



WILLOUGHBY ON THE WOLDS HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Midlands Rural Housing
in partnership with
Rushcliffe Borough Council
and Willoughby-on-the-Wolds Parish Council
June 2009



Thank you to the residents of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds parish for their help and support with this survey.



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Executive Summary

Midlands Rural Housing completed a Housing Needs Survey in Willoughby-on-the-Wolds during April 2009, to assess the housing need in the parish. As well as requesting specific housing information, the survey asks some general questions relating to the quality of life in the parish.

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people. Affordable housing may be provided through both rental and shared ownership schemes and is for people with a strong connection to the parish.

Willoughby is a pleasant and popular parish with a well balanced population, a good reputation and a friendly community spirit. Respondents to the survey did not feel that a lack of affordable housing is a major issue in the parish, although several did comment on the lack of housing for young, first-time buyers. There is more concern about the lack of essential facilities which may impact on the long-term sustainability of Willoughby.

Generally, property values are high in Willoughby and property sizes are large. There is very little small, low cost property available for either young starters or the elderly. There is also a very limited rental market and none is low cost rental.

The Housing Needs Survey did not identify anybody expressing an interest in affordable housing at the current time, although the lack of starter properties may become a problem in the future owing to the high percentage of young people, particularly under 16's, who will find difficulty staying in the parish in future years.

Our recommendation is that no provision for affordable housing needs to be made at the current time, but that Rushcliffe Borough Council should consider carrying out a new Housing Needs Survey in five years time to ascertain whether the situation has changed.



1. Introduction

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people in rural areas. In 2005 MRH established the Trent Valley Partnership to work closely with authorities in the East Midlands region.

Rushcliffe Borough Council has identified the Trent Valley Partnership as their preferred partner, for the purpose of undertaking Housing Needs Studies in rural villages and identifying opportunities for the development of affordable housing within the district. Trent Valley Partnership is now undertaking the fourth year of a programme of studies on behalf of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Willoughby currently has a population of 484 in 203 households (2001 census). 230 survey forms were produced for distribution to residents throughout the parish.

During April 2009, Midlands Rural Housing and Willoughby-on-the-Wolds Parish Council worked together to deliver a Housing Needs Survey form to every household in the village. The return date for the survey was 1st May 2009 and returns were made via a 'Freepost' envelope directly to Midlands Rural Housing.

2. Purpose of the Survey

The aim of the survey was to assess the current and future housing needs in the parish of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, in order to provide Rushcliffe Borough Council with the information it requires to formulate plans and anticipate future housing requirements.



3. Housing Costs

Property Values: Oct - Dec 2008 - Rushcliffe

	Av Detached	Av Semi	Av Terrace	Av Flat	Av Overall Price	No. Of Sales
East Midlands	£ 230,826	£ 134,634	£ 112,688	£ 106,521	£ 156,665	10,194
Nottinghamshire	216,508	122,930	98,857	95,162	145,562	1,831
Rushcliffe	255,012	182,343	156,720	99,628	195,769	257
Source: Land Registry						

The table above provides an indication of the property prices within the East Midlands Region, the county of Nottinghamshire and Rushcliffe Borough. It shows that, across the board, prices in Rushcliffe are considerably higher than elsewhere in the region. A family wanting to purchase an average terrace house would need to be earning approximately £40,000 per annum to secure a mortgage.

There is insufficient evidence of recent property sales in Willoughby so it is not possible to compare property values in the parish but it is unlikely that they will be below the average.



4. Availability of Affordable Housing in Rushcliffe

Rushcliffe Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2004-2007 (Nov. 2005), Sections A4 and A5, outlines the need for more affordable housing within the borough.

It shows that not only are open market values prohibitively high, but also that the levels of social rented properties available from Registered Social Landlords are well below the national averages for England and Wales.

Section A8.1 of the Housing Strategy goes on to show that in the 10 year period from 1995-2005, the number of affordable rented properties in the borough has reduced by 649 due to the Right to Buy scheme and 224 shared ownership properties have been lost through 'stair casing' up to full ownership.

