



And so, Rural Housing Association was born as a means by which the new rural housing policy could be implemented with its tripartite strategy approach to the provision of housing in rural areas:

- The Rehabilitation of single isolated dwellings in the countryside
- The provision of greenfield newbuild at crossroads and other rural settlements
- The provision and rehab/improvement of housing in village centres.

Fast forward 25 years and the new NIHE rural policy principles show the same level of commitment as that in the 1991 document. And at Rural Housing Association our board and staff are matching that commitment, working closely with our colleagues in the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities, helping to fight the good fight:

Over the last 25 years:

- we have provided 450 rural homes in areas where rural people wanted to live.
- we have helped provide rural schools with hundreds of new pupils.
- we have supported rural shops and post offices with extra business/income and rural builders with reasons not to drive their white van to Belfast or further afield for work.

Over the last 25 years we have helped build sustainable rural communities.

Now in 2017, Rural Housing Association aims to help fulfil that new rural strategy for the next 25 years. We have looked at Sean's 1991 principles again in depth and developed new tactics for their delivery.

A few years ago, we developed the Rural Design Guide for Social Housing in Northern Ireland. Our notion now is that all new schemes will reflect, respect and sustain local social and economic cultures and heritages of the landscape/environments that helped shape them with Rural standing against the growing suburbanisation and despoiling of rural Northern Ireland through the development of inappropriate house styles, layouts, surrounds and gardens, and entrances.

These ideals are now woven into our development aspirations both in social and

affordable housing. Our design teams now have to explain to us how they will be able to provide more than just the standard house types. We now expect flexibility in the design of our developments to reflect the variety of our locations and to see that modern design and technology, local characteristics and even the sites historical use can all be merged to provide houses that “look and feel the part”.

Together with our sister housing associations, our colleagues in the Rural Community Network, the NIHE and the Department for Communities, we look forward to helping build sustainable rural communities for the next 25 years.

Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Rural.