

Weston-sub-Edge

Parish Housing Needs Survey Report

October 2013



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2013 Weston-sub-Edge Parish Council agreed to engage the services of the Rural Housing Enabler to carry out a local Housing Needs Survey.

1.2 The Rural Housing Enabler (RHE):

- is employed by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, which is part of the national network of Rural Community Councils (ACRE - Action with Communities in Rural England).
- works closely with rural communities, housing associations, local authorities, other community organisations (including community land trusts) and landowners to meet the affordable housing needs of rural communities.
- is an independent advisor, although, the post is funded through contributions from Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Stroud District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and 6 housing associations.

2. PARISH SUMMARY

- Gloucestershire County Council Maiden estimates a population of 436 in 2010. Census 2011 states there were 197 occupied dwellings. This equates to an average 2.2 persons per household compared to approximately 2.4 for Gloucestershire as a whole.
- By road Weston-sub-Edge is 4 miles from Chipping Campden. There is a station 8 miles away in Evesham on the national rail network.
- Weston-sub-Edge has the following facilities: village hall, public house, fencing/ timber merchant.

3. AIM

3.1 The purpose of the survey is to investigate and establish the affordable housing needs of people who live in or have close ties to Weston-sub-Edge. By comparing the established needs with the existing supply of affordable housing and the number of re-lets, we can estimate the number of dwellings, house types and tenure of new units required to meet the Parish's needs.

3.2 **Housing needs** can be defined as the need for a household to obtain housing which is suitable to meet their requirements in terms of:

- House type and accessibility e.g. house, bungalow, flat etc
- Size and number of rooms
- Location e.g. in relation to employment, schools, family, shops and public services etc

- Affordability
- Tenure, including security

3.3 The aim of the survey is to provide Weston-sub-Edge Parish Council with an independent report of a robust nature based on evidence from reliable sources. This will assist the Parish Council to respond to any planning proposal that may come forward for additional housing within the parish.

4. SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE

4.1 The parish council arranged for the delivery of questionnaires to all homes in the parish in August 2013.

4.2 Householders were requested to return completed questionnaires in a an enclosed freepost envelope or on-line at www.grcc.org.uk

4.3 Part A is entitled 'You and your household' and is for every household to complete. Part B is entitled 'Home Working' and is also for every household to complete. Part C is entitled 'Housing Needs' and is for households in housing need to complete. People were asked to provide their name and contact details if they would like further information on housing options. Personal details are neither presented in this report nor passed to a third party.

4.4 A total of 229 questionnaires were distributed (this includes all residential dwellings in the parish).

- Everyone was asked to complete Part A and Part B of the form.
- If a household considered themselves in need, or likely to be in need of re-housing within the next five years, they were invited to complete Part C of the form.
- Households were asked to forward the questionnaire to anyone they knew of who had moved away but might wish to return to live in Weston-sub-Edge .

4.5 53 completed questionnaires were received at GRCC's offices in Gloucester post between 5th July and 9th October 2013. According to Census 2011 there were 32 vacant properties resulting in 199 occupied dwellings. There was a response rate of 27%. The rate of response is favourable compared to Bourton-on-the-Water 27%, Oddington 31%, Ebrington 40%; Stow-on-the-Wold 17%; Norton 36%; Kempsford 22%). Whilst the survey provides no direct evidence of the needs of those who did not respond to the questionnaires there are other useful sources that inform of housing needs i.e. the District Council's housing register (Gloucestershire Homeseeker), District-wide Housing Needs Survey 2009 and Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

5. KEY FINDINGS

Part A – You and your household

5.1 50 respondents reported that their home in Weston-sub-Edge was their main home. 1 household reported it was their second home. 2 households did not make an entry on the questionnaire.

