

# A DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF CHURCH LAWFORD



PRODUCED BY  
MIDLANDS RURAL HOUSING

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## 1. Introduction

Average property prices in rural areas have increased more than urban areas in monetary terms over the past 10 years<sup>1</sup> forcing many local residents to move away from their towns and villages in order to find suitable and affordable homes. House prices in the countryside are now up to £30,000 higher than in urban areas, despite average wages being lower.

The average rural house price in England is now more than twelve times the average salary of people living in rural areas (source: NHF). In order to obtain a mortgage, a person living and working in the countryside would need to earn £66,000 per year but the average rural salary is far below that at around £20,000 (source: NHF). The number of people on waiting lists for affordable homes in rural England has soared to around 750,000<sup>2</sup>.

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) found the first year of homeownership cost on average £70,538 in 2012 (taking into account a 25% deposit, stamp duty, mortgage repayments and annual maintenance) - up 73% from £40,892 in 2002. Over the same period, the cost of renting a home for 12 months - taking into account a six-week deposit and monthly payments - rose by 29%, from £7,492 to £9,662. New household formation is outstripping supply by 3 to 1 (source: CLG).

Increasing house prices and the limited availability of appropriate properties has resulted in local people being unable to find a home within their community and this may be happening in Church Lawford.

Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) work with local authorities, town and parish councils, registered providers (housing associations/registered social landlords), private developers and local communities in order to investigate the need for, and provide, homes to meet local needs in towns and villages throughout the Midlands. The first step in this research is to undertake a Housing Needs Survey which will give an overview of the current housing situation in a parish and provide details of the need for local housing.

The Church Lawford Housing Needs Survey questionnaires were delivered to every household in the Parish during the summer of 2012. Survey forms were distributed to all households in Church Lawford. In total 135 survey forms were distributed.

<sup>1</sup> Halifax Rural Housing Review 2011 - "Rural property prices rose by an average of £69,170 - equivalent to £576 per month - from £127,146 in 2001 to £196,316 in 2011. In the past decade, the average price paid by first-time buyers has risen by 90%"

<sup>2</sup> National Housing Federation, Rural housing research report 2011

## 2. Purpose of the Survey

The survey was conducted in order to obtain clear evidence of any local housing need for a range of housing tenures for Church Lawford residents. This evidence will be made available to Rugby Borough Council and Church Lawford Parish Council; used to inform Housing Strategy; and provide clarity on what type and tenure of housing is required to meet local needs.

In addition, the information can be used positively in the planning process. It provides a foundation on which to negotiate 'planning gain' opportunities with developers. In short, it gives the planners evidence that can be used to obtain an element of 'local needs' housing in negotiations with house builders, should such possibilities arise in the village.

The information obtained from a Housing Needs Survey is also invaluable at the local level, particularly in relation to local authority and parish council activities. Such information can be acted upon locally and taken on board in the decision making process when housing issues and opportunities arise.

### 3. Respondent details

A total of 135 survey forms were distributed and 94 were received in return, giving a return rate of 70% against the number distributed. In our experience this is an excellent level of response for a survey of this kind given that it is only those who have a housing need or are interested in a local needs development and general village life that are likely to respond.

#### i) Age of respondents

The questionnaire asked village residents to indicate the ages of the people in their households. This enabled the charts below (fig 1.1), to be produced:

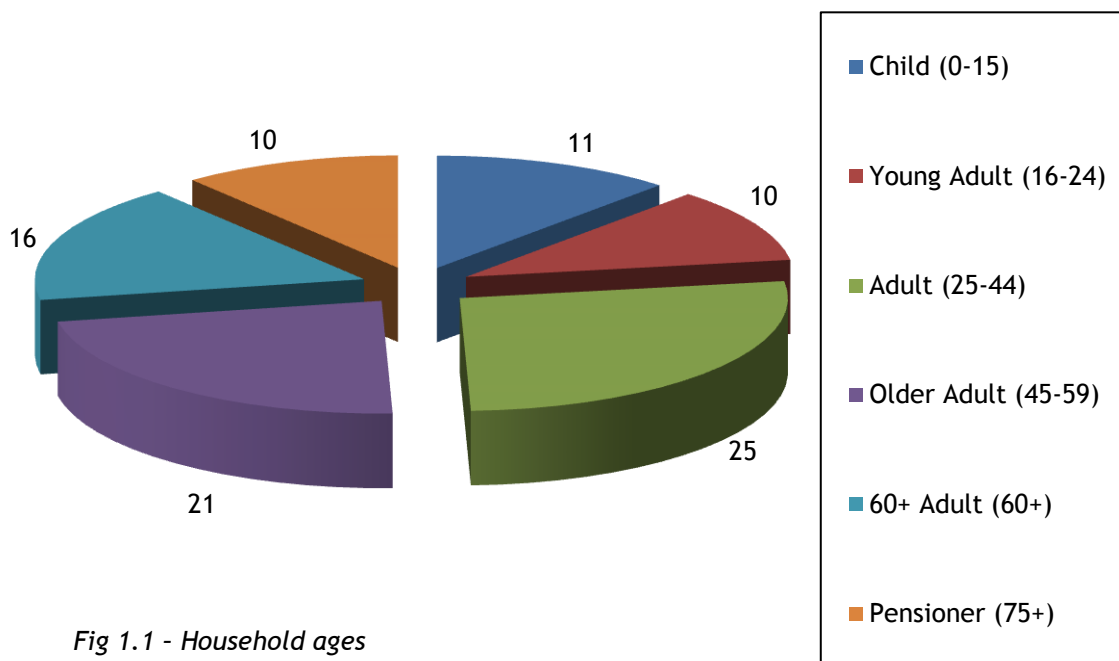


Fig 1.1 - Household ages

Fig 1.1 on page 4 shows the age range breakdown of households that responded to the survey.

The most common age range from respondents is 25-44 year olds (27%) followed by 45-59 year olds (22%).

28% of responses came from households containing people aged 60 years or older.

Notably, 11% of household composition was young adults (16-24 years old). This could indicate concealed households or individuals that would like to get their own home now or in the near future.

ii) **Tenure of all respondents**

The current household tenure of respondents is given in the chart below (fig 1.2):

