

# Parish of Meeth Housing Needs Report



**Produced by: Devon Communities Together**

**On behalf of: Meeth Parish Council**

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# 1 Executive Summary

## Principal Conclusions

The survey identified a need for 2 affordable homes within the next 5 years.

## Key findings

### Affordability

- The survey identified 2 households in housing need who could not afford to buy or rent in the open market.

### Tenure

- 1 of the households in need qualified for affordable rent, 1 may be able to afford a shared ownership property.

### Size of Property Required

- Both households require a 1 or 2 bedroom property

## Other Findings

- 74 surveys were delivered and 13 forms were returned. The response rate was 17.5%.
- 8 of those who answered the question said they would be in favour of a small development of affordable housing for local people. 2 would not be in favour. It should be noted that 3 households did not answer this question.

## 2. Aims of the Survey

- To investigate the housing need, tenure and size of homes required for local people living or working in the parish and those wishing to return.
- To establish the general level of support for new homes in the parish with an emphasis on homes for local people with housing needs.
- To establish the views of the whole community on future housing in the parish.
- To assist the Parish Council and District Council with future planning for the parish.

## 3. Survey history, methodology and response

### 3.1 History

As part of their Neighbourhood Planning process, Meeth Parish Council decided to carry out a survey to assess future local housing need and commissioned Devon Communities Together to undertake this work. Survey forms were finalised and 74 forms were posted out to every household in the parish. Parishioners were able to return the survey in a reply paid envelope. The deadline for the return of the survey was 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018.

### 3.2 Methodology

The survey was carried out using a standard methodology approved by local planners. Background notes on the methodology can be obtained from the Rural Housing Enabler.

The survey form was in 3 parts. The first section asked a limited number of questions about the type of household and their support for affordable housing. All residents were invited to respond to this part of the survey. The second section was aimed at parishioners aged over 55 to gauge the specific needs of older residents. The third part of the survey was designed to be completed by households who intend to move home within the next 5 years and wish to remain living in the parish. Both those who have an affordable housing need and those who wish to buy on the open market were invited to complete this section of the form. A reminder was also sent to those on the Devon Home Choice register who did not complete a survey form.

### 3.3 Response

- 13 surveys were returned, which is a response rate of 17.5% of all dwellings surveyed. This is a low response rate. The usual response rate averages around 25%.
- Out of the 13 returned surveys, 2 were returned with Part 3 completed.

It should be noted that whilst apparent inconsistencies in responses are followed up, the information given is taken at face value.

## 4. Introduction and Information about Meeth

### 4.1 Overview of Meeth

Meeth is a small rural parish in the West Devon area, lying on the A386 main road between Torrington and Hatherleigh. The village is located in the east of the parish on an elevated site and lies on the Tarka Trail.

Amenities include a parish church, village hall, Post Office and public house and there is a nature reserve located at the former Meeth Quarry. There is little employment in Meeth, apart from agricultural work. There is also a coach company that provides employment.

There is one organisation within the village, Meeth Guild, which meets once a month. There are also various one-off events held in the village hall throughout the year.

Transport links are fairly good with the main road running through the village and two regular bus services which link the village to the larger settlements of Great Torrington and Okehampton (all year round) and Tavistock and Barnstaple (summer only). These services do not run on Sundays.

#### 4.2 Population Figures

In the 2011 Census the usually resident population of Meeth was recorded as 167 in 74 households. The Census also records that there were 4 dwellings which were empty properties, second homes or holiday lets.

#### 4.3 Type of Accommodation

In the 2011 Census the types of accommodation in the parish were broken down as in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Detached house/bungalow	Semi-detached house/bungalow	Terraced house/bungalow	Flat	Caravan / mobile home	Total
38	24	5	2	0	69

#### 4.4 Bedroom numbers

In the 2011 Census the number of bedrooms per dwelling was broken down as in Table 2 below.<sup>1</sup> The majority of homes have 2 or 3 bedrooms with few smaller 1 bedroom properties.

Table 2

1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5 or more	Total
1	14	31	18	5	69

When viewed together these tables show that there is a lack of smaller, cheaper accommodation in the parish with detached properties of 3 bedrooms plus being the most prolific.

