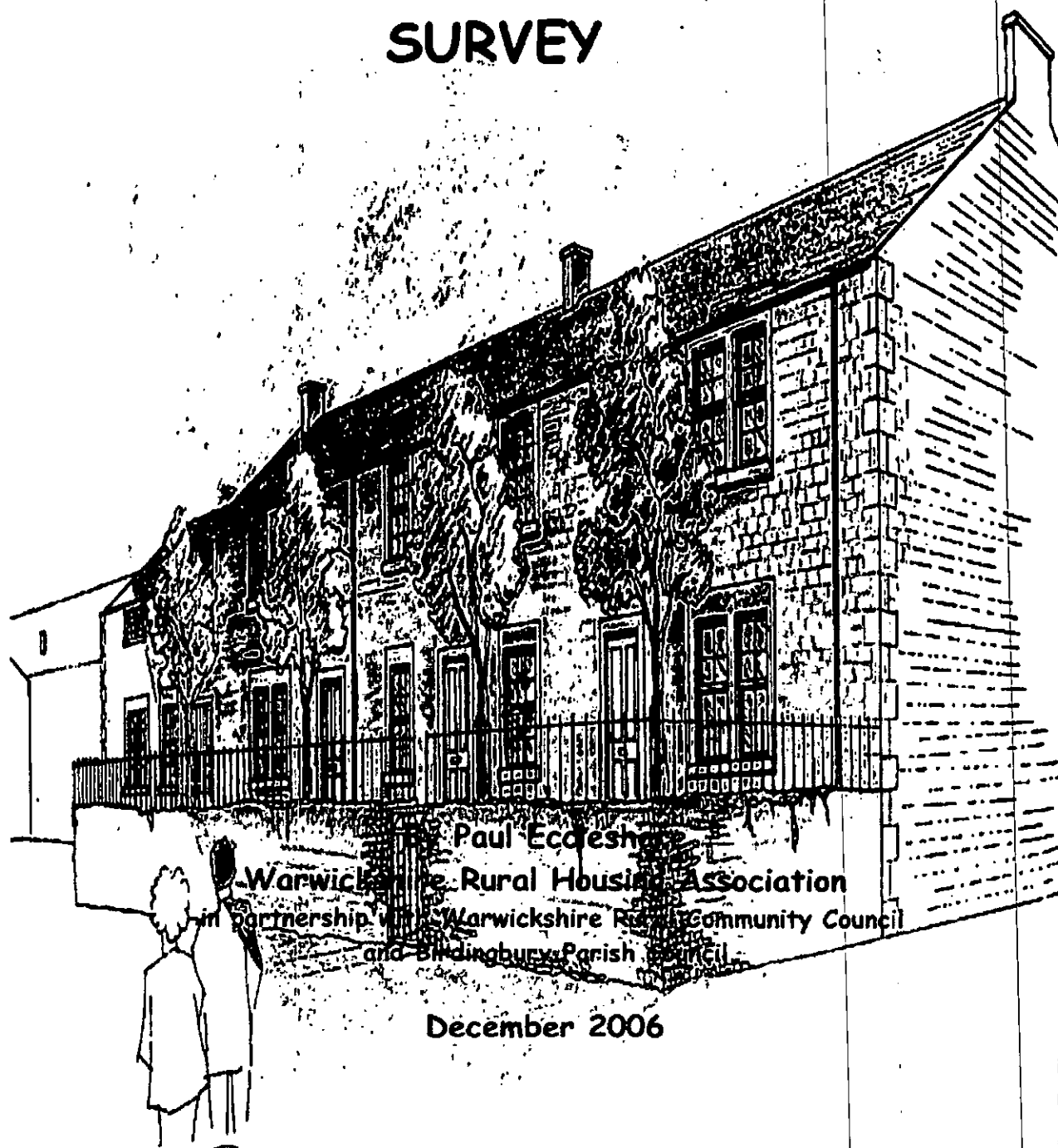


Warwickshire  
Rural  
Housing  
Association



# BIRDINGBURY PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY



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Warwickshire Rural Housing Association

in partnership with Warwickshire Rural Community Council  
and Birdingbury Parish Council

December 2006

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## **1 Introduction**

In May 2006 the Rural Housing Enabler covering Rugby attended a meeting of Birdingbury Parish Council to discuss undertaking a housing needs survey of the parish.

