



THE WINTERBORNE STICKLAND AND WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON VILLAGE PLAN

This document is the result of many hours of voluntary work from a committee of individuals with the community in mind: Chairman- John Sutcliffe, Secretary- Graham Case and David Godden, John Close (Houghton), Mike Ford (Houghton), Karen Marchant (Stickland), Richard Marchant (Stickland), and Crispin Stephens (Stickland).

INTRODUCTION

Winterborne Houghton

The village of Winterborne Houghton has changed, within living memory, from a farming hamlet to a rural residential village. Many of the original families are lost to the community, but in their place have come newcomers who value the peaceful country environment. The parish is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and is part of the Wessex Environmentally Sensitive Area. The ancient woodland and downland is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for exceptional flora and fauna. Within the parish there are 85 households and the current demographic profile is biased towards middle age and retirement, although new families which have recently moved in have increased the number of children by a total of 7.



Winterborne Stickland

In the Village Design Statement (2002) the villagers considered that Winterborne Stickland had a ‘special character’ and this was due to features which included:- its valley setting, the surrounding hills, the Winterborne, the people, thatched roofs of the cottages and the brick and flint and colour washed walls. It is seen as a village for families as much as for the retired and the elderly. These sentiments are true today, as is the view that Stickland remains a living and working village rather than a commuter or retirement settlement. In a Conservation Area and within an ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ these assets are still regarded as extremely important by the village residents in 250+ households.



Foreword by the leaders of the Parish Councils

Chairman, Winterborne Houghton: The information and comments you have provided have been invaluable in helping us to form a picture of the future changes that might be acceptable to the residents of the village. However, equally importantly, you have clearly identified those changes you would not like to see in the future. Thank you for your time in completing the questionnaire.

Chairman, Winterborne Stickland: The Village Plan has enabled the committee to collect the views and opinions of the community and has given all of the residents of our village a forum to express their ideas on what they like and what they don't like. Future decisions will be better made by both Parish Councils and taken forward more effectively because of the very strong evidence we have obtained through this plan to support your views. We hope that you will find this document interesting and informative and many thanks to the volunteers who helped to create it.

What is the Village Plan?

- It is a document that records the views and concerns of the residents in a format recognised by the North Dorset District Council (NDDC) and District County Council (DCC).
- It reflects the collective thoughts of the villages rather than those of the Parish Councils.
- It is an addition to the Village Design Statement, completed a few years ago. It does not replace these documents but complements them and covers much wider issues.
- It identifies the issues of importance to the community, including social, economic and environmental concerns.
- It is based on information gathered from effective consultation and community involvement.

- It identifies which features and local characteristics people value.
- It identifies local problems and opportunities and ways to solve them.
- It spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future.
- It includes a plan of action and says who needs to be involved to achieve this vision with a realistic programme for funding and delivery.

Why do we need a Village Plan?

- So that the Parish Councils know what is important to villagers and can act in their best interests.
- To guide Councillors in their dealings with the NDDC, DCC and other public sector organisations such as the Police, Fire and Rescue, Social Services etc.
- To respond to Government spending cuts because as these take effect there will be a greater need to understand which services are most needed by residents.
- Because spending discretions will be devolved to lower levels of authority in future, your Parish Councils (PCs) will need to understand what services are regarded as important to the villages.
- So that the PCs can show that their views accurately reflect those of the villages when representing your interests to local government.

Village Plan Questionnaire

To assist in preparing the Village Plan a questionnaire was devised and distributed to all households in Houghton and Stickland and then collected, mostly by hand, by a team of volunteers. In all, 255 questionnaires were distributed and 216 completed forms were returned - a response rate of 85%, which is considered to be an extremely good outcome. This leads us to believe that the results are a true indication of the views held by the residents of both villages and gives a high level of confidence to write a plan which fairly reflects their views.

Preparing the Village Plan - the process

The process involved in preparing a Village Plan is time consuming and complex and has been undertaken by a band of volunteers from both Houghton and Stickland. From the outset it was decided that a joint plan would be prepared as both villages share many features and challenges which could be addressed in the same document. Where unique points have been identified for each village then these are highlighted separately in this report, together with the appropriate action plans that are required to address any issues.

In order to understand the views and concerns of residents of both villages an action plan was undertaken which included:-

- two public presentations – St. George’s Day 2011 and a Village Hall Meeting on 18 June 2011 which gathered an initial list of points to be addressed;
- a Suggestion Box campaign;
- distribution and collection of the Village Plan Questionnaire to every household in the two villages;
- an in-depth analysis of the answers from the returned Questionnaires;
- a presentation of statistics from the questionnaire results on the 3rd March 2012 in the Village Hall;
- a draft plan for public viewing in summer 2012;
- submission to NDDC and Community Partnerships Executive for North Dorset (CPEND) for comment and adoption.

THE RESULTS

Population and Demographics

From the returned questionnaires an analysis has been undertaken to look at the numbers of people living in the two villages and how they are split by age group. The returns show that 398 people live in Stickland and 122 live in Houghton. This compares to the latest census figures (2001) which show that the population of Stickland is 576 and 195 for Houghton. Here again, allowing for those houses which did not respond to the survey, this gives confirmation to the accuracy of the collected data.

The graph shown below illustrates the split by age and gender which can be summarised as:-

Children aged 0-11 (13%)

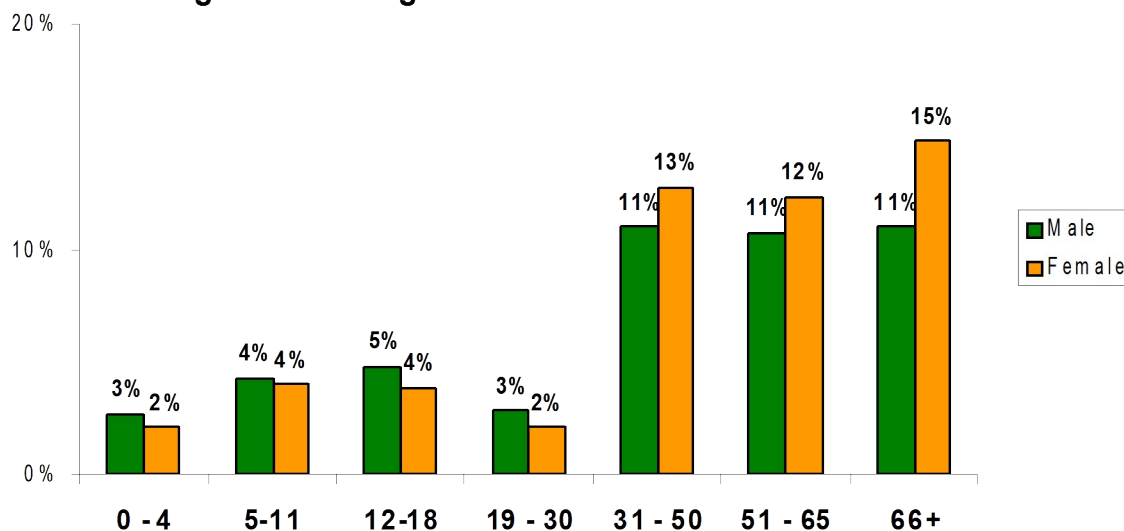
Youths aged 12-18 (9%)

Young adults 19-30 (5%)

Adults 31-50 (24%), 51-65 (23%), 66+ (26%)

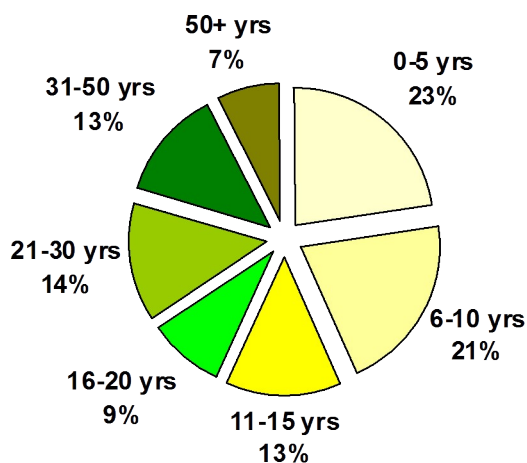
From these figures it can be construed that 73% of the inhabitants are over the age of 30 and 49% over the age of 50 which has implications for the type of housing stock and employment that is required for their needs.