#### 4.5 Property Prices and Rent

In the last 2 years the Land Registry has recorded only 2 property sales in the parish. These were sold for £695,000 and £415,000.

There are currently 4 property listings on the Rightmove website. The cheapest house on the market at the moment is a 3 bedroom property for £190,000. The other 3 homes for sale are all over £385,000.<sup>2</sup>

To assess whether a household can afford to buy in the open market we usually look at the cost of an entry level property in the local market. This is done by comparing information on recent

<sup>1</sup> This data only gives details for 69 dwellings, this is because data for empty homes is not included.

<sup>2</sup> Data correct as of 4/6/18

house sales and homes currently on the open market. Average rents are identified by comparing local private rents gained from the housing need survey with rents of properties currently on the market. From this information, we can establish typical rents to assess affordability. However, as so few properties have been sold or rented in the village, data has been estimated using figures from other nearby rural parishes and previous surveys. The figures used to assess affordability are set out in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

Size	Property price	Weekly rent
1 bedroom	£180,000	£150
2 bedroom	£250,000	£170
3 bedroom	£300,000	£200

There are currently 4 housing association owned properties in Meeth.

1 affordable home has been let in the last 2 years. Therefore lettings of current affordable housing stock are limited.

## **5. General Survey Findings**

### **5.1 In favour of a small local development**

Respondents were asked if they would be in favour of a small number of homes for local people being built if the need for affordable housing were proven. 8 of those answering the question said they would be in favour. 2 said they were against any development. It should be noted that 3 households did not respond to this question.

### **5.2 Site suggestions and general comments**

7 individuals made suggestions for possible housing sites within the parish or made more general comments about housing in the parish. These suggestions and comments will be made available to the Parish Council on a separate document.

### **5.3 Knowledge of those who have left parish in last 5 years**

Respondents were asked if they knew of anybody who had had to leave the parish in the last 5 years due to lack of suitable housing.

- No households knew of anyone

### **5.4 Current tenure**

All the respondents provided details on their current tenure. 11 own their own home and 2 live with relatives.

### **5.5 Main or second home**

None of the respondents was a second home owner.

### **5.6 Parish of Residence**

All respondents lived in Meeth parish.

### **5.7 Number of bedrooms in current home**

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their current home has. The replies are shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

Number of bedrooms	1	2	3	4+
	0	1	3	9

The vast majority of the respondents live in large properties of 4 bedrooms or more.

### **5.8 Future plans**

Respondents were asked whether they intended to move home within the next 5 years. If they answered Yes to this question they were asked to complete Part 3 of the form.

- 2 households stated they did intend to move within the next 5 years and completed Part 3 of the form.

### **5.9 Community Land Trusts (CLTs)**

Respondents were asked whether they would consider becoming a member of a CLT.

- 1 household showed an interest and left contact details.

## **6. Housing needs and aspirations of older residents**

Part 2 of the questionnaire was directed at residents over the age of 55. The number of people over the age of 55 is set to rise significantly across the UK over the next 20 years. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics published population projections for the next 20 years. These figures show that by 2034 the percentage of people over the age of 55 will have increased by 23% across Devon and by 27% in West Devon during that period.

11 people answered Part 2 of the survey from 7 households with at least one member over the age of 55. This is 54% of the total number of households who responded to the survey.

### **6.1 Age of Respondents to Part 2 survey**

Respondents were asked to give their age in 10 year bands. As can be seen in Table 5 below, the majority of those who replied (73%) were aged between 55 and 75.

**Table 5**

Age Group	55-65	66-75	76-85	Over 85
Number	4	4	1	2

### **6.2 Future Housing Plans**

Households were asked about their future housing plans.

- 1 household plans to move within the next 5 years but wishes to move away from Devon.
- The other 6 have no plans to move at the moment.

### **6.3 Adaptability of current home**

Respondents were asked if their current home was adaptable to meet changing needs.

- All 7 households felt that their home was adaptable

#### 6.4 Type of Accommodation preferred by older persons

Older households were asked what type of accommodation they may need in the future. Only 1 household replied and would prefer a home which better suits, but is not specifically designed for, older people.

#### 6.5 Considerations when choosing next home

Households were asked to list the most important considerations when choosing a new home. Again only 1 household replied. They wished to downsize to a smaller, more manageable home which was closer to public transport and was on 1 level for mobility reasons.