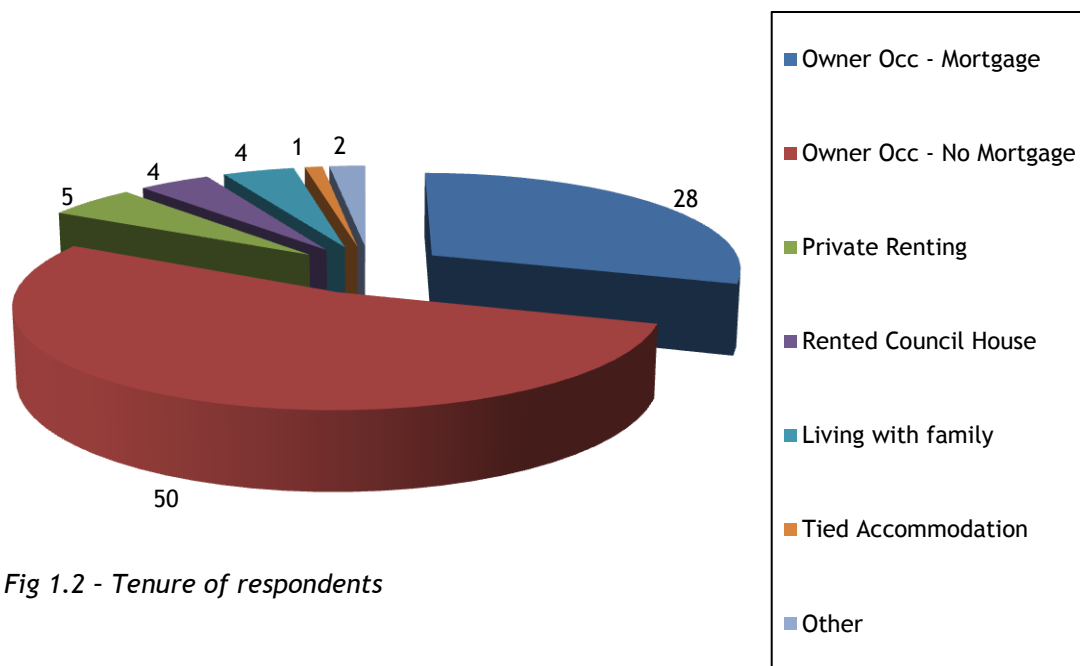


Fig 1.2 - Tenure of respondents

It shows that owner-occupiers were by far the largest tenure group accounting for 83% of replies (53% of total survey respondents have no outstanding mortgage on their property and 30% have a mortgage on their home).

10% of respondents rent their home (5½% rent privately and 4½% rent a council house). 4½% live with family.

iii) **Property Types**

The following chart (fig 1.3) details the type of property that respondents currently reside in:

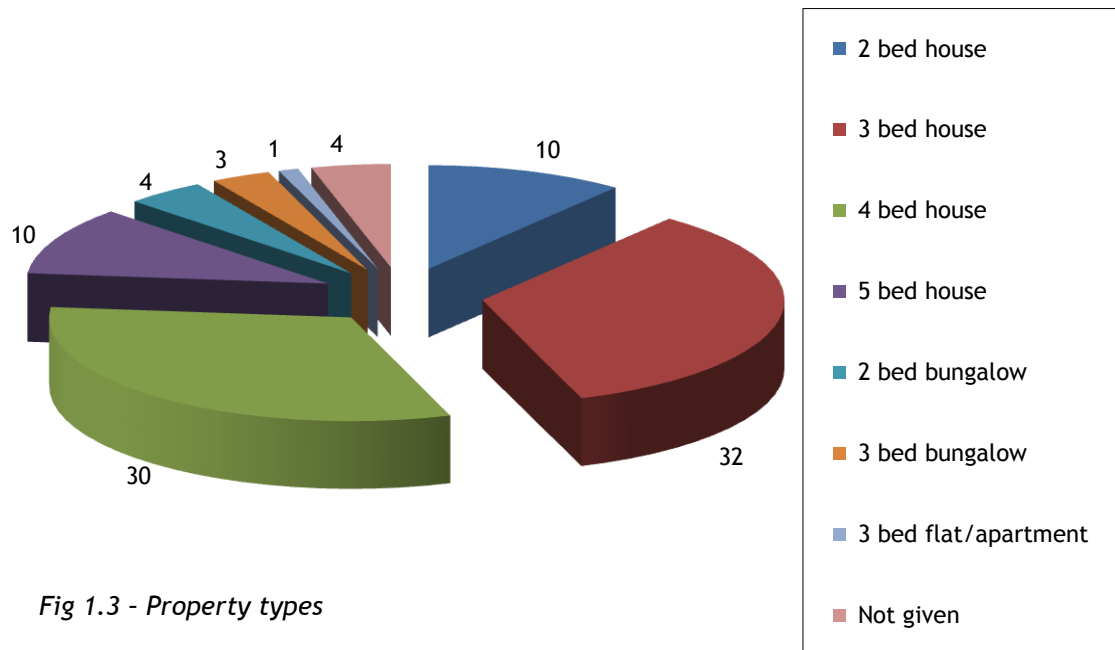


Fig 1.3 - Property types

Those living in 3 bed houses were the largest group (34% of responses), followed by those living in 4 bedroom houses (32%), 5 bedroom houses (11%), and 2 bedroom houses (11%). 7% of responses were from people living in a bungalow.

iv) **Length of residence in Parish**

The length of time that respondents have lived in Church Lawford is given in the chart below (fig 1.4):

