



HALFORD HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

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

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

June 2007

CONTENTS

1. **Summary of results**
 2. **Introduction**
 3. **Planning context**
 4. **Results – Contextual information**
 - i) Age profile
 - ii) Household size profile
 - iii) Housing tenure profile
 - iv) Housing type profile
 - v) Housing size profile
 - vi) Housing type and size profiles cross referenced
 - vii) Life in the parish: positive and negative aspects
 - viii) Outward migration from the parish
 - ix) Support for one or more small housing schemes based on local needs
 5. **Results - Housing needs information**
 - i) Reason(s) for housing needs - breakdown
 - ii) Local connection – breakdown
 - iii) Waiting list - breakdown
 - iv) Preferred tenure - breakdown
 - v) Preferred type and size - breakdown
 6. **Determination of specific housing needs**
 7. **Conclusions**
 8. **Recommendations**
 9. **Acknowledgements**
 10. **Contact information**
- Appendices A, B, C and D**

1. Summary of results

Approximately 150 Housing Needs Survey forms were distributed and 60 forms were returned. This equates to a response rate of 40%, an excellent achievement for a survey of this type.

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

Rented from a housing association

- 1 x 2 bed flat or house
- 1 x 3 bed house

2. Introduction

Halford Parish Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey in April 2007.

The aim of the Survey was to collect accurate housing needs information for Halford 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.

The Survey form was designed with input from Halford 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 local surveys in parishes 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 Halford. 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 June 2007.

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 Halford 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

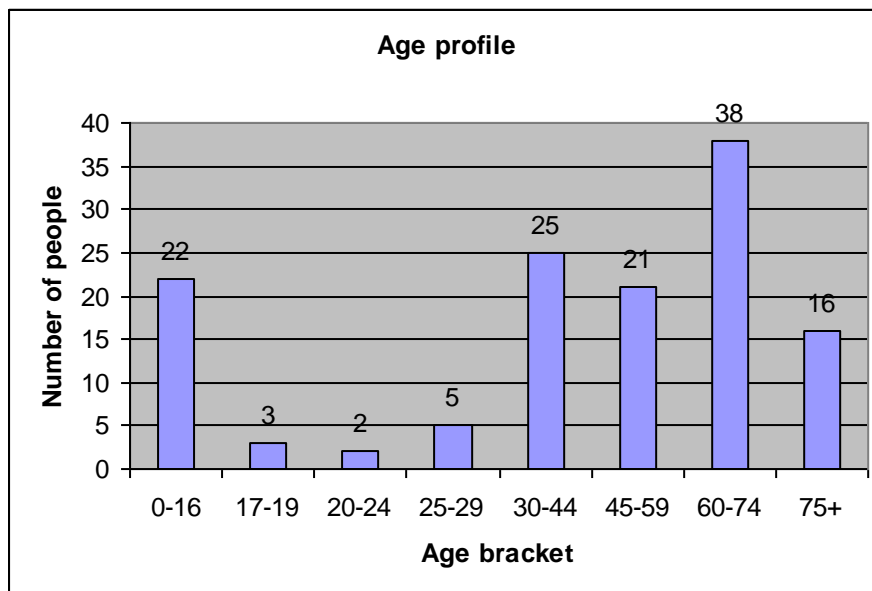
A total of 60 Survey forms were returned equating to a response rate of 40%. This level of response is an excellent achievement because people generally respond for one of three reasons:

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.

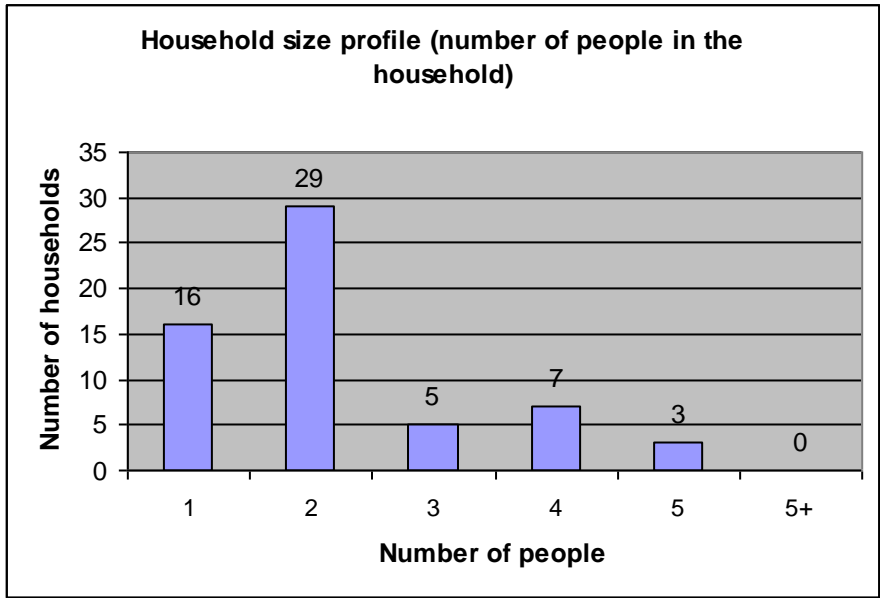
i) Age profile (60 responses, 132 people)

