



## RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

### HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

# SAMPFORD BRETT

## West Somerset

August 2012



## **RURAL HOUSING PROJECT**

**Exmoor, North Devon & West Somerset**

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



*Colin Savage, Rural Housing Enabler*

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

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

# SAMPFORD BRETT PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

## Introduction



**Sampford Brett** is a village and civil parish situated at the north-western edge of the Quantock Hills, Somerset, less than 1 mile south of Williton, just off the A358 road to Taunton.<sup>1</sup> The parish includes part of Tower Hill in Williton and some addresses in Weacombe. Sampford Brett has a long history as an agricultural centre. Two farms operate within the village, and the settlement is bounded on every side by agricultural

land. Opportunities for the provision of additional employment are scarce, and residents of working age generally look to Williton and beyond for employment. The school closed in 1933, followed by the general store/post office and public house. The remaining facilities include St. George's Church, the village hall and filling station/repairs garage on the A358. The limited range of facilities in Sampford Brett is countered to a certain extent by the village's proximity to Williton, a recognised Rural Centre.

## Background demographics

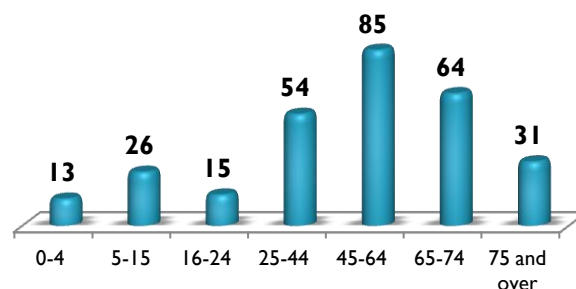
Sampford Brett is considered to be a “Small Village” in planning terms.<sup>2</sup> Between 1960 and 1974 Brett Close and Croft Meadows were constructed, since which time there has been further limited growth in the form of infilling.

Under Policy SP4 of the West Somerset District Local Plan (2006), development in Small Villages like Sampford Brett is limited to that which:

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

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

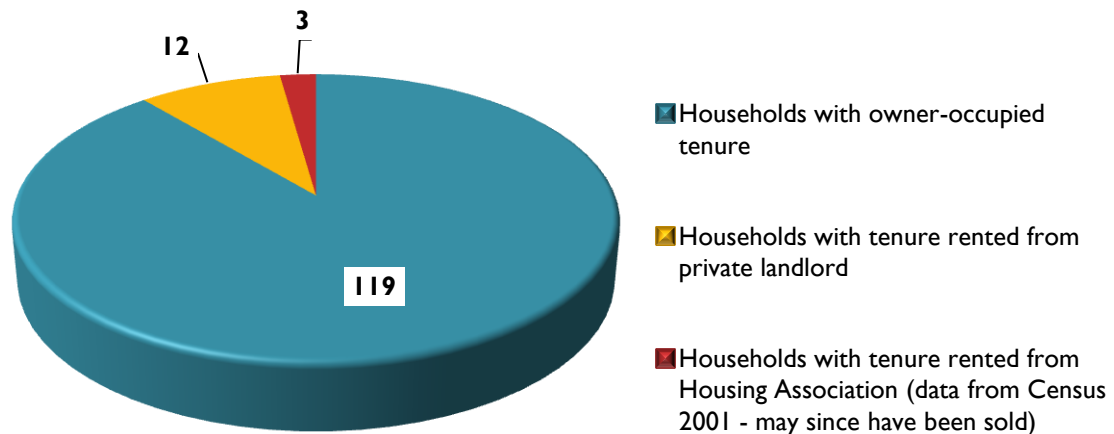
At the 2001 Census the population of Sampford Brett Parish was 288 with age breakdown as follows:-