Ages of Houghton & Stickland Residents



The question relating to the number of years that people have been residents of the community produced some interesting figures which show that 23% had lived in the parishes for 5 years or less, 21% for 6-10 years, 13% between 11 and 15 years, only 9% had lived in the parishes for 16-20 years, just over a quarter (27%) had lived in the parishes between 21 and 50 years and only 7% (15 households) had resided in the parishes for more than 50 years.

How long have we been resident?

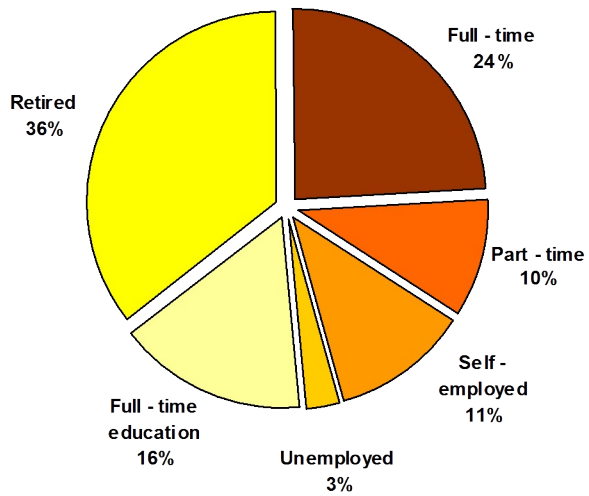


Type of Employment

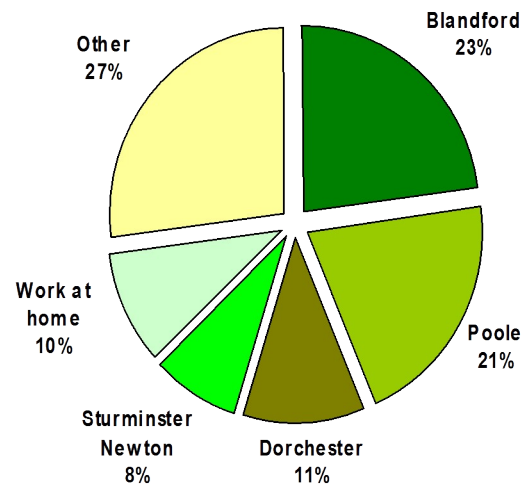
Other questions related to how people are employed and whereabouts they work.

The results for these two questions are shown below:-

How are we employed?

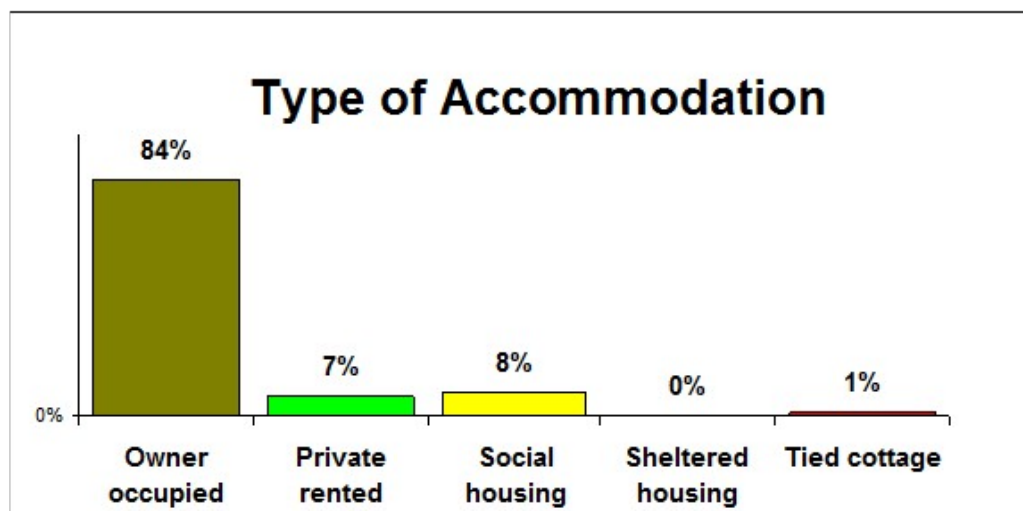


Where do we work?



Type of Accommodation

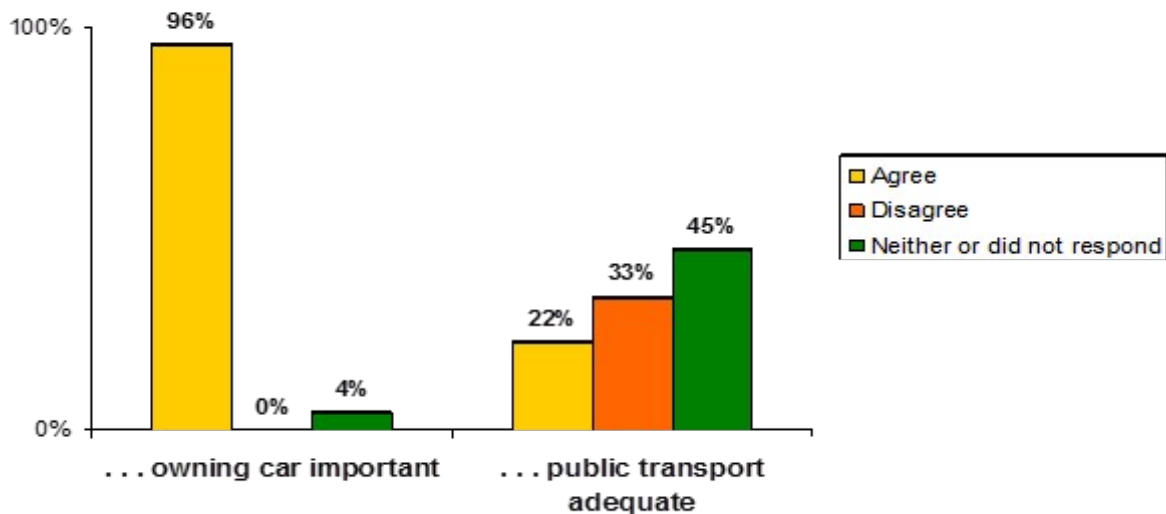
The survey requested details of the type of accommodation and the results show that most households live in owner occupied houses, there being no Social Housing in Houghton and a small number in Stickland. Details of the split between each type of housing are shown below:-



TRANSPORT

The Winterborne Valley is poorly served by public transport. The frequency is inadequate and the service is poorly advertised. It was no surprise that 96% of replies indicated that owning a car was important and 75% had not used public transport to travel to and from the

parish within the previous year. Only 20% stated that they would use public transport to travel to work if an adequate service was available, with almost 59% failing to reply to this question. Around 81% of responses indicated that a car was used for travel to work. However, there was little support for car sharing to work (22%). A proposal for a regular minibus service to Blandford received a 43% positive response. The lack of local transport options to visit the nearest towns has a major impact on satisfying the expectations of the young people in our community.