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 57% 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. In terms of the future sustainability of the Village, this is a healthy sign.



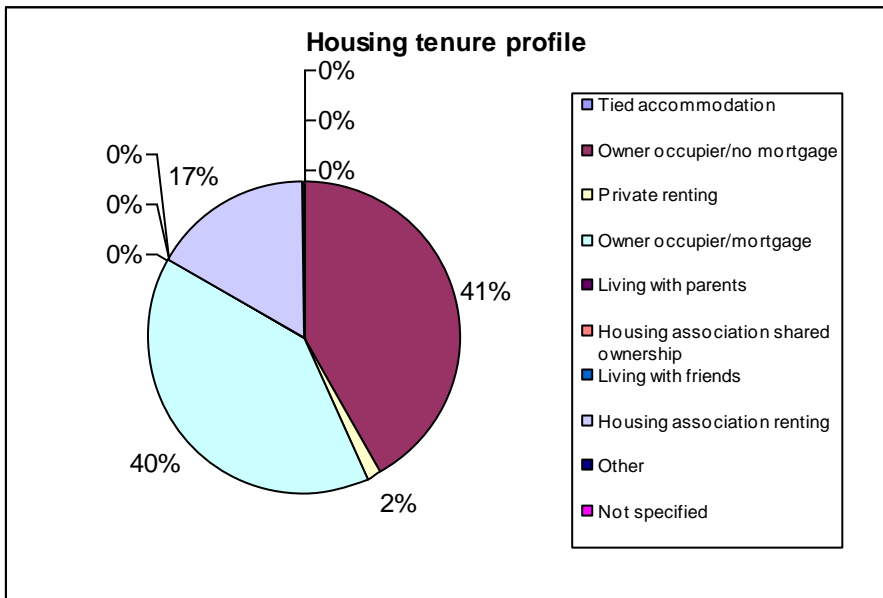
ii) Household size profile (60 responses)

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 2.2 people, slightly less than the Census 2001 figure for Halford Parish of 2.28 people.



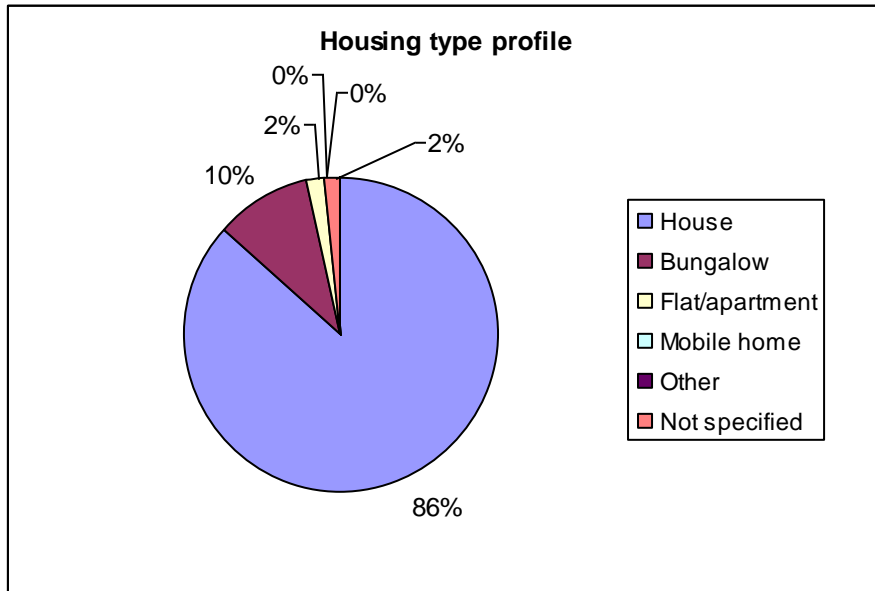
iii) Housing tenure profile (60 responses)

The following chart shows the housing tenure profile for the Survey respondents. In a pattern typical for villages in south Warwickshire, owner-occupiers represent 81% of the total. Tenures traditionally considered to be within the 'social sector' represent just 17% of the total.



