

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation – Young Person’s Survey

How the consultation was run and who responded

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group felt it was important to try to obtain the views of younger people in the area, since during the lifetime of the Plan, they would become adults, so their views were definitely important.

A Young Person’s Survey was devised, trialled on one young person (whose opinions have been included in the reported results) and publicised through the Newsletter and it was also mentioned on the primary survey to the community, where we asked the recipients to encourage their children to respond. The survey was made available on Survey Monkey in late September 2020 for them to complete online. The response was disappointing but to an extent it reflected the general trend of the other survey responses, in that it was people with families and with jobs, who were unable to make the time to respond.

In total we had 12 young people who took part, aged 11 – 18. Of these, 8 were school age, 3 were in further education and one had an apprenticeship. In addition, one of the participants also had a local (part-time) job.

What is good and bad about living here

We asked two open ended questions about what was good, and what was bad, about living here – the results of which are summarised in the list below. The beautiful countryside, peace and quiet, and the friendliness of neighbours were all strong plus points, but it also means that young people feel more isolated from their friends and activities many of which are based in the town, and the internet / broadband reception is also poor (which has been particularly difficult for home schooling).

The good...

- Quiet (x5)
- Scenery / views / beautiful place (x5)
- Community / friendly (x4)
- Countryside (x3)
- Architecture
- Near enough to towns for going out and meeting friends
- Plenty of space to walk my dog
- Small businesses
- Wildlife

The bad...

- Isolated / too far from town and friends (x5)
- Not much to do (x3)
- Poor internet / broadband reception (x2)
- Littering within the area
- No bus service
- No clubs or sporting activities
- Traffic
- Some of the community are not nice to young people

Activities and interests

What type of activities are young people getting involved in?

We asked our young people what organised activities they were involved in. This varied a lot, including scouts / guides, sea cadets, cycling, walking, horse riding, rugby, swimming and other

watersports. On average, our respondents took part in 3 or 4 different activities. Most of the sporting activities took place outside of the village. In their spare time, the ‘top things’ to do were:

- Socialise with friends (10 mentions)
- Play or listen to music (9 mentions)
- Reading (9 mentions)
- Play Video Games (9 mentions)
- Sporting activities with friends (8 mentions)

Where young people had to travel to get to their activities, most said they were reliant on a lift from parents, although some could on occasion walk or cycle (and some of the young people aged 16 – 18 had access to a car / motorbike or could travel by bus).

What could be done to improve existing activities / play areas in our area?

The ‘lack of available activities’ (those that they want to do) was cited as the most common reason why they did not get involved in local activities.

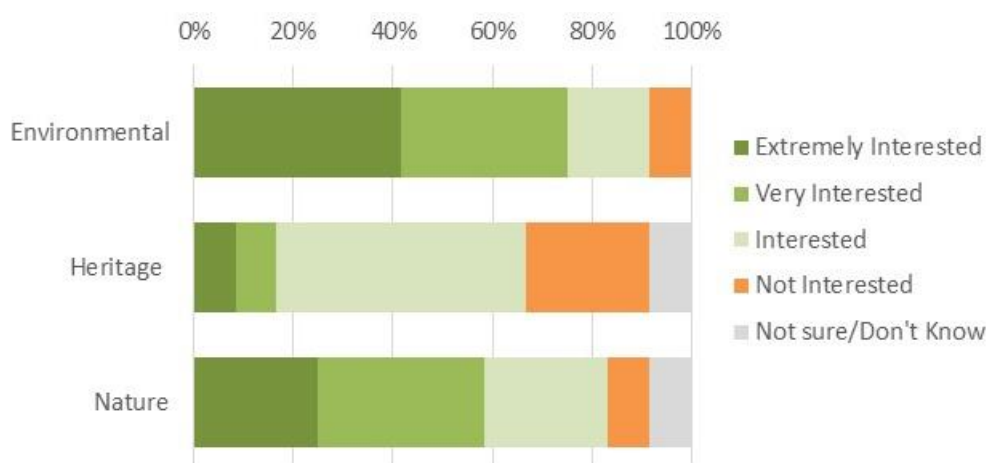
Ideas for new activities were quite varied, although the possibility of a gym was raised by nearly half of those responding. Ideas included:

- Gym (5 mentions)
- Sport / keep fit (2 mentions)
- Martial Arts / karate (2 mentions)
- Badminton club
- Church activities for young people
- Creative arts
- Cross country running club
- Football Training
- Horse riding teams and training
- Netball club
- Rugby
- Something involving cats
- Vintage tractor club
- Volunteering for occasions
- Youth Centre

We asked could be done to improve existing activities / play areas in our area. Most of those responding didn’t have any specific ideas, with three suggestions that the existing play facilities could be renovated / better maintained and include items more suitable for older children, one person suggested having a playground in Fleet, and another said that more benches would be a good idea. Better access to facilities was also suggested.

What issues are young people getting interested in?

We asked whether young people were interested in environmental issues (e.g. air pollution, climate change, deforestation, endangered species etc), heritage (e.g. historic buildings, archaeological sites or things worthy of preservation) or



natural history (e.g. animals, plants and other living things in their natural environment). Environmental issues was clearly of some significant interest to them, and also natural history, with some, but more limited, interest in the history of the area.

