



STOCKTON HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

**Commissioned by Stockton Parish Council
in partnership with
Warwickshire Rural Community Council
and
Warwickshire Rural Housing Association**

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1. Summary of results

Approximately 550 housing needs survey forms were distributed and 157 forms were returned. This equates to a response rate of 29%; a rate considered good for a survey of this type.

13 respondents expressed a need for alternative housing. The specific needs are:

Owner-occupier

1 x 4 bedroom house

Rented

3 x 2 bedroom bungalows
2 x 2 bedroom flats or houses
2 x 2 bedroom houses
2 x 3 bedroom houses

Shared ownership

2 x 2 bedroom houses
1 x 3 bedroom house

2. Introduction

Stockton Parish Council commissioned a local housing needs survey in October 2006. The Stockton Parish Plan 2006 indicated that a 'Stage 2' survey was required, in order to update and improve information collected by a previous survey in 2004.

The aim of the survey was to collect accurate housing needs information for Stockton Parish. This information can be used in a number of ways, but perhaps the most important is to help justify a small scheme of new homes for people with a local connection. This type of scheme is referred to as a 'Local Choice' scheme.

A survey form was designed with input from Stockton Parish Council and the Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire Rural Community Council.

A copy of the survey form was delivered to every home in the parish. Additional copies of the form were available for people not currently living in Stockton. A copy of the survey form can be seen as Appendix A to this report.

All households were asked to fill out Part 1 of the survey form with the aim of putting together a profile of household composition and property tenure, type and size. Residents were asked to comment on the perceived positive and negative aspects to life in the parish. Residents were also asked to indicate whether any member of their household had left the parish to find affordable or suitable accommodation and whether or not they would be in favour of a small scheme of new homes to meet locally identified housing needs.

Only households with or containing a specific housing need were asked to complete Part 2 of the survey form. This part of the form asked for respondents' names and addresses and other sensitive information, e.g. financial details. Respondents were assured that any information they disclosed would be treated in the strictest confidence.

Completed survey forms were posted via a 'Freepost' envelope to the Rural Housing Enabler. Analysis of all the information provided took place in late December 2006.

3. Planning context

Planning policy at all levels {national, regional and local} imposes considerable restraint on the development of new homes in rural areas. There is, however, capacity for this restraint to be relaxed, but only where new homes are intended to meet local needs.

Policy COM.1 of the Stratford on Avon District Local Plan 1996-2011 provides the policy mechanism to deliver new 'local needs' housing in Local Centre Villages and Main Rural Centres. Stockton is classified as a Local Centre Village.

Policy COM.1 is a tool for use by rural communities to deliver new homes and other facilities. The basis of the policy is to allow rural communities to determine their own needs and suggest possible solutions to these needs, rather than the traditional 'top-down' approach to planning.

Policy COM.1 describes the circumstances in which a small scheme of new homes might achieve planning consent. Such schemes are referred to as 'Local Choice' schemes and can include both affordable housing and market housing.

There are a number of useful definitions in this context:

1. **‘Local need’** refers to need originating or relating to the settlement in question, i.e. Stockton.

2. A household is considered to have a local connection if it meets one or more of the following **‘Local connection criteria’**:

- An individual who was born in the parish
- An individual who currently lives in the parish and has done so for at least 12 months
- An individual who was resident in the parish for at least 3 continuous years but has left in order to find suitable accommodation
- An individual who works full time in the parish and has done so for at least 12 months
- An individual with a close family member, i.e. mother, father, brother or sister, resident in the parish for at least 3 continuous years

3. **‘Affordable housing’** is defined as homes available to rent through a housing association at a low (subsidised) rent or homes available on a shared ownership basis. Shared ownership (also known as ‘HomeBuy’) is a middle ground between renting a property and full ownership. A ‘shared owner’ buys a share of the property, typically 50% initially, and pays rent to a housing provider, usually a housing association, on the remaining share. A ‘shared owner’ can usually increase their share of the property up to a certain limit, but they are not able to buy the property outright (under current legislation).

4. **‘Market housing’ or ‘Owner-occupier housing’** is defined as homes available to buy outright.

5. All new homes provided under Policy COM.1 would be subject to a planning obligation, referred to as a **‘Section 106 Agreement’**. This would limit occupation of the homes, including any market/owner-occupier homes, to people with a local connection, at least in the first instance. It would also seek to ensure that any affordable homes remained affordable in perpetuity.