A housing needs survey form was approved by the Parish Council and a copy of the form was delivered to every household in the parish during October 2006. The return date for the survey was the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and returns were made via a 'Freepost' envelope directly to Warwickshire Rural Housing Association (WRHA).

WRHA is a specialist rural housing association that works with parish councils and local authorities to investigate the need for, and provide affordable homes in, villages throughout the county.

## **2 Purpose of the survey**

The aim of the survey was to assess local housing needs, i.e. housing needs within and relating to the parish of Birdingbury.

## **3 Average house prices**

Data from the Land Registry shows the following average house prices for Birdingbury based on sales between July - Sept 2006:

Detached -	£365,209 based on 17 sales during the period. 15% higher than the UK average for the period of £319,727
Semi- Detached -	£192,340 based on 10 sales during the period. 2% higher than the UK average for the period of £188,480

Information regarding the average sale prices of terrace housing was not available at the time of writing due to too few sales occurring during the reported quarter.

## 4 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 where new housing would meet a 'local' need identified by the community

Policy S3 of Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan (adopted July 2006) – Rural Settlement Hierarchy identifies Birdingbury as a Local Needs Settlement (ie those with defined settlement boundaries other than Main Rural Settlements).

It goes on to state that only development to meet identified local housing needs will be permitted within Birdingbury and that preference will be given to the use of previously developed land.

In addition, Policy H7 of Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan – Rural Exceptions Policy outlines the circumstances in which development to meet identified local housing needs may be permitted adjacent to settlements such as Birdingbury:

"In exceptional circumstances, the development of affordable dwellings to meet identified local housing needs may be permitted adjacent to settlements as defined on the Proposals Map, where residential development would normally be resisted, provided that:

- a) It is demonstrated that no suitable sites exist within appropriate settlements; and
- b) The settlement has an adequate range of or convenient access to services and facilities; and
- c) It is clearly demonstrated that there is a local need for affordable housing which outweighs other policy objections; and
- d) Satisfactory arrangements for the management and occupation of the properties have been made to ensure that all dwellings provided will be, and will remain available for occupancy by eligible local people at an affordable cost, at a range of tenures, both initially and in perpetuity; and
- e) Developments do not have an adverse impact on the character and/or appearance of settlements, their setting or the surrounding countryside; and
- f) The development consists exclusively of affordable housing."

The explanation of this policy goes on to state "Sufficient land is allocated to meet the housing requirements of the Borough. However it is acknowledged that in the rural areas of the Borough, where large housing releases are not appropriate, there may be a need to make provision for the release of further land to provide for affordable dwellings, in addition to that required and identified for general housing provision."

The provision of any housing that may be provided as a result of this survey would be subject to a planning condition (known as an S106 agreement) being placed on the development, limiting

occupation of the homes to people with a local connection. In the context of Policy S3, 'Rural Settlement Hierarchy', of the local plan a local connection is defined as:

- A person or persons and their dependents residing permanently in the parish, or an adjoining parish, for at least 10 years;
- A person or persons residing permanently in the parish, or an adjoining parish, for 10 years or more within the previous 20 years;
- A person or persons required to live close to another person who satisfies the above criteria and is in essential need of frequent attention and/or care due to age, ill-health and/or infirmity;
- A person or persons required to live close to their place of work in the parish or an adjoining parish;
- In relation to employment, local needs will include:
  - A local business already within the parish and seeking modest expansion;
  - A new business of an appropriate scale that requires a rural location and/or would diversify the local economy;
  - A farm diversification scheme that would ensure the continuation of an existing agricultural enterprise.

## 5 Respondents' details

Approximately 150 survey forms were distributed and 50 were received in return. This equates to a response rate of 33% which is considered to be excellent for this type of survey because people generally respond for one of three reasons:

- a) to express a need for alternative accommodation,
- b) to offer their support in principle to the idea of a small housing scheme for local needs,
- c) to state their opposition to the development of a small housing scheme for local needs.

All 50 responses<sup>1</sup> were included in the remainder of this analysis. The total number of people represented by the survey forms was 128 across all age groups.