#### 6.6 Conclusion - Older Persons Needs

No need was established for older persons' housing in the village.

### 7. Assessment of those needing affordable housing

Part 3 of the survey was aimed at those who expect to need to move home within the next 5 years and remain in Meeth. It asked questions regarding size and make-up of the new household, local connection and financial circumstances. This information helps to identify the number of households that are eligible for both open market and affordable housing in the parish and the size, tenure and type of homes required.

#### 7.1 Respondents

2 households indicated a need to move within the parish in the next 5 years and completed Part 3 of the survey. Both meet the criteria for affordable housing and would be eligible for a 1 or 2 bedroom property.

#### 7.2 Housing tenure

Respondents were asked what type of accommodation they would consider moving to. The results are shown in table 6 below. Respondents could choose more than one option.

Table 6

Shared ownership/ equity	Affordable/Social rent	Self-build	Discounted market	Rent to buy	Open market
0	0	2	2	0	1

#### 7.3 Reasons for moving

Respondents were asked why they wished to move home. Both will be leaving home and cannot afford to buy or rent privately.

#### 7.4 Local Connection

In order to qualify for affordable housing, respondents must have a local connection to Meeth. Local connection criteria are set out by West Devon Borough Council and are detailed below:-

- A member of the household currently resident in the parish for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years where this has been out of choice or:
- Those people who have permanent work in the parish or:

- A member of the household has family connections in the parish (immediate family who have themselves lived in the parish for at least 5 years) or:
- Other strong local connection with the parish for example by upbringing

Both of the respondents have this connection.

### 7.5 Tenure required

Both showed an interest in purchasing their own home. 1 may be able to afford a shared ownership property but the other would only be eligible for an affordable rented property.

### 7.6 Other evidence of housing need

As well as this survey other evidence of housing need should be considered. The housing waiting list or register for Devon is called Devon Home Choice. Applicants are given a banding from A to E depending on their level of need. There is 1 household resident in the parish registered on Devon Home Choice. This household requires a 1 bedroom property.

The household who is registered on Devon Home Choice did not complete the survey. They were contacted separately by letter but no reply was received therefore they will not be added to the survey figures.

### 7.7 Previous survey

A Parish Councillor previously carried out a short survey in Meeth to establish the interest in discount market homes and received 4 replies. These have been passed on to Devon Communities Together to be included in this survey. 1 of these respondents was included in the figures for our survey. No income or local connection details were provided for the other respondents so it is not possible to judge whether any of these households qualify for affordable housing. They were contacted by letter and given the chance to complete the survey but did not do so therefore cannot be included in any affordable housing need figures for the parish, leaving the need at 2 affordable homes.

### 7.10 Housing Mix

The suggested mix of housing is shown in Table 8 below. This takes account of the family makeup as declared on the survey form and the type of housing required.

Table 8

Type of Property	Affordable Rent	Shared ownership	Totals
1 or 2 bedroom property for single people	1	1	2

## 8. Conclusion - Future Housing Need for Meeth

Overall, it must be remembered that this Housing Needs Survey represents a snapshot in time. Personal circumstances are constantly evolving. Any provision of affordable housing, would, by necessity, need to take account of this. The survey has identified a need in the near future for 2 units of affordable housing. As this is a very low number, it may not be possible to attract a housing association to build and manage the homes due to financial viability issues. There may be the possibility of building affordable self-build units which both respondents indicated an interest in. Self-build units can be built individually on small sites and do not require a housing association. However, raising a mortgage on a self-build property can be problematic.

Should the Parish Council wish to address the identified housing need, the Rural Housing Enablers are available to help identify potential sites, conduct site appraisals and facilitate the process of identifying potential development partners as well as any other ongoing assistance that may be required.

As the needs of households are constantly evolving the level and mix of need in this report should be taken as a guide. In particular it may be appropriate to vary the mix of sizes provided. This report remains appropriate evidence of need for up to five years. However if there is a significant development of affordable housing in the parish which is subject to a local connection requirement and substantially meets the need identified in the report it will normally be necessary to re-survey the parish before any further development to address local needs is considered.

### **Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the Parish Council:**

- **Note this report**
- **Consider the options for addressing the need for 2 affordable homes.**