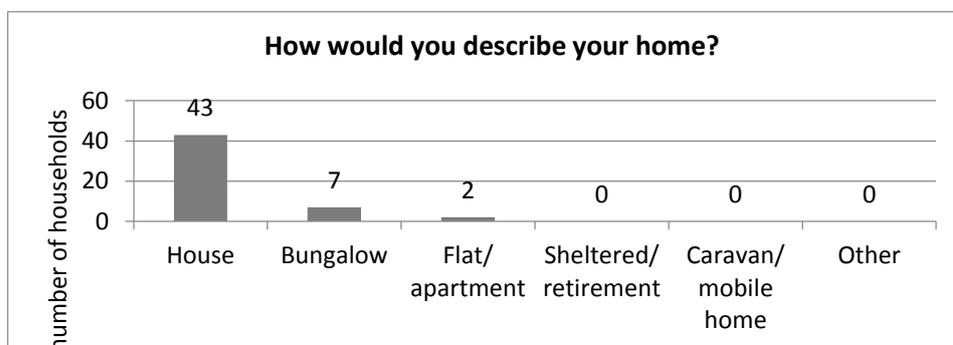
5.2 Table A below indicates the length of time respondents have lived in Weston-sub-Edge. It shows that a 42% of respondents have lived in the parish for 20 years or more or their whole life. 24% of residents have lived in Weston-sub-Edge for 4 years or less.

Table A – How many years have you lived in Weston-sub-Edge Parish?



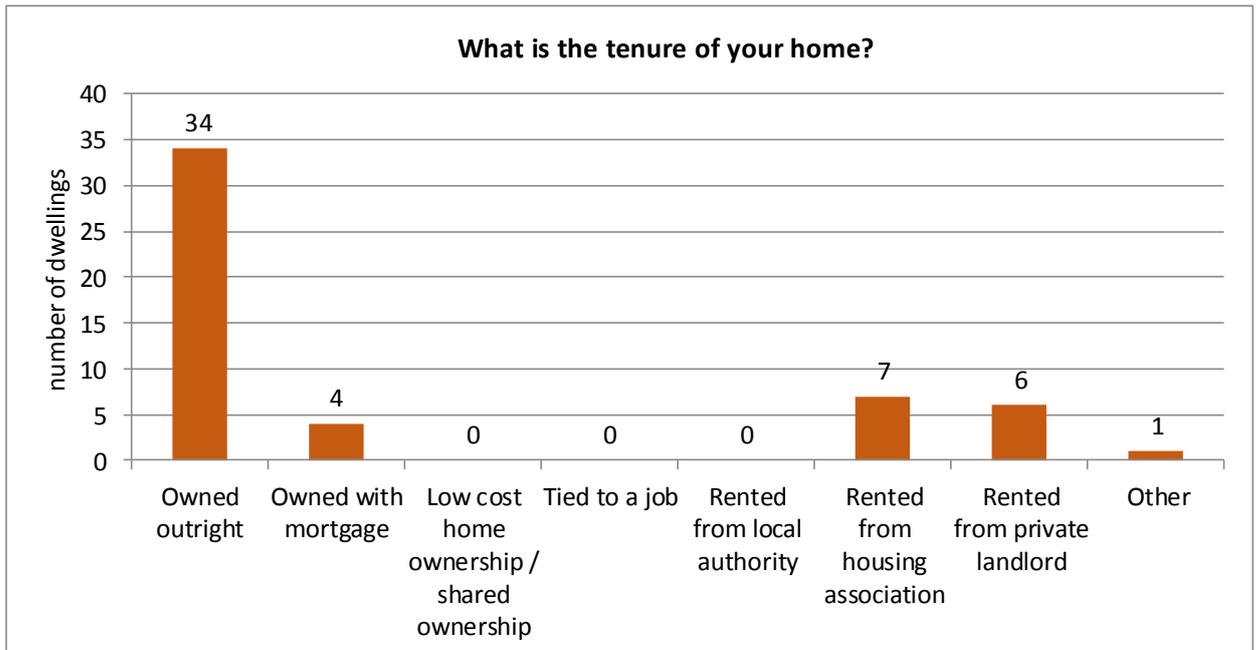
5.3 Question 2 asked people to describe their home in terms of house type. Table B below shows 83% of respondents live in a house, 13% live in a bungalow, and 4% live in in a flat/apartment.

Table B – How would you describe your home?



