

Cornwall housing allocations – do these shocking figures match those in your parish?

In the two years to March 31 2024, ten council-owned properties in Lanteglos parish became vacant. Out of those ten, one went to a person/family with a local connection. Currently, Cornwall Council is paying out many millions of pounds to accommodate homeless families. Lanteglos-by-Fowey Parish Council (LBFPC) thinks these statistics are linked.

Lanteglos by Fowey is a rural Parish but with more than 50 homes for social rent. This means the 'Parish Preference Label,' as defined in the Cornwall Housing Allocation Policy is not applicable. This situation is unfair for rural parishes such as ours as it is impossible for anyone with a local connection on 'Band D or E' priority to obtain social housing locally.

For the past three years, LBFPC has urged a change in Cornwall's housing policy – that in a spirit of fairness and recognising the need to keep communities together during an avoidable housing crisis, allocations to Cornwall Council-owned properties should alternate between those in highest need (for example homeless people) and people from the parish who have a local connection whatever their banding.

Cornwall Council has contemptuously dismissed this suggestion. LBFPC believes the reason is that the need to reduce the millions spent on homeless families trumps the needs of people from the parish.

LBFPC believes this is grossly unfair and that there is a danger of homeless people being blamed for this situation. To be clear, LBFPC stands in solidarity with homeless people. They, together with people in need from the parishes, are victims of a crisis which is decades in the making. Cornwall Council could, at a stroke, make fundamental changes to its housing policy which would bring immediate relief. Lanteglos-by-Fowey Parish Council has drawn up a housing manifesto which we recommend to you and which is appended to this letter for your information.

But for now, LBFPC is asking for your support in persuading Cornwall Council to adopt this policy in relation to housing allocation:

“Housing allocation should be on the basis of alternately letting to people in desperate need (with or without parish connections) followed by letting to bidders from the parish whatever their banding criteria. This is recognition that, at present, demand outstrips supply but maintaining our local communities in Cornwall should be a priority. Once publicly-owned housing for rent meets demand, the need for this measure will disappear.”

Cornwall Council has shown it is immune to a call for change from one small, rural parish. It will not find it so easy to do so if many town and parish councils, from Bude to Land's End, join us. Please consider this matter at your next meeting.