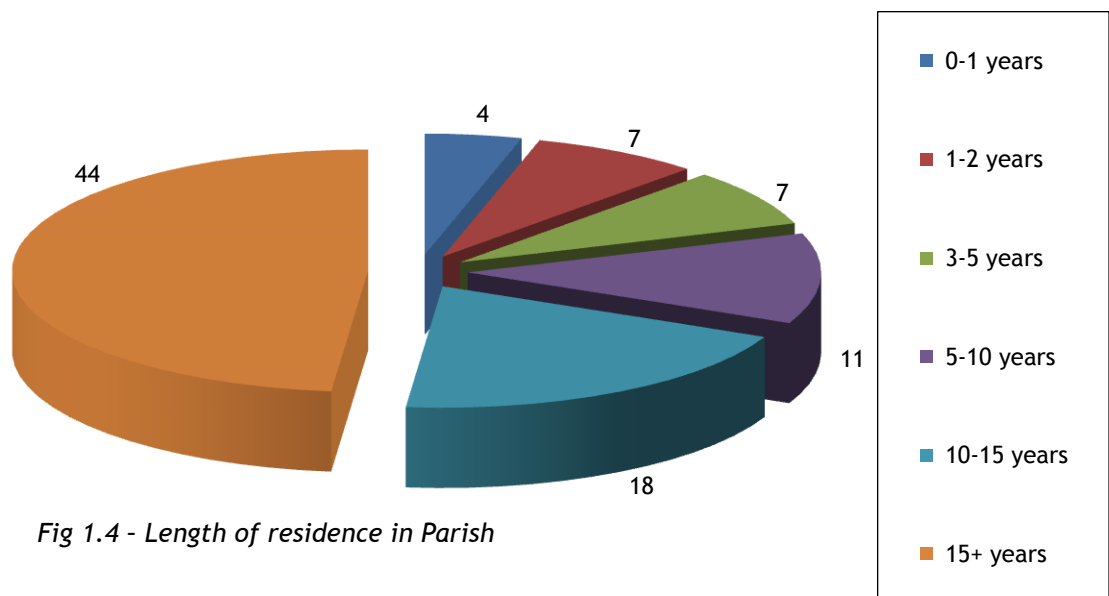


Fig 1.4 - Length of residence in Parish

It shows that 56% have lived in the Parish for in excess of 15 years.

47% of respondents have lived in Church Lawford for between 10 and 15 years, and 31% have been there for between 5 and 10 years. 20% of responses came from those who have lived in the village for less than 5 years.

v) **Migration**

The survey also asked whether respondents knew of people who had been forced to leave the Parish in the last 10 years but may wish to return.

