



DORSINGTON HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

**Commissioned by Dorsington Parish Council
in partnership with
Warwickshire Rural Community Council**

**Analysis by Charles Barlow
Warwickshire Rural Community Council**

April 2009

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1. Summary of results

Approximately 49 Housing Needs Survey forms were distributed and 22 forms were returned. This equates to a response rate of 45%, which is considered to be excellent for a Survey of this type.

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

Rented from a housing association

3 x 2 bedroom houses
1 x 3 bedroom house
1 x 4 bedroom house

2. Introduction

Dorsington Parish Council commissioned a local Housing Needs Survey in March 2009.

The aim of the Survey was to collect accurate housing needs information for Dorsington Parish. This information can be used in a number of ways, but perhaps the most important is to help justify a small scheme of affordable homes for people with a local connection. This type of scheme is referred to as a 'Rural Exception' scheme, because the development of new homes in rural areas is an exception to normal planning policy.

A Survey form was designed with input from Dorsington Parish Council and the Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire Rural Community Council. The basis of the form was a model document, previously used for many parish Housing Needs Surveys across Warwickshire.

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 Dorsington. A copy of the form can be seen as Appendix A to this Report.

All households were requested to fill out Part 1 of the Survey form. The first segment in Part 1 was designed to collect information on household composition and property tenure, type and size. The second segment was an opportunity for residents to comment on specific issues, in order to build up a profile of positive and negative aspects to life in the Parish. The final segment asked whether any member of the 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 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 early April 2009.

3. Planning context

Planning policy at all levels {national, regional and local} imposes considerable restraint on new housing development in rural areas. There is, however, capacity for this restraint to be relaxed in exceptional circumstances, but only where new housing meets an identified local need for affordable homes.

Policy CTY.5 of the Stratford on Avon District Local Plan 1996-2011 provides the local planning policy mechanism for 'Rural Exception' schemes. The policy states:

"The development, in exceptional circumstances, of affordable dwellings to meet local housing need in perpetuity may be permitted in settlements where residential development is normally resisted.

Such schemes will be supported within or adjacent to existing settlements provided that:

- It has been demonstrated that there is a local and long-term need for affordable housing
- The content of the scheme reflects and can reasonably be expected to meet identified local need
- The scheme has been initiated from within the local community and has the support of the relevant Parish Council, or is identified in an adopted Parish Plan (or equivalent)
- Satisfactory prior arrangements for the management and occupation of the properties have been made to ensure that the homes to be provided will meet identified local housing needs, both initially and in perpetuity, and
- The need to ensure that other relevant policies of the Plan are not undermined in the location and design of the scheme"

‘Local need’ refers to need originating or relating to a particular village. For parishes that contain more than one village, the housing needs of each village must be considered separately. In the case of Dorsington, the Village and the Parish are effectively the same thing.

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, son or daughter resident in the Parish for at least 3 continuous years

‘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 (sometimes 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).

All new affordable homes provided as part of a ‘Rural Exception’ scheme are subject to a planning obligation, referred to as a **‘Section 106 Agreement’**. This limits occupation of the homes to people with a local connection in the first instance and ensures that the homes remain ‘affordable’ in perpetuity.

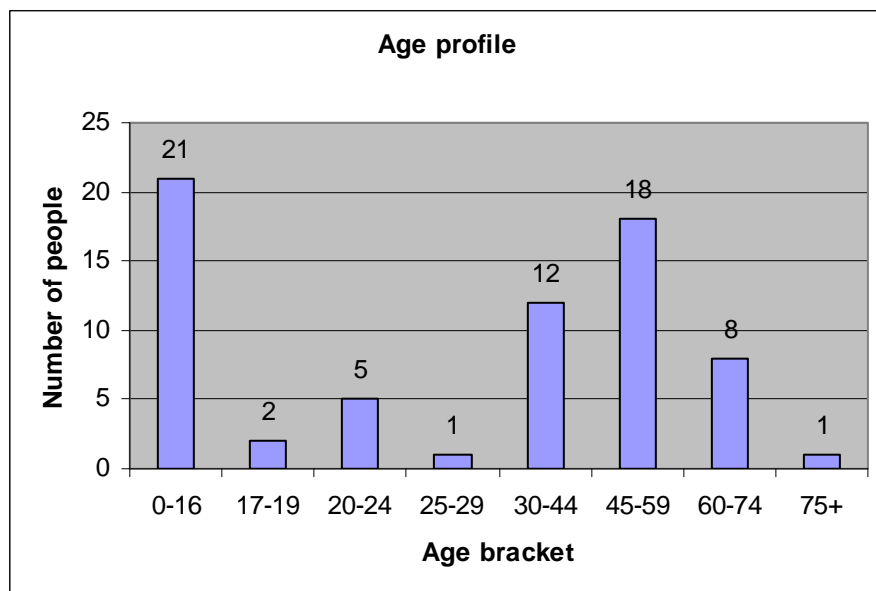
4. Results – Contextual information

A total of 22 Survey forms were returned equating to a response rate of 45%. This level of response is considered to be an excellent achievement 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 (22 responses representing 68 people)