5. Planning Context

Planning policy at national, regional and local levels imposes strict restraints on new housing development in rural areas. However in exceptional circumstances, consideration for affordable housing in rural areas, where the Council is satisfied that local need exists, may be permitted.

Section A8: Affordable Housing Development, in Rushcliffe Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2004-2007 (Nov. 2005), outlines the means by which local communities can engage with the planning process to bring about developments that meet their 'local' housing needs.

Section A8 encourages communities to explore their housing needs, ideally as part of a parish plan or equivalent. It is anticipated that, in due course, this Housing Needs Survey will form an integral part of a Parish Plan that will be adopted by the Borough Council.

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. This has the effect of limiting occupation of the properties to people with a strong local connection who have exceptional personal reasons for residing there, or are required to work in the locality and are in housing need.

6. Respondents' Details

The following sections of this report detail the responses from the questionnaires distributed and returned during April 2009, in Willoughby-on-the-Wolds parish.

Respondents individual details have been kept confidential and any identifiable attributes have not been included in the results. Any comments that have been made may also have been edited so as not to identify individual circumstances.

The following results are a snapshot in time and provide the village and Rushcliffe Borough Council with an insight into the parish in terms of current housing need, the desirability of the village as a place to live, and the current level of facilities serving the local community.

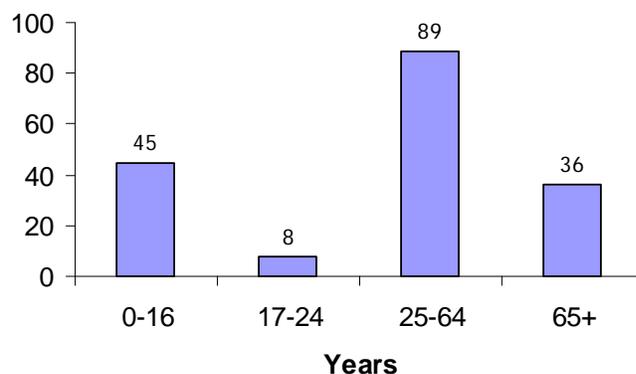
A total of 69 survey forms were received giving a return rate of 30%. This is considered a good response, taking into consideration that only people who have a housing need, or those who are interested in commenting on local matters, are likely to respond.

6.1 Age Profile

The chart overleaf shows the age profile of the 178 people captured on the 69 survey forms returned. The responses show that the largest single group of the population, representing 50%, are adults of working age.

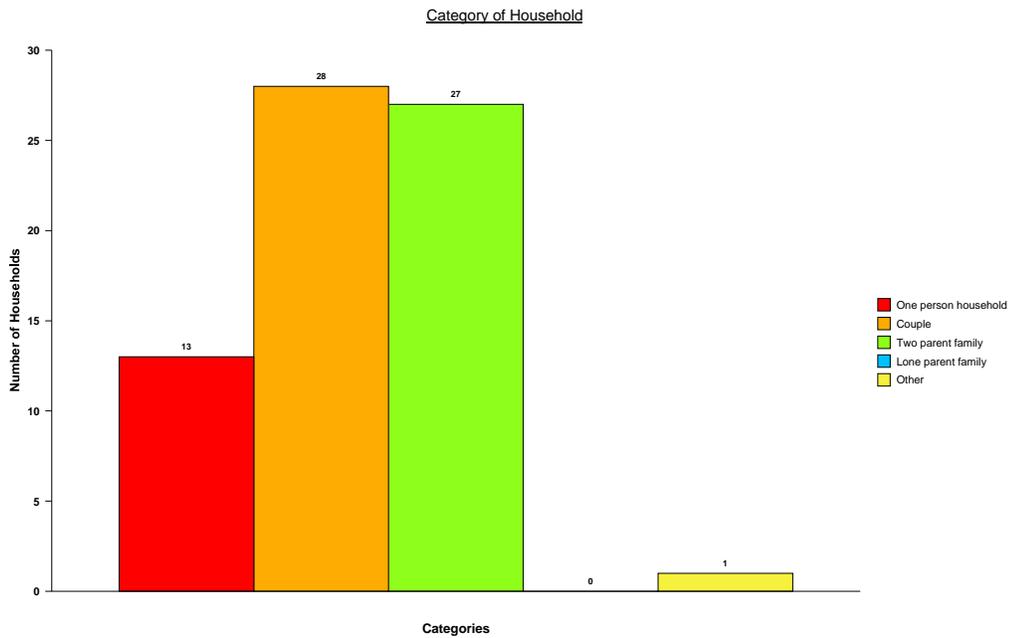
Children under 16 form 25% of the population which is a significant percentage. This group may find difficulty remaining in Willoughby in the future if property is unaffordable.

