

SONNING COMMON

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING AND HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

October 2012



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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Sonning Common Parish Council is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. As part of its evidence gathering process, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP) commissioned Oxfordshire Rural Community Council to conduct a housing survey in August 2012. ORCC is a charity that works with and supports communities across the county and has long-standing expertise in helping communities meet their housing aspirations.

The survey gave every household in the village the opportunity to express an opinion on housing development and to register their own housing need, should they have one. The survey had three parts. All households were asked to complete Part 1: *Your Household* and Part 2: *Housing in Sonning Common- Your Opinions*. Part 3 asked households which need a new home in Sonning Common to state their requirements.

DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE

- The Rural Housing Enabler at ORCC, liaising with the NPWP, prepared the survey content.
- The Parish Council distributed surveys to 1468 households in September 2012. Respondents were asked to return their surveys to ORCC by 28 September 2012, using a *Freepost* envelope.
- 354 surveys were returned: **a response rate of 24%**.
- 27 comments were made after Part 1, 82 after Part 2 and 22 after Part 3: **a total of 131**.
- The RHE analysed the returned surveys and prepared this report.
- No information is known about the non-respondents, and no assumptions have been made about their housing opinions, needs, or requirements.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The report gives a detailed breakdown of answers to all 39 survey questions. The following is a selection of findings.

Part 1

Number of households intending to move within Sonning Common in the next 5 years but which cannot	24
Top 3 reasons preventing residents from moving within Sonning Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unable to afford a new home• Lack of suitable housing to meet my needs• Unable to afford moving costs

Number of Individuals who have left Sonning Common in the last 5 years	72
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|---|---|
| Top 3 reasons for leaving Sonning Common | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Lack of affordable housing • Other |
|---|---|

Part 2

- | | |
|---|---|
| Top 3 types of accommodation that Sonning Common needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Semi-detached houses • Detached houses |
|---|---|

- | | |
|---|---|
| Top 3 tenure types that Sonning Common needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner occupation • Shared ownership • Affordable rent through Housing Association |
|---|---|

- | | |
|--|--|
| Top 3 sites for new housing development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to Herb Farm • On Kennylands Road • Orchard Avenue/ Bishopswood |
|--|--|

Number of households wishing to return to Sonning Common	75
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|--|--|
| Top 3 reasons for wishing to return | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be near family • Unable to afford current mortgage • Want to start first home |
|--|--|

Part 3

Number of households which need a new home in Sonning Common	40
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- | | |
|---|---|
| Top 3 reasons for requiring a new home | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be near family • Need bigger home • Want to start first home |
|---|---|

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Top 3 types of home required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-detached house • Terraced house • Detached house & semi-detached bungalow EQUAL |
|-------------------------------------|---|

- | | |
|---|--|
| Top 3 preferences for housing tenure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-ownership • Shared ownership (with Housing Association) • Rent from Housing Association |
|---|--|

Number of households with a supported housing need	3
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HOUSING PROFILE AND AFFORDABILITY

Home Costs and Wages

Average terraced properties in the RG4 postcode area, which includes Sonning Common, sold for £253,385 in July 2012 (source: www.home.co.uk House Prices Report for RG4: July 2011- July 2012). In 2011, median gross annual pay for those living in the district of South Oxfordshire was £25,801 (source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2011 (provisional results), Place of Residence by Local Authority, Table 8.7a: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-235202>). Therefore, to secure an average, terraced RG4 property would require an income of 9.82 times earnings.

Current Sale and Rental Market Context in Sonning Common

In order to contextualise survey responses with current market housing conditions in Sonning Common, a web search for properties for sale or rent in the village was conducted on 12/10/2012 (Source: www.rightmove.co.uk).

The results were as follows:

House Type	Price ¹	Totals for Sale and Rent ²
For Sale		34
4 bed semi-detached house	425,000	11
3 bed terraced house	229,950	11
2 bed flat	210,000	10
1 bed flat	180,000	2
For Rent		4
4 bed house	1495pcm	2
3 bed house	1295pcm	1
2 bed cottage	1495 pcm	1
1 bed barn conversion (*Chalkhouse Green)	620pcm	n/a

**Where properties of this size were not available for sale or rent in Sonning Common the search radius was widened to 1 mile.*

¹The lowest price for each size property has been recorded.

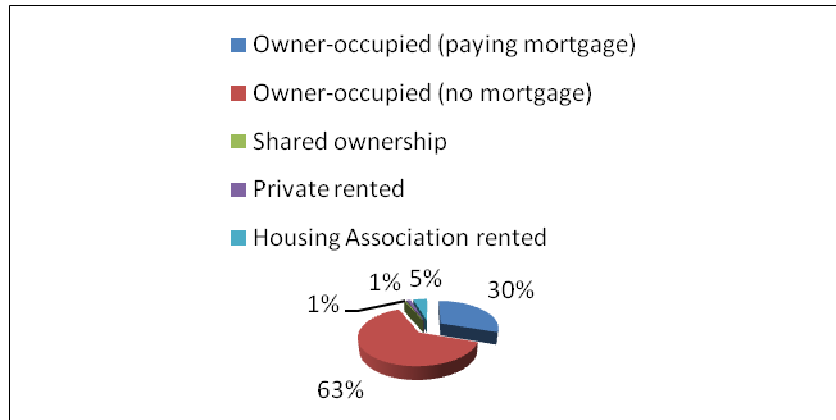
²Sale and rent totals are based properties available within Sonning Common

Detailed Results

Part One- Your Household

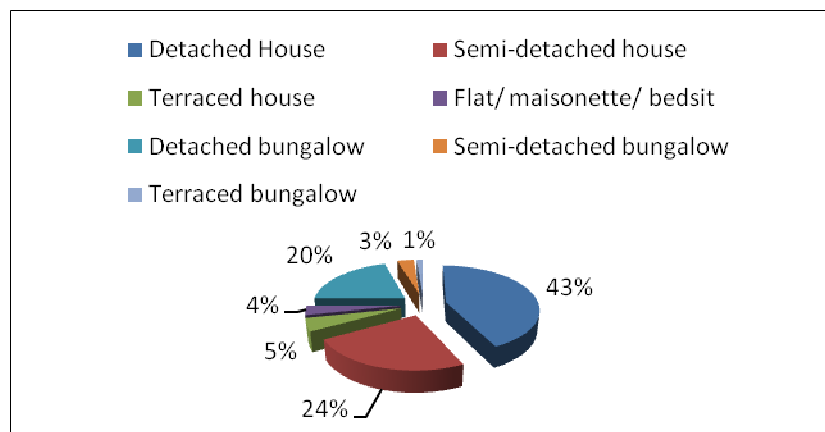
1. Is your present home...?

346 respondents



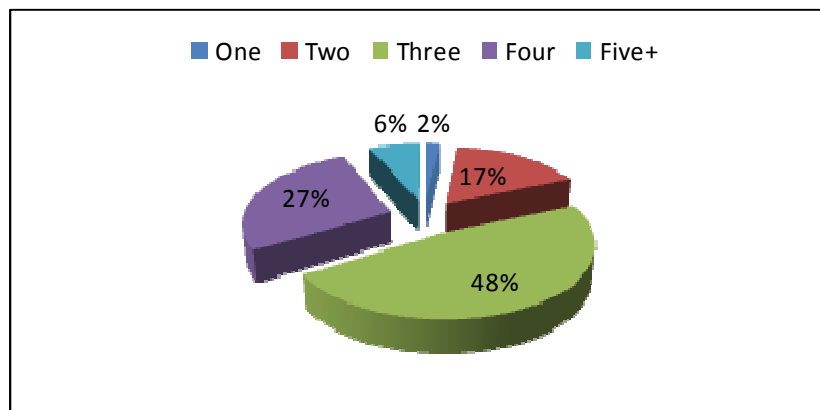
2. What type of property is your home?

324 respondents



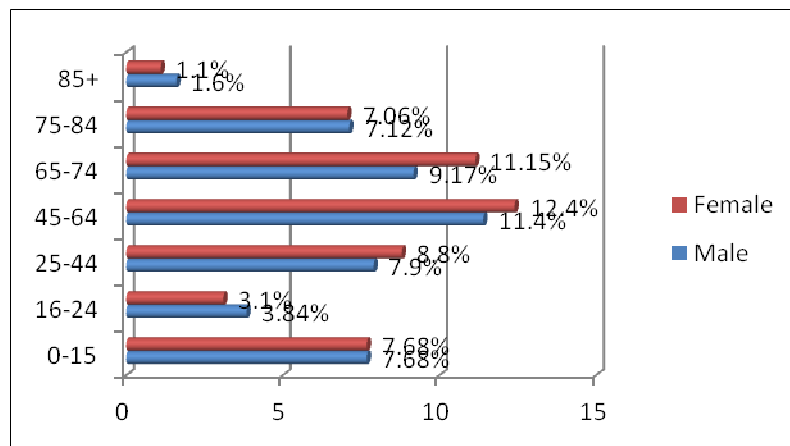
3. How many bedrooms are in your current home?

343 respondents



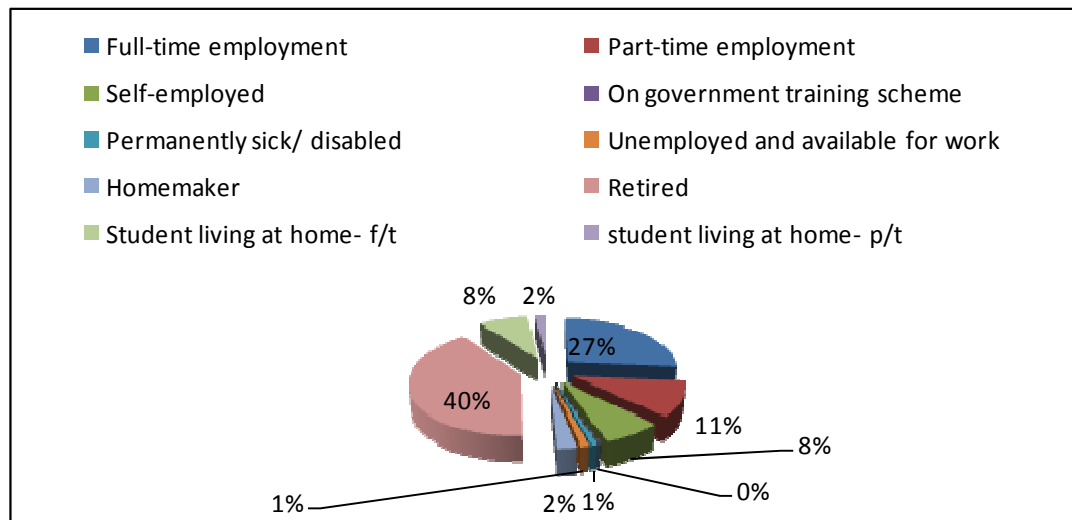
4. How many people of each age and gender live in your household?

351 respondents- 807 individuals total



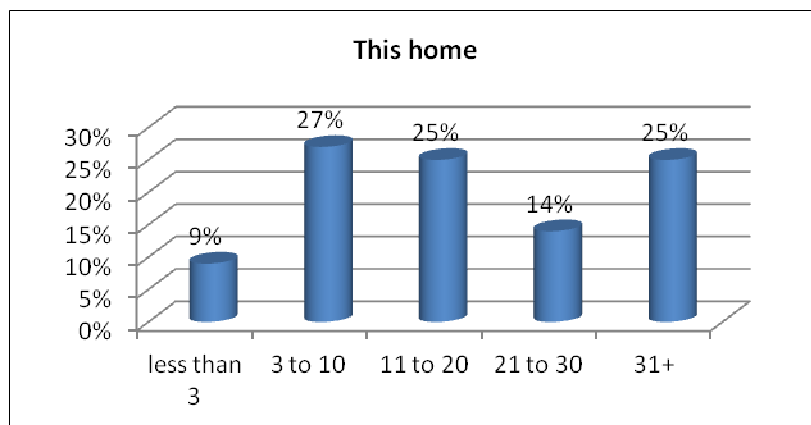
5. How many people in your household are...?