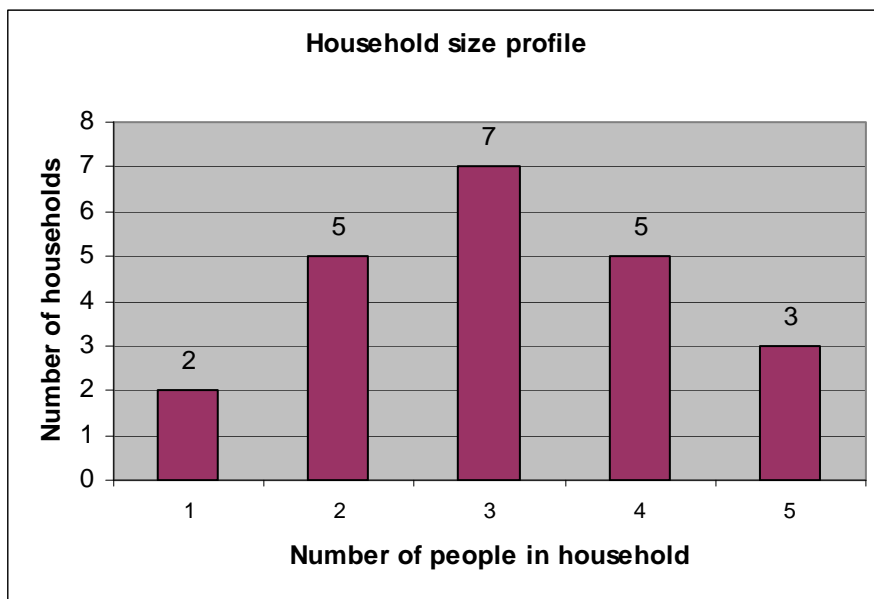
The following chart shows the age profile captured by the Survey returns. The chart suggests a fairly even spread of age groups within the community. This is unusual for parishes in south Warwickshire, where in general older age groups dominate the profile.



ii) Household size profile (22 responses)

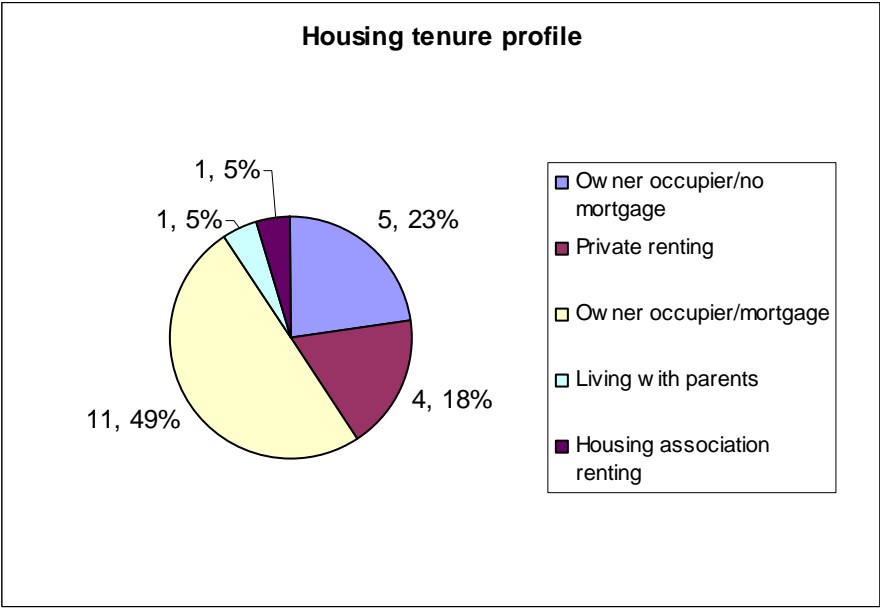
The information collected from the age profile can also be used to create a profile of household size, as shown in the following chart. The chart again shows a fairly even spread of household sizes. This is in contrast to the majority of parishes in south Warwickshire, which are dominated by 1 and 2 person households.