Recommendation

Lobby NDDC, Dorset County Council (DCC) and the DT11 partnership for a more effective transport option. Possible options might include:-

- utilising minibuses at peak times rather than an occasional service with wide bodied vehicles;
- an internet based booking system using local taxis supplemented by district/county funding when more than 2 passengers share a vehicle.

Road Maintenance

The road network in the Winterborne valley is suitable for light traffic and occasional access for heavy vehicles. The maintenance provided by the DCC is adequate to ensure repairs are conducted in a timely and effective manner with some minor exceptions. In poor weather

conditions drainage is maintained by a regular drain cleaning programme and removal of debris and stream clearance by community members.

Recommendation

Regular surveys of parish drainage should be planned to ensure that flood risk is minimised.

Road Safety

The subject of road safety is of concern to residents of both Stickland and Houghton. In Stickland 57% thought that the current speed limit is adequate, but in Houghton only 37% felt it was adequate (In Stickland this is 30 mph and there is no restriction in Houghton and therefore it is theoretically 60 mph.) However, the roads in both villages are narrow with tight turns and 64% considered it necessary to control traffic speed and obstruction caused by parked cars.

‘There is too much on-street parking in North Street. Sometimes if cars are parked on both sides of the road it is really difficult to get through. If parking is restricted on one side of the road then it would be safer for villagers – especially during harvest time when there are more agricultural vehicles on the road.’

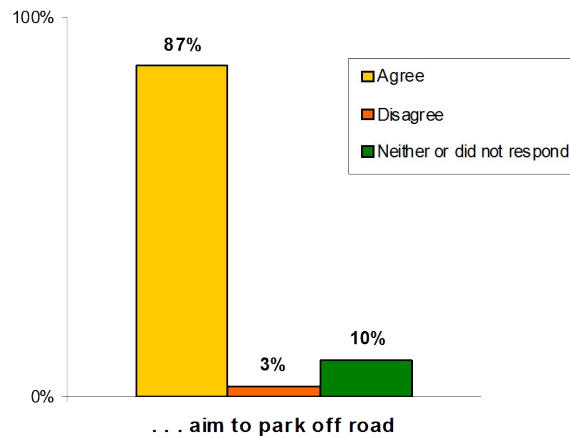
A lorry lost and stuck in the lanes of Houghton



59% of residents wanted to see more parish footpaths in both communities. A large number in Stickland (58%) were keen for traffic measures to come from existing funding and not result in a council tax increase. Poor public transport, limited services and modern trends for multi-car families all contribute to the issue of congestion.

‘Our biggest concern is the speed traffic goes through the village especially for the safety of children and animals.’

Improve road safety by off road parking



Recommendations

During large road excavations such as the culvert replacement at the village green or the development of new build houses at Moonhill, consideration should be given to the inclusion of new pavements as a planning condition.

A letter should be sent on behalf of both communities to lobby the NDDC, DCC and the DT11 partnership for electronic signage warning of unsuitable access for heavy goods vehicles and advising reduced speed at sharp bends.

A parish wide campaign should be conducted for more considerate parking and better use of personal drives.

SERVICES

It is generally acknowledged that Stickland and Houghton are desirable villages to live in, as illustrated by the quote from one household saying:

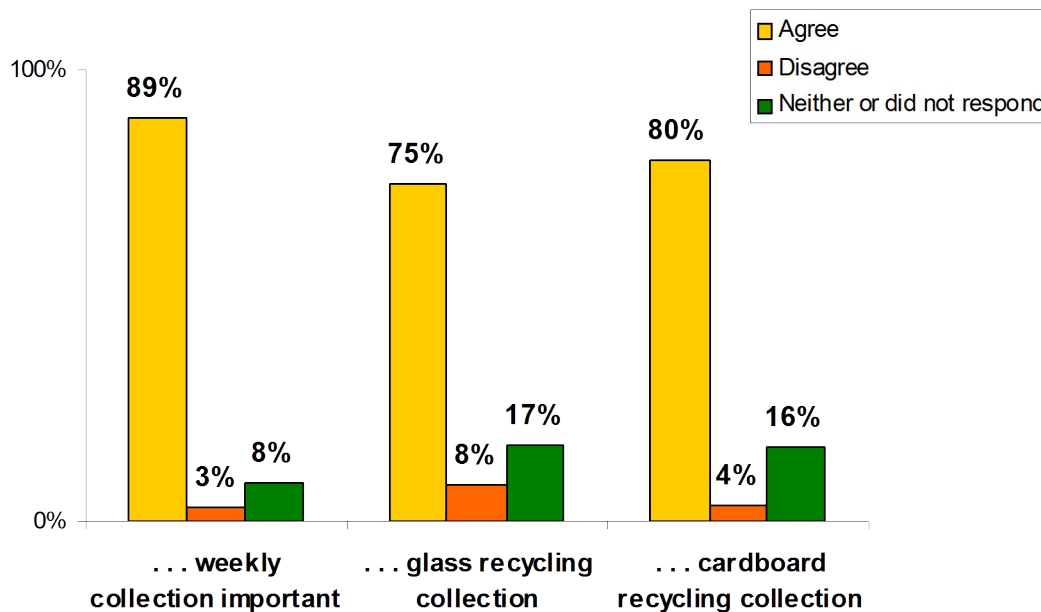
'We need to keep this as a special place for future generations by protecting our heritage and environment.'

The enjoyment of living in the villages is greatly affected by the services available and a large section of the Village Plan Questionnaire was devoted to seeking the parish views on this topic.

Refuse and recycling

Refuse collection is an important aspect of village life and 88% of residents agreed that this should be done weekly. There is little support (18%) for a large refuse bin in each village to supplement

the weekly rubbish collection and the provision of wheelybins to households was not well supported with only 26% in favour. The concept of recycling is well supported in both village communities and residents are generally in favour of extending the current service provided by the NDDC. 75% want glass to be included in the kerbside collection and 80% think that cardboard should be included. There is also good support for the introduction of a green waste collection facility (53%).