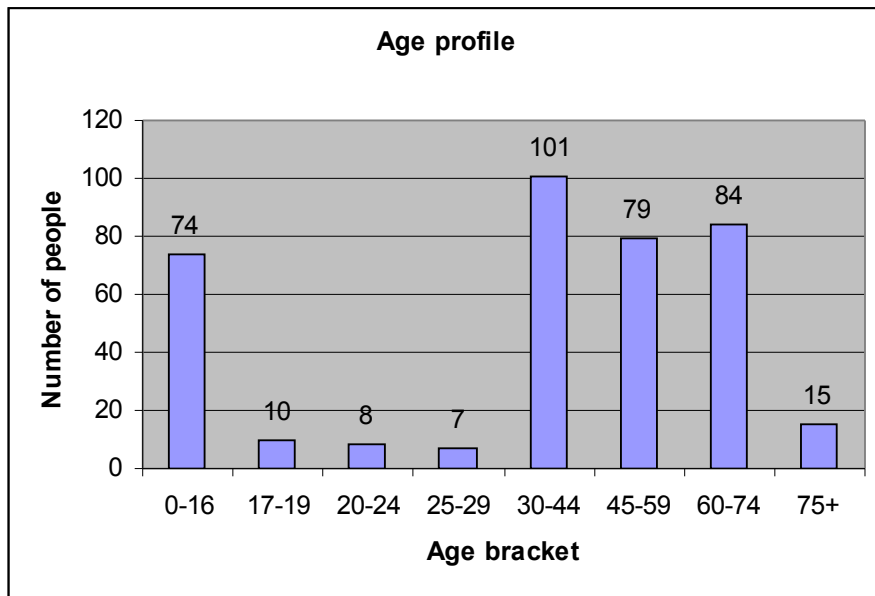
4. Results – Contextual information

A total of 157 survey forms were returned equating to a response rate of 29%. A response rate of between 20 and 30% is considered to be good for a survey of this type because people generally respond for one of three reasons:

1. To express a housing need.
2. To offer support in principle to the idea of a small housing scheme to meet local needs.
3. To state opposition to the idea of a housing scheme.

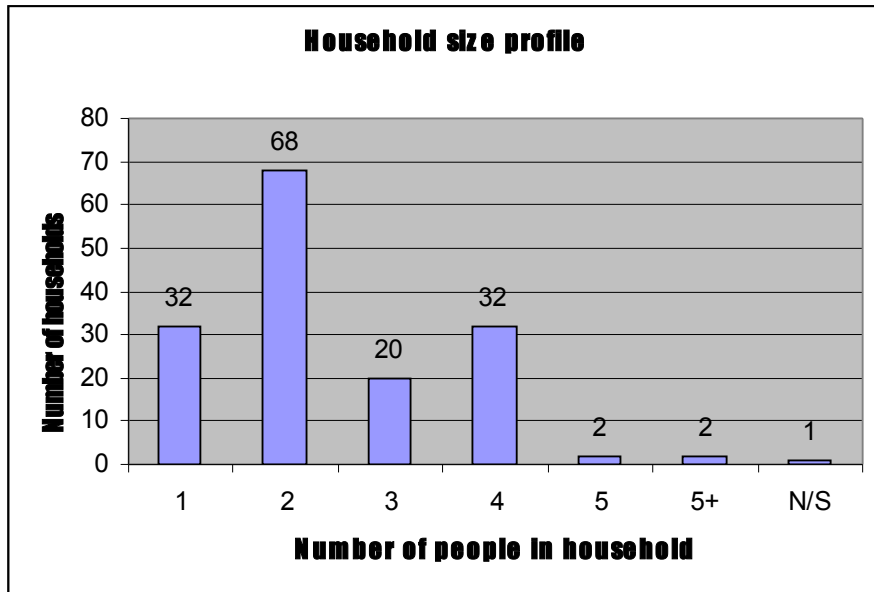
i) Age profile (157 responses, 378 people)

The following chart shows the age profile captured by the survey returns. In common with many Warwickshire parishes, the chart shows an ageing population, with 47% of people aged 45 years or over. Encouragingly though, the number of children in the age bracket 0–16 years and adults in the age bracket 30–44 years indicates a relatively high number of young families as well. In terms of the future sustainability of the village, this is a healthy sign.



