

## Response by Tenterden Community Land Trust to the Tenterden Housing Needs Survey

### Introduction

Tenterden Community Land Trust (TCLT) was founded by a group of long-term residents and friends of Tenterden, all concerned that young couples could not afford to raise their children here as we did. This has serious implications for the sustainability and character of our community.

Whilst there was, and is, plenty of anecdotal evidence this was the case, authoritative facts were needed. A Housing Needs Survey (the Survey) was required and the first task of TCLT was to bring this about.

We are very pleased to say that Ashford Borough Council saw the merit in what we are seeking to do, and agreed to fund the Survey. After the survey work was completed, the Survey itself was produced in June 2020. The information provided will benefit anyone who is interested in the housing needs of Tenterden. We would like to record our thanks to Ashford Borough Council and particularly to Tessa O'Sullivan of Action with Communities in Rural Kent who carried out the Survey and the analysis at what proved to be a difficult time due to Covid-19. Were it not for that, we believe the response rate, and therefore the need shown, would have been higher. Nevertheless, the Survey findings may be treated as authoritative, having been carried out by a recognised provider.

The Survey is in two parts; one relating to the housing needs of younger people; the other to older people, whose housing needs tend to be different, although affordability is still an issue.

The Survey may be viewed on our website; [tenterdenclt.org](http://tenterdenclt.org)

### Conclusions

- 1) The data in the Survey confirms that a serious problem exists with housing affordability in Tenterden for people who have a local connection.
- 2) With the low number of respondents to our Survey appearing on the Ashford Borough Council Housing Register, that Register does not adequately reflect the housing need within Tenterden.
- 3) That the need for affordable housing is not being met, given that at least 50 households say they need such housing either now or within 1-2 years.
- 4) That there is a requirement of at least 46 affordable homes for younger local single people, couples and families.
- 5) There is a requirement for more suitable housing for older people from at least 60 households, 13 of whom say they need affordable housing. The remainder would prefer to buy in the open market if they could find somewhere suitable.
- 6) There are 9 younger households who say they do not want affordable housing and would prefer to buy on the open market, but none could in fact afford to do so when their means were assessed. Shared ownership might be an option for 7 of those households if they would consider it.

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- 7) Whilst more analysis may be required, the indication is that whilst shared ownership/discounted market sale is desired, it is not affordable for perhaps two thirds of those who want it.

### Action

Whilst the results of the Survey have a life of 5 years, there is a need for action now. A site or sites must be found and we want to work with our members, the community and the Town and Borough Councils to enable that to happen on terms that truly affordable housing can be provided.

We cannot meet the demands of everyone who responded to the Survey. The financing of the project will be crucial, and we hope it will enable us to promote a scheme which provides the greatest benefit to the community.

We encourage the Planning Committees of both Ashford Borough Council and Tenterden Town Council to take the Survey's results into account when considering planning applications from developers, and to try to ensure that proposals for development meet the actual needs of the community.

Mark Ellender

Chair – Tenterden Community Land Trust

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