



West Farleigh Housing Needs Survey

April 2016

Tessa O'Sullivan – Rural Housing Enabler

With the support of:
West Farleigh Parish Council
Maidstone Borough Council

Contents	Page
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Background Information	4
4. Method	5
5. Results	6
6. Appendix W1 – Question 9 comments	11
7. Appendix W2 – Letter to householder and housing needs survey	14

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) from Action with Communities in Rural Kent undertook a parish wide survey to ascertain if there are shortfalls in affordable housing provision within the parish and to identify any need for alternative open market housing, including for older people wanting to downsize/move to more suitable housing for their needs.

A survey was posted to every household within the parish of West Farleigh in March 2016. Approximately 224 surveys were distributed with 64 surveys being returned, representing a 29% response rate.

Analysis of the returned survey forms identified that 77% of all respondents are owner occupiers, 14% are renting privately. 58% of all respondents have lived in the parish for over 10 years.

The survey did not find a need for any type of alternative housing from people with a connection to West Farleigh.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE WEST FARLEIGH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Rural Housing Enabler worked with West Farleigh Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council to undertake a housing needs survey within the parish. The aim of this survey is to identify in general terms if there is a housing need from local people. It is not to provide a list of names and addresses of individuals requiring a home.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a report published in December 2014, the Rural Housing Alliance has stated that 'For many rural households, finding somewhere affordable in their local community remains a barrier, with homes costing over eight times the average salary in 90% of rural local authority areas. This is an affordability gap which, in many areas, is even more extreme given low paid rural employment.'¹

Small developments of local needs housing schemes can provide affordable housing for local people, thereby enabling them to stay in their community and contribute to village life. This can make a real difference to the vitality of village services.

In 2007 Matthew Taylor, then MP for Truro and St Austell, was asked by the then Prime Minister to conduct a review on how land use and planning can better support rural business and deliver affordable housing. Many rural communities are faced by a combination of higher than average house prices and lower than average local wages. This can create challenges for individual families, the local economy and the wider sustainability of the community.

On July 23rd 2008 Matthew Taylor presented his Review to the Government. The then Government issued their response to the review in March 2009 where they accepted the majority of Matthew Taylor's recommendations (Department of Communities and Local Government 2009).

The Government believe that the Community Right To Build will shift power from them to allow local people to deliver homes that are needed in their communities so that villages are vibrant places to live and younger people are not forced to move away because of a shortage of affordable homes.² The Community Right to Build forms part of the neighbourhood planning provisions contained in the Localism Act 2011.

The Rural Housing Enabler Programme, which is delivered in Kent through Action with Communities in Rural Kent – the Rural Community Council for Kent and Medway, is supported by Local Authorities across Kent and Medway including Maidstone Borough Council.

Action with Communities in Rural Kent is a registered charity (No. 212796) whose purpose is to improve the quality of life of local communities, particularly for disadvantaged people, and to facilitate the development of thriving, diverse and sustainable communities throughout rural Kent. Since March 1998 Action with Communities in Rural Kent has employed a Rural Housing

¹ Affordable Rural Housing: A practical guide for parish councils. December 2014. Rural Housing Alliance

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/neighbourhoodplansimpact>

Enabler whose role is to provide independent support, advice and information to Parish Councils and community groups concerned with the lack of local needs housing in their rural communities.

The RHE will assist with carrying out a housing needs survey, analyse the results and help identify suitable sites in conjunction with the local authority and others, for a local needs housing scheme. Once a partnership has been established between the Parish Council, the chosen housing association and the local authority to develop a scheme, the independent role of the RHE helps to ensure the project proceeds smoothly and to the benefit of the community.

4. METHOD

The Rural Housing Enabler from Action with Communities in Rural Kent agreed the format of the survey and covering letter with the Parish Council and a copy of the survey was posted to every household in the parish in March 2016.

Surveys were returned in pre paid envelopes to Action with Communities in Rural Kent. Copies of the survey were available to complete for anyone who had left the parish and wished to return, these were held by the Rural Housing Enabler. It was asked that completed survey forms were returned by 6th April 2016. All surveys received at Action with Communities in Rural Kent by the 20th April are included in this report.

Approximately 224 surveys were distributed with 64 returned by this date representing a return rate of 29%.