<sup>1</sup> Text from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

<sup>2</sup> Policy SP1 – West Somerset District Local Plan 2006

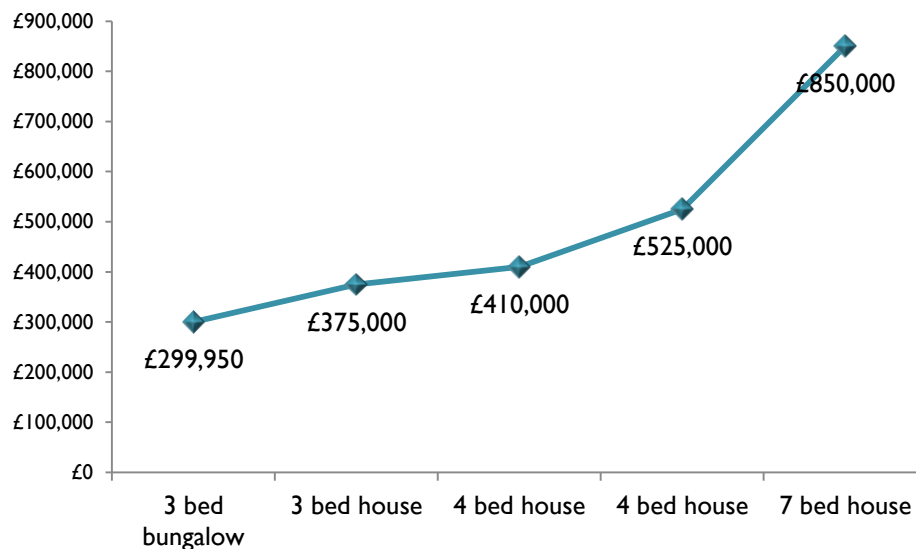
The vast majority of homes in Sampford Brett are owner-occupied, as follows:



### Local House Prices

Houses in Somerset cost on average nine times more than the average wage, this is more than the rest of the UK where houses cost seven times more.<sup>3</sup> West Somerset is the most expensive place to live in Somerset with houses costing on average 18% more than the rest of Somerset.

As at the end of August 2012 there were five residential properties for sale or under offer in Sampford Brett. All of the available properties had asking prices of £299,950 or above, putting them well out of the reach of many would-be home owners:

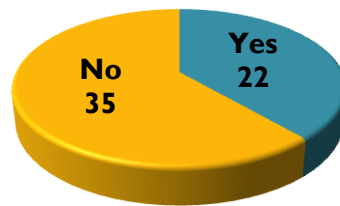


### The Survey

Following discussions with Sampford Brett Parish Council and with their agreement, survey forms were sent to all households in the parish along with a covering letter from the Rural Housing Enabler, Colin Savage. (Copies are appended to this report.) 44% of surveys were returned.

<sup>3</sup> Somerset County Council Economic Digest March 2009

In answer to the first question - whether people would be in favour of a small number of new homes being provided to help meet the proven housing needs of local people in the parish – more than half answered “no”, they would not be in favour:



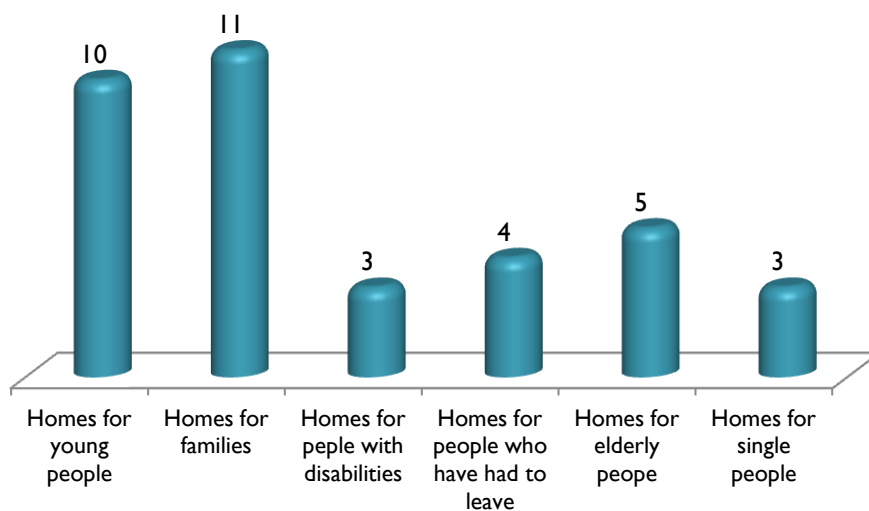
Comments were invited on two further issues:

- Whether there is any other form of development people would like to see in their community, e.g. open space, community buildings, employment opportunities.
- Suggestions for a site where a small development could be built, or building/s that could be converted for affordable housing.

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

### Perception of Housing Need

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



Of the 57 returns, four households completed Part Two, indicating that they were likely to move home locally in the next five years:

- One family finding present accommodation too expensive
- One couple looking to set up their first independent home, first choice of location being Sampford Brett
- One couple expecting first child and living in privately rented accommodation in poor condition and too expensive, first choice of location being Sampford Brett
- One older, single person wishing to remain in Sampford Brett but in a smaller property with no stairs.

## **Rural Housing Enabler's Comments and Recommendations**

The four replies to the second part of the survey indicate three households in affordable housing need, wanting to remain living in the village, and one owner occupier wanting a smaller home to purchase. The three households needing affordable housing are all families with children already living locally. On the basis of this identified need, I would recommend two new affordable homes be provided, one two bedroomed/four person, the other a three bedroomed/five person home. All three households require rented housing.

A small development such as this is unlikely to be viable on its own. If it is to occur, it is likely to need some open market housing in order to cross-subsidise it.

In the first part of the survey, thirty five households said they were not in favour of new affordable housing. Twenty two respondents supported the idea if there was a proven need. This is an unusual response, as with most such surveys the vast majority of respondents support the provision of housing where there is a proven need. Many respondents added comments to this question. Of those in favour, a significant number mentioned the need to retain younger people. Of those who answered "No" to this question, many focused on concerns about the roads and service infrastructure, and clearly these issues would have to be taken into account before any proposals were brought forward.

Another question related to other developments which might benefit the village. Replacing or modernising the village hall was mentioned by several respondents, as was open space within the village. Some would like to see a village shop. If any such developments are to take place, significant funding will be required, and one opportunity would be through the provision of open market housing or other commercial development.

The community will need to come to a balanced judgement as to whether the benefits of helping local people to remain living in the village, or the provision or retention of community facilities such as the village hall or new open space, are important enough to encourage the development of some open market housing which is the most likely way these things could be funded.

Several constructive suggestions were made as to possible locations for a small housing scheme. The Rural Housing Project would welcome the opportunity to consider these with the parish council, but could otherwise consider these independently and report back.

**Colin Savage**

Rural Housing Enabler

*September 2012*

## **SAMPFORD BRETT COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Comments from those who answered “Yes” to a small number of new homes being provided to help meet the housing needs of local people in the parish, if the need is proven:-**

- Young people need to have the opportunity to be able to afford to stay in a village where they were brought up and houses for young families available to keep villages “alive”.
- New houses for prospective buyers would enhance the social and economic structure of the community as opposed to allowing stagnation.
- To bring younger people into the village encouraging their participation and livening the place up.
- Yes, BUT only if need is really proven.
- Must be in a suitable location and not used as an excuse (justification) for new commercial housing.
- As people age they require the opportunity to downsize whilst staying within a community they enjoy. There are currently no cheap starter homes for young families who grew up here.
- But not “executive houses”. Houses would need to be complementary to a partially listed village, and notice needs to be taken to the fact there is no shop, post office, public house or conveniences in the village and also road access/egress is very narrow and limited.
- I answered yes for younger people who cannot afford to buy in Sampford Brett.
- If necessary, small and few.
- This village is dying. There are no young people to keep it running. The present residents are old and frail. Young people cannot afford the houses there are.
- Help balance the community in the village – too many of us “elderly”.
- In-filling only
- The existing village/parish infrastructure is not suitable to support large numbers of new homes without upgrade of utility systems. Therefore by answering “yes”, any new homes would be restricted to “in fill” sites only.

### **Comments from those who answered “No” to a small number of new homes being provided to help meet the housing needs of local people in the parish, if the need is proven:-**

- Further development would risk spread towards Williton and ultimate merging.
- Roads, sewerage, drains can’t support more housing.
- Existing properties (several affordable) are taking a long time to sell; is there really a need for more? Likewise in Williton – Smithy Close should be for affordable ownership, not speculative letting (see enclosed advert from Free Press 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012).
- Sampford Brett has been extensively extended with small bungalows which look as though they were built in the 60s and 70s. These provide a need for people relocating to smaller homes in their retirement or for families needing a small home. The increase in traffic and further pressure on an already overloaded sewage system and add no benefit to the village.
- Lack of infrastructure; inadequate roads and access.
- There are no facilities in Sampford Brett e.g. shop, post office, school, public house or public transport, therefore increased use of cars or other private transport would be necessary, on narrow single track roads. There are several properties on the market of varying value, which have been for sale for many months.
- This is mainly a retirement village with no amenities such as school, pub or shop. I feel its rural qualities need to be preserved.

