

# Community Right to Bid for Assets of Community Value

## Nomination Form

**Please read the attached notes before completing this form.**

Please note, if you are collecting personal data such as names and addresses from individuals in order to create an 'unincorporated body', you have a duty to ensure that individuals are shown the following privacy notice. The Council will accept no responsibility for any breach of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Protection Data Regulation (GPDR) if individuals claim they did not see this notice or were not aware of the rationale for collecting their data. **We recommend using the template attached to the end of this form at Appendix 1 for unincorporated body nominations.**

### Privacy Notice

The information contained in this form is processed by the Valuation and Strategic Assets Team to carry out their statutory duties to respond to nominations pertaining to legislation in the 2011 Localism Act 'Assets of Community Value'. The purpose of this form is to check the nomination is valid in accordance with S89 of the 2011 Localism Act. The information contained in this form may be shared with the Electoral Services department of Lambeth Council and adjoining local authority boroughs and as required by law. For full details of our privacy notice, and a description of your rights, please refer to [www.lambeth.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

### Section 1 – About you

Your Title:  Forename:  Surname:

Address:

Postcode:  Telephone:

**Section 2 – About your voluntary or community group**

<b>Name of Organisation:</b>	The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre CIO (Registered Charity Number 1193643)
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<b>Address:</b>	1b Sunnyhill Road
	London

<b>Postcode</b>	<b>SW16 2UG</b>	<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>020 3582 4912</b>
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<b>Email Address:</b>	info@streathamhilltheatre.org
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<b>Your position in the organisation:</b>	Chairman
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**What type of voluntary or community organisation do you belong to? Tick the appropriate box(es)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> A company limited by guarantee
<input type="checkbox"/> An unincorporated body with at least 21 members	<input type="checkbox"/> An industrial and provident society
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A charity	<input type="checkbox"/> A community interest company

**Please state what your organisation does and what its main activities are (a) within the London Borough of Lambeth and (b) outside the borough if applicable.**

<p>The objects of the charity are:</p> <p>(a) To protect, preserve and restore for the benefit of the people of Streatham, of South London, and of the nation at large, the building known as Streatham Hill Theatre and situated in Streatham Hill, London SW2, its historical, architectural and constructional features, and its environs;</p> <p>(b) To promote, maintain, improve, assist and advance public access, participation, appreciation and understanding in all aspects of the arts and culture including (but not limited to) design, architecture, drama, theatre, poetry, the spoken word, literature, mime, circus, magic, opera, music, dance, singing, art, photography and cinematography.</p> <p>Note that the charity is run entirely by volunteers.</p>
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<b>How many members does your organisation have?</b>	c. 1200 across all categories
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**If your organisation has a constitution, please attach a copy with this nomination form.**

~~**If the organisation is an unincorporated body, please use the attached form to list the names and addresses of 21 members who are registered to vote in the London Borough of Lambeth or neighbouring boroughs.**~~

**Section 3 – About the property to be nominated and its use**

**Name and address of the Property**

<b>Streatham Hill Theatre</b>
<b>110 Streatham Hill</b>
<b>London</b>

**Postcode:**

**SW2 4RD**

Please provide the following:

1. A description of the property, its proposed boundaries and its use. If possible, please attach a site plan.

The whole of the Property above, known as **Streatham Hill Theatre**, formerly Streatham Hill Playhouse, latterly a Bingo Hall. See attached Site Plan below.

**A History of Social Use:**

The Property is **Grade 2 listed**, is recognised as **at risk** by Historic England, is situated in a **Conservation Area**, and is an **Asset of Community Value**.

The Property was built as a theatre in 1928/9, by architects WGR Sprague – the well-renowned theatre architect – and WH Barton. It opened and operated as a theatre from 1929. It was the fourth largest theatre in London when built, and presented “*west end shows at provincial prices*”.

It was damaged by bombing in 1944 then restored and reopened as a theatre in 1950. It remained a theatre until 1962. As a theatre it presented a wide range of entertainment: plays, revues, concerts, opera, ballet, pantomimes, film etc.

In 1962 it was taken over by Mecca Social Club as the largest bingo hall in Britain. It operated as a social club and bingo hall under various operators until 2017 (as Beacon Bingo). It also staged some shows, pantomimes, wrestling etc. in the early part of this period.

In 1994 the theatre was granted a Grade 2 listing as “*an unusually lavish example of a theatre built in the short-lived revival of building in 1929-30; as a suburban example of this date the building may be unique*”. Refer to: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1244564>

The book “*The Streatham Hill Theatre – The Story of a Suburban Theatre*” by John Cresswell documents the history of the theatre until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Published by Streatham Society in 2000, ISBN 0950443166 and available from The Friends.