The mean average household size captured by the Survey returns is 3.09 people; slightly more than the 2001 Census figure for Dorsington Parish, 2.82 people.



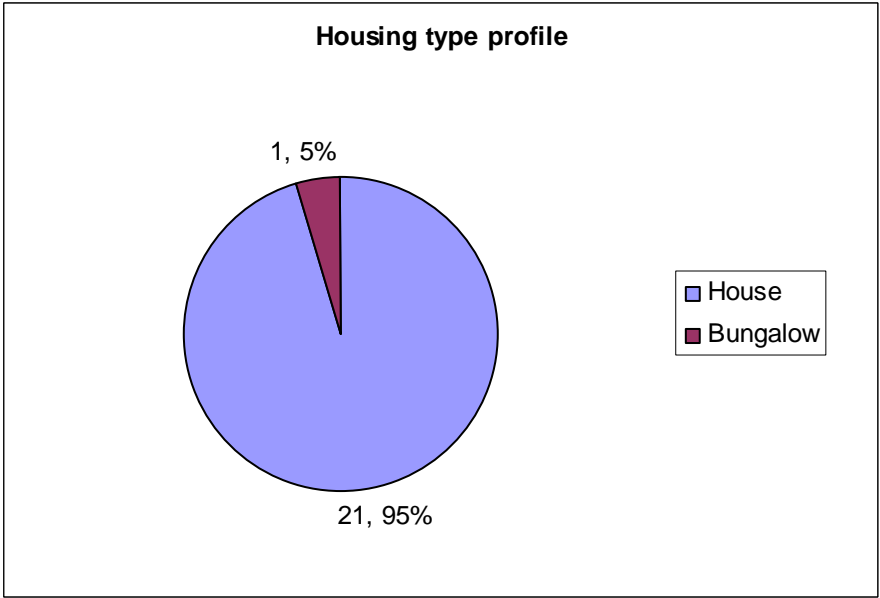
iii) Housing tenure profile (22 responses)

The following chart shows the housing tenure profile for the Survey respondents. In a pattern typical for parishes in south Warwickshire, owner-occupiers represent 72% of the total. Tenures traditionally considered within the 'social sector' represent only 5% of the total.



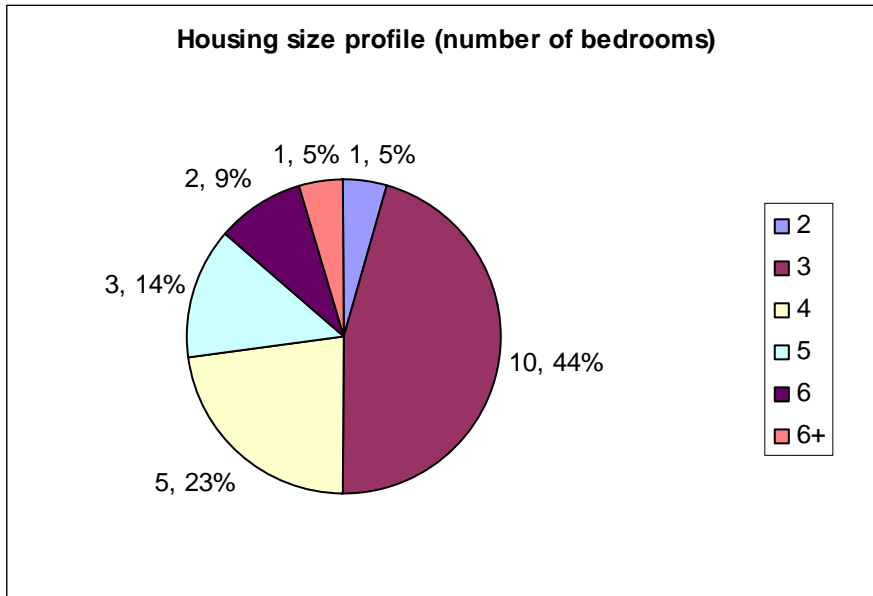
iv) Housing type profile (22 responses)

The chart below shows the types of homes that the Survey respondents live in.



