

# Countryside Matters



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# How we can help to fix broken housing market

**Living as we do in a part** of the world where house prices are many times greater than average wages, the moves in the latest Housing White Paper to recognise the increasingly important role of the rented sector are encouraging. The Department for Communities and Local Government, in releasing the White Paper, named it *Fixing our broken housing market*.

Broken it surely is. Survey after survey makes gloomy reading for young people wanting homes of their own in the South West of England. BNP Paribas Real Estate estimates that by 2020 house prices in the region will be a third higher than in 2016, reaching an average of £291,184. That 33% rise is way above London's predicted growth rate of 16%. The Halifax Rural Housing Review of 2016 calculates that homes in the countryside typically cost £43,000, or 20%, more than those in urban areas, with buyers attracted by open spaces, a cleaner environment and a better quality of life.

Add to that the relatively lower wages in the countryside and the dream of home ownership is moving increasingly out of reach of many rural residents and workers. This affordability gap is not just an issue for individuals and families, but for the

futures of the very communities they want to live in. The statistics used in the White Paper show that, in terms of home ownership, parts of Devon are as unaffordable as large swathes of London. Such situations are, as the paper rightly points out, likely to be damaging to the entire economy: low levels of building mean less work for everyone involved in the construction chain, from architects and builders to the people who make kitchen sinks.

And the more housing costs take out of wages and pensions, the less money people have to spend in the rest of the economy. Further, high rents caused by a shortage of properties mean more Housing Benefit needs to be paid out. Finally, employers may struggle to recruit the best workers if they can't afford to be mobile and move to where the jobs are.

The White Paper draws attention to the need to release land for development, to build faster and diversify the market whilst also offering solutions and help now.

Much of it focuses on urban areas, and many of the solutions won't necessarily translate into the

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countryside with its own specific housing issues. Among the challenges the paper highlights are concerns among communities about the impact of new housing. It says: "People are more likely to support new mansion blocks or mews houses on a derelict strip of land than a new estate in countryside."

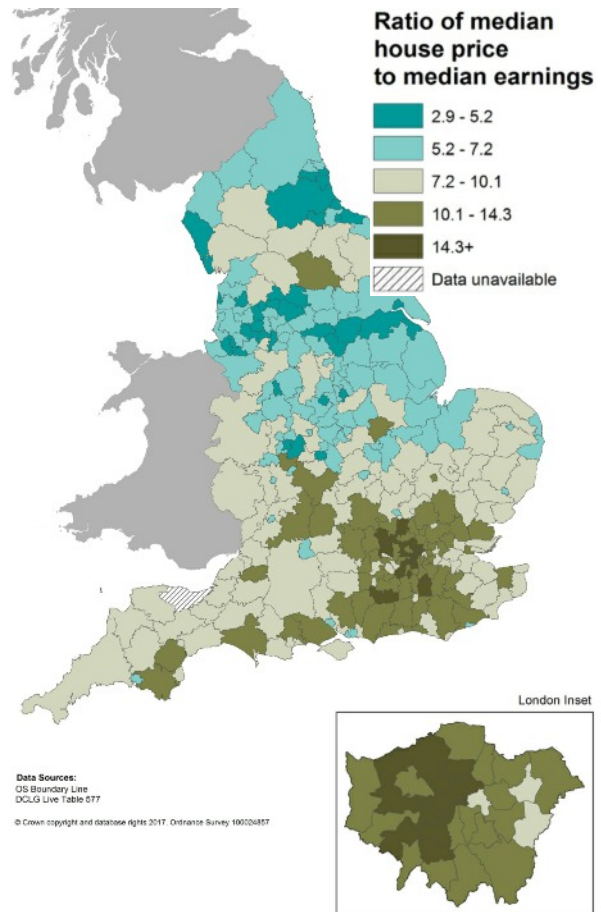
Many of the proposed measures are common to town and country. The pace of development, suggests the White Paper, is too slow. Suggested solutions include ensuring that councils' development plans are robust and up-to-date and that their planning departments are adequately resourced. Extra funding for these departments could come from higher fees charged to applicants. The plan to recognise affordable rent as a specific affordable designation for planning purposes must also be welcomed in both city and countryside, as should the added clarity over the affordable status of Starter Homes.