From 2013 the theatre also hosted events and exhibitions for the annual Streatham Festival, and Film Festival. Local open-access Streatham Theatre Company has staged performances, promenade site-specific performances, and guided tours attracting the community to the theatre.

The Arthur Lloyd Theatre History website has a good article concerning the theatre. Refer to <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Streatham.htm#hilltheatre>.

The Friends’ Statement of Heritage Significance shows the importance of the building in much more detail <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/press/SHT%20Statement%20of%20Heritage%20Significance%200%28Web%29.pdf>. [Attachment 6]. It summarises:

*The Streatham Hill Theatre is significant on a number of levels: its place in the work of the original architect W.G.R Sprague, being a rare example of interwar suburban theatre buildings, its aesthetic completeness, quality and scale - and its role in the collective cultural memory of its local community.*

In 2018 the theatre was added to the Theatres Trust register of theatres at risk and remains on that list. Refer to

[http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/assets/000/000/799/2018\\_TheatresTrust\\_Theatresatrisk\\_assessment\\_register\\_and\\_map\\_web\\_original.pdf?1516114610](http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/assets/000/000/799/2018_TheatresTrust_Theatresatrisk_assessment_register_and_map_web_original.pdf?1516114610),  
<http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk/484-streatham-hill-theatre> and  
<https://database.theatrestrust.org.uk/resources/theatres/show/2522-streatham-hill>

Also in 2018, Lambeth Council approved our nomination of Streatham Hill Theatre as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), confirmed in early 2019 after a review requested by the owners and our flashmob demonstration. More detail is presented in the next section and in the Attachments below.

In 2021, Historic England added the Theatre to its Heritage at Risk register – refer to <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/212434> - noting

*There is flooding in the basement subways causing deterioration of the fabric and other areas show signs of water ingress.*

And in 2022, Save Britain's Heritage added it to their Buildings at Risk register. Refer to <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/campaigns/item/796/SAVE-Me-Im-Yours-New-Entries-List-in-full#:~:text=South%20East-,Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre,-%2C%2011%20Streatham%20Hill.>

It is also on the Art Deco Society's Heritage at Risk list. Refer to <https://artdecosociety.uk/buildings-at-risk/#:~:text=Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre>

The Friends' Statement of Heritage Risk collates the at-risk information to date [Attachment 7] <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/press/Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre%20-%20Statement%20of%20Heritage%20Risk.pdf> .

The building remains classified by the Valuation Office Agency as a Bingo Hall (SCAT 025S) for business rating purposes – this is a *sui generis* Use Class <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/business-rates-find/valuations/start/91727075>. [Attachment 10]

The Gambling Commission lists a continuing bingo licence for the premises [Attachment 9]. Refer to <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-register/premises/detail/NDQ2Vkk> .

The Lambeth property database shows more information about the building's planning and licencing history. Refer to <https://planning.lambeth.gov.uk/online-applications/propertyDetails.do?activeTab=relatedCases&keyVal=004L5YBOLI000>.

#### **A Viable Future Social Use:**

The Streatham Investment and Growth Strategy 2019-2030 sets out plans to explore opportunities for the theatre as part of a wider regeneration strategy for Streatham that aims to: challenge perceptions and attract inward Investment to Streatham; diversify the town centre economy; provide space for growth and enterprise; improve the resident and visitor experience; and progress development opportunities. Refer to [https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s115279/Appendix%201\\_Streatham%20Investment%20Growth%20Strategy.pdf](https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s115279/Appendix%201_Streatham%20Investment%20Growth%20Strategy.pdf). It states that

*Successfully restoring this building would bring significant improvements to the public realm and historic/cultural fabric of the area, as well as delivering against a number of other objectives presented in this strategy (e.g. Strengthening and Diversifying the Town Centre).*

The 2020-2035 Lambeth Local Plan (PDF) states:

*The former Streatham Hill theatre is Grade II listed and provides a transformative opportunity to provide a major leisure and entertainment venue with the potential for workspace for creative, digital and cultural industries.*

As proven by a viability study and economic impact assessment which reported in 2021, the property can be brought back into use quickly for arts and cultural purposes, starting by continuing and expanding such activities which had to cease when the building closed, then through a phased programme of restoration to support further activities. The study was funded by 400 supporters, The Mayor of London, Theatres

