

Location	Meadow Close, Upper Minety, Wiltshire	
Housing Association	Wiltshire Rural Housing Association	
Partners	White Designs (architects); Nixey Powell (employer's agent); Ken Biggs Contractors; Wiltshire Council; Homes & Communities Agency; Triodos Bank	
Scheme outline	<p>The beautiful and innovative scheme at Upper Minety in rural Wiltshire was completed and let on the 20 March 2015. The scheme provides for 10 'affordable' rented homes in an area of high demand. The development consists of 2 x 1 bed, 7 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed houses.</p> <p>The Association employed award winning Architects, White Designs, to develop proposals for the site situated on the edge of this rural settlement. The site was brought forward as a rural exception site, allowing for affordable housing to be delivered where other development would not be acceptable under planning policy.</p> <p>The development was designed to minimise impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking from the new houses and to enable views across the site to open countryside. The layout retains existing hedgerows and trees and includes new planting to enhance the site's ecological value.</p> <p>The design of the houses is based on a modern interpretation of the traditional building forms and materials found in the surrounding area. Cotswold stone has been used for gable end walls and is continued around to elements of the front elevations and for boundary walls. Projecting windows, with timber or aluminium surrounds, add variety and identity to the individual houses.</p> <p>The houses were designed with high levels of thermal insulation and achieve a target airtightness of 3 m³/(m².h)@50Pa. They use a passive stack system to provide ventilation and air source heat pumps for heating. The houses achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and also meet Secure by Design and Lifetime Homes standards. They also benefit from modern, high capacity kitchens and water saving bathrooms.</p>	

	A small piece of land to the side of the development has also been landscaped to provide public open space for the whole village to enjoy.
Need	<p>The planning proposal was initiated following a Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Wiltshire Council and Minety Parish Council. The Housing Needs Survey demonstrated a maximum of 12 rented homes were required within the village in order to meet local needs. The survey also showed that 70% of respondents supported the proposal for such a development in the village.</p> <p>The Parish Council contacted WRHA as their preferred partner because we already owned and managed 4 old alms houses in the village and they were keen to work with us again.</p> <p>WRHA worked with the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council to identify a suitable site within the village. As a ‘rural exception site’ it was important that the development was accessible to local amenities and provided high quality, energy efficient homes, to people in housing need within the community. It was also important to provide additional community facilities for all residents to benefit from.</p>
Good practice	<p>WRHA has strong design and sustainability protocols therefore it was essential an Architect was chosen that shared this vision. White Designs provided an excellent service that met the design brief and fulfilled the high standard specifications. Together with a range of partners WRHA created a beautiful development that complemented the surrounding environment whilst providing spacious, energy efficient homes for local people. The main attributes were:</p> <p><i>Modern design to complement local environment; High levels of thermal insulation; Kitchens exceed space and storage standards and provide high quality units; Modern bathrooms with water saving low flow taps and showers; The scheme exceeds minimum standards at CSH Level 4; Secure by Design certificated; Achieves Building for Life standards; Air Source Heat Pumps provide clean, value for money heating and hot water; Passive Ventilation system to prevent condensation and reduce energy use; Land for community benefit</i></p>
Funding	<p>WRHA loan – £1,257,697 Capital Receipt – £125,000 (sale of existing home) Homes & Communities Agency – £177,750</p>

“I am very happy living here. The plot we are in, the location of the houses and more importantly the neighbours are great”; “I love the house”; “I love my home and all the neighbours”; quotes from New Homes Tenant Questionnaire, February 2016