



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

WEST QUANTOXHEAD

West Somerset

April 2012



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

Exmoor, North Devon & West Somerset

The Rural Housing Project has been running since 2002 and is a partnership between Exmoor National Park Authority, North Devon Council, West Somerset Council, English Rural Housing Association, Falcon Rural Housing, Hastoe Housing Association, North Devon Homes, Devon and Cornwall Housing Association and Magna Housing Association. It has been working hard to address the shortage of affordable housing within a predominantly rural area. The area covered by the project displays an extreme disparity between incomes and house prices, which makes it hard for many to gain secure footing within the housing market.



Colin Savage, Rural Housing Enabler

The Rural Housing Project is designed to help promote and deliver affordable rural housing strategically across the project area and helps deliver Exmoor National Park housing policies within the Park. This is being achieved by informing people about affordable rural housing, providing help and advice, carrying out research at parish level to assess the affordable housing need and bringing together the community and various partners to help deliver housing where it is needed.

One of the tasks for the project is to work with the Parish Council and the local community to assist them in carrying out a housing needs survey, in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.

WEST QUANTOXHEAD PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Introduction



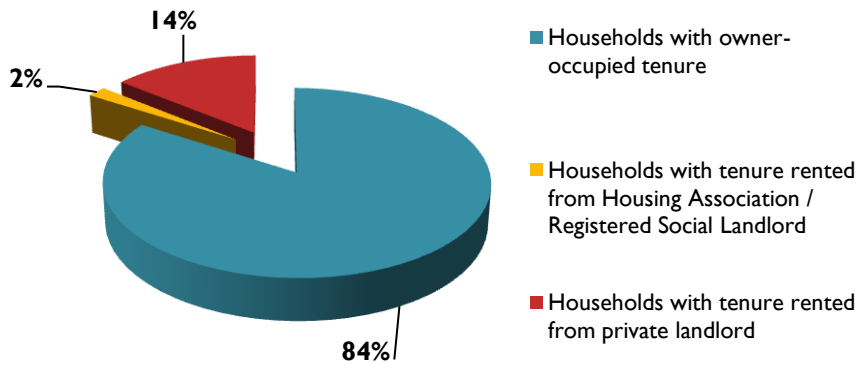
West Quantoxhead is a village and civil parish in West Somerset. It lies on the route of the Coleridge Way and on the A39 road at the foot of the Quantock Hills, 2½ miles from Williton and equidistant from Bridgwater and Taunton. The parish includes the hamlets of Weacombe and Lower Weacombe. West Quantoxhead is also known as St Audries.

The West Somerset Local Plan defines West Quantoxhead as a “small village”, meaning that under Policy SP/4, development is limited to that which

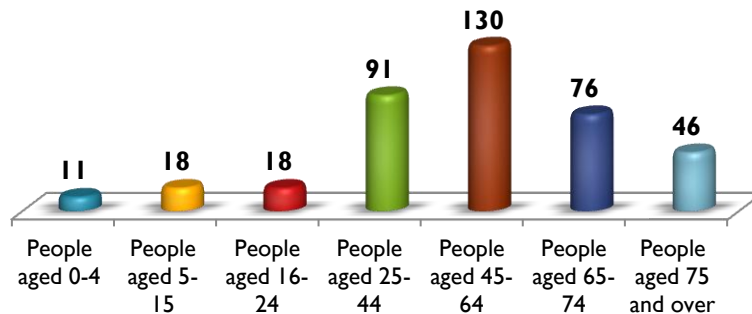
- supports its social and economic viability
- protects or enhances its environmental quality and
- is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in car travel

and where for residential development it usually provides only for affordable housing to meet an identified need. Residential development in a small village is usually limited to conversions, infilling or the redevelopment of previously used land and small groups of dwellings.