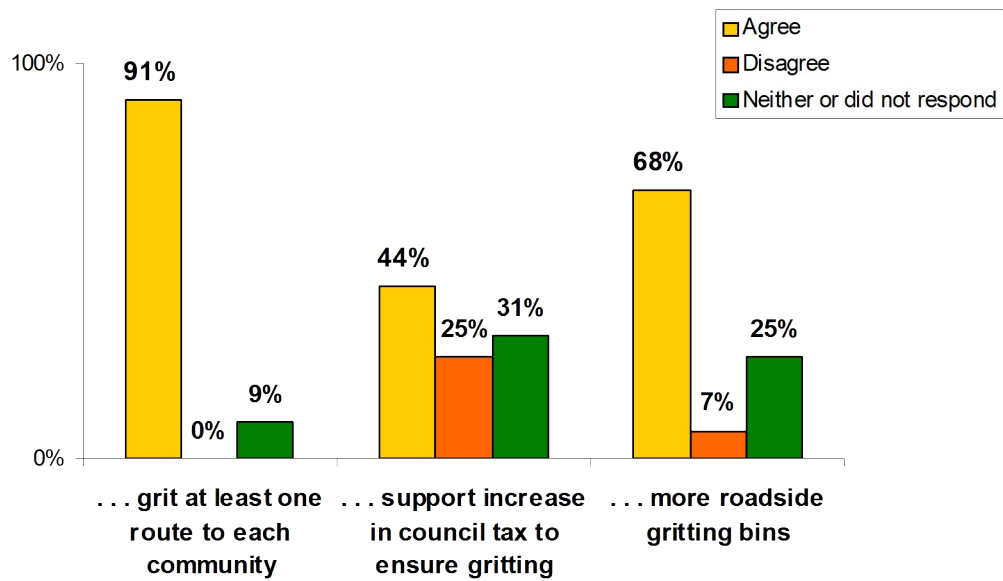


Recommendation

A request should be made to NDDC for an extension of the kerbside recycling service and a copy of future plans for rural community refuse collection.

Gritting in winter

The issue of gritting the roads in the winter is a major concern and 91% of residents agreed that at least one route from each community should be gritted in icy weather. The community believes that access is a basic right and any cost should be borne by the DCC from current



budgets, which said, 44% supported increasing their contribution to ensure that access is guaranteed. Houghton was placed on the community gritting network in 2012 which should ensure an exit/entry route in the event of inclement weather. There is support for more roadside gritting bins in both villages and 68% are in favour. Current bins are replenished free of charge but in future years the cost of replacing grit used will fall to the Parish Council rather than NDDC.

A typical winter's day at Water Lane between Houghton and Stickland



Recommendation

The NDDC and DCC should confirm their commitment to at least one gritted route for access during freezing weather.

The purchase and location of additional grit bins should be considered by the Parish Councils.

Information services

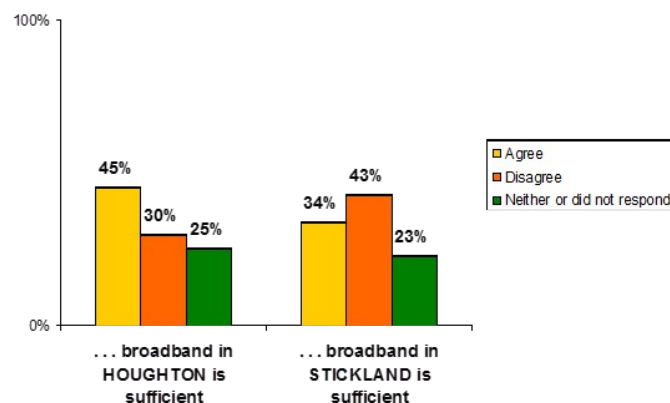
The provision of the Mobile Library service is well supported and there is general agreement that a fortnightly run is adequate (55% support). The Valley News is seen as a useful provider of information to the Villages and 90% of residents think that it makes an important contribution to the community. The concept of an information pack for all residents providing details of services and facilities in the parishes is supported by 66% of those who responded to this question.

Recommendation

Consideration should be given by the Parish Councils to produce of a small welcome pack for new residents to the community.

Broadband

The provision of a fast Broadband service will be increasingly important, particularly in encouraging business development, and there are various local initiatives to improve this service. Overall only 34% (Stickland) and 45% (Houghton) of those questioned believe that the available service is currently sufficient for their needs although both villages responded slightly differently.



Recommendation

The Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) and NDDC should extend the Trailway initiative to both villages or identify alternative methods of improving internet speed for domestic and business use. The Trailway initiative will link 5 communities (Durweston, Stourpaine, Shillingstone, Okeford Fitzpaine and Child Okeford) with fibre optic cable to deliver superfast broadband. The cable will follow the course of the old railway track, hence the name.

Drainage and sewerage

The provision of drainage and sewerage services is clearly an important issue in rural communities and generally residents are satisfied with their present arrangements, as only 22% would be prepared to pay an appropriate charge for connection to mains drainage and sewerage.

Emergency Services

Health services in this community are thought to be appropriate and 77% agree that the GP service is sufficient for their household needs and there is a high level of confidence that an ambulance would be available if required. 56% of residents agreed that the local fire and rescue service provided a good service but the support for the community police is less positive with only 38% agreeing that the police provide a good service in maintaining our safety and security. We are fortunate to live in a low crime area.

Recommendation

Regular contact should be maintained with the local police authorities and the community should continue to expect regular updates and occasional attendance at parish meetings by community police officers.

Green Energy

There is general support for future initiatives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, although 41% in Stickland and 31% in Houghton would be interested in mains gas if it were possible and did not incur additional cost to deliver it. 69% of respondents sought to improve amenity with the installation of electricity and telephone cables underground as pylons and posts become unserviceable.

‘Roof solar panels should be encouraged rather than the panel arrays in fields.’

There has also been great concern with regard to the visual impact of a solar panel “farm” in a neighbouring community. Solar panels to provide renewable energy are supported by 54% of villagers as an effective and unobtrusive option; however, the more visually obvious wind turbine was less popular at 44% in favour in Stickland and 23% in Houghton, and only then if it had an impact on energy bills within the community. 57% in Houghton and 32% in Stickland actively disagreed with wind turbines.

Recommendation

Consideration should be given in both communities to planning applications for renewable energy options to ensure they are consistent with a scale appropriate to the dwelling that they support and should be as unobtrusive as practicably possible and in keeping with both the conservation areas and the AONB.

Garage Services



Winterborne Stickland has a local garage servicing the community of both parishes. A return journey to the town of Blandford is a distance of 9 miles from Stickland and 13 miles from Houghton. Reliance on private transport, poor access to public transport and the legal requirement for annual vehicle checks make the garage in Stickland a most important service for convenience and to reduce the overall cost of

running private vehicles.