Estates Director of Clinton Devon Estates John Varley explains the position of rural estates in this climate: "Rural estates are in a unique position to be able to respond to many societal demands, none more so than the government's agenda of meeting housing demands whilst also protecting the environment; increasing biodiversity through landscape-scale conservation; managing natural resources through high standards of agriculture and land management practices, all the while contributing positively to society and providing much-needed food, energy and employment, directly and indirectly.

"Large land owners can be part of a solution in facilitating change and innovation required across the housing industry to meet society's needs."

The paper highlights the need to include local communities in decision making about where development should be located, and the need to support small and medium sized sites in rural communities.

Mr Varley added: "A lack of sustainable development in our rural communities, far from helping to preserve them, is putting them at risk. The population is continuing to grow, and to grow older. This means we need more housing, and a greater mix of properties. If working people cannot afford to live in the countryside they will move away in search of homes and jobs in towns and cities, skewing the balance of the rural population. Without farm workers to manage the countryside it will change beyond recognition. Without people to work in pharmacies, post offices and village shops, they will close. Without children, and without teachers and support staff, village schools will close.



The Government's housing affordability map of England based on median earnings

The communities which are currently so attractive will rapidly decline, victims of, if not their own success, their own attractiveness.

"The solution is to provide appropriate, sustainable development, brought forward in response to identified need. The longer it takes to get approval for a new development of any size, the more expensive – less affordable – each home becomes, lessening its effectiveness in solving the housing crisis. Decision-making needs to be more straightforward, including the appeals process, so local people and those seeking to provide them with the homes they need can both enjoy more certainty."

Ross Murray, president of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) said of the White Paper: "Rural areas need homes too. It is disappointing that ministers have focused so completely on the need to build homes in and around our towns and cities. This leaves big questions about how we will meet the specific housing needs of young and old people in our villages and leaves a question over how the government will deliver on its commitment to delivering growth across all parts of the country."





A new housing development at Greenway Lane in Budleigh Salterton won a Gold Award from What House?

He added: "We understand that planning departments are under-resourced, but we can see big downsides of a 40% increase in fees for smaller applicants. It could well be counterproductive, stopping small developments being brought forward. This problem will be compounded by the risk of prohibitive appeal fees. We will urge Government to look closely at the impact of these fee hikes on rural developments."

Despite the focus of this latest White Paper on towns and cities, the existing National Planning Policy Framework underlines the fact that rural areas have their own housing issues. It says: "It is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements. A thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities."

The Rural Services Network has long campaigned on this issue, and says: "Rural communities should be places where people from different age groups and backgrounds can live. Yet house purchase and rental costs are frequently beyond groups such as young adults, families and those on ordinary wages, displacing those with a local connection. Over time this changes the nature of rural communities and risks turning many into retirement or dormitory

settlements for the better off. It undermines the future sustainability of rural areas and their economies. It is a concern that is frequently raised by rural communities. Whilst true that major development proposals in rural areas often attract a hostile reaction from those living nearby, who would be most affected, there is typically community support for smaller-scale developments offering affordable homes that will address local needs."

But while there may be support from communities for such small-scale development, it is recognised by many, including the Local Government Association, that such development is likely to be harder to achieve, because of a range of factors from restrictive development regulations, sensitive design requirements, limited sites, and local opposition. There is clearly no silver bullet to respond to the rural housing crisis, no simple change of policy is going to provide a permanent fix.