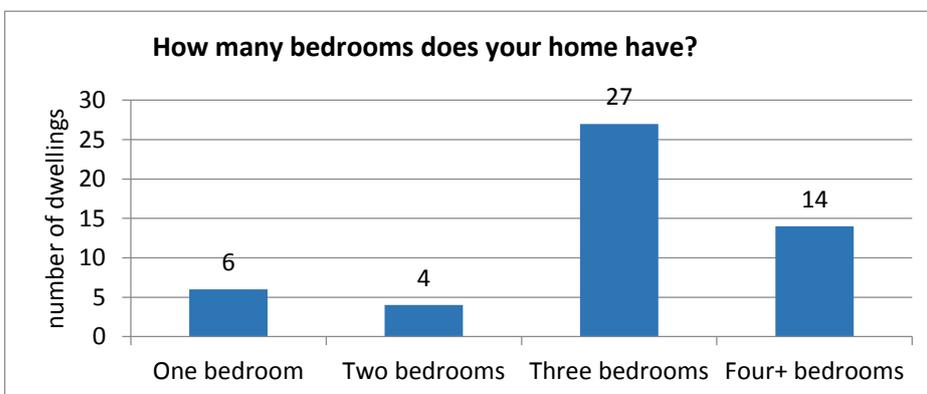
5.4 Question 4 asked the tenure of people’s homes. Table C below shows 73% of respondents in Weston-sub-Edge are owner-occupiers, of whom 9 in 10 have no mortgage, and the remainder own their home with a mortgage. 12% live in private rented, 13% live in housing association rented housing and none live in tied accommodation or shared ownership/ low cost home ownership.

Table C – What is the tenure of your home



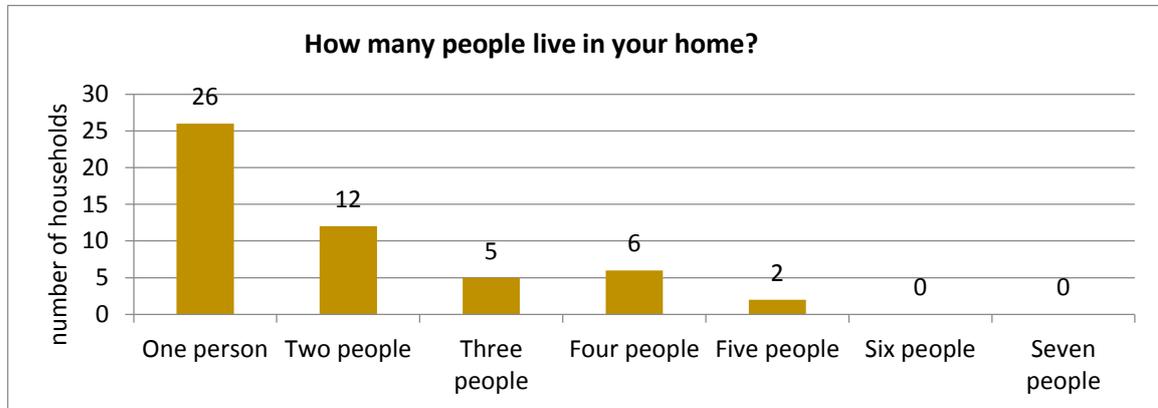
5.4 Table D below shows 79% of homes have three or more bedrooms, 8% of homes have 2 bedrooms, and 12% of homes have one bedroom according to the survey response.

Table D – How many bedrooms do you have?



5.5 Question 4 asked how many people live in your home. Table E below shows 73% are 1 or 2 person households, 22% are 3 or 4 person households, and 4% are 5 person households.

Table E- How many people live in your home



5.6 12 respondents said their home had been adapted to increase physical accessibility.

5.7 4 people said someone from their family had moved away from Weston-sub-Edge in the last 5 years due to difficulty finding an affordable home locally.

5.8 Asked *..Are you in favour of a small development of affordable homes for local people if there was a proven need?*, 73% of people indicated they were in favour, 23% were not in favour, and 4% did not make an entry.

5.9 Tables F and G below compare age profiles between those who responded to the survey questionnaire Part 1 and Gloucestershire County Council's Maiden estimate for 2007.

Table F – Age distribution of respondents to survey questionnaire

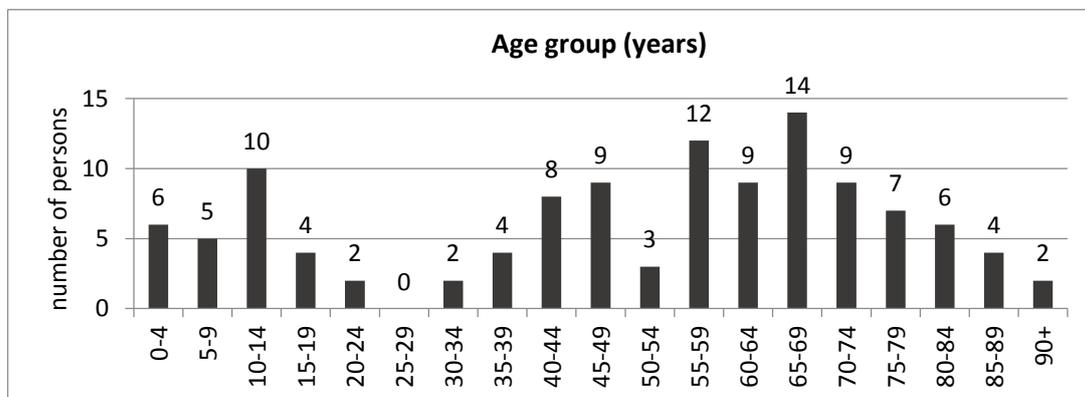
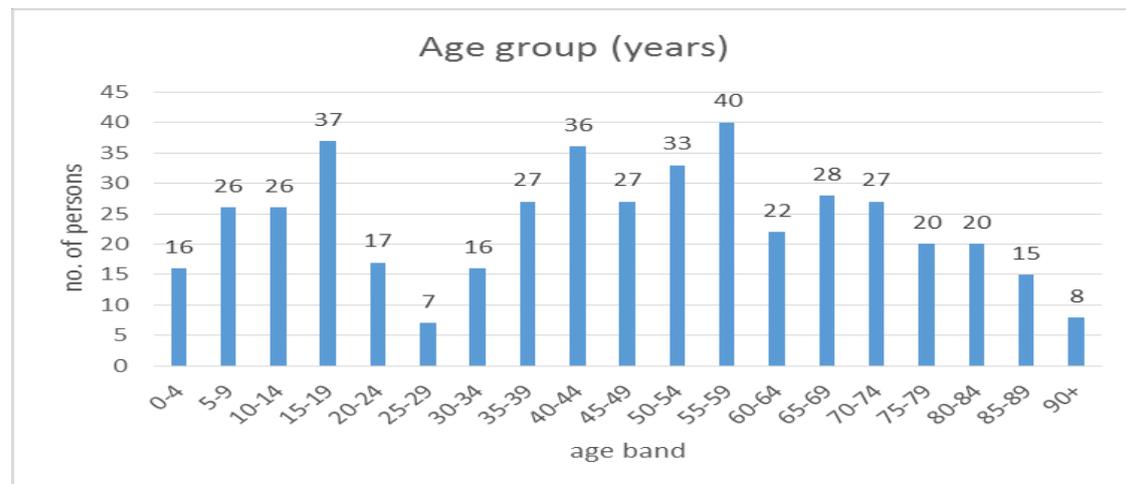


Table G - Age distribution of Weston-sub-Edge according to Gloucestershire County Council Maiden estimate for 2009



5.10 The figures shown in Tables F and G demonstrate people in age bands 5-9, and 15-39 are significantly underrepresented by the housing needs survey. Whereas, age groups 60-79 are overrepresented in the housing need survey compared to Gloucestershire County Council Maiden estimate 2010.

Comments

5.11 Below is a schedule of respondents' comments on the issue of affordable housing.

- Current village residents and individuals with strong family connections to the village should receive priority in any housing allocation. Any affordable housing must not be utilised as a 'dumping ground' for city dwellers and must not be available as second homes.
- Unless high speed broadband and good 3G/4G coverage becomes available this is a big negative for living in the village. I find it very frustrating in managing my voluntary business. Also my son who lived here with us forced to leave to leave as he could not run his web design business with such poor communications.
- We currently rent from a private landlord and lived in the village for less than a year. My partner works in Wickhamford and I attend Worcester University whilst our children attend Mickleton School. We have fallen in love with Weston, which isn't hard, with local residents and a real community feel. However, as a student life can be a struggle paying for overpriced property in a poor state. We also struggle with private landlords due to being labelled 'a student'. Therefore, affordable housing within the village would be a blessing to make proper roots within the village and allow for our family to settle, in a very friendly and to allow me to reach my goals and to become a psychologist in the local prison. Affordable housing would be greatly welcomed by my family.
- Unsure as to whether the village could sustain any more houses. There is no shop, post office or regular bus service. Although affordable housing is

good any developments for houses might start small but then soon spiral to bigger developments which is not good for the village.

