



Warwickshire Rural Housing Association

**A DETAILED INVESTIGATION  
INTO THE  
HOUSING NEED OF  
BUTLERS MARSTON**

**Produced by  
Warwickshire Rural Housing Association  
in conjunction with  
Butlers Marston Parish Council**

**November 2001**



Warwickshire Rural Housing Association

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## **1. Introduction**

As part of our continuing work within the Stratford upon Avon District, we wrote to Parish Councils throughout the District to introduce the work of Warwickshire Rural Housing Association and explain the process involved with identifying and addressing housing need in rural areas.

One of these Parishes was Butlers Marston, who responded positively confirming that they were interested in looking at the housing need of the village, and it was agreed that a housing needs survey should be conducted, the results of which would be passed on to the Local Authority and Parish Council.

The survey form was agreed with the Parish Council who then arranged delivery to every household in the village towards the end of September 2001 (a copy of the survey form is attached at Appendix 1 to this report). The return date for the survey was 2<sup>nd</sup> November, giving respondents approximately 4 weeks to return their completed forms.

Butlers Marston currently has a population of c.250 people, and 100 survey forms were produced for distribution around the village (one to every property), and a “freepost” envelope was attached for respondents’ convenience.

## **2. Purpose of the Survey**

The survey was conducted in order to obtain clear evidence of the housing need in the village of Butlers Marston. This evidence can then be used to inform the District Housing Strategy and provide clarity on what type and tenure of housing is required to meet local needs.

One option for meeting a village’s housing need is through the construction of a purpose built affordable housing development using the “exceptions” criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing). However, to do this there must be accurate details of the village housing need, and in this respect the survey is the most accurate and accepted method.

In addition, the information can be used positively in the planning process in that it provides a foundation on which to negotiate “planning gain” opportunities with developers. In short, it gives the planners evidence which can be used to obtain an element of “local needs” housing in negotiations with house builders, should such possibilities arise in the village.

The information obtained from such a survey is also invaluable at the local level, particularly in relation to the Parish Council’s activities. Such information can be acted upon locally and taken on board in the decision making process when housing issues arise.

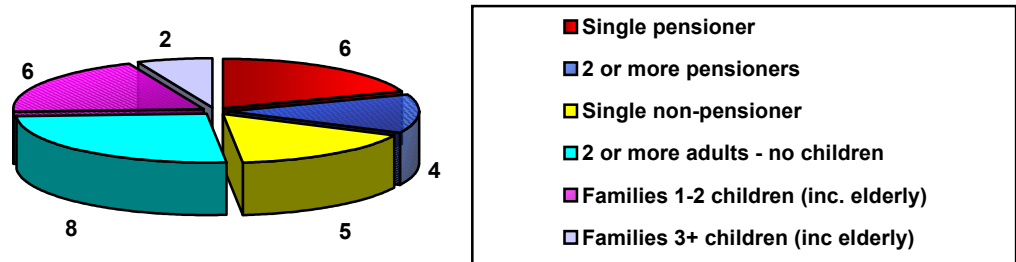
Indeed, if anything is to be done about the local needs of the village, support at the local level is vital before anything can be done to address it.

### 3. Respondent details

A total of 31 survey forms were received, giving a return rate of over 31%. This is a good level of response when considering that only people who have a housing need, or who are interested in a local needs development, are requested to respond.

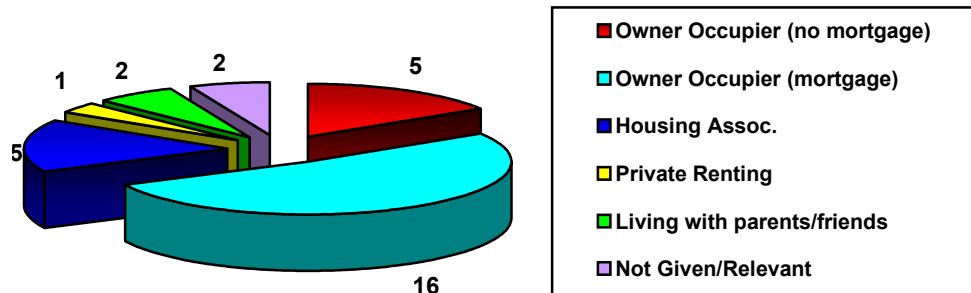
#### i) Household Size of Respondents

As can be seen from the chart below there was a large response from elderly persons accounting for just over 32%. There was also a fairly high return rate from families and childless couples accounting for almost 26% respectively.