In December 2015, Clinton Devon Estates, working alongside architects LHC, family home builders Cavanna Homes and the Cornerstone Housing Association, was hailed by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as a model of how country estates can play their part. Their joint development of new houses on estate land at Greenway Lane, Budleigh Salterton, saw 40 per cent of the total of 48 new homes dedicated as social housing for local people. The project was also recognised at the house building industry's 'What

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Affordable housing is part of the mix at Greenway Lane in Budleigh Salterton

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House?’ Awards. Given a Gold award, the judges commented that the Budleigh Salterton project contributed to building a ‘budding new community’.

Clinton Devon Estates is continuing this work as it seeks to find pockets of land appropriate for housing, much of which would be designated as affordable for local people. In East Budleigh, for instance, the estate is planning to build five new homes on land near its former offices, three of which would be designated affordable.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) recognises the role of estates in helping to shape sustainable communities. Its November 2016 paper, *On Solid Ground: Encouraging landowners to invest in rural affordable housing*, says: “There is a pressing need to provide additional rural affordable housing, and rural landowners have a key role to play in helping to meet this need. As providers of a range of services to local rural communities throughout the country, rural landowners will have a strong affinity with the local area, and are often deeply embedded in a range of activities affecting the local population.”

The CPRE report does not necessarily set out its official position on housing delivery, but does help to identify a number of policy solutions, which focuses on two main models of provision. The first model is similar to Greenway Lane, but highlights one major constraint – that of deciding who may be eligible to live in the properties. Many local authorities and housing associations have pooled resources to run choice-based lettings systems across a wide area, based on need. The CPRE suggests this broad approach may be leading to a

lack of suitable sites being released, as landowners may want their properties to benefit people with strong local community ties. The CPRE suggests there is a case for a new government policy which would allow landowners a greater say on nomination rights, provided applicants meet statutory criteria.

The second model put forward by the CPRE is, on the face of it, more straightforward with a bigger part to play for landowners who will construct and lease the property directly, as well as take responsibility for all aspects of the property management and maintenance. The CPRE states that this is more likely to be attractive to estate owners or large-scale farmers: “They are also likely to be important employers in the local area, and keen to provide accommodation for their workforce to prevent them from being priced out of the area. With local authorities trying to ensure that affordable housing is provided to all those on waiting lists, it is crucial that a strong case is made to ensure that those with a local connection benefit from the housing provided.”

A major constraint identified in this model by the CPRE is the tax implication. Any expenditure over income is not eligible for income tax relief in the year the loss is incurred. Consequently, any losses made on letting at below market rates cannot be offset against other taxable income and can only be carried forward to set against future rental profits – should any be made. Nor is there any capital gains tax rollover relief for landowners, further discouraging investment in affordable rural housing. The CPRE paper concludes that the motivation for rural landowners is because many desire: “local people to be able to access affordable housing within their communities.”



# With help from Friends, ancient hillfort is saved

**A partnership** formed by Clinton Devon Estates, Historic England, local people and a team of dedicated enthusiasts has been instrumental in helping preserve a nationally important Iron Age hillfort. The Friends of Berry Castle was set up early in 2015 and made such great progress that in just two years the ancient fort was removed from Historic England's Heritage At Risk Register.

John Wilding, Clinton Devon Estates' Head of Forestry and Environmental Economy, said: "In some ways, this success at Berry Castle is down to larch disease! Berry Castle was pretty much undisturbed for hundreds of years under the protective cover of woodland. But then the larch crop immediately adjacent was infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*, which is a pretty nasty tree disease. The plant health notice which was issued meant there was a real risk of windblow damaging the monument. So we acted promptly to remove tree cover, safeguarding the monument. The formation of the Friends of Berry Castle and the dedication the site has inspired is a very positive outcome from what appeared at first to have been a very bad situation."

The chair of the Friends of Berry Castle is Audrey Alimo. She takes up the story:

After many years undisturbed in woodland on Clinton Devon Estates land in Huntshaw, Berry Castle

has been removed from Historic England's At Risk Register. This great achievement has come about as a result of collaboration between Clinton Devon Estates, Historic England and a recently formed Friends of Berry Castle. Berry Castle is an Iron Age hillfort that is estimated to be 2,600 years old. The site covers almost two hectares, located on a wooded hilltop overlooking a steeply sloping isolated river valley in Huntshaw, North Devon. It was placed on the Heritage At Risk Register in 2010 being largely planted and worked as part of a commercial coniferous plantation, and subject to damage and anti-social behaviour.