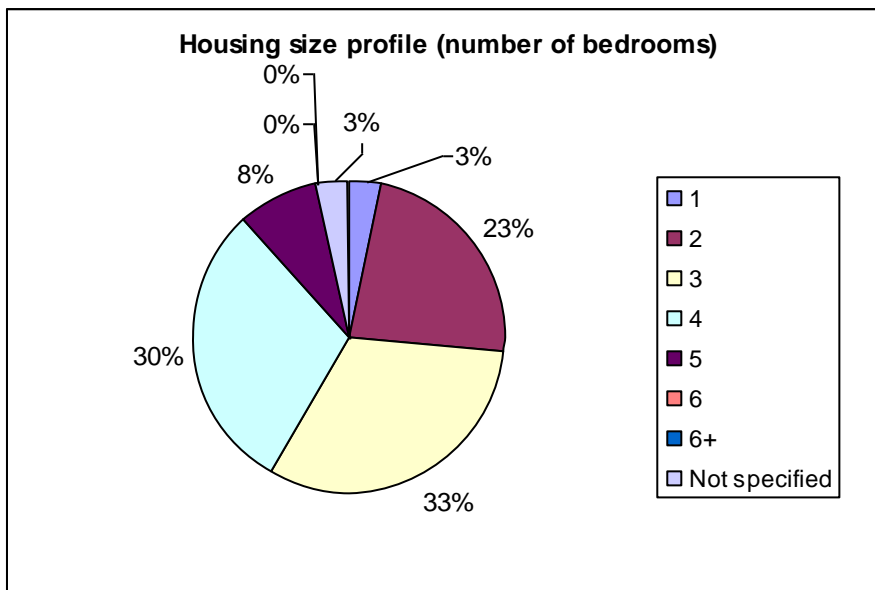
iv) Housing type profile (60 responses)

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



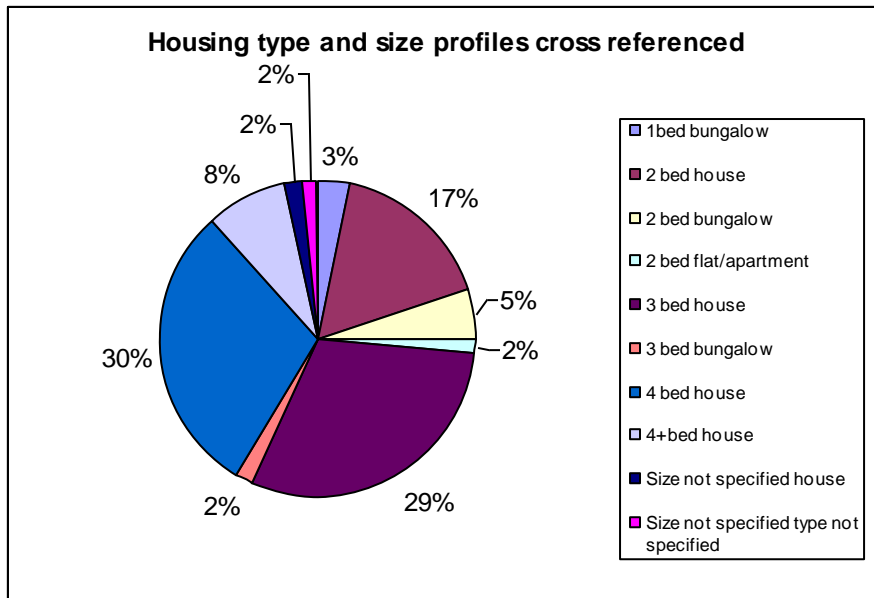
v) Housing size profile (60 responses)

The following chart shows the sizes of homes that respondents live in. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes are the significant factors.



vi) Housing type and size profiles cross referenced (60 responses)