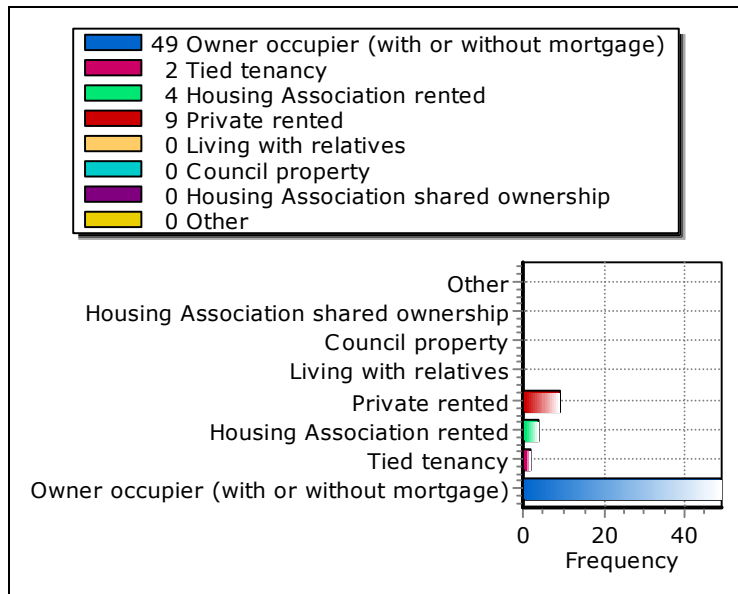
Some surveys were not fully completed therefore the results are shown for the total answers to each question.

5. RESULTS

Section 1

Listed below are the results of each question asked by the housing needs survey.

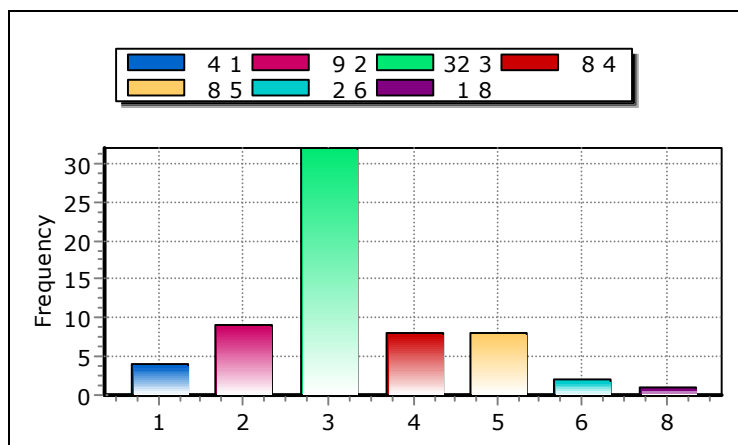
Question 1. What type of housing do you live in?



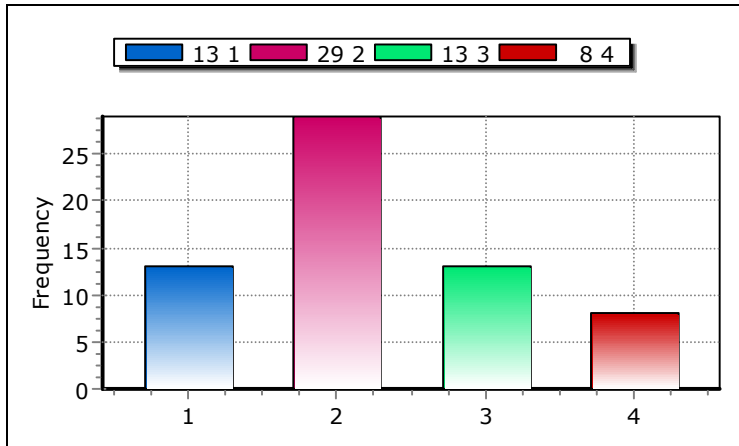
77% of respondents are owner occupiers.

Question 2.

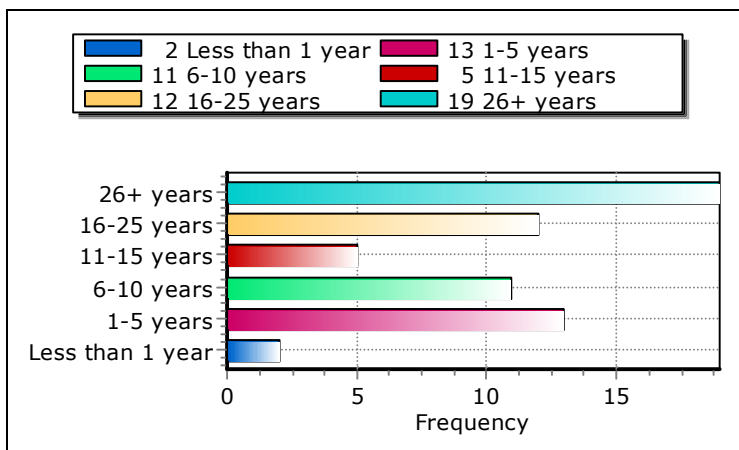
Number of bedrooms in your home



Number of people that currently live in the property

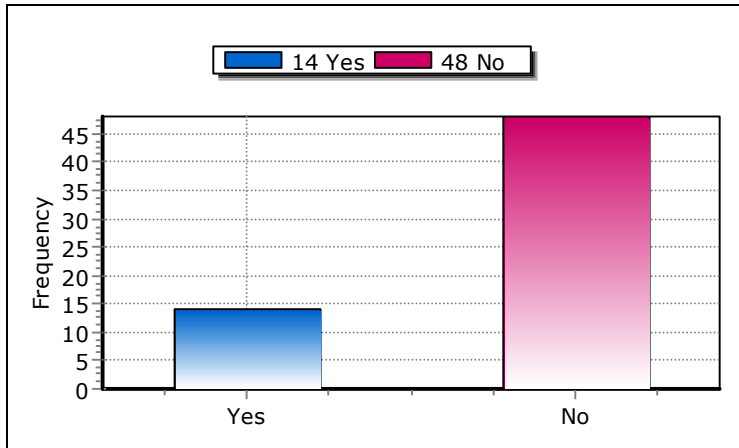


Question 3. How long have you lived in the parish?

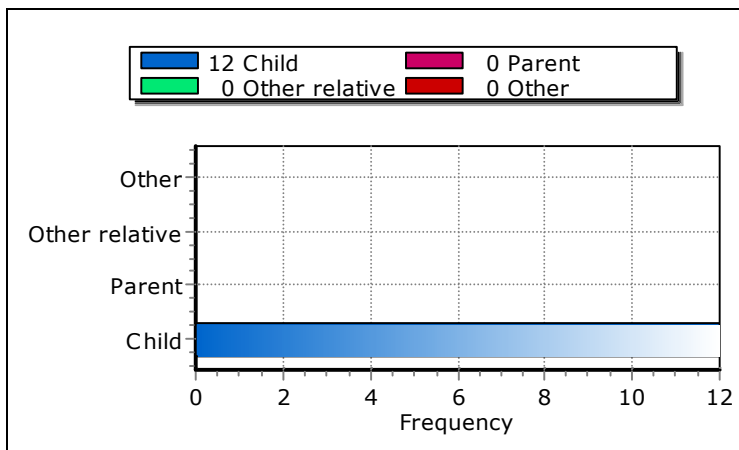


36 respondents (58%) have lived in the parish for over 10 years.

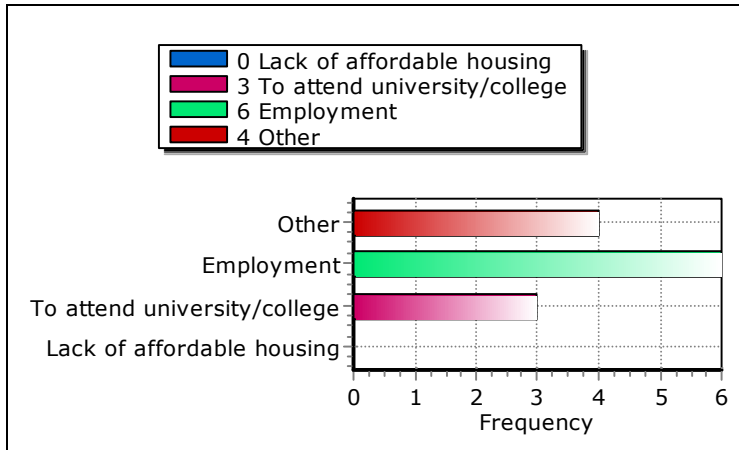
Question 4. Have any members of your household left the parish in the last 5 years?



Question 5. If you answered yes to question 4, please state what relationship they have to you.



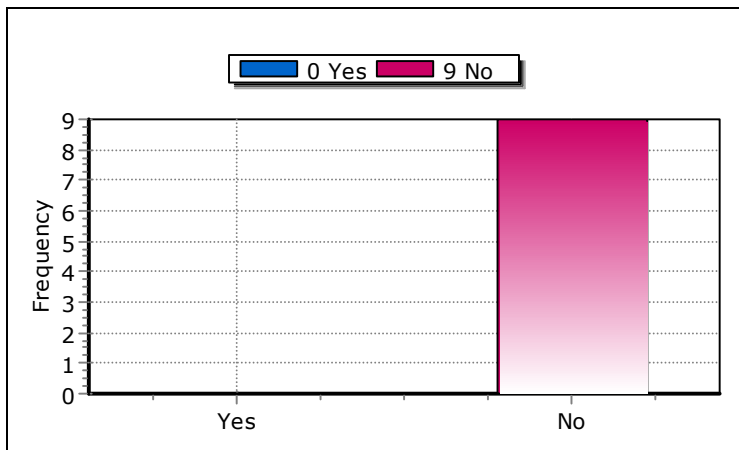
Question 6. Please indicate the reason why they left. Some respondents indicated more than one option.



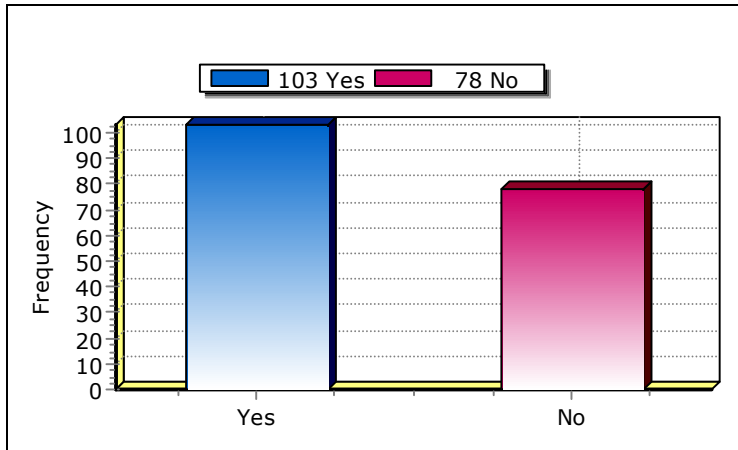
The most frequently given reason for leaving the parish was employment.

The reasons given under other include marriage, bought a house elsewhere and death.

Question 7. Would they return if more affordable accommodation could be provided?



Question 8. Would you support a small development of affordable housing if there was a proven need for people with a genuine connection to the parish?

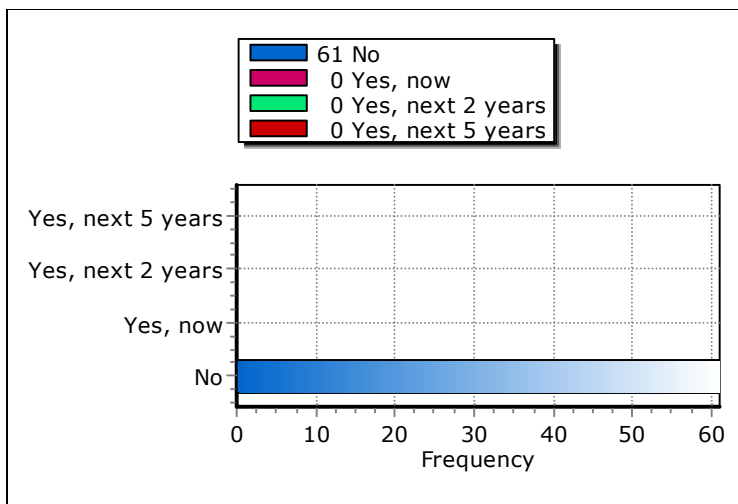


52% of respondents who answered the question (50% of all respondents) said they would support a development of affordable housing.

Question 9. Please use this space if you wish to explain your answer to question 8.

There were 41 responses to this question; a full list of responses can be found in Appendix W1.

Question 10. Do you or a member of your household need separate or alternative accommodation either now or in the next 2 or 5 years?