The Friends of Berry Castle (FOB) is the umbrella term for the partnership group formed from Clinton Devon Estates, local people from surrounding parishes and other interested parties, who work together to rescue and secure the future of a remote and nationally important scheduled monument, located in one of Britain's most deprived rural districts, Torridge. The main aims of the project were to rescue, recover and preserve the site for the future and to facilitate wider enjoyment of the site by local people and enthusiasts.

The landowners form part of FOB and coordinated the first major capital works phase of the project, which involved clearing the site of the conifer trees.

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Berry Castle Hillfort in North Devon has been removed from Historic England's At Risk Register

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The Estate has now withdrawn the site from commercial forestry and agreed it will be managed as a woodland clearing dedicated to the preservation and display of the hillfort. Permissive access has been agreed and Clinton Devon Estates provide support and training to FOB members.

A positive management regime has now been implemented which involves FOB volunteers removing vegetation debris and timber from the site, preparing it for regeneration of a more appropriate, less damaging ground cover. Around 40 local army cadets undertook part of their Duke of Edinburgh service through attending site clearance days. The clearance work encourages soft native vegetation and wild flowers to colonise the clearing.

FOB's work has facilitated greater public engagement and access and over the past year social events including a very successful open day have been held on site. Transport to on-site events is provided for less-abled access.

Four local newsletters are produced each year and some members are now presenting at meetings. FOB have affiliated with the North Devon Archaeological Society and now link into wider archaeological themes and projects. Young people have been inspired to undertake a creative writing

project about the site. FOB also monitor the site against damage from activities such as mountain biking, off-road 4x4 racing and antisocial behaviour, reporting to Clinton Devon Estates and Historic England.

The final phase of the work is to work towards a better understanding and interpretation of Berry Castle. Over the past six months two geophysical surveys, an earthworks survey, a dowsing survey, drone aerial photography and an ecological survey have been conducted. The results of the recent surveys are being analysed and it is possible that a small-scale excavation will be conducted in the near future which will complete the research programme. The information gained from the research will be used to develop a series of interpretation boards placed in strategic positions around the site.

The Friends of Berry Castle are grateful for the ongoing support of Clinton Devon Estates and for the permissive rights granted to the group. The friends would also like to acknowledge support from Alverdiscott and Huntshaw Parish Council, Weare Giffard Parish Council, The Coastal Recycling Community Fund, Torrington Cavaliers, Tamar and Devon Dowsers and Ian Kevern of Skyz Inc.



To see the site in all its glory, go to: <https://youtu.be/jQpCxrCVsZU>

### Previous successes

**A focal point for our ancient ancestors:** More than 3,000 years before the birth of Christ, our ancient ancestors were hard at work at High Peak Camp, near Otterton in East Devon, creating what is known as a causewayed enclosure, to serve as focal point for, perhaps, feasting or rituals. Modern-day excavations have unearthed polished stone axes from Cornwall, and a fragment of an axe from the Alps.

Many hundreds of years later, after the Romans left Britain, and High Peak was once again an important place for the inhabitants of East Devon, as our early medieval ancestors built a fortified settlement there. Storage jars found there suggest the sixth century residents were part of a wide trade network, in wine, oil or olives from Europe.

Today the land is owned by Clinton Devon Estates, who felled trees to open up the site to assist preservation work – and provide stunning views into the bargain!

Like Berry Castle, High Peak is a Scheduled Monument. Following work by the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in conjunction with the Estates, to protect it, it was removed from the At Risk Register in 2012.

**Bronze Age barrow recognised by Historic England:** Bowl barrows are ancient monuments to our departed ancestors. These mounds made of earth or rubble cover single or multiple burials, and can be found across lowland Britain.