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

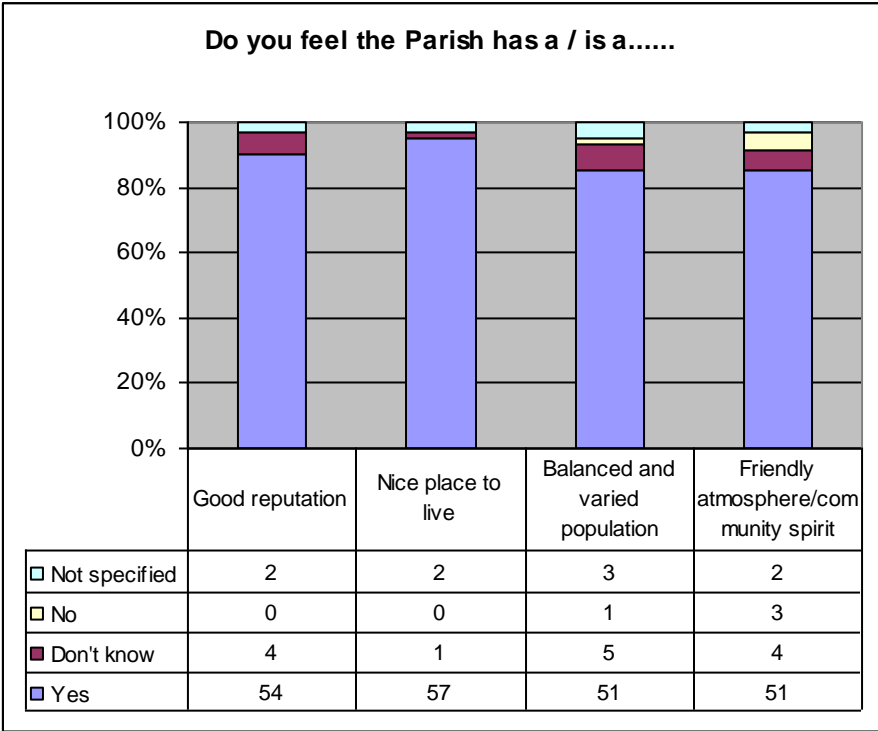


vii) Life in the parish: positive and negative aspects (60 responses)

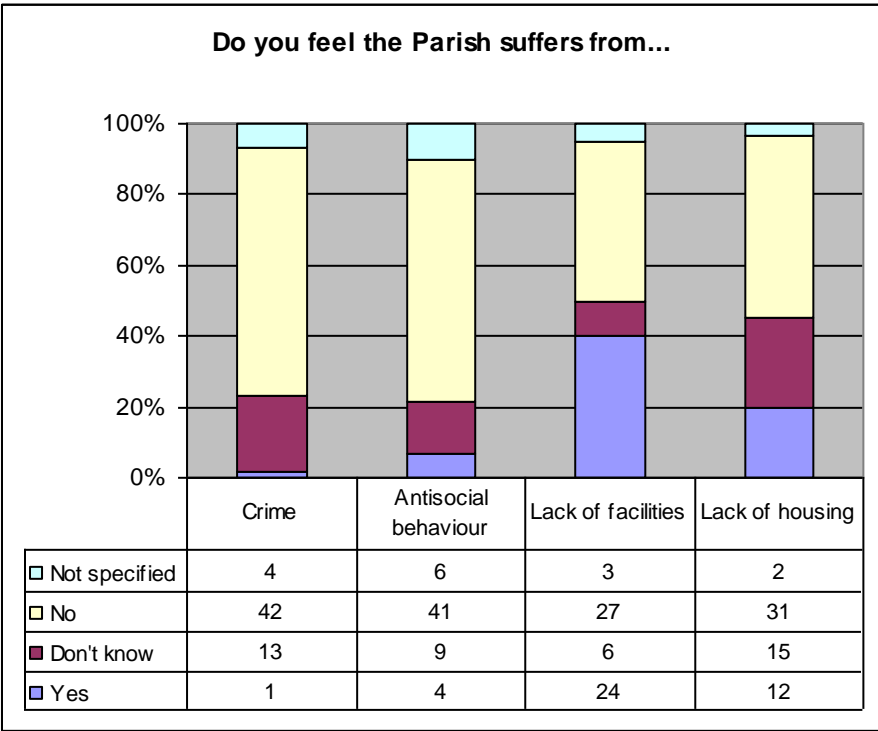
Respondents were asked a series of questions in respect of the perceived positive and negative aspects to life in Halford Parish.

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.

The first chart shows respondents' views on the benefits to living in Halford. 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. In respect of crime and antisocial behaviour, the majority of people didn't perceive there to be an issue. In respect of whether there was a lack of facilities and to a lesser extent a lack of housing, there were more mixed views.