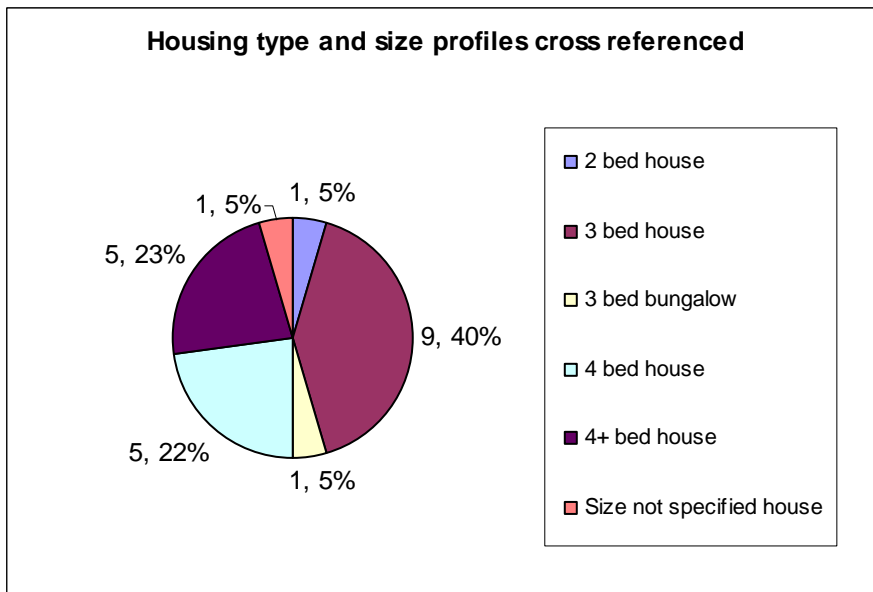
v) Housing size profile (22 responses)

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



vi) Housing type and size profiles cross referenced (22 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.

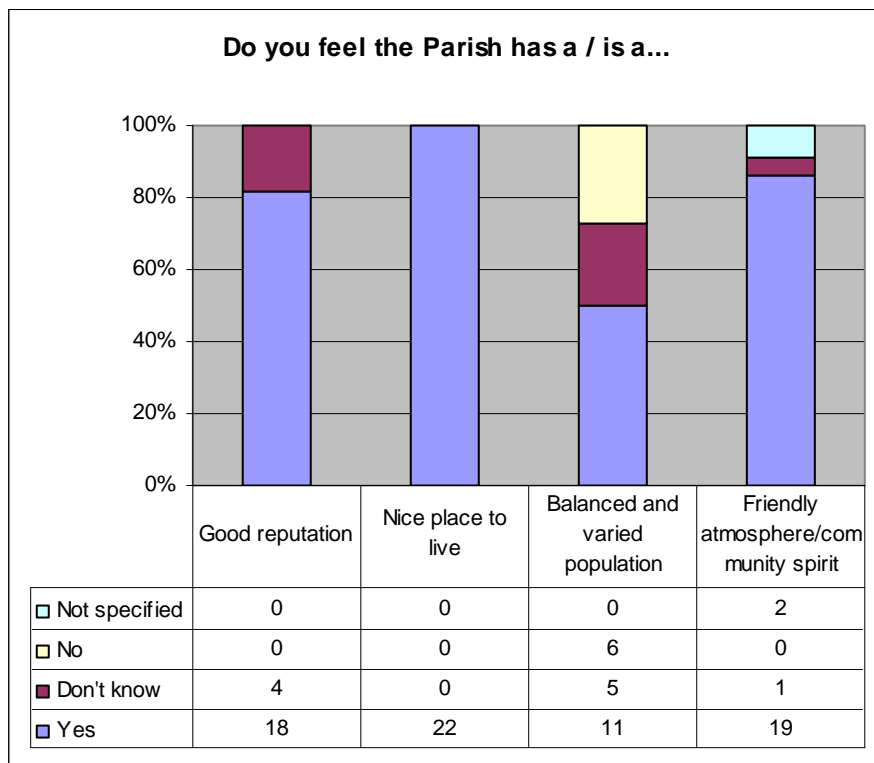


vii) Life in the Parish: positive and negative aspects (22 responses)