They first appeared in the late Neolithic period, and most date from 2400 to 1500 BC. A Bronze Age barrow a few metres north of the disused Petrockstow Station in north Devon, in the Heathermoor Plantation, is said to have survived comparatively well.

It is a scheduled ancient monument, described by Historic England as "a 33.8m diameter circular flat-topped mound standing up to 1.65m high. The surrounding ditch from which material to construct the mound was derived is preserved as a 2m wide buried feature."

Careful management of the site and its surroundings by landowner Clinton Devon Estates is contributing to the long-term survival of the site, and it was removed from Historic England's At Risk Register in 2010.



Volunteers gather at Berry  
Castle Hillfort.  
Pictures by Ian Kevern/Skyz Inc





# Musical duo exchange London for Liverton

**Two of the UK's leading** music mastering engineers have moved their studios to Exmouth – and are now working just two doors apart!

Mike Marsh and Simon Davey were colleagues at The Exchange Mastering Studios in London for many years, but when the landlord said the building where they worked was being turned into flats they set up separate studios in different parts of the country.

Mike moved back to his home county of Devon and set up Mike Marsh Mastering at the Liverton Business Park in Exmouth, owned by Clinton Devon Estates, while Simon founded The Exchange Vinyl in Hertfordshire. But Simon was again forced to up sticks, and after Mike told him about Liverton, he took a unit just a few yards from his former workmate, opening for business in January

Mike's client list includes Oasis, Calvin Harris and the Chemical Brothers, and he has also worked on tracks by bands from ABC to Zoot Woman, via Depeche Mode, Erasure, Massive Attack, The Prodigy and dozens of others. He said: "Liverton has to be the best business park in East Devon, if not all of Devon. It's obviously important to me that my business is in a great location, but it's equally important that it's in the right place for my clients.

"My work involves mastering audio for CDs, DVDs, digital downloads and vinyl for a wide range of musicians, including International Pop, Hip-Hop, R&B and Rock artists, so good communications are obviously very important. The communications here are very good: some of my clients fly in from Italy, France, Germany or Spain, and we're only 15 minutes from Exeter International Airport. We've also had clients fly from Canada to London and get the train down to Devon. There's a really good rail link from Exmouth to the main line at Exeter. And Exmouth is an ideal place for clients to stay, with plenty of choice of hotel accommodation and food outlets. Many have commented how waking up in the morning at their hotel, whilst looking out to sea, has such a relaxing influence and readies them for a busy day ahead! The high-speed broadband is excellent here too.

"We get 75MB download and 20MB upload, which is about as good as you can get anywhere in the country. I think my fellow tenants take pride in

being part of Liverton. The place is very well managed by Clinton Devon Estates, it looks nice, it's kept tidy and the security is very good. There's also plenty of parking, which is important for visiting clients."

Estates Surveyor Adrian Pitts, from Clinton Devon Estates, said: "The Liverton Business Park provides employment space for a wide variety of enterprises, creating jobs and contributing to the economy of Exmouth, East Devon and beyond. The location, facilities and easy access mean Liverton is very popular with the public – and with businesses looking to expand or relocate. We have recently completed the new Harpford Units, which are already generating a great deal of interest from new tenants."

Simon added: "Mike really sold Liverton to me – everything he says about it is true. Many creative people are being squeezed out of London by a shortage of suitable premises at reasonable rents. But Exmouth is so well connected that in many ways I could be back in London – just without the disadvantages like the long commutes. The majority of my work arrives over the internet nowadays, so it really doesn't matter if I am not actually in London!"

Having worked on releases by Emeli Sande, Dizzee Rascal, Calvin Harris, The Swedish House Mafia, The Spice Girls and Tinie Tempah among many others, Simon has recently decided to concentrate on mastering music mainly for vinyl records.