Age Profile



6.2. Household Size and Mix

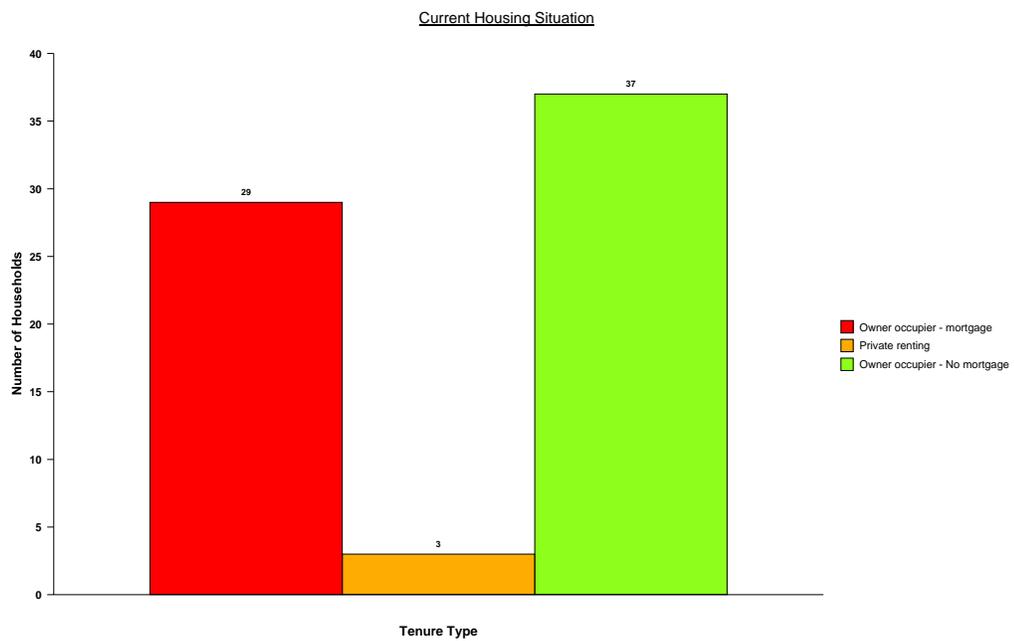
The following chart shows the number of households in each size/mix category. Almost 60% of households contain 2 or less people. 39% of households contain families with children.



6.3. Tenure of all Respondents

The following chart shows the current household tenure of all respondents. 96% of households are owner-occupied, of which 56% have no mortgage.