350 respondents -714 individuals total

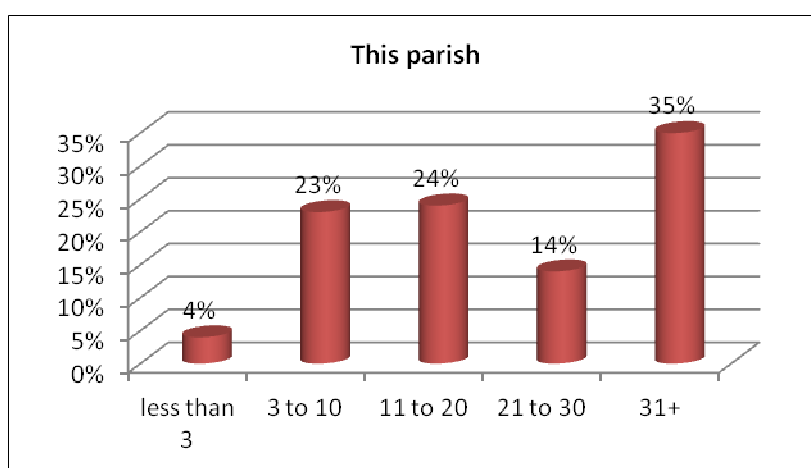


6. How many years have you lived in Sonning Common?

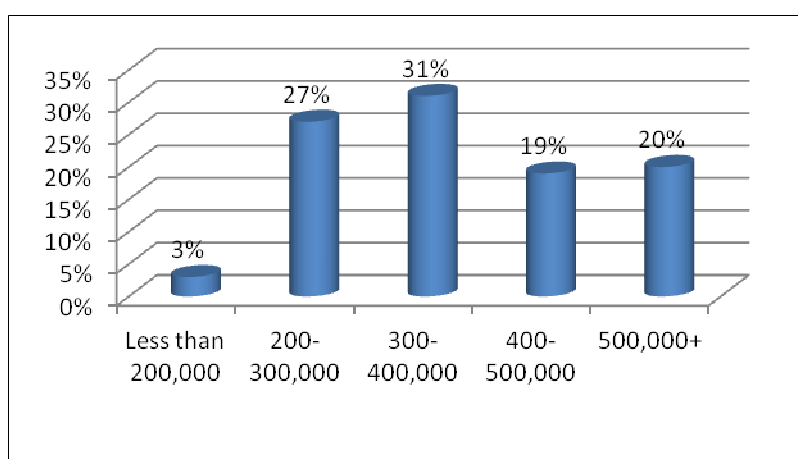
341 respondents



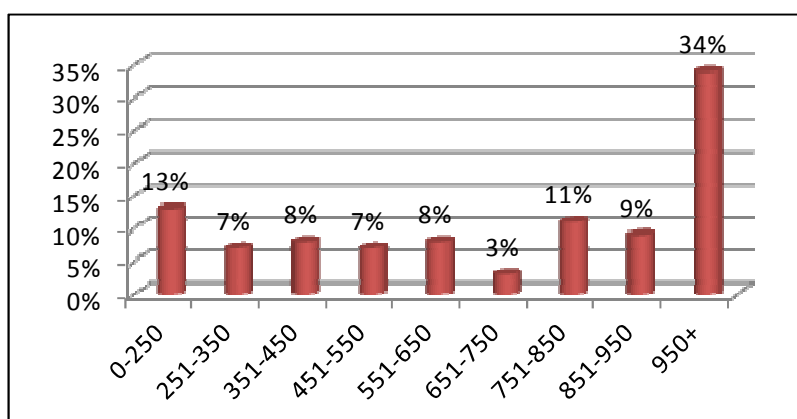
283 respondents



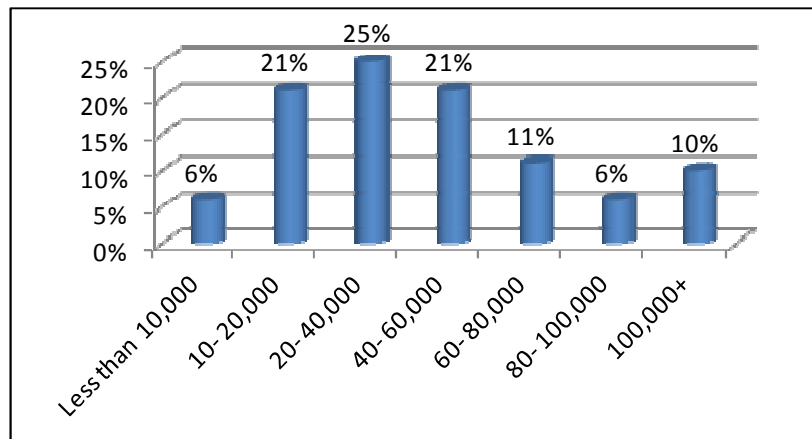
7. If you own your own home, what is its current [estimated] value? 296 respondents



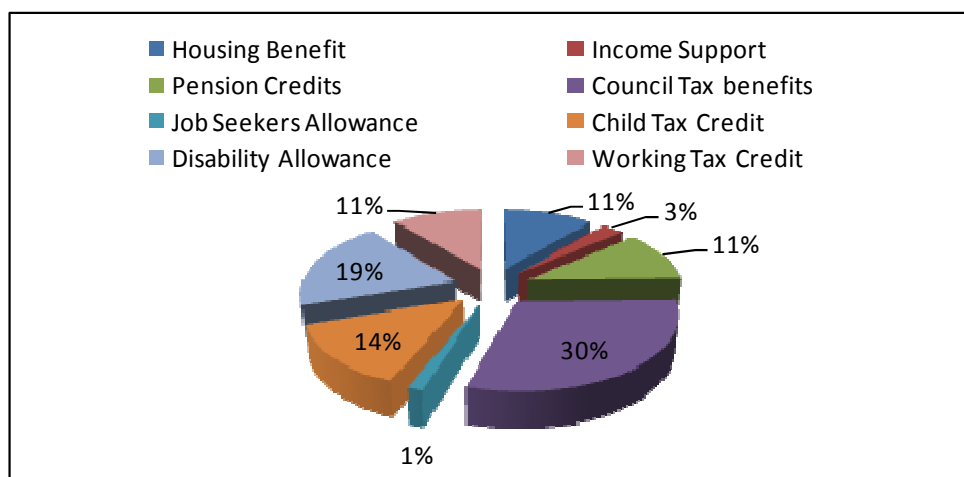
8. How much rent/ mortgage do you pay per calendar month? 104 respondents



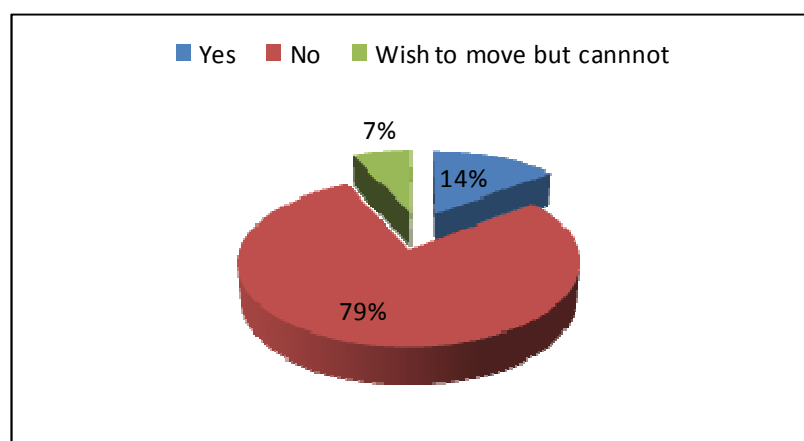
9. What is the total annual income of your household, before tax but not including benefits?
248 respondents



10. If your household receives any financial support, please state which type.
73 respondents

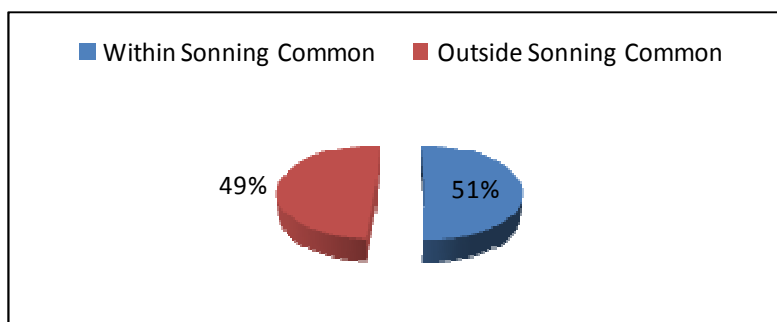


11. Are you intending to move house within the next 5 years?
347 respondents



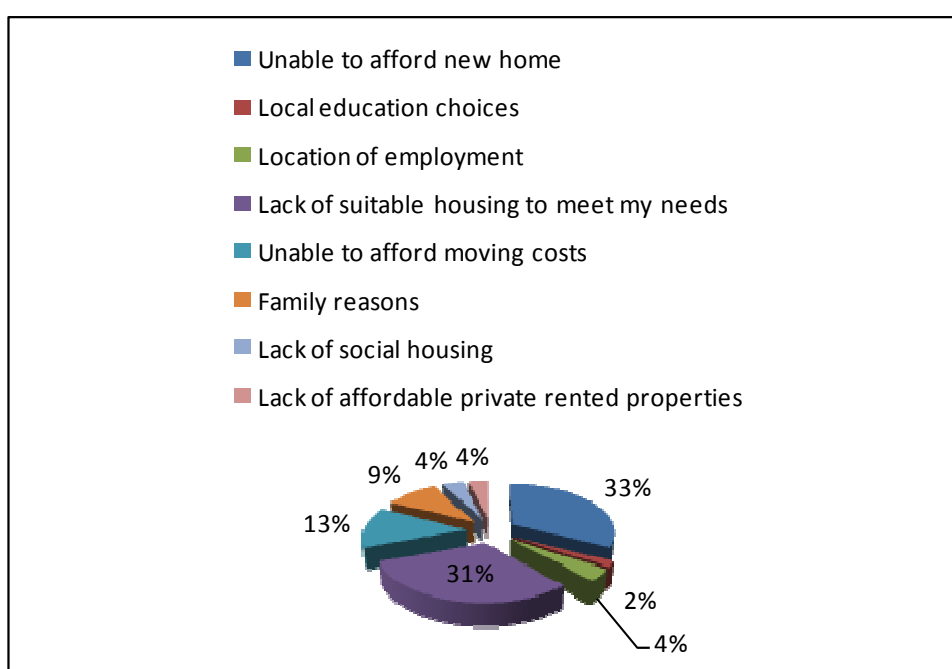
12. If 'yes', are you intending to move within or outside Sonning Common?

50 respondents- 69 choices total



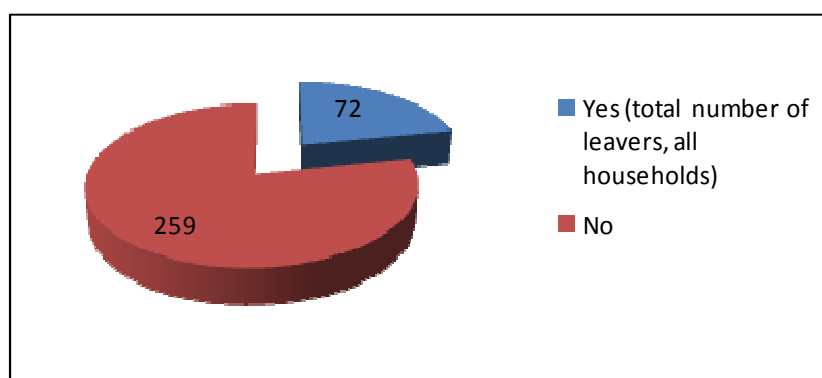
13. If you wish to move but cannot, what are the reasons preventing you?