Trust and Lambeth. The summary viability report is attached [Attachment 8], and is supported by considerably more material which can be made available. Refer to <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/press/Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre%20Viability%20Study%20Summary%20-%20Digital.pdf>. It summarises:

*The Viability Study and Economic Impact Assessment ... shows how the refurbishment of the currently under-utilised former Streatham Hill Theatre (the Theatre) is a real opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the regeneration of Streatham as a major town centre and to addressing inequalities in a diverse and up-and-coming area of Lambeth and South London.*

*With the right circumstances, and a significant level of third-party capital investment in retro-fitting and refurbishment, the ongoing operation of the Theatre as a leisure and entertainment venue promoting arts and culture, is a viable long-term proposition. This project will involve overcoming challenges, but has the potential to generate footfall, jobs and economic growth, leveraging support from key stakeholders such as Lambeth Council and the GLA.*

A theatre company that Theatres Trust and The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre were supporting had been in discussion with the freeholder regarding purchasing the Property [Attachment 11]. However, in May 2022 it was reported that the theatre had been sold to another buyer – a property development company. Despite the efforts of the campaign group to discuss options on the theatre, the building was then rapidly sold onward at a reportedly vast increase in price to church group, the Rauch City Church. The Church currently has a base in neighbouring Brixton but had been seeking a new property. The Church also owns the Grade II\* listed Gaumont State, Kilburn.

Rauch City Church will need to apply for planning permission for a change of use to enable use for public worship or religious instruction. Should the Church be successful in an application for change of use to a church, that would constitute a social use.

The Friends, the theatre company, Lambeth and Theatres Trust are all seeking discussions with the Church to understand if there may be opportunity for a shared theatre and / or community use of the Property, which would also constitute a social use.

**2. The name(s) of the current occupants/users of the property (if known)**

- a) Ruach City Church (building unused pending planning application for relocation from Brixton)
- b) Merkur Cashino (slot machines in part of ground floor only)

**3. The name(s) and current or last known addresses of all owners i.e., those holding a freehold or leasehold interest in the property (if known)**

- a) Freeholder: Ruach City Church, 122 Brixton Hill, London, SW2 1RS.
- b) Leaseholder: Merkur Casino UK (part of Gauselmann Group of Germany), Seebeck House, 1a Seebeck Place, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK5 8FR.

*Note at the time of writing the Land Registry does not show the most recent updates to freehold and leases. We understand another lease to Mecca has been terminated.*

**Are similar alternative facilities available in the area and do you know of any proposals to move the existing facilities to alternative premises.**

Yes

No

(Tick one box)

**If yes, please provide details**

- a) There are **no similar facilities** in the area. A new theatre space (Streatham Space Project) opened nearby but is much, much smaller (capacity c. 120 v 2,500 at Streatham Hill) and does not have the same range of ancillary facilities. Streatham Hill Theatre and the Streatham Space Project would complement each other as part of Streatham's arts and cultural offering.
- b) The **existing facilities are currently disused**, apart from a small slot machine lounge which may move out at some future date.

#### Section 4 – Information to support the nomination

**Please state your reasons for thinking that the Council should conclude that the property is of Community Value and provide as much information as you can to support your application (to be continued on a separate sheet of paper if necessary).**

Please refer also to the information in Section 1 above and the pertinent documents which are attached below.

The property is currently an Asset of Community Value, since 2 July 2018.

- On 21 May 2018 The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre applied to list Streatham Hill Theatre as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011. [Attachment 1]
- On 02 July 2018, following a review by the Assessment Panel, Lambeth Council agreed that the above asset complies with criteria set out by the Localism Act 2011 and/or Asset of Community Value Regulations 2012, and registered the property as an Asset of Community Value. [Attachment 2]
- On 30 August 2018 Beacon Bingo Ltd (the owner at the time) sought an appeal. [Attachment 3]
- On 26 November 2018, the Friends submitted a response to the appeal. [Attachment 4]
- On 09 January 2019, the Reviewing Officer upheld the first panel's decision to list Streatham Hill Theatre as an Asset of Community Value to the extent that it meets the requirements set out within Section 88(2) of the Localism Act 2011. [Attachment 5]
- The ACV status expires on 01 July 2023.

The recent change in ownership as described above makes it strategically important to confirm to the new owners that Property continues to have a significant value to the wider community, and not just a specific set of potential users.

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre are now applying once again for the Streatham Hill Theatre to be granted ACV status.

Since the Theatre is already proven to be an Asset of Community Value as shown above, this application is focused on what has happened since granting of the status in 2018, and why ACV status should be granted for a further 5 years.

