



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

PARRACOMBE

North Devon

October / November 2012



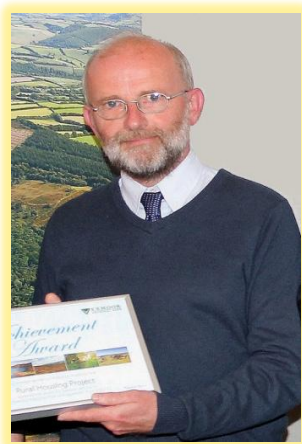


RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND 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.

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.



Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler

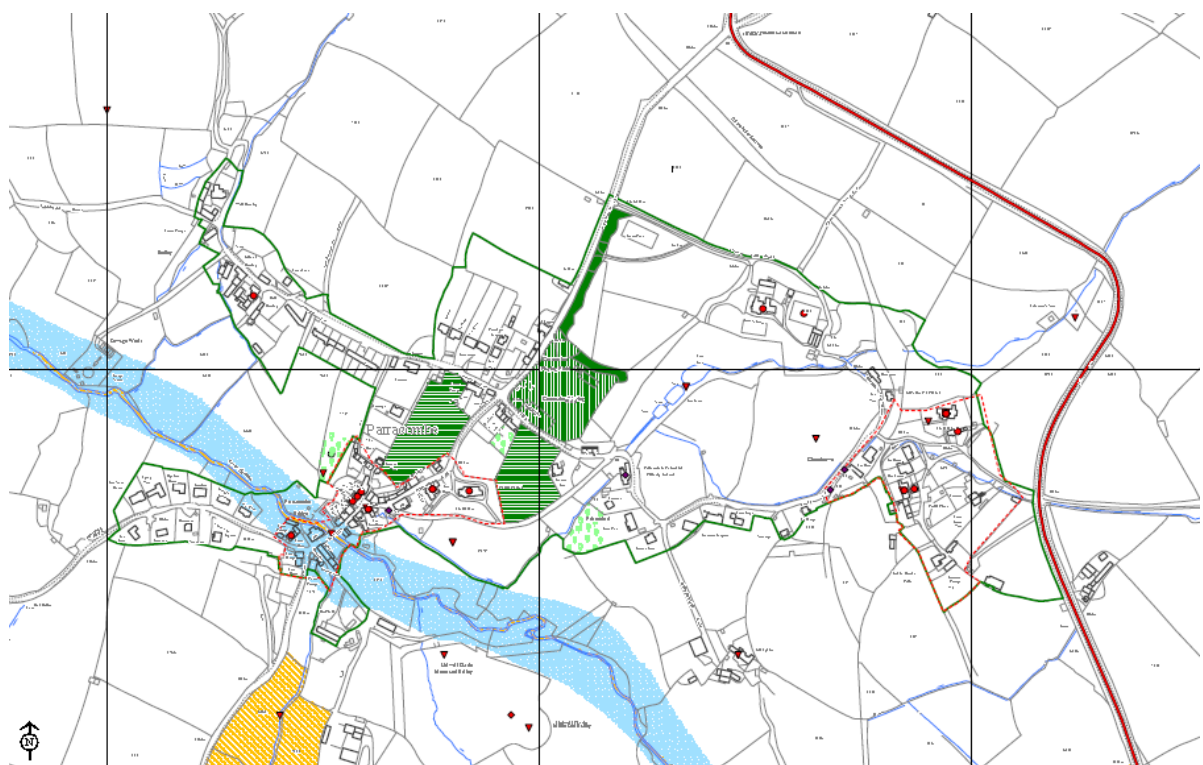
One of the tasks for the project is to work with the Parish Council and the local community to assist them in carrying out a housing needs survey, in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.

PARRACOMBE PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Introduction

Parracombe is a rural parish in the upper Heddon Valley, on Exmoor. The parish is totally within the National Park. Parracombe identified as a “Village” by Policy S1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan. It is in fact the largest village in the Devon side of the National Park and occupies a narrow valley location. Parracombe parish includes the hamlets of Bodley, Prisonford and Churchtown, which together with the main village are all classed as one community.