33 respondents-52 reasons in total



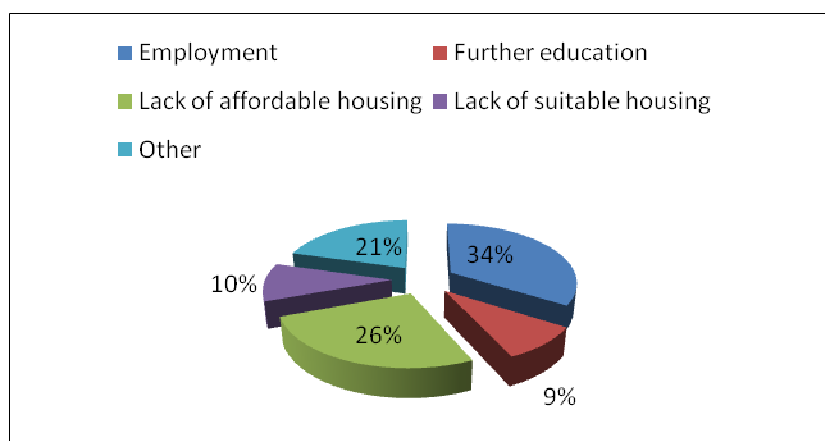
14. Have any members of your household left the village in the last 5 years?

308 respondents



- **If members of your household left, what were the reasons?**

72 leavers- 88 total reasons



15. How many people have joined your household in the last 5 years?

- **39 respondents- 55 new additions to household** (births, marriage, relatives moving in etc.)

Comments on Part 1

Note: where there is a possibility of a respondent being identified a comment has been edited.

- I feel that Sonning Common needs affordable housing in general. There would seem to be adequate provision of houses and bungalows to buy if one can afford them. There also seems to be an adequate supply of similar housing to rent privately. I feel that SC does not need any more large detached houses available to buy, particularly those with 5+ bedrooms.
- Sonning Common needs affordable housing to encourage young people to stay in the village otherwise it will become a village of elderly people.
- When building flats etc. for couples over 60 they should all have two toilets, if architects even thought this through, early mornings can be a very difficult time. We have visited many couples with one toilet and realise how upsetting this can be. Please not too many [new] houses.
- Before a big expansion of housing, the centre of the village (Wood Lane) needs to be altered to accommodate all the extra traffic and people who would use it, otherwise it will grind to a halt, buses will not get through so we will lose them. The giant delivery lorries need to be reorganised somehow.
- The main reason we are considering leaving the village is the poor transport connection and need for train connection to London.

- We are both pensioners so we have nobody here. [...] it gets a bit lonely. My wife has got her family in [...]. We have been on the [housing waiting] list for 5 years but we are still waiting.
- Why is there an empty and rotting house in Peppard Road which could be made available or made into flats etc.? What a waste.
- We did look at moving a couple of years ago because our garden was too small for our growing family but we decided to use what we would have been charged in stamp duty to extend but still have issue of small garden.
- Strong need for truly low cost affordable housing in the village for those younger people starting up. We are a village of geriatrics.
- Many small properties have been extended by purchases and speculators during the past few years. These smaller properties have not been replaced and included in large enough numbers leaving shortage of properties for retired people.
- Although our [...] daughters left home for employment they could only have stayed in the village by living with us because they would be unable to afford a home here.
- Our daughter lives with us but really needs a place of her own. Unfortunately there are no affordable homes in Sonning Common. I also think a great deal needs to be done to the infrastructure of the village before too many homes are built.
- I would like to see really affordable housing for young people and a retirement complex for such as me, something on the lines of the McCarthy Home retirement villages.
- Living and the provision of care that the inhabitants need.
- Because of my age, a few months ago I tried to sell my house to move [out of the area where my children live] but I could not find anything as nice as my house now for the amount of money I could get from it so I'm staying put. I've lived in this area over 45 years and love it though it would have been nice to be near my children and grandchildren.
- [...] I am unable to afford to move but I don't want to live in the same house all my life.
- My son is trying to buy a house in Sonning Common but [the homes are] not affordable.
- Both of our children left home more than 5 years ago and couldn't afford a property in Sonning Common.
- I have a daughter with young children who has lived here all her life and cannot get a house in Sonning Common who is now living in [a flat elsewhere] which is totally unsuitable in every way. Please explain why total outsiders that have no connection to the village in any way can get houses?
- I would release my 3 bed house if there were any 2 bed affordable bungalows in village.
- 4 [members of our household] have left because they couldn't afford to buy in Sonning Common.
- We do not agree with young single parents being given council homes ahead of others in the village (or nationally). Children and young people who continue in education and find work are discriminated against as there is no feasible possibility of them being able to afford to live in Sonning Common.
- If you build more houses you need more schools and doctors and some easing to the roads.
- Need more affordable housing for young and working class families.

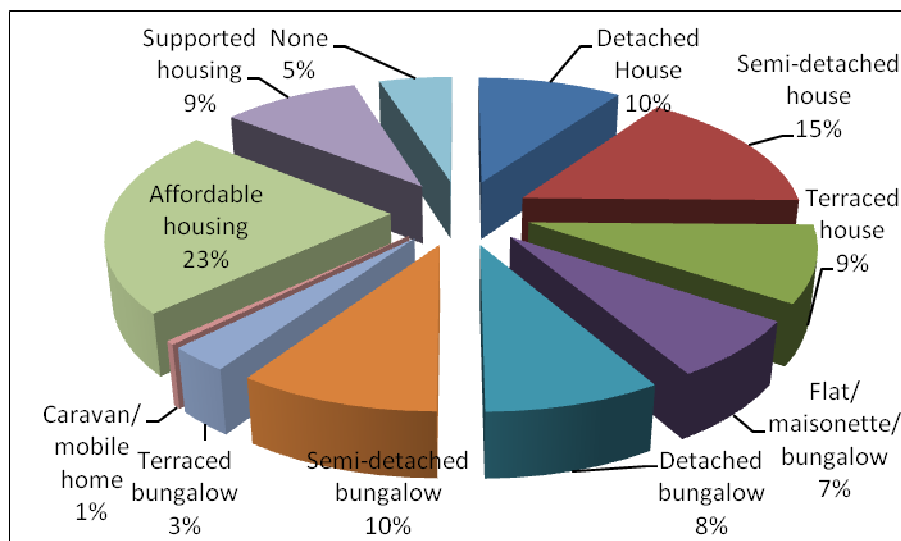
- Sonning Common is already overcrowded for the amenities available. Additional housing must consider that. Equally the main road must be considered if access required as already an extremely busy and dangerous road. Speed still an issue.
- My home is a base for my children and their families who [live elsewhere] and visit several time a year, staying up to a month. At these times the house is full.
- We think there should be small housing developments around Sonning Common, not large group developments.

Detailed Results

Part Two: Housing in Sonning Common - Your Opinions

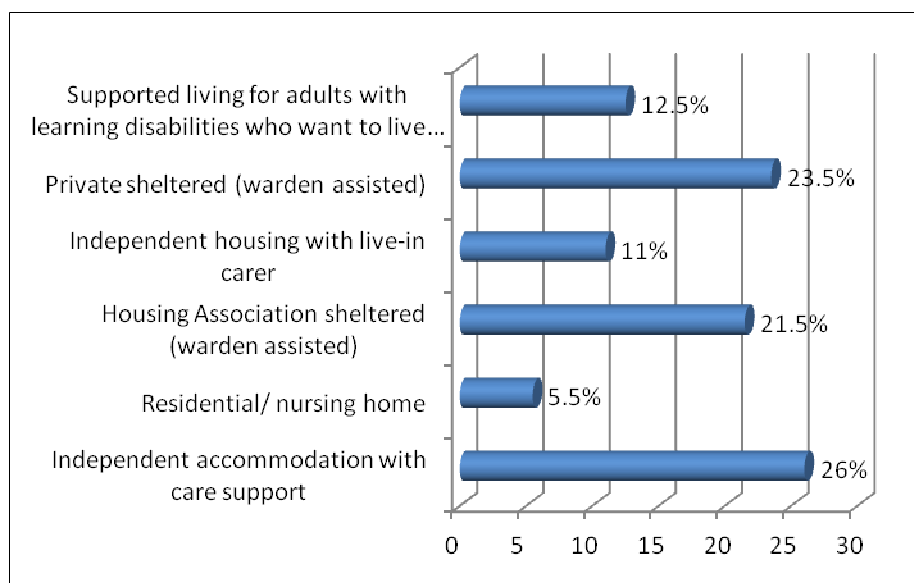
16. What type of accommodation do you think Sonning Common needs?

302 respondents- 867 suggestions in total



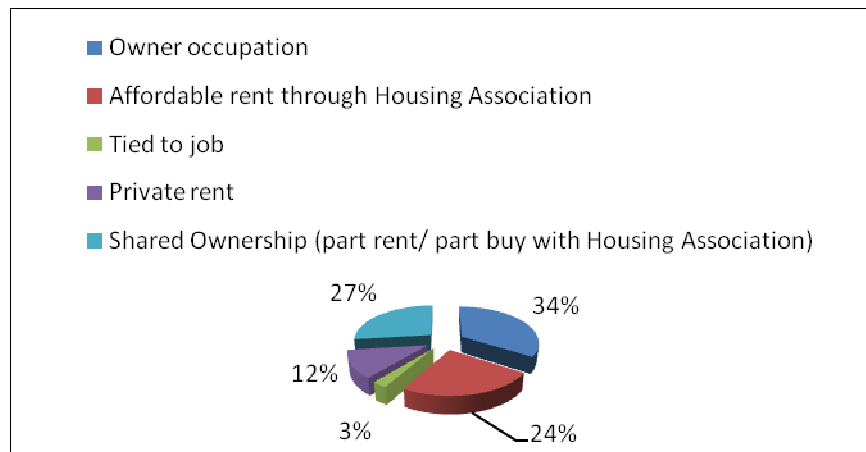
17. If you think Sonning Common needs supported housing, what type is required?

160 respondents- 327 suggestions in total



18. What type of housing tenure do you think Sonning Common needs?

281 respondents- 571 suggestions in total



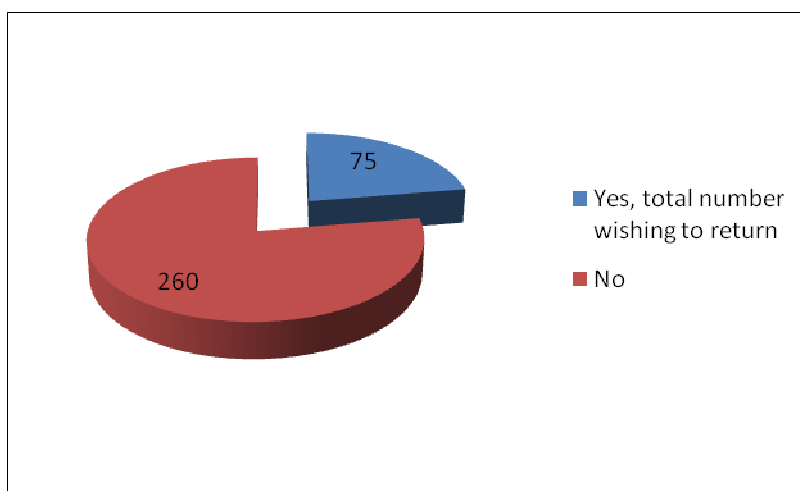
19. If you think Sonning Common needs new housing, can you suggest any suitable sites for development?