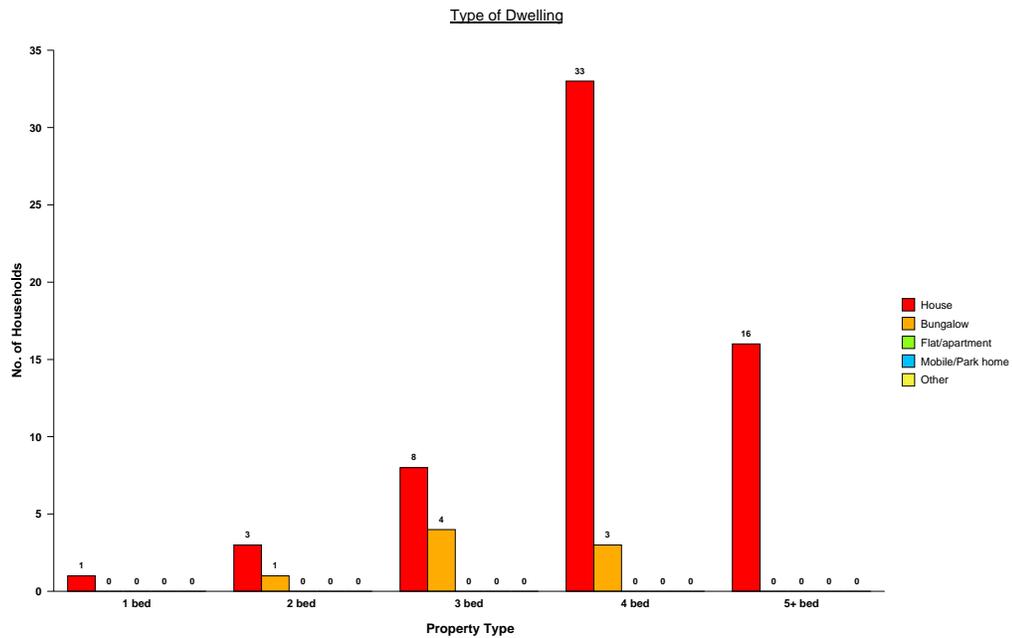
Only 4% of households are rented and none are low cost social rented properties.



6.4. Property Types

The following chart details the types of property that respondents currently live in. The largest group were occupants of 4 bedroom houses at 48%, followed by occupants of 5 bedroom houses at 23%.

Small one and two bedroom homes make up only 7% of total housing stock.



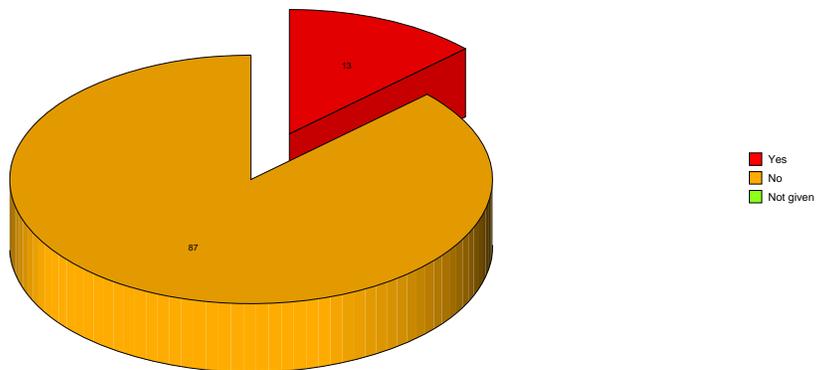
6.5. Ethnicity

Respondents' results showed that the demographic is almost entirely White British. This supports the recent Countryside Agency report which found that rural settlements had lower levels of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents than that of urban cores and that there were only 136,000 BME residents in rural areas throughout the country.

6.6. Migration

The chart below indicates that a number of local people have been forced to move out of the village in order to secure suitable housing. 13% of respondents were aware of somebody who needed to move out to find affordable or suitable accommodation.

