



## Introduction for Stedham with Iping Parish Annual Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Good evening

I am Neil Ryder and I'm here to introduce START Community Trust – the START of truly affordable housing in the heart of the rural South Downs

Unless you saw the Petersfield Post or Midhurst & Petworth Observer the week before last, you've probably never heard of it, but we plan to make sure you hear a lot more about it soon, and this is just a very brief introduction.

START stands for Stedham, Trotton and Rogate Together and it was the determination and community spirit of a group of councillors from your own parish and those of Trotton and Rogate parishes that got it past all the red tape and enabled us to establish START as a community land trust last 2 weeks ago – fully registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.

So for those of you who don't know, what is a community land trust – or CLT? It's a relatively new type of non-profit, community-based organisation, run by volunteers to develop truly affordable housing – and I mean affordable by local people.

I won't bother you with which section of which act they come under, but suffice it to say that it allows CLTs to buy pieces of land that others might not be allowed to develop and get government and other grants to put low-cost housing on them and then rent or lease them ONLY to local people. The CLT owns them for ever and is allowed to set permanent rules about who is allowed to rent or lease them.

We are also allowed to own or create shops, post offices, pubs, car parks, leisure facilities and almost anything else the community needs, although housing is our initial priority.

A CLT is owned and run entirely by its members, who we are restricting entirely to the residents of our 3 parishes. The members buy a share each for £1 – or as many as they like to support our work - but it's only one member, one vote. They then have the right to:

- elect the board
- stand for election to the board
- vote on our priorities and policies – including the allocation policies which rule who can live in its houses
- volunteer to join the "housing needs" panel that will help to choose sites and design the houses
- decide whether we should buy or create other community assets like pubs

. . . . and basically take part in any important decision we take.

So why START – why the 3 parishes together? Well initially, when the government and county and district councils started pushing this new idea, each of the 3 parishes all started thinking about and talking about setting up a CLT to tackle the problem of local people – particularly youngsters - being priced out of the market. All of us went to talks in Chichester and elsewhere run by social housing bodies, etc. All of us went and talked separately to Midhurst CLT, which started its formation about 4 or 5 years ago.

But each of us realised we were not big enough to put together a strong enough group of volunteers to jump through all the red tape and legal registration processes. Eventually, we all realised that we all had the same need and the same problems, and we started talking last year. Lucy Petrie and John Wheelhouse initially agreed to join two of us from Trotton and two from Stedham to investigate further and, after a lot of meetings and work, we finally achieved our legal status on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Our aim is to have our policies and share documents ready for a public launch in June – possibly at the Rogate fete - but we have started building a mailing list of anyone interested in more information – whether they're interested in joining as voting members or in going on the list to rent one of our houses, or to offer us a bit of land, or just to be kept informed.

So that's my brief intro. We haven't even had time to build a website yet, so we have a temporary page on the Trotton PC website and you can sign up there and I have some bits of paper with the website address - I have also rushed together a little leaflet in time to bring a few tonight. What I would say is: it might be several years before we identify suitable sites, negotiate with the owners, and then design and get permission to build our first houses – but if you want to have a say in where they go, what they look like and who's allowed to live in them, do sign up to one of our lists as soon as you can. Thank you for having me.