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

Lack of facilities – comments:

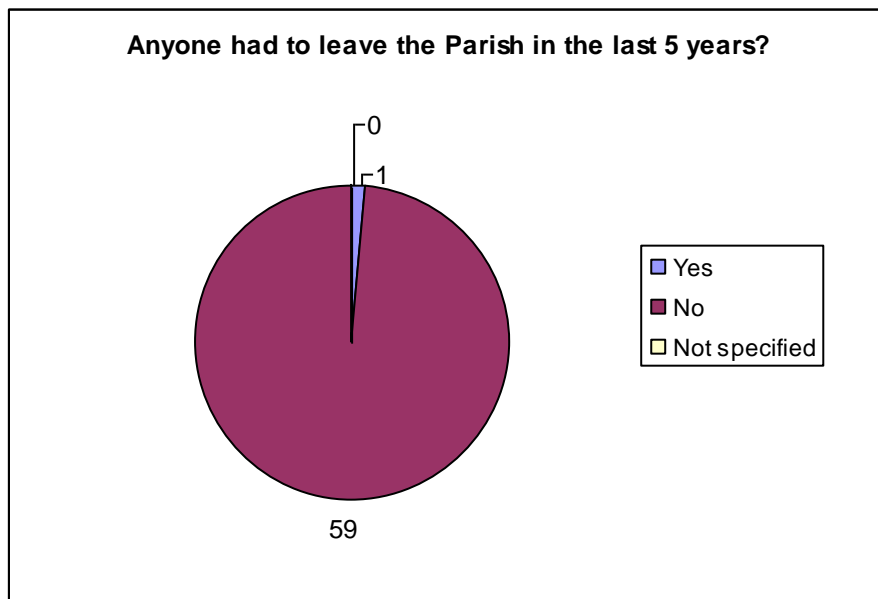
Key issue	Number of respondents' comments
Need a Post Office	18
Need a village shop (other than the Petrol Station)	4
Need a children's park	3
Need for youth facilities / youth club	3

Lack of adequate housing – comments:

Key issue	Number of respondents' comments
Need additional affordable housing generally	9
Need additional affordable housing – for younger people in particular	3
Need starter homes	2

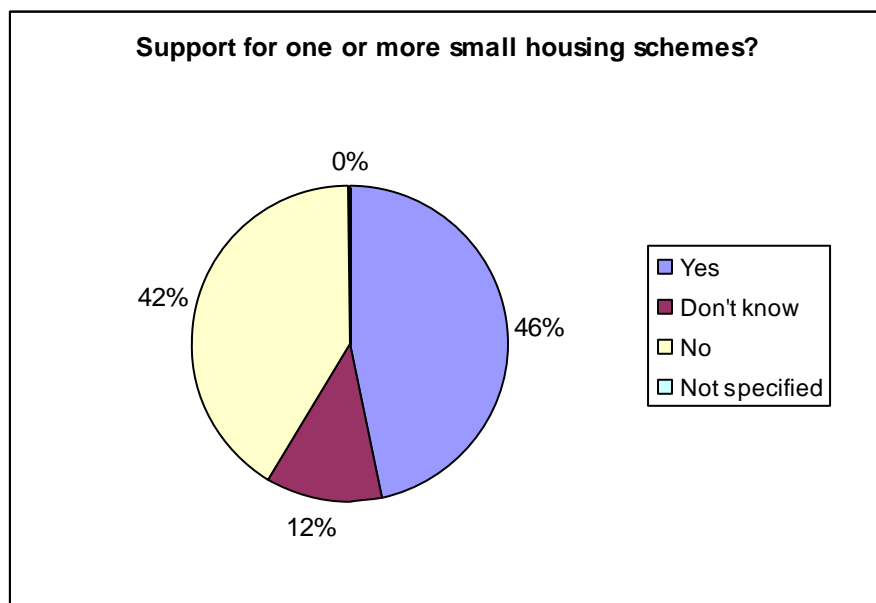
viii) Outward migration from the parish (60 responses)

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 (60 responses)

The chart below shows the level of support amongst respondents for one or more small housing schemes to meet the needs of local people being built in the Parish. The chart shows there are mixed views on this. A relatively high number of respondents specified 'No', relative to most other parish housing needs surveys where the response is in the region of 20 to 25%. Comments received from respondents on this subject are reproduced as Appendix B to this Report.



