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Work starts on 23 new affordable homes in Eastington

THE village of Eastington is set to expand with 23 new affordable homes, thanks to a campaign by residents.

Villagers blocked five attempts by developers to build on plots of land in the village, some of which they have now bought for a community-led development.

After gaining government new housing funding for the project, construction has now started at Puddleworth Close, which will see a collection of houses, flats and bungalows available for Eastington's residents.

The project is being managed by Eastington's Community Land Trust, in partnership with housing association, Aster Group, who said the homes would be affordably rented to locals who might otherwise have to move elsewhere.

Jane Gallifent, at Aster Group, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for locals to secure a home in their village at a rent they can afford.

"Community-led projects like this are a great way for villagers to invest in their local area, and secure much-needed affordable housing for the long-term future of their community.

"Our partnership with Eastington Community Land Trust has culminated in reaching this important milestone and we are delighted to celebrate the start of the next stage and building homes that will meet the needs of the local community.

"As part of our commitments through the Aster Foundation, our corporate social responsibility initiative set up to benefit society, we aim to support a number of rural schemes each year to ensure the long-term future of our smallest towns and villages."

Tom Morrison, chair of Eastington Community Land Trust, said: "The delivery of this scheme demonstrates how local residents were able to play an important role in shaping the future provision of affordable housing in Eastington.

"In partnership with Aster Group and with the support of Stroud District Council and Homes England, we were able to choose a site and housing mix that put community needs ahead of profit. We will draw a lot from our experience of what was an ambitious maiden project for Eastington CLT and will continue to take a pro-active approach to address the identified housing need in our local community."

Mathew Vye, of construction firm EG Carter said: "We are delighted to have supported both Aster and the Eastington Community Land Trust to secure planning permission for this affordable housing development in Eastington and we are looking forward to delivering the new homes in 2020.

"The pre-contract phase of the project has been a fantastic advertisement for collaborative working to create a strong team base to take into the construction phase and we look forward to seeing the benefit this development will bring to the local community."

Councillor Chas Townley, Chair of Stroud District Council's Housing Committee said: "It's great to see these much-needed homes being delivered by the Eastington Community Land Trust. They have worked so hard to identify the local housing needs, prepare a very successful planning application and work with Aster to get the development on site.

"Stroud District Council successfully secured £443,000 in infrastructure funding for the site through Homes England.

"We encourage communities throughout the district to work together to provide community-led housing and can provide advice and some financial support to help schemes on their way as we have done at Eastington."

Homes England, EG Carter and Stroud Council joined Aster and Eastington Community Land Trust to celebrate the start of works on Friday, December 20.

The homes, which are being constructed by EG Carter & Co. Ltd are expected to be complete by winter 2020.