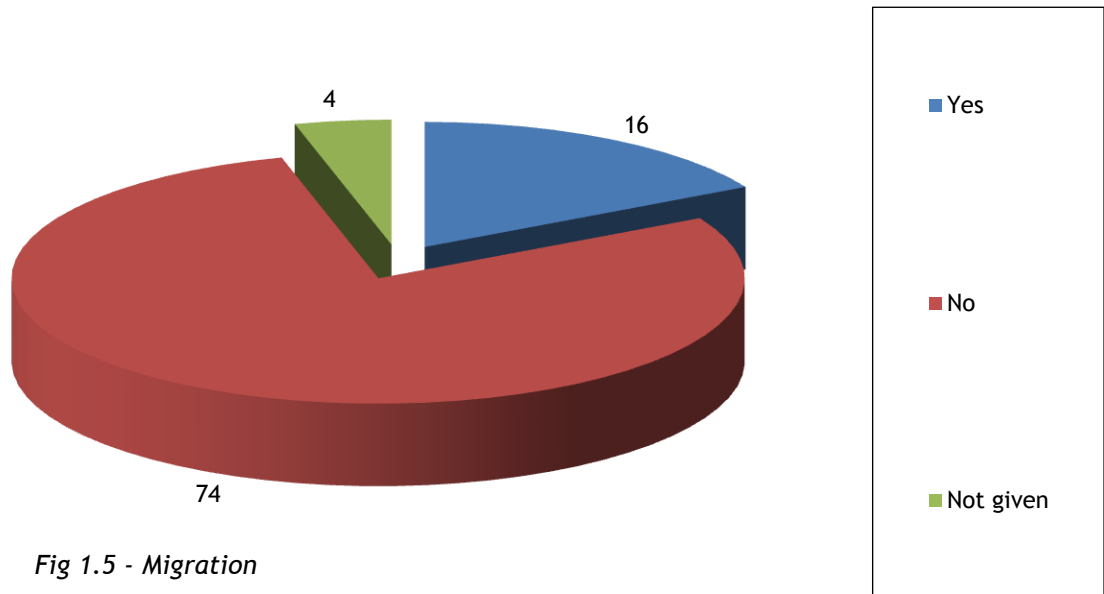


Fig 1.5 - Migration

Fig 1.5 shows that 17% of Parish residents who returned questionnaires were aware of others who have had to leave the Parish in the last 10 years.

Obviously some/many of these 'leaving' people/families will have been 'double counted' within this figure, but the number is still worth noting.

vi) **Support for affordable housing scheme for local people**

One of the fundamental questions in the survey is that which asks whether people are in favour of a small scheme of affordable homes in the village for local people.

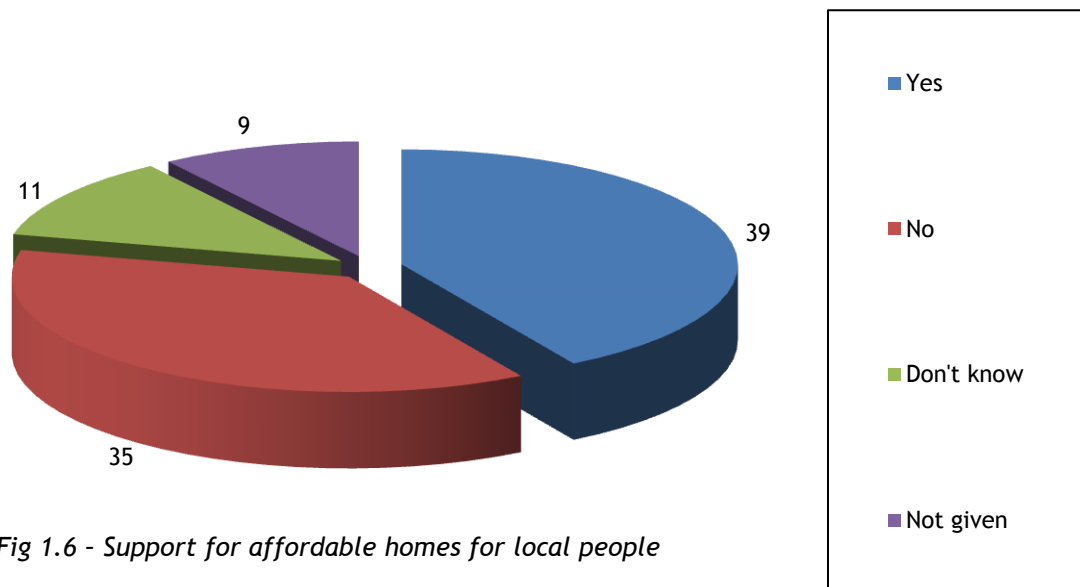


Fig 1.6 - Support for affordable homes for local people

Fig 1.6, above, shows that 41% of respondents are in favour of an affordable housing scheme for local people, while 37% said that they are not in favour.

12% of respondents did not know whether they would be in favour or not, and 10% did not give a response.



## 4. Housing Need Analysis

Of the 94 returns, 89 were from people who felt that they were adequately housed at present. These respondents completed a form primarily to offer their support, objection or thoughts towards 'local needs' housing as well as to give their comments regarding life in the Parish. These were, therefore, discounted from the rest of the analysis.

As far as the requirement for housing, 5 returns indicated a need for housing within the next few years.

### i) Local Connection

The survey form is made available to those who currently live in the Parish and those who have a previous residency or a strong local connection to the Parish, such as a job or close family in the Parish. Of the 8 respondents who indicated a housing need, all of them currently satisfy Rugby Borough Council's local connection criteria (5 year permanent residency in the Parish; 5 out of the past 20 years permanent residency in the Parish; requirement to live close to another person who satisfies the previous criteria and is in essential need of frequent attention and/or care due to age, ill health and/or infirmity; essential functional need to live close to work in the Parish).

The local connection links are shown in the chart below (fig 2.0):

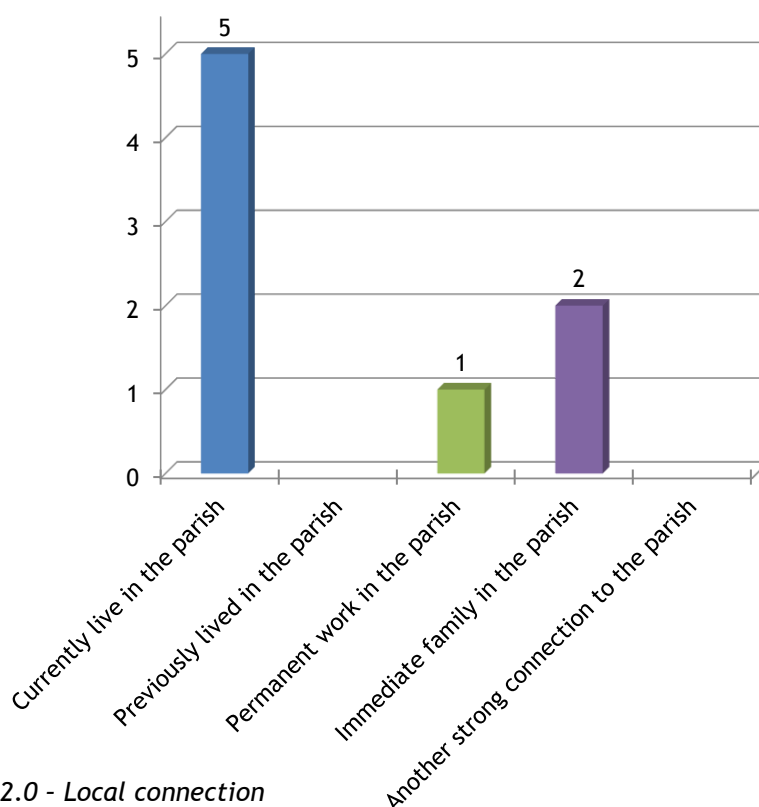


Fig 2.0 - Local connection

The 5 returns in housing need were all from people who currently live in Church Lawford. 2 respondents also have immediate family in the Parish and 1 also works in the Parish.

In total, there were 8 local connections given by the 5 respondents. This is more than the total number of responses in housing need as households can have more than one connection to Church Lawford.

## ii) Reasons for housing need

Respondents were asked to state why they felt they were in need of alternative accommodation. The chart below (fig 2.1), shows the reasons that were given:

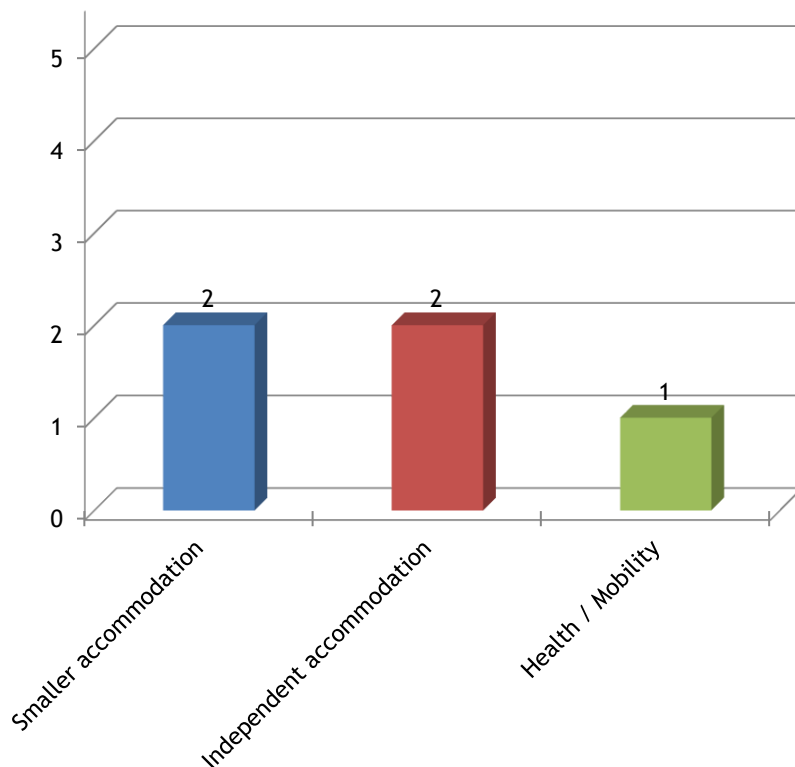


Fig 2.1 - Reasons for housing need

It can be seen that the reasons for seeking alternative accommodation are fairly consistent with independent accommodation and the desire for a smaller home being the most popular reasons cited.

### iii) Respondent analysis

The table below lists details of those respondents who stated that they are in housing need. Respondents were asked to identify what they felt is needed in terms of property type and size together with a preferred tenure type. In reality it may not be possible to meet the aspirations of each respondent. Incomes and likely property prices are considered in order to ensure that any proposed scheme would indeed meet the needs of those to be housed. Therefore a ‘reality tenure’ is suggested to outline realistic provision.

Any entry marked with a \* indicates that the respondent is currently housed in Housing Association/Council accommodation which would be available to other people in need on waiting lists if the current residents were able to be re-housed in a more suitable property.

For the purpose of this analysis, 2 bedroom properties have been recommended for single people and couples for reasons of long term sustainability, but consideration should be given by anyone ‘under-occupying’ a property who is in receipt of housing benefit due to the under-occupation penalties that exist.

#### In the next 3 years

Ref	RESPONDENT	WHAT REQUIRED	REALITY TENURE
2	Adult couple household, currently living in home without a mortgage in the Parish (have lived in the Parish for 15+ years). Need to move due to health/mobility problems.	2 bed bungalow - Open market home	2 bed bungalow - Open market home
26	Single person household, currently living with family in the Parish (has lived in the Parish for 10+ years). Needs independent accommodation.	1 bed house / flat - Affordable / social rented home	1 bed house / flat - Affordable / social rented home
46	Single person household, currently living in home without a mortgage in the Parish (have lived in the Parish for 15+ years). Needs smaller home.	2 bed bungalow - Open market home	2 bed bungalow - Open market home
49	Single person household, currently living in home without a mortgage in the Parish (have lived in the Parish for 15+ years). Needs smaller home.	3 bed bungalow - Open market home	3 bed bungalow - Open market home
62	Single person household, currently living with family in the Parish (has lived in the Parish for 10+ years). Needs independent accommodation.	1 bed house - Open market home	2 bed house - Shared Ownership home

#### iv) House price data

The table, below (fig 2.2), details the house prices and household type breakdown for the Church Lawford area. They are taken from [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk). Further local context is given below with regard to properties that are/have been for sale and rent in Church Lawford itself.