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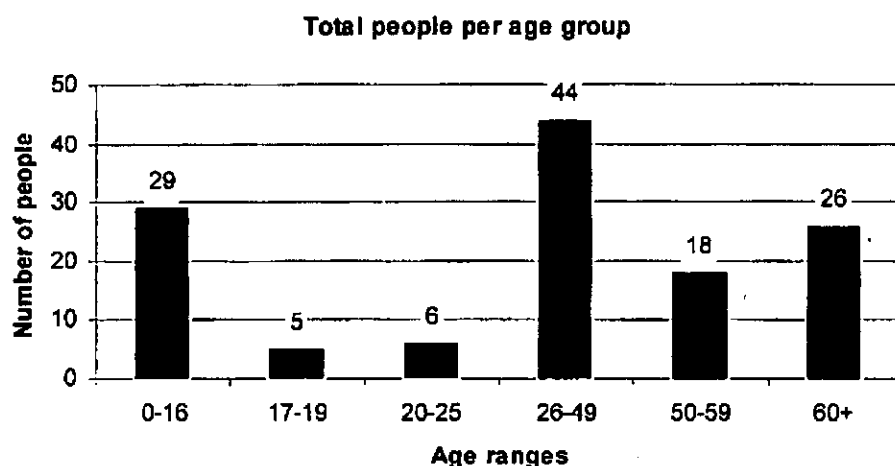
<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document the term respondent refers to an individual survey form. This often represents a household containing more than one person.

## 6 Age profile

The following chart shows the age profile of the 128 people captured by the 50 returned survey forms. It can be seen that the largest group of respondents are in the 26 – 49 years age group. This group represents just over 34% of the people responding to the survey and a majority of this group represent family households with a healthy number of 0 – 16 year old children present.

16 of the respondents represent households containing at least one member of over 60 years of age. Positively, only 3 of these are single person households. 11 of these respondents live in households composed entirely of people of 60 years of age.

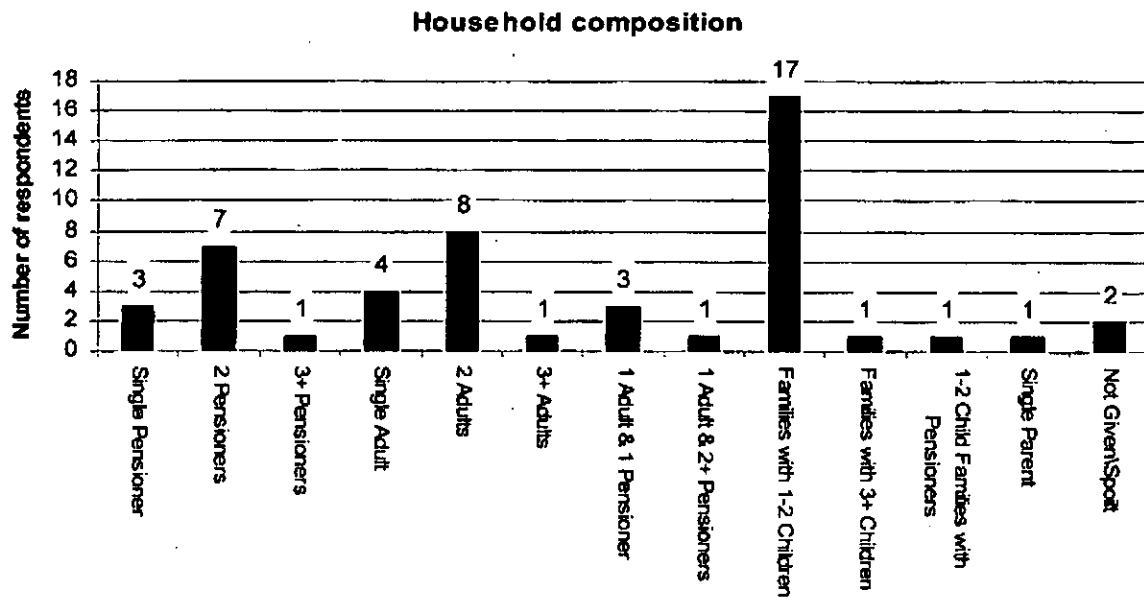
Altogether the profile shows a reasonable mix of age ranges at present with the over 60s (20%) being outweighed by the under 60s (80%). An area of concern may be the small number of young adults (17 – 25 years of age) captured by the survey. A number of factors will play a role in maintaining a good diversity of age ranges within the parish, and the availability of affordable housing for young people growing up in the parish will be one of them.



