



## START Community Trust

When the Community Trust was first conceived, I think we all hoped we could find a small site on the edge of one of our villages to build an attractive group of affordable and social houses, where the asset lock of a Community Trust would ensure only those with a local connection could occupy them. The reality, in a National Park, is that these sites are unaffordable, unavailable and hence illusory.

Cats spend 90% of their time asleep. START CT has been living like a cat over the last year or so, but a couple of mice have just trickled past our noses and there may be a chance to pounce -

Recently we have been aware that Hyde, who hold the social housing stock which once belonged to Chichester District Council, have decided on economic grounds to sell off some of their housing stock in Stedham, Rogate and Milland. They have an obligation to replace this, by re-investing the proceeds in housing stock, but in the Chichester District, rather than in our villages. Because of this we have recently held a meeting with Hyde Housing and parish council representatives to reiterate the social impact of these actions. I am hopeful this has started a positive dialogue with this housing association which we can build on, to both prevent future sales of the local stock and to have a foot in the door for cooperation on future developments.

As a Community Trust we have to consider the benefits we can offer our communities. One chance that may arise is in relation to the shop in Rogate. This has been a privately held building: shop below, flat above; and it is now for sale. There are two options - either it continues as a privately held investment, or START tries to acquire the building to set up a community owned shop (as has been done successfully in other villages) with the flat above providing a home for a person or family with a local connection. Clearly there is no danger at the moment that the village shop will remain just that; but there is a small window of opportunity, which with enough community support, we could set this in place for perpetuity. If anyone would like to take this further please contact us.

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