Innovative partnership secures recreational green space in a new housing development

Friday 21 April, 2017

UK wide charity, Fields in Trust, in partnership with HAB Housing, are marking an innovative collaboration which will secure recreational land in perpetuity as part of a new housing development at Winchester, Hampshire. A plaque was unveiled at the site by HAB Housing Founder, Kevin McCloud and Fields in Trust Trustee and former international footballer, Graeme Le Saux, to mark the safeguarding of the site. Mayor of Winchester, Councillor Jane Rutter and Chairman Kings Worthy Parish Council Stewart Newell, were also in attendance.

The semi-rural site on Lovedon Lane, in the historic village of Kings Worthy, is two miles from Winchester and is being developed with, allotments, wildflower meadows, play areas, a running circuit and a community orchard area. Once the development is complete and ownership transferred to the local Parish Council, this will complement the existing facilities in the adjoining Eversley Park, with its football pitches, playground and basketball and tennis courts.

There is an urgent need to build new homes across the UK and sometimes hard choices have to be made. Fields in Trust believe that all communities, and particularly young people, should be able to enjoy healthy, active, outdoor recreation within walking distance of home. As well as protecting recreational space via a legal mechanism, the charity Fields in Trust produces benchmarks for accessible outdoor space. The “Six Acre Standard”, recommending adequate recreational provision, has been accepted and implemented by local councils since the 1930s; the latest version “Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play” was published in 2015 – Lovedon Fields conforms to these latest guidelines.

The design of new housing can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Recreation spaces in residential areas remain a priority for protection, especially at a time when there is pressure on land for new housing. The innovative HAB Housing development has taken a pre-emptive approach and designed-in recreational space from the outset which has been safeguarded with a Fields in Trust “deed of dedication”, ensuring that the land will be protected for community use, in perpetuity. This makes properties at Lovedon Fields attractive as buyers can be assured that local open space will be safeguarded forever.

Land owners, local authorities and enlightened developers working with Fields in Trust can secure their green spaces through a legal mechanism; ensuring public recreational land is protected forever. Fields in Trust currently safeguards over 2,600 sites, a total of 30,000 acres of land (12,140ha.) including playgrounds, playing fields, and formal and informal parkland across the UK.

Environmental design of the landscape, sustainable water management and ecological features of Lovedon Fields take account of local wildlife and are a vital part of the design. Spaces for swallows, slow worms, bats, hedgehogs and insects have been incorporated throughout the scheme. Every home includes an integrated micro-habitat for bats, birds or even the honeycomb-like Bee Bricks to help house the pollinators of the wildflowers in the new parkland.

Homes benefit from highly energy-efficient construction and also generate significant electricity from solar panels controlled by a smart home heating controls via smartphone, tablet or computer. There will also be a shared car club on site - for the use of everyone at Lovedon Fields as well as the wider community.

Fields in Trust Trustee **Graeme Le Saux** says*: “Fields in Trust protects land for play, sport and recreation and campaigns for recognition of these spaces to contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. If we are to reduce child obesity and build a more active nation, as the government’s sports strategy aspires to, we need to ensure that all new housing developments make space for outdoor recreation.”*

HAB Housing Founder and Chairman **Kevin McCloud** said *“At HAB we set out to build beautiful homes that are a joy to live in. It’s a mission that we approach with real zeal. It’s not just the fantastic designs of the homes; we’ve an equally strong focus on the spaces between the buildings themselves, ensuring that we’re creating amazing places to live. These delightful homes are nestled by the local park, which we’re doubling in size and packing full of stuff for both our new residents and the existing community.”*

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Hi-Res Photographs of the unveiling event – and of the partially completed site are available

NOTES TO EDITORS

- **Fields in Trust** is a national charity that operates throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites. Founded in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association by King George V, their mission is the same now and as it was then: to ensure that everyone – young or old, able-bodied or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. These spaces are vital to building happy and healthy communities and sadly continue to be threatened by all kinds of development. www.fieldsintrust.org

- **HAB Housing**: HAB stands for Happiness Architecture Beauty. The company was set up by Kevin McCloud in 2007 to challenge the way identikit volume housing was built in the UK. The homes and places they build aim to respect the local context and biodiversity; are strongly rooted in history, landscape and the community; and are sustainable, beautiful and a pleasure to live in. HAB is recognised as a leader in sustainable development, favouring a fabric-first approach to environmental construction with a focus on biodiversity, edible landscapes and sustainable drainage. They use materials and products which have low environmental impact and they also need to be affordable, durable, readily available and easy to maintain. www.habhousing.co.uk

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