

SRS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2015

There have been two good pieces of news on the housing front. Firstly plans were announced to redevelop the old petrol station site in Southwold with high quality town houses. Secondly Waveney council announced plans for 20 affordable homes on the site of the former Duncan's yard off St Edmunds Road in Southwold.

The petrol station site has been a derelict eyesore for some years but now an Ipswich developer Equity Estates has bought the site and revealed plans to build 13 town houses – most of them fronting onto Might's Road. Car parking will be at the rear of the houses and the plan is for work to start next Spring.

The Society met with Equity's Managing Director Alastair Thomas to discuss his proposals and were encouraged by his commitment to high quality design and materials. It also welcomed the fact that it was an important step towards creating a decent "gateway" to Southwold in place of the current rather shabby and run down entrance to the town.

The new scheme will replace the original plan approved by Waveney which was for four "cottages" and a block of 18 flats.

The second housing proposal comes from Waveney council which has announced it's buying the former Duncan's building yard where it hopes to build 20 affordable homes. The council says it's been able to finance the purchase by selling off three Waveney properties in the town.

The Society has welcomed the news so long as the homes go to local people or people with local connections and so long as they remain for the use of the local people. Nobody wants to see a repeat of the Tibby's Triangle experience.

On an historical note some of the first council houses in the country were built in Southwold – also in St Edmunds Road. In 1905 the then Southwold Corporation built the row of terraced houses called Corporation Cottages which were for rent by low paid agricultural workers.

Finally Southwold Hospital is back in the news but for all the wrong reasons. The local health commissioning group – Health East – has launched a consultation into the possible closure of the hospital as part of wider changes but even before the consultation had finished, they announced it was having to close for three months anyway because of shortage of staff.

This begs the question of whether it will ever re-open. At the moment it is scheduled to stay closed until November when Health East is due to make the final decision on its future. If the decision is to close it down, will Health East bother to re-open it or just leave the doors locked and bolted. The signs are not good

John Perkins, Chairman