

SILK WILLOUGHBY
NORTH KESTEVEN

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

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Housing Needs Survey Report

Silk Willoughby

Silk Willoughby is a quiet rural village with a population of about 320 situated one mile east of the A15 and approximately two miles from the market town of Sleaford.

The focal points of the village are the 14th century church, the Village Hall, which is a well renovated former small school dating back to 1858 and the village public house, The Horseshoes.

The Village Hall is the main social venue for the village with regular events including; Social mornings, Whist drives, WEA classes and Bridge club. Silk Willoughby is also fortunate to still have a village Post Office, which operates out of the Village Hall.

The Church building itself is a major part of the life of the whole village and stands as a monument to all those who have worked, ministered and worshipped there over the years. It is also a beautiful place of space and tranquillity, open to all during the day for anyone who seeks a few moments of peace and quiet. The church continues to serve the community today.

Between 2004 and 2008 there was an average of 3 or 4 property sales in Silk Willoughby per year. During the same period the average property price rose by only 1% and lower quartile house prices actually fell by 2%. However at the peak of the property market in 2007, average and lower quartile prices were 17% and 19% more expensive respectively than in 2004¹. In 2008, the average property cost £163,500 which was over 9 times the average wage for the district of £17,115².

In November 2009, North Kesteven District Council felt that there may be a need for some affordable homes for villagers and asked the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) from Community Lincs to conduct a Housing Needs Survey to establish whether a scheme was required.

This report is a summary of the information gathered through that survey.

¹ Land registry data from <http://www.dashservices.org.uk/Shared-Services/HI4EM>

² ASHE data from www.statistics.gov.uk

The Housing Needs Survey

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 1: Affordable Housing

Distribution and Response

Survey forms were provided by the RHE and delivered to every household in the parish by volunteers from the Parish Council. They were returned by Freepost or via the collection box in The Horseshoes Public House with a deadline set for return by the 18th December. All parishioners were given the opportunity to respond.

It is to be expected that the majority of people living in the area are well housed and would not necessarily respond to any survey seeking information about housing needs.

In the experience of the Rural Housing Enabler, the majority of responses in any survey of this kind come from:

- People who feel themselves to be in need of housing now or in the near future
- Their relatives
- People involved in some way in community affairs who probably have an appreciation of the problems affecting the community as a whole, even if they are not in housing need
- People who feel strongly that there should not be any more development in the village

Of the 140 questionnaires distributed, 18 (12.9%) completed or partially completed forms were returned.

Support and Opposition

The survey asked parishioners whether or not they would support a small scheme of affordable housing for local people in the parish. The responses were very mixed with **8 households (44.4%) in favour of a scheme and 8 households (44.4%) not in favour**. 1.1% of responding households did not give a definitive answer.

Respondents' Comments

Some households used the additional space provided to make comments on the issue of affordable housing provision. Below are the comments taken from the survey:-

- We have good plot at the rear of our house. If Silk Willoughby was not a third tier village and planning would play ball, we could build a bungalow freeing up a 3 bedroom house in the village!

- While I understand the need for affordable housing, I also feel that too many small hamlets are being gobbled up by the town. Both Quarrington and Holdingham are now joined to town losing their identity. Affordable housing for local people is great but can you assure me it would be for local people, I think not. For this reason I have an issue with the whole affordable housing scheme.
- There is no work in the village therefore it is possibly better for young people to move where the work is and again a wider view of lifes experiences away from the family home as our six children have done and all have benefitted.
- If new housing is built in the village, it should not be saved for local families. It should be available for all to enable new blood & genes to come into the village community!

Suggested sites

Respondents were given the opportunity to suggest potential sites for the proposed affordable housing development. Popular suggestions included (number of responses in brackets):

- No (3)
- School Lane (2)
- Near Rowan Drive

Two respondents indicated that they owned land which may be suitable.

People Who Have Moved Away

No respondents knew of anybody who had left the village due to a lack of affordable housing.

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 2: Housing Need

Analysis of Need

5 households filled out the second part of the form, indicating a need for affordable housing at some point in the next five years.

The survey form also asked for details of why respondents consider themselves to be in housing need, it should be noted that at this stage, these statements are self assessed and have not been verified in any other way.

As part of the analysis process a number of respondents who indicate a housing need are ruled out of consideration. This may be for a number of reasons, the main ones being:

- The respondent does not wish to remain living in the local area.
- The respondent is already adequately housed e.g. they have a large property and would like to downsize.
- The respondent does not provide enough information with which to accurately assess their needs.

Of the 5 households who filled out the second part of the form, all were ruled out of consideration. Each of the respondents had partially filled out the second part of the survey, apparently not realising that it should only be filled out by those in housing need.

Respondents on the Housing Register and Housing Stock

There are currently **100** households on North Kesteven District Council's housing register who have expressed a preference to live in Silk Willoughby. Of those **1** has a direct local connection.

There are currently 9 affordable properties in Silk Willoughby which consist of:

- 1 x 2 bed house
- 2 x 3 bed house
- 6 x 2 bed bungalow

In 2009 there were 3 properties re-let which were:

- 1 x 2 bed house
- 1 x 3 bed house
- 1 x 2 bed bungalow

NKDC Survey of the Housing Register

Subsequent to the local housing needs survey being carried out in the parish, North Kesteven District Council undertook a survey of the 100 households on the housing register. **45** households responded to the survey, of which **7** have a local connection. Their needs are as follows:

- 1 x 2 bed bungalow
- 1 x 3 bed bungalow
- 5 x 2 bed house

Summary and Conclusion

On the basis of the survey and housing register data there is potentially evidence to warrant a scheme of affordable housing in Silk Willoughby. However, stock turnover in the village is fairly high, and recent properties have attracted few applicants.

Therefore, whilst there is an evidenced need within the village, careful consideration should be given to whether a development would be viable with particular consideration given to the ease in which properties in the village continue to be re-let.