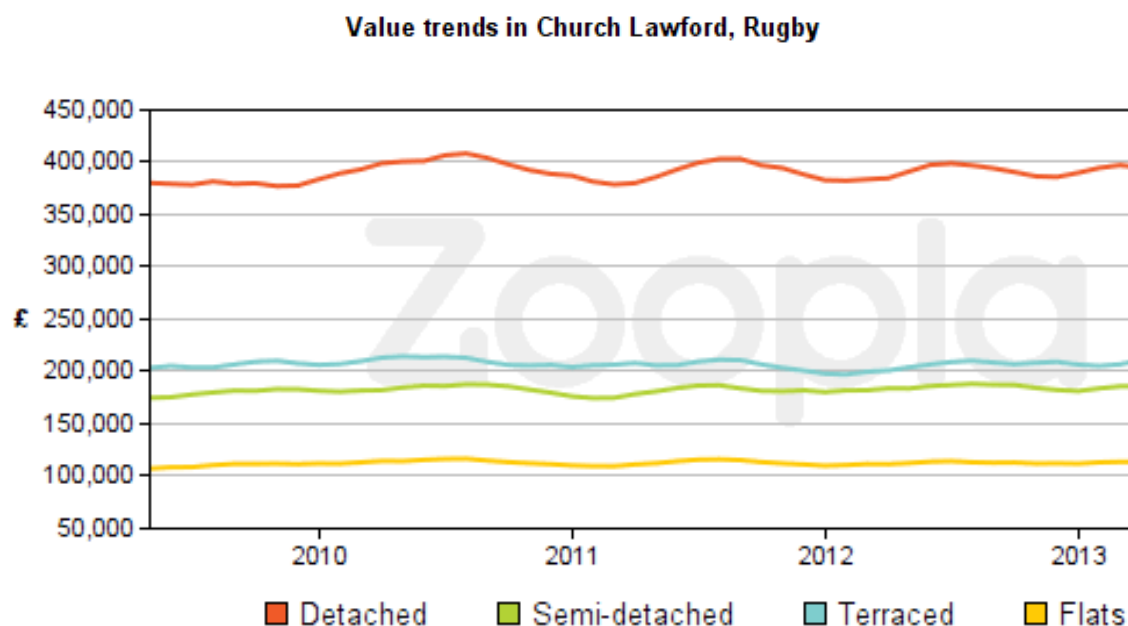


Fig 2.2 - Average property prices for Church Lawford 2009-2013

The chart above (fig 2.2) shows that property prices in Church Lawford have, overall, increased slightly over the past 3 years.

#### v) Local context

By way of local context, the table, below, shows prices of properties that were that have been sold in Church Lawford over the past 5 years:

Year	Property	Price (£)
2012	Semi detached property	187,500
2011	Semi detached property	165,000
2010	Terraced property	148,235
2009	Detached property	358,000
2009	Detached property	455,000
2009	Detached property	410,000
2009	Semi detached property	155,000
2009	Detached property	198,000
2008	Detached property	280,000

The lower quartile property price for actual sales since January 2008 is £193,617.

**Affordability is calculated using a mortgage multiplier of 3.5 times household income with a 20% deposit.**

Based on this affordability criteria it would require a deposit of almost £39,000 and an income in excess of £44,000 per annum to afford the property at the lower quartile price over the past 5 years in Church Lawford.

Even the 'cheapest' property sold over the past 5 years (£148,235) would have required a deposit of almost £30,000 and an income of nearly £34,000 per annum.

It should be noted that there was only one property sold for less than £150,000 during the last five years.

## 5. Conclusion

MRH and the Parish Council have conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of Church Lawford. This study has investigated the needs for affordable housing, market rent level housing and open market housing. In addition, the survey ascertained residents' views with regard to living in the Parish and support for housing development in the village.

The survey has identified a need for properties to meet the housing needs (i.e. those with a need within 5 years) of those with a local connection. (It should be noted that many more households will be on housing registers and estate agent lists wanting a property, affordable or open market, in Church Lawford but this survey ascertained those in need who have a local connection to the Parish).

Of the 5 respondents who indicated a housing need:

- **2 were assessed as being in need of affordable housing**
  - 1 x 1 Bed property - affordable/social rented
  - 1 x 2 Bed house - shared ownership
- **3 was assessed as being in need of open market housing (for local people) to purchase**
  - 2 x 2 Bed bungalow - open market purchase
  - 1 x 3 Bed bungalow - open market purchase

**THEREFORE, THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED**  
**FOR 5 HOMES IN CHURCH LAWFORD FOR**  
**THOSE WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION**

## 6. Contact information

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