None of the respondents indicated a housing need either now or in the next two or five years. The analysis therefore ends at this point as a need for affordable housing or alternative housing for older people in the parish was not identified by the housing needs survey.

6. APPENDIX W1

Question 9. Please use this space if you wish to explain your answer to question 8.

In principle I would support but need to know where this would be located before I can answer.

Depends on the exact details

Far too many houses being built locally and destroying our countryside. Coxheath as an example, roads are not good enough or wide enough (but shouldn't be widened). Far too much traffic already, (Loose Road, Wateringbury Crossroads at peak times)

I think this would be the start of expansion of the village which I would not like to see.

The last lot of housing in the village for local people have always been full of non-local people.

West Farleigh is a small village in the countryside with lots of farmland so no room for development.

1. Because there is no way to ensure that once a property was owned that person doesn't sell it for profit and move away - back to square one. No local property for locals. 2. A HA would not necessarily allow a tenant to be from the village only.

This is based upon the condition that only those with a true local connection are eligible.

Only if we all agreed where they would be built.

We moved to the area because of its lack of development, traffic and noise.

We consider that there is sufficient new development planned in close proximity to cater for the needs of the village, we also feel that our roads and services can't sustain further development.

We would support the above provided that they style of house was in keeping with those in the village, and that the site of the development had adequate parking facilities off main road.

Rural exception sites are not explicitly protected from the right to buy so any affordable homes built could be sold to relatively well-off incomers. This will not help the housing needs of local people and West Farleigh will lose agricultural land.

There are no facilities in the village for additional housing. Plus there is more housing in Coxheath putting pressure on doctors' surgeries which is the nearest surgery for the village.

Only if closely placed to existing housing and not on agricultural land.

I think it will devalue existing property.

Maintain population in village, providing a rural environment, viability of community and development of activities.

However improved public transport services (buses) would be needed. Currently very reduced on Saturday and none at all on Sunday.

Too much traffic on roads already.

It would open the floodgate for unscrupulous land owners to sell their land with no regard for local people.

Should be at least 25 homes.

The house we live in an ex council house (not purchased from MBC by ourselves) and we feel that housing stock for tenants should have been or can be with this scheme replaced.

Our son is single and struggling to find independent accommodation.

West Farleigh is a nice quiet village and doesn't need to be mixed by the sort of people who buy affordable housing.

There are very few facilities in the village therefore some of the sheltered accommodation isn't always used or wanted.

I agree with affordable housing, a small development would be an addition to a small community (8-10 homes).

If housing is built in West Farleigh it would spoil the village. I live next to a field; I would not like that to become housing.

West Farleigh needs more young people and families.

West Farleigh is close enough to Maidstone and it is the local transport that should be improved. Why spoil villages so close to towns. Once these houses are built it will continue. Keep building closer to the towns not villages.

There is a need for affordable housing.

Concerned at lack of affordable housing for young people who wish to live in their own home rather than with parents.

My daughter and her husband needed to live within walking distance of a main station - they therefore bought a house in Maidstone. My son moved to Epping to be closer to his wife's family and they also wanted to be in walking distance of a main station.

Villages like West Farleigh are becoming extremely rare and I consider this nothing more than a smoke screen for de elopers to get a foothold here. There is no need for any size of housing estate in West Farleigh and to say it is for people with a connection to the village is nothing but a ruse.

Around West Farleigh there are orchards which have been bought and just left. The reason - probably 'on spec' that they will get planning permission. Once the flood gates open who knows.

Must be genuine. Not on greenfield. Not council, not HA rented.

Regardless of 'connection to the Parish' the town area/surrounding villages have no extra roads, schools, infrastructure. My opinion is that all these new homes are suffocating our town/village and need to be built north of the M20 where there is more room and still close to town.

1. There is no infrastructure capable of supporting more people in the area e.g. Dr practices - already need to wait 3 - 4 weeks for an appointment and schools. 2. There has been a significant increase in traffic in Charlton Lane which is not a rat-run and is becoming increasingly hazardous for pedestrians, especially young children, in the absence of paths.

Whilst initially housing would be available for local people, it would move to 'outsiders' when they decide to move on. You cannot restrict a homeowner when they come to sell. Also there is no infrastructure to cope with new development. West Farleigh is a rural village.

In principle we would support such a development but we do not believe in reality people with a local connection would actually get the houses and under the Government's right to buy they could soon all be sold to tenants for a profit giving no long term benefit to the village.