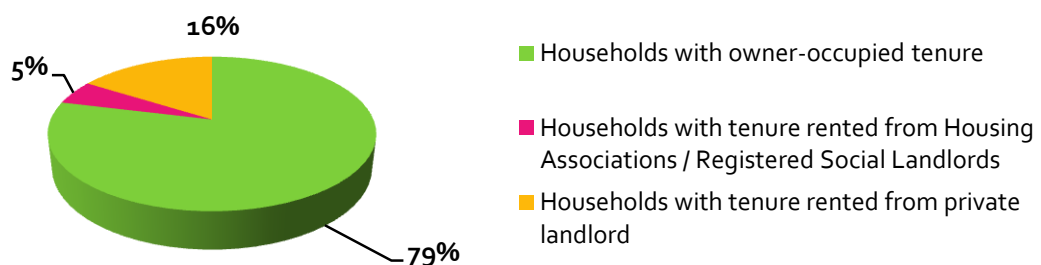
One of the distinctive features of Parracombe is the steep roads and narrow, twisting lanes. A Conservation Area was designated for the whole of Parracombe in 1997.



Exmoor National Park Local Plan Map – green line is boundary of Conservation Area

Background Demographics

There are 144 dwellings in Parracombe parish of which 18 are classed as second residence/holiday accommodation. The majority of properties are owner-occupied, as shown in the following chart:-



Parracombe parish has a population of 294¹ of which 151 are male and 143 female.

In December 2012 there were 6 residential properties for sale in Parracombe² none of them below £250,000.



£675,000

5 bedrooms



Offers over
£550,000

3 bedrooms



£449,950

4 bedrooms



£325,000

4 bedrooms



£305,000

4 bedrooms



£299,950

3 bedrooms

There were three properties available to rent privately:

- 3 bedroom “reverse living” barn conversion - £800 per month
- 3 bedroom cottage - £725 per month
- 3 bedroom semi-detached house - £625 per month

The average income in North Devon is £24,970 per annum³.

The Survey

Following discussions with Parracombe Parish Council, and with their full agreement, initial housing needs survey forms were sent to all households in the parish, along with a covering letter from the Rural Housing Enabler. All households were asked to return the first part of the survey, which asked

- Who they perceived to be in greatest need of new homes in the parish – young people, families, people with disabilities, the elderly, single people or those who have had to leave and wish to return;
- Whether they would be in favour of a small number of new homes to help meet the housing needs of local people if the need is proven;
- Suggestions for any other development they would like to see in the community;
- Suggestions for sites where a small development could be built or building/s that could be converted for affordable housing.

A total of 45 surveys were returned – a 31% return. Summary charts of results are shown below, and comments and suggestions are listed in Appendix A.

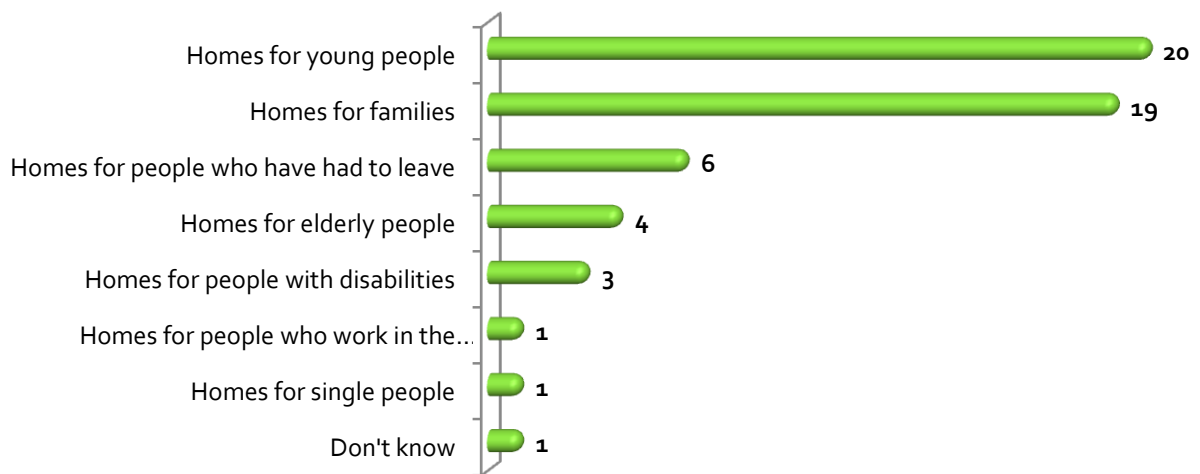
¹ Census 2001 : Office of National Statistics