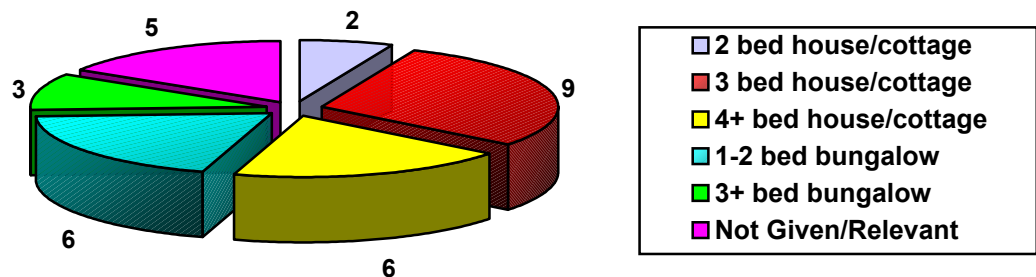
#### ii) Tenure of all Respondents

The current household tenure of respondents is given in the table below. It is easy to see that owner occupiers, who still have an outstanding mortgage, were by far the largest tenure group accounting for almost 52%. However, what is unusual to see is a level of social housing available in the village from other Housing Associations.



#### iii) Property Types

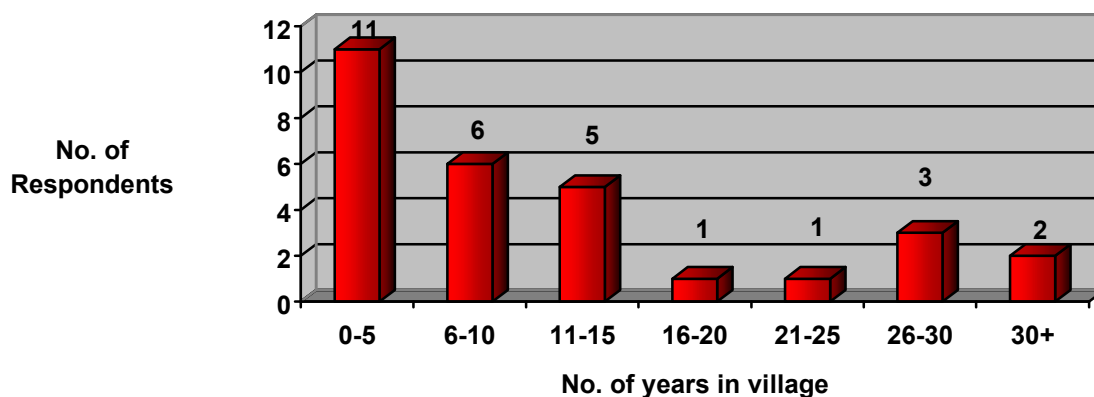
The following chart details the types of property that respondents currently reside in. From this chart we can conclude that there is a variety of properties within the village, however, the availability of such properties may be an issue. Another unusual finding in Butlers Marston is the number of respondents who currently occupy bungalows in the village.



**iv) No. of Years in Village**

The table below gives the number of years that respondents have lived in Butlers Marston. From this table we see that the highest category is from respondents who have lived in the village for less than 5 years.

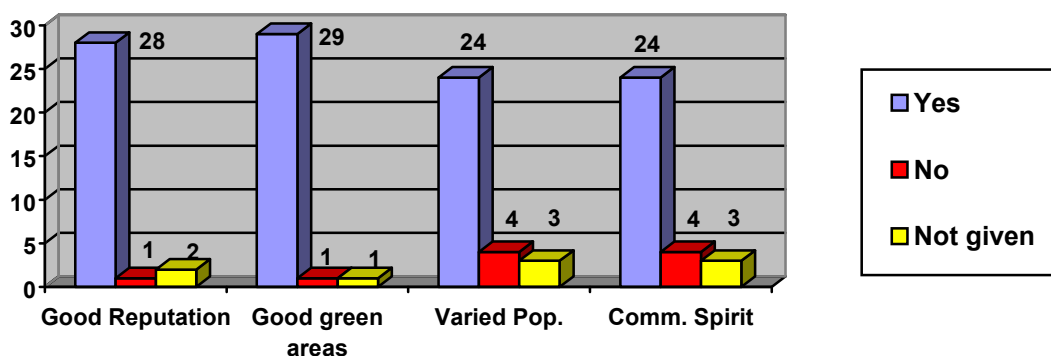
What is interesting is the fact that there are only 2 respondents who have lived in the village for more than 30 years.