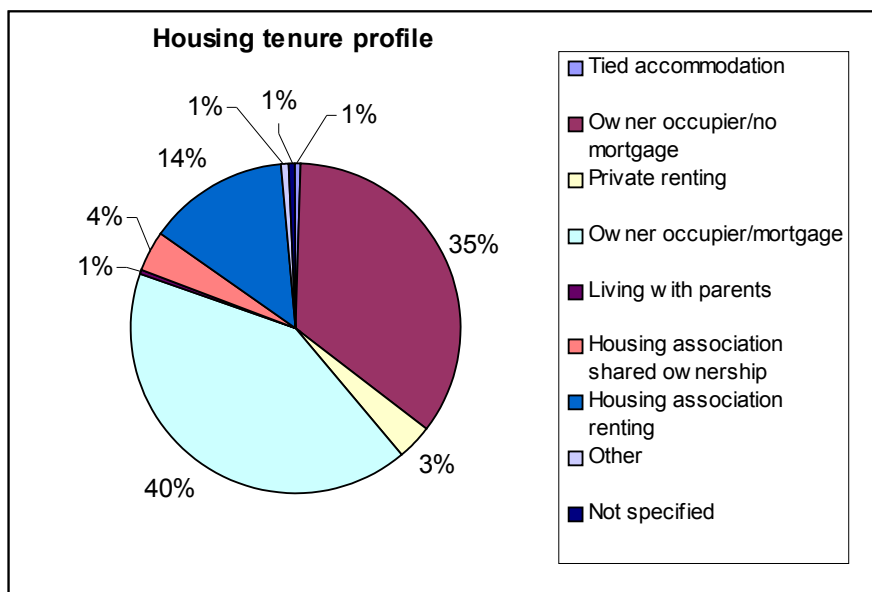
ii) Household size profile (157 responses)

The information collected from the age profile can also be used to create a profile of household size, as shown in the following chart. The chart shows a dominance of 1 and 2 person households as indeed do the majority of parish housing needs surveys. The mean average household size is 2.4 people; slightly less than the Census 2001 figure for Stockton Parish of 2.59 people.



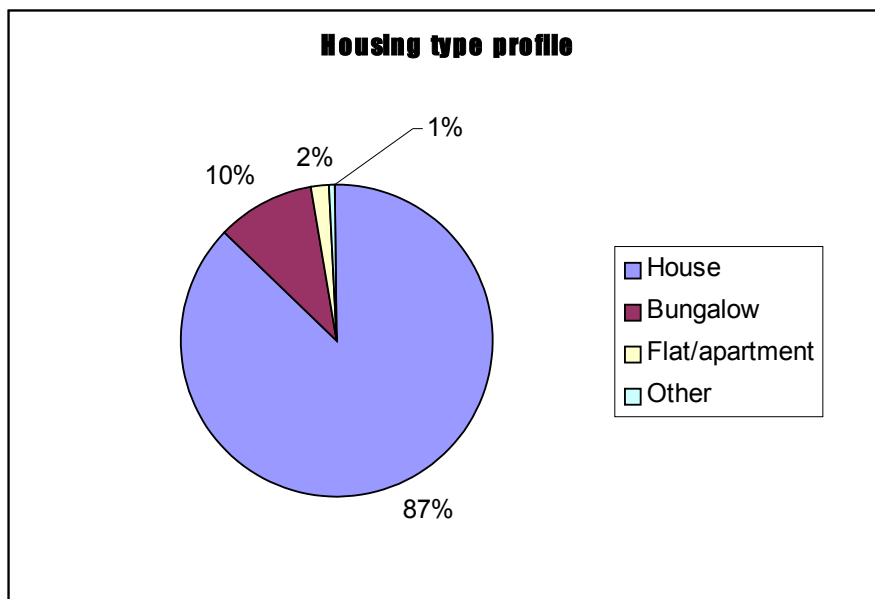
iii) Housing tenure profile (157 responses)

The following chart shows the housing tenure profile for the survey respondents. In a pattern typical for villages in south Warwickshire, owner-occupiers represent 76% of the total. Tenures traditionally considered to be within the 'social sector' represent 18% of the total.



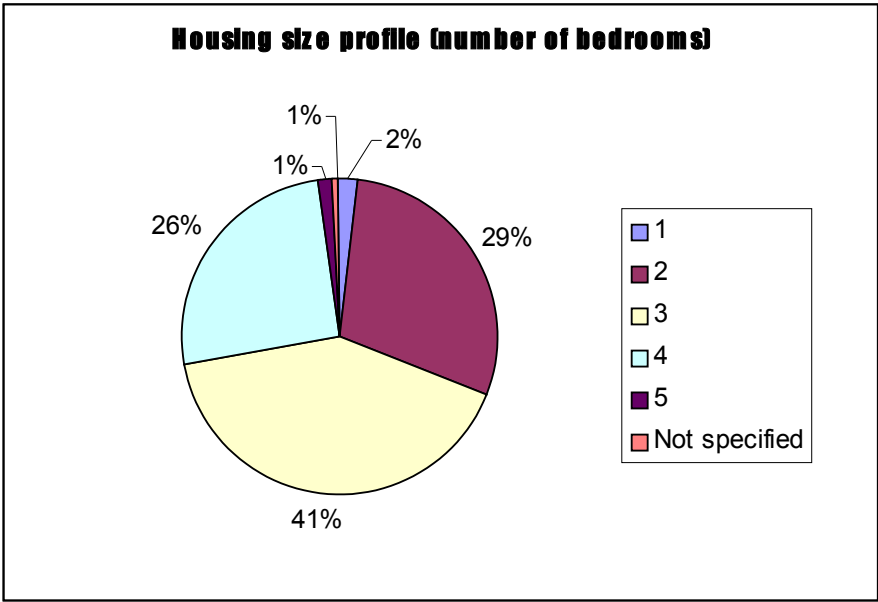
iv) Housing type profile (157 responses)

The chart below shows the types of homes that the survey respondents live in. Perhaps unsurprisingly houses represent the largest factor.



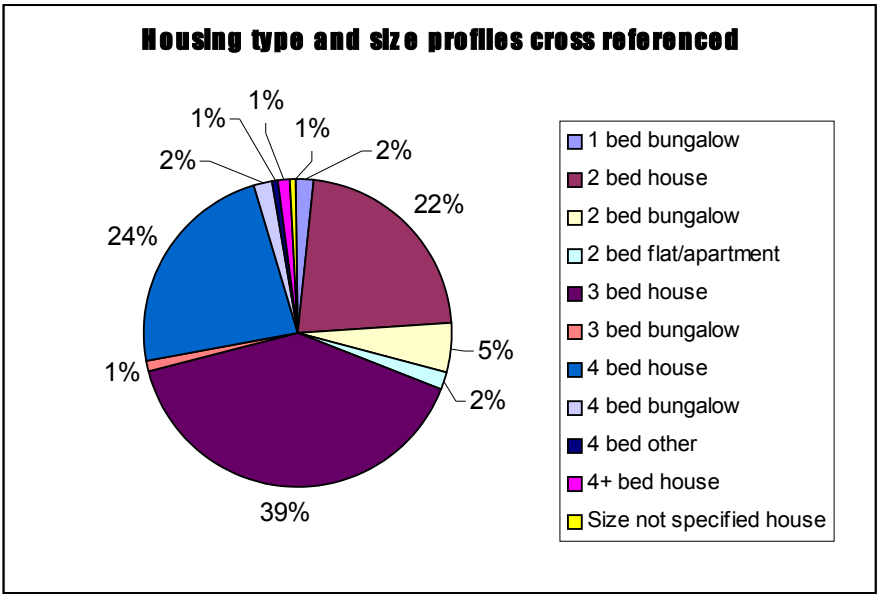
v) Housing size profile (157 responses)

The following chart shows the sizes of homes that respondents live in. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes make up the majority.



vi) Housing type and size profiles cross referenced (157 responses)

Cross-referencing the data from 4.iv and 4.v provides a combined profile of type and size. 3 bedroom houses emerge as the largest single factor.

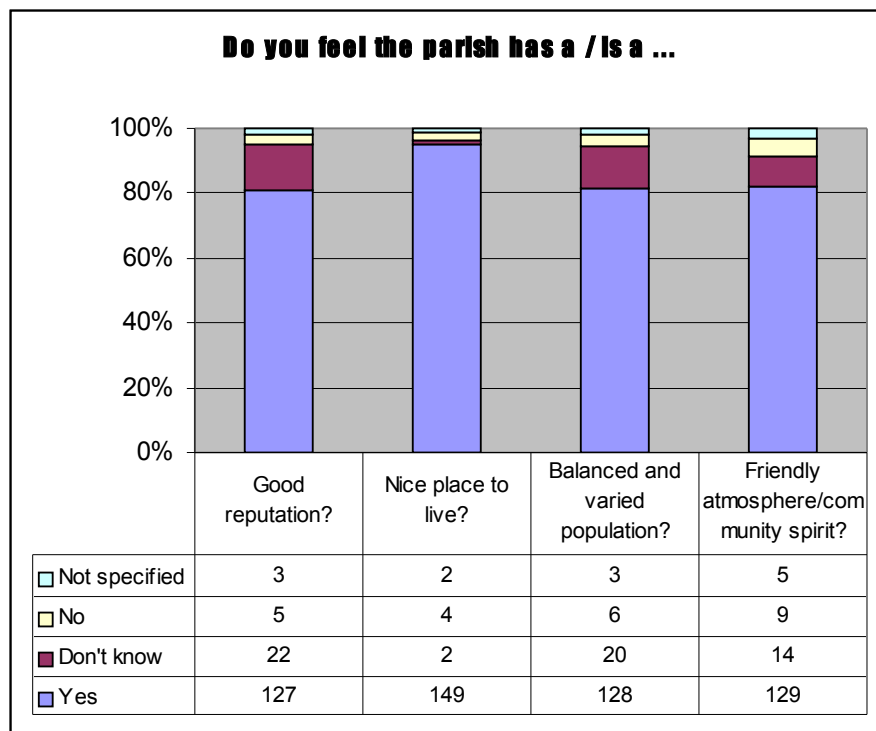


vii) Life in the parish: positive and negative aspects (157 responses)

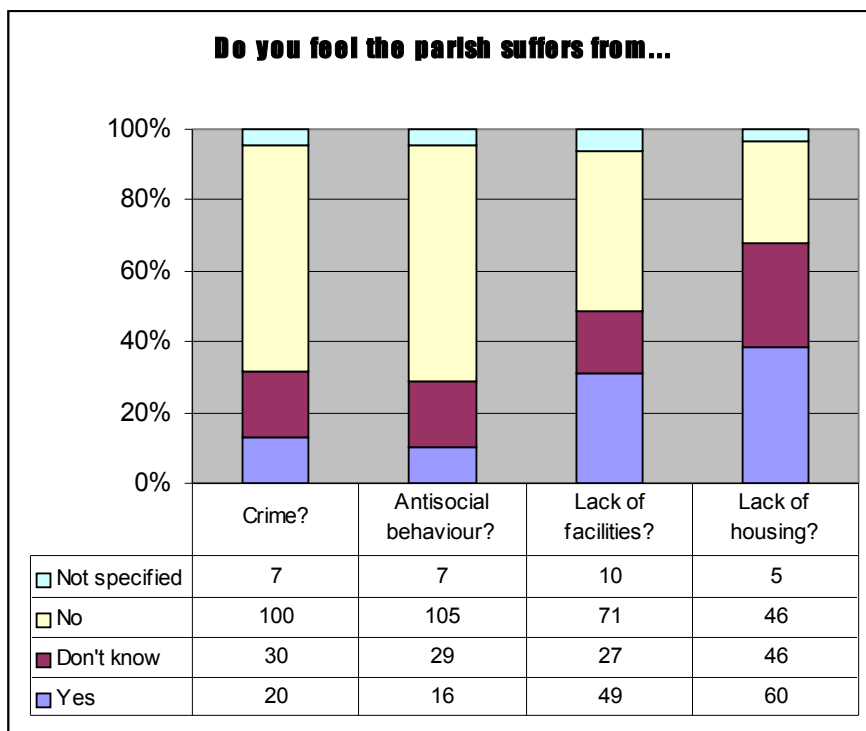
The survey respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived positive and negative aspects to life in Stockton Parish.

Information relating to the sustainability of a village is important to assess whether any affordable homes that are subsequently provided will be 'sustainable'. Ensuring that people will take up tenancies is a crucial consideration when proposing new affordable homes in particular.

The first chart shows respondents' views about the benefits to living in Stockton. The majority of respondents thought the parish had a good reputation, was a nice place to live, and had a balanced and varied population and a friendly spirit.



The second chart shows the survey respondents' views about negative issues that might exist in the parish. In respect of crime and antisocial behaviour, the majority of people didn't perceive there to be an issue. In respect of whether or not there was a lack of facilities, although the majority of respondents were happy with the level of provision, a significant minority thought that extra facilities were need. In respect of whether or not there was adequate housing, a significant number of respondents thought there was a lack of housing.



Respondents were asked to elaborate on their views regarding a lack of facilities and a lack of housing. Certain key issues emerged, as described in the following tables:

Lack of facilities – comments:

Key issue	Number of respondents' comments
Activities for teenagers	11
Youth club	6
Doctor's surgery	7
Improvements to/new village hall	6
Improvements to the park area	3
Improvements to public transport	2
More/better shops	5

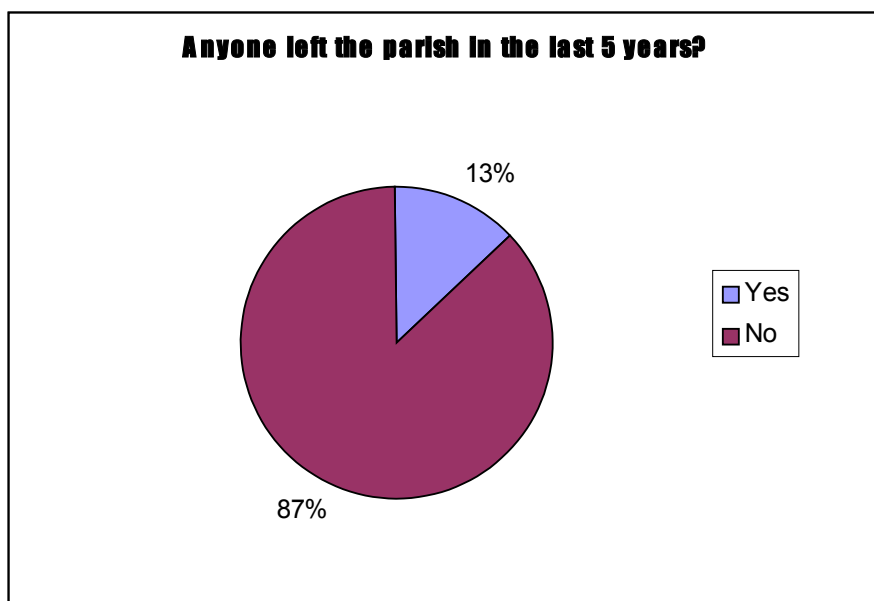
Lack of adequate housing – comments:

Key issue	Number of respondents' comments
Affordable housing, general comments	8
Affordable housing, specifically for younger people	12
Affordable housing, specifically for older people	5
Affordable housing, specifically for families	5
Private housing, small homes	17
Private housing, larger homes	7
Private housing, specifically for older people	7

N.B. Many of the 17 respondents that commented on the need for additional private small homes actually specified 'starter homes'. This could be interpreted as small affordable homes, although starter homes are traditionally considered to be private housing.

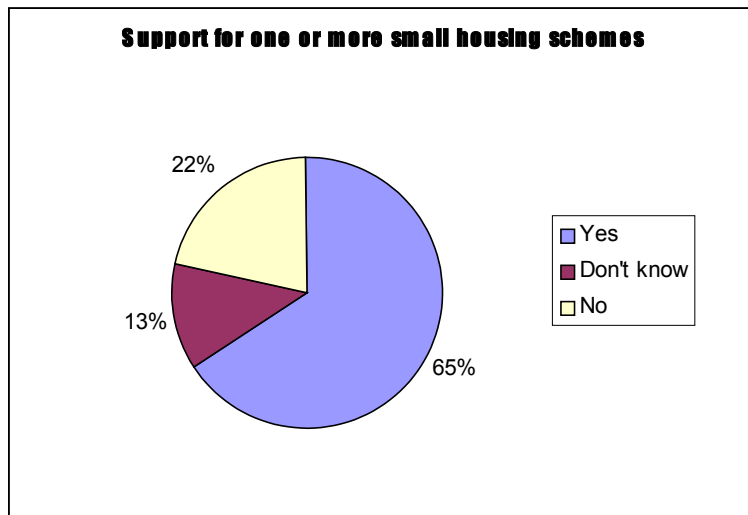
vii) Outward migration from the parish (157 responses)

The survey respondents were asked whether anyone in their household had had to leave the parish in the last 5 years because no affordable/suitable housing was available. The following chart shows the overall response.



ix) Support for one or more small housing schemes based on local needs (157 responses)

The chart below shows the level of support amongst the survey respondents for one or more small housing schemes to meet the needs of local people, being built in the parish. The chart shows there is a high level of support amongst respondents for one or more small schemes. Only 22% of respondents were completely against such a scheme. Comments received from respondents with regard to the development of such a scheme(s) are shown in Appendix B to this report.



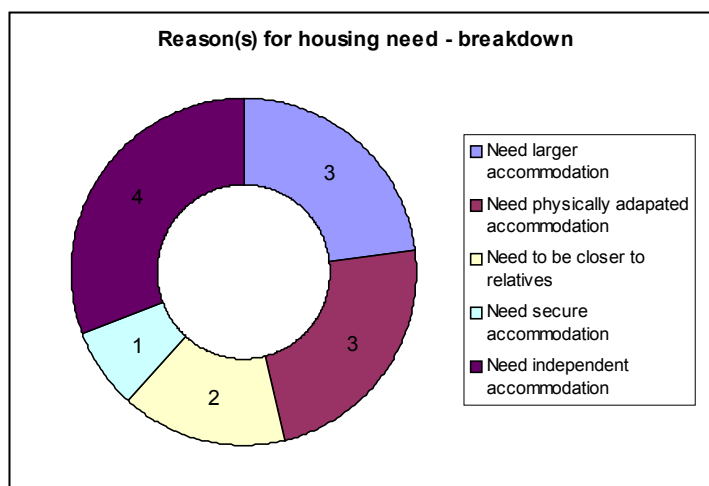
5. Results – Housing needs information

Out of the 157 responses to the survey, 14 individuals/households expressed a need for alternative housing. However, one of these 14 housing needs was discounted from the final analysis because the respondents' housing requirements appeared to be met already.

Section 5 provides a breakdown of information from the remaining 13 individuals/households.

