress the development, the Parish Council invited South Hams District Council to manage and fund the scheme and to ensure that at least 60% of the housing would be affordable. They also stated that priority must be given to the affordable needs of the local community ie those with a local connection to the Parish of Bigbury.

The development, which has now been granted full planning permission will be of exceptionally high quality in terms of its design and landscaping and all of the dwellings have been designed to be highly energy efficient (carbon net zero) to make them economical to run. The new dwellings will also all come with adequate parking facilities, with all car parking spaces having access to electric car charging points.

The development will comprise 13 dwellings in total of which 8 dwellings will be affordable units. It was originally proposed that some of the affordable housing units would be for discount purchase and the remainder for affordable rent but due to the recent increase in building costs and need for some funding by Homes England, it is now proposed that the affordable housing units will be for affordable rent only.

Eligibility

The lettings policy for this development gives preference to having a local connection with priority being given to households with a connection to the Parish of Bigbury. To be eligible for an affordable housing unit in this scheme it will be necessary to meet one of the following criteria:

1. *A person who has immediately prior to such nomination had his or her main residence within the Parish of Bigbury for 3 out of the last 5 years.*
2. *A person has immediately prior to the allocation lived in Bigbury Parish for 6 out of the last 12 months preceding the allocation.*
3. *A person who has permanent employment with the Parish of Bigbury for the last year with a minimum contract of 16 hours per week which has continued for the 6 months preceding the allocation without a break in employment of more than 3 months.*
4. *Immediate family (ie parents, siblings or non-dependent children) have lived in Bigbury Parish themselves for 5 years preceding the allocation.*

*Preference will be given to applicants banded in bands A – E under Devon Home Choice and who meet the above criteria.*

**N.B. It is essential for anyone who wishes to apply for an affordable dwelling to register their interest with Devon Home Choice** [www.devonhomechoice.com/how-it-works](http://www.devonhomechoice.com/how-it-works).

If there are not enough people from the Parish of Bigbury, who meet the above criteria, and have made an application through Devon Home Choice, the dwellings will then be offered to applicants who have a local connection to the neighbouring parishes of Ringmore, Aveton Gifford and Kingston.

Following this, it would be open to applicants from the District of South Hams, and only then available to other applicants on whole of the Devon Home Choice register.

Please register your interest with Devon Home Choice as soon as possible.

If anyone has any questions regarding the proposals or would like a copy of the plans please contact Valerie Scott.

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