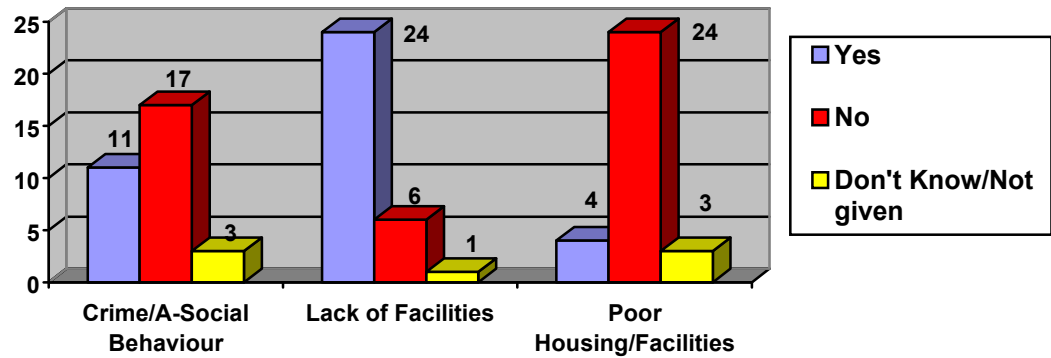
Added to this chart, there were also 2 respondents who do not live in the village at present, but who have periods of previous residency.

**v) Sustainability**

The following two charts detail respondents’ answers to the “desirability” questions. The answers to these questions allow us to build up a picture of life within Butlers Marston. From this we can assess whether any social housing that is subsequently provided in the village will be “sustainable”, i.e. that potential current and future applicants will in fact want to take up a tenancy or lease.



From this first chart we note that the vast majority of residents consider that Butlers Marston has a good reputation, pleasant and well maintained green areas, varied population and a friendly atmosphere/community spirit.



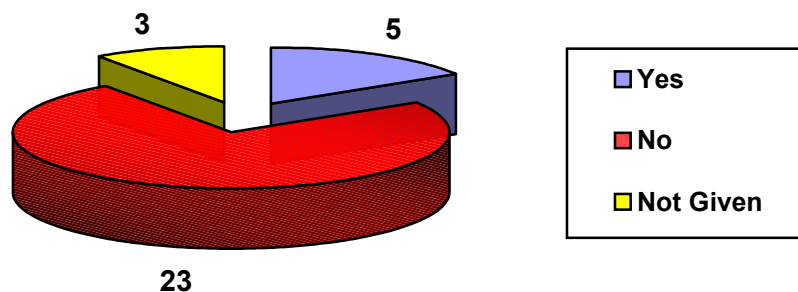
The second chart shows that the majority consider that there is very little crime, although there is a high percentage who stated that they did feel that the village suffered crime and/or anti-social behaviour. Added to this, the vast majority felt that there are insufficient facilities but that the condition of buildings is generally good.

Some of the comments regarding further facilities that would be desirable include:

- *Better bus service*
- *Shop/Post Office*
- *Better street lighting*
- *Mains gas supply*
- *Better maintenance of paths*
- *Village hall*
- *Social meeting place, plus community activities for the younger residents*

#### vi) Migration

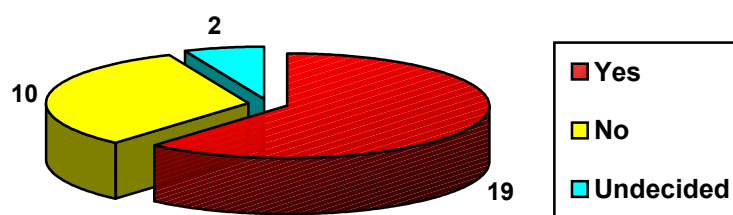
The survey also asked whether respondents knew of people who had had to leave the village because of a lack of suitable, affordable accommodation.



This chart confirms that there have been a number of local people who have been forced to move out of the village in order to secure suitable housing at a level that they can afford.

#### vii) Local Support for a Small Housing Development

One of the fundamental questions on the survey is that which asks if there is support for a small local needs, affordable housing development. The majority of respondents, over 61%, would be in favour of a small local needs, affordable housing development.