This application is accompanied by attachments and references to support the case for ACV status, and The Friends are available to answer any queries or provide further information if required.

Reviewing the Localism Act 2011, the relevant Section 88(2) states:

(2) For the purposes of this Chapter but subject to regulations under subsection (3), a building or other land in a local authority's area that is not land of community value as a result of subsection (1) is land of community value if in the opinion of the local authority—

(a) there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, and

(b) it is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-



ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

Addressing part (a):

The Reviewing Officer stated in January 2019:

It has not been contested by the Owner that the Property was used as a Bingo Hall between 1962 to 2017 and it is therefore reasonable for me to conclude that the Property has been used as a Bingo Hall in the recent past and that Bingo is an activity which furthers the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. As such, in my opinion there has been a 'time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community'.

Since 2017, the Property has remained licensed as a Bingo Hall by the Gambling Commission, and the Planning Use class remains sui generis bingo hall. [See attachments 9 and 10]

A Tribunal in [New Church v Bristol] found that although closed, a church was still a church, so it seems reasonable that a closed bingo hall is still a bingo hall, and it is clear that a bingo hall is a social use.

**Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that condition 88(2)(a) is met.**

Addressing part (b):

During the period from 2017 to date, The Friends have been campaigning to bring the theatre back into use for the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. The Friends' patrons and supporters (around 1200) include experts from the professions and the creative industries, the vast majority of whom have a strong connection to Streatham and South London, as well as from the local community. This diverse body of Friends is clear that there is a realistic future social use for the Property.

The Friends have commissioned a Viability Study and Economic Impact Assessment, funded by supporters, The Mayor of London, Lambeth Council and Theatres Trust which shows that it is realistic for there to be a non-ancillary use of the building as a theatre and multipurpose arts centre. This can include initial temporary or meanwhile use of the building with minimal intervention, followed by renovation and refurbishment to restore and return the building to support modern requirements. [See Attachment 8].

In addition to potential commercial users, there are a number of local community groups offering the chance for community participation in the arts who could make effective use of the considerable facilities of the Property, including for rehearsal, performance and affordable (even free) arts training. The Property is the last remaining large space in the area with the ability to hold large events, such as productions, performances and concerts.

The Friends have approached the various owners and operators multiple times requesting the opportunity to use the Property for community activities, for "temporary use" or "meanwhile use", or to rent those parts of the premises not in use by the operators. Such use had been possible while bingo was in operation, allowing Streatham Festival events, theatre productions, film shows and tours to take place. However, the owners/operators were unable or unwilling to support this community activity.

In the period after closure of bingo, the operator was seeking new users. The Friends introduced a number of potential commercial theatre, arts and cultural operators for the Property, many of whom visited the Property and entered into discussions with the operator's agent. The operators subsequently changed their strategy and determined to retain the Property and develop other uses themselves. This did not come to fruition – there were several changes in their senior management

since 2017.

One such potential operator, an arts club, while awaiting a response to a proposal to take on the whole Property as its base, hired parts of the building to create two pop-up theatre spaces and supporting facilities, which was used to host a month-long arts festival. There was no positive response from the owners so they subsequently moved out.

Another potential commercial operator made a bid to the owners to acquire the Property freehold for use as a theatre\* – they have a number of large “destination” shows pending which would use the Property in its current configuration. They would subsequently renovate and refurbish for future productions, and would actively support community involvement and use of the Property. Despite losing out on the acquisition of the freehold they remain committed to seek a way to work with the new owners to make use of the Property as a theatre. [See Attachment 11]

\* Note that the community right to bid for the freehold was not available due to the Property being occupied by leaseholders. It is understood that this lease is due to expire in 2028, so having ACV status in place then would be advantageous.

The Friends also continue to receive requests for use of the Property by commercial organisations such as production companies, for staging shows including theatre, ballet and music; for filming of TV or feature films; for rehearsals; for art installations. At present all we can do is pass these on to the owners and operators, despite wishing to be able to incorporate these into a social use for the Property and receive associated revenue.

The building remains licenced as a Bingo Hall according to the Gambling Commission, and its planning use class remains sui generis bingo hall, so could potentially be returned to that social use as such. Should the new owners achieve a change of use to a church, that too would constitute a social use. Alternatively, should an arts and cultural use be agreed, that too would be a social use.

**Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that condition 88(2)(b) is met.**

**With both conditions met, it is reasonable for Lambeth to conclude that, in its opinion, the Property be registered as an Asset of Community Value.**

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The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre  
A volunteer-run community campaign  
A CIO and Registered Charity 1193643  
info@streathamhilltheatre.org | www.streathamhilltheatre.org | 020 3582 4912

Patrons: Akram Khan MBE, Baroness Floella Benjamin OM DBE DL, Catherine Russell, David Harewood OBE, Jessica Thom, Jools Holland OBE DL, Paul Merton, Renato Balsadonna, Robert Glenister, Samira Ahmed, Simon Callow CBE & Sir Mark Rylance

## Checklist of attachments

- A copy of the organisation's constitution if it has one.
- ~~The names and addresses of 21 members who are registered to vote in the London Borough of Lambeth if the organisation is an unincorporated body filled in at Appendix 1~~
- A site plan showing the property and its boundaries, if you have one.

If electronically submitted, please scan and email to [cr2b@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:cr2b@lambeth.gov.uk) or post to Valuation and Strategic Assets, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Olive Morris House, 18 Brixton Hill, London, SW2 1RD

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## Declaration

I confirm that this nomination form has been fully completed and that the information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate to enable the Council to consider the nomination in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

Signed:



or tick here  if electronically submitted

Print Name: D N Harvey

Date: 4 June 2023

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## Additional Attachments:

ACV process 2018-9:

1. Nomination Form, The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre dated 21 May 2018
2. Assessment Panel Decision Letter to The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre dated 6 July 2018
3. The Owner's Representations dated 18 October 2018
4. The Nominator's Representations dated 26 November 2018
5. Review Outcome dated 9 January 2019

Property information:

6. Streatham Hill Theatre – Statement of Heritage Significance
7. Streatham Hill Theatre – Statement of Heritage Risk
8. Viability Study & Economic Impact Assessment for Streatham Hill Theatre (Summary)
9. Gambling Commission – Bingo Premises Licence
10. Valuation Office Agency – Premises Summary, Bingo Hall
11. Statement from IC Venues re Commitment to Streatham Hill Theatre

H.M. LAND REGISTRY			TITLE NUMBER	
ORDNANCE SURVEY PLAN REFERENCE	COUNTY	SHEET	NATIONAL GRID	SECTION
	GREATER LONDON		TQ 3073	AF
Scale: 1/1250			© Crown copyright 1978	

BOROUGH OF LAMBETH

Old Reference LN XI 83 Q



**Site Plan: Streatham Hill Theatre**  
**110 Streatham Hill, SW2 4RD**

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# Community Right to Bid for Assets of Community Value

## Notes on completing the Nomination Form

All community nominations for properties to be included on the List of Assets of Community Value must be made using this form and must satisfy the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012. For these purposes the term property means any qualifying land and/or buildings that are covered by the Regulations. The nomination form may be downloaded either as a PDF or a Word File.

### What is the definition of an asset of community value?

A building or land is of community value if, in the Council's opinion:

The actual current main use of the building or land furthers the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community and it is realistic to think that there can continue to be a main use which will further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community (although not necessarily in the same way).

Or

In the recent past, the main use of the building or land furthered the social wellbeing of the local community and it is reasonable to think that within 5 years the building or land could be brought back into a use that would further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community (although not necessarily in the same way as before).

In this context social interests include cultural, recreational and sporting interests.

## Section 2 – About your voluntary or community group

We are asking for the information in this section because we need evidence that you are eligible to make a nomination. We have to do this in order to satisfy the Regulations.

It is essential for you to show a local connection to the London Borough of Lambeth.

It is also essential for you to state the type of organisation you belong to as only those voluntary and community bodies shown on the form are eligible to make a nomination. Nominations cannot be accepted from anyone else, whether a person or a body. The definitions are as follows:

- A Neighbourhood Forum is a body designated as such pursuant to section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as established by the Localism Act 2011).
- An unincorporated body must have at least 21 members and does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members.
- A charity means a charitable organisation.
- A company limited by guarantee must be one that does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members.
- An industrial and provident society means a body registered or deemed to be registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 which meets one of the conditions in section 1 of that Act. It must be one that does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members.
- A community interest company group is a company which satisfies the requirements of Part 2 of the Companies (Audit Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004.

## Section 4 – Information to support the nomination

Please note that any information provided in this section may be copied and passed to the owner(s) of the property concerned.

### Declaration

The form must be signed by the person named in Section 1.

### Where can I get further information?

Further details of the Community Right to Bid are available on the Government's Community Rights website at <http://communityrights.communities.gov.uk/what-are-community-rights/community-right-to-bid/>