- I have no problem with affordable housing as long as those people who have a direct long lasting connection to the village.
- The current craze for building tall houses of 3 or 4 storeys in order to cram as many as possible into a site might be OK for estates within towns but it is important to ensure any new development is in keeping with the rest of the village i.e. open spaces and on 2 floors. An ideal spot would be between Dovers View and The Old Police Station, if the land could be made available.
- Weston-sub-Edge does not have any conveniences (decent transport, schools, shops etc) to make additional housing viable without providing these facilities. Why ruin a beautiful village when there are plenty of brown field sites in built up areas that could be redeveloped? You will devalue our property which we are paying for. Those of us who work hard and pay a mortgage do not seem to get the benefits provided to those in affordable houses.
- No facilities
- The lack of affordable houses in an area like this is a major issue and I would be happy to support any development on a small scale which was sensitive to the needs of the local community.
- I am all in favour of affordable housing in WSE so long as it goes to those with contacts who lived in the village. Unfortunately when the council houses came under a housing association this was not enforced which left anyone with a computer anywhere in the World to apply for a house saying that they had whether true or not. If I wanted to sell my ex-council house I have give 1st choice.

Part B - Home working

5.12 Asked ...'Do you or does any member of your household carry out any paid work from home?' 13 answered 'yes' and 35 answered 'no'.

5.13 Asked...'do you work for an employer or for your own business?' 4 answered 'for an employer', and 9 answered 'for my own business'.

5.14 Asked....'If you have your own business at home, what type is it?

If you have your own business at home, what type is it?

	Count
Crafts/Arts	1
IT/ Knowledge based	1
Design	0
Consultancy	3
Other	5
No reply	0
total	10

Other included: farming x 3; writing

5.15 Asked... *'How many hours per week do you usually work from home?'*

	Count
Less than 10 hours per week	2
10 to 24 hours per week	5
25 to 40 hours per week	1
More than 40 hours per week	4
No reply	5
total	17

5.16 Asked... *'Would you like to work from home if you had the proper facilities to do so?'* 2 answered 'yes', and 28 answered 'no'.

5.17 Asked... *'Whether or not you currently work from home, what working space do you/ would you require to enable you to undertake your work?'*

	Need & already have	Need but do not have	Do not need
Desk only	7	2	0
Room shared	3	0	3
Dedicated room for working use only	7	3	1
External storage space e.g. shed or garage	6	0	2

5.18 Asked.... *'What communication services do you/ would you require to undertake your work?'*

	Need & already have	Need but do not have	Do not need
Telephone land line	14	0	0
Fax landline	2	0	7
Mobile	6	0	3
Broadband	14	0	0

Part C - Housing needs

5.19 Seven households completed *Part C: Housing Needs* of the survey questionnaire self identified themselves in need of moving to more suitable housing in Weston-sub-Edge. However, one household has clearly indicated a desire to move to another place with more facilities. Therefore, there are six households seeking re-housing in the parish.

5.20 None of the six respondents needing to move home are regarded as having financial means to afford suitable housing in the private sector in Weston-sub-Edge. Account is taken of household's current tenure, deposit, income and maximum house purchase price it could afford. Therefore, all six respondents in need of affordable housing are the focus of this report.

5.21 Of the six households in need of affordable housing, 5 respondents indicated a need to move within < 2 years, and 1 respondent indicated a need to move in 2 to 5 years.

5.22 Two of the six respondents in need of affordable housing indicated they were on the District Council's housing register (Gloucestershire Homeseeker). These are comments made by persons in need of alternative housing, not necessarily affordable, who answered 'no' and who were asked to explain why they were not on the housing register:

- Not eligible as we rent already (all be it an expensive rental)
- We live in Warwickshire
- Currently live with parents
- Not requiring accommodation yet but may move in 3-5 years

5.23 Here are reasons given for need to move home (some people gave more than one reason for needing to move):

- 2 households indicated a need for a move to cheaper accommodation
- 1 household indicated a need for a change of tenure
- 1 households indicated a need to set up independent home
- 1 household indicated a need to move closer to employment
- 1 household indicated they needed to return to the parish where they were born and brought up
- 1 household indicated a need to move to smaller accommodation

5.24 Analysing the results of those 5 households in need of rented accommodation shows:

- Single person
- Couple aged 23 yrs & ?
- Lone parent family
- Lone parent family
- Lone parent family

5.25 Financial information provided on the respondents' questionnaires indicates that the following one household might be able to afford intermediate housing i.e. low cost home ownership or *affordable rent* i.e. up to 80% market rent:

- Couple

6. AFFORDABILITY

6.1 A household's income, savings and the state of the housing market are key factors for assessing a person's need for affordable housing.

6.2 In simplistic terms the assessment of affordability requires household incomes and savings to be measured against prices of property of a suitable size, type and location, whether rented or home ownership. However, depending upon tenure there will be additional factors that will impact upon costs of acquiring the right to occupy the property.

6.3 For home ownership, these costs include: mortgage interest rates, mortgage indemnity premium, mortgage application fee, legal fees, stamp duty tax, legal fees and search fees etc.

6.4 For rented, these costs may include: rent deposit and rent paid in advance.

Home ownership

6.5 In order to investigate affordability, further research has been carried out on house prices in the area.

6.6 Using information gained from HM Land Registry it is possible to obtain the average property prices in Weston-sub-Edge .

6.7 The average price of properties sold in Weston-sub-Edge in the 24 months to June 2013 are shown in Table H below.

Table H: Average Prices of residential properties in Weston-sub-Edge sold in the period 24 months to June 2013 (according to HM Land Registry)

Average House Prices in Weston-sub-Edge Parish (£)		
House Type	Price	Number of Sales
Detached	£834,875	8
Semi-detached	£330,500	3
Terraced	£249,000	1
Flats	-	none
All	£659,958	12

6.8 The number of house sales are for new and existing properties where the sale details registered with the Land Registry are inside Weston-sub-Edge Parish.

- Figures were obtained from “www.rightmove.co.uk” with data supplied by HM Land Registry.
- There are sometimes delays in registrations of sales and this may result in under counting of property sales.

6.9 Unfortunately, the number of bedrooms in each property is not specified.

6.10 The average price of properties sold does not necessarily reflect the average value of all properties in the parish.

6.11 HM Land Registry tells us that the average price of residential properties sold in Gloucestershire is £174,231 in September 2013.

6.12 The latest figures show that for Gloucestershire there has been a small fluctuation in average house prices between 2011 and to September 2013, but up by 1% over the 12 months to September 2013.

6.13 House sales volumes in Gloucestershire fell significantly from a peak of 1,475 in June 2007 to a low of 436 in January 2009. Sales numbers have recovered somewhat with 867 residential property sales in July 2013. Winter is traditionally a time of a lower number of house sales.

EXAMPLE CALCULATION FOR A MORTGAGE

6.14 Typically, a household can obtain a mortgage of 3.5 times their gross annual income, and in today’s financial market would expect to pay a deposit of at least 15% towards the total purchase price.

6.15 To afford the price of the cheapest house (£180,000) sold during the past 2 years in Weston-sub-Edge a household would require at least £27,000 as a deposit, and their annual gross income for mortgage purposes would have to be at least £43,700.

6.16 At the time this report is published mortgage lenders currently offer first time buyers standard variable annual rate interest rates from a low as 4.5% APR upwards. Applying a 4.5% interest rate to a mortgage of £153,000 equates to £859.84 per month for a repayment mortgage (repayment of capital and interest) over a 25 year period.

Gross annual earnings for residents and employees in local authority areas

Area	Median gross annual earnings for residents (£)	Median gross annual earnings for employees (£)
Cotswold	17,948	16,651
Forest of Dean	20,833	19,364
Gloucester	19,630	20,615
Stroud	22,403	19,753
Cheltenham	22,039	19,740
Tewkesbury	19,937	23,321
Gloucestershire	20,651	20,018
South West	20,000	19,831
Great Britain	21,342	21,324

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2010, Office of National Statistics

- The median (50th percentile) in the table above shows gross annual earnings of residents in Cotswold District (£17,948) is lower than the corresponding regional (£20,000) and national figures (£21,342). However, the median for earnings of employees in Cotswold District (£16,651) is significantly lower than, the regional (£19,831), and the national figures (£21,324).
- Considering the average prices of homes sold in Weston-sub-Edge Parish during the 24 months up to March 2012 a household on a median income in Cotswold District (£17,948) would be unable to purchase a property without a substantial deposit.
- Many potential first time buyers struggle to meet the costs of buying their own home.

Private rented

6.17 Information gained from 'Rightmove.com' tells us these are the starting prices for rents for the following property types in October 2013:

One bedroom flat (Broadway).....£750 per calendar month

Two bedroom house (Honeybourne).....£800 pcm

Three bedroom house (Weston-sub-Edge).....£795 pcm

6.18 It is generally recognised that a household's housing costs should not exceed 25% of a household's gross income. Based upon this assumption a minimum gross annual income required to afford the rent on the above properties would be £36,000 for a one bedroom flat, £38,400 for a two bedroom house, and £38,160 for a three bedroom house. Of course, the rent does not include running costs e.g. council tax, fuel bills etc.