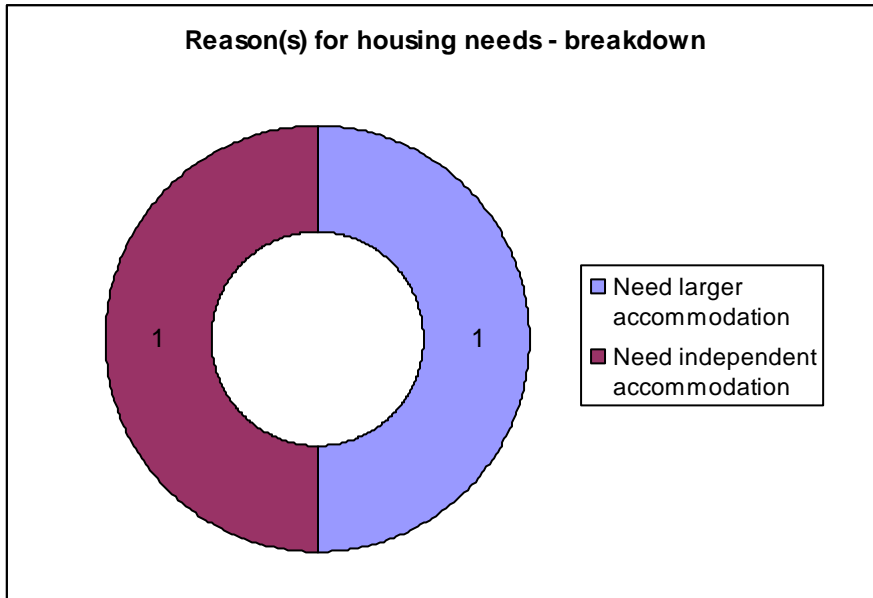
5. Results – Housing needs information

Out of the 60 responses to the Survey, 2 individuals/households expressed a need for alternative housing.

Section 5 provides a breakdown of information from these 2 individuals/households.

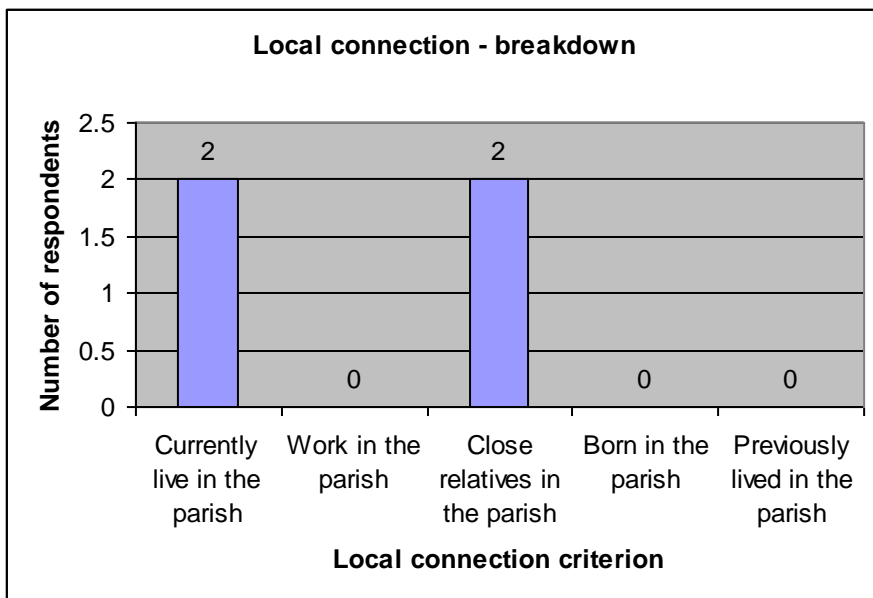
i) Reason(s) for housing needs – breakdown (2 responses)

The following chart shows the reasons for the 2 respondents' housing needs. Where more than one reason was specified, the first reason shown on the Survey form was counted.



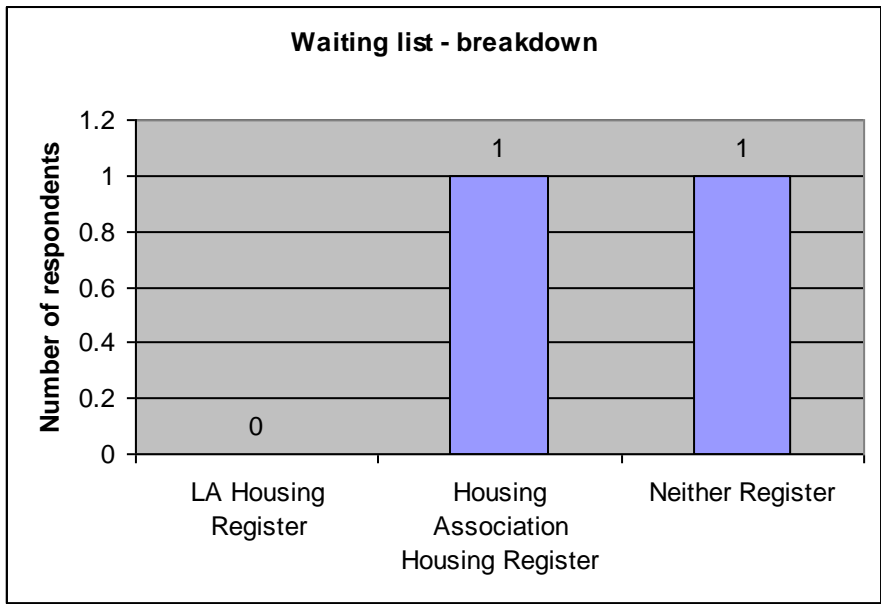
ii) Local connection – breakdown (2 responses)

The chart below shows the types of local connection that the 2 respondents have.



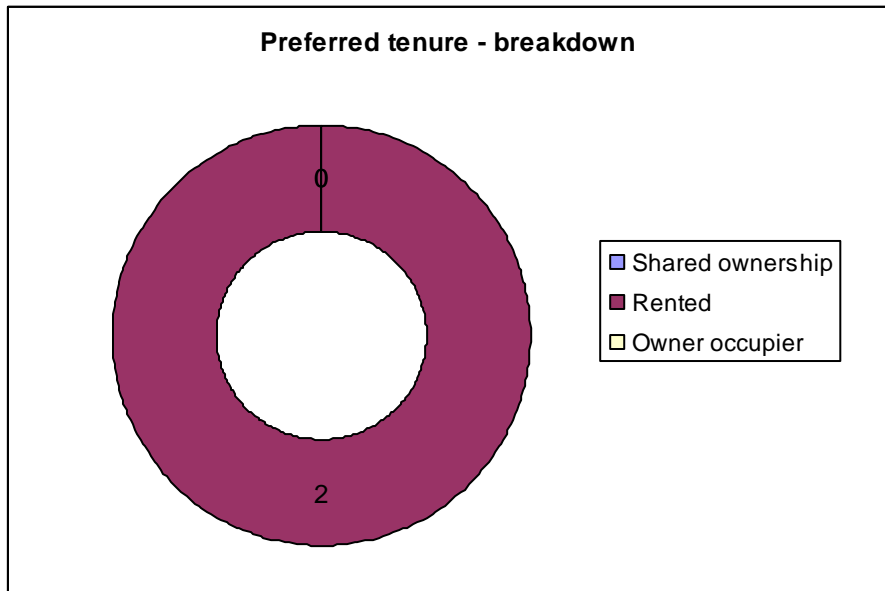
iii) Waiting list – breakdown (2 responses)

The following chart shows the number of respondents registered on the Local Authority Waiting List and/or a housing association waiting list. N.B. 'waiting lists' are now generally referred to as 'housing registers'.



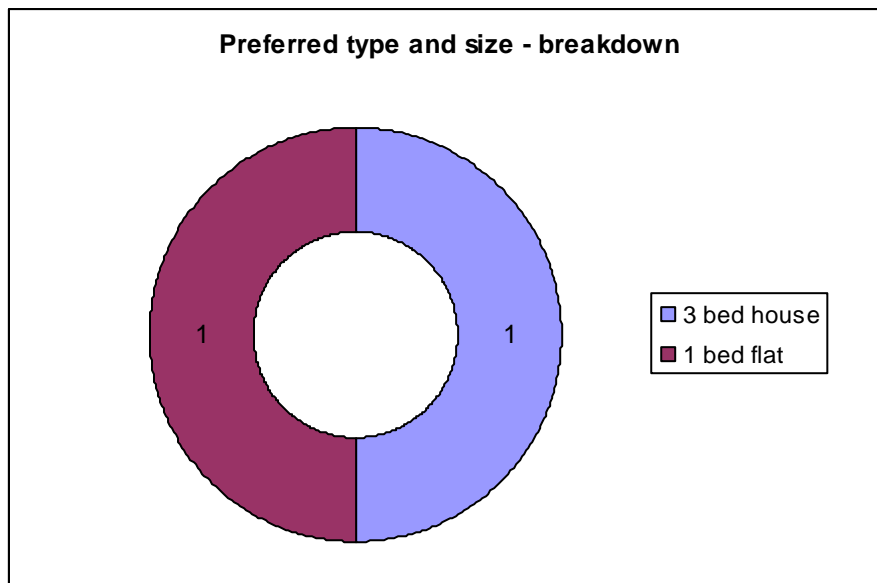
iv) Preferred tenure – breakdown (2 responses)

The preferred tenures of the 2 respondents are shown in the chart below.



v) Preferred type and size – breakdown (2 responses)

The preferred types and sizes of accommodation expressed by the 2 respondents are shown in the following chart.



