

Toller Porcorum Community Land Trust



The village shop and post office closed in the small Dorset village of Toller Porcorum in 1998, an area dominated by holiday lets and retired homeowners. The Toller Porcorum Village Association housed the post office initially in local man Hugh Hereward's house, but this was a temporary solution. In 2009 his daughter Vanora offered to gift land to the village and together with some adjacent land that became available, the site would enable building a larger, new-build post office and store, plus six affordable homes.

Over 40 of the 300 villagers together with representatives from Wessex Community Assets, West Dorset District Council and Aster Housing Group attended a meeting in 2012 where it was decided to establish the Toller Porcorum Community Land Trust (CLT) to own the site and to contract a housing association to develop the project. This partnership was based on a model developed by Wessex Community Land Trust Project and used by 10 CLTs to complete over 100 homes since 2010 across Somerset, Devon and Cornwall working with 4 local housing associations. Another 100 homes are in the pipeline. Under this CLT/housing association partnership, the CLT owns the land freehold and grants a lease 125-year lease to the housing association for a small ground rent. This enables the association to take the risks and responsibilities involved in developing, financing and managing the scheme, whilst the CLT leads on site choice,

6 homes
Affordable rented
(and a post office!)

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design of the homes, allocation criteria and community consultation.

In Toller Porcorum, sadly Vanora passed away shortly after it was decided to set up the CLT, but her bequest enabled the aptly named Hereward Close scheme to be developed with funding from the Homes & Communities Agency and West Dorset District Council. The CLT decided to lease the post office and homes to Aster, who manage the 6 affordable rented homes (one 1 bedroomed flat over the post office, two 2 bedroomed and three 3 bedroomed houses), whilst the CLT operates the post office under a sub-lease. The design uses materials already used in the village and pitched roofs to echo surrounding buildings. Landscaping was chosen to blend into the local rural village setting and native tree and shrub species were chosen to provide ecological benefits and sustain wildlife in the area.



We lost our Post Office, shop and pub some time ago. It's almost impossible for young people on average earnings to get homes in an area of the country where the average house price is now £330,000. The village was in danger of becoming one big old age pensioners' home. The new development has given a new life to the village, and has stopped young people and families moving out of the area. It was Vanora's idea and when she first suggested it, it sounded like pie in the sky, but the houses have been built now and it's nice to have children running round the village. It was only right to name the estate after her, given everything she did for the village.

Barry Rutherford, Toller Porcorum CLT treasurer



Support from:

Wessex Community Land Trust Project