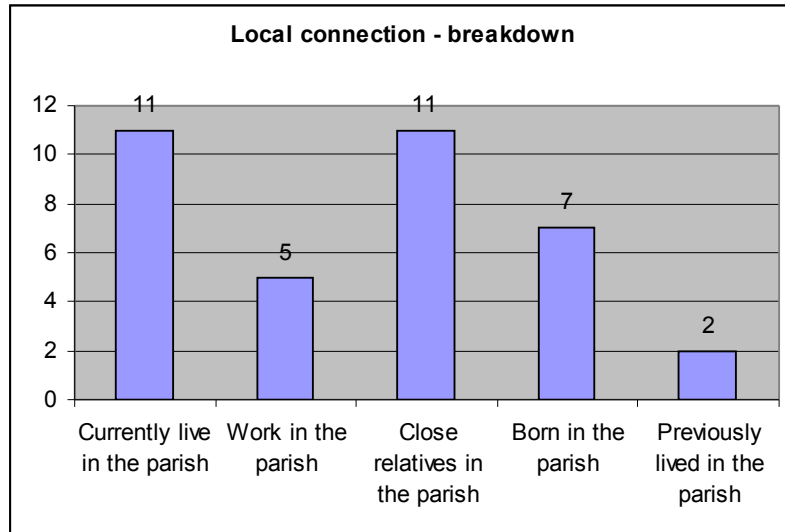
i) Reason(s) for housing needs – breakdown (13 responses)

The following chart shows the reasons for the 13 respondents' housing needs. Where more than one reason was specified, the first reason shown on the survey form was counted.



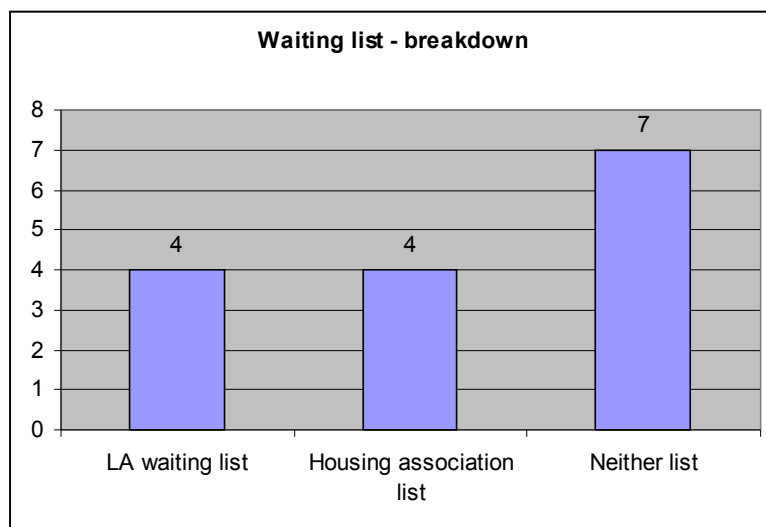
ii) Local connection – breakdown (13 responses)

The chart below shows the types of local connection that the 13 respondents have. The two respondents that were not currently living in the parish had both previously lived in the parish.



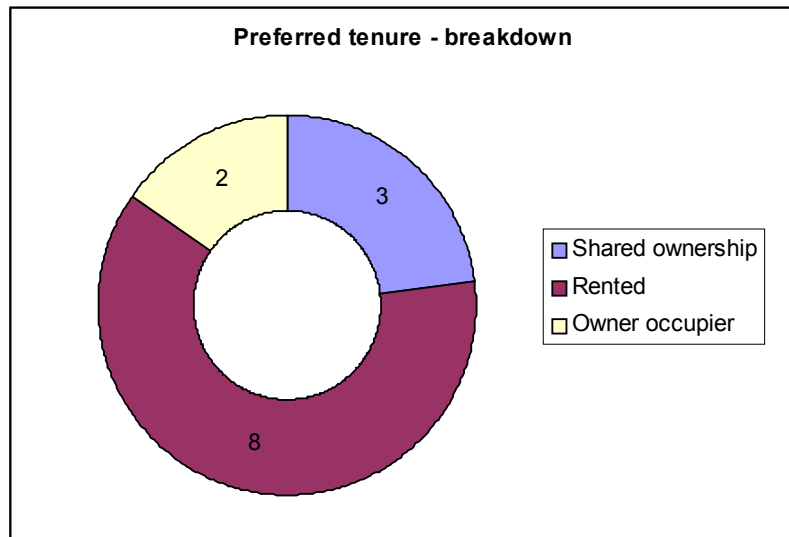
iii) Waiting list – breakdown (13 responses)

The following chart shows the number of respondents registered on the local authority waiting list and/or a housing association waiting list.