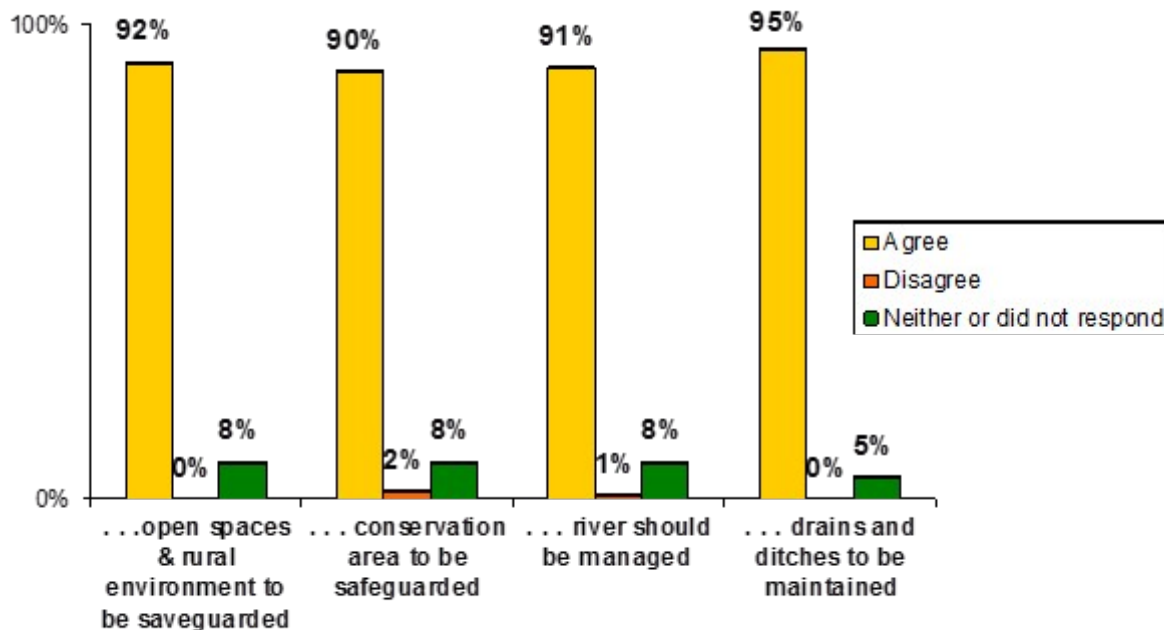
ENVIRONMENT

The Parishes of Stickland and Houghton lie in the North Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within the parish boundaries there are also designated conservation areas.

‘The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is blessed with some of the most striking sequences of beautiful countryside that are unique in Britain.’

The unique, unspoilt nature of the environment that surrounds the two villages of Stickland and Houghton is a major contributing factor in attracting new families to settle in the area and in encouraging existing residents to stay.

The features that contribute most to the environmental impact of the area are the rolling chalk hills, wooded areas, hedgerows, water meadows and the Winterborne River. Considerate farming techniques and development confined within the parish boundaries to sustain open spaces also have a major part to play.



The Winterborne River

The Winterborne River has its source at the western end of Houghton and joins the Stour River at Sturminster Marshall. Rare flora and fauna are attracted by the river, including a population of water vole that can be found as far downstream as the Quarleston Farm development.

The river is prone to both flash flooding during heavy rains and seasonal flooding if drainage and flow are not maintained, and requires careful management to ensure that drainage is not impeded by weed and debris. Any clearance needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the natural environment of rare animals is not unduly disturbed or removed. 91% of the community agreed that the river should be managed.



A Typical flood scene following a period of rain at Houghton

Recommendation

The post of Stream Warden should be supported and maintained to manage the stream on behalf of the communities, on a voluntary basis with a small expense budget under the guidance of the Parish Councils.



The Winterborne River “running”

Open spaces

Open spaces are also an important part of the local environment and the water meadows at Clenston Road in Stickland and Water Lane between the two villages are key contributors to the amenity of the villages and the AONB. 92% of those questioned were overwhelming in their support for the maintenance of the open spaces and safeguarding the environment that they support. Hedgerows are also an important feature and should be maintained and encouraged in the land adjacent to the village boundaries.

Recommendation

Where hedgerows that bound fields are damaged or removed they should as far as possible be replaced to maintain local amenity and where an indigenous tree or hedge is removed in the conservation area, due to ill health or size, then it should be replaced with the same variety to support the environmental impact for future generations - as highlighted in the Village Design Statements.

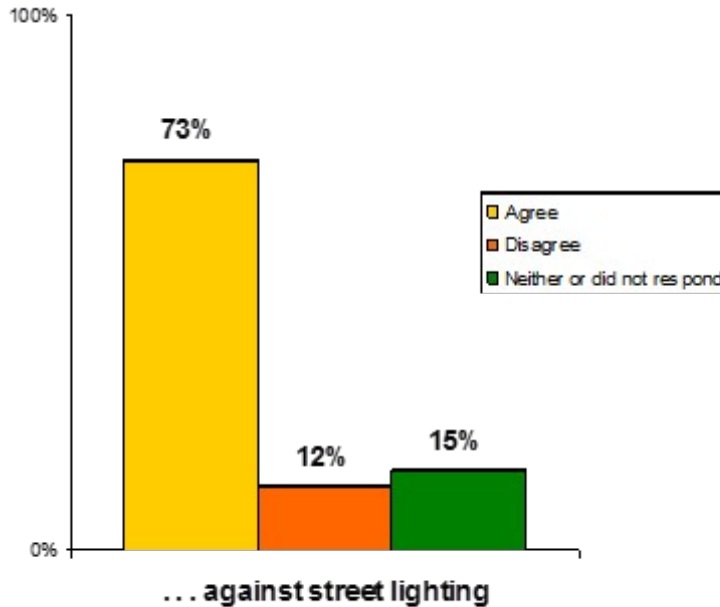
‘Trees enhance our local environment enormously; they remove carbon dioxide from the environment and release oxygen, thus improving air quality. They provide pleasant leafy surroundings and home for many varieties of insects, birds and animals which are important to our eco-system.’

Conservation areas

There was also overwhelming support (90%) for the maintenance of the conservation areas within the two communities. Light pollution, noise pollution, increased traffic and overgrown footpaths can all have a detrimental effect on the conservation area and character of the two villages.

Light Pollution

Light pollution was a particular issue exposed by the questionnaire. 73% of responses were against street lighting. The villages are not currently lit during the hours of darkness despite only the main road in Winterborne Stickland, North Street, having any pavement. The lack of street lighting not only maintains the natural tranquillity and remoteness of the area but it also contributes to the reduction of the rural carbon footprint of the two parishes. The lack of public lighting makes private radiated light all the more obvious and should be a factor when considering planning permission to ensure that any new building works don't have a negative impact on the night sky (such as large glass structures, conservatories etc.).



Recommendation

Due consideration should be given to maintaining low levels of light pollution, particularly in the conservation areas, when planning applications are considered.

EDUCATION

Easy access to good education has become a key driver nationally in helping young families to decide where to live and work. Families with young children are far more likely to accept a commute to work rather than settling in an area with poor education facilities near to their employer. Both parishes are extremely fortunate to have access to good education with minimal travel for children between the ages of 4 and 11.



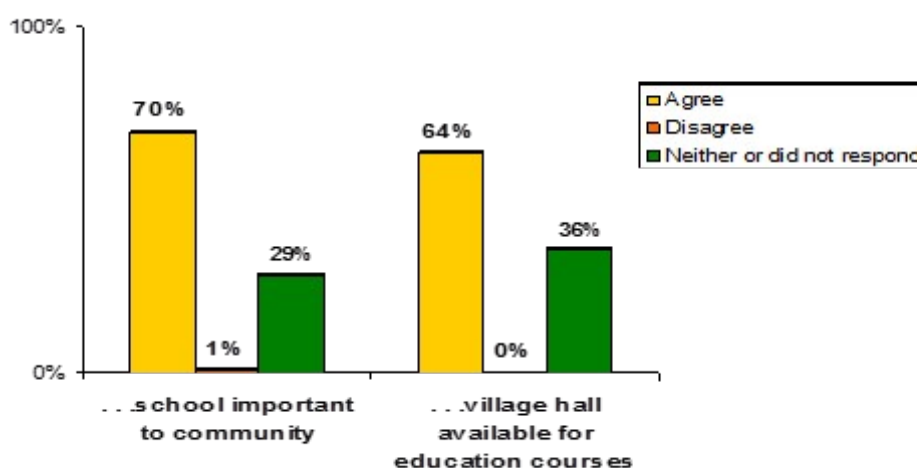
The Dunbury School Winterborne Stickland base

Using the information returned and with reference to the Dorset Data Book 2011 (DCC), the questionnaire indicates that approximately 70% of the potential numbers of children and young people living in Houghton and Stickland have been identified in the survey; the proportions of children and young people of various ages are consistent with the county wide data.