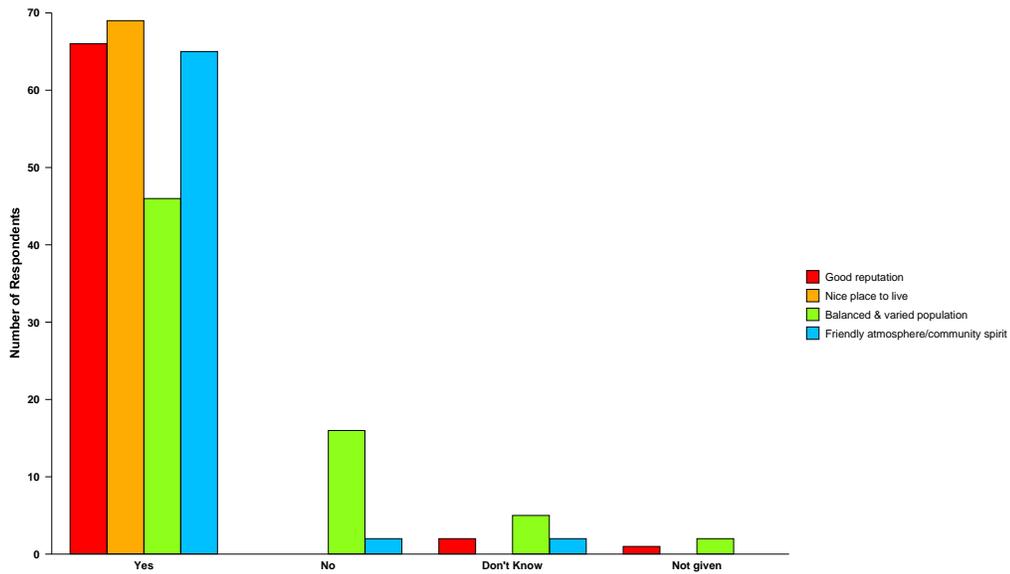
Migration - Leavers in Last 5 Years



7. Sustainability Issues

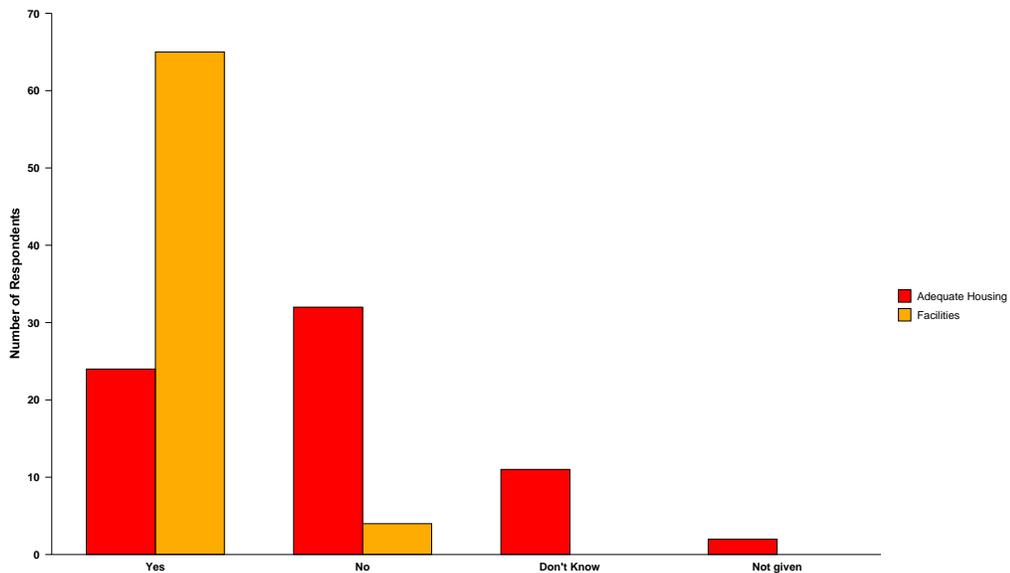
Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of living in Willoughby. The purpose of these questions is to build-up a picture of life in the parish and to identify any issues that could form a threat to the long-term sustainability of the village. The following two charts detail respondents' answers, from which we can gain an indication whether any affordable housing provided in the village will be sustainable in the future, i.e. will people want to live there in the future?

Does the Parish Benefit From?



From the chart above it can be seen that the vast majority of residents consider that Willoughby has a good reputation, is a nice place to live, with a balanced and varied population and friendly community spirit.

Does the Parish Lack?