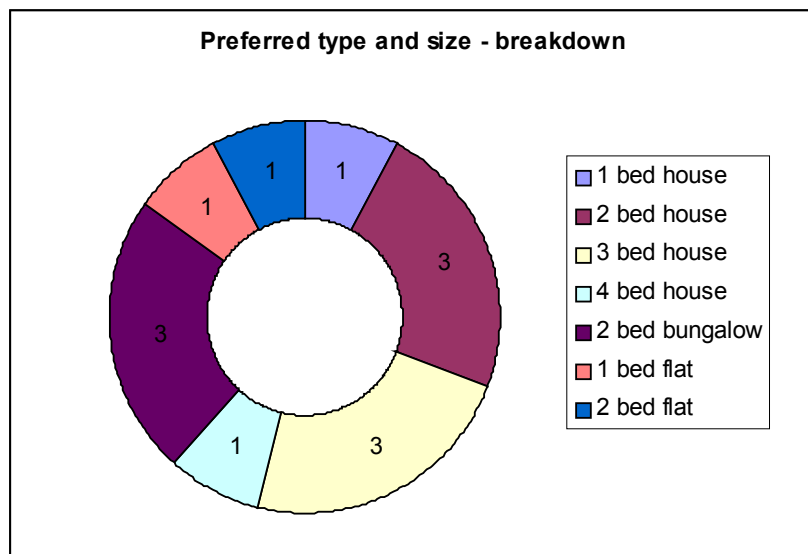
iv) Preferred tenure – breakdown (13 responses)

The preferred tenures of the 13 respondents are shown in the chart below.



v) Preferred type and size – breakdown (13 responses)

The preferred types and sizes of accommodation expressed by the 13 respondents are shown in the following chart.



6. Determination of specific housing needs

The following table shows the specific housing needs of the 13 respondents. A number of rules were used to compile this table:

- Respondents that indicated a preference for a 1 bedroom home were classified as being in need of a 2 bedroom home. There are three reasons for this: 1.) The possibility of a 1 bedroom home sitting vacant for a period of time, 2.) The extra flexibility that a 2 bedroom home provides and 3.) The possibility that a household will grow and need additional space in the future.

Past experience of providing 1 bedroom affordable homes in rural areas has often proved to be problematic. The needs that exist in the short term may change significantly in the medium and long term. The consequence of these changes is that 1 bedroom homes, especially older homes, can be difficult to let and therefore sit vacant for periods of time.

In reality a 1 bedroom home can accommodate only a single person or a couple, whereas a 2 bedroom home can also accommodate a small family. This increased flexibility, weighed up against the relatively small extra cost and extra space associated with building a 2 bedroom home, is a strong argument for providing the larger unit.

- Where a respondent indicated a preference for shared ownership their ability to enter into a shared ownership arrangement was assessed. The mortgage the respondent could raise was compared against a 50% share (the usual starting % for shared ownership) of a comparable open market property. Research was carried out on property prices in the Stockton area and this can be seen as Appendix C to this report. Having assessed whether the respondent could afford to enter into a shared ownership arrangement, if they could not do so they were re-classified as being in need of rented accommodation from a housing association.
- Where a respondent indicated a preference for owner-occupied housing their ability to afford this was clarified using the income and mortgage capacity information they provided. If a respondent could not afford owner-occupied housing then they were reclassified as being in need of shared ownership housing under the terms described in the paragraph above.

Local connection verified	Preferred tenure	Preferred type/size	Actual tenure	Actual type/size
Yes	Owner occupier	4 bed house	Owner occupier	4 bed house
Yes	Rented	2 bed bungalow	Rented	2 bed bungalow
Yes	Rented	2 bed bungalow	Rented	2 bed bungalow
Yes	Rented	2 bed bungalow	Rented	2 bed bungalow
Yes	Shared ownership	1 bed flat	Rented	2 bed flat or house
Yes	Rented	2 bed flat	Rented	2 bed flat or house
Yes	Rented	2 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Rented	2 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house
Yes	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house
Yes	Owner occupier	1 bed house	Shared ownership	2 bed house
Yes	Shared ownership	2 bed house	Shared ownership	2 bed house
Yes	Shared ownership	3 bed house	Shared ownership	3 bed house

A full breakdown of the needs can be seen as Appendix D to this report.

7. Conclusions

There is need for 13 new homes in Stockton for local people. The specific needs are:

Owner-occupier

1 x 4 bedroom house

Rented

3 x 2 bedroom bungalows
2 x 2 bedroom flats or houses
2 x 2 bedroom houses
2 x 3 bedroom houses

Shared ownership

2 x 2 bedroom houses
1 x 3 bedroom house

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that an exercise is carried out to identify a suitable piece of land, or pieces of land, to meet the 13 housing needs identified by this survey. Partners in this exercise should include:

- The Parish Council
- Stratford on Avon District Council
- Warwickshire Rural Housing Association
- Local landowners
- Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire Rural Community Council

Any new homes that are intended to meet the needs described in Section 7 should be accompanied by an appropriate planning obligation to restrict occupancy of the homes to people with a local connection, as described in Section 3 of this report.

9. Acknowledgements

Gratitude is expressed to all those who helped distribute survey forms.

10. Contact information

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