



Claydon with Clattercote

Claydon with Clattercote Parish Council

Introduction

The **Village Survey 2023** was conducted over the summer of 2023 for a 3-month period, ending on the 30th September.

The following areas were covered by the Survey to gauge an all-round parishioner perception of village life and its future direction.

This was partly to aid the Parish Council in terms of its clarifying policy to steer and develop the community based on the majority consensus of the village; but also, to give those Parishioners that may not normally attend the meetings, a voice in the future direction of the village.

1. **General Living in Claydon with Clattercote.** The aim is to collect general thoughts of what parishioners thought about life in the village of Claydon with Clattercote.
2. **Life within the community.** The aim is to collect thoughts around certain aspects and facilities within the community and their usage.
3. **Environment.** The aim is to collect thoughts and ideas regarding the environment in and around the village.
4. **Communications & Business.** The aim is to see if the village has the right basic infrastructure to accommodate home businesses.
5. **Public Transport.** The aim is to gauge how parishioners make use of transport within the area and to see if improvements could be made.
6. **Roads, Traffic, Crime, and Personal Safety.** The aim is to collect parishioners' views on the basic traffic volumes, state of the roads, crime and personal feelings of safety.
7. **Housing & Development.** The aim is to collect parishioners' views on housing and any future development.
8. **Comments & Suggestions.** This is an open area for parishioners to express their views regarding anything within the parish.
9. **General Demographics.** The aim is to gauge the general demographics of those that replied to the questionnaire to ensure a 'fair spread' across the spectrum.

Results of the survey

Estimates around survey response rates vary across the UK, A survey response rate below 10% is generally considered very low. A good survey response rate is anything above 50% (<https://www.qualtrics.com/uk>, 2023)

The results from our survey of which 62 households responded in total (approx. 41%), is good and is enough to give an understanding of Parishioner views. This is especially true as many of the views expressed matched very closely as the results bear out, demonstrating a significant consensus in many areas.

20th December 2023

Community - Support our local communities, encourage inclusion and diversity.

Environment - Protect and enhance our local environment.

Governance - Promote participation, good management, and efficiency.

To maintain and enhance the quality of life and sense of community within the Parish of Claydon & Clattercote.
To safeguard the individual character of our village and protect its rural environment whilst supporting sustainable development that meets the needs of residents now and in the future.

General Living in Claydon with Clattercote

For the large part, the responses to this section were fairly standard across the board. So instead of writing about it, I've quoted the main themes that repeatedly occurred in numerous survey responses.

Blue = Favourable, Red = Detractors

Over to YOU!

Peace and quiet in a beautiful countryside setting.

Lovely scenic walks

Lovely community spirit – it's there, it just needs a little nurturing.

No light pollution.

Safe environment

Quintessentially English village.

Wonderful landscape & views.

Sense of community

No large housing estates.

Being able to wander around with no worries.

Friendly, helpful people

Gossip & petty squabbling on social media.

Pathways poorly maintained.

Poor road maintenance - potholes and bad drainage.

Lack of facilities on the playing field.

Speeding traffic through village.

Few social events that bring the whole village together in community.

Whinging and whining - some people really need to get a life.

Poor public transport facilities – bus service.

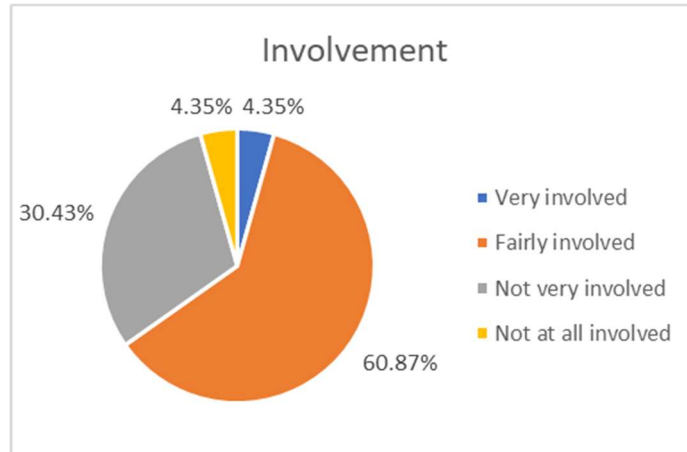
Lack of a Pub\Shop

Lack of wildlife friendly areas / planted areas.

Life within the community

This section was aimed at discovering how active people were within the parish collective, in terms of engagement with community activities. In all communities there are those that wish to participate and those that are happy to be left alone for the most part.

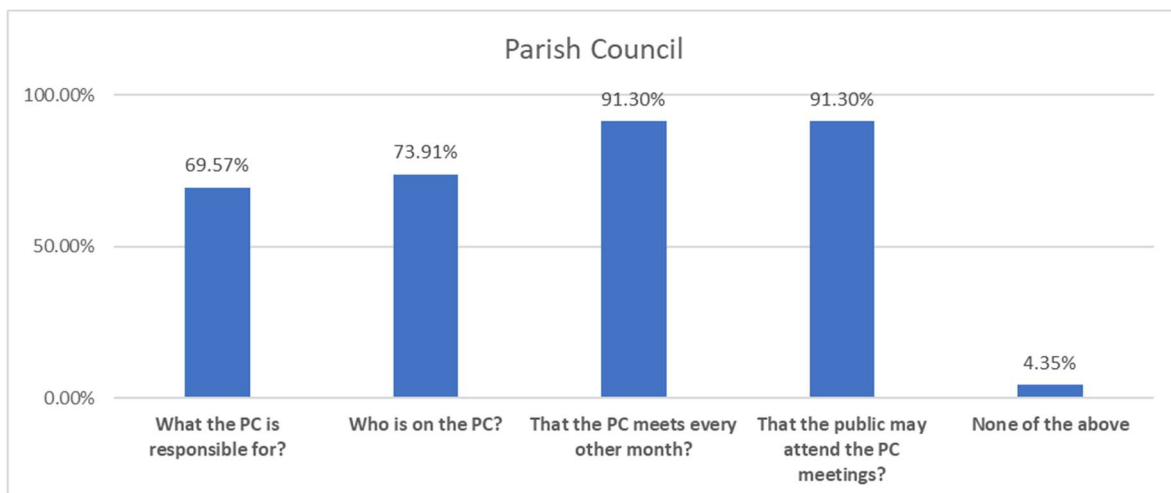
Claydon with Clattercote is no exception to that rule. Of those who responded, around **65%** were actively involved, approx. **30%** passively involved and 4% with no or very little community engagement.



Parish Council

While most people understand what the Parish Council is for, who is on it and that it holds regular meetings, only a small minority of people attend these meetings. The rest are therefore reliant on the published Minutes or word of mouth conversations.

Because of this, it may be a case that not all views and opinions are heard by the Parish Council, but may be expressed informally through other means, such as social media, and so are not considered within a Parish Council setting.



While it is understood that many people can't attend Parish Council meetings due to work or family obligations, inconvenient time and, to be honest, the meetings can be perceived as 'dull' and time consuming. Nevertheless, it is the forum to which villagers are free to ask questions and post their suggestions to be discussed by all.

Parishioners are encouraged to speak to Parish Councillors face to face or to email questions or concerns at any time; Parish Councillors exist to act as a conduit and to represent parishioners' views.

Communications

When it comes to forms of communication within the village, most people prefer to use the Village website, word of mouth, Village Notice Board & Facebook.

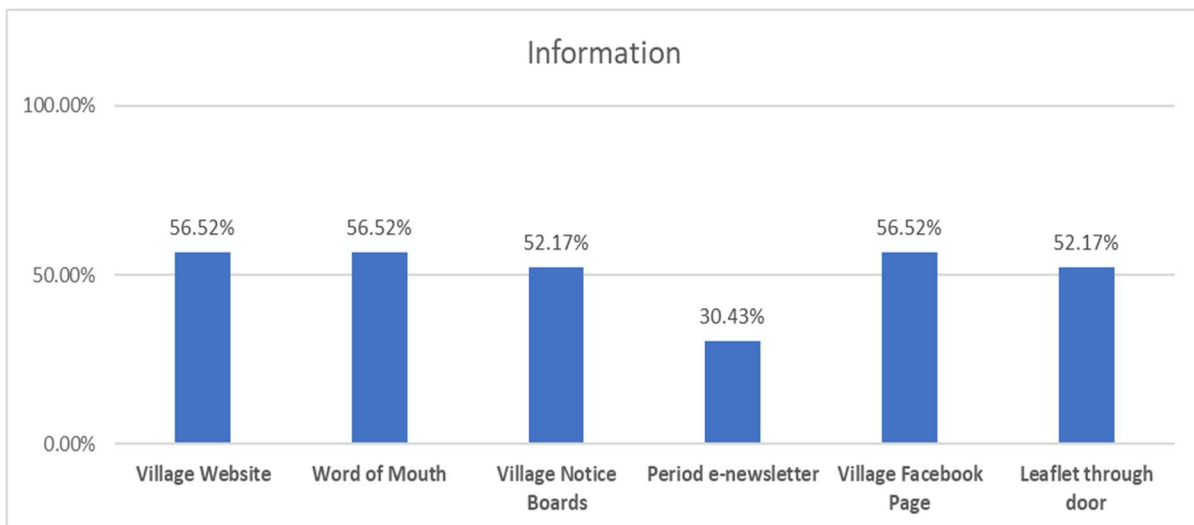
It should be noted that there is now a new Village Website, www.Claydon.org.uk, which has been expanded to include much more in the way of capturing news and events for the parishioners. The Parish Councillors have identified this as a key workstream for 2024 and are looking to work with the Community Volunteer Group in developing this.

There was a largish section of people who wished to receive printed material through the letterbox. However, it should be noted that the Parish Council is reluctant to pursue this line due to the following 2 reasons:

- 1) Sheer cost involved in printing Minutes, Agendas, Surveys, Vision Plans & Event updates would be a significant financial burden and the cost would fall to us all; and the time to deliver to each door would be significant also.
- 2) In line with our value regarding minimising environmental impact and energy, electronic communications are encouraged going forward. It is not considered 'environmentally' friendly to print more than is essential as many copies may end up in the bin, however the Parish Council is keen to include all parishioners in communications and therefore recognises where the need for print is required.

The village notice board and electronic means (Website & Facebook) are therefore considered the 'default' methods for delivery of communications.

For those who do not have access to the internet the PC would be happy to discuss alternatives. It may be just a case of asking a friendly neighbour to print off a copy for you.



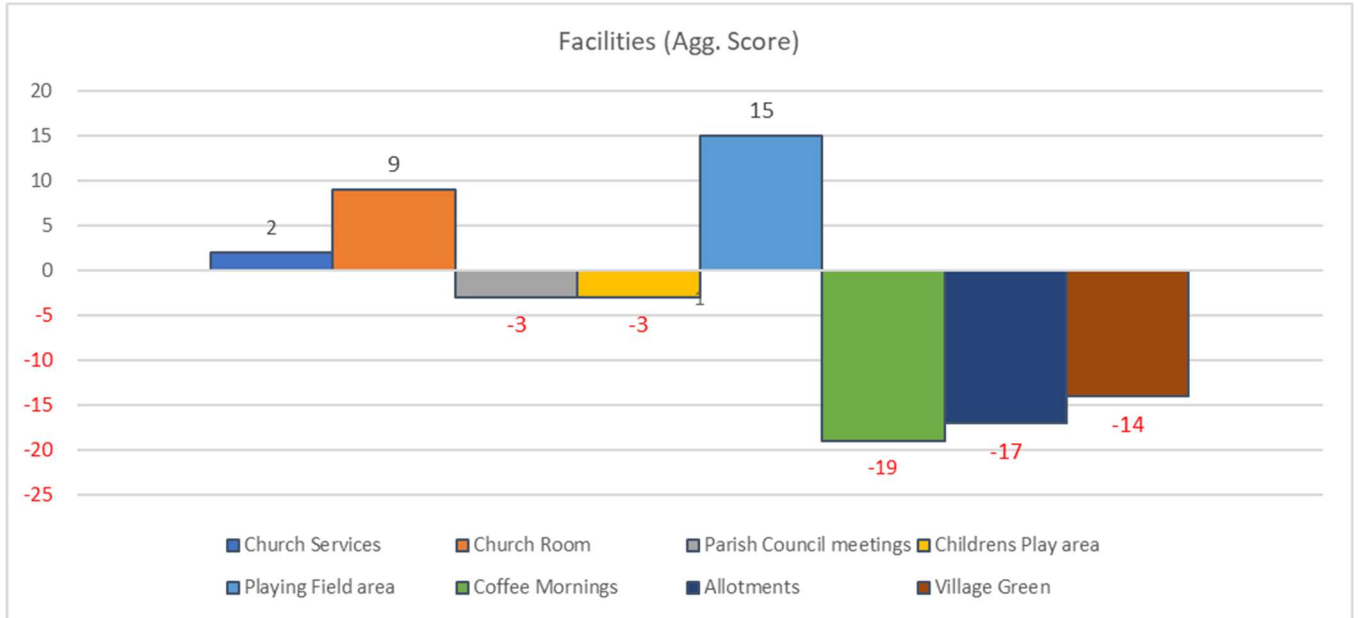
Please remember that the Parish Council is made up of **unpaid volunteers**, who have full-time jobs or are full-time parents and carers. They give up their spare time to help run the council on behalf of the community.

We are all in this together.

Facility Usage

While there are currently limited facilities in the parish, we wished to see if those that are present are being used to their full potential or not. Interestingly, **58%** of parishioners say they do not use the current facilities.

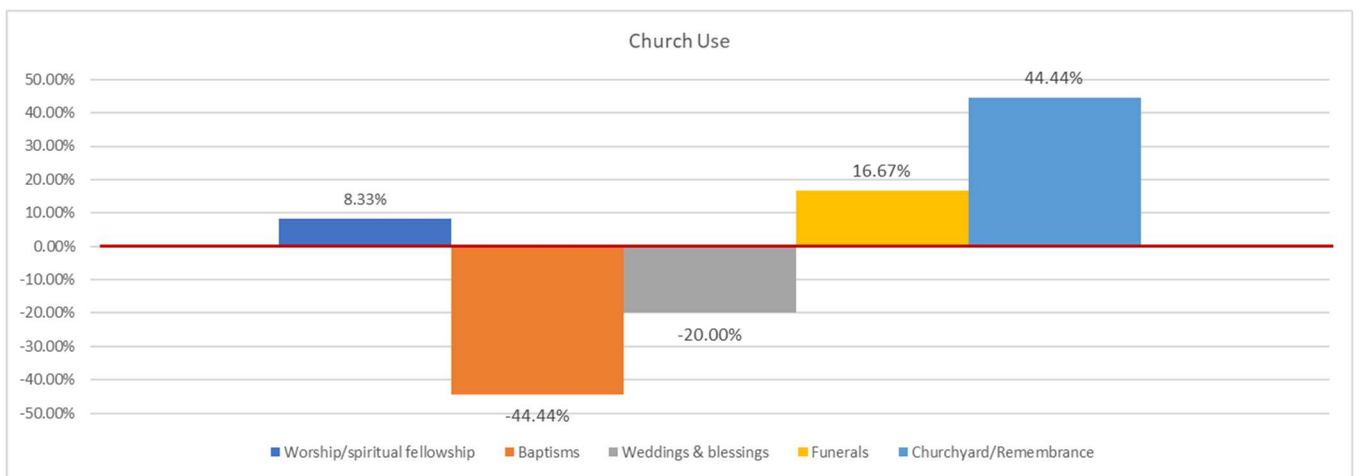
The below chart shows that while the Playing field and Church room are certainly used, views identify there is room for improvement; other areas may do with some extra thinking or revisiting.



Church

While St James Church is the focal picturesque cornerstone of our community, is it being used as much as it could?

Parishioners certainly express their views that the Church is largely a place for remembrance and for quiet contemplation though not as much for actual public worship for most. Christmas services and Harvest festival being the exceptions.



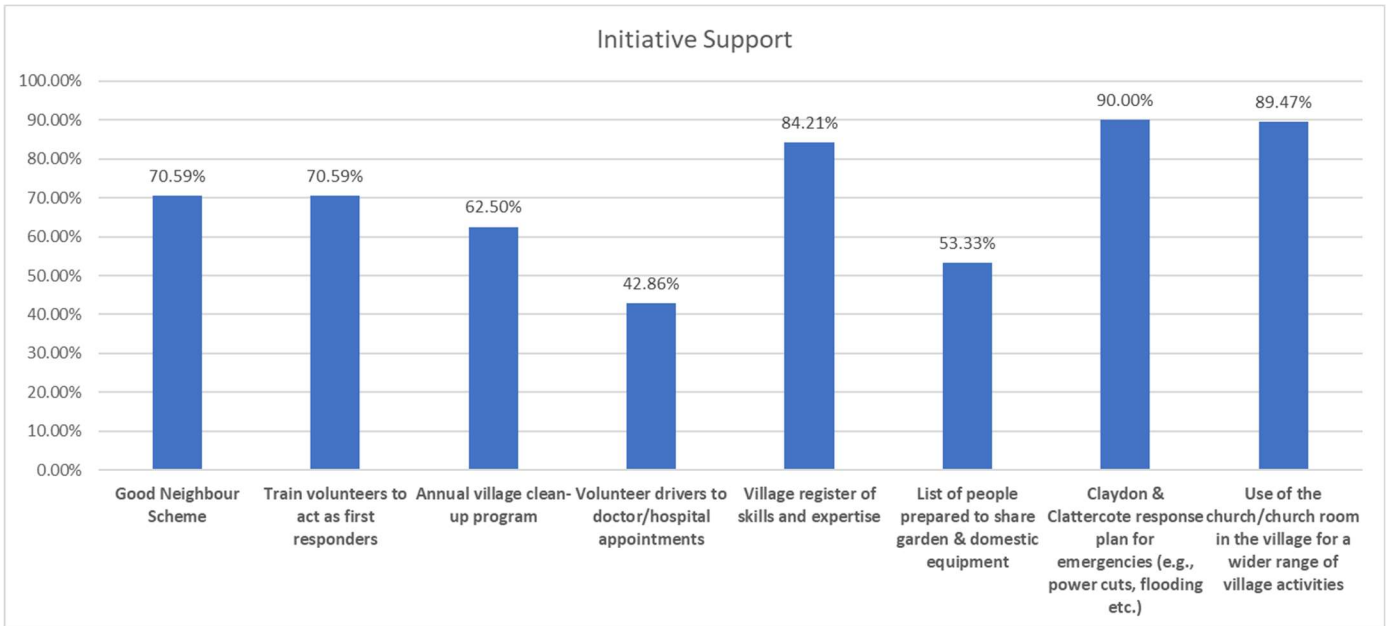
However, as can be seen in the next section, there is overwhelming support to see it being ‘used’ more efficiently.

Local Initiatives and Support

A list of initiatives was proposed and some enthusiastically supported, including ideas to make better use of the Church and Church room with more social events.

Emergency planning is another factor currently under consideration and consultation by the PC. Links are on the new website for initial official responses.

As well as a list of those that *wish* to advertise their skills on the website for people in the village to contact, there were also those who did not want to have their details on full public display.



Together with the launch of the recent Village Community Group, it is envisioned that more initiatives will be developed going forward.

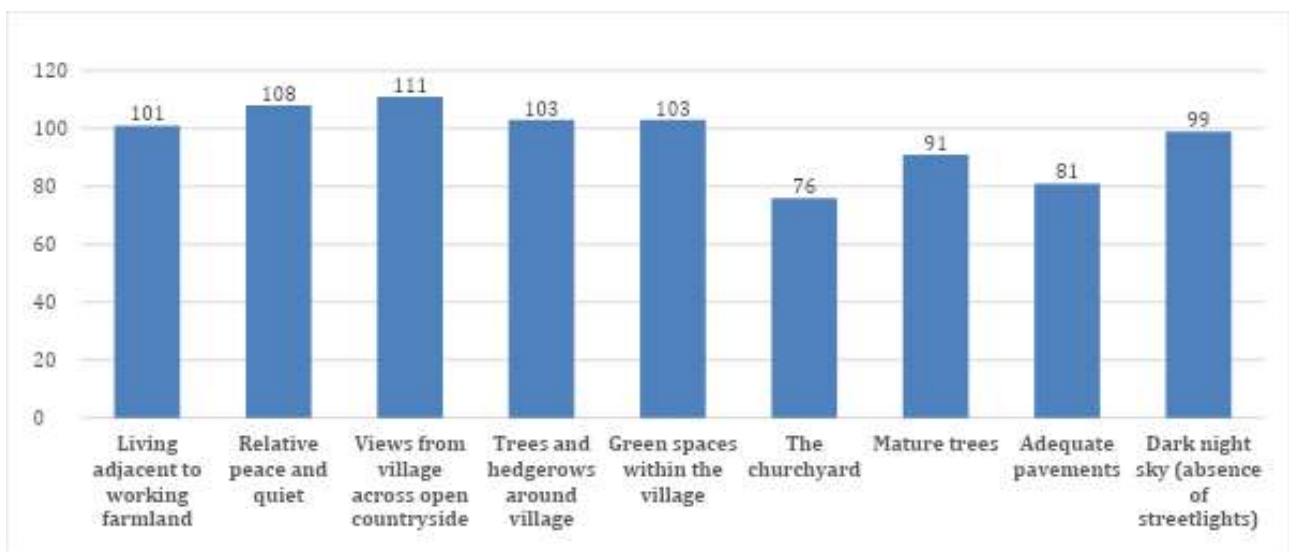
Environment

This section is about the environment in which we live. We are both lucky and privileged to live in some wonderful open countryside. But this also comes with a great responsibility too, by default we become its guardians. Any endeavours we accomplish today, we must keep an eye out for future generations too. Basically, just because it sounds good now, doesn't necessarily mean it's good for tomorrow.

Together, we must act responsibly.

Cherwell District Council also recognises this and has recently designated Claydon with Clattercote to be marked as 'Open Countryside'. This will help to protect us from future major development within our parish bounds. Though we must stay vigilant and not become complacent as planning applications present.

To start with, we asked what was important to your village life out here in the countryside.

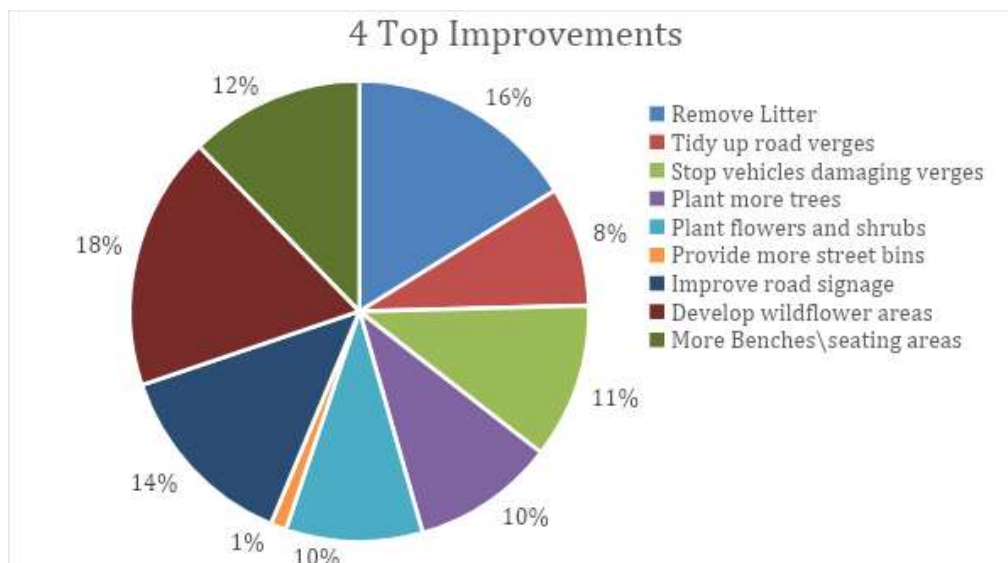


The responses are typical of many rural villages around the country. Views, peace & quiet, trees & hedgerows, green spaces, no light pollution from streetlights and the like. All these were identified as priority themes.

The farmland and countryside around the village of Claydon with Clattercote supports a wide variety of wildlife including migrant and local birds and various birds of prey. We also have a host of insects – beetles, moths, bees and butterflies. Our resident mammals include shrews, bats, rabbits, badgers, hares, foxes and hedgehogs. To name but a few.

These are quintessentially, what rural village life is all about. For most this is why we live here and why we wish to protect this way of life for future generations.

We then asked what top 4 improvements you wish to see to maintain the environment.



The results being: More Wildflower areas (**18%**), Remove Litter (**16%**), Improve Road\Path signage (**14%**) & More Benches (**12%**).

Again, these point to promoting a pleasant and clean environment in which to live and, with more benches available.

We then asked would you like to be involved with projects concerning the village environment to which **81%** responded with a resounding "YES".

This included projects like:

- Tree planting schemes
- Bulb planting schemes
- Wildflower planting schemes
- Community allotment/garden
- Periodic litter picking
- Mapping of local biodiversity
- Environmental plan for the whole village

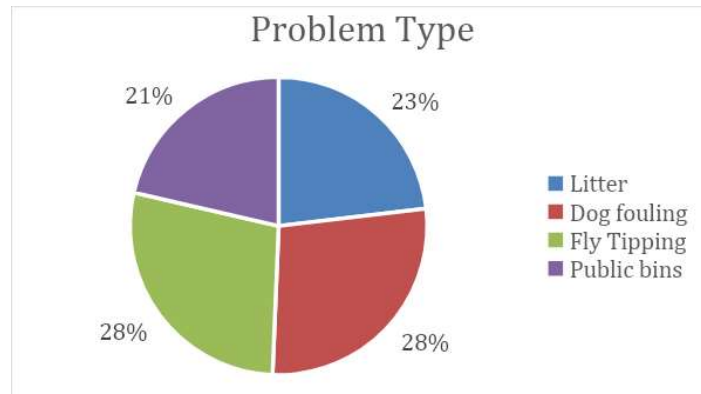
The Parish Council, with its parishioners, are looking to embark on a number of environment initiatives around the village to help preserve and provide a protective home for its flora and fauna and promote biodiversity.

These initiatives include tree and bulb planting, raising awareness and monitoring of wildlife and the promotion of conservation.

Projects will range from the promotion of insect boxes, bird houses, insect log piles, hedgehog runs and 'wildflower seed bombs'. Projects for all the family to join in with.

When we asked what problem areas you see within the village that might affect our environment: Fly Tipping and Dog Fouling topped the list. BOTH of which are against the law and will result in hefty fines if caught.

If you see it, report it. Links are, again, on the new village website.



The final topic concerned looking into forms of renewable energy in terms of personal, group and at a community level. All these forms received **100%** backing.

- Using renewable sources of energy in your own property
- Group buying of energy to reduce energy bills
- A community renewable energy scheme

There are various companies that provide Solar panels, Heat pumps etc. and a few villagers have taken these up.

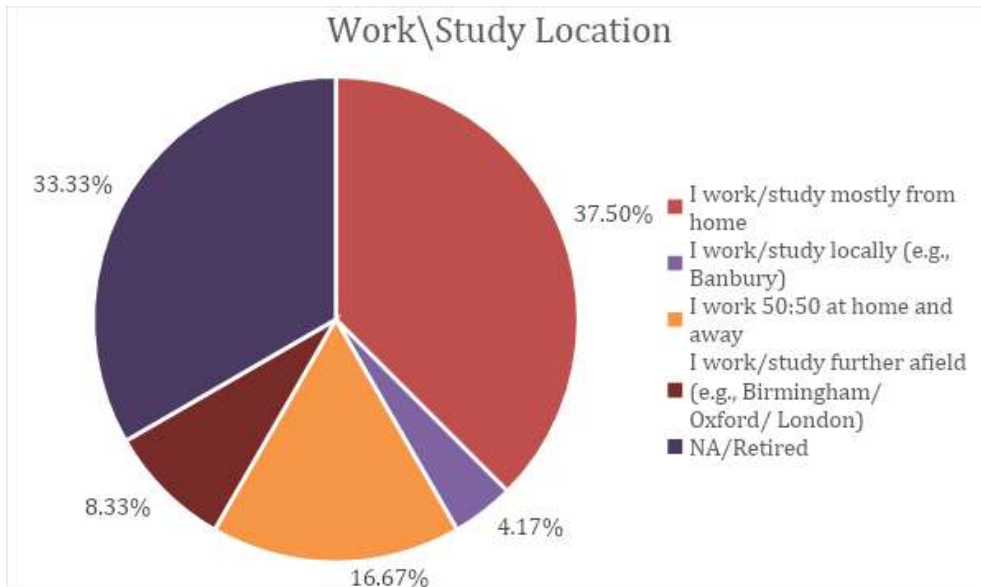
However, there may be a case whereby a discount could be agreed if several people got together with a single supplier and potentially benefit from economies of scale.

The Parish Council will investigate the various schemes around the country to see if we can benefit from the later of these – Community Energy Schemes.

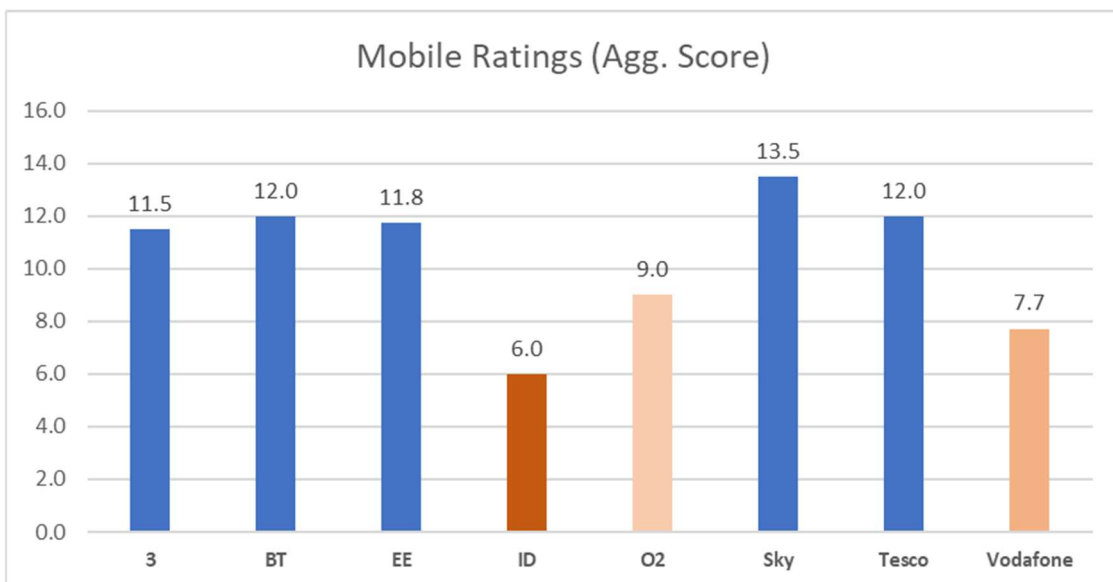
Communications & Business

The purpose of this section was to understand the working patterns of those in the community, both employed (**66.67%**) and retired (**33.33%**), to see if the current infrastructure was satisfactory to their needs. It also looks at the internet/mobile usage and needs of the village as a whole.

It should be noted that this survey was completed BEFORE the roll-out of the new Vodeus fibre link.



Mobile coverage within the village was not considered of the highest quality and differed from location within the parish. Sky came out with the best aggregated score.



When it came to broadband usage, there was an average rating across the board. It also indicated that most users in the village are high-end users. By that we mean apart from general web browsing, emails etc. many villagers used high bandwidth facilities like TV & Film\Media streaming (Netflix, iPlayer, Amazon Prime, Sky).

Sky and PlusNet were the 2 big scorers in the broadband arena.

Public Transport

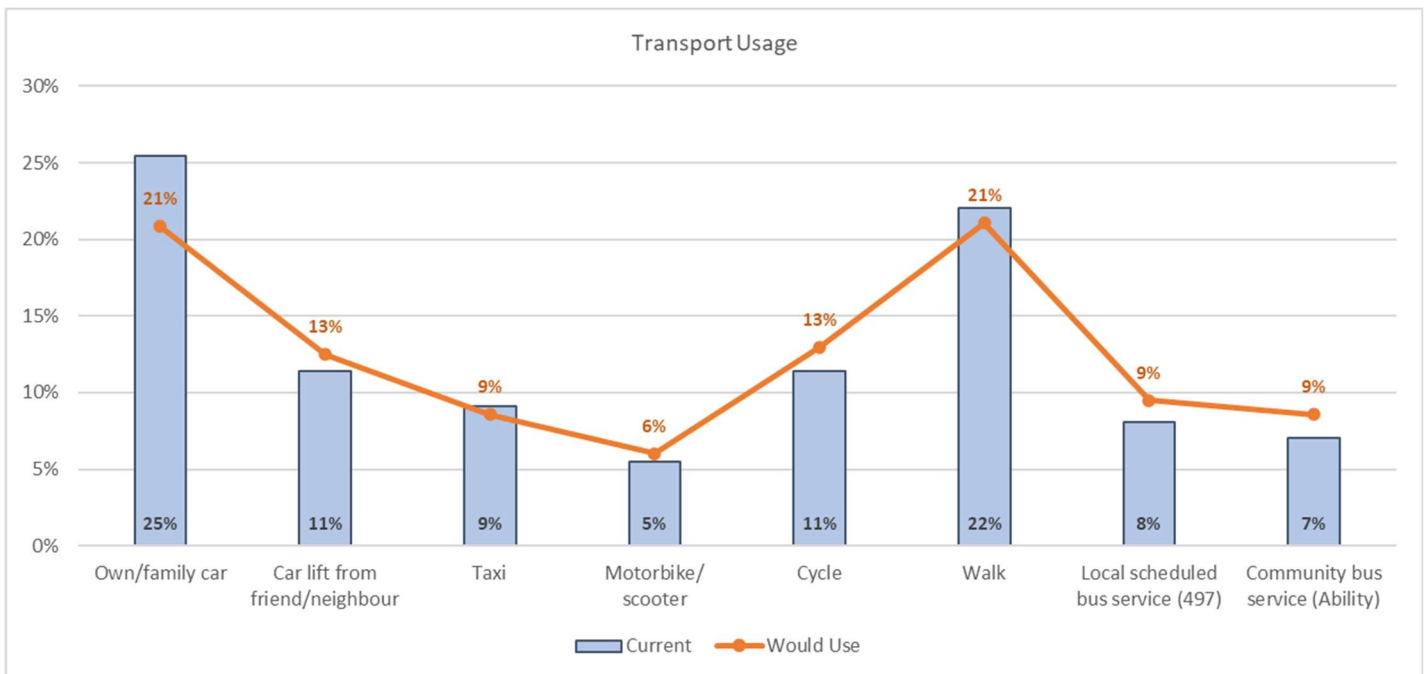
As a parish, we have suffered from a lack of good, reliable, and frequent public transport. But not only this, but due to the poor state of the roads generally and speeding traffic; cycling is not as popular as it might be. This is in spite of the fact that councils\governments keep trying to ‘encourage’ people to abandon their cars and use these seemingly ‘non-existent’ or ‘unworkable’ environmentally friendly alternatives.

The current bus service is not fit for purpose as:

- 1) There is no flexibility of service – 1 per week.
- 2) The timing of the return journey is such that the amount of time available in the town is so short that people can’t do much shopping in any case.

The questions were asked to see what people currently used and what they would use if they had the choice.

It is no surprise that when the results for village transportation methods came in, there was a support for public transport and improved ‘safe’ cycle routes with a decrease in personal car use where possible.



However, a form of salvation may be on the horizon regarding the public transport issue.

At the last meeting held on the 14th November '23, Cllr Reynolds (County Councillor), reported that “there are rumours of a new Community Bus service to be set up around the Northern points of Oxfordshire next year. Details will soon hopefully be forthcoming in February 2024”.

Watch this space.

Bus: Would use more if

- a) More frequent: at least twice weekly
- b) Better timescales: return bus at a more realistically spaced interval

Cycle: Would use more if

- a) Roads were in better condition: Potholes & verges cut etc.
- b) Less dangerous traffic: Slower & more considerate drivers

Roads, Traffic, Crime, and Personal Safety

Road and Traffic

This being the largest section of the questionnaire and generated probably the most interest. Largely because the volumes, actual size, and velocity of traffic; coupled with the general decline in the standards of road repair, have affected us all in some form or another.

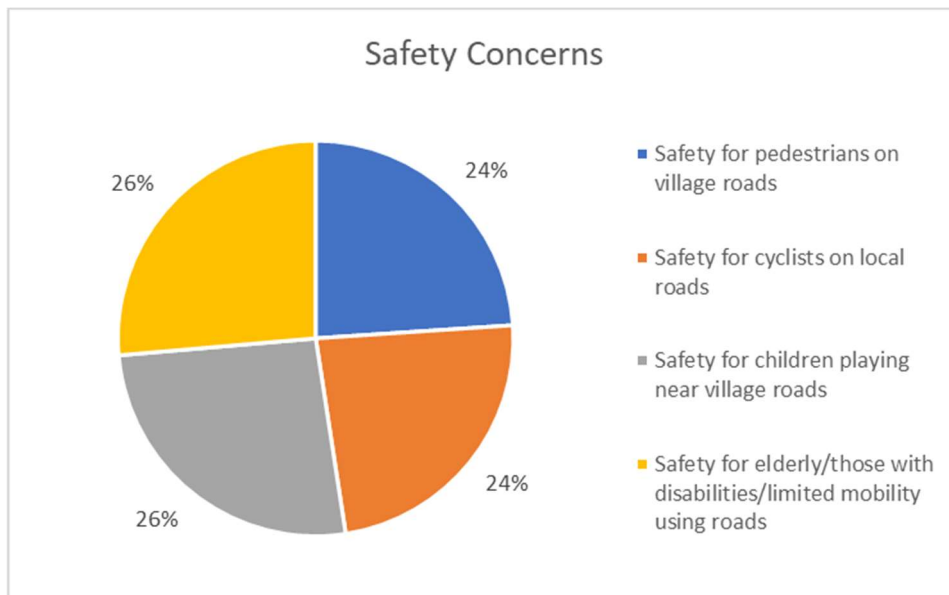
Touching on each area in turn. While relatively consistent across the board in terms of increased volume and general vehicle size, the top concern, **36%**, is the actual 'speed' of which traffic seems to pass through the village.

The main culprits seem to be the delivery vehicles, most of which are paid by the number of items they deliver. So, to maximise their earnings they need to deliver more items in the shortest time possible. This, sadly, means scant regard to local speed limits.

This isn't helped by the fact that the main connection roads into the village are labelled at a ridiculous 60mph (Mollington and Claydon\Cropredy roads) when the actual main roads are limited to 50mph (A423 Banbury – Southam road).

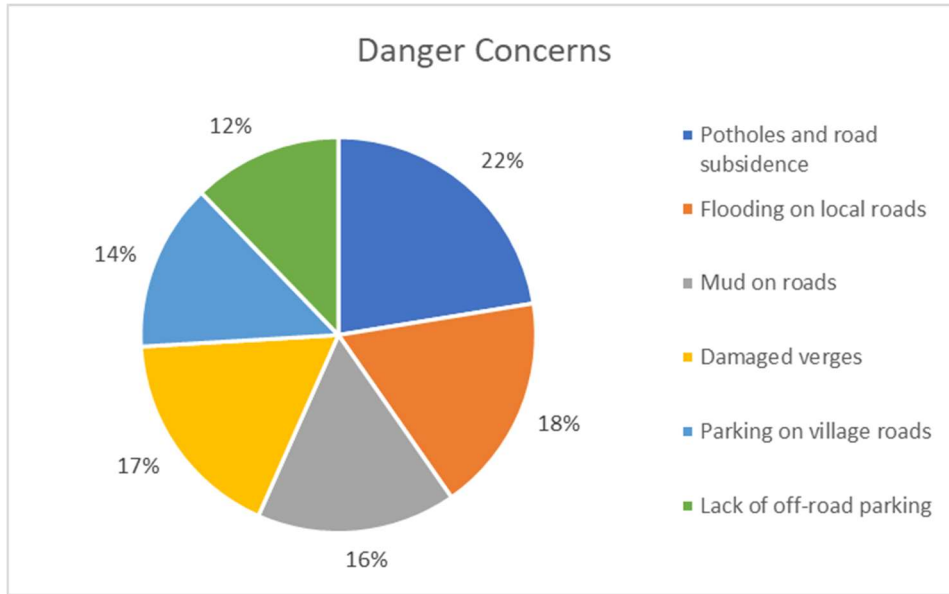
The Parish Council has already asked for the village to become part of the 20mph speed limit campaign. Cllr Reynolds (County Councillor) assures us that these should hopefully be rolled out from mid-2024 next year. Providing, that is, the Government doesn't abandon the idea altogether.

This in turn prompts safety concerns which are evenly spread across the board.



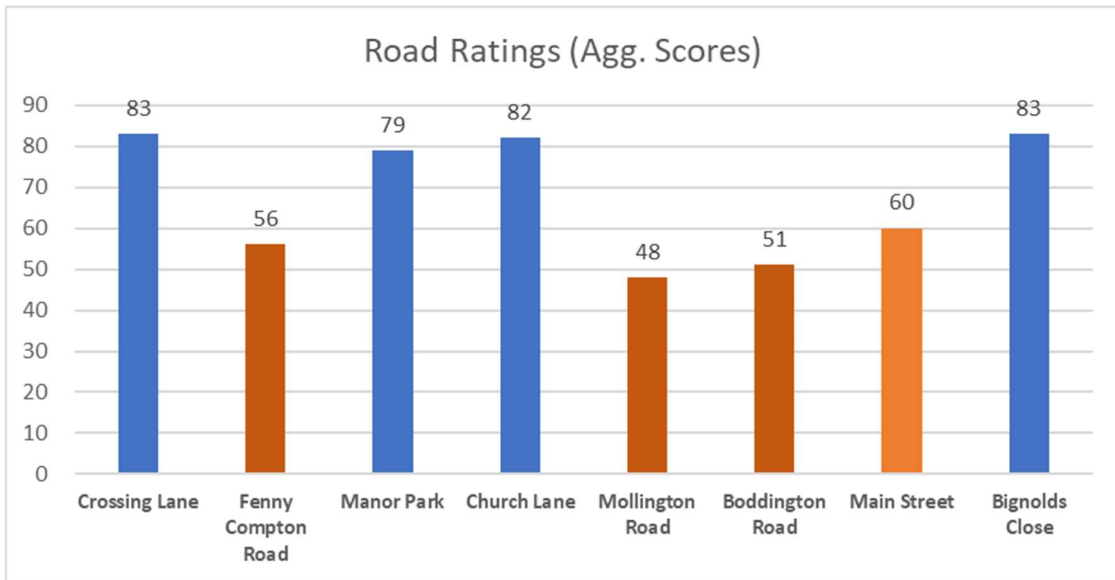
So, looking at the general state of our roads and the dangers they can pose. Potholes and Subsidence are the top concerns. Potholes are routinely badly patched due to cheap and in-effective methods and often result in the pothole itself remerging very soon afterwards.

We must also bear in mind that this village is based around a farming community, so wide and heavy vehicles are part of the norm.



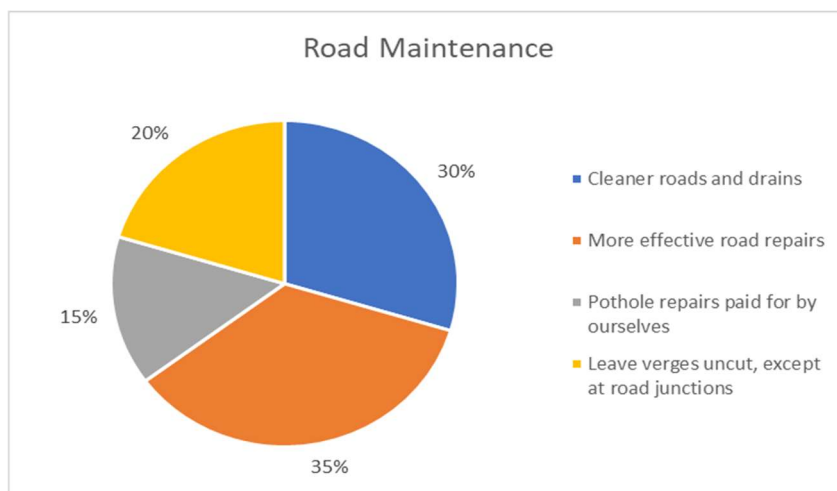
When asked about the general state of individual roads\streets, the main arterial routes through the village fare worst in the aggregated scores. This obviously makes perfect sense as these are subject to 'high' speed or heavy traffic, farm or otherwise.

The Mollington Road comes out worst of all. This is mainly due to the constant potholes and water collection points over the stream bridge and under the rail bridge. There is also the issue that the 30mph limit sign is placed much too close to the village entrance on a 'blind and constricted' corner.



This point is borne out by the fact when asked for the parishioners' views on actual road maintenance, the 2 top points were for:

- More effective road repairs and
- Cleaner roads and drains



The PC needs to emphasise the point that 'road repairs' come under County Council jurisdiction and therefore encourages **ALL** parishioners to log these under the '[Fix my Street](#)' web page. The link for this can be found on the village website.

Simply put, the more people log these issues, the more the CC will have to act. Sadly, it is a numbers game.

The PC does report essential repairs, non-pothole related, and involves Nick Watson from the County Council. Sadly though, we are often told it is a resource issue of one kind or another and hence delays in actual work being done from this particular department.

Crime

When parishioners were asked about the levels of crime within the community and their feeling of safety in this area, most people were generally not too concerned. However, while it was recognised that there has been a very slight increase in thefts in the parish, violent crime has so far not arisen as an issue.

The idea of joining a local neighbourhood watch scheme, getting to know your neighbour as well as to use the various hotlines to report crimes, which are listed on the village website, was encouraged.

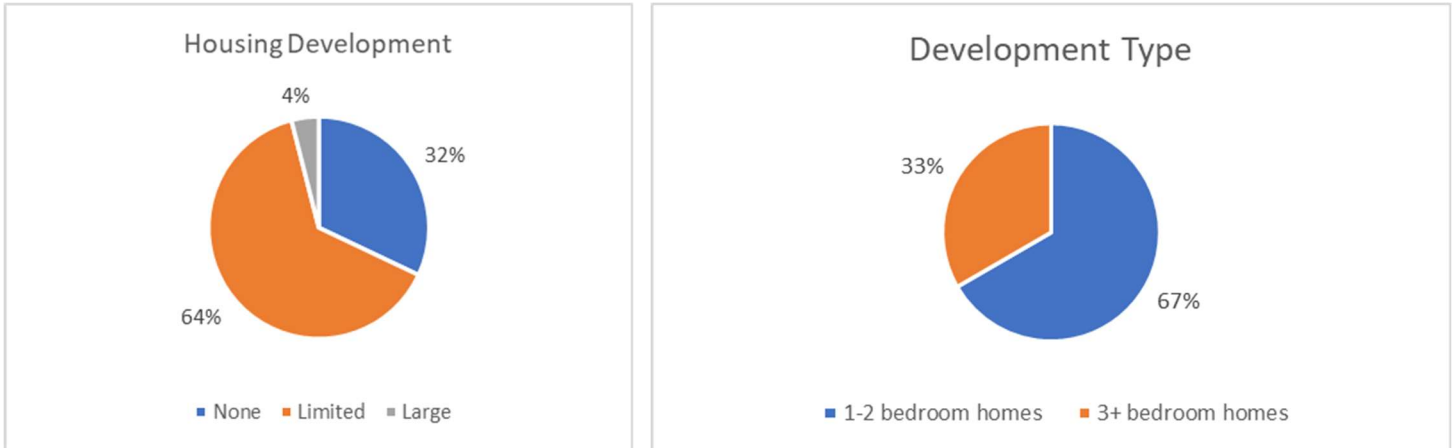


If it looks suspicious, report it.

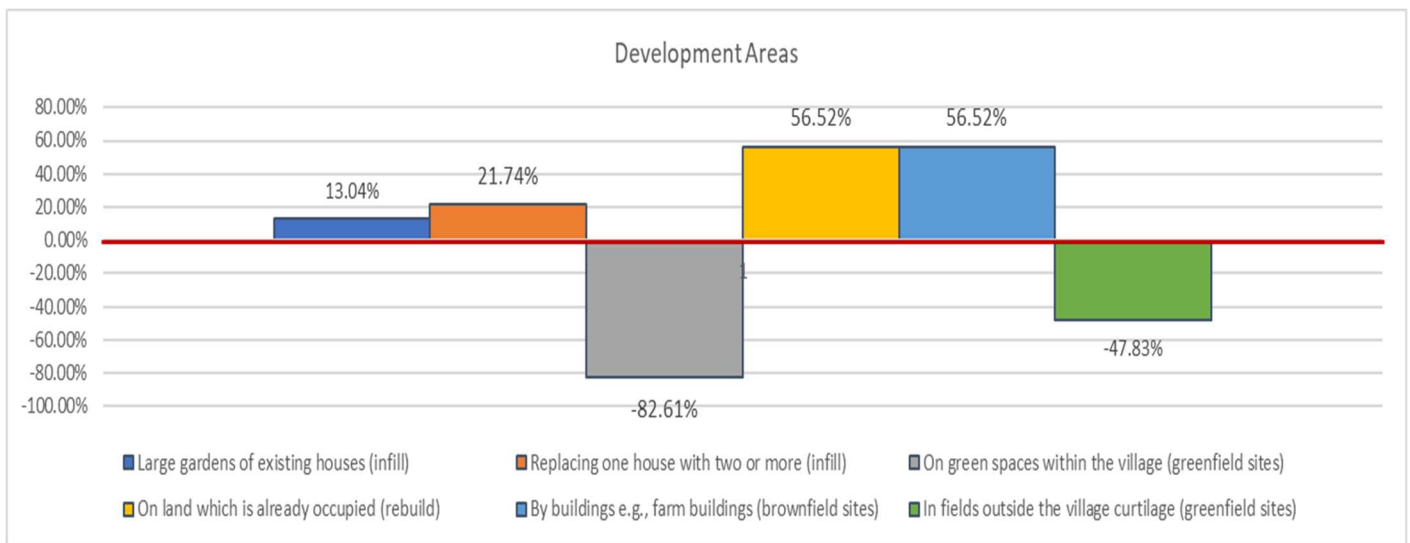
Housing & Development

This is always a contentious subject and debate can be quite polarised.

However, looking at the results we can see that while a majority of parishioners (**64%**), recognise there might be a need for a **SMALL** number of developments within the village; these should be kept to small 1–2-bedroom homes (**67%**). This is more in keeping with most house sizes within the parish.



When it comes to the actual development areas for these new homes, the choices are also obvious. Preference given to 'Rebuild' and 'Brownfield' sites, while 'Greenfield' areas to be avoided at all costs.



As to the type of housing proposed, this was split relatively evenly across the standard divisions with 'Affordable (Housing Association) rented homes' topping the conditional list.

Shared ownership homes	18.75%
Affordable (Housing Association) rented homes	25.00%
Private rented homes	18.75%
Retirement/ sheltered homes	21.88%
Self-build plots	15.63%

Comments & Suggestions

It should be noted that the Parish Council has embarked on a number of 'Visions for the Future' ideas.

These include the updating of facilities in the Playing Field as well as other ideas around the village itself. This includes extending the pathway from Dog Lane and along the embankment via Clattercote house to join up with the pathway towards the Playing field area.

Speed restrictions signs have been applied for and will hopefully be installed mid-2024. The PC is also looking into verge gateways to encourage traffic to slow down on the approach to the village.

The idea of a Pub\Shop within the village is not a new one, however due to setup costs and running a facility, this makes it somewhat prohibitive and impractical. The idea of a 'pop up' facility on the other hand, has been talked about and will be looked into for feasibility at a later date.

Dropped kerbs in the right places would help those with mobility issues.

It would be good to have a map of the local footpaths on the website.

Aside from the Playing Field, it would be helpful to have a few small benches around the village, for those who can only walk short distances at a time.

Stop cars parking on pavements. These are for pedestrians. It is not on that disabled people should be forced to go into the road to avoid badly parked cars.

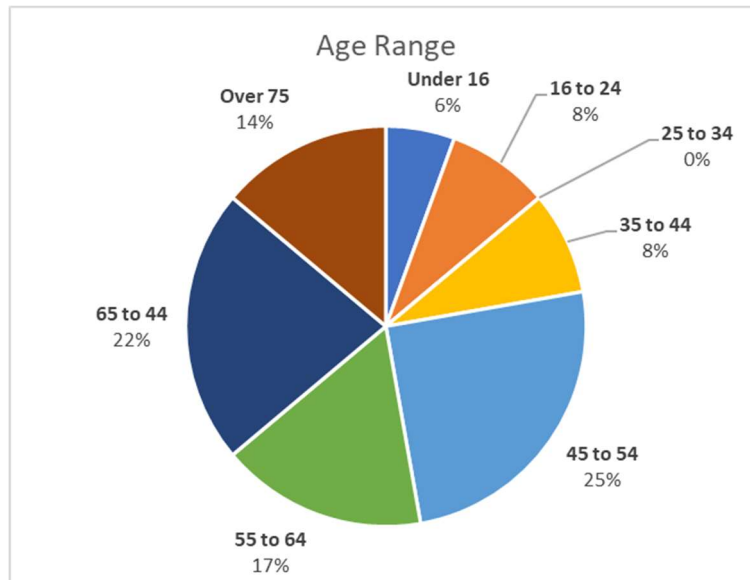
It would be nice to have some sort of Pub\Shop.

Provide more facilities on the Playing field. For example, some permanent toilets would be nice.

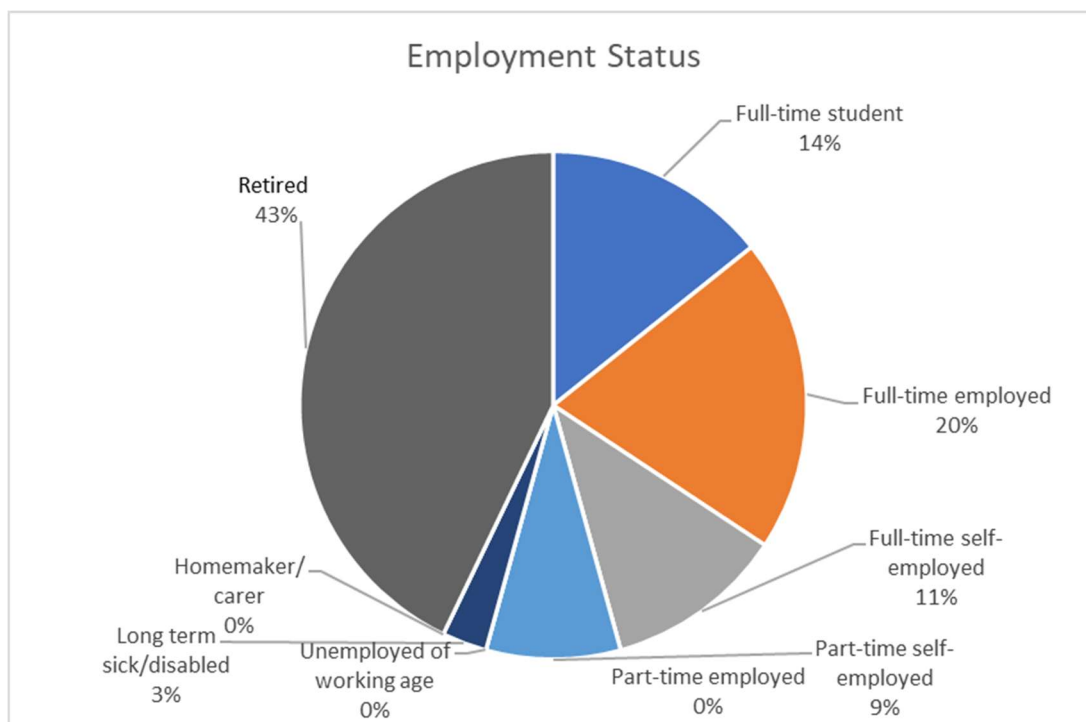
General Demographics

As is borne out by the statistical information below, the response to the survey was a good balance of representatives across the community.

Relative equal proportions of both Male (**44%**) & Female (**52%**), with **4%** abstaining added to the mix. As well as a broad range of age groups was encouraging too. All helping to add to the overall collective feel of the village.



There was also a good range of 'Employment Status' amongst the parishioners with **43%** retired to **54%** either working full\part time or students. This again adds to the feel and overall usage of the village and its amenities.



From a 'Help Wanted' perspective, there was a need for help in the following areas. If parishioners are able to provide any of these services, we could certainly advertise via the website and/or the notice board should they wish to.



Lastly, for those that are desperate to know who won the 'battle of the pets' type, especially in the case of Dogs v Cats.

It was Dogs, with **57%** as opposed to Cats with **36%** of the votes!

Summary

On balance, it is pleasing to note that the Parishioners and the Parish Council of Claydon and Clattercote are pretty much on the same wavelength as each other; especially when it comes to the general direction of the Village and its future.

The road is not easy, especially in this troubled time we find ourselves in. Politically, economically and with the current worldwide tensions; we often forget what impact these can have on us, even as a seemingly inconspicuous little village in rural Oxfordshire.

It is only by **working together as a whole**, can we ensure that the goals and aspirations of the majority of the community are met.

So, what happens next?

The results need to be absorbed by both Parishioners and Parish Council alike to decide whether this is a fair reflection of general village life and its visions for the future.

Cherwell District Council will also be interested in reviewing a few of the points raised for example: local transport, housing, environment, road repairs, and general concerns.

At the November Parish Council meeting the District Councillor was at pains to warn us that future funding cuts were likely to be significant in 2025. We are mindful therefore to plan developments carefully and spend judiciously to minimise the impact of this on us all.

The Parish Council plans will then need to be aligned with Parishioner views in order to address any areas of concern.

Thank you to all who took part in the survey and for helping to make Claydon with Clattercote a better place to live.

Your thoughts on the survey results are welcomed and can be emailed to:
CWCParshCouncil@gmail.com

On one final note, the Parish Council would like to wish all the parishioners of Claydon with Clattercote:

*A Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year*

Please stay safe.