He said: "At the moment I would say that around 95 per cent of my work is mastering vinyl records. Many people don't realise that an album can take many months to record and mix in the studio, often with different producers working on different tracks at different times. My job is to bring all that together so the sound is consistent. Mastering is the last chance to get the music sounding its best before the public get to hear it."

Vinyl records are currently enjoying a resurgence, with sales at the end of 2016 hitting £2.5 million a week compared to £2.1m for digital downloads.

Simon said: "A lot of young kids have come to the vinyl market for the first time and are discovering the joy of going to a record shop, choosing a piece of vinyl and taking it home and listening to it.





Simon Davey, left, and Mike Marsh have set up studios at Clinton Devon Estates' Liverton Business Park

Downloading music isn't enough for a lot of music listeners now, they are enjoying the fun element of vinyl. Most downloaded digital tracks are in the MP3 file format which is compressed to save space and download more quickly and so have a certain sound, when it comes to vinyl it is a totally different listening experience.

"The resurgence of vinyl has also rekindled the interests of the older generation. A lot of people in their 50s and 60s are getting their turntables down from the loft and enjoying vinyl again too."



To find out more about Liverton Business Park, please go to [www.clintondevon.com](http://www.clintondevon.com).

# New face on patrol on the Pebblebed Heaths

**If you have been enjoying** the stunning beauty of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths recently, you may well have come across the area's new conservation steward on patrol.

Sama Euridge has been tasked with helping the public understand the importance of some of the most important landscapes of south and east Devon. Sama, officially called a Habitat Mitigation Officer, is now working on the heaths, as well as the Exe Estuary and Dawlish Warren, helping people get the most out of the landscape while at the same time explaining why it is precious and needs protecting.

Sama said: "I meet and greet walkers, cyclists, dog owners and nature enthusiasts alike, ensuring everyone gets the very best from our natural spaces, without accidentally causing damage to the habitat or detriment to wildlife. I answer questions on heathland management, conservation grazing, birds, botany, and local regulations. The reception I have

had has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone I have met has been so pleased to see me in post, helping to protect the heathland that they love. I feel welcomed into a community.

"I think the best part of the job for me is talking to people about their relationships with the heath and with nature. It is a passion that connects us all - even if you aren't interested in heathland birds or butterflies and just love a good yomp with the dog. Once I understand people's relationships with our wild spaces, I can communicate effectively and guide their behaviours to ensure damage to these special places is prevented.

"If everyone I talk to learns just one new fact, or is enthused a little bit about our natural heritage, then I believe that respect for these places, and our desire to conserve them, will grow. We must learn to share this space with the wildlife that lives here and behave responsibly. It's about coexisting in harmony."

Sama is employed by East Devon District Council on behalf of a partnership with Exeter and Teignbridge councils called the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership, set up to help protect the natural environment in the face of increasing visitor numbers. The partnership also includes Clinton Devon Estates, the Exe Estuary Management Partnership, Devon Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, and funding has come via contributions from developers of new housing across the three council areas.

Kate Ponting, the Countryside Learning Officer for Clinton Devon Estates, said: "The Pebblebed Heaths are recognised nationally and internationally as being among the most important conservation sites in Europe, and help to support more than 3,000 different species, 300 of which are of special conservation significance.

"Just as importantly, they are incredibly well loved by local people of all ages who visit the heaths to be able to enjoy this wonderful natural environment. The Estates, through the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, employ dedicated wardens who work with the local community, and many enthusiastic volunteers, to help care for this special place for both people and wildlife. We very much welcome the opportunity to work in close partnership with local councils and the new mitigation officers to further protect and enhance the heaths for the benefit of all."



Sama at work at Dawlish Warren, above, and with Clinton Devon Estates' Kate Ponting on the Pebblebed Heaths, right







# Beetles enlisted to save the spruce - from beetles

**Spruce is one of** our nation's most important commercial tree species, and it's under attack. The great spruce bark beetle was, scientists believe, brought to the UK among imported timber around 30 years ago, and since then has become an established pest in Western England and in Wales.

