

Bourton on the Hill Village Survey 2023

Executive Summary + Initial Actions

The following is a short summary of the door to door survey carried out in Bourton on the Hill in October 2023, analysis and interpretation of the data received, and initial actions for the Parish Council to pursue as a result. More detailed discussion is required for some issues, and further actions will be agreed at future Parish Council meetings.

Once again, the Parish Council would like to thank all residents who took the time to actively participate in the survey.

All responses to the survey remain anonymous with only aggregated data being shared here. Anonymised verbatim comments have been referenced where appropriate. However, if it is felt to be of value, further analysis by some sub-groups will be possible where sufficient numbers exist to retain anonymity eg

- a) "Moreton end of village" vs "middle"
 - b) Newer residents (< 5 years) vs longer residents
 - c) Rented vs owned properties
- etc etc

If you have any questions after reading this summary of results please contact us via the website contact page and we will respond as soon as we can.

Introduction

Week commencing 9th October 2023 the PC team hand-delivered 148 survey questionnaires alongside copies of a new village information booklet. In addition, just information booklets were delivered to properties which were clearly Air BnBs or vacant "holiday homes".

14 of the 148 surveys were delivered to "outlying households" i.e. properties well outside the Bourton on the Hill village, like Troopers Lodge, and other farms/cottages which are officially part of the BotH Electoral Register but not directly involved in everyday village life. During collection, when speaking to a couple of those households they expressed their appreciation for being included in the distribution, especially of the information booklet, but said they had little or no opinion on the topics raised in the questionnaire (eg state of roads/pavements in the village) so had not responded.

Some residents returned their questionnaires by hand, and the PC team collected the remainder door-to-door on Sunday 22nd October 2023.

In total we received 64 completed questionnaires (2 arriving after the closing deadline and hence not included in the main analysis). **Of the 134 delivered directly in the village there was a response rate of 47%, which shows the desire amongst residents to participate.** Average response rates to door drop surveys can vary in the range 5% to 30% depending upon many factors. However, 47% is a very good result which enabled us to interpret results as representative of village residents' views, and should eliminate concerns about any bias which could have resulted from a low response rate.

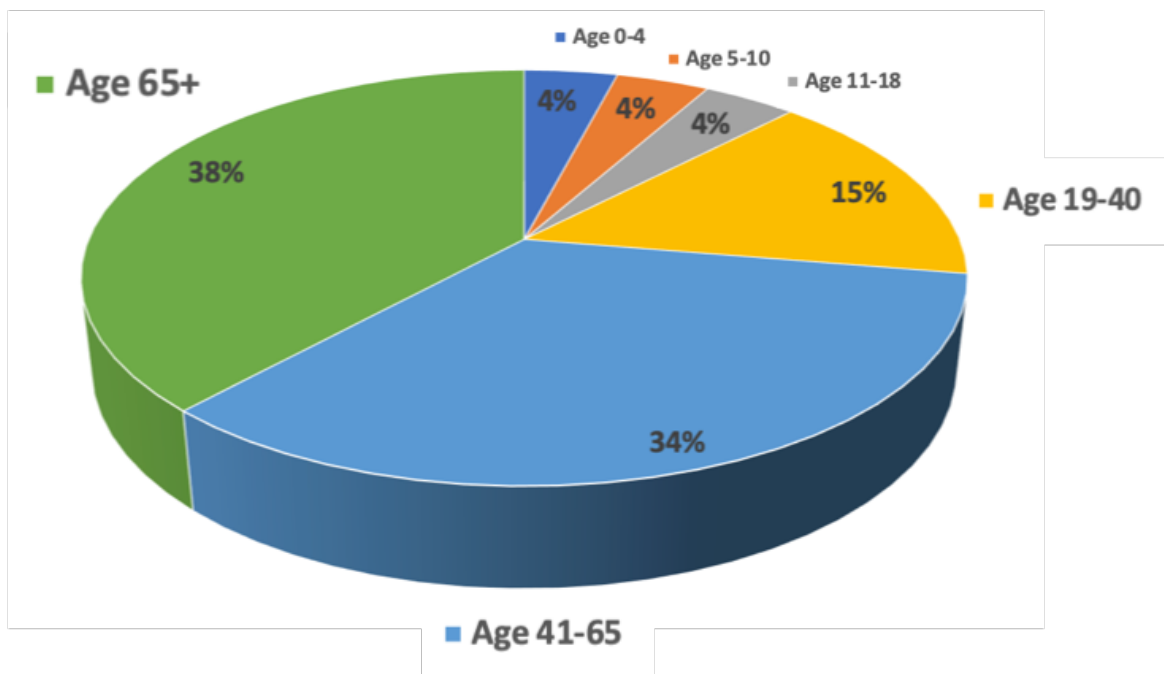
This initial analysis provides a lot of valuable information. However, we will be able to refer to and extract more value through further analysis of the results over the coming months.

Section 1 – Demographics

Whilst the individual responses are anonymised we can share the overall broad demographic breakdown of the respondents.

- 86% of households (HH) responding were 1 or 2 person households. Only 13% of HH had children present. This is very relevant when later we look at the question of having a children’s playground in the village.
- The graph below shows the age profile of village residents, with 38% over the age of 65, and 34% between 41 – 65.

Bourton on the Hill - Age Profile of Residents *

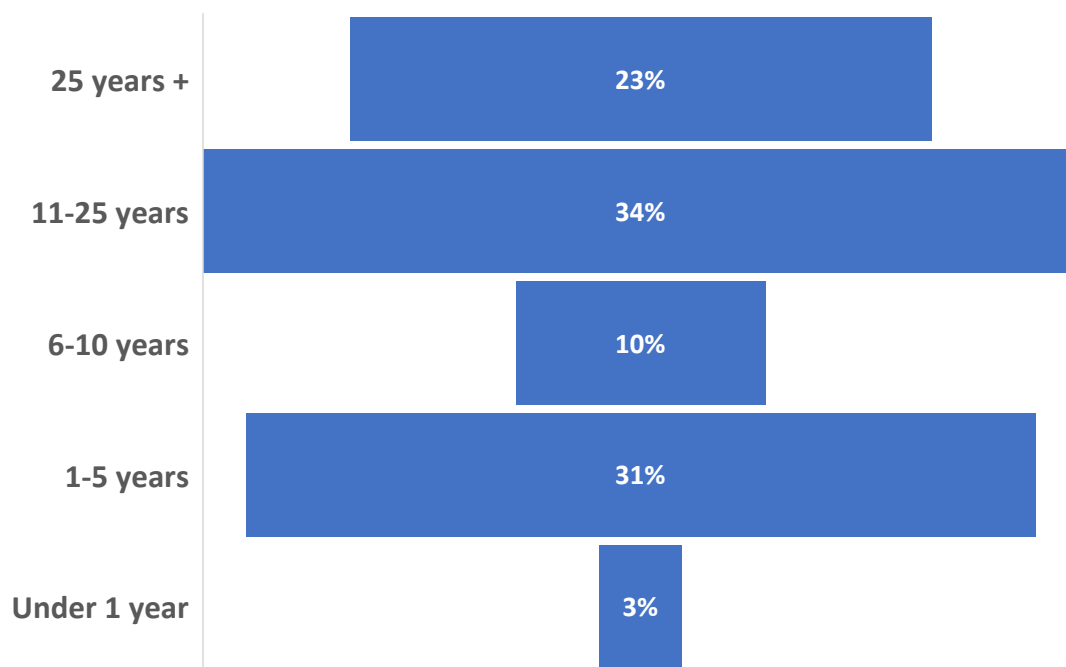


* Based on questionnaire respondents

- 77% of Respondents owned their properties, whilst 23% were renting. [Note: This survey excluded owners of Air BnBs and Holiday Lets]
- 95% of households owned a car, with 58% owning 2 or more cars.

- 57% of residents have lived in the village for more than 11 years (23% over 25 years) with one resident saying they had lived in the village for 77 years !

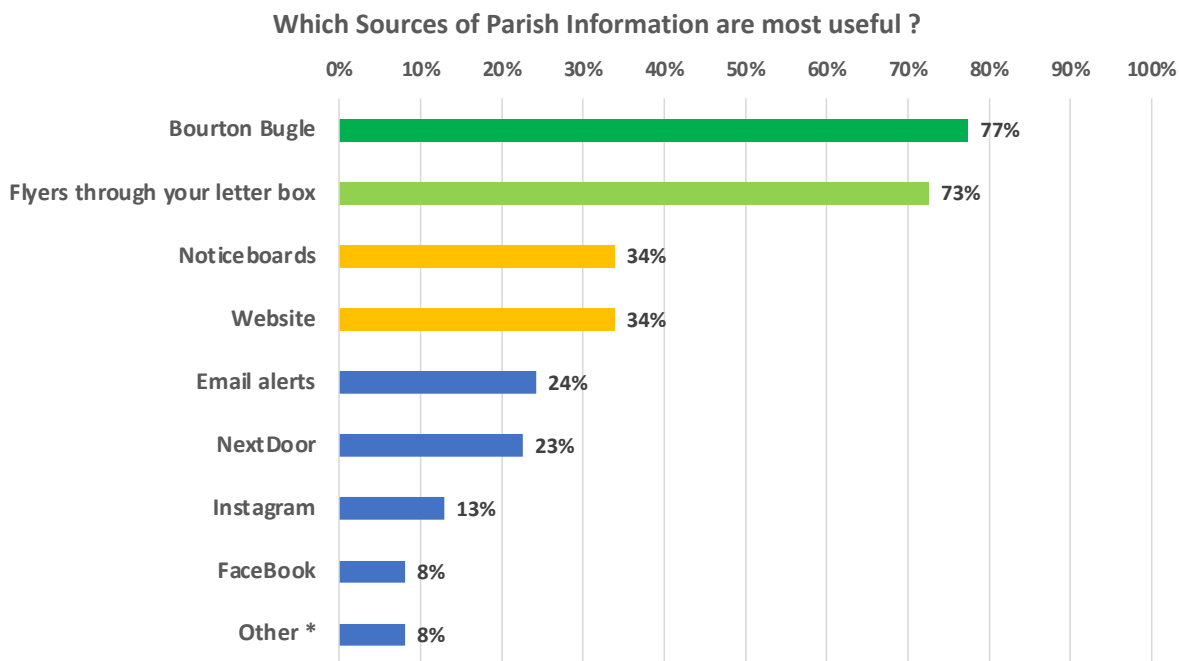
How Long Have You Lived In The Village ?



Section 2 – Communication

- Less than half of all households (45%) claimed to use the village (Parish Council) website. Some were unaware it existed, whilst others had visited and found it to be of limited value due to the content, or the fact that the content rarely changed.
Since the survey took place, the PC website has been substantially overhauled and moved to www.bourtononthehill.org.uk
- 84% of households found the information booklet to be useful with some helpful comments suggesting additional content for future editions eg contact numbers for taxis. It appears that many of the remaining 16% did not receive, or had not seen the booklet.
If you would like a copy of the info booklet please make a request via the contact page, including your name and address.
- 58% of households thought that a village information board would be a good idea. In the main, respondents were answering questions from a personal pov. Therefore, whilst this number is relatively low the PC will also consider the value of such an info board to visitors to the village.

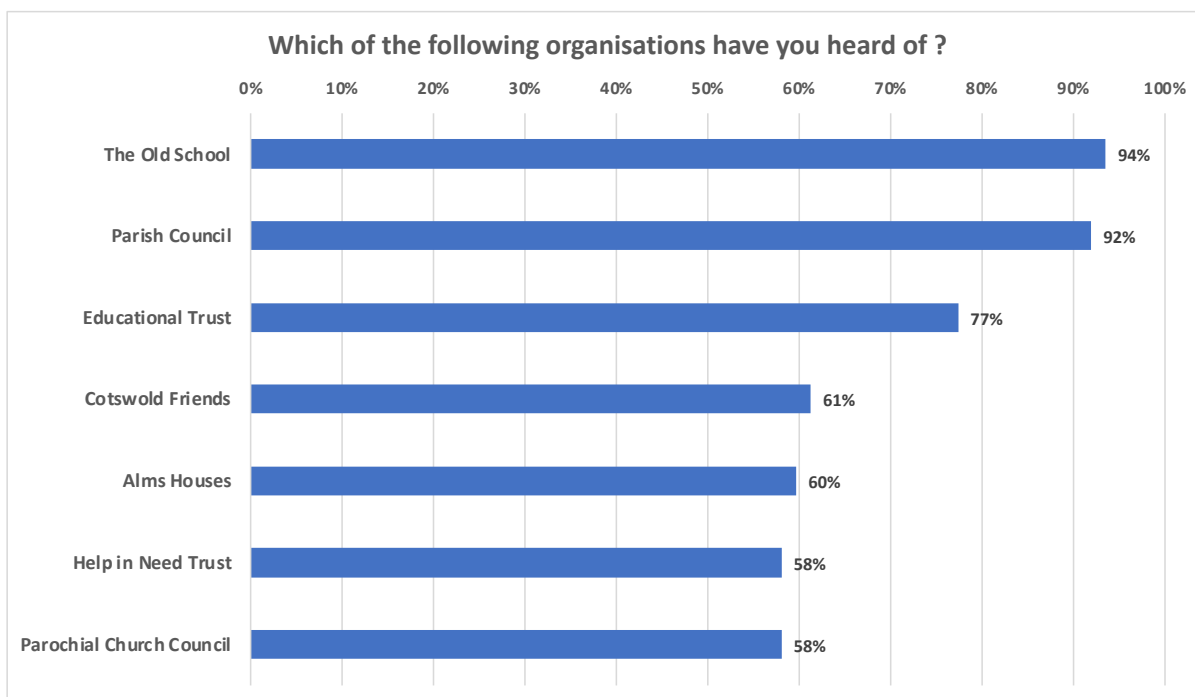
- The Bourton Bugle (77%) and Flyers through the letter box (73%) were the most popular sources of Parish Information (see graph below).



- “Other” most commonly mentioned sources were neighbours and word of mouth.

Section 3 – Community

- A high level of awareness exists for most organisations and amenities in the village (see graph below). Nearly every HH had heard of the allotments and Millennium Wood, whilst slightly fewer (85%) were aware of the community orchard.



- Whilst 92% had heard of the Parish Council, 81% thought they knew what the Parish Council does and how to make contact. 67% thought it was very/quite easy or OK to get in contact, with only 5% of HH thinking it is quite / very hard to get in contact.
- 6 people expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council. They have since been contacted and discussions for co-opting potential candidates are in progress.
If you are interested in becoming a Bourton on the Hill Parish Councillor please get in touch via the contact page, or email clerk@bourtononthehill.org.uk
- Even though only 18% of HH did not know what the PC does, 60% of HH said they do not know if the PC represents their views when needed.
The PC will continue to seek residents' views and publish decisions made by the PC in order to improve these scores.
- Several respondents made positive comments about improved communications between the PC and residents since the May elections in 2023.
- 82% of HH claimed to frequently or occasionally take part in village activities, with only 16% saying they never participate. 69% said they are willing to help in "village clean up mornings" but that the dates need to be publicised more clearly. That is 43 people / households – a significant boost vs previous turnouts !

- **Children's Playground**

- This topic led to split opinions with 32% in favour of having a children's playground in the village, 24% against, and 42% having no opinion on the issue.
- From the survey demographics only 8 households (13% of responses) had children present, and only 2/3 of those having children under the age of 10 i.e of an age likely to use a playground.
- Hence most respondents thought that a playground was not a relevant issue for them, although a small number did mention liking the idea "for when grandchildren visit"
- The implication of the village demographics is that a playground would rarely be used (once a week or less even for those with children).

This topic was specifically raised as a question at the 2023 AGM and, therefore, will be addressed at the next Parish Council meeting in March 2024.

- **Other suggested Village Activities**

Some ideas were put forward, but no single idea stood out as being more popular than others, with only 40% of HH making any suggestions. Those ideas were:-

- Bonfire Night
- A mobile library van
- A "whole village" event eg Summer Fete
- Encourage Horse & Groom to hold more activity nights
- Honesty Veg box / windfalls
- Yoga / Pilates (esp. in evenings for those who work)
- Defibrillator training

- A Parish lunch
- Screening major sporting events in village hall
- “Meet the neighbours” to be held in different locations in the village

• **How to further enhance the village ?**

There were some positive comments about the recently started village coffee mornings in the Old School. Apart from that other suggested ways to enhance the village were :-

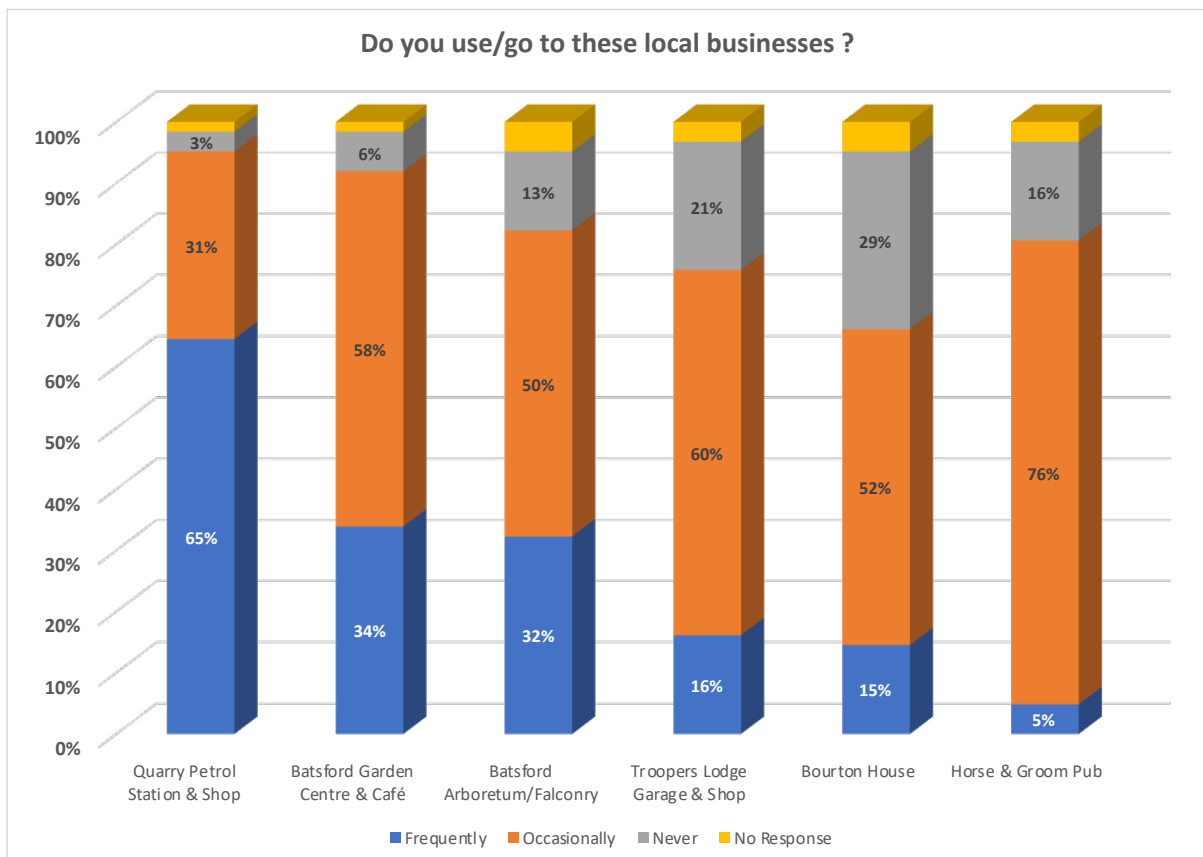
- Find a way to introduce more parking in the middle of the village
- Limit the number of second homes / Air BnBs as they were felt to undermine the community feeling for permanent residents, and added to the parking issues.
- Add more social events for older people. Unfortunately no specific ideas were given.

• **Use of local businesses**

With 95% of households owning a car, perhaps unsurprisingly the most frequently visited local business was the Quarry (GULF) petrol station and shop. 65% said they frequently visited, with another 31% saying occasionally. This compared with 16% frequently and 60% occasionally for Troopers Lodge garage.

Some specific comments were made about the benefits and improvements that had been made to the GULF shop in recent years along with other facilities such as the parcel collection / drop off point.

Results for all businesses are shown in the graph below.



- **Bus Usage**

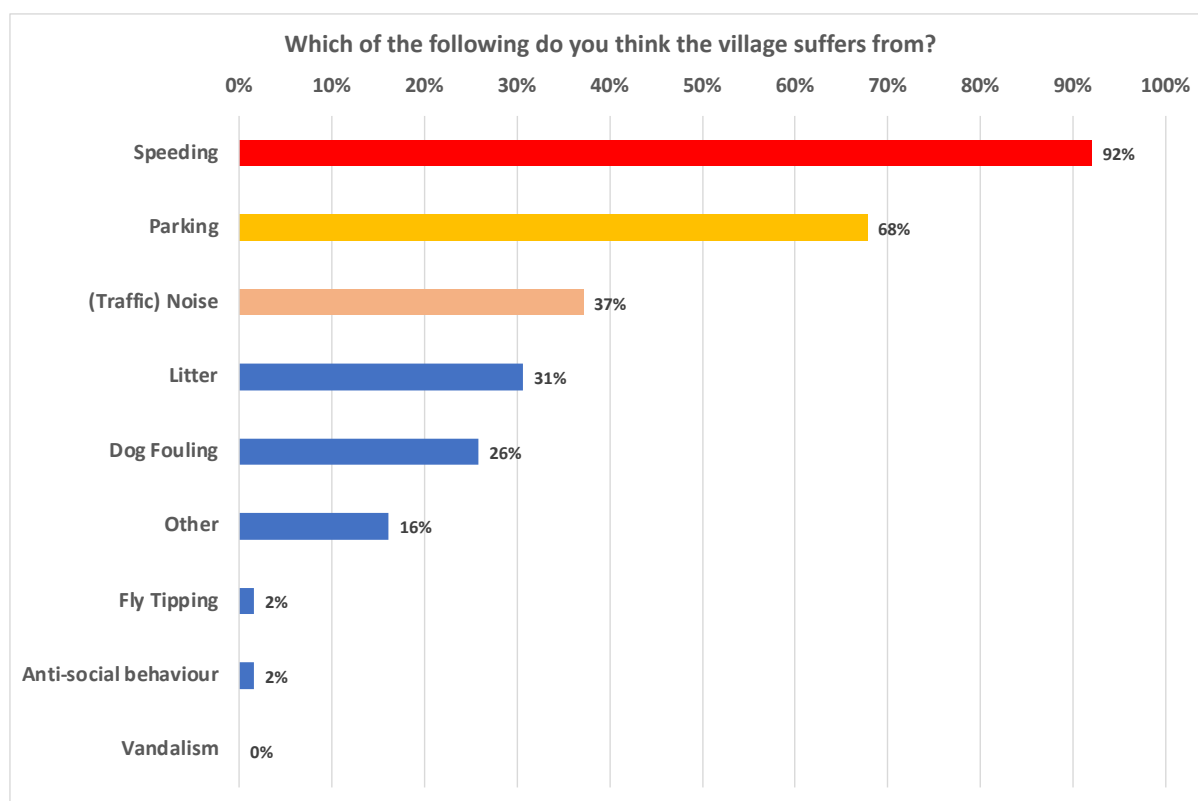
With such a high level of car ownership it is also not surprising that 79% of respondents said they never use the bus services. Only 3% of HH said they used the bus on a weekly basis with a further 18% claiming to use them “rarely”.

There was a reasonable level of awareness of available services – 44% for Cotswold Connexions, 53% for The Robin – with a couple of additional mentions for The Hedgehog Bus and The Villager. So it appears that low usage is driven more by a lack of need or convenience rather than a lack of awareness.

Section 4 – Environment

- There was a high degree of consensus amongst respondents about the key issues Bourton on the Hill suffers from (see graph below). A whopping 92% stated that speeding on the A44 through the village was their primary concern. Many people vented frustrations that this had been an ongoing problem for many, many years and seemed to be getting worse, not better.

The PC is clear that this remains the top priority for the village and will provide regular progress updates on direct actions being taken to address the issue.



- In the short term, whilst waiting for the fixed cameras to be installed, manual Community Speed Watch checks will be restarted. ***If you are interested in participating, please provide your email and name via the contact page on the website.***

- The implications of speeding traffic occur in other questions in this survey, such as safety when using pavements (see later). When analysed, the 3rd highest concern of “Noise” was mostly in reference to traffic noise, especially large lorries and motorbikes.
- The second highest area of concern was the lack of parking in the village, particularly in the middle of the village around the Old School and Rectory Lane/Back Lane. This is exacerbated by visitors coming to walk the Heart of England footpaths, and users of Air BnBs, especially at weekends.
- Despite the village clean up mornings, litter was still seen to be an issue (including people throwing litter out of car windows at the top of the village near the GULF petrol station).
- 55% of HH felt that some areas of the village were “unsafe”. The primary reasons given were :-
 - Speeding traffic / large lorries / caravans
 - Narrow pavements, worsened in some places by overhanging vegetation from people’s gardens (middle of village) and debris (section from Horse & Groom up to the petrol station)
 - Lack of a continuous pavement from the bottom to the top of the village, requiring pedestrians to cross the road several times
 - Dangerous turnings joining the A44 with poor visibility of oncoming (speeding) traffic at the Longborough Road, and the exit from Manor Farm
 - Middle Farm (Batsford) buildings crumbling / deteriorating and at risk of collapse
- When asked specifically [Q 4.9] about walking on the pavements through the village 63% of HH said they felt unsafe when doing so.
- 57% of HH thought that the physical state of the footpaths/pavements was good/fair. 39% thought that they were poor, with the main issues being those listed above.
- Regarding the roads 52% thought their state was good/fair. 48% thought that the village roads were poor. This did not refer to the main A44. The primary reasons were potholes and patchwork repairs instead of complete resurfacing. Most mentioned were Back Lane, Rectory Lane, and Keytes Lane.
- 95% of respondents used local countryside footpaths, but only 61% thought that they are adequately signposted and maintained.

- **Electric Vehicle charging points**
Only 27% of HH thought that communal EV charging points would be useful in the village. 27% said “No” and the remaining 46% had no opinion.
From the demographic data 82% of HH have a garage and/or off-road parking available at their property, so did not empathise with the need to provide communal charging points. This was reflected later in the survey [Section 7 Precept] where only 23% of respondents were in favour of increasing the precept to fund an EV charging initiative.
- For those who thought communal EV charging points were a good idea the proposed locations were Old School car park, Fenhill Close car park, GULF petrol forecourt.
- Apart from building a bypass the other ideas proffered for improving the village environment were; Planting more bulbs / flowers, limiting the number of Air BnBs, and creating a central meeting point / “village green” for people to meet.

Section 5 – Housing & Planning

- 90% of HH are aware that Bourton on the Hill is part of the Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). Households were split 50:50 as to whether they wanted any more information about the AONB or not.
- Only 24% of HH felt that they receive enough information about planning applications in the village. ***Information about how to sign up for planning alerts is available in the “Useful Links” information section of the PC website.***
- Only 24% of HH felt that the present planning process operates to “benefit the Parish”. Most people (45%) said they didn’t know.
- 82% of households were aware that the PC responds and comments on all planning applications. However, many believe that
 - CDC Planning overrules or ignores Parish Council input
 - Planners are too remote from the local residents’ feelings and opinions i.e. poorly informed when making decisions

The Parish Council will continue to listen to all residents’ views when giving their input on each planning application.

- Regarding future building developments :
The majority of HH (65%) were not in favour of any further housing development in the village, and even more (76%) were against further developments in the surrounding adjacent countryside.

- 26% were in favour of some limited development in future. This was mainly centred on affordable housing for rent (27% agreeing) or part ownership (29% agreeing).
- Because of the existing parking issues in the village 95% of HH thought that any new developments should have garages or designated off-road parking included.

The Housing and Planning results will be shared with Cllr. Daryl Corps in his capacity as a member of the CDC planning committee.

Section 6 – Internet / TV / Mobile

This section of the survey was of interest, but dealt with areas where the PC have little or no control.

- 4G mobile signal availability is variable throughout the village
- 66% of HH said they have problems with the TV signal cutting out during certain weather conditions
NB 10% of HH said they do not have a TV
- The main internet providers in the village are :
Gigaclear 56%
BT 31%
- Gigaclear is seen as a good supplier for speed and reliability, but can be quite expensive and are seen as having a monopoly (despite BT availability). Gigaclear is not available to all residents due to the expense (and occasionally willingness of Gigaclear) of getting cabling to their property from the main A44 hubs.

Section 7 – Precept

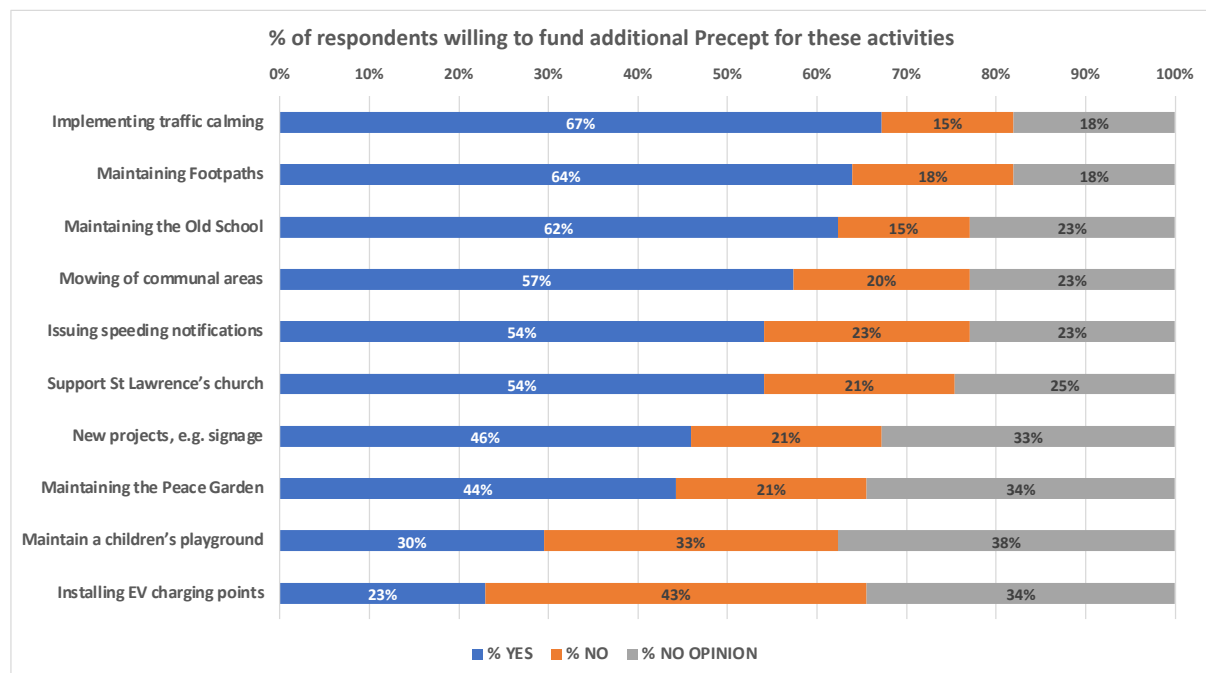
This important section of the survey asked residents which activities (if any) they would be willing to pay an incremental amount to fund via the local parish precept.

Q: In future years would you support a small increase in your council tax to allow for an increased precept to pay for improvements to any of the following items ?

The question gave a bit of context regarding the current levels of Council Tax (for a typical Band D property) in Bourton on the Hill, and the very small proportion of that which is currently paid as a precept to fund all local Parish requirements.

Other considerations as context for this particular survey are the current cost of living crisis in the UK, and the fact that many councils, including CDC are in danger of going bankrupt, needing to find significant cost savings in their 2024-25 budget plans.

- The graph below shows the results for the prompted activities in ranked order from “most willing to incrementally fund” through to “least willing to fund”.



- 6 of the 10 proposals received positive agreement from 54% or more of the respondents, the highest being for “Implementing Traffic Calming” at 67%. Interestingly this dropped to 54% who were prepared to pay additional precept to fund “Issuing Speeding Notifications”, with the most common comment from those dropping out being that they thought this should be funded by the police.
- In contrast the activity with the least support for funding was “Installing EV charging points” in the village at 23%. [See also Section 4 above] This activity also attracted the highest number of households actively saying “No” at 43% (as opposed to “No Opinion”).
- The other lowest supported activity with 30% in favour was “Maintaining a Children’s Playground”. A further 33% actively said “No” with the remaining 38% having “No Opinion” - the highest level of uncertainty (or apathy) to any of the proposals. [See also Section 3 above].
- Apart from the predetermined choices we only received one additional suggestion for funding and that was for “Wildlife Conservation”. For comparison that would represent 0.75%.

All of the above information has been taken into consideration when applying for the 2024-25 precept budget.

Section 8 – Future Contact

- Most Households expressed a preference to receive communications from the PC via the Bugle and leaflet drops (85%).
- 55% also wanted to receive information via email. Some residents already have their email registered on the PC website. 19 new emails were provided by residents.

If you do wish to receive updates and news alerts from the PC please provide your name and email via the contact page on the website.