Number of children

The questionnaire returns for both Houghton and Stickland indicate that children and young people aged 0–18 represent 22% of the population: 5% at pre-school age, 8% at primary age and 9 % between the ages of 12 and 18.

“The local school needs to be supported or we will lose it”



Local Schools

The villages of Houghton and Stickland are served by The Dunbury Primary CE VC School until the age of 11 and the Blandford School up to the age of 18. The Dunbury CE VC Primary School is a federated school located on three sites: Winterborne Stickland, Winterborne Whitechurch and Winterborne Kingston. 120 children currently attend The Dunbury School. 70% of responders to the questionnaire feel that The Dunbury School is important to the community. Written comments received included reflections upon the need for there to be stronger links between the school and the local community, and that the local school should be supported.

‘There need to be stronger links between the school and the community’.

Recommendation

Responses from the questionnaire should be shared with Dunbury School and The Blandford School.

There needs to be a better relationship between the community and The Dunbury School Stickland base.

Pre-school

The former pre-school and nursery in neighbouring Milton Abbas has closed (2011) and there are currently no pre-school or nursery facilities in the Houghton/Stickland area. The nearest pre-school and nursery facilities are in the Blandford area (4.5 miles).

Recommendation

Local pre-school provision should be investigated and supported.

Alternative Schools

Other schools in the area that have been identified as schools of choice for residents include: Puddletown First and Middle Schools (9.2 miles), The Thomas Hardy School (14.5 miles), Durweston pre-school and CE Primary School (5 miles), Sturminster Newton High School (8.3 miles), Lytchett Minster School (18 miles), Fontmell Magna Pre-school (10.5 miles) and Poole College (20 miles). A number of independent schools can be reached within 10 minutes from both villages: Milton Abbey School, Knighton House, and Bryanston School.

Adult Education

The Pamela Hambro Hall is used by the community to accommodate a number of educational activities and events such as the Artsreach exhibitions. Artsreach in particular has been well received with 50% endorsing this initiative. Most of the activities are organised by local groups, some of which arrange talks and demonstrations that are open to all for a small charge, e.g., The Valley Gardening Club. 64% of respondents thought it a good idea that Pamela Hambro Hall was available for education courses.

For those seeking more formal education opportunities, evening adult education courses can also be found at Blandford School, Kingston Maurward College, Weymouth College and Poole College.

In response to the Education questions as detailed above, on average 45% responded with an opinion, 55% neither agreeing nor disagreeing or did not respond.

Recommendation

There is a need for a better input about the nature and variety of adult education opportunities in North Dorset.

There is a need to seek additional education courses and activities based in the Pamela Hambro Hall.

Children's Clubs

Our children and young people tell us that they are actively involved in many clubs and activities either at their school or that are available in the wider area. They are reliant upon family members being able to transport them to and fro due to the lack of public transport. Our younger generation

are involved in over 50 educational or recreational activities at present with aspirations to add further activities if it were possible. However, in response to the Young Person's Questionnaire, in two thirds of returns only 1 or 2 children or young people were interested in each specific activity indicating that no one activity was popular enough to draw a large degree of support.

Recommendation

Feedback should be provided to the Valley News on their positive impact in advertising various children's activities in the local community with encouragement to continue their good work.

AMENITY AND RECREATION

This section covers the aspects of community life which instil and improve a feeling of well-being in the parishes.



The Annual St George's Day celebration at the Stickland Crown Pub

Community Amenities

Access to a shop, post office, pub, church, village hall and sports club all scored highly in the questionnaire. 94% of those questioned thought that post office services were important and 91% supported the concept of a village shop. Currently the two are combined and family owned. 85%

considered the pub to be a key feature of community life. 94% agreed that the Pamela Hambro Hall is very important to community life. The hall has modern facilities for theatre productions, presentations and social events and is well managed by a community group.

'I consider myself very lucky to live in Winterborne Stickland, a thriving community, which offers a very good range of social activities'.



Houghton May Queen Celebration

St Andrews Church Houghton

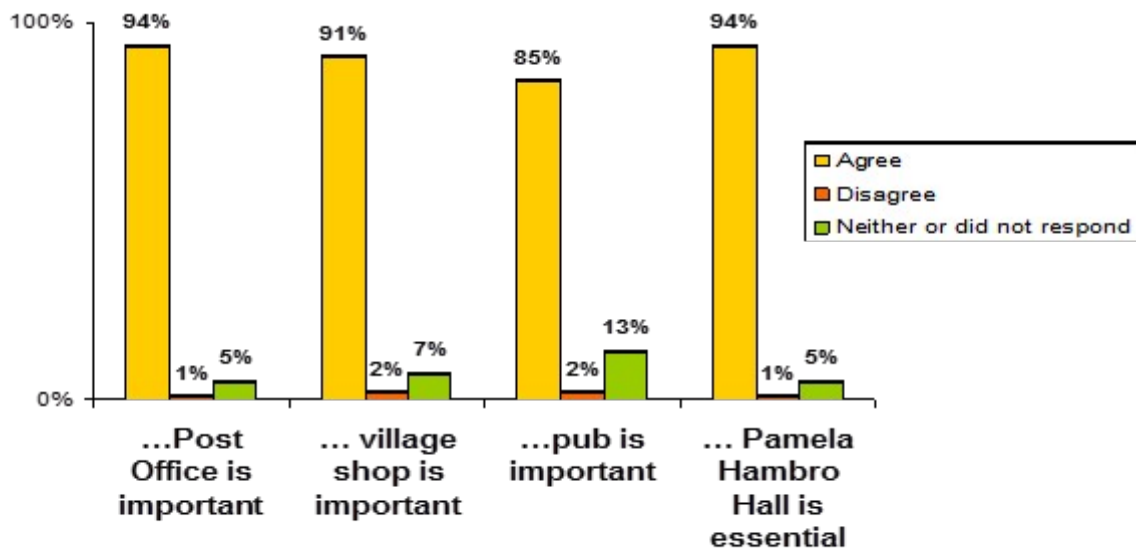


opening of a Monday coffee morning in St Mary's, Stickland, has been popular and well supported.

St Mary's Church Stickland



The church is also important to many in the community with 55% in Stickland and slightly fewer (34%) in Houghton agreeing that the church was an important focus of community life. The



The Winterborne Sports Club



The village sports club received strong support from the community. 52% considered it an important meeting place for sporting events. The key sporting focus is football and tennis. There is appetite for a wider variety of activities.

Recommendation

More emphasis is made on providing sporting activities at the village sports club as a means to drawing in funds to maintain the facilities.