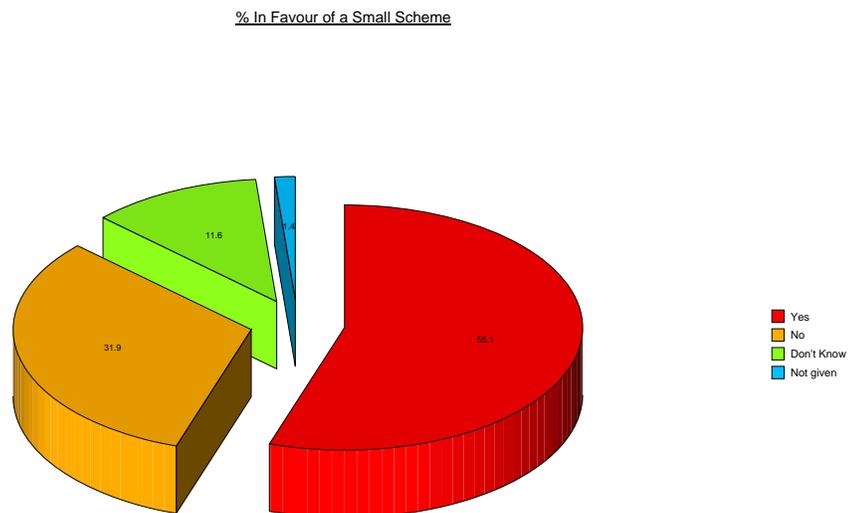


The second chart above shows that approximately one third of respondents feel that lack of affordable housing is an issue and almost 100% feel there is a lack of essential facilities.

8. Support for a Small Housing Development

The chart below shows the level of support for a small development of affordable homes for local people, being built in the parish.

Support is split, with 55% being in favour but a substantial 32% being against the development of affordable housing.



9. Housing Needs Analysis

Of the 69 returns all were from people who would be considered as adequately housed and would not be looking to move to alternative accommodation within the next 5 years. These respondents completed a survey form primarily to offer their support or objection towards a 'local needs' housing development, as well as to give their comments regarding the sustainability of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and comment on its facilities.

Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing is concerned, there are no returns detailing a housing need.



10. Conclusions & Recommendations

Midlands Rural Housing, in partnership with Willoughby-on-the-Wolds Parish Council, has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of the parish. This study has not only investigated the actual housing needs, but has also ascertained residents' views with regard to living in the village, and has identified the level of local support for a development to meet local needs.

Willoughby is a pleasant, popular parish and residents feel that it has a good reputation and friendly, community spirit. Respondents to the Housing Needs Survey did not feel that lack of affordable housing was a major issue, but they have registered concern over the lack of essential facilities in the parish.

The age range of the population is well balanced and there are a high percentage of children under 16. This group may find it difficult to find affordable housing in the parish in the future and this, combined with the lack of facilities, may have an impact on the sustainability of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds.

The housing stock is largely owner-occupied, large family housing. There is very little small housing available for young starters or the elderly. The level of rented property is extremely low and there is no low cost social rented housing in the parish. As a result, there is not only a lack of suitable small housing available, but open market prices for house purchase or rental are high and would be unaffordable for those people on low incomes.

However, at the current time, lack of affordable housing does not appear to be a problem for people in Willoughby-on-the-Wolds. The Housing Needs Survey has not identified any respondents expressing an interest in either rental or shared ownership property.

Our recommendation is that no provision for affordable housing needs to be taken at the current time, but that Rushcliffe Borough Council should consider carrying out a new Housing Needs Survey in five years time to ascertain whether the situation has changed.



11. Acknowledgements

Midlands Rural Housing would like to thank Mr. E. Smith, Chairman of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds Parish Council and Mr. Mike Elliott, Clerk to Willoughby-on-the-Wolds Parish Council, for their time and help in carrying out this Housing Needs Survey.

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Appendix A: Comments Regarding Facilities

The following is a list of general improvements to the quality of life in the parish, requested by several respondents to the Housing Needs Survey:

- It is essential to be a car owner as the lack of an adequate bus service is restricting.
- Willoughby's main problem is that transport is required as there are no amenities such as shops.
- Roads and pathways could be improved.



Appendix B: Comments Regarding a Small-Scale Development of Affordable Housing for Local People.

The following comments were received from respondents and give a general indication of their concerns for and against an affordable housing scheme. A random selection of comments has been reproduced.

- My children will require affordable housing in the future.
- We think there should be more affordable housing available for local people, provided the design and quality were in keeping with the village.
- There is a serious lack of three bedroom bungalows for elderly people downsizing.
- I don't perceive this to be a problem in this village. There is already a balanced variety of housing.
- The boundary should not be extended. Only in-fill sites should be used.
- Where would the houses be built? The village boundary should not be extended.
- Affordable housing is a nice idea, but the lack of public transport means additional road traffic in the village.