Housing and Design

Further housing needs

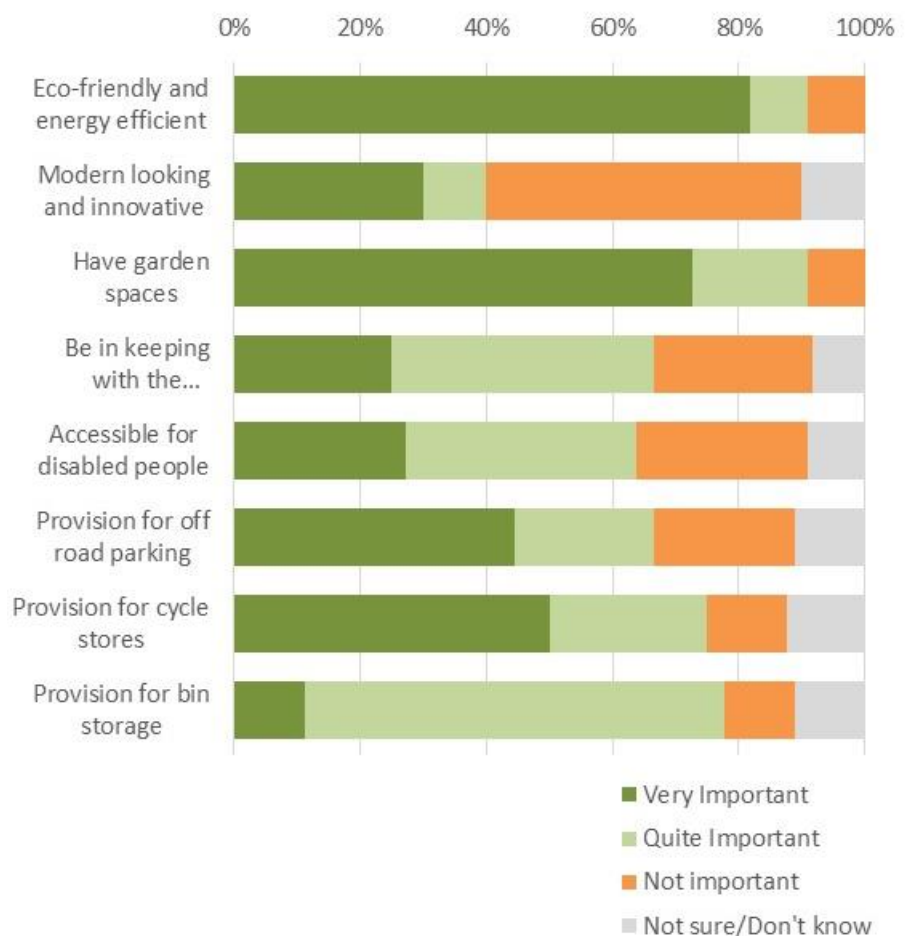
Seven of the 11 young persons said that they might like to live here one day, with 3 young people definitely wanting to move away (all of who were aged 16 – 18). Without more data it is difficult to understand the reasons – whether this is because they feel they have to move away (because of the lack of jobs and affordable housing) or whether they feel the area is too isolated and there are not enough activities and interests here compared to other places.

Design criteria for new buildings

We used the survey to check priorities for the design of new buildings, to see if young people’s views differed much from the general population.

In the main (adult) survey, the top three aspects were off-road parking, being in keeping with the surroundings and being eco-friendly and energy efficient followed by having good garden space. So there appears to be some agreement across the age groups, although the environmental credentials and garden size were more highly rated by the youth.

Neither group appears to think that new buildings need to be modern or innovate looking, with much clearer support for buildings designed to be in keeping with their surroundings.



Concluding remarks

We gave our young persons the chance to make any other suggestions which might make their village a better for children and young people. Here is what they had to say (redacted as necessary):

- Measures to slow cars down. “Cars drive through our village going 50 mph”

- Safe ways to cycle to friends (2 comments) – “I would like to cycle on the roads but I am too scared and my parents won’t let me.”
- Better internet / broadband (2 comments) – “The broadband can be slow and I find it difficult to do what I need to. Lockdown learning was hard because my teachers did lots of live lessons on Microsoft Teams and sometimes the broadband made them glitchy or difficult to follow. I do lots of homework using the internet and I sometimes find it is too slow then as well. I also use the internet for my social life because none of my school friends live in my village. I often cannot play the game adequately because of slow broadband so I am left out.”
- Youth Club for older children
- Skate Park (2 comments)
- There should be some sort of trim trail or play area with tennis or netball courts.
- More activities (3 comments) – “There should be more clubs as there are none in Fleet”
“More community activities that people can get involved with after covid has calmed down”
“Have more things to do”
- Improve transport links like buses - more frequent maybe, and possibly to Dorchester
- Ask our opinions “This is the first time I have ever been asked about anything to do with where I live and what I want.” “Older people don't understand how young people think.”
- Allow innovate eco-friendly designs – “I would like to live in a house dug into the hillside with a grass roof, completely eco-friendly and with a zero carbon footprint.”
- “I would like to be able to stay near where I have grown up and find good work here. I hope to never own a car.”
- “Visitors here don't always look after the area well.”