Most homes in West Quantoxhead are owner-occupied, see chart below for breakdown of tenure:



West Quantoxhead Parish has a population of 390¹ of which 204 are male and 186 female, living in a total of 162 households. Age groups are as shown in the following table:



¹ Census 2001: Office of National Statistics Last Updated: 28 April 2004

Local House Prices

As at April 2012 there were four residential properties for sale in West Quantoxhead. The cheapest, a 2 bed bungalow, was on the market for £210,000. To obtain a mortgage on this property a household would need an income of £42,000 plus a £30,000 deposit or £44,500 with a £20,000 deposit.²

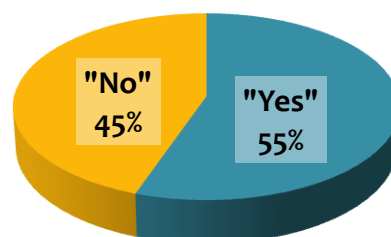
2 bedroom detached bungalow for sale
West Quantoxhead, TA4 £210,000



The Survey

Following discussions with West Quantoxhead Parish Council, and with their agreement, initial housing needs survey forms were sent to all households in West Quantoxhead Parish, along with a covering letter from the Rural Housing Enabler. Copies are appended to this report.

34.5% of surveys were returned. The first question asked whether people would be in favour of a small number of new homes being provided to help meet the proven housing needs of local people in the parish. More than half of those who responded were in favour, as shown in this chart →



Comments were invited on three areas of interest:

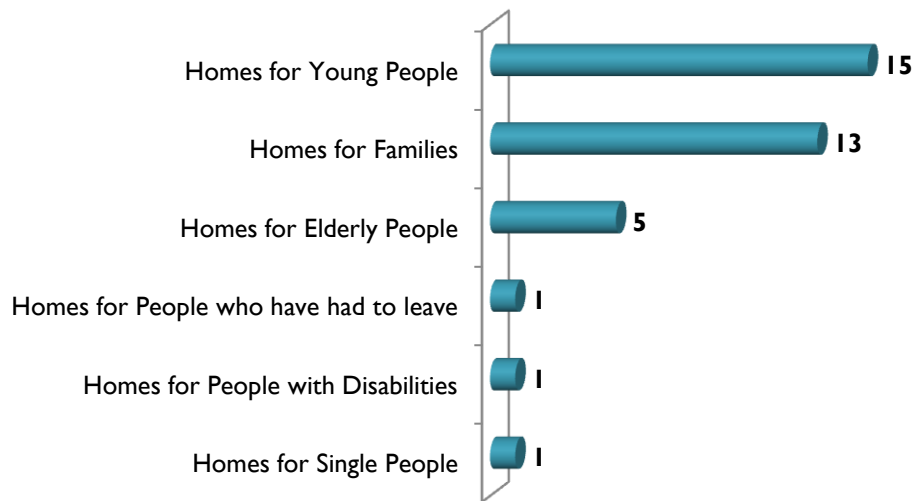
- The provision of a small number of new homes (as mentioned above)
- Any other development that might be needed to benefit the community (e.g. open space, community buildings, employment opportunities)
- Suggestions of sites where a small development could be built or buildings that could be converted for affordable housing.

Many comments were received and these are listed at the end of the report.

² www.santander.co.uk

Perception of Housing Need

Respondents felt that those in greatest need for provision of housing in the parish were in the following groups:



Of the 56 returns, 7 households completed Part Two indicating that they were likely to move home locally in the next five years, and they were subsequently sent a follow-up form requesting more detailed information on their needs and aspirations.

Five questionnaires were returned completed:

- Retired couple wanting to be nearer shops and other amenities, therefore looking to relocate to Williton
- Couple with substantial income and savings who may need to move in five years or so and will choose Williton, Exmoor or Minehead.
- Couple renting privately, need a 2 bed affordable home preferably in Williton or Carhampton
- Retired couple, owner occupiers, will need to downsize in 5-10 years' time from 3 beds to 2 beds, would like to stay in West Quantoxhead.
- Nil return, having completed form in error and not needing to move.

Rural Housing Enabler's Comments and Recommendations



Those requiring new housing either need it elsewhere or at some stage in the relatively distant future. At this stage there is no apparent need for any new housing.

We will continue to monitor the situation and if any other need is identified, from this or adjoining parishes, we will reconsider the situation.

Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler
31/5/2012



Views re. small number of new homes being built

 Yes	No 
<p>This seems logical.</p>	<p>I have recent experience of young people with young children living close and would not want to experience it again. I know that not all young people behave this way but would not like to take the risk.</p>
<p>Families imply children. New young blood in the village is to be welcomed.</p>	<p>West Quantoxhead is a blot on the landscape as it is. It can be seen from miles away, the only development on the escarpment of the Quantock Hills, and to make it bigger would be a disaster.</p>
<p>There are very few young people in my parish, therefore no innovations in business or revenue activities.</p>	<p>Essential any housing development should be sustainable in centre of village or town with full amenities, allowing easy and safe access by pedestrians on roads to shops etc. and good level of public transport.</p>
<p>Housing was provided for original Hinkley Point workers, these are now mostly retirement dwellings. There is nothing here to encourage young families to live here. We need no more retirement homes.</p>	<p>WQ has village hall, pub, church and garage with shop. It is a rural parish within an AONB - no industry and poor public transport. Very little land for "infilling". Most property is owner occupied. High proportion of retired residents.</p>
<p>WQ is full of elderly people as majority of buildings are bungalows. Young people would breathe new life into the village.</p>	<p>Not a suitable place for anyone, young or old, with no transport. No facilities for children or young people.</p>
<p>Only if numbers are very small (i.e. 1-5) and not taking the view from others. This is a small village, mainly retired people. The view is <u>the</u> feature. Bus service to Watchet, not Williton or Taunton, so car is essential.</p>	<p>Because of the terrain it would not be a suitable place to build a new development.</p>
<p>More housing is needed</p>	<p>Without a total overhaul of the sewage and drainage system new homes would be a burden to the current facilities</p>
<p>But where could you put them?</p>	<p>I don't think we need any new homes in our village.</p>
<p>Very hard for local people to stay in village</p>	<p>I can see no land available that would or could be developed to enhance the community.</p>
<p>Possibly a sheltered housing unit</p>	<p>There are no suitable locations for a multi-dwelling development within the village boundary. Any such development would have to be on valuable agricultural land and would represent unacceptable ribbon development.</p>



Views re. small number of new homes being built

<p>The village is almost entirely made up of retired people or semi-retired people working a few hours per week, very few families with a full time working member. An influx of younger families is a desirable requirement.</p>	<p>Essential any housing development should be sustainable in centre of village or town with full amenities allowing easy and safe access by pedestrians on roads to shops etc. and good level of public transport.</p>
<p>As a self-employed single parent I do not know if I would be able to get a mortgage on a home here at present. My income is reasonable.</p>	<p>The infrastructure of the village will not support further housing development without <u>major</u> improvement. Also, if social housing is considered, the public transport provision will need to be improved.</p>
<p>Our village is full of elderly people. We need families to ensure continuity and keep essential resources going like schools, post office, shops, libraries.</p>	<p>Do not want new builds in parish</p>
<p>We would not wish to deprive anyone of a home to live in providing the need is proven.</p>	<p>WQ has no infrastructure, no street lights and, in the main, consists of retired householders.</p>
<p>Yes, homes with reservations - the parish already has a large number of elderly people, very few amenities and public transport is minimal. I would suggest in-fill only.</p>	<p>There is no need for any development. No work in the village, no pavements, infrequent public transport. Village is in a rural setting i.e. the Quantocks.</p>
<p>Area of designated beauty is a problem for new build but any successful building consent should be sympathetic to surroundings.</p>	<p>There is not room for building any more houses in WQ</p>
	<p>The village has no school, no mains gas, no street lighting, no post office, no park, very poor broadband, no youth entertainment and one shop that sits on the busy A39. I can think of nowhere less suitable for a young, low income family or anyone without motor transport to live. Building homes to invite such occupants into the village would be irresponsible.</p>
	<p>Everyone, everywhere needs a place to escape to. Let that be here in the UK.</p>
<p>Williton would be much more suitable as it has all the basic needs such as shops, library, banks and supermarket etc.</p>	



Community Development suggestions - West Quantomhead

Modern village hall - more energy efficient.

Employment opportunities.