² www.findaproperty.co.uk

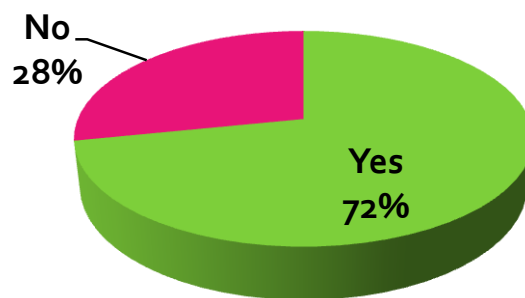
³ www.northdevon.gov.uk NDC Baseline Data 2009

Perception of Housing Need

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



The majority of respondents would be in favour of a small number of new homes being provided to help meet the housing needs of local people in the parish, comments in Appendix A:



Housing Need

From the surveys returned, 10 households reported a housing need. One of these did not wish to remain in Parracombe and two were not specific about desired location. Two were owner occupiers looking to downsize, and these are not regarded as being in affordable need.

The eight households indicating local affordable housing need were as follows:

- Family with 3 bed need 1 
- Single man, family break-up 1 
- Young adults, first independent home* 6      

* One of these wishes to self-build

Rural Housing Enabler's Observations and Recommendations:

1. Of the ten households completing the second part of the survey, two are owner-occupiers wanting to downsize locally. There may not be suitable housing for them to buy.
2. Of the eight requiring affordable housing, seven can demonstrate local connection. The other one works locally, but may not satisfy ENPA local connection criteria.
3. Five young households need affordable housing as a first independent home. One other is an older person moving out from a shared property to live alone. Although all these households initially need only one bedroom, it would be inappropriate to provide this size of home. Some of these households are well established with work locally, others may need to move away. Two expressed a preference for living elsewhere.

It is recommended that 3 x 2 bedroom homes would be sufficient to meet this need.

4. One family requires a three bedroom house but is currently in private renting housing. Although technically "adequately" housed, this is insecure tenure, and expensive.

It is recommended that 1 x 3 bedroom house be provided.

5. Households from adjoining parishes have expressed an interest in 2 bedroom affordable and open market housing.

A development of four affordable homes by housing associations is unlikely to be viable within the current government funding framework, which has reduced the amount of public housing grant available to housing associations to build affordable housing. Additional finance is likely to therefore be required to enable new affordable housing to be built at the current time and this is being considered by those involved with affordable housing provision. Emphasis has been put on cross-subsidy from open market housing. At least one local family interested in downsizing, and others from adjoining parishes are keen to live in Parracombe, therefore if planning policies change to allow open market housing to facilitate provision of affordable housing, this might be achieved and meet a local need for open market housing.

Colin Savage

Rural Housing Enabler

December 2012

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS – PARRACOMBE

Views on Housing

- Without young people and families the village community will disappear, local businesses will suffer.
- We need young families in the village to help sustain the school, church and post office. Also they are more likely to join in with village events and support out pub.
- I would be in favour of families being housed within the parish.
- Just a small development and maybe conversions of barns for farming families.
- Most affordable homes are snapped up by the second home market. This prevents local young people settling in the area.
- New homes to encourage young people into the community.
- My three children can't stay in the area because there are no houses to buy.
- Impossible for young people to afford houses in this area – 2nd homes and retirement pressures.
- The housing should be in keeping with local style – stone/thatch/slate/oak frame. Quality build will enhance the neighbourhood – cheap build will further undermine Parracombe as a lifestyle destination. Whilst I think “affordable” housing is essential, the criteria and planning guides for “affordable” make developments (a) unsightly and (b) unrealistic for the developer.
- The village needs young people in order to be an energetic community, to support the school, shop and community events.
- But only within the boundary of the village itself or sites which cannot be seen, to assist employment e.g. agricultural.
- Houses should be priority for sons and daughters of residents of the village who wish to continue living in the parish.
- The need is based more on finance and affordability than age. The village needs a cross-section of ages. The least “needy” are the elderly, judging by current standards.
- If younger people aren't encouraged to live and work in the area, the village will become a ghost town!
- Short lease/part-owned possibilities to allow young people to afford houses here.
- Affordable housing is very important to enable Parracombe to survive as a community – we need a balance of young and old.
- There is a need to encourage young families to move into the area in order to balance an ageing population.
- Young people who have been brought up in Parracombe and whose families still work and live in Parracombe, i.e. farming.
- A small number of new homes would be desirable, but if you want to address the issue of affordable homes for local people, I suggest you look at who many unused/for sale/empty properties are already existing in Parracombe.
- It would be OK as long as it would be within the development boundary and not as the scheme you are referring to, which is on open farmland and a ploy to develop a non-affordable private house.
- Needs to remain unspoilt

- There is a nice balance of new and old properties in Parracombe. I do not believe that there is a need for further affordable housing. It would spoil the character of this Exmoor village. Lynton would be a more suitable venue.
- We were told a few years ago that there would be no permission to build new homes in Parracombe.
- There are many houses in the parish empty for a large part of the year (holiday homes and houses owned by people who do not use them). Government should legislate to bring them into use if a housing need is proven. Council houses in Bodley Lane are in some cases let to families from other parts of the country. Local councils should be required to let village housing stock to families working in the local community before letting to others from other parts of the country.
- I do not perceive a local housing need that cannot be met with the existing housing stock. Dilapidated existing housing should be renovated.
- It would change the character of the village and even a few extra homes would lead to a considerable increase of traffic through our tranquil village.
- Only if access is suitable, e.g. not Bodley, Churchtown, central village, Prisonford.
- Local people are not considered for NDH properties and people from Barnstaple, Croydon, Bratton Fleming are moved into empty properties. Family members are also excluded because of internal layouts of properties; no 2 bed accommodation available.
- NDH properties should be passed to the Parish Council who would then rent to “local” family members that require a first step to renting or owning property. Any affordable housing should, when built, be passed to the Parish Council to set up a housing association for local occupation.
- One of the charms of Parracombe is its unspoilt nature. I am against any form of development in this conservation area and national park. First time buyers can’t afford to buy a house in Parracombe. This is due to a problem with the housing market, not availability of property. A number of houses in the village are holiday homes when they could be used for locals. Also our remoteness deters a lot of would-be buyers especially with rising fuel/commuting process.

Suggestions re. Community Developments

- Not a weir!
- Urgent rebuilding of Parracombe Primary School
- Rebuilding the Lynton to Barnstaple Railway
- L & B railway creating employment opportunities
- Community hall owned by village to include sports hall and youth-useable facilities.
- Improved village hall with space for learning, sport, meetings, education.
- Would love to see our burnt-out school rebuilt.
- Space for the youth to meet on rainy days.
- The school to be repaired before it falls down.
- Employment opportunities should be encouraged, provided they can be housed in discreet buildings in keeping with the beauty and peace of the Exmoor landscape.
- A car park and garages in field below the church together with village compost heap, orchard forest garden, allotments and youth meeting venue. Cars could then be kept off the road through the village and the village garden waste would be kept in the village.
- We have lots of “open space”. Of course, employment opportunities would be wonderful for those out of work.
- Employment opportunities actually in and around the village.
- Better public transport to Ilfracombe.

- Parking provision for local households. (Parracombe was built in an age when cars did not exist!) – a village car park for residents and visitors.
- A village hall which is not controlled by the Buffs. But don't get me started!

Site Suggestions

- Empty property in centre of village opposite stores.
- On Church Glebe
- Continue more recent development on road to Minniemoor Cross where there is access to Rowley Cross and main road.
- On the Heale Road [Pencombe Rocks] out of Parracombe – continue on from existing houses.



- Red window-silled house opposite shop – unoccupied – could be converted.
- Land up the lane towards Heale
- Not down Bodley Lane due to access problems at Bodley Cross and number of cars already using it.
- Pencombe Rocks site.
- Empty farm buildings in Bodley Lane?
- Unused cottage opposite the Post Office.
- Any development should be within the current village, e.g. opposite existing housing, not extending the ribbon development.
- There is a crumbling stone barn on Tor Path that could be converted.
- Fields on the Heale road, beyond Pencombe GR SS 666448
- Ground between council houses and East Bodley Farm
- Adjoining land next to Christchurch, Church Road
- Land opposite church
- The church field would be a very good site for a small development of energy-efficient Earth Ship style houses.





RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

October 2012

Dear Resident

Housing for Local People in Parracombe Parish

The Rural Housing Project is an independent project whose role is to support the provision of rural homes for local people across North Devon and West Somerset, where there is a proven need for them.

We have been asked to assess the housing requirements of Parracombe parish, to gauge the need for a small new development. This could be for affordable rented, low cost home ownership, or people needing open market housing but who cannot find anything suitable/affordable locally, but will only be for those with a strong local connection.

Enclosed is a simple survey form. Everyone is asked to complete this and post the form back to us by the end of October. This will help identify whether there would be support for such a scheme.

Those needing housing in the next ten years should also complete the enclosed questionnaire so that we can assess housing requirements more fully. If you know someone who has lived locally before, has had to move away but would like to return, please encourage them to get in touch with us and we will send them a form too. Information we receive is treated in confidence and will only be used to help people get the housing they need.

Once the information is analysed, we will use the findings to determine the level of housing need and we will report back to the Parish Council.

If you need to know more, please do get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Colin Savage

Rural Housing Enabler

PARRACOMBE

Housing Options

Any affordable housing provided would only be available to people able to demonstrate strong local connection to the parish or adjoining rural parishes.

- **Affordable rented housing:** This would probably be built and managed by a housing association, to high space and environmental performance standards. Tenancies would be more secure and rents would be lower than private sector rents.
- **Shared ownership homes:** These could also be built by a housing association, if there is sufficient proven demand. People with strong local connection would be able to buy a part share in the property, and would pay a lower than usual rent on the remainder.
- **Self build:** If there is an identified need for local people who cannot afford open market housing but could afford the cost of building a home, it may be possible to provide plots for building.

Low cost home ownership can only be provided if there is sufficient proven need for it. If you are interested in shared ownership or self build, it is crucial that you complete and return the survey form. People need to have a reasonable income, a deposit, and be able to get a mortgage to be able to buy this type of housing.



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

HOUSING & COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY PARRACOMBE, NORTH DEVON

EVERY HOUSEHOLD PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

① In your opinion, who do you think is in greatest need of a new home in the parish? (Please tick)			
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	

② 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:

③ Is there any other development you would like to see in your community?
(e.g. open space, community buildings, employment opportunities)

④ Can you suggest a site where a small development could be built, or building/s that could be converted for affordable housing?

Name	Post code
------	-----------

Thank you for completing this survey. An envelope has been provided for its return. Please also complete the enclosed questionnaire if you or someone in your household will be likely to need to move in the next ten years.



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

HOUSING NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE

PARRACOMBE

The purpose of this survey is to identify local housing requirements for people in all tenures – rented, owner-occupied, self-build etc.

To be completed by those likely to need a new home locally in the next ten years.
Please complete all sections.

1. HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

a.

Your present home is: <i>(please tick)</i>		Type of home you need: <i>(please tick 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>	

b.

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

CONTACT DETAILS

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number/s:

E-mail address:

Date form completed:

1. WHO NEEDS HOUSING?

Please provide the following information for all members of the household who will need to move:

Relationship to you <i>(e.g. wife, partner, son)</i>	Age <i>(at September 2012)</i>	Male/Female <i>(M/F)</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	
q) 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	
e) 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	2nd	3rd
<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Reasons</u>	<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 3 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 detail:

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).

Less than £20,000 per annum	<input checked="" 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"/>

If you are interested in purchasing a property, 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?

Yes	<input checked="" 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

Exmoor House, Dulverton. TA22 9HL

① 01398 322249 cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk