

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018

Kate Kennally  
CEO Cornwall Council  
New County Hall  
Treyew Road  
Truro TR1 3AY

Dear Kate,

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at the Eden project staff gathering you took a question from a member of staff who is also a member of the Stithians Parish Development Plan Committee. The question was about housing development policy in isolation of infrastructure development which has caused children to attend primary school outside our village, siblings to go to separate primary schools and people to seek doctors surgeries elsewhere. In short the construction of new houses and lack of associated infrastructure is fragmenting our community and alienating the very people that we want to welcome into their new homes.

Having stated that “New houses must also be homes in communities”, you invited the staff member to write to you explaining the situation and to offer advice on how to rectify it. This morning on ITV News Dominic Raab, the housing minister used the phrase “We have to carry communities with us” six times. The challenge is not to ‘Carry communities’; they are not a weight or a burden to be carried. The challenge is to enable them to carry themselves.

One problem in our **parish** is the trouble people experience having to fight for the rights of their elderly friends and relatives to remain full members of society for as long as possible, to enable elderly persons to choose their life-style freely and to lead independent lives in their familiar surroundings for as long as they wish and are able.

This problem can be overcome by means of adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and play an active part in public, social and cultural life by means of a provision of housing suited to their needs whilst respecting their privacy, and participation in decisions concerning living conditions.

Our **parish** is friendly welcoming place in which lonely people are noticed and invited to join **community** groups. We do not tend to address loneliness directly; instead we “build” community. We have a lovely **community** centre in which people can meet. However, as the population rises with the increase in housing stock it will become harder for lonely people to find places to meet.

When you build new houses for younger people they inevitably have children. We have a lovely **village** school and already people moving into the **area** have to send their children to school in other places because of the lack of capacity of the school to accommodate the increased population. Indeed, in some cases families have to send siblings to different primary schools. This is a clear example of how current policy not to increase infrastructure proportionately with increased

housing results in parents and children occupying new houses becoming isolated from the community in which they live.

We have a lovely **village** doctor's surgery (a satellite of Penryn surgery) and over the past years, as more houses are built, it is becoming progressively harder to get appointments at the surgery. As housing stock increases bringing more families it makes sense to increase the capacity of medical services to treat people. However, many people who attend doctor's surgeries are not sick but are "symptom carriers" of social or political issues.

Age, loneliness, health and education are impossible to address in isolation and if they are not addressed as part of housing development we will not have created an age, loneliness health and education problem, we will have created a **parish** problem of which age, loneliness ill health and poor education outcomes are the symptoms.

Whilst our **parish** is going through a house building phase there are some things that only the local authority can do like increase the capacity of the school to accommodate all of the local children who wish to attend it, increase the capacity of the surgery to ensure that all people new to the **parish** (in those houses) can use it and increase the capacity of places for people to meet in order that people new to the **area** feel welcome. The local authority should get on and do those things. There are some things that the community can do only with the help of local authorities like set up a parish development plan and we thank Cornwall Council and our Parish Council for their support and guidance. There are some things that the community can do by itself like welcome new people and befriend the lonely. The local authority should enable us to do that by ensuring sufficient infrastructure is put in place before or whilst new houses are occupied by new people.

Measured by the depth of our associational life and how we welcome new people, Stithians is a high performer and we wish to it stay that way. We accept that the benefits to our **parish** of new housing far outweigh the costs provided that the necessary infrastructure is put in place by the only body that can do that – the local authority.

Our community is thriving because it is about much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter. Unfortunately, we notice the signs of a decline in our community health and well-being. This decline is as a direct result of house construction policy which will only worsen unless action is taken by Cornwall Council to address retrospectively the damage to our community that has already been done by the lack of proportional infrastructure development and in advance of what is about to happen.

We look forward to your response on how Cornwall Council plans to continue to work with our Parish Development Plan to ensure that infrastructure proportionate to housing development is put in place.

Yours sincerely,  
Etc.