It attacks, and breeds in, all species of spruce grown in Britain. The female burrows into the tree, and lays its eggs under the bark. The larvae feed on the wood under the bark, and if left unchecked, will eventually kill the tree, and spread to its neighbours. An infested tree appears to be bleeding resin. Browning foliage over the crown is another symptom.

Because of its potential to cause damage not just to trees, but also the rural economy, much research has focused on how best to tackle the beetle. And the best answer is, it appears, another beetle.

John Wilding, Head of Forestry and Environment for Clinton Devon Estates, said: "Wood is the ultimate renewable resource and timber from well managed forests can be better than carbon neutral. Each year we harvest around 20,000 tonnes of timber, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, for use locally and beyond for building material, fencing, and fuel.

"So it's vitally important that we are able to tackle the range of natural threats to our forests, including the great spruce bark beetle, which, if left uncontrolled, can lead to forest death."

Working in conjunction with Forest Research,



The great spruce bark beetle, above, has become an established pest. But Clinton Devon Estates are fighting back, with the R Grandis beetle, below

Pictures: Forest Research

part of the Forestry Commission, John decided to enlist nature to control the pest. He said: "We've recorded the great spruce bark beetle in forests near Hawkerland for three or four years, and the Forestry Commission recommend a completely natural prey to help tackle it. It's a tiny beetle known as *Rhizophagus grandis* which has only one source of food – the great spruce bark beetle. R Grandis, as it's known, is specially bred in the lab to be introduced to infested trees and fight the problem head-on.

"The female R Grandis eats only the eggs of the great spruce bark, and her larvae will similarly attack the unwanted invader, so the use of this one species of beetle to attack another much more damaging one is a very neat, natural solution. R Grandis just won't eat anything else, and certainly doesn't cause any damage to the spruce tree. If it has no prey it will just die out but, that said, it is very good at tracking down its food!"







Billy Warren, Wayne Morgan and Simon Savage, from Toolstation, celebrate the opening of their new Liverton Business Park branch with Leigh Rix, right, Head of Property and Land at Clinton Devon Estates

## Move to Exmouth unit creates seven new jobs

**One of Britain's** fastest growing trade businesses has opened its latest branch at Liverton Business Park in Exmouth with the creation of seven new jobs.

Toolstation is the first company to move into the new Harpford Units at Liverton Business Park, built by Clinton Devon Estates to support economic growth in Exmouth and the wider East Devon. The company, which supplies tools, accessories and building equipment to the trade and home improvers, was founded in 2003 and is rapidly expanding with over 250 branches nationwide and a further 30 in the pipeline this year.

Philip MacLaughlan, agent for Toolstation, said: "Exmouth was on a list of target locations for the company and Liverton Business Park's Harpford Units were able to provide exactly what we needed. It will also be mutually beneficial to be close to neighbours who operate in complimentary businesses."

Leigh Rix, Head of Property and Land for Clinton Devon Estates said: "Toolstation are the first to move into the new Harpford Units on Liverton Business Park and we are very pleased to have been

able to support their business growth plan which has created seven new jobs in Exmouth. There has been a huge amount of interest in the six Harpford Units since we completed construction at the end of last year and we reserved all but one of them."

Andrew Hosking of Stratton Creber Commercial who introduced Toolstation, negotiated the terms and, together with joint agent Malcolm Williams of Harrison Lavers and Potburys, is marketing The Harpford Units. He said: "To have secured such a major tenant as the first occupier in this new development is particularly pleasing, as is the speed with which the transaction was completed."

Four of the Harpford Units are 1,250 sq ft (116m<sup>2</sup>) and two are 2,500 sq ft (232m<sup>2</sup>) with roller doors, ample parking and an option for a counter and mezzanine floor. Liverton Business Park opened in the 1990s to serve Exmouth and East Devon and in recent years has been expanded to alleviate the shortage of serviced employment space in the town.

In 2013 a new five-hectare site to the north of the park opened, offering purpose-built space for light industry, storage and distribution.



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