- Plenty of houses for sale in the parish, some have been for sale for a long time.
- The village is predominantly a retirement village and “affordable” housing would change the nature of the village.
- Selfishly, Sampford Brett has been allowed to stay as a separate parish from Williton. New houses are to be permitted in Williton which can meet housing needs of local people.
- If, as now there are properties on the market why does Sampford Brett need more homes? Sampford Brett is the last place to build new homes. In the event of that happening no doubt there would be children but where would they go in their leisure time? For the teenagers S.B. would be the most boring place on Earth. I have lived here for twelve years and cannot think of any reason why a family would want to move here when there is no pub, no shop no club of any sort other than the gardening club. S.B. is peopled with elderly, and retired people who moved here for that reason. Think! Sampford Brett has no entertainment venue. Williton has one public open space. Well!
- The village itself is not a good place for homes. They would generate traffic. There is no shop, no pub and all needs have to be brought in.
- Can’t see the need for any new homes. This is more of a hamlet with very limited facilities.
- The village is lived in by mainly older people and quiet reigns. Quiet is most important to my wellbeing, that is why I live here.
- No local amenities are available in village. No street lighting, no gas, no shop.
- Sampford Brett is too small to support much more housing – any homes built should be for ordinary folk not affordable housing as this policy is skewing the local population – see Williton!
- I believe there are enough homes in the village to cater for existing and incoming people. Indeed the homes currently for sale have been on the market and unsold for a considerable period of time.
- There are several properties of various sizes and prices that have been for sale for many months, and some for years!
- Not a very suitable location for further development
- No suitable land available for building within the main area of the village where there already are properties, which often remain unsold for lengthy periods.
- A very recent enquiry to build homes in the village was refused by all concerned.
- No available space within building line. Utilities – water supply, sewerage etc. already overstretched.
- There is no need for more houses in Sampford Brett
- The nearest shops and schools are at least a mile away. Unless you have private income Sampford Brett is very unsuitable.
- Sampford Brett is a rural community and thus does NOT require any additional housing!
- There are currently at least six properties for sale in the village, all of which have been on the market for over 12 months.
- Sampford Brett has no facilities and the infrastructure is inadequate for further property.
- I moved here in 1970. Throughout the 70s and 80s there was rarely a property on the market. In the last 10-15 years there are always properties for sale, sometimes as many as 11 at the same time. A few have been on the market for years. There are very few “local people” in Sampford Brett. The incomers are mostly nearing retirement or retired. There are very few local jobs, and there has been a large increase in traffic both in and through the village. Further development would not be in keeping with the character of a small village.



- No further homes are needed in this village. There are currently homes of all sizes for sale in the village, some of which have been on the market for over 2 years – therefore clearly no need for expansion.
- This village has only 2 tiny lanes that cannot be upgraded to support more cars (the only viable transport solution in such a rural area).

### **Community Development Suggestions**

- Local shop
- Replacement of ageing village hall
- New village hall with community rooms for e.g. visiting chiropodists etc.
- Bus service into the village
- Our village hall is reaching the end of its life and badly needs help. Also we have no ground suitable for sports, play or leisure pursuits with adequate car parking.
- Anything to bring some life to the place.
- Play area
- Open space
- Upgrade of existing community building (village hall)
- Development of the shop at the garage on the A358
- Community orchard
- Bus shelter on A358 (opp. Quantock Garage)
- Village green
- Small village shop needed
- Open space areas within village
- Stand alone PV community generator; small wind turbine.
- Bus stop signs are needed on the A358, with timetables, and a bus shelter. The Coleridge Way and MacMillan Way West go through the village.
- A broadband connection to enable residents to use the two laptops which were given to Sampford Brett.
- The development of a wildlife area and encouragement and provision for wildlife in the parish, e.g. the churchyard, farm buildings and land and boxes for birds, bats, owls etc.
- Any kind of development to get people out of their boxes, driving around in boxes and watching their boxes.
- A cycle way to Williton. The little used pavement could have shared use and kept free of brambles and stinging nettles so it can be used in summer.
- The whole of West Somerset is stifled by its two main roads being barely better than cart tracks. Two service vehicles cannot pass on most of their length.