113 respondents- 178 total site suggestions

Site location	Number of responses
Next to Herb Farm	37
Kennylands Road	14
Orchard Avenue/ Bishopswood	11
Kennylands Road (land behind)	9
Infill	8
Peppard Road	7
Small developments	6
Peppard Road (derelict house)	5
Opposite Chiltern Edge School	5
Lea Meadow	5
Not in centre	5
Not greenfield	5
SON 9	4
SON 7	4
SON 2	4
SON 3	3
Blackmore Lane	3
Woodlands Road (land behind)	3
Ashford Avenue (land behind)	3
Blount's Court Road	3
Between Kennylands Road and Peppard Road	3
SON 6	3
Reading Road	2
Lambourne Road	2

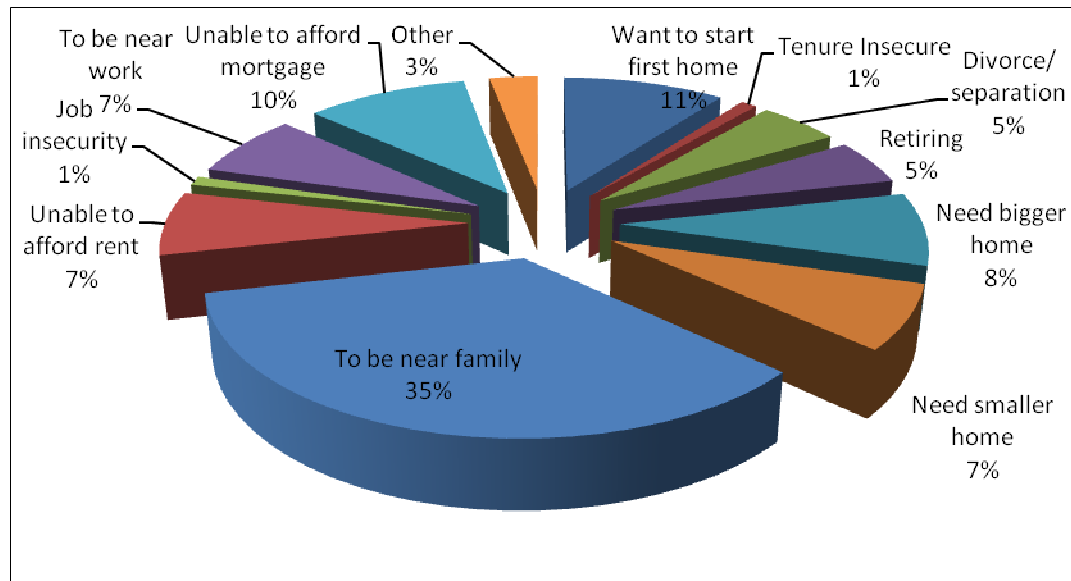
North of village	2
Kidmore End	2
Peppard	2
Millennium Gardens (adjacent to)	1
Millennium Gardens (part of)	1
Woodlands Road (on)	1
Grove Road	1
SON 13	1
Towards Emmer Green	1
Kidbys Yard	1
Butchers Arms	1
Hare Hounds	1
Pages Orchard play area	1
Wood Lane	1
Land behind nursing home	1
Hagpits	1
SON 5	1
SON 8	1
Not towards Reading	1
Brownfield	1
Redevelop existing houses	1

20. Do you know of any households living elsewhere who wish to return to Sonning Common?
310 respondents



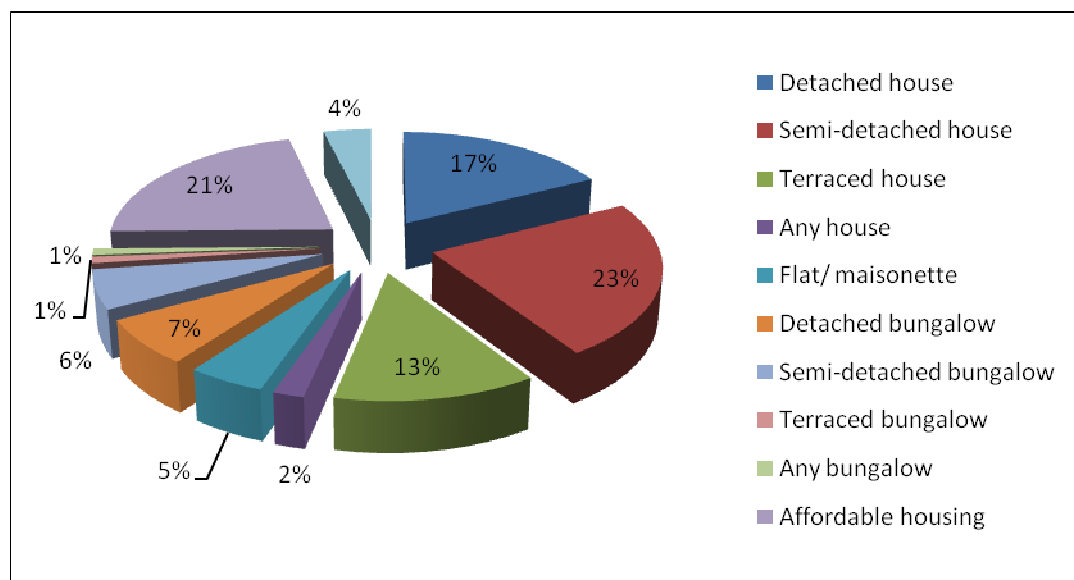
21. Why do they want to move back to Sonning Common?

50 respondents-98 reasons in total



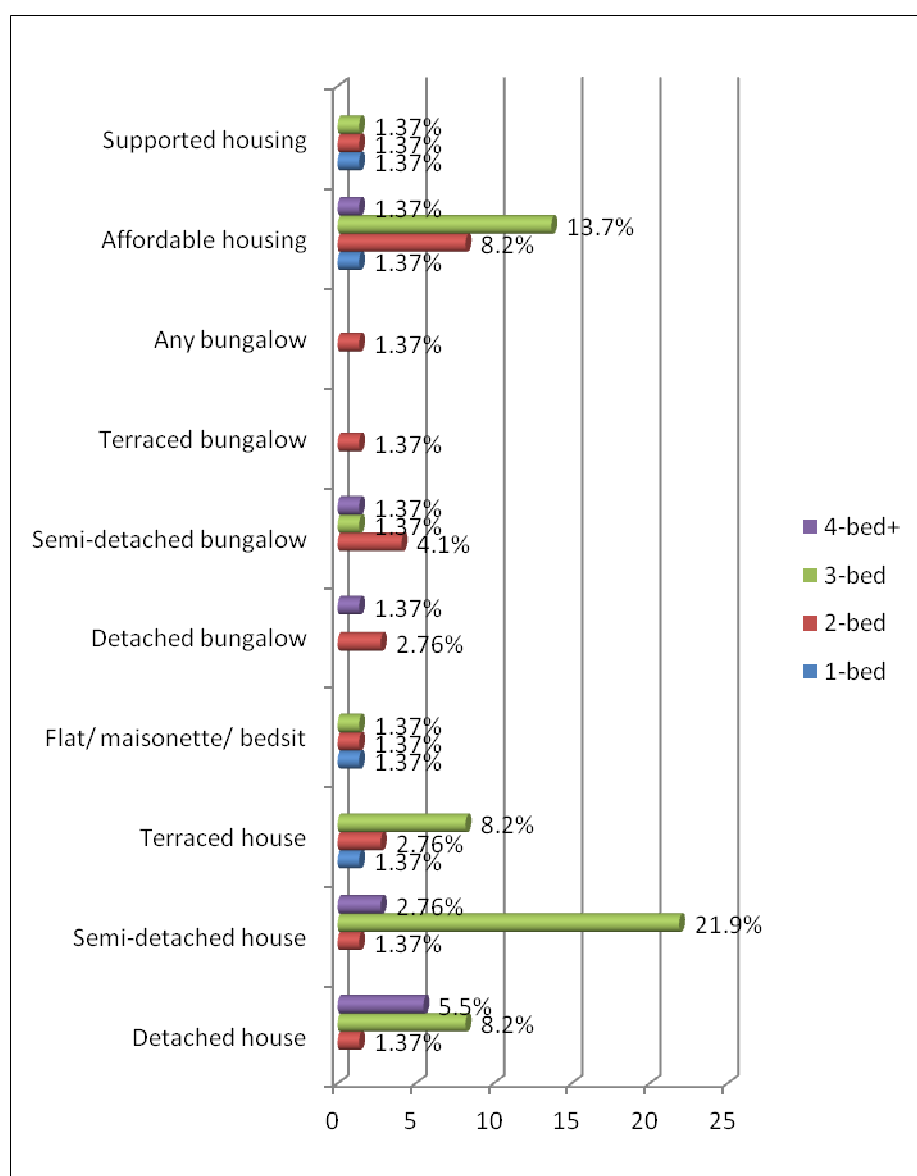
22. What type of home would those returning to Sonning Common require?

49 respondents- 103 types given in total



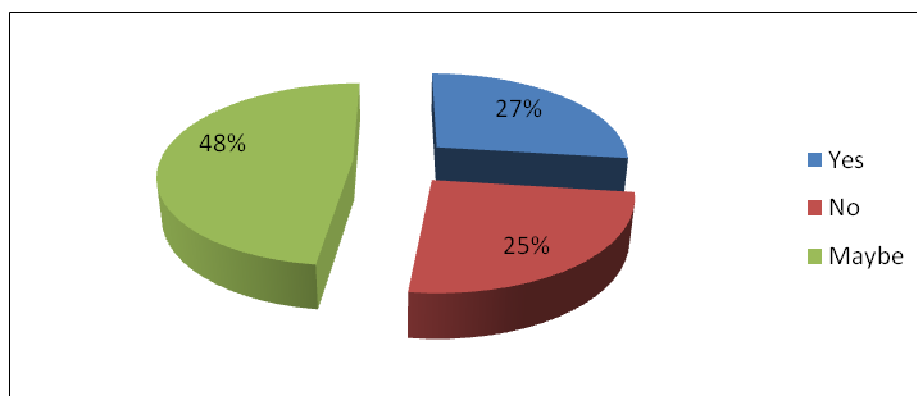
How many bedrooms would they require?

46 respondents

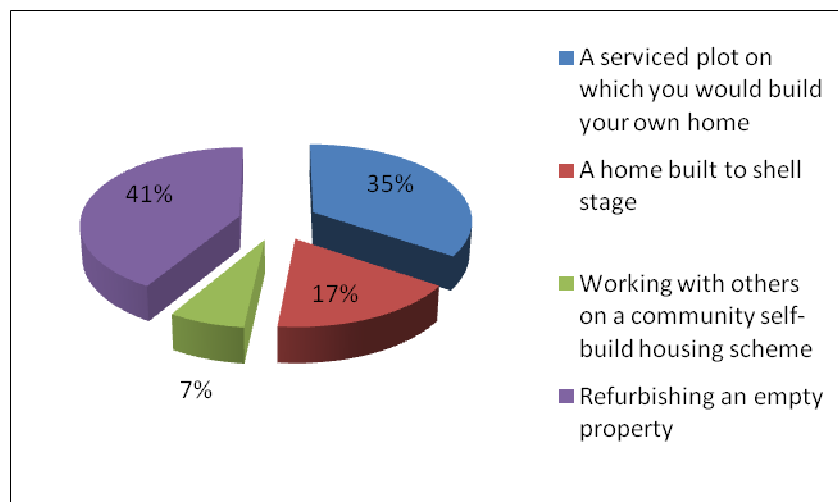


23. Do you think that a Community Land Trust might be worth exploring in Sonning Common?

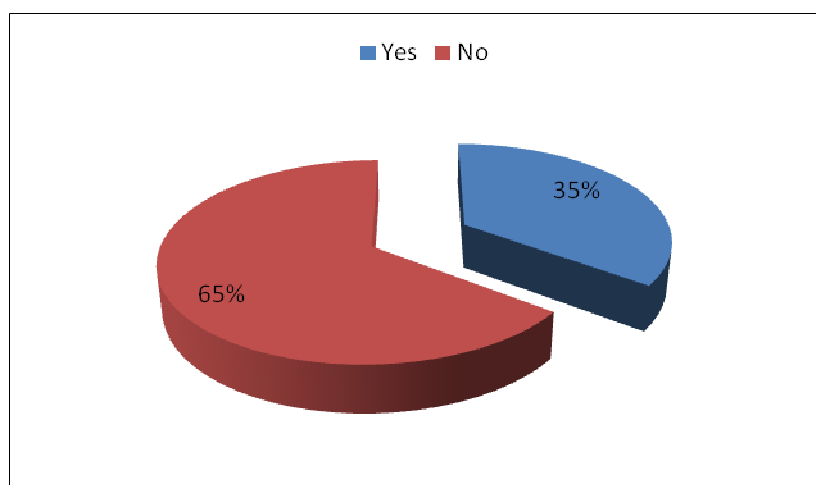
273 respondents



24. Are you interested in constructing your own home? If so, would you be interested in the following? *60 respondents-116 choices in total*



25. Do you support backland development? *304 respondents*



Comments on Part 2

Note: where there is a possibility of a respondent being identified a comment has been edited.

- Community selling- local community being aware of what housing is available, i.e., those wanting to downsize. There could be a system whereby those within the local community would be aware first.
- I cannot see that Sonning Common can support any more new houses. It's already a problem getting a doctor's appointment, parking is sometimes difficult and what about places? Planners do not think these things through. I should think we have already reached saturation point.
- I believe Sonning Common desperately needs social housing of every size from one bedroom flats for singles to four bedroom houses for families and terraced bungalows for retired people. I would like to see a number of small builds rather than one or two large builds. So there needs to be several small builds of one and two bedroom flats, a similar number of two and three, even four bedroom houses, sheltered housing clusters of bungalows/flats for retired people and some provision for assisted housing. Ideally those builds would be a mixture of private rents, social housing and rent to buy. Some of these properties should be built specifically with disabled people in mind. There should also be specifically built assisted accommodation such as semi-independent flats for elderly people, those with a learning disability and those with mental health problems. I personally think that the greatest need is for one bedroom flats, social housing for singles and couples. Sonning Common has 2-bed flats, 3-bed houses and a few bungalows as social housing but no one bed flats that I am aware of. The second greatest need is for a small retirement cluster of 1-2 bed bungalows to buy with care support available 24/7, a small restaurant and facilities such as personal care, housekeeping, shopping, washing/drying/ironing services. I understand I'm asking a lot but basically Sonning Common needs several small builds of social housing, particularly 1 or 2-bed flats.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: if the planners insist, then at least 2 cars must be parked off road.
- I am aware of the need of more housing but this is a village and has only limited resources, i.e., capacity for extra pupils at schools, the ability of the health centre to cope with extra residents, services etc. So any planning must be carefully controlled. I do not want this village to become a small town and I think that any suggestion of light industrial development is not appropriate. There are some areas in the village that could, with good planning, be useful for more houses but I am very much against any further backland building. The idea of building behind some of the existing shops on the back spare land is not acceptable. Please try to preserve this village as a village. This is where I have lived for so many years that I would be sorry to see drastic changes.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: strongly oppose the proposed development behind the shops in Wood Lane.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: Building in backlands would only add to parking problems around the shops. Better use would be to extend parking and add yellow lines around shop fronts and around junctions.

- COMMENT ON Q. 25: maybe, if access and traffic flow was also improved. Personally I don't know how big the gardens are and how many houses they want.
- I would prefer to see land such as near the Herb Farm used [for development] rather than open fields surrounding the village. This would simply be infilling rather than expansion. Also any development would need to contribute to the existing facilities such as the schools, library, access improvements. Utilities would also need to improve as the water pressure is often low and sewage pipes often get blocked.
- Sonning Common is a lovely village and a nice place to live. Nonetheless in the last 30 years it has changed for the worse. The simple fact is Sonning Common has reached the maximum size for a village. You can't simply start building new houses otherwise all the characteristics of the village will be lost. Further, local infrastructures can't and should not have to support more and more families. I simply fail to understand why we are even considering building on green sites. Clearly people need somewhere to live but destroying a village is not the answer.
- I am in favour of small developments as there is a need for housing in the village but there also needs to be the services that these families will need. It is no use building large expensive houses which will bring in extra families whereas the local young people need somewhere to live.
- One of the most important factors in the village plan should be the protection of green belt around the fringes of the village. The biggest appeal of the area is the green spaces/woodland. Other considerations are bus service and internet connection.
- This is a great village of live with a diverse range of people. That's what makes it good. Therefore any new housing must match the existing mix within the village currently and should not focus on particular areas such as all large detached or all affordable housing- a mixture is required.
- Sonning Common does not have the infrastructure of the services to cater for any large developments. The doctors are in high demand, the schools are sought after for places, and the roads are busy, sometimes ridiculously so. At school hours all roads surrounding Grove Road are used by parents making it very busy. On bin days even walking to school is a minefield as pavements are simply not wide enough. Large developments will have a hugely negative impact on Sonning Common and its residents. We are not opposed to small and single house developments, which remain in keeping with those around it. Parking with these houses is essential as there are too many cars parked on roads, making it dangerous for other car users and pedestrians.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: I believe back land development is an option where space and infrastructure allows. Wood Lane is already too congested in terms of traffic and parking.
- Whilst I appreciate Sonning Common will be pressurised into having additional houses built in the next few years, although I question the council's method of allocation, I have the following points to make. 1- when an actual figure has been agreed it should take into account any homes that have been built from when this process began, i.e., 2 years ago. Those homes already built should be deducted from our allocation. 2- as a business owner in the village, any potential new customers are welcome. However, this has to be balanced by what it is actually like to live here on a day to day basis. Currently the infrastructure is

barely able to support the demands made upon it. Therefore any additional homes would seriously test it. 3- when referring to the infrastructure, officials seem only to take into consideration the population of the village as its user but what they continually fail to note is that Sonning Common supports a much wider catchment area, Peppard, Stoke Row, Shiplake, Binfield Heath, Kidmore End, Gallowstree Common and so on. This village cannot support so many people's needs and I don't believe it is possible to grow the infrastructure to that necessary, at least not without losing the very essence of what makes people want to live here in the first place. 4- I hear so much about affordable housing and apart from the Housing Association dwellings that we have I don't think any more are needed. Historically, young people have moved out of the village to find affordable accommodation and then when they can afford it, they move back. Why is it necessary now to suddenly be entitled to a home just where you want it? Aspiration pushed us to achieve our goals.

- We will definitely lose one bus service through the village unless we can keep the road clear for buses. Then what? No-one will be able to travel without a car.
- I would like to see the development of more work and leisure facilities alongside any housing development so that local people can obtain more of their needs locally rather than just building more executive homes for commuters. I also think that the population of Sonning Common is a little unbalanced across the age ranges and so would not wish to see further housing developments targeted for the elderly. Finally I would wish to see the construction of a traffic-free cycleway between Sonning Common and Emmer Green, ideally along the route of the B481. Perhaps this could be facilitated by agreement with Philimore Farms utilising the headland along the field boundaries adjacent to the B481. A traffic-free cycle route would benefit young people in the village especially, as well as enabling more environment-friendly commuting and leisure. Would also like to see any new housing built on maximum energy and water efficiency lines, above those imposed by building regulations.
- There are too many retired old people like myself here. We should enable young people to live here. Sonning Common does not need more 5 bed houses.
- I would love Sonning Common to stay a small community village. And not to overload amenities with too many new houses and people.
- We moved to the village 11 years ago for work but chose Sonning Common because of its village atmosphere. I believe if we have to build these houses they should be together and on the outskirts of the village. I do not agree or think a business park in/near the village is a good idea as this would remove the village feel and there are plenty already in place that we should support as well as our current shops. I have no issue with additional houses but the look and feel should be right.
- Sonning Common does not need any more houses. The doctors and schools couldn't take any more, they are already oversubscribed. The traffic is already very bad especially in Wood Lane.
- There should be no further housing developments until the goals to relieve congestion on the main roads are achieved. Wood Lane is an accident waiting to happen because of on-road parking and speeding cars.

- There is a need for social housing for a mix of ownership and rent. Would be developers must take into consideration the need for genuine affordable housing. Developers also must be aware that sustainability also refers to protecting the village centre from housing developments that would increase parking problems, congestion and endanger our bus service to Reading.
- There are 2 areas which have had plans proposed for development. Could one be for housing, and one be for parking?
- There should be more affordable housing and I mean affordable. My daughter [...] would love to live in Sonning Common, where she was born and brought up. When she enquired about part buy/rent she was told she had to have an annual income of at least £25,000.
- We understand that the current infrastructure cannot support large numbers of new properties.
- More homes are urgently needed especially for those who cannot aspire to house ownership in such an expensive area. Backland developments such as the one proposed in Wood Lane inevitably provide large expensive homes to maximise profits. This development would add to the existing congestion in the village centre.
- Sonning Common will lose its identity as a village if it gets larger and just become an urban satellite of Reading.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: Using dead space behind the shops in Wood Lane makes perfect sense. It helps fulfil the need Sonning Common has to provide new housing. It maintains the character of the area. If the houses are designed for older people it is highly likely that their disposable income would be spent in the village so sustaining the business there. Greenfields remain intact.
- If possible, Sonning Common's new housing should be kept to a minimum as too many extra people would put a lot of strain on health centre. The wait is long now to see your own doctor, weeks in fact, you can see other doctors if really necessary but most people want to see their own doctor. More patients will make this impossible. There is also enough congestion now with cars in the village. More houses, more cars, not enough car parks, with people parking all over the place. Development behind shops in Wood Lane would be a bad move, could affect bus stop there which is essential for many people and might result in no buses in Wood Lane which would be bad for elderly people. Any housing should be well away from centre of our village
- Before any housing developments are planned, a review and changes to roads, traffic flow and parking are needed. Congestion in the village is already horrendous, parking is terrible and road safety/safe pavements are a problem with children. I would also like to see a crossing near the co-op. We also need an improvement to existing shops and local amenities. A proper pretty attractive village centre would be much better than what we currently have.
- Blocks of flats to house older people are against all the recommendations of health specialists who stress the need for regular exercise for a long and happy life.
- Sonning Common has for years been developed at random. We will have to accept development on the village fringes and it appears this will amount to some 150 houses/dwellings. The centre of the village serves a wider area than Sonning Common itself

and in order for it to provide services and shops to this wider community a serious radical change to the village centre is required. Any building of houses behind existing shops in Wood Lane will destroy an opportunity to make a centre for the community that will serve it long into the future. Our councillor, local and county, must consider talking to all shops with a view to a change of the centre which will allow a redevelopment to make car parking and shopping integrated – this does not have to be a shopping precinct. The traffic flow on Wood Lane must be eased to maintain a bus service and make the village centre a more manageable and pleasant experience.