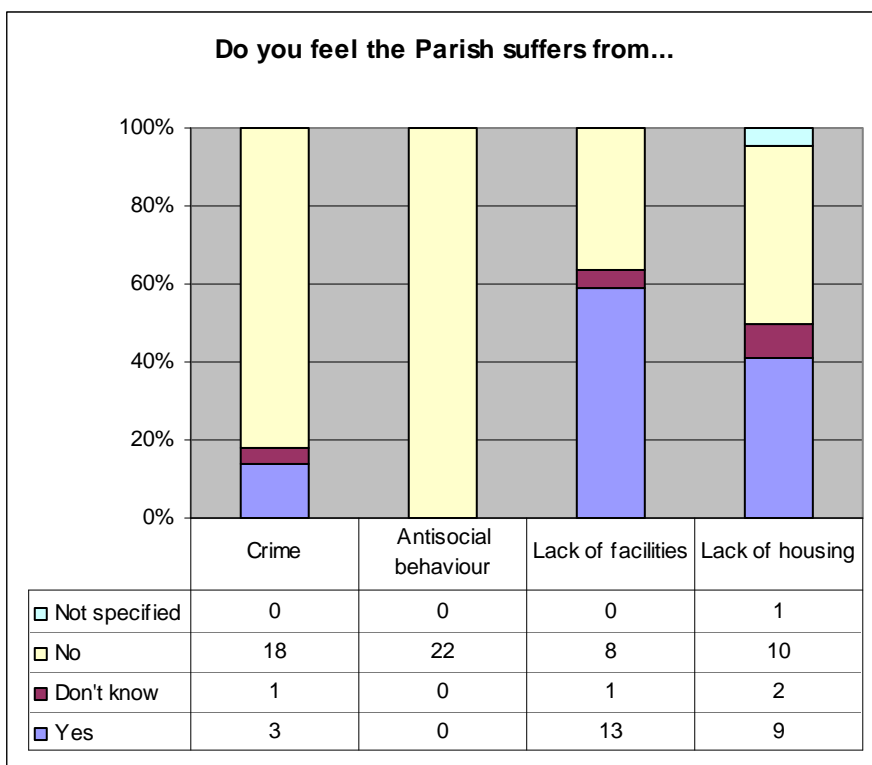
The Survey respondents were asked a series of questions in respect of the perceived positive and negative aspects to life in Dorsington Parish.

Information relating to the sustainability of a parish 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.

The first chart shows respondents' views on the benefits to living in Dorsington. 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 respondents' views on negative issues that exist in the Parish. Almost 60% of respondents perceived there to be a lack of facilities and just over 40% of respondents felt there was a lack of housing of some type.



The Survey 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
Need a Village Hall / meeting place	6
Need a shop / Post Office	5
Need a better bus service	3
Need a pub	2

Lack of housing comments:

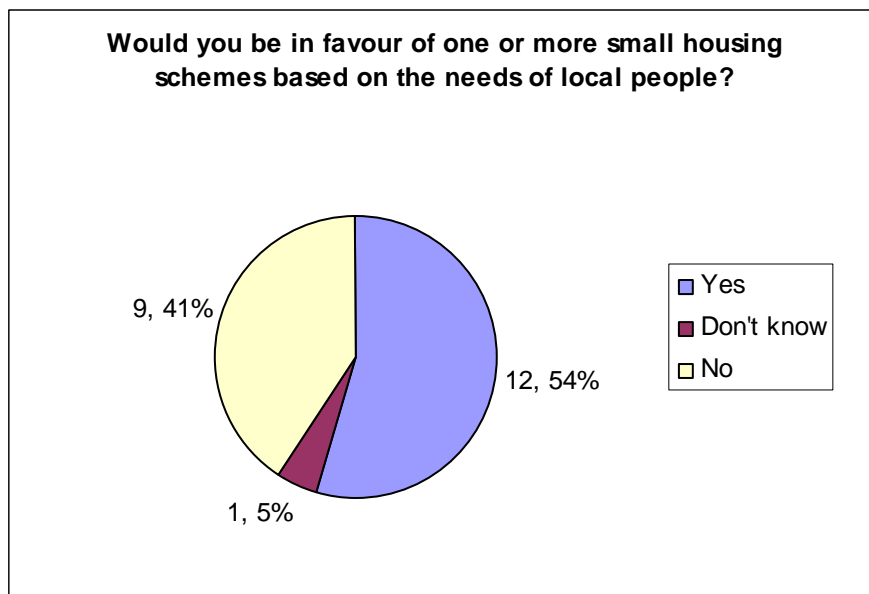
Key issue	Number of respondents' comments
Need more affordable housing	8
Need 'one off' homes for family members	1

viii) Outward migration from the Parish (22 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. None of the 22 respondents commented that this had been an issue for their household.

ix) Support for one or more small housing schemes based on local needs (22 responses)

The chart below shows the level of support amongst 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 to the idea of a small scheme. Comments received from respondents in respect of this matter are reproduced as Appendix B to this Report.