I do not believe anyone has a right to live where they want if that means villages become over-populated or greenfields built on. Are these houses really for people working in the village or a means to sell on for profit?

Would encourage more families to the village.

West Farleigh Parish Council

Chairman : Bruce S Scott

Clerk: Amanda Broadhurst

16 Merivale Grove Walderslade Chatham Kent ME5 8HP

E-mail: westfarleighpc@googlemail.com Phone: 01634 681685

March 2016

Dear Householder

Housing Needs Survey

Owing to the high cost of housing in this area, the Parish Council is considering whether there might be a need for additional affordable housing in West Farleigh Parish so that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally will not be forced to move away. This type of affordable housing is also known as local needs housing; they are homes that can be rented or part bought (shared ownership) from a Housing Association. The reason for providing local needs housing is to help local people of all ages who would like to stay or return to their parish and contribute to the village services that still exist.

We would also like to know about any other types of housing that local people might need e.g. older people wanting to downsize but stay in the village.

We are sending out this Housing Needs Survey to assess the demand and gauge the level of support a small scheme might have in our community. We are doing so with the approval of Maidstone Borough Council, whose housing officers have approved this questionnaire. Tessa O'Sullivan, the Rural Housing Enabler from Action with Communities in Rural Kent is assisting us to carry out this survey. **The survey will be analysed by the Rural Housing Enabler, with all information given being kept confidential.** She will then give a summary report to the Parish Council.

Depending on the outcome of this survey, we may try to find a suitable site within the parish of West Farleigh.

The most likely type of site would be what is known as a 'Rural Exception Site', within or on the edge of the village whereby:

- All homes on the site are owned and managed by a Housing Association
- Houses are either rented or part-sold (shared ownership) to tenants
- Only households with a genuine local connection are eligible to be tenants

Once a site is found a village consultation event will be held so that residents of the parish can view and discuss the proposals and put their views forward.

This is a very important issue, so please take time to fill in this survey. Even if no one in your household has a housing need, we want to know your views.

Please return this form using the FREEPOST envelope provided by 6th April 2016.

If any further information or additional questionnaires are required please contact the Rural Housing Enabler on 01303 813790.

Yours sincerely

Cllr B Scott
Chairman of West Farleigh Parish Council

HOUSING NEEDS IN THE PARISH OF WEST FARLEIGH

Please complete this survey on behalf of your household.

SECTION 1

Q1. What type of housing do you live in? Council property Private rented Tied tenancy
 Housing Association rented Housing Association shared ownership Owner occupier (with or without mortgage)
 Other please specify _____ Living with relatives

Q2. Please enter the following information -
 Number of bedrooms in your home Number of people that currently live in the property

Q3. How long have you lived in the parish?
 Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-25 years 26+ years

Q4. Have any members of your family/household left the parish in the last 5 years? If your answer is No, please go to Q8 Yes No

Q5. If you answered yes to Q4, please state what relationship they have to you.
 Child Parent Other relative Other please specify _____

Q6. Please indicate the reason why they left
 Lack of affordable housing To attend university/college Employment
 Other please specify _____

Q7. Would they return if more affordable accommodation could be provided?
 Yes No

Q8. Would you support a small development of affordable housing if there was a proven need for people with a genuine local connection to the parish? (Average size of local needs housing schemes are 8 - 10 homes)
 Yes No

Q9. Please use this space if you wish to explain your answer to Question 8.

Q10. Do you or a member of your household need separate or alternative accommodation either now or in the next 2 or 5 years?
 No Yes, now Yes, next 2 years Yes, next 5 years

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES PLEASE CONTINUE WITH SECTION 2.

SECTION 2

HOUSING NEEDS

If you or anyone else living in your house is in need of alternative housing, please continue with the questionnaire. Please complete one form per household in housing need. If you need another form please contact the Rural Housing Enabler on 01303 813790

Q11. Are you completing this form for yourself or someone else?

- Self Someone else

Q12. If you are completing this for someone else please state their relationship to you and where they currently live eg. with parents, private renting etc.

Please continue to complete this form by answering the questions in respect of the person/household in need of alternative accommodation.