## 7 Household size and mix

The following chart shows the number of households in each size/mix category. The highest level of response was from the 'Families with 1 – 2 children' category (34%). Households containing just 2 adults make up the next largest group, closely followed by households containing two pensioners<sup>2</sup>.

The average household size for the respondents = 3.66 persons per dwelling.



<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report the term 'Pensioner' refers to anyone over 60 years of age.



## 8 Tenure of respondents

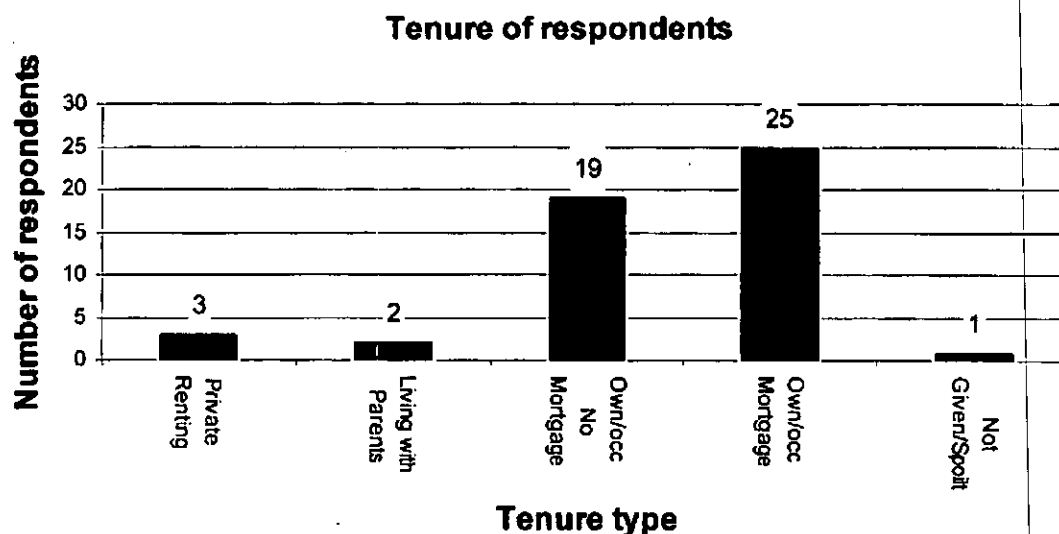
The following chart shows the current **household** tenure across the 128 respondents.

Given that the largest group of respondents are the 26 – 49 years age group it is unsurprising that the largest tenure group is the 'Owner occupier with mortgage'. 19 respondents (15 of which contain a household member over 60 years of age) are owner-occupiers without mortgage. The results for this question are typical for a rural parish where owner-occupiers make up a majority of the residents.

The chart shows that at least 5 respondents are living in potentially insecure / undesirable tenures:

Private renting - 3 respondents (8 people)  
Living with parents - 2 respondents

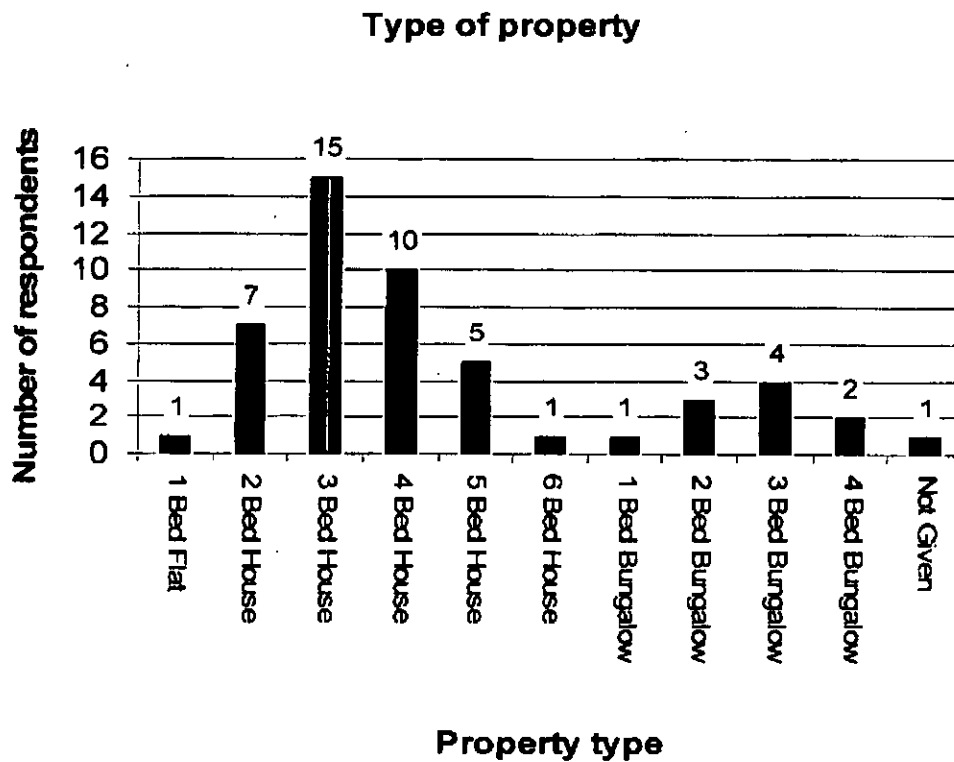
None of the respondents are currently housed by a Social Landlord (Housing Association or Local Authority). 2001 census data for the parish shows that there are 5 social dwellings owned by the Local Authority in the parish.



## 9 Property types

The following chart shows the types of dwellings that respondents currently live in. The two largest categories are 3 bedroom houses and 4 bedroom houses, which is not untypical for a rural parish.

Overall the chart suggests that there is a reasonable mix of property size types within the parish, including a range of different sizes of bungalows.

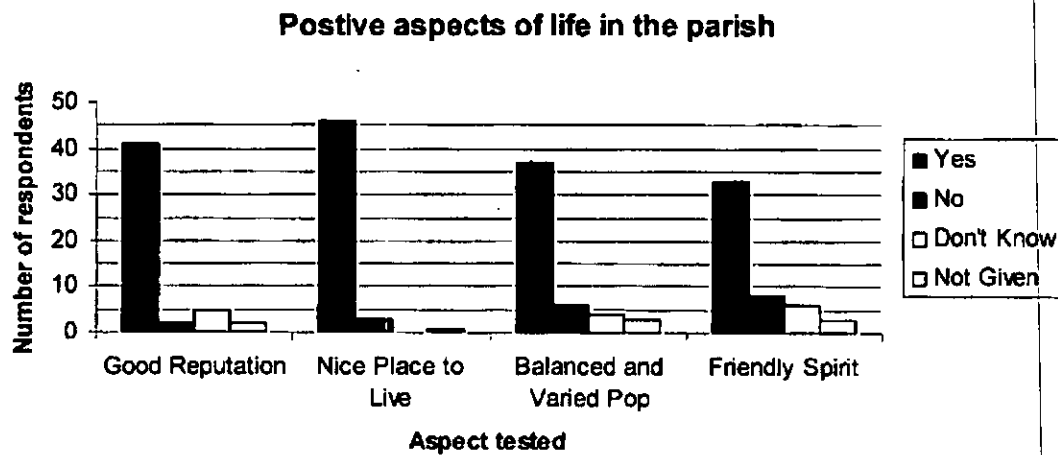


## 10 Sustainability issues

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived benefits and disadvantages to living in the parish of Birdingbury. This was done to build-up a picture of life in the parish, and to identify any issues/problems that could threaten the long-term sustainability of the parish.

Information relating to the sustainability of a settlement is important to assess whether any affordable homes that are subsequently provided will in themselves be 'sustainable'. Ensuring that people will take up tenancies and live in a settlement are crucial considerations when providing new homes.

The first chart shows respondents' views about the benefits to living in Birdingbury. The majority of respondents think the parish has a good reputation, is a nice place to live, has a balanced and varied population, and a friendly spirit.