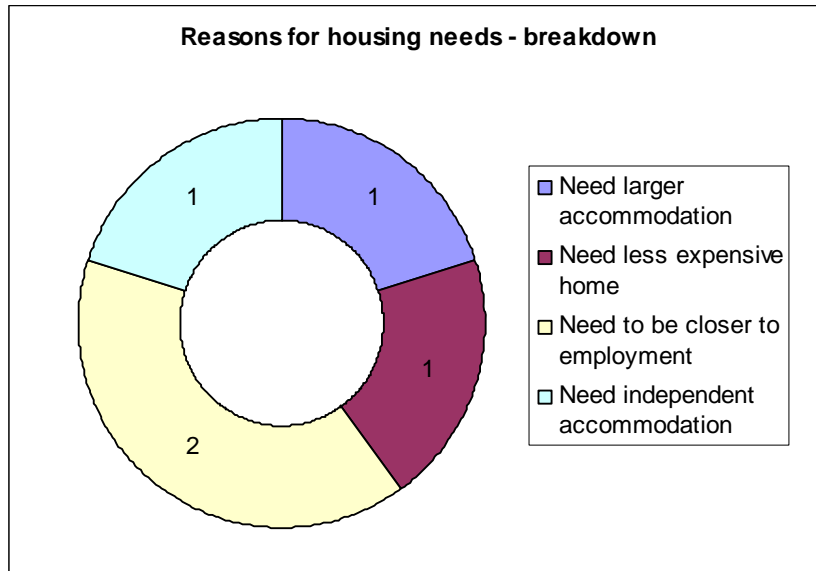


5. Results – Housing needs information

Out of the 22 responses to the Survey, 5 individuals or households expressed a need for alternative housing. Section 5 provides a detailed breakdown of information relating to these 5 respondents.

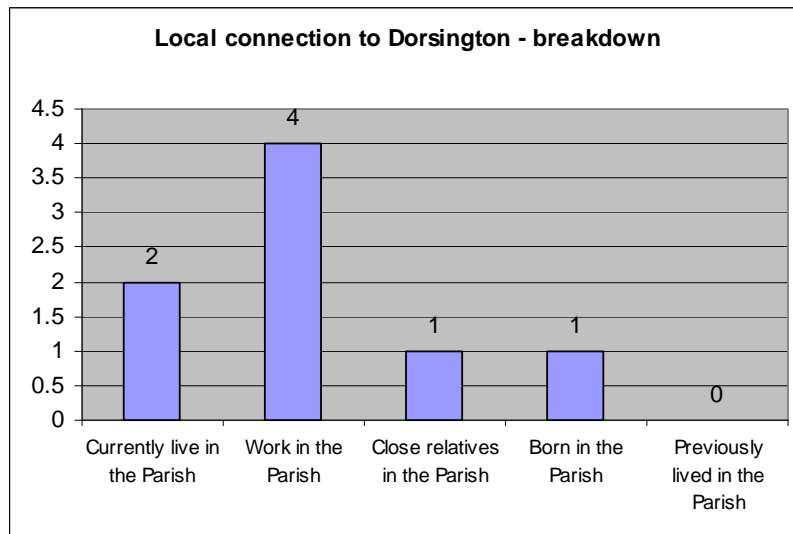
i) Reason(s) for housing needs – breakdown (5 responses)

The following chart shows the reasons for the 5 respondents' housing needs. Where more than one reason was specified, the first reason shown on the Survey form was counted.



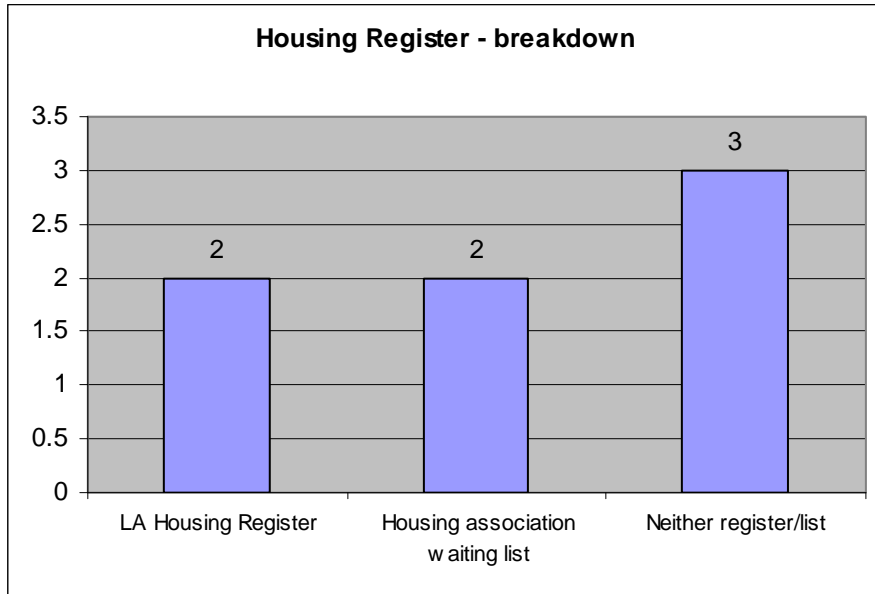
ii) Local connection – breakdown (5 responses)

The following chart shows the types of local connection that the 5 respondents have. Respondents were able to indicate more than one type of local connection.



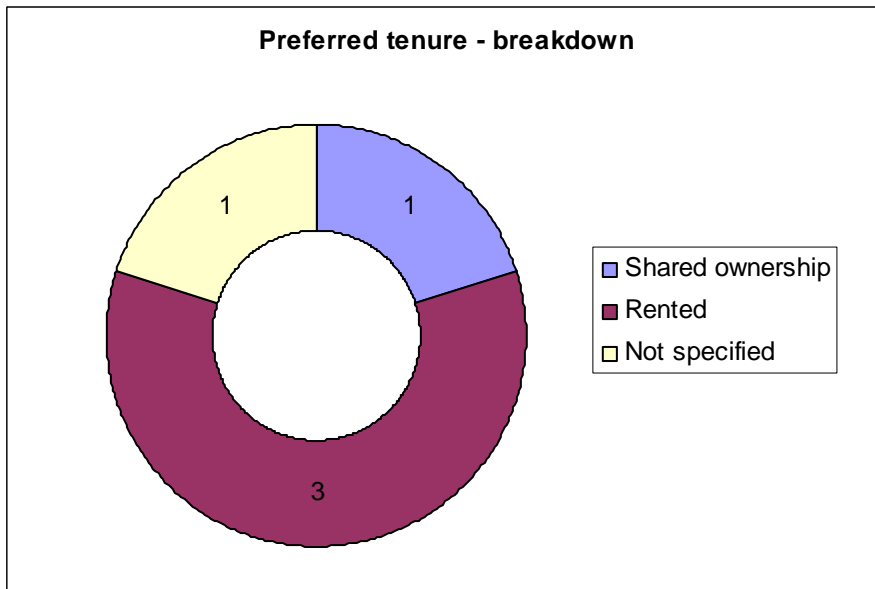
iii) Housing Register / Waiting List – breakdown (5 responses)

The following chart shows the number of respondents registered on the Local Authority Housing Register and/or a housing association waiting list.

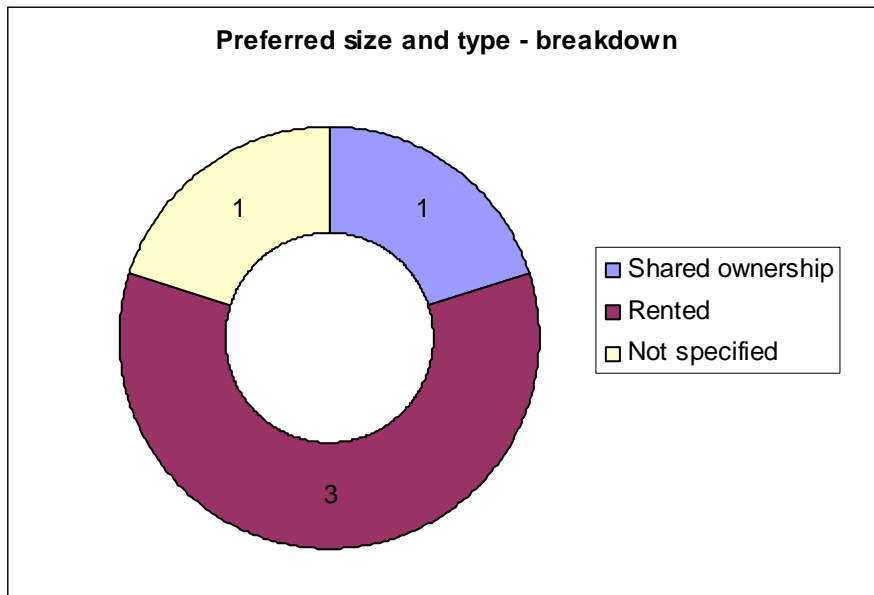


iv) Preferred tenure – breakdown (5 responses)

The preferred tenures of the 5 respondents are shown in the following chart.



v) Preferred size and type – breakdown (5 responses)



The preferred sizes and types of accommodation expressed by the 5 respondents are shown in the following chart.

6. Determination of specific housing needs

The following table shows the specific housing needs of the 5 respondents. A number of rules were used to compile this table:

- Where a respondent indicated a preference for a 1 bedroom affordable home they 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 require 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.

In the case of Dorsington none of the housing needs were (re)classified in this way, but the above text hopefully explains why single people and couples were classified as being in need of 2 bedroom accommodation.

- 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 the value of a comparable owner-occupied property, as demonstrated through the research shown in 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.

1 respondent who expressed a preference for shared ownership accommodation was re-classified as having a need for a rented home

- Information was acquired from Stratford on Avon District Council regarding the turnover of existing affordable homes in Dorsington Parish, to ascertain whether any of the 5 housing needs could be met through the turnover of existing affordable homes.

On the basis of a very low number of reallocations, no discount was applied to the number of affordable homes needed by respondents.

Local connection verified	Preferred tenure	Preferred size/type	Actual tenure	Actual size/type
Yes	Not specified	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Shared ownership	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house
Yes	Rented	4 bed house	Rented	4 bed house

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

7. Conclusions

There is a need for 5 new homes in Dorsington Parish for people with a local connection. The specific needs are for:

Rented from a housing association

3 x 2 bedroom houses
1 x 3 bedroom house
1 x 4 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 5 housing needs identified by this Survey.

Partners in the land identification 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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Appendix A

DORSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

March 2009

Dear Householder

A lack of affordable housing is an issue for many rural communities, which can force local people to move away in order to find accommodation.

As a first step towards addressing the issue in Dorsington we are carrying out a detailed Housing Needs Survey. **The Survey is for everyone, however, not just people in need of affordable housing.** The issues in the first part of the Survey Form will help to compile a profile of residents and some general points about life in the Parish. **We need your help and ask all households to complete a Survey Form.**

The Survey is being carried out in partnership with Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC). When the Survey is complete the Parish Council will consider the results and work together with WRCC to explore how any needs can be addressed.

PLEASE NOTE that people in need of affordable housing do not have to be living in Dorsington at the present time. They do, however, need to have a strong local connection, e.g. they work in the Parish **or** they have close relatives in the Parish **or** they were born in the Parish **or** they previously lived in the Parish but moved away to find suitable housing. If you know of anyone with a strong connection to the Parish but currently living elsewhere, please encourage them to contact Charles Barlow the Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire Rural Community Council on 02476 217343 or email charlesb@wrccrural.org.uk so that a Survey Form can be sent to them.

All information you give will be treated in strict confidence and the Parish Council will not see individual replies. The analysis will be carried out by WRCC and it will retain all Survey Forms.

Forms should be returned by 31 March 2009 in the 'Freepost' envelope provided.

Thank you for your help in conducting this Survey.

Yours faithfully

Dorsington Parish Council

Appendix B

Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments. Although intended to focus on housing issues, the comments relate to a range of subjects. The comments are reproduced below, whole and verbatim, except where a reference was made that could identify an individual or in the case of defamatory remarks.

- Any building would have to take place on Green Belt.
- Don't know.
- Dorsington is too small a community to take any further housing.
- In favour only to families who have employment, not unemployed.
- Size of any development should reflect the needs of the LOCAL COMMUNITY only.
- Small villages are being spoilt by so called small housing schemes that are not needed.
- There are no 'local', i.e. in this Village, people in need of any housing scheme and our lack of amenities make the Village only suitable for multi-vehicle families and they have no need of any housing scheme property.

Appendix D

Local connection verified	Household composition	Reason for need	Need support	Preferred tenure	Preferred type/size	Actual tenure	Actual type/size
Yes	Single person	Need independent accommodation	No	Not specified	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Couple	Need less expensive home	No	Shared ownership	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Single person	Need to be closer to employment	No	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	2 bed house
Yes	Family of 4 (2 children, different sexes)	Need to be closer to employment	No	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house
Yes	Family of 5 (4 children)	Need larger accommodation	No	Rented	4 bed house	Rented	4 bed house