#### 4. Housing Need Analysis:

Of the 31 returns, 25 were from people who were adequately housed and would not be looking to move to alternative accommodation within the next 5 years. These respondents completed a form primarily to offer their support/objection towards a “local” needs housing development as well as give their comments regarding the “desirability” of Butlers Marston. These were therefore discounted from the rest of the analysis. Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing is concerned there are 6 returns detailing a housing need.

The following table lists the respondents who have a housing need, what type of housing they will require and our assessment of their need:

<b>RESPONDENT</b>	<b>WHAT REQUIRED</b>	<b>ASPIRED TENURE</b>	<b>REALITY TENURE</b>
Family (3 children), housing assoc. renting (not in village). Would like to return to the village, to be close to family and friends.	3 bed house	Rent	3 bed house - rent
Single person, living with parents. Wishes to establish independent home in the village close to family and friends	2 bed house, flat or bungalow	Rent or shared ownership	2 bed house – rent
Couple, private renting. Current property is too small and expensive	3 bed house	Shared ownership	3 bed house – shared ownership
Couple, private renting (not in village). Would like to move back to the village to be close to family and friends	2 or 3 bed house	Rent or open market	2 bed house – shared ownership (due to income levels)
Single person, owner occupier. Will require a smaller, more manageable property.	2 bed bungalow	Shared ownership or open market	Future need for 2 bed bungalow – shared ownership
Single person, living with parents. Wishes to establish independent home in the village close to family and friends for support	2 bed house or bungalow	Shared ownership or open market	2 bed house – rent (due to income levels provided)

## 5. Conclusion

Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, in partnership with Butlers Marston Parish Council, has conducted a detailed study of the housing need of the village. This study has not only investigated the actual housing need of Butlers Marston, but has also ascertained residents views with regard to living in Butlers Marston, as well as identifying local support for a development to meet local needs.

There is a need for both rented housing and shared ownership purchase. The exact need is as follows:

**2 x 2 bed houses for rent**

**1 x 3 bed house for rent**

**1 x 2 bed house for shared ownership purchase**

**1 x 3 bed house for shared ownership purchase**

Added to the above, there is also a future requirement for a bungalow through the shared ownership purchase scheme.

Our recommendation is that a single mixed development of 5 social housing dwellings should be considered, as detailed above. This development will alleviate the current housing need for those who can not afford to secure a suitable property in Butlers Marston, but who wish to stay in the village/be close to family and friends for support.

It should be noted, however, that there were a number of respondents who would be against a social housing development and this would need to be addressed at an early stage if a development is to be provided. A number of these respondents did raise the issue of developing the old school site as the cause for their concern, and clearly further local consultation is necessary.

Finally, it is clear from this survey that there is a good level of affordable housing provision for the older members of the community, i.e. housing association owned bungalows. However, what is apparent is the lack of affordable housing for the younger members of the community and also family groups. As stated earlier in the report, there were 5 respondents to the survey who confirmed that they were aware of people who had been forced to leave the village because of a lack of affordable housing. We can conclude therefore, that without the provision of social housing in the village other younger residents will be forced to leave to find suitable affordable homes.

## 6. Comments

Detailed below are a cross-section of comments that were expressed by respondents, including whether they would support a small development to meet local needs:

- a) **YES:** *“Village needs development if services are to be supported.”*
- b) **YES:** *“Although in favour of some social housing (in principal), it seems impractical as the village has such poor facilities that the very people we would be seeking to help would be impoverished further by the lack of facilities (i.e. may need a car). A village shop/post office would not survive in the current climate – residents would still go to Kineton. Design/location of any development would also be an issue.”*
- c) **NO:** *“We believe the balance between cheaper affordable housing and more expensive is presently good. More cheap housing would tip the balance and in any case is not needed. Ex-council housing and old peoples bungalows presently provide good opportunities for people requiring affordable accommodation.”*
- d) **NO:** *“Butlers Marston has social housing already and is already in need of additional ‘higher income’ homes of 3 or 4 bedrooms to redress the balance. The last thing the village needs is additional social housing built on the old school site.*
- e) **YES:** *“There is social deprivation in the village due to a total lack of facilities – no shop, pub, school, village hall. Since the closure of the primary school five years ago any community spirit has dissipated due to a lack of meeting place.”*
- f) **?:** *“What we don’t need is cheap housing (social) where the ‘misfits’ and anti-socials from local towns can be posted... We need a few starter homes, a few mid priced semi’s and a couple of 4/5 bed executive homes.”*
- g) **YES:** *“As we have no shop here, one must go to the nearest place to shop... One must have transport to live here. Bus service is poor.*