

AI generated summary of Wiltshire Council housing needs survey for Great Bedwyn Parish

GREAT BEDWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item 12 — Housing Needs Survey

Briefing Note

Full Council Meeting — 19 February 2026

1. Purpose

This note summarises the findings of the December 2025 Housing Needs Survey carried out by Wiltshire Council, and sets out recommended actions for the council's consideration.

2. Key Findings from the Housing Needs Survey

Response rate

Of the **610 households** in the parish, **45 responded (7.4%)**. This is a very low response rate and the results should be treated as a minimum indication of need, not a ceiling. The survey was skewed toward older and owner-occupier households (82% owner-occupiers; 40% aged 65+; only 22% aged 18–44).

Community attitudes

- **80% of respondents (36) support some new housing** in Great Bedwyn. The most popular scale was 10–30 homes.
- 20% of respondents (9) opposed any new housing.
- Strongest support was for affordable/social homes to rent, low-cost homes for first-time buyers, and discounted market units.
- 40% of respondents expressed willingness to participate in community-led housing delivery.
- 24% supported co-housing, with a further 27% 'maybe' interested.

Identified housing need

11 respondents identified a housing need. 7 provided sufficient data for analysis. Wiltshire Council also identified **5 further households** on the Homes4Wiltshire register with a verified Great Bedwyn parish connection who did not complete the survey. These have been incorporated into the recommendations.

The most common reasons for needing to move were: rent/mortgage too expensive; need for ground floor accommodation; need to move closer to work; and currently renting or living with family/friends.

Recommendations: 12 new homes over 3 years

Taking into account finances, housing costs, tenure preferences, and likely re-let rates, Wiltshire Council recommends the following **minimum** need:

Category	Properties Required	Total
Social Housing	1×1 bed flat, 1×2 bed house, 1×4 bed house 2×2 bed bungalows (ground floor/adapted) 1×1 bed + 1×2 bed sheltered bungalows	7
Intermediate (Shared Ownership)	1×2 bed house, 1×3 bed house	2

Market Housing (purchase)	2×3 bed houses, 1×4 bed house	3
		TOTAL: 12

Important context

- **This is a minimum figure.** The low response rate (7.4%) means the true level of need is very likely higher than reported. The survey under-represents younger households (18–44), who are typically most affected by affordability pressures.
- **Affordability is a serious barrier.** An average 2-bed property in the parish costs £303,929, requiring a household income of approximately £82,500. The Wiltshire median full-time income is £37,861. Most respondents with a housing need cannot afford to buy on the open market.
- **Social housing stock has very low turnover.** Only 7 social homes have been re-let in Great Bedwyn over the past 3 years, from a stock of 117. Existing stock cannot meet identified needs.
- **The 2017 HNS identified demand from 29 households.** The lower figure this time reflects the low response rate, not reduced need.
- **HNS results are valid for 3–5 years** (approximately until 2028–2030), providing a window to act.

3. The Parish Council's Role

It is important councillors understand that the parish council **has no statutory duty to deliver housing**. All housing delivery and planning decisions rest with Wiltshire Council as the unitary authority. Our role is to **represent the community's views, facilitate engagement, and influence outcomes** through the tools available to us — principally the Neighbourhood Plan, rural exception site policy, and community-led housing models.

Suggested standard line for public communication: "The parish council's role is to understand and represent the views of the whole community to Wiltshire Council, which is the planning authority that decides applications. We ensure our community's voice is heard effectively."

4. Recommended Actions for Council Consideration

The following actions are proposed for the council's approval:

1. **Note and receive the HNS results.** Formally receive the December 2025 Housing Needs Survey report produced by Wiltshire Council. Note that it represents a minimum indication of need due to the low response rate.
2. **Contact Wiltshire Council's Housing Enabling Team.** Write to the Housing Enabling Team (housingenablingteam@wiltshire.gov.uk) and Housing Strategy team (housing.strategy@wiltshire.gov.uk) to discuss the findings and agree next steps. Target: within 4 weeks.
3. **Invite Homes of Our Own to present to the council.** Contact the 'Homes of Our Own' community-led housing hub (info@wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk) to arrange a presentation on community-led housing options and the Seend CLT experience. Target: April or May council meeting.
4. **Organise a community information event.** Plan a drop-in exhibition (not a formal public meeting) presenting the housing needs evidence alongside information about rural exception sites and community-led housing. Independent experts from Wiltshire Council and a housing association should attend. Target: spring/summer 2026.

5. **Begin informal site identification.** Authorise the chairman and clerk to begin informal conversations with local landowners and to assess potential sites with Wiltshire Council planning officers, particularly regarding North Wessex Downs National Landscape constraints. Note that schemes under 10 dwellings avoid the 'major development' threshold.
6. **Progress the Neighbourhood Plan.** The Great Bedwyn Neighbourhood Area was designated in December 2016 but no plan has been made. The Neighbourhood Plan remains the council's single most powerful tool for shaping housing outcomes. Agree to bring a proposal for restarting the Neighbourhood Plan process to the April meeting.

5. Summary

The Housing Needs Survey provides clear evidence of unmet housing need in Great Bedwyn. Even on this conservative (low response) basis, 12 households need new homes over the next 3 years — predominantly affordable and social housing. The council's position is strong: we have fresh evidence, a supportive policy framework, proven delivery models in comparable Wiltshire parishes like Seend, and dedicated support organisations ready to help.

The recommended actions above set in motion a phased approach that keeps the council in its proper role — facilitating, influencing, and representing the community — while ensuring Great Bedwyn's housing future is shaped by evidence and local leadership.