6.19 By comparing the monthly costs of private rented property with home ownership, it is substantially less expensive to rent than to buy a similar starter-type home.

What is affordable rented housing?

6.20 Traditionally the levels of rent that housing associations have been able to charge have been controlled by *Homes and Communities Agency*. These rents are known as *target rents* and are subject to the national Housing Benefit scheme.

6.21 The *target* rents of properties let by Housing Associations are controlled by the Tenants Services Authority, the regulatory agency of registered providers of social housing in England. Rents are calculated according to a formula based on relative property values and relative local earnings.

6.22 A household's entitlement to housing benefit takes into account a household's size, income, savings and other circumstances, may entitle a household to a financial contribution of a sum up to the entire rental charge.

6.23 More recently the Coalition Government has introduced *affordable* rents for council and housing association rented properties. The *affordable* rents are up to 80 per cent of market rents. For some areas of Gloucestershire that means *affordable* rents will be significantly higher than traditional *target* rent levels.

7. EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

7.1 Weston-sub-Edge parish currently has a total of 27 affordable dwellings for rent.

Affordable housing stock in Weston-sub-Edge

Landlord	Tenure	1 bed bungalows	1 bed houses	2 bed houses	3 bed houses	Total
Bromford Living	rented	6	2	5	14	27

8. SUMMARY

8.1 *Part C* of this survey is aimed at persons who are seeking alternative housing, in particular those who cannot open market prices and therefore require affordable housing (rented or shared ownership).

8.2 The information gained from this survey is a key element of assessing local needs. Other useful sources of information include Cotswold District

Council's Housing Register (known as Gloucestershire Homeseeker). Some key issues arising from the survey are:

- It is notoriously difficult to get accurate data on the housing need of young people, and surveys of this type tend to underestimate the figures.
- Those who have expressed a genuine need have been considered in the recommendations, rather than those with a wish to move but are considered to be able to afford appropriate market housing.
- Housing development in Weston-sub-Edge parish should take account of future anticipated housing need as well as the number of households in immediate need.
- There is a shortage of affordable properties in Weston-sub-Edge for rent and none available for shared ownership ownership. This survey has shown 79% of properties in the parish have 3 or more bedrooms.
- Of those six respondents to the questionnaire who are in need to move to suitable accommodation in Weston-sub-Edge, all six require affordable housing. None have indicated they could afford market prices. In the current financial market some potential purchasers, particularly first time buyers, are experiencing difficulties obtaining a mortgage. The Bank of England Base Rate has remained at an all time low of 0.5% since March 2009 (last reviewed on 10th October 2013). However, mortgage lenders often charge high rates of interest to first time buyers and require substantial deposits, sometimes 15% or more of the purchase price as well as charging arrangement/administrative fees.

Households in need of rented

	Single persons	couples	Lone parent families
1 bedroom general purpose i.e. flat/house	1	1 (prefer 2 bedrooms)	-
2 bedroom house	-	-	3

Households in need of shared ownership/intermediate

	Single persons	couples	families
1 bedroom general purpose i.e. flat/house	-	1 (prefer 2 bedrooms)	-

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 This survey has determined that there are ***6 households with a local connection who have self identified themselves in need of affordable housing in the parish.***

10.2 In addition to local households in need, consideration should be given to turnover of the existing social housing stock in the parish when determining the number, type and tenure of additional affordable dwellings required to meet the parish's need. Also, consideration may be given to forecasted changes in the demographics and the impact of Government policies e.g. housing benefit regulations. It should be noted that some existing affordable housing may be allocated to persons in greatest housing need throughout Cotswold District.

10.3 The survey does not attempt to identify Weston-sub-Edge residents seeking to move to affordable housing outside of the parish.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a) The Rural Housing Enabler produces an executive summary of the survey report for publication in the local newsletter, and the parish council holds hard copies of the full report available for parishioners to read upon request.
- b) Anyone who is in need of affordable housing is encouraged to apply on the District Council's Housing Register (Gloucestershire Homeseeker www.gloshomeseeker.co.uk tel 01285 623300).
- c) The District Council is provided with the Housing Needs Survey Report.