### **Site Suggestions**

- A recent application was made on land in Sampford Brett. This site would be perfect for housing both (as proposed) for private and social housing.
- No, that's the problem
- None easy to identify
- Orchard opposite present village hall, built on a raft to lift it above the flood plain
- Farm barns?
- The field beside the tithe barn
- Convert church into homes.
- Small development in field at top of Rocks.
- Watchet and Williton!



## RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

24 July 2012

Dear Sir or Madam

### **HOUSING IN SAMPFORD BRETT PARISH**

Enclosed with this letter is a survey form which we are hoping you will complete and return, so that we can gauge the needs of people in Sampford Brett parish regarding where they live or would like to live.

We would be grateful if every household could complete and return page one of the survey. If you are looking for somewhere to rent or to buy in the next five years, please also complete the rest of the form; it will help us to identify all those requiring different housing, and how we might best help them. Elsewhere in West Somerset and Exmoor we have supported the delivery of housing through new build schemes with housing associations, conversion of empty/redundant buildings and new, self-build schemes. We will look at all options, and welcome your suggestions as to what might be appropriate in your parish.

Sampford Brett Parish Council is fully supportive of our undertaking this survey and will be very interested in the outcome.

Please post your completed survey – page 1 or the whole form - back to us before 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

*Colin Savage*

**COLIN SAVAGE**

Rural Housing Enabler

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**RURAL HOUSING PROJECT**  
EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

## HOUSING & COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY SAMPFORD BRETT, WEST SOMERSET

The purpose of this survey is to identify local housing requirements for people in all tenures - rented and owner-occupied – and to identify other issues that people would like to see resolved.

### SECTION 1 – EVERY HOUSEHOLD PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

In your opinion, who do you think is in greatest need of a new home in the parish?

Homes for young people		Homes for elderly people	
Homes for families		Homes for single people	
Homes for people with disabilities		No further homes are needed	
Homes for people who have had to leave		Other, please specify	

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

Yes  No

Please briefly explain your views:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**1. WHO NEEDS HOUSING?**

Please provide the following information for everyone who will need to move with you:

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

**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, etc.*)

1 <sup>st</sup> Choice Parish/Village	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice Parish/Village	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice Parish/Village
<u>Reason</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Reason</u>

We may need evidence to support your local connection.

**b. Long Term Residence**

Housing may be provided for people with long term residence or for those needing to live close to someone who has lived locally for a long time.

**Please provide all addresses and dates of residence for the people who have lived locally during the last 20 years:**

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

*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

**c. Employment**

Do you need to live locally because of work commitments?	<b>Yes / No</b>
Please describe the nature of that work and why you need to live nearby:	
Where is your place of work?	Post code:

**d. Are age, health issues, or disabilities likely to affect your housing needs?**

**Yes / No**

**If not please go to (e). If yes, please answer the questions below:**

Please describe the age, health issues or disabilities that affect your housing needs:	
Could you remain in your present home if alterations, adaptations or support were provided?	<b>Yes / No</b> If Yes, describe what changes would be needed
Do you want housing which is more adaptable to your changing needs?	<b>Yes / No</b> Please describe what you would be looking for  If so, would you want to rent or buy?
Do you need sheltered housing?	<b>Yes / No</b> If so, would you want to rent or buy?
Do you need extra care housing?	<b>Yes / No</b> If so, would you want to rent or buy?
Do you need care and support in your own home?	<b>Yes / No</b> If so, is there someone who can provide this for you?
Is the housing, care or support you have identified above available in the locality in which you want to live?	<b>Yes / No</b>
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?	<b>Yes / No</b> Please state their relationship to you  <u>and</u> 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 have any other relevant local connection to the area?** **Yes / No**  
If so please explain:

### 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.

**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):

£.....

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### 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?**

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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:  
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☎ 01398 322249      cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk*