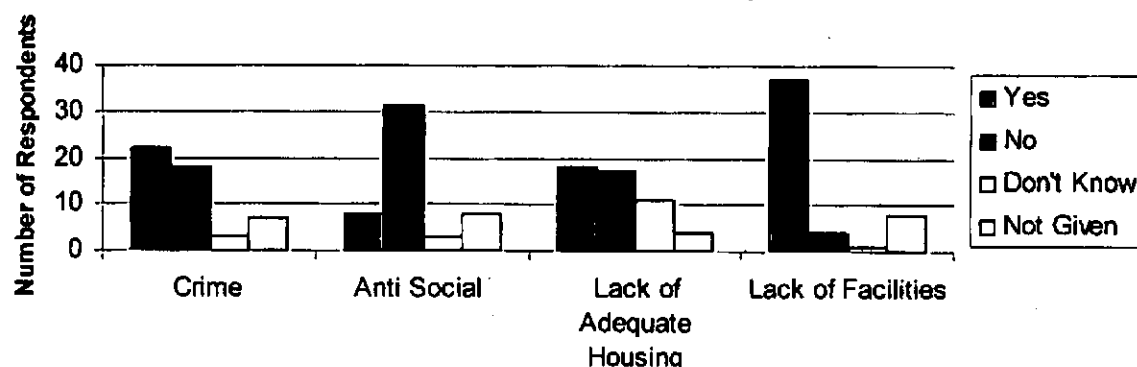


The second chart shows respondents' views about negative issues that might exist in the parish. This is more of a mixed bag of views. 44% of respondents felt that crime was an issue within the parish. There were no accompanying comments to suggest the reason for this perception, although the low level of experience of anti-social behaviour shown in the graph suggests that the higher level of concern over crime may be caused by more than just noisy / abusive youths as is often the case.

With regard to respondents perception about the provision of adequate housing within the parish, 18 respondents felt that this was an issue, 17 felt that it was not an issue and 11 respondents were undecided.

A greater level of consensus is achieved in people's perception of the range of facilities available within the parish. 74% of respondents felt that the parish was lacking in this respect. This is, however, not unusual in a rural parish. Additional comments provided by respondents highlighted their desire for a local post office / shop.

### Negative aspects of life in the parish

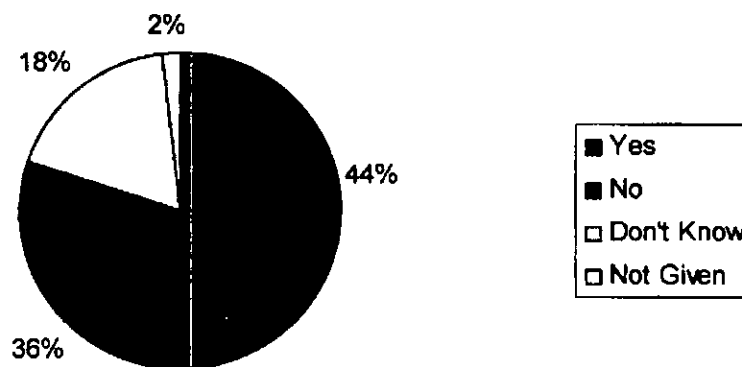


## 11 Local support for a small housing development

The chart below shows the level of support within the community for the possible future provision of a small housing development of affordable homes for local people being developed within the parish. It can be seen that a majority of respondents expressing a definite opinion support such a concept. However, 36% of respondents were against such a scheme and 18% were not certain how they felt.

Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers and their submissions are reproduced verbatim in appendix A.

**Level of support for a small housing scheme**



## 12 Housing needs analysis

Of the 50 returns, 41 were from people who would be considered as adequately housed and therefore would not be looking for alternative accommodation in the next 5 years. These respondents completed the survey form primarily to offer their support or objection towards a 'local needs' housing development, to give their comments regarding the 'sustainability' of Birdingbury and comment on its facilities. They were therefore discounted from the rest of the analysis. Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing within the next five years is concerned there are 9 returns where the respondents have given specific details of their housing need. Due to the local occupancy restrictions imposed by Rugby Borough Council only four of these respondents meet the eligibility criteria for affordable housing.

