

Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plan

Meeting of Project Team 27th November 2017



David McCaffrey (DMc) – Wilkie May and Tuckwood (guest speaker regarding residential housing in the Parish)

DMc advised that within our Parish demand is outstripping supply. It is a mixture of families moving locally and others relocating from further afield as we are seen as a gateway to other places and comparably cheaper.

He advised that the most recent building in Henlade (Henlade Close) had 26 units – 10 x shared ownership for local buyers from within 5 neighbouring Parishes and 16 housing association rentals. Half of the 10 (5) had been sold to local people but demand dried up, so it was opened up to anyone within Taunton for the remaining 5. All 26 units sold to local people. The 10 units started at £70k and most were first time buyers who own 40% with options to increase their ownership. The criteria for the 10 units was anyone living or working in the Parish, or a close family member meeting the criteria. Resale must be on the same criteria. At the time of this development there would have been competition from CSM and Monkton Heathfield where affordable housing and shared ownership was also being offered.

There has not been much change to the Buy to Let market in Taunton so the impact on our Parish is negligible.

Houses in Ruishton/wider Parish sell quickly as these are good villages and properties sell well. It was asked whether the new CSM houses have affected our Parish? DMc explained that they have not seen as much come to market in Ruishton this year as in previous years. At CSM, they have not had a problem selling the higher end houses ie 4 bed/ 600sq. ft. for £300k+.

DMc said that our Parish has churches, pubs, good primary and secondary schools and good road access. Perhaps more amenities could be considered such as a shop.

He explained that currently, no particular type of house was selling better than another within the Parish. People are moving up the ladder so there is a demand for everything. For comparison, at Killams, 2,3,4 bed houses are all selling at present and nothing is sticking.

He felt there is always a demand for bungalows, but no one builds them due to a lack of return on investment. A question was posed regarding what do the elderly do if they want to downsize within the parish if none are being built? DMc said that not many sheltered housing units are being built. At Firepool a 1 bed unit was starting at £220k with a service charge of over £2k per annum. DMc advised that there was not enough of a need demonstrated within our Parish to give incentive to build this.

DMc felt that a selection of a variety of houses should be built within our Parish. He thinks that what is being built at Monkton is likely to be what will be built in our Parish as it is likely a large national builder will have options on land. It will depend on the developer and size of the development as to what a builder is likely to do for a community. It could be funding towards a school or roads eg at Killams (320 units) there was a contribution towards a bridge to get in and out of the school.

Provision for parking is dependent on the developer but there is limited parking within schemes.

The Government has extended its Help to Buy scheme to 2020 as an incentive to buy therefore developers need to build.

DMc said that Trull and Staplegrove are being absorbed into Taunton so he thinks that, over the next 20 years, our Parish will be absorbed but there is a need for the infrastructure to improve.