- One side of Wood Lane, from the chemist to the pet shop, and all land to the rear should only be developed as part of a village centre. The primary school should remain on its present central site with its excellent playing fields. We need to retain a library and youth club to complement other organisations. Sensible transport links to adjacent villages, i.e., minibuses linking with buses to Reading etc. in Sonning Common centre. Restrict housing to areas that will not impinge on surrounding countryside or reduce distance from village edge to Reading. An excellent draft vision statement.
- To maintain ambience of Sonning Common as well as plan for future growth in a steady controlled way.
- As you will see from this form, I am a social housing tenant and we need more of this type of housing in Sonning Common. The small close I live in was built in 2000 and at least 4 of these homes are lived in by young people brought up in the area and attended local schools. At least 2 of these are the children of residents who own their own houses but the children cannot afford to do so. I am sure that many other children have had to leave the village because property is expensive. Being able to stay means family ties maintained and a support network. We also need affordable housing for those with higher incomes who cannot manage a full market value property. Supported housing for older people is also needed to help them move from family properties (and release these to families in need) into smaller manageable homes. The sheltered scheme in the village is out of date and not suitable for modern living and the provision of care that the inhabitant's need.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: Backland development [SHOULD BE PERMITTED] if kept to small number of dwellings. This might help to encourage youngsters to stay in the village as currently most properties start at £200k upwards.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: I suggested I was for and against backland development. I am for using this land for new developments but against any development being to the detriment of the facilities or amenities of Sonning Common. Developers should be made to bear in mind what they are proposing has to fit in with the overall village structure rather than just the profit motive. If necessary they should be forced to offer the village a plan that gets over the detrimental aspects of their proposed development not expect the district council to fill in the gaps. The development behind the shops in Wood Lane will, if allowed, mean the loss of use of one of the important bus stops in the centre of the village, result in the loss of run through parking in front of the present shops and of some of their actual parking spaces, and mean vehicles exiting the site will need to join Wood Lane at a very crowded point. Each of these factors will have a detrimental effect on the village and could easily result in an accident to either pedestrians or vehicles in the vicinity of the site. The

developer cannot just say these are not my problems and my plan is within the existing planning legislation. We each have a wider responsibility to the community in which we live or the development is proposed. Perhaps that is the problem - the developer or landowner usually does not live in the area in which development is proposed.

- As a 78 year old retired person I am very happy living in Sonning Common but I can see how very hard it would be for young people to afford to live here.
- What we want behind the shops is more parking places.
- I have lived in Sonning Common for over 50 years. This large village has the best community spirit among the residents in the last few years than in all the previous years. People really care - so much has been achieved to make it look attractive. We seriously want what is best for Sonning Common and all its residents. The worst aspect here is the traffic in the village centre- lack of space for parking. We attract motorists from the surrounding villages of Peppard, Kidmore End, Gallowstree Common, Rotherfield Greys and more, since they have no shops, health centre, dental surgery etc. It is so important for the residents of Sonning Common not to spoil the countryside around them. To build on back land causes noise, less of a feeling of space, more traffic- we do not want to extend our boundaries towards Reading or Kidmore End. It seems to me that what is good in Sonning Common, and in particular the more attractive areas, should not be spoilt by over-development. We have several large areas of dense building (estates). More houses must be sympathetically placed so as not to be a detriment to other properties.
- If there are to be more houses built in Sonning Common how would our full pre-schools and schools cope.
- Any garden or space between houses that is big enough for a dwelling should be a priority for building before expansion of the village boundaries.
- Oxon fails in its corporate priorities and needs to implement its ??? before imposing more houses. The storm drains in our road have been blocked for the past few months/years. I have removed two heaped barrow-loads from the one outside my home this summer. The state of the local roads and pavements are appalling/ dangerous. Some of the planning decisions for local developments are hopeless. The authority removed finance for our library at the same time it was planning more homes. They can't support bus passes before 9.30.
- I prefer bunched housing not encroaching into the countryside which is so accessible. More encouragement for people to walk more and leave the car at home. The young and old need more provision at reasonable levels of cost. Sonning Common is a great place to live, it's all about a question of balance.
- I do not think Sonning Common needs new housing. We are already the largest village in Oxfordshire and there are not the services, parking and space to absorb more and more expansion, which is degrading the village feel of our community.
- I like the neighbourhood planning document- very well put together- please make it work! As a FISH volunteer I now hear comments from the elderly of our village that with the new opening hours at the Hare and Hounds (4pm) there is nowhere in the village to which they can walk and enjoy a drink and a chat with their peers (Henley has the very welcoming Catherine Wheel). By 2026 our next generation will still be lacking in this area. Also, as a

social centre a church would be a welcome (and normal) addition to our village-they provide hospitality, friendship, comfort and a feeling of belonging to a community too old to engage in sport.

- Why are developers being allowed to carve up our village for their own gains? We can't cope with new housing on a large scale. The doctors are full, the schools are full and the parking in the village is now dangerous. There is a house along the Peppard Road not far from the paper shop which has stood empty for at least 30 years. It is now overgrown, how has this been allowed to happen?
- Affordable housing/shared ownership very important to keep young people in the village. At present too expensive and they leave.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: I am completely opposed to backland development in the village generally and particularly with regard to any proposed development in the village centre. The village centre is already congested and lack of parking is an ongoing problem which needs to be addressed urgently. The traffic/congestion problems in the centre create a hazardous situation for local residents which would be exacerbated by further development in the centre. A particular attribute of Sonning Common is its pleasant green spaces. It is essential that we hold on to these to maintain the character of the village. After all, this is why many of us moved here. Any proposed development should be within the village envelope on sites which make least impact on existing housing and the environment. A proper assessment must be carried out and funding made available to extend/improve services to satisfactorily meet the needs of all residents, if development takes place.
- Any development requires to be on Reading side of village to limit the extra traffic within village centre which is already congested most of the time. Developments that side would encourage use of Emmer Green, Caversham, Reading for shops etc. meaning less extra traffic within the already congested village centre.
- Development in Sonning Common should be discussed by residents and then by the Parish Council. If the majority agree, that is fine. However, if suitable discussions take place and the PC and residents are against a development it seems unsuitable that such a development is then passed by SO District Council, most of whom do not seem to understand the difficulties of a particular site. Sadly this has happened with a recent development in Sonning Common, the entrance to which is an accident waiting to happen.
- I do not know enough about the relative properties of different types of housing in the village and other similar villages to have an opinion on what is required but I do believe the following to be true.
- There are a large number of bungalows/properties for older residents. I do not believe more should be built- we need to encourage more younger people to the village. Any extra housing must have extra resources associated with it- roads, schools, parking, shops, healthcare. This needs to be prioritised on land in the centre of the village rather than housing.
- Sort out parking in Ashford Avenue. Road markings required to Ashford Avenue on the houseshare to the bungalows to prevent the owners/residents being blocked in by cars.
- The people who live in this village should be encouraged to keep their properties in good repair to make it a more attractive area to live in. Some gardens are disgraceful.

- It is obvious that Sonning Common needs more affordable housing to buy or rent for young people. However, NIMBY-ism always raises its head at the mention of any sites. This must in some way be overcome. It is not fair on the young. If it is not addressed Sonning Common will just become one huge retirement home with relevant drain on resources and particularly on health care provision.
- Development in Sonning Common possible only if all infrastructures improved!
- Strongly oppose 'garden grabbing' and similar piecemeal building behind existing house line. Would like Sonning Common to remain the quiet rural atmosphere that attracted us to it. In our opinion Sonning Common is unsuited to development due to infrastructure constraints. Development would be better located in the larger towns- Didcot, Henley, Caversham, Pangbourne.
- People who have lived in the village all their life (or most of it) should be given priority for council houses if they require them.
- We desperately need affordable housing in Sonning Common. Many young people are still living with their parents as they cannot afford to buy or rent housing in our village. Therefore, we need suitable homes for first time buyers. The social housing in this village is also inadequate for many families. They are too small and cramped for anyone with 3 or more children. Many of these families would like to move out but cannot afford a mortgage or private rent which is also high in this village. Therefore we need family homes that have a reasonable amount of space and a decent garden. Many proposed developments of recent years have simply tried to pack too many houses into the available space and have subsequently been rejected at the planning stage. We all know that we have to accept new housing schemes but it must meet the needs of the village. I am in favour of backland development keeping new builds within the village boundary, as we do not want to become part of the Reading conurbation. We absolutely do not need any more executive homes as these do not serve local inhabitants and simply allows our village to become a commuter town as they are completely out of the price range of many of the people we desperately need to help.
- I strongly believe that Sonning Common is not big enough to allow or accommodate more houses/ families. The traffic will increase substantially, the facilities will not be able to cope and the village feeling will change dramatically.
- I understand that the target for new housing development in Sonning Common has been revised upwards and is currently standing at 152 new homes. There seems to be some variance in the date by which time the development should be completed, 2022-2026? I think that the development should run at a maximum of 15 new homes per year to allow for a gradual increase in village population to allow the infrastructure to absorb the increase. However, the village centre must also develop to allow for the increase in people and traffic. There must be more traffic management and it is essential that village centre parking must be increased to accommodate the traffic volume expected by 2022-26.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: strongly oppose backland housing development behind the shops along Wood Lane. This would completely change the village centre and most definitely impact negatively to the already congested Wood Lane, where there is a major parking issue. Such development would be highly likely to also impact on the bus route along Wood

Lane which is crucial to many, particularly the high proportion of elderly in the village who rely on a central point of delivery for the bus service into Reading. The village centre requires altogether a different kind of development bearing in mind local businesses, parking need and retention of its unique exterior. In general, most particular attention should be paid to our position surrounded by AONB which need preserving for future generations. Affordable housing for young people/ families and supported/ warden assisted housing for the elderly are the most important when considering the nature of potential developments.

- Concerns: congestion in Wood Lane, Peppard Road, Grove Road and outside Chiltern Edge School. Surely a large development of houses will only increase the problems of traffic and parking on these roads. Small or individual new builds would not cause such an upset and hopefully be more successfully integrated into the community.
- I do not feel we need any more housing in Sonning Common- the school, doctors are full to capacity and without improving the infrastructure it will cause more problems. Traffic is already a problem within the village and building more houses in backland development will increase traffic in the village twofold. Sonning Common is becoming overcrowded as it is now without further development. I have lived in this village for 40 years and feel there has been enough expansion over the years, any more will completely ruin the country atmosphere that is evident now.
- One comment- why when applications are considered for building new houses is there not a stipulation that there should be a group of, say, 8 or 12 small places which are basically a shell? Yes, there should be a kitchen and bathroom but it shouldn't include washing machine, dishwasher etc. This only puts the price up. Let's face it, an affordable home is probably a maximum price of £100, 000. Most younger couples would love the chance to buy a home at this price and complete their home as and when they can afford it with the luxuries. Also the social housing is always set up for people who have children who, more often than not, don't work which means they aren't paying rent or council tax. This doesn't help the economy at all, only the person involved.
- We must de-clutter the centre of the village. Yellow lines will not sort out the problem. Do not allow infill behind the shops. Enforce One Stop and the Co-op to make good parking places. Build at Herb Farm with a good mix of affordable/ low cost housing. Put a small Tesco or Waitrose Express there to relieve pressure on the village centre. Give the Parish Council more power. They know and care about local issues. Give them some planning power. At the moment they make local recommendations and the SODC who know nothing about our village counter them.
- We need to provide/ extend existing services such as buses, health centre, schools, supplies, water, nurseries, pre-schools, etc. before more housing. Need more pathways to help walking around village and more patrolled crossings to make it safer for children too.
- It is important to keep Sonning Common as a village. There should be no development in centre other than small commercial as already exists and extra car parking. The shops are used by drive through customers as well as villagers. And development should be mixed and small with green spaces, trees and hedges, a condition of development. Safe walking

pathways are also important. Please, no yellow lines, traffic lights etc. that would encourage a town feel.