The following table lists the responses identifying what type of housing they would prefer and our assessment of their need.

RESPONDENT	PREFERENCE	REALITY
Single person. Currently living with parents. Resident in parish for 19 years. Also has grandparents and uncle in parish. Needs independent accommodation.	2-bed house Owner occupier.	2-bed house Rented.
Family. Resident in Harborough Magna. Work in the parish. Currently renting privately and require more affordable and secure tenure closer to employment.	2-bed house Shared ownership / rented	2-bed house Rented
Single person. Currently resident in Rugby, wishes to return to parish to be closer to family (parents and siblings). Previously resident for 20 years.	2-bed house Shared ownership / owner occupier	2-bed house Shared ownership
Single person. Currently living with parents. Resident in parish for 23 years. Also has grandparents and uncle in parish. Needs independent accommodation.	2-bed house Owner occupier	2-bed house Rented.

Therefore the housing needs derived directly from this survey are:

**3 x 2-bed houses for rent**

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

**Total = 4 units.**

### **13 Conclusions and recommendations**

Warwickshire Rural Community Council in partnership with Birdingbury Parish Council and Warwickshire Rural Housing Association (WRHA) has conducted a detailed study of housing need in the parish of Birdingbury. The survey has not only investigated housing needs, but also ascertained residents' views regarding life in the village, as well as identifying local support for a development to meet local needs.

WRHA's recommendation is that Birdingbury Parish Council considers the findings of this report both with respect to the level of housing need expressed and the level of support for a small scheme by members of the community.

If the parish council feels that it wishes to commit to a development of a small scheme of four affordable dwellings to meet the need identified then WRHA would be more than willing to work with the parish council to meet its aims. However, the parish council may wish to explore community opinion further in the light of the findings of this report, either separately or with the assistance of the WRCC and / or WRHA through a community consultation exercise.

A majority of the respondents are young people who have grown up within the parish and who wish to remain there, or return to it, to live near their family. Without providing for this need these members of the community may be forced to move away to the neighbouring towns.

## **14 Acknowledgements**

Warwickshire Rural Community Council would like to thank Councillor Guy French, Chairman of Birdingbury Parish Council.

## **15 Contact details**

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## **Appendix A: Respondent comments regarding the development of a small-scale affordable housing development for local people.**

The following comments were received from respondents to the Housing Needs Survey regarding their feelings about the development of a small-scale affordable housing scheme for local people. They are reproduced verbatim:

- The village needs more adequate housing for local people who have to move to a town.
- The village needs to have a shop.
- Retirement housing would be beneficial to many.
- Uncontrolled youths due to poor parenting.
- The village is in need of a post office.
- No specific housing need in the next 10 years.
- I really do not understand the point of this survey. It suggests that there is a need to expand the village, I think that any scheme to change the village would be a mistake. Why change something as the village is fine as it is. The adage "if it ain't broke, don't fix it comes to mind!" What a waste of the parish councils time and effort – surely there are better things for the council to do.
- There is absolutely sufficient housing for a village of this size.
- The village has already outgrown its facilities – we need a community/village hall including shop/part time post office. We already have a youth club with 50 children and nowhere to meet. More houses need more facilities – if you are considering a scheme it must include provision of facilities for services like a shop.
- Your form does not cater for adult children living at home so that they can express their personal views.
- Additional housing schemes are not required. Low cost housing which does exist does not sell quickly. There is insufficient local work, public transport and road infrastructure to support additional housing schemes, and I would actively campaign against any such developments as would other members of my family.
- There are starter homes, medium priced and expensive houses in this small village. We see no need for anymore of any type.
- Please build some houses so we can have a mixture of families living in the village, not just a load of rich people who look down their noses at you.
- Better street lighting – local security cctv to monitor potential rural crime.

- The small development of "1<sup>st</sup> time buyers" houses of 1990/91 are now mostly occupied by "incomers" with no connection to the village.
- We feel in our opinion there is no need for anymore housing or facilities in Birdingbury village or it will destroy the fabric of a rural community.
- Houses not affordable for young people
- Lack of small low-cost units
- Lack of affordable homes for young people or key workers – present houses too dear.
- Nowhere to downsize to – bungalows have very large gardens.