The Crown Pub, Stickland



The Village Post Office, Stickland

Although commercial ventures, the pub, post office service, and access to basic stores are all important aspects of the parish which should be supported in partnership between the owners and the representatives of the community and the Parish Councils. Where any of these services fail the Parish Councils should encourage an alternative and support innovative ideas to provide the service.

Supporting Local Business

Low employment opportunities in rural communities are a recognised threat to sustainability. The concept that we should employ local people to undertake local tasks, where this option exists, is supported by 81% of residents. There are several local businesses that employ staff. The key business activities are in equine, agriculture and building but also include the local garage, shop, fish farm and pub. The opportunity for employment in agriculture is decreasing as the reliance on contracted persons with loaned or leased farming equipment continues to increase. A list of some businesses operating in the Winterborne valley can be found in the Valley News.

Valley Fabrications, Stickland



The Fish Farm, Houghton

Recommendation

There should be business supplements or tax benefits for businesses that employ local people in rural communities.

HOUSING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

It is generally accepted that Stickland and Houghton are desirable places to live and that the rural and relatively unspoiled environment contributes to the attraction of the villages.

Whilst it is clearly desirable that the rural idyll should be protected for future generations, there is also a future need to provide additional housing, particularly for younger people. This has the potential to create conflict within the villages where the needs of some may not support the general view that life should not change for the majority, who would like to preserve the existing way of life.

The Village Design Statements, published in 2002 in Stickland and 2003 in Houghton, are the guides used by your Parish Councils to decide whether planning applications to change current properties, or build additional housing, will complement the look and style of existing dwellings. The Village Plan will not replace the Design Statements but will be used to assess the need for future development and to reflect the views expressed by villagers for the types of properties needed and their possible locations.

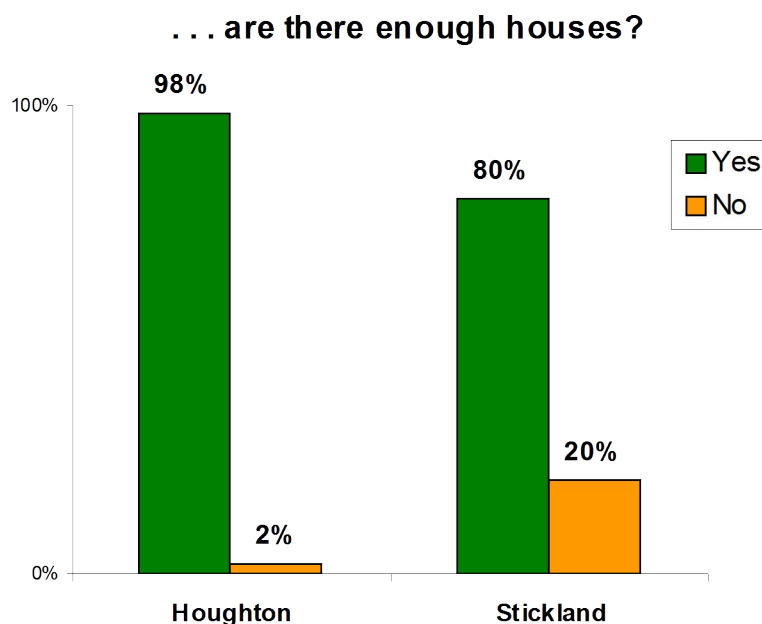
Future Housing needs

The majority of residents do not foresee a need for building additional houses in the villages and in answer to the question ‘Do you think that there are enough houses in the village?’ 98% of Houghton residents agreed with this statement as did 80% of Stickland residents.

In response to the question 'Is there any need for additional housing for your family?' only 5% of villagers thought that there is a requirement and only 4% agreed that this would result in their family forming more than one household.

Whilst these results indicate that there is a low level of support for changes to the housing stock, if both villages are to encourage our young people to remain in the communities and the size and spirit of the communities is to be sustained, some affordable homes may have to be considered in the future. This point is illustrated by the comment from one resident, who said:

'We need to retain the youth and twenty somethings to keep the village alive and robust. Cheap affordable housing and renting is vital over second homes, keeping trades and money in the local economy.'



Future development

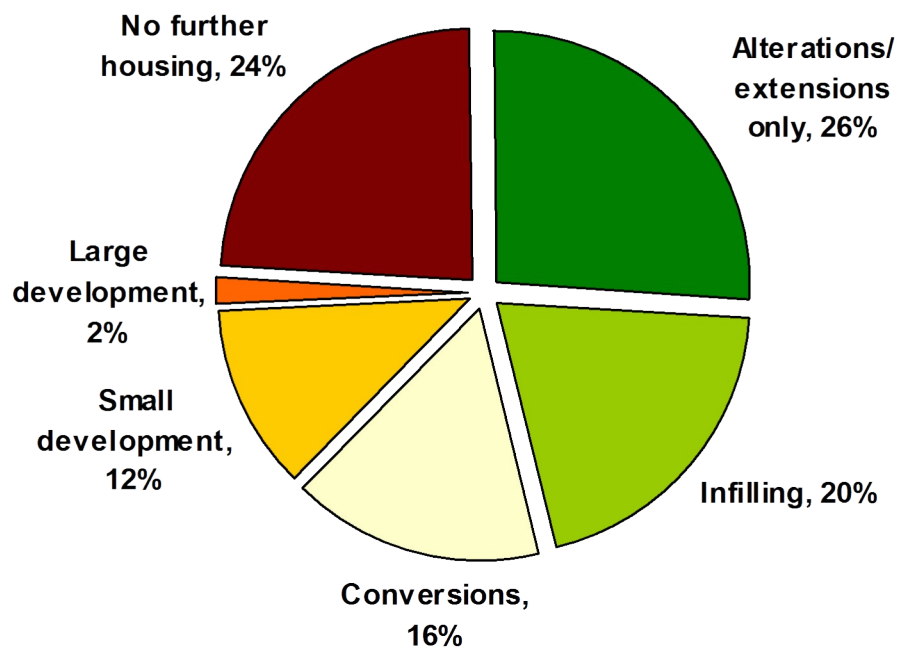
Although there is little support for future housing development, the survey asked villagers to list their preferences for any future changes and in Houghton there was zero support for any large developments and only 2% support in Stickland. It is clear that only small changes to the housing stock would be supported although 24% stated that they would not want to see any further housing.

The preference is for alterations or extensions only; 26% of villagers supported this option. Another 20% thought that infilling would be acceptable although one resident commented:

‘Very little space available for infill development and we must not encourage garden grabbing.’

Conversions to properties were preferred by 16% of respondents with a further 12% supporting only small development.

. . . preference for future housing development



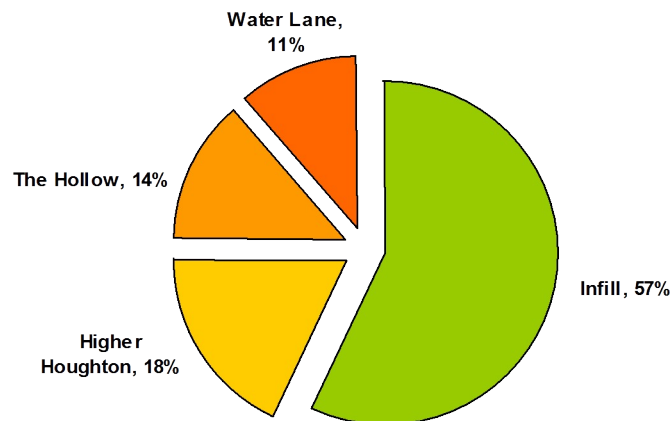
Should there be a future need for housing in the area, then we should be mindful of the need to provide accommodation for younger people with 36% of the returns showing that there is a need for starter homes and 30% for smaller homes. Only 9% thought that there is a need for larger homes followed by 7% who supported bungalows and 5% saw a need for sheltered housing.

Location of future developments

Although there is a low level of support for much future development, residents were asked to answer the question, ‘If there was a need for new housing in our parishes, which area of the village do you think would be best suited for building?’ The answers for each village are shown below:-

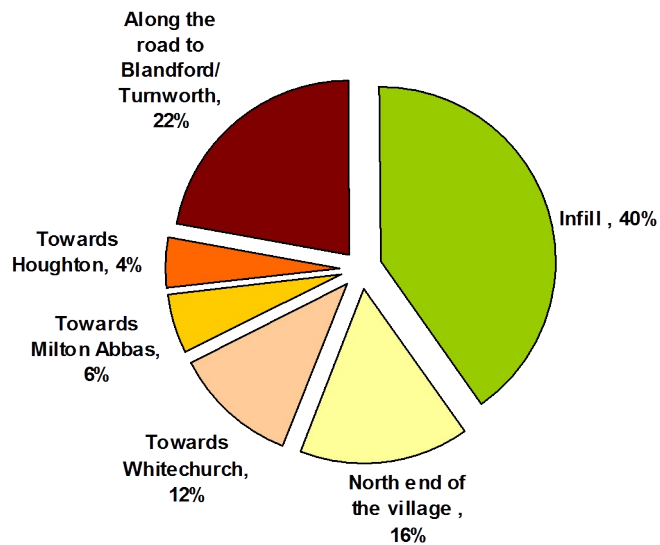
Winterborne Houghton

Where to build in Houghton



Winterborne Stickland

Where to build in Stickland



In summary

There is virtually no support in either village for any large scale development and overall 85% of residents thought that there are enough houses in Stickland and Houghton. Any future development would need to be low key with a large proportion of residents believing that this should be achieved by infill.

Villagers are mindful of the needs of younger people as there is some support for starter homes, although there is no current appetite for anything other than very small scale development.

Any future development in Houghton would need to be achieved by infill which is also popular in Stickland, although some 38% would favour some additional housing towards the northern side of the village toward Blandford and Turnworth.

Recommendations

Conduct a review of development needs periodically.

Recognise that the Village Design Statements remain valid for both communities and continue to use them as the main reference for planning applications within the parishes.

Consider the production of a neighbourhood plan should an overwhelming future need for development be identified.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Lobby North Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and the DT11 partnership for a more effective transport option. Possible options might include:-

- a. utilising minibuses at peak times rather than an occasional service with wide bodied vehicles;
- b. an internet based booking system using local taxis supplemented by district funding when more than 2 passengers share a vehicle.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

2. Regular surveys of parish drainage should be planned to ensure that flood risk is minimised.

ACTION: Parish Clerks in partnership with DCC.

3. During large road excavations such as the culvert replacement at the village green or the development of new build houses at Moonhill, consideration should be given to the inclusion of new pavements as a planning condition.

ACTION: Parish Councils in partnership with DCC.

4. A letter should be produced to lobby the NDDC, DCC and the DT11 partnership for electronic signage warning of unsuitable access for heavy goods vehicles and advising reduced speed at sharp bends.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

5. A campaign should be conducted for more considerate parking and better use of personal drives.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

6. A request should be made to The NDDC for an extension of the kerbside recycling service and a copy of future plans for rural community refuse collection.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

7. The NDDC and DCC should confirm their commitment to at least one gritted route for access during freezing weather.

ACTION: Parish Councils in partnership with NDDC and DCC.

8. Parish to ascertain location of additional grit bins and cost of provision.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

9. The Parish Councils to consider the production of a small welcome pack for new residents to the community.

ACTION: Parish Clerks.

10. There should be direct liaison with DAPTC and NDDC with a view to extending the Trailway initiative to both villages or identify alternative methods of improving internet speed for domestic and business use.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

11. Regular contact with the local police authorities should be improved and both communities should continue to expect regular updates and occasional attendance at parish meetings by community police officers.

ACTION: Parish Council Neighbourhood Watch Representatives in partnership with Dorset Police.

12. Consideration should be given in both communities to planning applications for renewable energy options to ensure they are consistent with a scale appropriate to the dwelling that they support and should be as unobtrusive as practicably possible and in keeping with both the conservation areas and the AONB.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

13. The post of Stream Warden should be supported and maintained to manage the stream on behalf of the community, on a voluntary basis with a small expense budget under the guidance of the Parish Council.

ACTION: Winterborne Stickland Parish Council.

14. Where hedgerows that bound fields are damaged or removed they should as far as possible be replaced to maintain local amenity and where an indigenous tree or hedge is removed in the conservation area, due to ill health or size, then it should be replaced with the same variety to support the environmental impact for future generations as highlighted in the Village Design Statement.

ACTION: Parish Councils to liaise with local landowners.

15. Due consideration should be given to maintaining low levels of light pollution, particularly in the conservation areas when planning applications are considered.

ACTION: Parish Councils to consider the impact of light pollution when responding to planning applications and complaints in partnership with NDDC.

16. Stronger links should be forged with the The Dunbury School and The Blandford School.

ACTION: The Village Plan Committee should share the responses from the questionnaire with The Dunbury School and The Blandford School to encourage stronger links to be forged with the community.

ACTION: Both Parish Councils should work more closely with the local Dunbury School.

17. Options for local pre-school provision should be investigated.

ACTION: Parish Clerks should investigate local pre-school provision and Parish Councils should encourage and support their business plans.

18. There is a need for a better input about the nature and variety of adult education opportunities in North Dorset.

ACTION: Both Parish Councils to establish a dialogue with the Adult Education Services to determine future courses.

19. There is a need to seek additional education courses and activities based in the Pamela Hambro Hall.

ACTION: Parish Council Clerks should write to adult education services to encourage the use of the Pamela Hambro Hall as a venue.

20. Feedback should be provided to the Valley News on their positive impact in advertising various children's activities in the local community with encouragement to continue their good work.

ACTION: Village Plan Committee.

21. More emphasis is made on providing sporting activities at the village sports club as a means to drawing in funds to maintain the facilities.

ACTION: Winterborne Stickland Parish Council to liaise with the Winterborne Sports Club.

22. There should be business supplements or tax benefits for businesses that employ local people in rural communities.

ACTION: Parish Councils should send a joint letter to the MP for North Dorset to support tax initiatives for rural businesses employing local people.

23. Conduct a review of development needs periodically but no later than 5 years' time (2017) to ensure that the joint position of both parishes is valid and current.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

24. Recognise that the Village Design Statements remain valid for both communities and continue to use them as the main reference for planning applications with the parishes.

ACTION: Parish Councils.

25. Consider the production of a neighbourhood plan should an overwhelming future need for development be identified.

ACTION: Parish Councils.