- While we appreciate that Sonning Common has to have a quota of new housing it should be more affordable housing for first time buyers, not have to be in infilled spaces and not make Sonning Common so large that it joins Emmer Green and Caversham outskirts to become part of Reading. Sonning Common is a nice village with good amenities and a good community spirit. It would be a shame to see this disappear.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: there has been some good back land development in Sonning Common. That proposed for Wood Lane is inappropriate in that access is into an already congested area. The land could also be used for improvement of village amenities. There is probably little suitable backland available for development. We would ask whether the need for housing in Sonning Common is any worse than other villages. Unfortunately market forces have made it difficult for many to get on the housing ladder and this is part of the pain of the young throughout the south of England. To some extent they must accept this. Sonning Common has an aging population and it is likely that more homes will become available to younger residents in the next decade or two. If we are to develop a sustainable future then the country's population must be stabilised if not reversed. This would help solve many problems (housing, emissions, traffic) but we need a new financial model. This does of course require government commitment. Meanwhile we should resist development so close to the urban sprawl of Reading. Our children moved away and we have accepted this- it is the norm.
- I think there should be greater opportunities for young people to afford homes in what is seen as a relatively expensive area, rather than, e.g., the old council yard in Shiplake Bottom which seemed only to provide executive style houses.
- COMMENT ON Q. 25: regarding backland development- it depends where it is and what the access is. Not at all sure that Wood Lane is the right place for access to backland development but on quieter roads it may not be such an issue.
- I believe that small sites should be used for up to 10 houses. Less impact on any one area. Landowners would share any profits, not just one or two large landowners making large amounts. As long as the properties were near then services could be extended to small developments. Should still be mixed housing with good garden space! Plans to date show very small gardens, no space between etc.
- Sonning Common is an expensive village to buy property in but people are willing to pay the premium for the current lifestyle and mix of people currently in the village. To try and change the type of housing available will change the feel and dynamic of the village and take away what people currently pay a premium for.
- There is a need to give more balance to the housing stock in Sonning Common. It is too biased to the top end!
- We are reluctant to see any kind of development or expansion in the village which increases traffic (especially in Kennylands Road) or housing significantly. We moved to the village 14 years ago without knowing much about it but liked its convenience and proximity to Reading whilst being in the countryside, small and friendly. We feel it offers a good balance of housing and if anything would rather see large family homes which would encourage

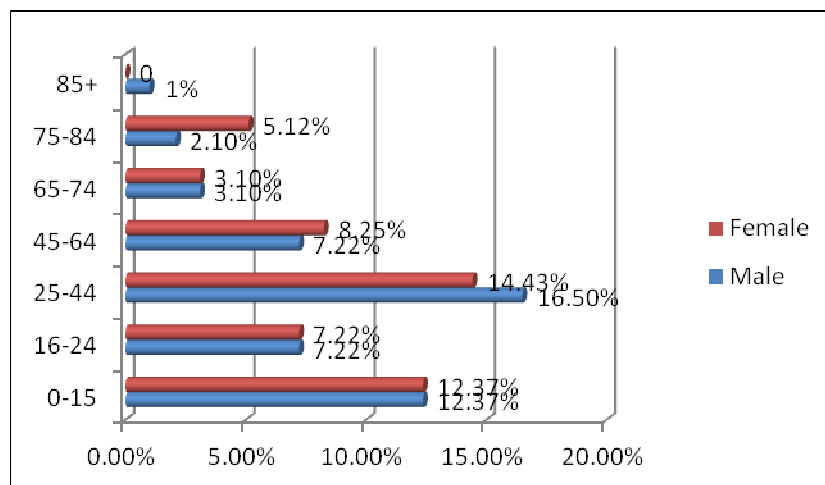
stability as opposed to mobility in the population. We applaud and support the development of facilities such as a sports centre, swimming pool and activities which encourage health, fitness and good use of the countryside. Traffic calming measures to enable safe cycling for children would be welcomed.

- I know government requirements but not sure putting social housing in with private housing would work for either party. People are not going to buy houses again, however low interest rates are, until they have job security. Sonning Common has too many older people (us included) and we need younger people and a way has to be found to house them. Lots of 30+ still living at home. Too much NIMBY-ism.
- Careful planning of where to put new homes. Putting more social housing next to current social housing stock would separate community even more. Sonning Common suffers from too many wealthy homes which are out of reach to the majority of the community. More family homes that are affordable are needed to privately buy. Key worker homes are a very good idea and part buy/rent homes are desperately needed.
- Use the land behind the shops in Wood Lane to build replacement shops and demolish existing to create a village centre.

Detailed Results

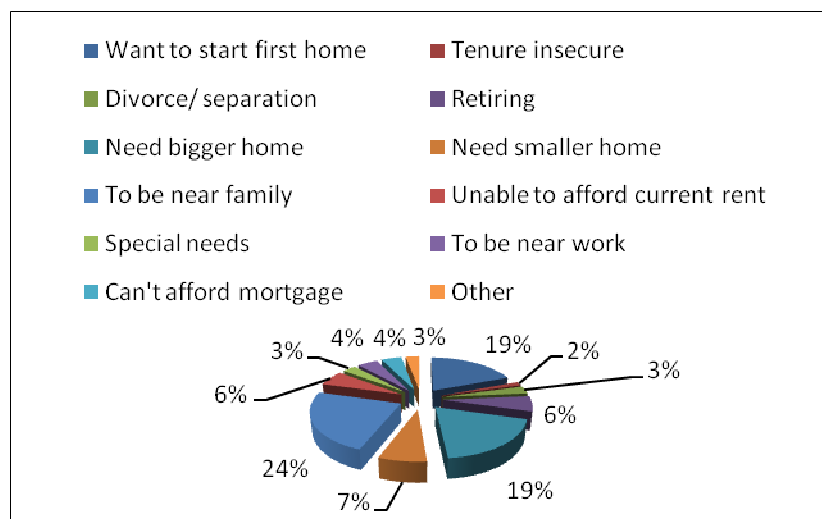
Part Three: Your Housing Needs

26. How many people of each age group would live in the new home (include carers if support needed to live independently)?
41 respondents- 97 residents total



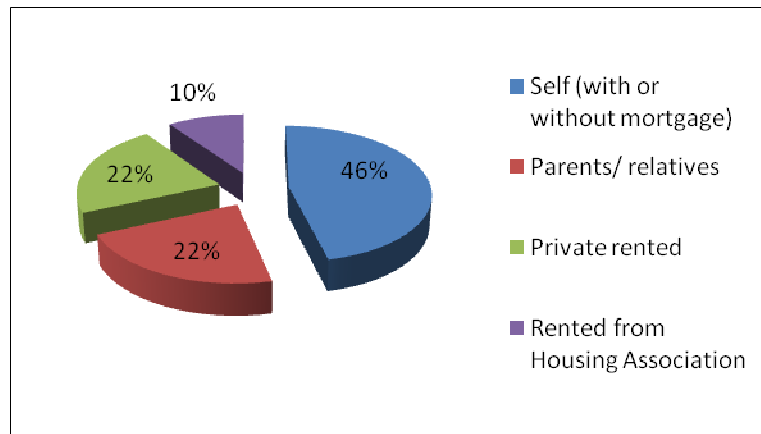
27. Why do you need a new home in Sonning Common?

40 respondents- 68 reasons given in total



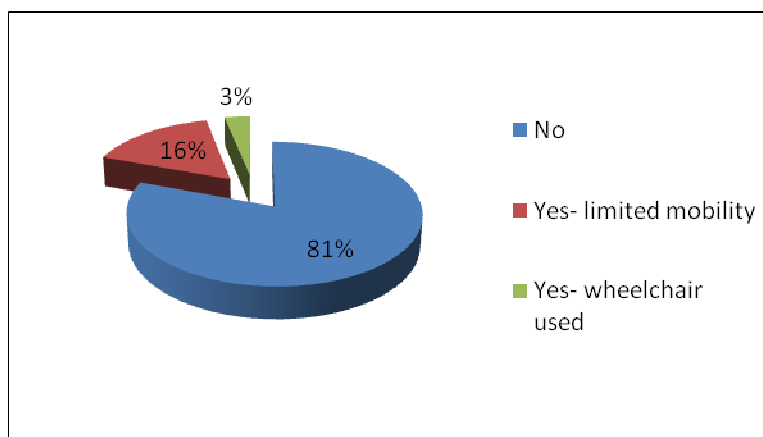
28. Who owns the home you live in now?

41 respondents



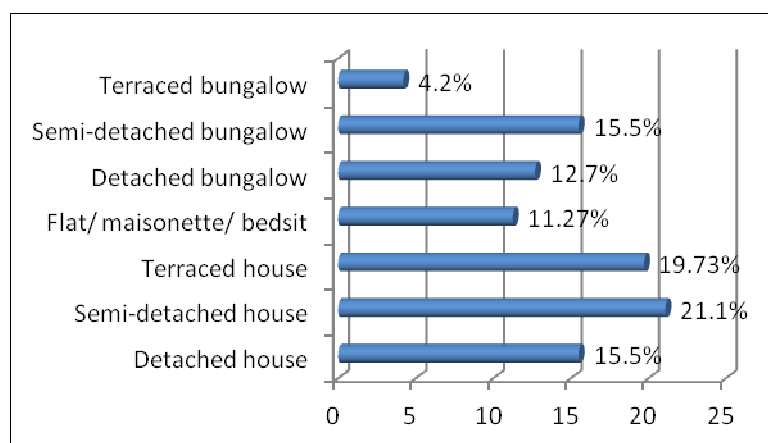
29. Does anything affect the type of home you need?

31 respondents



30. What type of home do you need?

39 respondents- 71 types in total



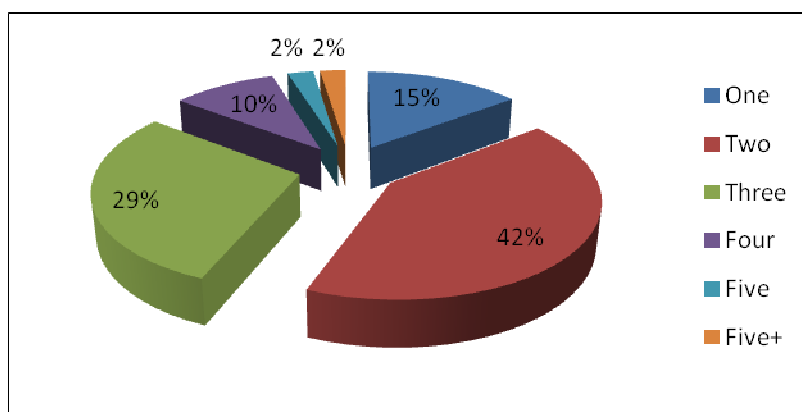
31. Please rank your preferences for housing tenure.

41 respondents- 89 choices in total

	No. 1 preference	No. 2 preference	No. 3 preference	No. 4 preference
Private rent	2.3%	2.3%	6.75%	7.8%
Housing Association rent	9%	1%	7.8%	6.75%
Self-ownership	33.7%	2.3%		2.3%
Part-rent/ part-buy with Housing Association	2.3%	12.3%	3.4%	

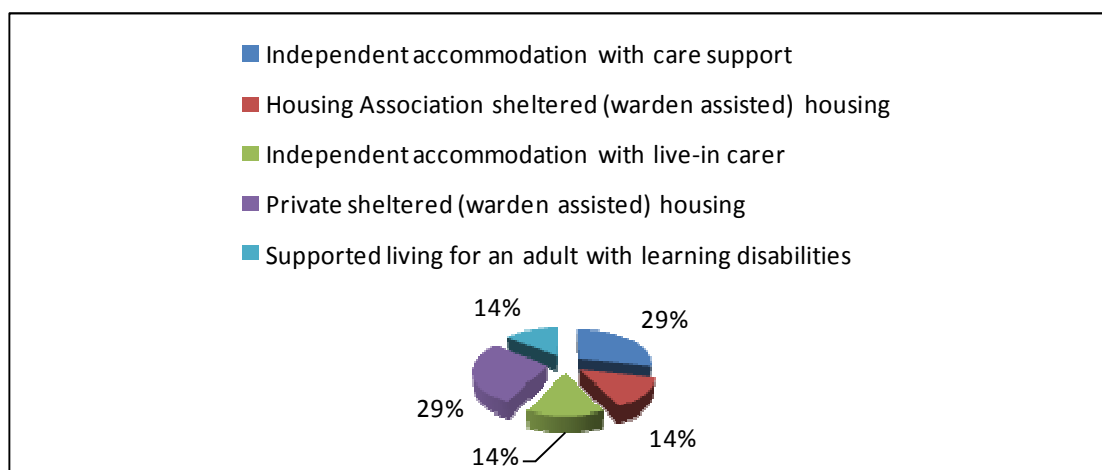
32. How many bedrooms would your new home need?

41 respondents- 41 choices in total



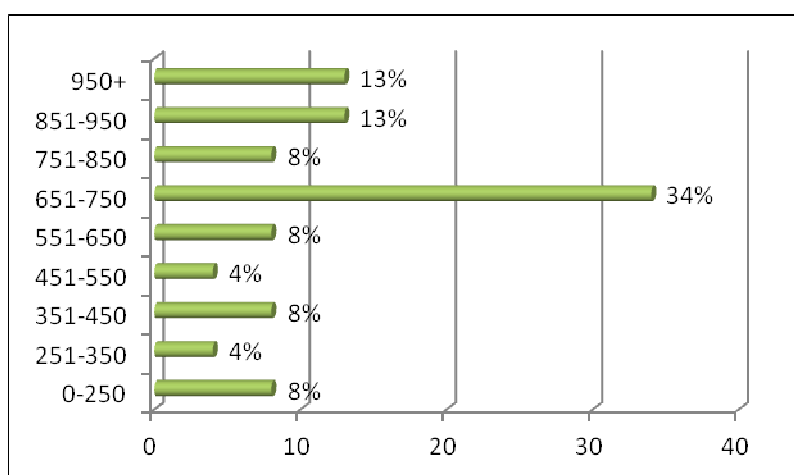
33. Does anyone in your home have a supported housing need?

3 respondents- 7 choices in total



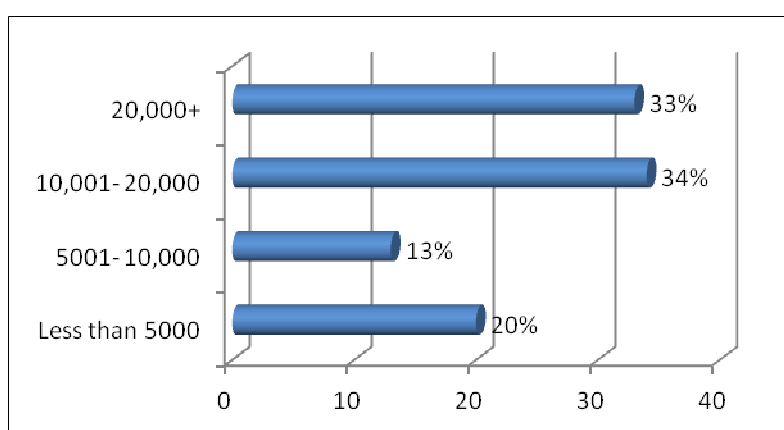
34. Can you give some idea of how much rent/ mortgage you could afford to pay per month?

24 respondents



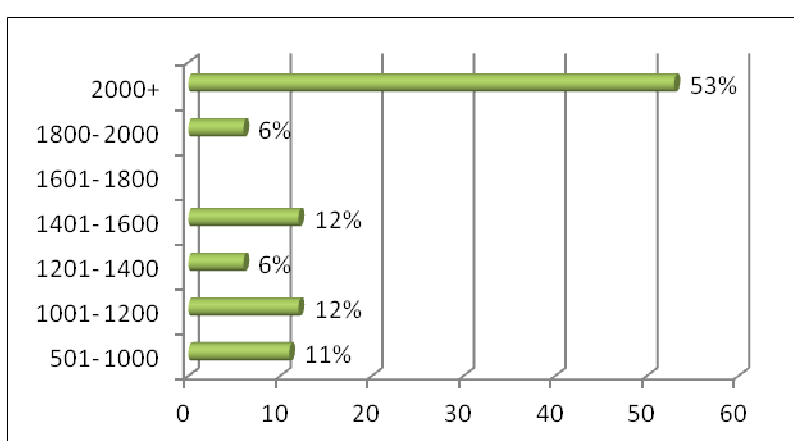
35. If you are interested in shared-ownership, how much do you think you could put down as a deposit?

15 respondents



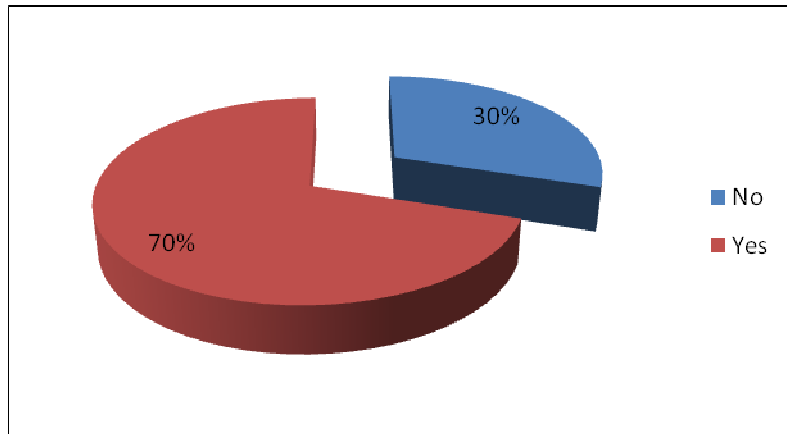
36. Can you give some idea of your household's monthly income, after tax?

17 respondents



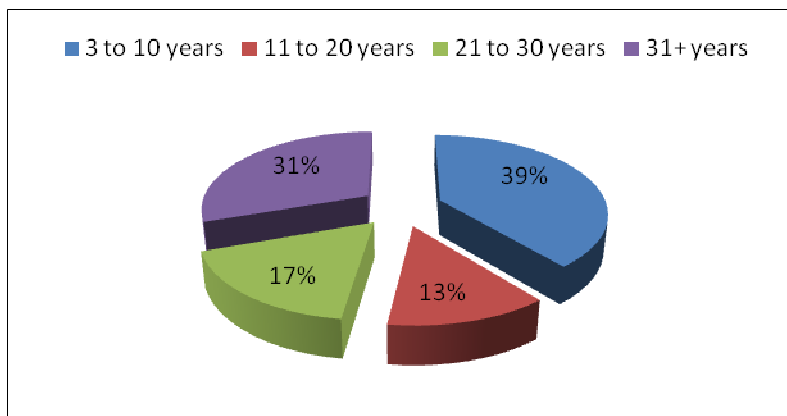
37. Do you live in Sonning Common at the moment?

40 respondents



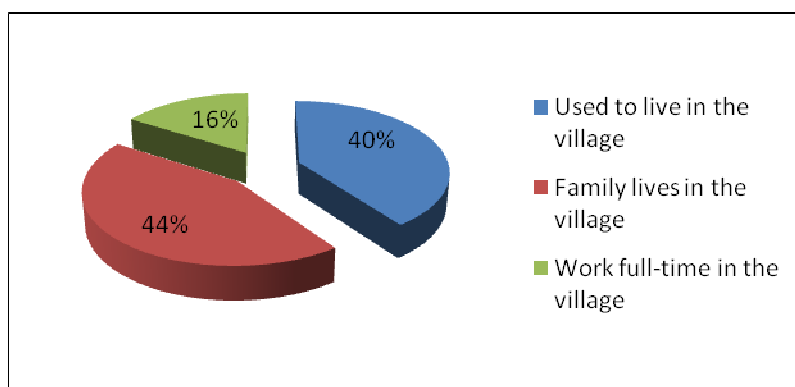
If yes, for how many years?

23 respondents



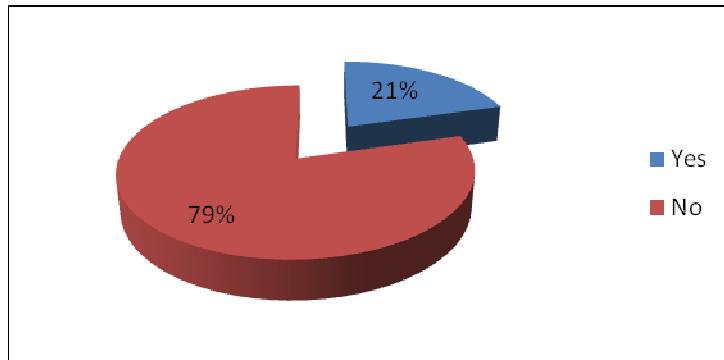
38. If you do not live in Sonning Common just now, what is your connection to it?

12 respondents- 25 connections listed in total



39. Are you on the South Oxfordshire District Council Housing Register?

39 respondents



Comments on Part 3

Note: where there is a possibility of a respondent being identified a comment has been edited.

- Sonning Common, like many other small towns and communities, will have to be massively resourceful owing to the number of foreign bodies taking residence in this country. Green belt is sacrosanct and for this reason big gardens and large detached homes will be a thing of the past by the turn of the century. Only very rich will avoid encroachment on their land-lucky [expletive] ! You don't need a survey to realise this is only common sense.
- Moved here from a much cheaper area of the UK to help out with young children in family and to be near family as nearing retirement age. Although sold my own house in previous area, struggle to afford to buy property in Sonning Common. Money going on private rent. If more affordable properties, I could afford to buy. Working two part time jobs because I have to.
- Sonning Common is a pleasant practical working village made special by the green space surrounding us. Having been brought up in Twyford which, due to thoughtless development, is now a suburb of Reading, we should limit new housing programmes and protect what we have.
- My mobility is decreasing and the stairs are becoming difficult. If bungalows could be built for buying or renting it could be very useful for the older pensioners in Sonning Common. Eventually a reservoir of such bungalows would accrue.
- Living with parents. Want to move out and rent but need to earn 30x the monthly rent to be 'reliable'. Struggling to find rental properties at £705pcm or below. Housing for key workers would be of benefit.
- I do not think we need any more new houses in Sonning Common, it is full up. It is difficult to get across the road and to find a parking place, the schools are full and the drains will break down. Sonning Common used to be a nice quiet place, you are trying to turn it into a town.
- Having a link with Sonning Common does not merit special housing arrangements.
- There is a good community spirit here. I think Sonning Common has a great deal to offer many varied people- young families, people who commute with Reading and London, schools are excellent, and access to Henley College.
- We would like to downsize but we could get more money back from the sale of our house if we moved away.

- There should be more housing for people who were born and brought up in Sonning Common but who can't afford to live here now in the present financial climate.
- [Young male] wishes to get on housing ladder. Born and raised and lived with Emmer Green/Kidmore End/Sonning Common all his life so would like to stay close to family and friends.
- Would like affordable housing to buy.
- 2 teenage children who do not expect to be able to afford to move out so will probably stay with parents another 5-10 years.
- How will this village cope with more houses regarding the health centre and parking already a problem.
- I want to move back to the village as I have family here and have been brought up here and it is not fair that I am in a flat which is unsuitable for my family and I think it is unfair that I have to move out of the place that I grew up in when people have no reason to be in the village. Get in place, it is not fair and totally unreasonable.
- Would like 2 bedroom bungalow, £250-275,000. This could be detached or semi-detached. Wheelchair accessible, sliding doors (manual or electric), with small sunny garden and garage. Both bedrooms with ensuite.
- Family of requires 3 bedroom house. Private renting at present.
- [We] moved to our present semi-detached Housing Association house in [the early 1990s]. I [have health problems and] would like to downsize in the next 2 years to either a 2 bed flat or maisonette in the area, whenever one becomes available. More affordable housing, particularly flats and maisonettes, would be much appreciated by young and old alike.
- Sonning Common may not be a beautiful village but it is a totally unique, happy and supportive community. Our great facilities serve the wider community surrounding us. We will resist any attempt to join us up with Reading and turn us into a town by developing large areas into whole new housing areas. Small carefully designed closes to suit need would be the most happily received.
- With increasing age [mobility problems] are ever more likely. Ideally I would like a 2 bedroom bungalow with small garden. Access to shops and local facilities for when I can no longer drive would be important.
- We realise more houses need to be built as long as the infrastructure is built alongside it, i.e., car parks, doctors, roads etc.
- There is great need for affordable family (not social housing) homes. 3 and 4 bedrooms. Currently unable to afford to move out of a private house on sociable housing street as all homes are a massive step up and out of reach.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

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