6. Determination of specific housing needs

The following table shows the specific housing needs of the 2 respondents. A number of rules were used to compile this table:

- Where a respondent indicated a preference for a 1 bedroom 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 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 Halford 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	Rented	1 bed flat	Rented	2 bed flat or house
Yes	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house

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

7. Conclusions

There is need for 2 new homes in Halford for people with a local connection. The specific needs are for:

Rented from a housing association

- 1 x 2 bed flat or house
- 1 x 3 bed house

The opinion of villagers towards a small housing scheme to meet local needs is, however, very mixed.

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 2 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 to this Report.

9. Acknowledgements

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

10. Contact information

Charles Barlow
 Rural Housing Enabler, Warwickshire Rural Community Council
 25 Stoneleigh Deer Park
 Stareton
 Kenilworth
 CV8 2LY
 Tel: 02476 217343
 Email: charlesb@wrccrural.org.uk

Paul Eccleshare
 Development Services Officer, Warwickshire Rural Housing Association
 Whitwick Business Centre
 Stenson Road
 Coalville
 Leicestershire
 LE67 4JP
 Tel: 01530 276545
 Email: paul.eccleshare@midlandsrh.org.uk

Sue Finlay
 Clerk to Halford Parish Council
 Rowborough Farm
 Stretton on Fosse
 Moreton in Marsh
 GL56 9RE
 Tel: 01608 661157
 Email: sue.finlay12@btinternet.com

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 the individual concerned or in the case of defamatory remarks.

- We already have 4 housing association houses built to replace the Parish Cottages let only to village applicants. 2.) 14 bungalows housing association. 3.) Any remaining HA houses = former Council houses not privately owned. 4.) A private recently built development of 8 houses, 3 of which were first time buyer. In a small village that is more than enough. We have lived here for 42 years. Our 3 sons have made their own way so I speak from a parent's point of view.
- A small village will lose its charm with any more housing and thus traffic. Parking would cause problems and spoil the green areas we strive to protect.
- Additional housing for locals - not immigrants.
- As the sale of affordable homes in the Parish is slow and protracted, houses often being on the market for periods of 12 months or more, I feel there is no need for further housing!
- Far too much dog noise and mess. There is never a day without both. Having been in the village almost 20 years I am sick and tired ...(unreadable). However, the village is lovely, in the best County and Country in the World.
- Halford doesn't need anymore housing.
- Halford is a small rural village and should stay that way.
- Houses for rent/shared ownership.
- I think the sale has been created by the sale of rented properties, both public and private sector, and housing association policies. The Feldon Edge development would have been an ideal opportunity to include a couple of suitable properties.
- If people can't afford to live in the village, they should seek to find affordable accommodation as local as possible. We have a small village and should not be spoilt.

- In my experience the housing on offer in these schemes still fails to target those on the first rung of housing requirements. Still not affordable.
- Most definitely need homes for local people.
- The latest new development (some 3 years ago) which contained 3 'starter' properties at the request of the local residents did not attract local buyers so negated supposed need.
- There is no school, PO, nor significant employment opportunities in Halford. Even 'local' people should live near such facilities, rather than be forced to commute to work, school or shops....
- Too late now but the Halford Pub could perhaps have been converted to non luxury flats?
- We already have a Council estate, a number of old peoples' bungalows, 4 parish cottages for local people and a recently built private development, half of which is low cost housing development - enough for a village of Halford's size without upsetting the social balance. Many of the people moving into Association houses and old peoples' bungalows have no local connection.
- We have already had a group of houses built a few years ago (Feldon Edge) and it was agreed by the Parish Council that this was sufficient.
- We have villagers who were in private rented which is now being sold and wishes to stay in the village. Although there will be 2 properties empty in 2 weeks time they will not be considered because they are not over 60 years old. There is a field in the Idlicote Road, Halford, which if built on would infill between the Council estate (now sold off) and Far Cottages. Maybe if someone looked into this possibility SDC would pass it for planning.
- Would be in favour only if the houses were built in a style in keeping with the local architecture and with suitable local materials

Appendix D

ID	Local connection verified	Household composition	Reason for need	Need support	Preferred tenure	Preferred type/size	Actual tenure	Actual type/size
25	Yes	Single young person	Need independent accommodation	No	Rented	1 bed flat	Rented	2 bed flat or house
1	Yes	Family of 4 (2 children)	Need larger accommodation	No	Rented	3 bed house	Rented	3 bed house