Very limited opportunities as village dissected by busy A39 road especially in holiday season, and lack of suitable sites - no village centre. Lack of employment in area, necessary to commute.

Employment

Allotments

A new village hall would be a bonus.

Employment opportunities such as more NVQs and apprentices.

Employment opportunities

No. West Quantomhead is just fine as it is. The population is predominantly elderly/retired who have chosen to live here because of what it is, not because they want it to be something else.

Employment opportunities

Village green

More modern (efficient) village hall

Employment opportunities

Street lights, road bumps to control traffic and decrease vehicle speed.

Playground

A decent public transport system

Sewer system needs updating.

Community buildings - use what there is 7 days a week. Supermarkets do, publicans do and many of the self-employed. DO YOU?

Employment

We are very lucky to still have a filling station and first class shop - the owner is having no support whatsoever to build a house for him and his wife which he desperately needs to help combat crime.

Children's facilities - nothing at all in WQ

Very limited opportunities as village dissected by busy A39 road, especially in holiday season and lack of suitable sites - no village centre. As lack of employment in area necessary to commute.



Site suggestions - West Quantoxhead

Anywhere along the A39 where good public transport links should be provided.	
Behind St Audries Park - old school buildings as live/work spaces or artists' studios?	
On the left hand side of Weacombe RJ ¹ as you leave the village towards Bicknoller	
Understand site has been put forward by owner outside permitted development village limits. Please refer to comments on attached sheet.	
Watchet/Williton Area Local Plans identify WQ as inset map 13. Site 15 on that map is a possible new housing site (H/1), within the limit of village development (WQ/1) As a site of ecological/geological value (C/2) it is very questionable in its present state.	
Woolston, possibly?	
Think lots of land owned by farmer, Mr Nick Gibbs. Think there may also be a ban on new development?	
Between Mount Royal and Cherry Orchard	
Between Pit and Weacombe	
South of Rectory Cottage	
Staple Lane campsite.	
Affordable housing depends on the landowner's willingness to sell.	
Somewhere on the outskirts of the main street.	
Use it, rent it or lose it! Empty flats above empty shops. Old hospital, Minehead. Derelict commercial buildings and houses, unused churches.	
With strict regulations. All land is farming or privately owned.	
Understand site has been put forward by owner outside permitted development village limits. Please refer to comments on attached sheet.	
In Williton, behind antiques centre	
Garage forecourt not greenbelt or quarry	
Not green belt or quarry	Not near <u>me</u>
Old quarry area	The quarry area
West of "The Belt"	West of Cherry Orchard
East side of The Avenue	The Avenue, WQ



HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY – WEST QUANTOXHEAD

The purpose of this survey is to identify local housing requirements for people in all tenures - rented and owner-occupied.

SECTION 1 – EVERY HOUSEHOLD PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

In your opinion, who do you think is in greatest need of a new home in the parish? *(Please tick one)*

Homes for young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Homes for elderly people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homes for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	Homes for single people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homes for people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	No further homes are needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homes for people who have had to leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify	

If need is proven, would you be in favour of a small number of new homes to help meet the housing needs of local people in your parish?

Yes No

Please briefly explain your views:

Is there any other development you would like to see in your community?
(e.g. open space, community buildings, employment opportunities)

Can you suggest a site where a small development could be built, or building/s that could be converted for affordable housing?

Thank you for completing this.

If you will need to move home locally in the next five years, please also complete the other side of this form.

SECTION 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE LIKELY TO NEED TO MOVE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS		
Your present home is: <i>(please mark x)</i>		Type of home you need: <i>(please mark x all that apply)</i>
	Owner occupied	
	Low cost home ownership	
	Private rented	
	Housing association rented	
	Shared ownership	
	Conversion of existing building	
	Self-build	
	Tied to employment	
	Other <i>[specify]</i>	

Size of present home: <i>(please mark x)</i>		Size of home you need: <i>(please mark x)</i>
	1 bedroom	
	2 bedrooms	
	3 bedrooms	
	4 bedrooms	
	5+ bedrooms	

CONTACT DETAILS	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number/s:	
E-mail address:	
Date form completed:	

The Rural Housing Project will contact you in due course for further details.



EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset.TA22 9HL

☎ (01398) 322249 ✉ cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

16 March 2012

Dear

Thank you very much for completing and returning the housing needs survey we sent out recently.

You filled in Section 2 for people likely to need to move in the next five years, and we are therefore enclosing a further form designed to give us the information we need to try and help as many local people as possible to live in a home that is the right size and location for their needs. Please complete and return this as soon as possible.

We attach a photocopy of your first form, for your reference.

All information received will be stored confidentially and used to work out what can be provided in terms of development to benefit the community. We will get in touch if a housing scheme is brought forward that could meet your requirement.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Colin Savage

Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler

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FOLLOW-UP HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY - WEST QUANTOXHEAD

1. WHO NEEDS HOUSING?

Please provide the following information about yourself & everyone who will need to move with you:

Living at present home: <i>(please mark x)</i>	Relationship to you (e.g. wife, partner, son)	Age	Male/Female (M/F)	Will live at the home you need: <i>(please mark x)</i>
	<i>Myself</i>			

Why do you need to move (you can give more than one reason)?

a) First independent home		b) Couple setting up home together	
c) Present home too small		d) Present home too large	
e) Health/Disability		f) Need specially adapted home	
g) Present home in poor condition		h) Present home too expensive	
i) Renting but would like to buy		j) Moved away and wish to return	
k) Private tenancy, need more security		l) In tied housing, need more security	
m) Family break up		n) For family care/support	
o) To be near work		p) Living with parents or in someone else's home	
Other <i>[please explain]</i>			

Which of the above is your main reason?

Please state one letter only

What is preventing you from moving?

a) Suitable rented housing is not available locally		b) Suitable housing to buy is not available locally	
c) Suitable rented housing <u>is</u> available locally but I/we cannot afford it		d) Suitable housing to buy <u>is</u> available locally but I/we cannot afford to buy it	
Other <i>[please explain]</i>			

2. LOCAL CONNECTION

a. Where do you need to live?

Please tell us which settlements you need to live in, in order of preference, and give the reasons for your choices (e.g. near work, near family, born/brought up there, close to school/other facilities etc.)

1st <u>Reasons</u>	2nd <u>Reasons</u>	3rd <u>Reasons</u>

We may need evidence to support your local connection.

b. Long Term Residence

Please provide all addresses and dates of residence for your household members - or the people you need to live close to - during the last 20 years:

Address (including postcode)	From (month/year)	To (month/year)

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

c. Employment

Can you demonstrate that you have a real need to live locally because you have permanent employment?

Yes / No

Please describe the nature of that work and why you need to live nearby.

Where is your place of work?

Post code:

If you work from home, does your new housing need to take account of this?
If so, please provide more detail:

d. To provide care or support

Is there someone living locally who needs you to live nearby in order for one of you to provide support or care to the other, for age or medical reasons?

Yes / No

Please state their relationship to you: _____

and provide their addresses in 2 b. above.

e. Are you a former resident of this parish who wishes to return?

Yes / No

If yes, please tell us why you originally left and why you wish to return:

f. Do you need different housing because of age or health reasons? Please explain:

g. Do you have any other relevant local connection to the area? If so, please describe:

3. INCOME AND SAVINGS

In order to fully assess the type of housing you can afford, it is necessary to know about your current income, savings, capital and investments. This information should be combined for couples/households.

a) Which of the following ranges of annual income does your household have? (gross income, before deductions).

	x
Less than £20,000 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
£20,000 - £24,999 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
£25,000 - £29,999 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
£30,000 - £39,999 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
£40,000 - £49,999 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over £50,000 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) If you are interested in purchasing a property, would you need to borrow money?

Yes / No

c) How much deposit could you raise? (round up or down to nearest £1000):

£.....

4. HOUSING REGISTER

If your household needs affordable housing, it is essential that you are on the Council Housing Register.

Are you currently registered on the Local Authority housing waiting list?

	x	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Band:
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Application submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Intend to apply soon	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If you have any queries about this form, affordable housing or the Rural Housing Project please contact:

*Colin Savage ~ Rural Housing Enabler
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E-mail: cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk*