

A DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THORNTON



PRODUCED BY
MIDLANDS RURAL HOUSING

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1. Summary

- A Housing Needs Survey was carried out in the village of Thornton in September 2016.
- Results obtained showed there was a need in the next 5 years for up to 5 affordable homes and 5 open market (sale) homes for local people enabling them to be suitably housed within the community.
- Local needs affordable homes could be developed on a ‘rural exception site’¹, if available, and subject to local support some open market sale homes could be used to cross-subsidise the affordable homes.
- The alternative to this is that the local homes that are needed are developed as part of a larger development if the opportunity arises and if the needs cannot be met by existing properties.
- The housing needs that have been identified along with the potential ways to meet them, if desired and necessary, will be explored further by the Bagworth & Thornton Parish Council, the local community, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Midlands Rural Housing.

2. Introduction

Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) is one of the leading providers of rural housing services in the UK. MRH works with government organisations, developers, architects, builders, parish councils, local authorities, and housing providers to assess the needs for as well as enable access to excellent affordable homes in the Midlands. More details of the work of MRH can be found on the web site (www.midlandsrural.org.uk).

In Leicestershire, MRH works on behalf of a collaborative rural housing partnership. The Leicestershire Rural Housing Group is guiding the work of Midlands Rural Housing to assess and meet the housing needs of people in the villages of Leicestershire. Partners are focused on delivering affordable homes for local people and having a positive impact on our rural areas. The Group is a dedicated formal partnership between the County Council, six rural District and Borough Councils (including Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council) and three Housing Associations who fund enabling work in Leicestershire to investigate housing needs and bring forward affordable housing schemes where they are needed. The Group also includes non funding organisations such as the Rural Community Council, National Housing Federation and the Homes & Communities Agency.

In 2016, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (H&BBC) instructed MRH to investigate the local housing needs of the residents of Thornton, Leicestershire. This formed part of a rolling 5 year programme of Housing Needs Surveys that H&BBC have to understand the housing needs of its rural communities. MRH worked with Bagworth & Thornton Parish Council to agree and arrange the Housing Needs Survey of the whole Parish.

¹ An exception site is a piece of land outside but touching the village boundary that can be developed as an exception to normal planning policy. Planning permission is only granted on sites where it has been demonstrated that housing is needed and the homes provided will be affordable and reserved for local people as a priority in perpetuity i.e. now and in the future.

3. Rural housing and the Housing Needs Survey

Average property prices in rural areas have increased more than urban areas in monetary terms over the past 5 years² forcing many local residents to move away from their towns and villages in order to find suitable and affordable homes. House prices in the countryside are now from £20,000 to £50,000 higher than in urban areas, despite average wages being lower.

The number of people on waiting lists for affordable homes in rural England has soared to around 750,000³. New household formation is outstripping supply by 3 to 1 (source: CLG). Increasing house prices and the limited availability of appropriate properties has resulted in local people being unable to find a home within their community and this may be happening in Thornton.

The Thornton Housing Needs Survey questionnaires were delivered to every household in the Parish in early September. The return date for the survey was 30th September and returns were made via a postage paid envelope directly to MRH. Survey forms were distributed to all households in the village as well as to those who contacted MRH to say that they had moved away from Thornton or had a strong connection to the Parish and wished to complete a form. In total 480 survey forms were distributed.

The Housing Needs Survey was conducted in order to obtain clear evidence of any local housing need for a range of housing tenures for Thornton residents. This evidence will be made available to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Bagworth & Thornton Parish Council; used to inform Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Plans; and provide clarity on what type and tenure of housing is required to meet local needs.

In addition, the information can be used positively in the planning process. It provides a foundation on which to negotiate 'planning gain' opportunities with developers. In short, it gives planners and parish organisations evidence that can be used to obtain an element of 'local needs' housing in negotiations with house builders, should such situations arise in the village.

The information obtained from a Housing Needs Survey is also invaluable at the local level, particularly in relation to local authority, parish council and neighbourhood planning activities. Such information can be acted upon locally and taken on board in the decision making process when housing issues arise.

² Halifax Rural Housing Review 2015 - "a house in a rural area costs £206,423 on average, which is 13 per cent more than the typical cost of a property in an urban area at £182,710."

³ National Housing Federation, Rural housing research report 2015

4. Conclusion

MRH has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of Thornton up to 2021. This study has not only investigated the affordable housing need of the village, but also for market rent level housing and open market housing.

The survey has identified a need for affordable and open market properties in need in the next 5 years for those with a connection to Thornton.

Of the respondents who indicated a housing need in the next 5 years:

- **5 were assessed as being in need of open market housing (for local people) to purchase:**

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 x 3 bed house | 1 x 5 bed house |
| 2 x 4 bed house | 1 x 2 bed bungalow |

- **4 were assessed as being in need of affordable housing for rent and shared ownership**

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 x 1 bed bungalow - affordable rented | 1 x 1 bed house - Shared Ownership |
| 1 x 4 bed house - affordable rented | 1 x 4 bed house - Shared Ownership |

- **2 respondents were assessed as being adequately housed**

These results were cross referenced with the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Housing Register. Respondents to the Housing Needs Survey who were also on the Housing Register were not analysed again (so no double counting has taken place), and there were a further 8 households who have been assessed as being in housing need who feature on the Housing Register but did not complete a Housing Needs Survey questionnaire. These households all have a connection to Thornton and their housing needs are as follows:

- **8 were assessed as being in need of affordable housing.**

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4 x 1 bed home - affordable rented | 1 x 4 bed house - affordable rented |
| 3 x 2 bed house - affordable rented | |

THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR
5 OPEN MARKET HOMES AND 12 AFFORDABLE HOMES
IN THORNTON FOR THOSE WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION

Appendix 1 - Housing Need Analysis

Of the 151 returns, 140 were from people who felt that they were adequately housed at present. These respondents completed a form primarily to offer their support, objection or thoughts towards 'local needs' housing and comments on life in the village. It was, therefore, not necessary to process these in the 'housing needs analysis' as they had not indicated a housing need for the next 5 years.

i) Respondent analysis

The following table lists details of the 11 respondents who stated that they are in housing need in the next 5 years as well as those assessed as being in need on H&BBC's Housing Register. Respondents were asked to identify what they felt is needed in terms of property type and size together with a preferred tenure type. In reality it may not be possible to meet the aspirations of each respondent. Incomes and likely property prices are considered in order to ensure that any proposed future homes would indeed meet the needs of those to be housed. Therefore a 'likely allocation/purchase' is suggested to outline realistic provision.

| RESPONDENTS BELOW HAVE A NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE HOUSING IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|--|
| Ref | Local Connection? | On Housing Register? | Household details | Reasons for need | Preferred home and tenure | Likely allocation / purchase |
| 15 | Yes | No | Single person living in affordable rented home | Too far from village | 2 bed bungalow - Affordable rented | Suitably housed at present |
| 22 | Yes | Yes - Housing Assn register | Couple living in affordable rented home | None given | 2 bed bungalow - Affordable rented | Suitably housed at present |
| 53 | Yes | Yes - HBBC CBL Register | Family living in affordable rented home | Family break up | 2 bed bungalow - Affordable rented | 1 bed bungalow - Affordable rented |

| Ref | Local Connection? | On Housing Register? | Household details | Reasons for need | Preferred home and tenure | Likely allocation |
|-----|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 56 | Yes | No | Family living in affordable rented home | Present home in poor condition | 3 / 4 bed house - Affordable rented | 4 bed house - Affordable rented |
| 83 | Yes | No | Family living in own home | Present home too small | 4 bed house - Open market purchase | 4 bed house - Open market purchase |
| 88 | Yes | No | Family living in own home | Present home too small | 4 bed house - Open market purchase | 4 bed house - Open market purchase |
| 90 | Yes | No | Family living in own home | Present home too small | 5 bed house - Open market purchase | 5 bed house - Open market purchase |
| 101 | Yes | Yes - HBBC CBL Register | Family living in affordable rented home | To be closer to family | 4 bed house - Shared ownership / affordable rented | 4 bed house - Shared ownership |
| 104 | Yes | No | Single person living with family | First independent home | 1 bed house / flat - Open market purchase / shared ownership | 1 bed house - Shared ownership |
| 115 | Yes | No | Couple living in own home | Disabled, cannot manage stairs; need adapted home | 2 bed bungalow / flat - Open market purchase | 2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase |

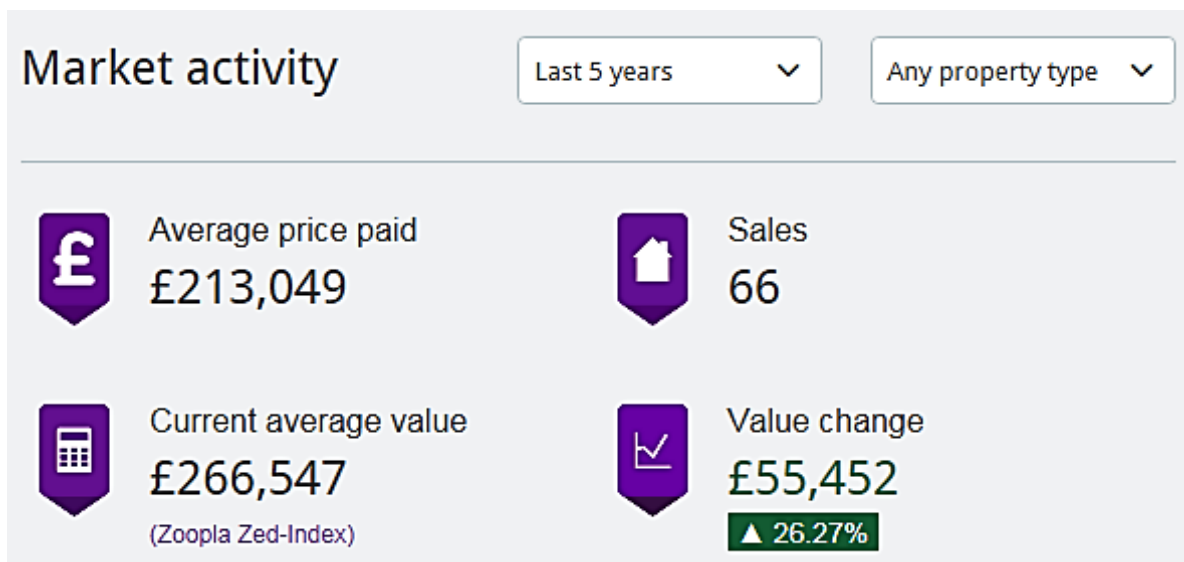
| Ref | Local Connection? | On Housing Register? | Household details | Reasons for need | Preferred home and tenure | Likely allocation |
|-----|-------------------|----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 136 | Yes | No | Single person living in privately rented home | Renting but would like to buy; Couple setting up first independent home | 4 bed house / bungalow - Open market purchase | 3 bed house - Open market purchase |

RESPONDENTS THAT DID NOT COMPLETE A SURVEY FORM BUT ARE ON HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S HOUSING REGISTER AND HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AS BEING IN IMMEDIATE HOUSING NEED

| | Local Connection? | On Housing Register? | Household details | Reasons for need | Likely allocation |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Yes | Yes | Single/ couple | Unsuitably housed | 1 bed home - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Single/ couple | Unsuitably housed | 1 bed home - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Single/ couple | Unsuitably housed | 1 bed home - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Single/ couple | Unsuitably housed | 1 bed home - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Family | Unsuitably housed | 2 bed house - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Family | Unsuitably housed | 2 bed house - affordable rented |

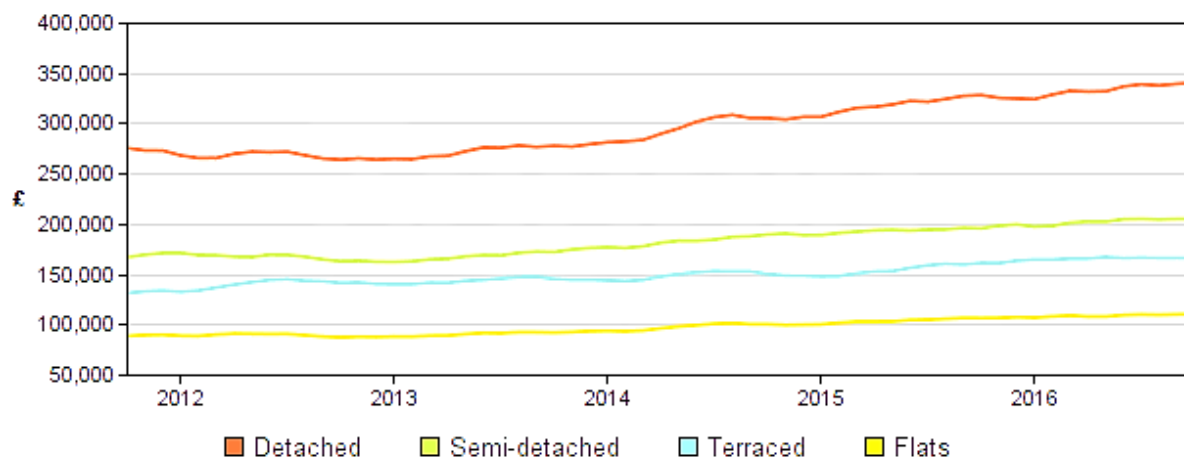
| | Local Connection? | On Housing Register? | Household details | Reasons for need | Likely allocation |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Yes | Yes | Family | Unsuitably housed | 2 bed house - affordable rented |
| | Yes | Yes | Family | Unsuitably housed | 4 bed house - affordable rented |

ii) House price trends



Property prices in the village have, overall, increased over the past 5 years. During that period prices have increased by an average of 26.27% (£55,452).

Value trends in Thornton, Coalville



iii) Local context - properties for sale

By way of local context, the tables below shows prices of properties that were for sale or private rent in Thornton in October 2016 (source: www.zoopla.com).

Current asking prices in Thornton, Leicestershire

Average: **£281,000**

| Property type | 1 bed | 2 beds | 3 beds | 4 beds | 5 beds |
|---------------|-------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Houses | - | £195,000 (1) | £99,000 (1) | £415,000 (2) | - |
| Flats | - | - | - | - | - |
| All | - | £195,000 (1) | £99,000 (1) | £415,000 (2) | - |

Current asking rents in Thornton, Leicestershire

| Property type | 1 bed | 2 beds | 3 beds | 4 beds | 5 beds |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Houses | - | - | - | - | - |
| Flats | - | - | - | - | - |
| All | - | - | - | - | - |

There are currently four properties for sale all ranging from £195,000 to £450,000. There are currently no homes for rent in Thornton.

iv) Local context - properties sold

Property value data/graphs for Thornton, Leicestershire

| Property type | Avg. current value | Avg. £ per sq ft. | Avg. # beds | Avg. £ paid (last 12m) |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Detached | £339,930 | £214 | 3.9 | £256,000 |
| Semi-detached | £204,531 | £253 | 3.0 | £209,100 |
| Terraced | £165,624 | £196 | 2.5 | £176,975 |
| Flats | - | - | - | - |

Affordability is calculated using a mortgage multiplier of 3.5 times household income with a 20% deposit.

The average property price for actual sales since November 2015 (total 10 sales) can be seen on the right hand column of the chart above. Based on the affordability criteria explained above, to purchase a terraced house at the average price paid since November 2015 (£176,975) would require a deposit of over £35,000 and income in excess of £40,000 per annum.

Appendix 2 - Respondent details

A total of 440 survey forms were distributed and 151 were received in return, giving a return rate of 31% against the number distributed. In our experience this is a good level of response for a survey of this type in a settlement of this size.

i) Household type

Question 1 of the questionnaire asked village residents to indicate the type of household they are.

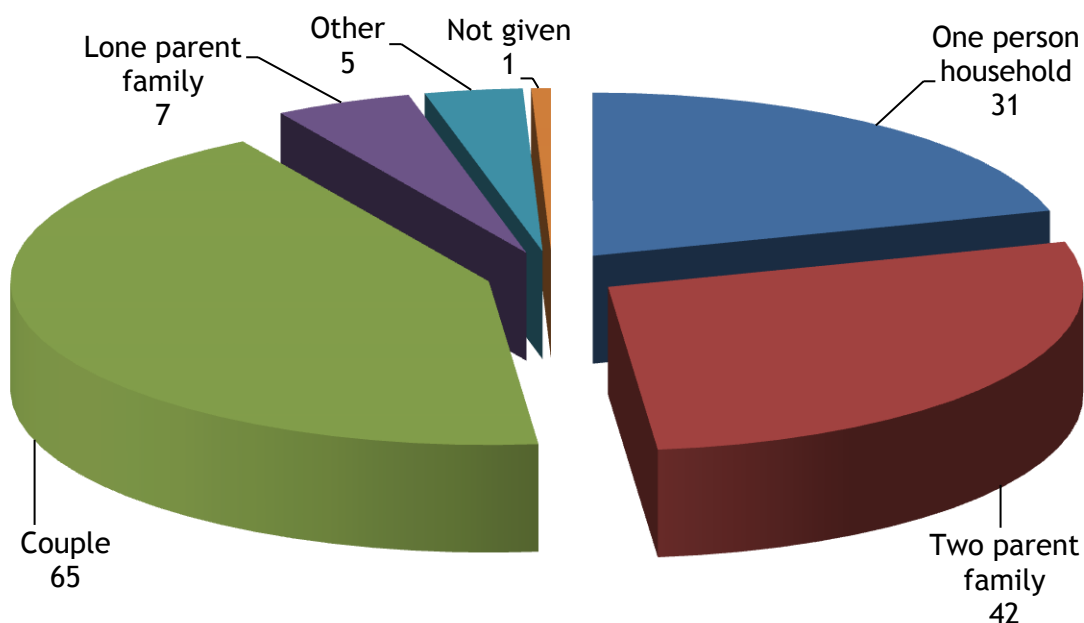


Fig 1.1 - Household type

The chart above (fig 1.1), shows the breakdown of households that responded to the survey.

The largest number of responses was from households containing couples; 43% of total responses were from this group.

28% of responses came from two parent families; 21% from one person households and 5% from lone parent families. 3% of responses described their household composition as 'other.'

ii) **Tenure of all respondents**

The current household tenure of respondents was asked at question 3 and the results are given in the chart below (fig 1.2):

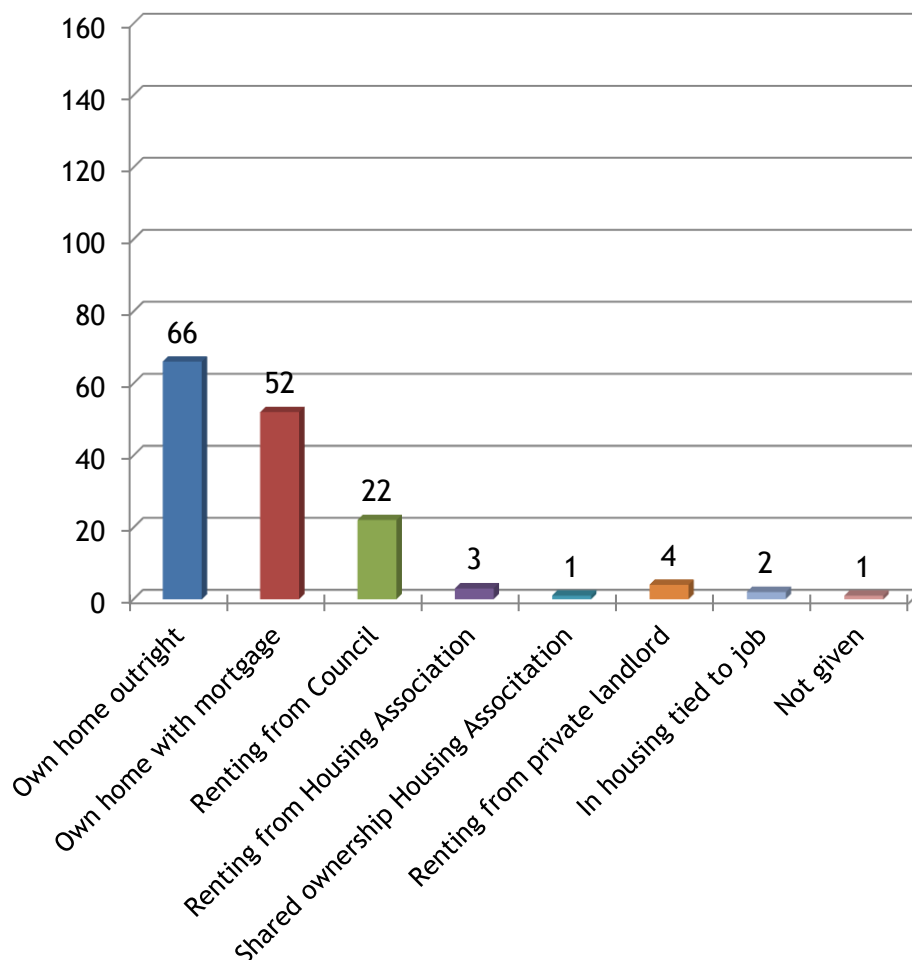


Fig 1.2 - Tenure of respondents

It shows that ‘owner-occupiers’ were by far the largest tenure group accounting for 78% of replies (44% of total survey respondents owned their home outright and 34% have a mortgage on their home).

19% of respondents live in rented accommodation (16% rent from the Council or a Housing Association and 3% rent privately).

iii) Property Types

Questions 4 and 5 asked about size and type of home. The following chart (fig 1.3) details the type of property that respondents currently reside in:

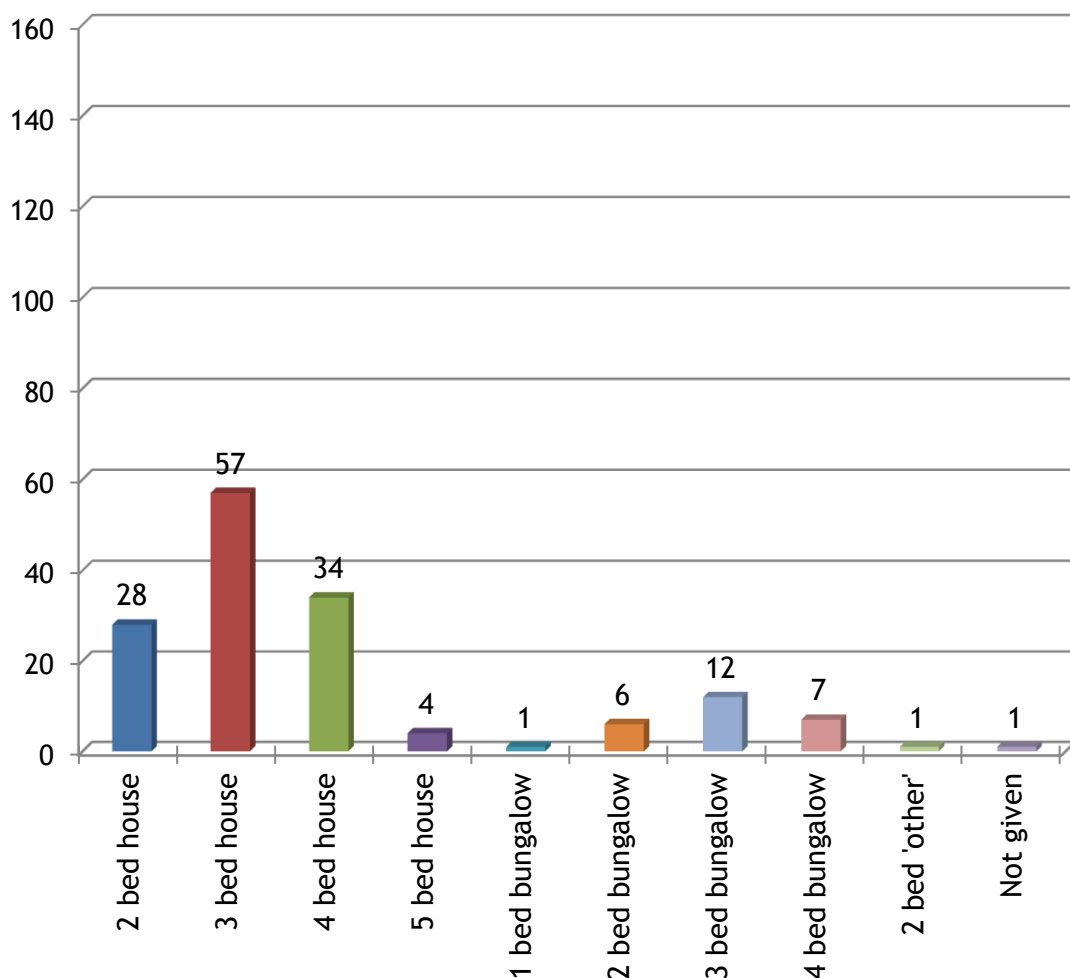


Fig 1.3 - Property types

Fig 1.3 shows that 81% live in a house and 17% live in a bungalow.

Those living in 3 and 4 bedroom houses were the largest group (38% and 23% of responses respectively), followed by those living in 2 bedroom houses (19%) and 3 bedroom bungalows (8%).

iv) Length of residence in village

The length of time that respondents have lived in Thornton was asked at question 6. The responses are given in the chart below:

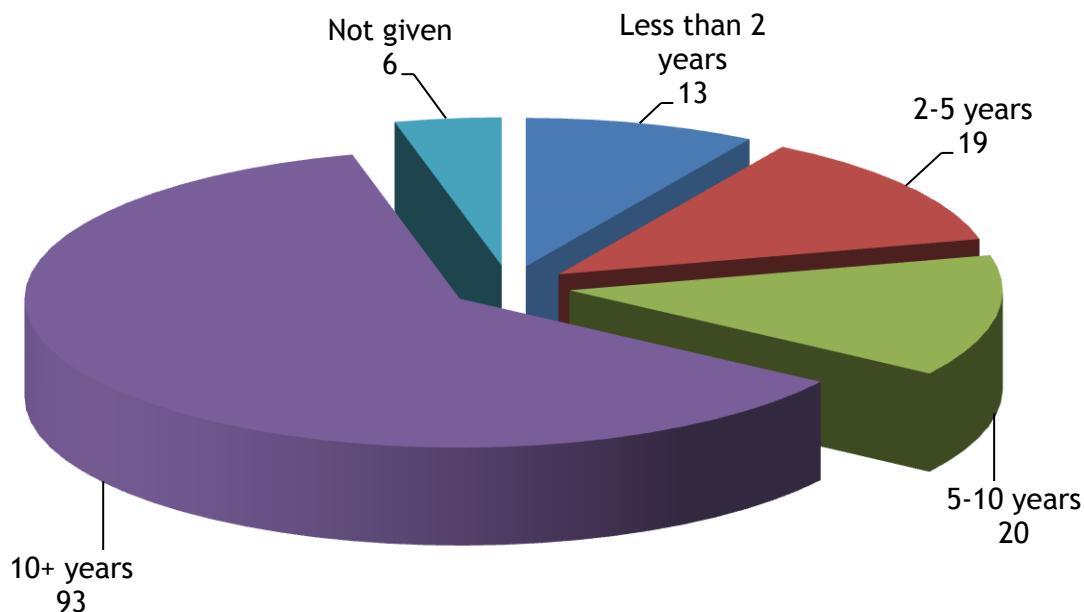


Fig 1.4- Length of residence in village

Fig 1.4 shows that 62% of completed surveys came from households that have lived in the village for over 10 years.

13% of respondents have lived in Thornton for between 5 and 10 years, 13% have been there for between 2 and 5 years and 9% of responses came from those who have lived in the village for less than 2 years.

v) **Type of housing required in the village**

Question 7 of the survey asked for opinions on the types of housing that respondents believe are needed in the village. The results are given in the chart below (fig 1.5):

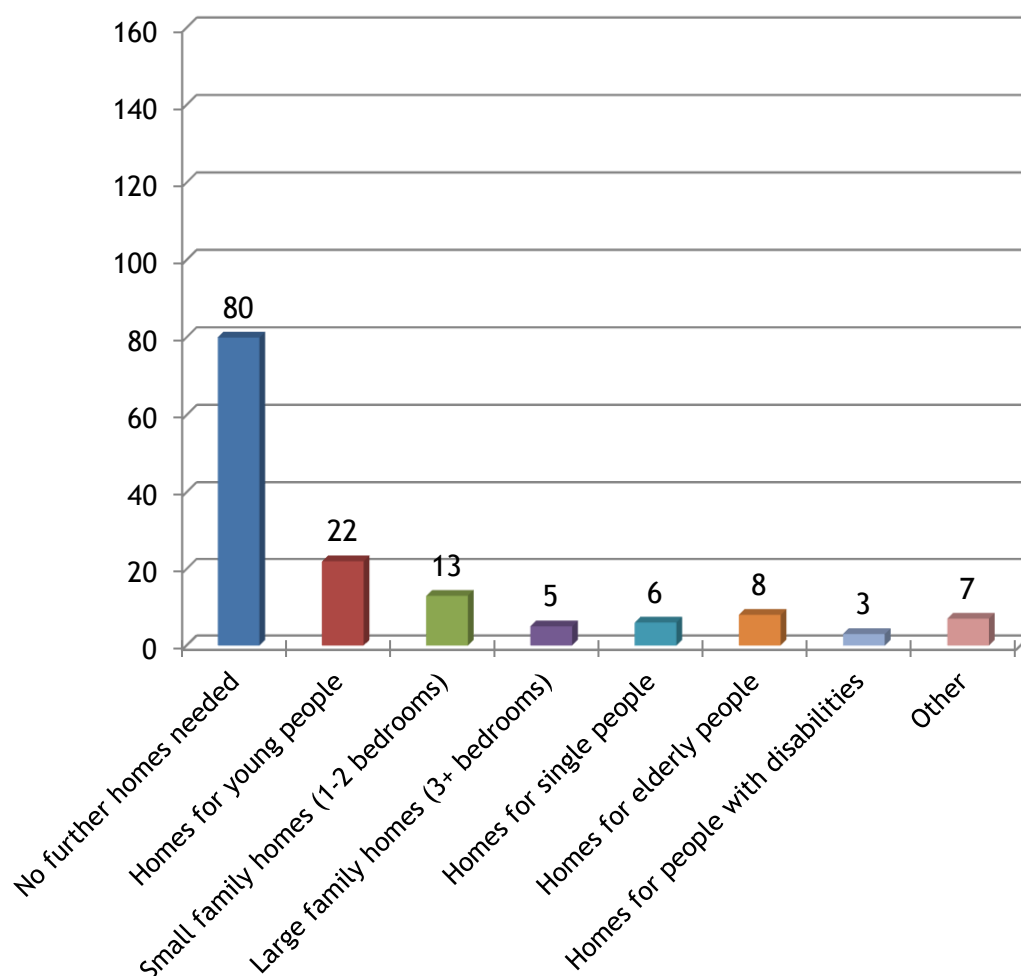


Fig 1.5 - Type of housing needed in the village

It should be noted that respondents were able to tick as many options as they felt appropriate, hence the total number is higher than the number of individual responses received.

Fig 1.5 shows that 53% of respondents thought that no further homes were needed in Thornton.

Of those that believed more homes were needed, the most popular choices were:

- Homes for young people
- Small family homes

vi) Requirements for new homes

Respondents were asked at question 8 whether anyone living in their household has a need to set up home separately in the village in the next 5 years.

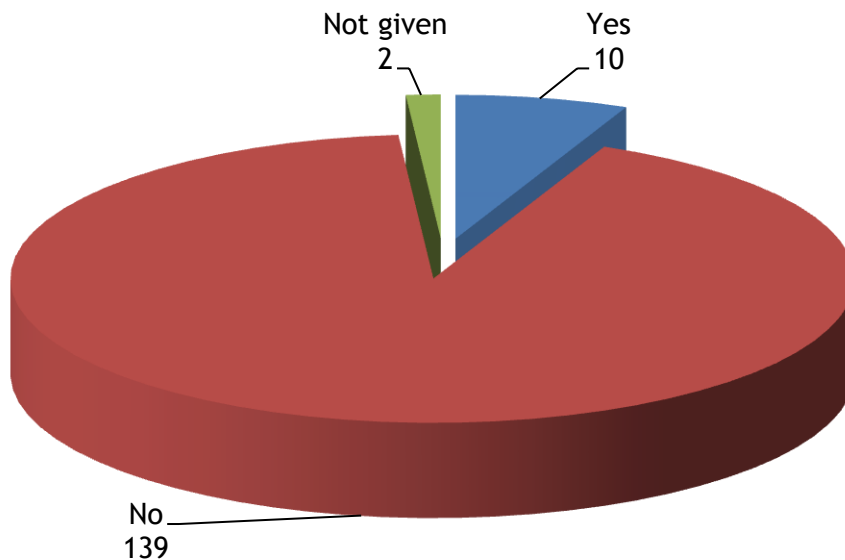


Fig 1.6 -New homes required from within household

It can be seen from fig 1.6, above, that less than 7% of respondents felt that someone within their household has a need to set up a separate home in the village in the next 5 years. 92% of responses felt that this was not the case.

vii) Migration and reasons for leaving

Question 8 also asked whether respondents had experienced former members of their household leaving the village over the last 5 years and, if so, what the reasons were for them leaving.

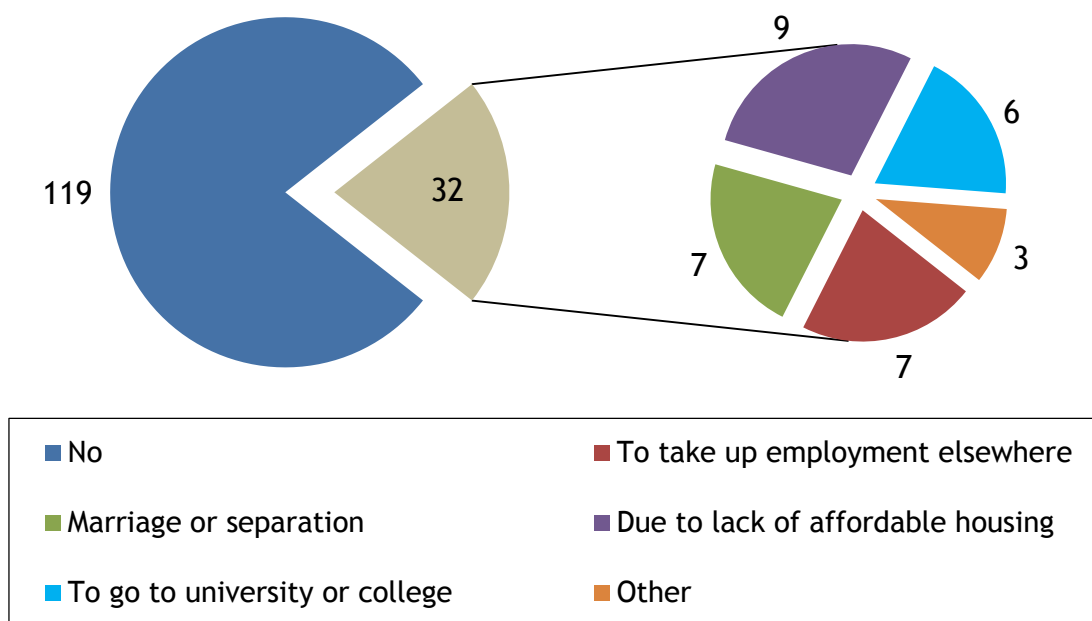


Fig 1.7 - Migration and reasons for leaving

Fig 1.7 shows that 21% of village residents who returned questionnaires were aware of other household members who have had to leave the Parish in the last 5 years.

The reasons for members of the households leaving can be seen in the chart above and it is worth noting that 9 cases involved a lack of affordable housing.

viii) Support for small number of homes to meet local peoples' needs

A fundamental question in the survey was question 9 which asked whether people are in favour of a small number of new homes in the village to meet the needs of local people.

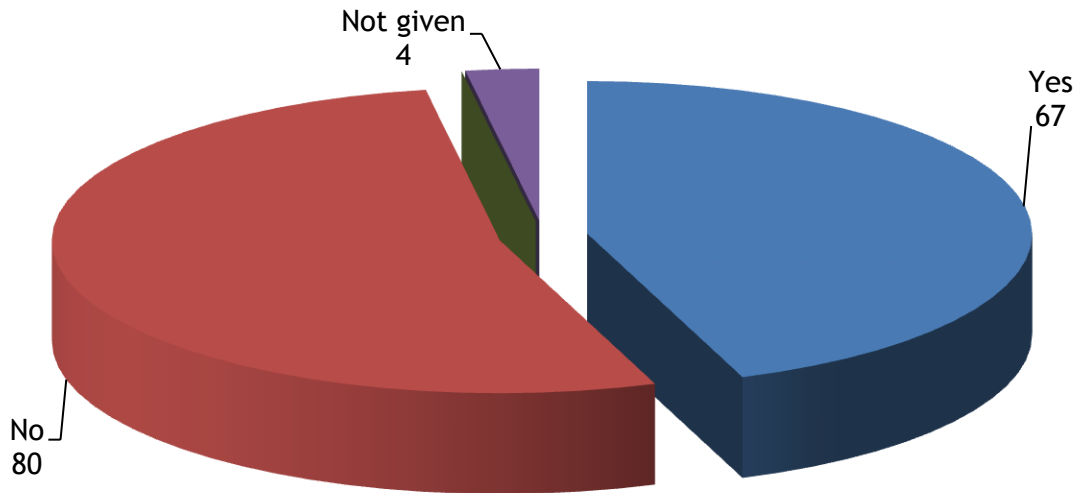


Fig 1.8 - Support for homes for local people

Fig 1.8 shows that 44% of respondents are in support of a small number of homes to meet local peoples' needs, while 53% said that they are not in support. 3% did not provide an answer to this question.

Of the 80 respondents who answered 'no', any reasons specified are shown below.

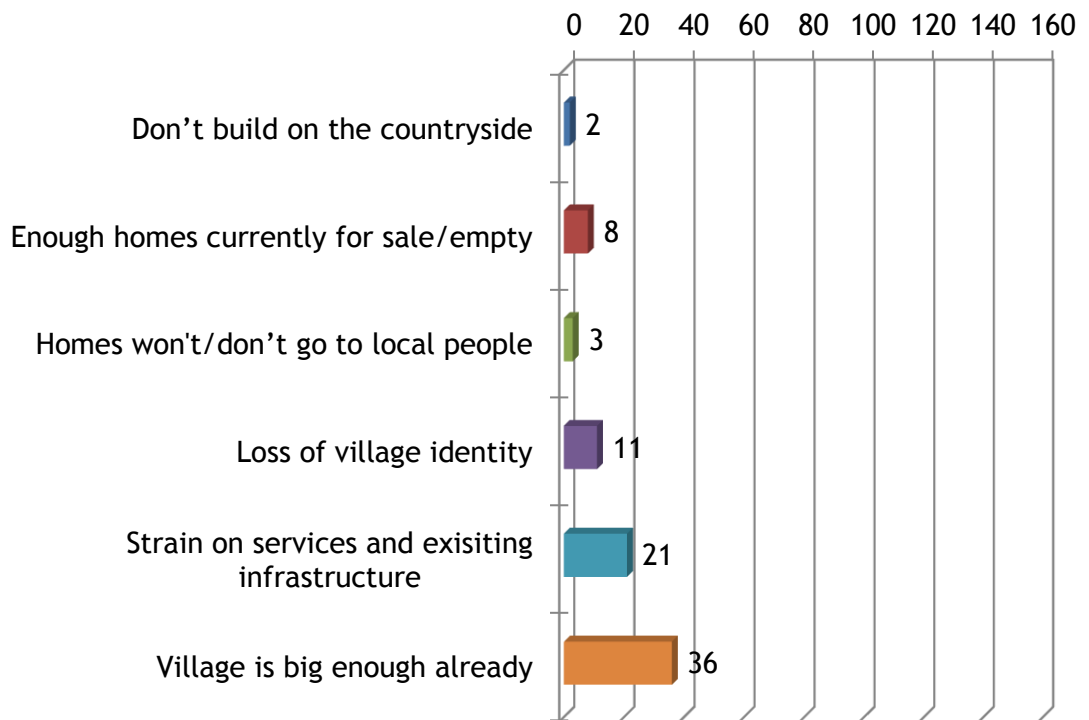


Fig 1.9 - Concerns over new homes being built

It can be seen that the main concerns are that the village is big enough already and may lose its identity. There is also concern that there will be too much strain on services and infrastructure.

ix) Life in the village

The following two charts detail respondents' answers to the 'life in the village' questions.

The views expressed allow a picture of life within the village to be built up. This information can help assess whether a village can be considered desirable and sustainable. Ensuring that people will want to take up residency and live in a village both now and in the future are important factors when considering the provision of new homes.

The first question (question 19) asked village residents which of the 'positive' factors of life in the village best described Thornton.

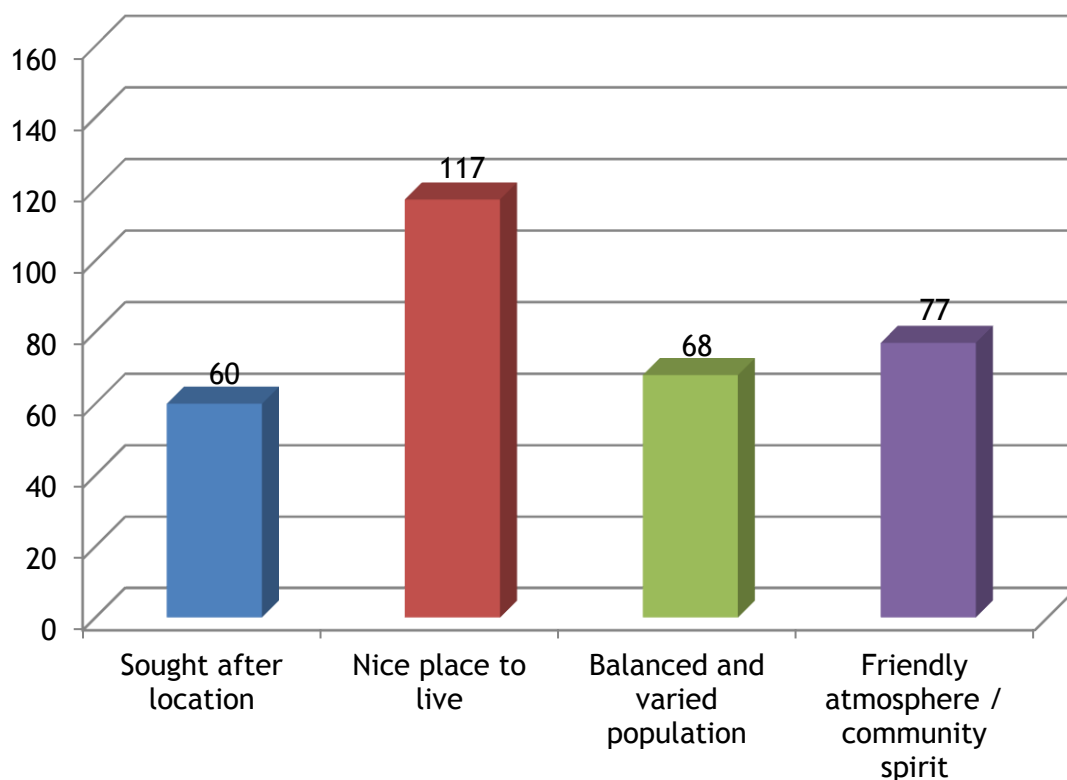


Fig 2.0 - Life in the village - positive factors

From fig 2.0, above, it can be seen that many respondents hold positive views about life in Thornton. 77% believed that the Parish is a nice place to live and 51% believe it has a friendly atmosphere/community spirit. 45% believe it has a balanced and varied population and 40% believe it is a sought after location.

The second question (question 20) sought village residents' perceptions on the potentially negative aspects of life in the village.

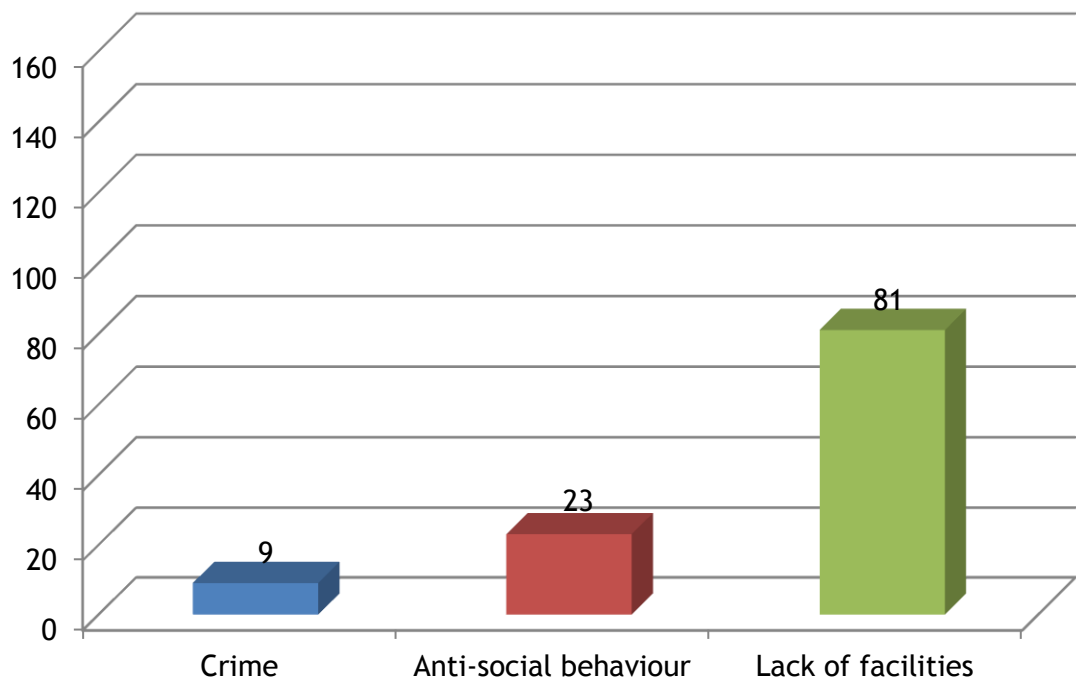


Fig 2.1 - Life in the village - negative factors

As can be seen from fig 2.1 above, some respondents consider that Thornton suffers a little from some of the 'negative factors' that affect many communities. 54% of respondents stated that there is a lack of facilities in the Parish.

15% of respondents felt that anti-social behaviour can be a problem and 6% believe that there is some crime in the village.

Some respondents provided further details around their thoughts on this question. These can be found overleaf.

Do you feel that the Parish suffers from a lack of facilities? Those that answered 'yes' and provided a comment can be summarised as:

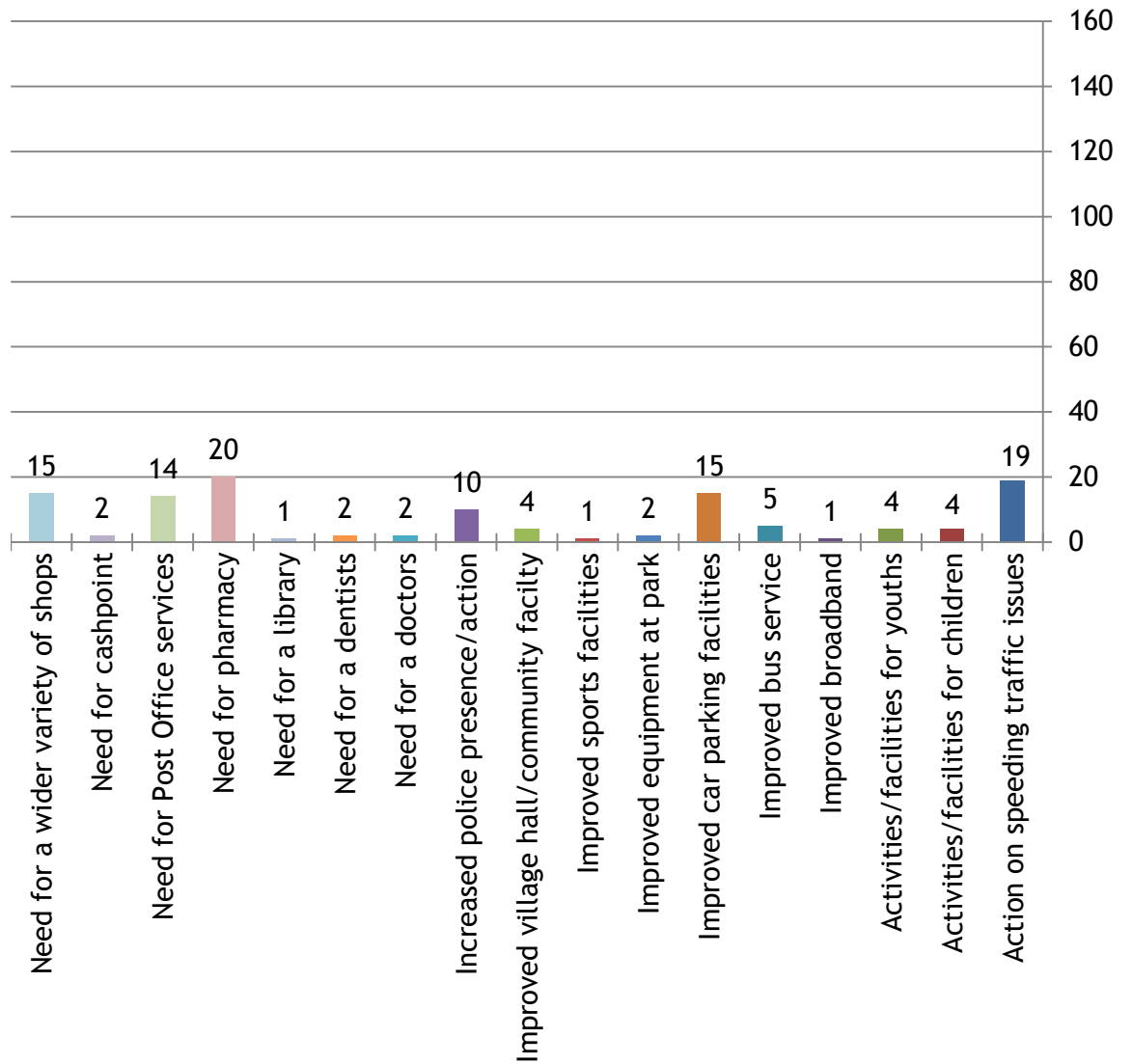


Fig 2.2 - Issues of concern / areas for improvement in the village

Of the 81 responses (54%) who felt that the Parish lacked facilities the highest number related to shop/post office/pharmacy requirements and traffic related problems such as parking and speeding.

x) Adequate housing in the village

Question 21 asks respondents if they felt that there was a lack of adequate housing.

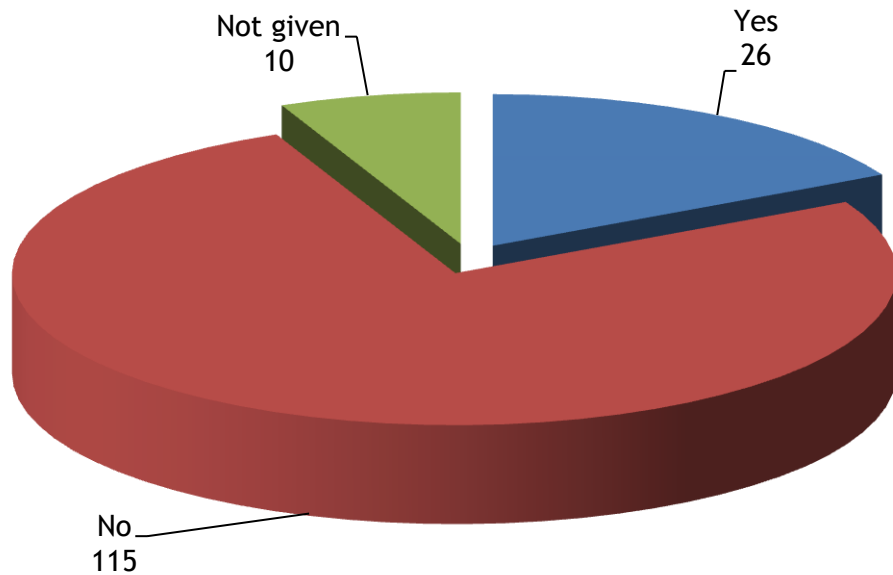


Fig 2.3 - Perceptions on the provision of adequate housing in the village

Fig 2.3 shows that just 17% of respondents believe that there is a lack of adequate housing in Thornton, with 76% of respondents believing that there is not a lack of adequate housing.

Of the 26 responses (17%) who felt that the Parish had a lack of adequate housing specific comments are grouped below.

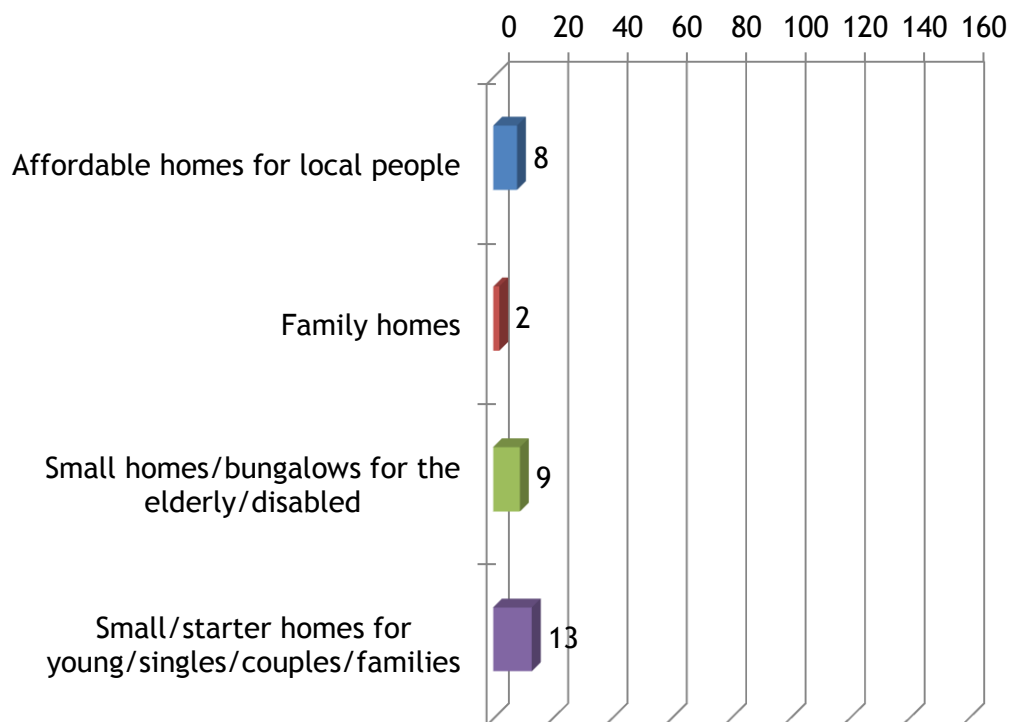


Fig 2.4 - Type of homes believed to be lacking in the village

Appendix 3 - Contact information

Midlands Rural Housing

Whitwick Business Centre
Stenson Road
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 4JP



Telephone: 0300 1234 009

Email: richard.mugglestone@midlandsrural.org.uk

web: www.midlandsrural.org.uk



@MidlandsRural