

FEDERATION OF SUSSEX AMENITY SOCIETIES NEWSLETTER



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Chairman :- Dick Thompson

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Saxon Weald

At the Federation's 43rd AGM, Stuart Fullwood and Marie Riordan from the Saxon Weald Trust talked about affordable housing.

Stuart gave the background that Saxon Weald control about 5,400 homes, 25% of them being sheltered housing. Housing Associations are the main developer of social housing in the country. The government is funding £8m for new build this year. There are currently 2 million homes with 5 million living in social housing. Saxon Weald manages affordable housing, particularly in rural situations, or where extra care or supported housing is required. They have many tenants with general needs, who are mainly in rented accommodation, but some have shared equity / ownership.

The process that Saxon Weald go through is usually - Sites identified, local authority discussion, engage with community, employ architect, early engagement with contractor, work with planners and building control, organise funding and finally SOS - start on site. Saxon liked to get the ownership of the site first so that they can manage the development with funding from the Homes & Communities Agency.

Saxon Weald has terms of reference and constitution, with a board that scrutinise reports, overall there is a governmental right to inspect.



Illustrations of modern buildings they had developed were shown

:- Durrington - large modern extra care block, Amberley - twelve homes, reflecting the local architecture.

Maria spoke on sustainability and good design interspersed with favourable comments received from tenants on comfort, low running costs etc. They are proud of Arun Crescent in Billingshurst, which has achieved sustainability level five - compared with level three being required by the government. The site had been a garage compound in poor condition. Billingshurst in general offered a good sustainability level with good transport links and school places available. The development had cost 13% extra to raise the standard from level 3 to level 5.

The key components were rainwater harvesting and an 85m bore-hole to support a ground source heat pump, which was zero carbon. No upstairs heating had been required, as the insulation



efficiency was so high. There had been objections to the aesthetic design - i.e. mono-pitch roof etc. The next step was to learn from this development, i.e. using roofing space for the GSHP etc.

Marie emphasised that Saxon Weald was not a developer, but a building development facilitator.

Although the system had been heavily subsidised - residents were being charged 11p per unit for power drawn from the grid, and paid 28p per unit for power sent to the grid.