Q13. Please provide the name of address of the head of the household in housing need. Your details will remain confidential to the Rural Housing Enabler at Action with Communities in Rural Kent. We may use this information to contact you again if we need to update the findings of this survey in the future.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email Address: _____

Q14. If you live outside the parish do you wish to return?

- Yes No

Q15. If you live in the parish do you wish to stay in the parish?

- Yes No

Q16. What is your connection with the parish? Please tick all that apply

- I currently live in the parish and have done so continuously for the last 2 years
- I do not currently live in the parish but have previously lived there for 2 out of the last 5 years
- I do not live in the parish but have immediate* family members living there who have done so for at least the last 2 years
- I am currently permanently employed* in the parish
- I currently have or am about to take up an offer of permanent employment* within the parish

*Immediate = mother, father, sister, brother, husband/wife or partner

*Employment = for a minimum of 6 months and for more than 16 hours per week

Q17. Please indicate below which categories of housing need apply to you, if any:

- I am homeless/threatened with homelessness
- I am homeless and occupying temporary accommodation provided by Maidstone Borough Council
- I am living in unsatisfactory housing due to overcrowding, insanitary or hazardous conditions/risk to health and safety
- I will suffer hardship if I don't move because I need to give or receive care or to take up an employment, education or training opportunity
- My current housing is unsuitable due to a medical condition (including physical disability, mobility need, mental or learning disabilities) or welfare grounds

Q18. What type of household will you be in alternative accommodation?

- Single person Couple Family Other _____

Q19. How many people in each age group need alternative accommodation?

MALE

- 0-9 10-15 16-19 20-24 25-44 45-59 60-74 75+

FEMALE

- 0-9 10-15 16-19 20-24 25-44 45-59 60-74 75+

Q20. Why are you seeking a new home (please tick all that apply)

- Present home in need of major repair To be nearer family To be nearer work Retirement
- Present home too expensive Need smaller home Divorce/separation New job
- Current home affecting health Private tenancy ending First independent home Lodging
- Setting up home with partner Need larger home Difficulty maintaining home
- Sheltered accom due to age/infirmity Disability/disabled Cannot afford existing mortgage
- To move to a better/safer environment Access problems Other _____

Q21. What is your current housing situation?

- Owner occupier with/without mortgage Living with relatives Renting from Council Shared ownership
- Renting from Housing Association Tied tenancy Renting privately Other _____

Q22. Please tell us in your own words why you need to move and what prevents you from doing so.

Q23. What type of housing do you need? Please tick any that apply.

- Flat House Bungalow Sheltered housing (suitable for older persons with limited support via a warden or lifeline system)
- Accommodation suitable for older persons without support Extra Care housing (suitable for elderly people with range of support options)
- Other please specify _____

Q24. Which tenure would best suit your housing need?

- Renting - Housing Association/Council* *Shared ownership - Housing Association* *Private renting*
 Open market *Other* _____

Q25. How many bedrooms will you need?

- 1 2 3 4 5+

Q26. Please indicate the total gross annual income (before tax) of the household in housing need (joint if a couple). Do not include housing benefit or council tax benefit.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Under £10,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£30,000 - £35,000</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£10,000 - £15,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£35,000 - £40,000</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£15,000 - £20,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£40,000 - £50,000</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£20,000 - £25,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£50,000 - £60,000</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>£25,000 - £30,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>More than £60,000</i> |

Q27. How much money could you raise towards the purchase of a property; taking into account any access you have to capital (e.g. equity in your home or savings) as well as the amount you could borrow on a mortgage? _____

Q28. How much money would you be able to raise as a deposit towards buying your own home?

Q29. Do you have any particular or specialised housing requirements e.g. to assist with a disability or special need? (Please provide details).

Q30. Which method of transport is usually used by members of your household to travel to their place of work/study? Please tick all that apply

- Own car* *Car share* *Train* *Bus* *Bike* *Walk*
 Mainly work from home *Other* please specify _____

Q31. How many vehicles are usually available for use by the household?

- 0 1 2 *more than 2*

Q32. Are you registered on the council's housing register?

- Yes* *No*

To be considered for affordable housing you must also register on Maidstone Borough Council's Housing Register. If you would like to register go to www.kenthomechoice.org.uk or phone the council on 01622 602440

Information on this form will be used to provide a summary level of housing need in West Farleigh. Personal information will remain confidential to Action with Communities in Rural Kent

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE FREEPOST ENVELOPE PROVIDED BY 6th APRIL