

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation – Employment & Business Surveys

Headline results

Employment Survey

- 49% of the Employment survey returns were from people over 66 years old, which makes the sample unrepresentative. Only 6 responses from people under the age of 30.
- Only 131 returns were made which probably reflects the fact that many retirees did not see the relevance of responding to an Employment Survey.
- Almost half of jobs were in 4 areas of employment, Hospitality, Tourism, Manufacturing & Public Sector
- 47% of those in employment worked in the CB area
- Main mode of transport unsurprisingly was car/van

Business Survey

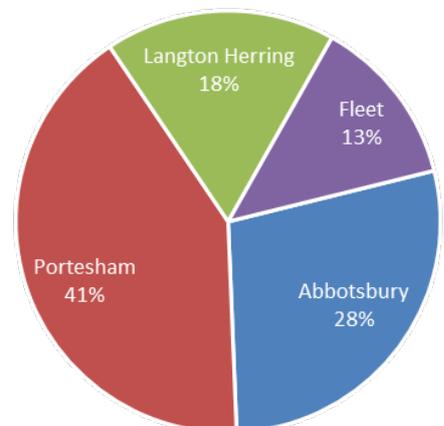
- 25 responses from Business Survey several of which were face to face interviews
- Broad cross section of businesses polled i.e. tourism, hospitality, agriculture, retail, professional services
- 68% of businesses are either sole traders or micro-businesses (<10 employees)
- Almost half of the businesses had difficulty recruiting staff, due either to lack of appropriate skills or transport difficulties. Limited pool of working age residents in CB area.
- 80% dependent on reliable and speedy broadband but 28% said performance was poor
- 57% stated that prospects were much the same but of course this may have changed with the impact of Covid-19
- AONB status was seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage (greater planning restrictions)

How the consultation was run and who responded

For our second residents' survey (which focused on employment and business matters) it was distributed to every household during February 2020. It was also available online via SurveyMonkey and over 50% of responses were done in this way.

We had a slightly lower response rate from this survey than the previous one, with 131 completed questionnaire forms returned, but still a reasonable sample size from which we were able to gather some useful information.

Again, the smaller parishes of Langton Herring and Fleet were particularly well represented in the survey returns. Because people told us which area they lived in, we were able to use this information to check whether there are any real differences of opinion depending on where people live.



Of the survey responses received, just under half (49%) were from those aged 66 and over. This older age profile was even more pronounced in Portesham, with 63% in that age range. We had

very few responses (just 6 in total) from younger people (aged up to 30 years old) – and therefore we do not have a very clear picture of the employment issues that may be facing that section of our community.

We also issued a survey in February 2020 specifically focused on local businesses operating in the Chesil Bank Parish area. The majority of businesses were invited to respond online but we arranged for several businesses to be interviewed face to face in order to get a more detailed insight into their businesses.

We had 25 responses from local businesses to this survey. The survey was scheduled for completion by 13 March 2020, just at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic and potential impending restrictions on residents and businesses.

The main businesses represented in the response related to the tourism / hospitality industry (accounting for about 40% of the responses), followed by agriculture and retail (20% each) and professional / consultancy services.

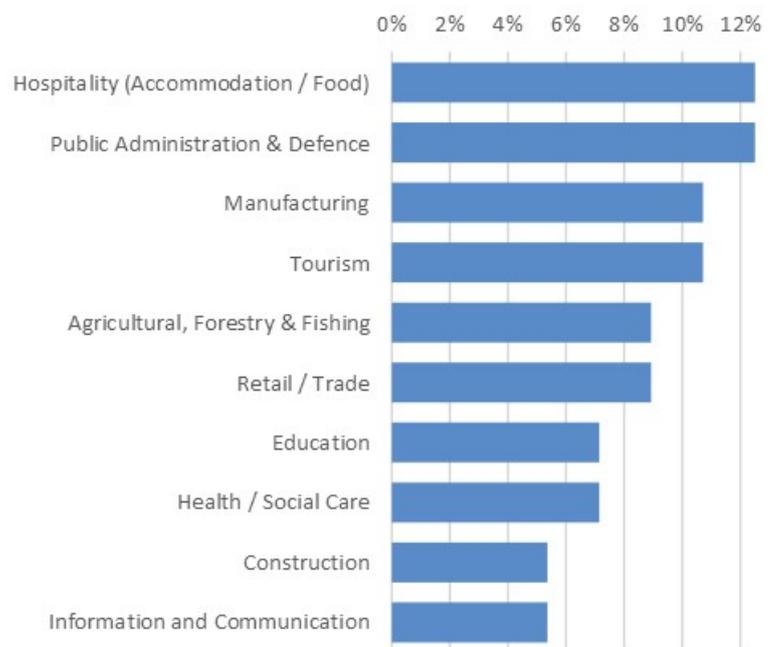
Main Findings

What sectors are people working in?

Compared to the previous survey (when 58% said that they were retired), just under half of those responding (48%) were retired. This may partly be because of the self-selecting nature of surveys (with those retired seeing less relevance in completing an employment-focused survey). Of those in retirement, about a third (32%) said that they undertook some unpaid voluntary work. 5% of the respondents were either studying or in some form of training (which accounted for all of the responses from people aged 11 – 30).

In terms of the type of jobs people were working in, this varied greatly. The four 'top' jobs were in either hospitality (including accommodation and catering), tourism (including recreation and other activities), manufacturing, and working for the public sector (administration and defence). This is broadly similar to the 2011 Census findings, and confirms the greater prevalence of farming, manufacturing and hospitality / tourism compared to the wider Dorset area, and lower than average number of people employed in retail, health and financial / insurance jobs. Tourism was notably more important in Abbotsbury and the smaller settlements than it appears to be in Portesham.

Employment sectors (top 10)



About 8% of those in work or of working age were either looking for a different job or more working hours. The main barrier they told us about was, simply, the lack of suitable opportunities.

Where do people work?

Just under half (47%) of those in work living in the area, worked within the Chesil Bank parish area. The proportion of those working outside of the parish was the highest amongst Portesham residents (61%). Just over a third (36%) either work from home or within a mile of their home. Whilst most of those working close to home (within 1 mile) tend to travel to work on foot, the main mode of transport to and from work is by car or van (accounting for over 70% of all trips). The same applied to those in training / education.

The response from local businesses, in terms of their own staff, suggested that about two thirds (68%) of the businesses were either sole traders or micro businesses (employing fewer than 10 staff). The vast majority (84%) had their own (dedicated) business premises. These ranged in size from around 20sqm up to over 300sqm

On average, businesses typically employed 2 - 5 full time staff (or equivalent). However there were five businesses employing in excess of 20 staff (these were all in the tourism sector and included a significant level of seasonal work). About half of all businesses (48%) said that they did have difficulty recruiting staff, the main reasons being the lack of appropriate skills and transport (for staff coming to work but living outside of the area). There was no obvious correlation between the type of business and staff recruitment issues.

What attracts businesses to this area?

We asked existing businesses what attracted them to locate here in the first place. The answers were varied, with the main reasons being that they already lived or owned land here (or had taken over a family business), or because of the natural environment and quality of life here.

The advantages and disadvantages of the area to businesses, as expressed by the business owners / managers, is summarised in the table below:

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Good customer base / passing trade (especially in summer) – Good land. – Lovely part of the country / beautiful surroundings – No traffic congestion – Proximity to South West Coast Path and other tourist attractions – Quiet / peaceful – Super fast broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Greater planning restrictions linked to AONB / Listed Building status – Increasing activity from poachers / trespassers – Lack of marketing of the area – Lack of public transport – Limited number of working age residents (more retired people wanting little change) – Limited parking for customers – Poor broadband – Poor signage for visitors – Poor transport links to rest of UK – Seasonal of passing trade and businesses closing outside of peak season – Small size of available premises

The key factors suggested as being important for business success included:

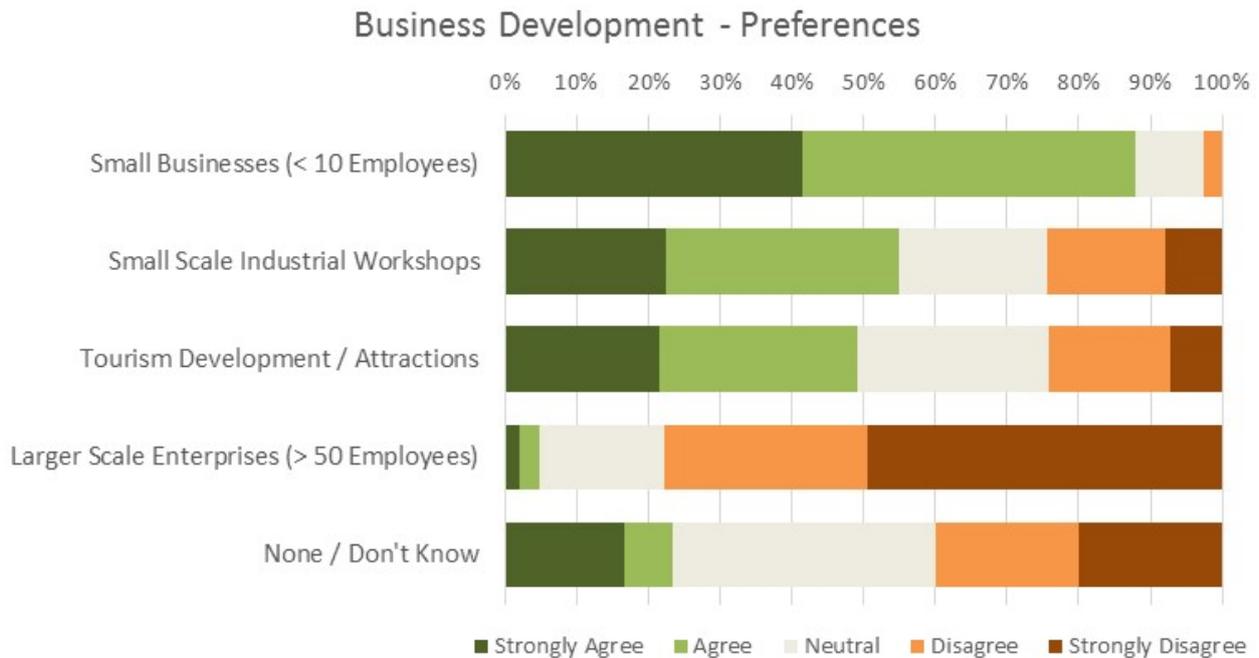
- Attractive premises / location
- Being open 7 days/week
- Good customer service
- Good internet
- Good product / reputation
- Good weather
- Local reliable employees
- Range of services / specialist products

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of businesses (80%) said that reliable and speedy broadband connection was either highly important or vital to their business. About half (52%) considered the current service to be either good or very good, with just over a quarter (28%) claiming that it was not good at all.

Traffic and access were not particularly problematic to most businesses, with less than a quarter (20%) reporting any issues. Of those encountering problems, these were typically due to the size of some of the larger vehicles (lorries and bus / coaches) and poor on-street parking.

What type and scale of businesses would people prefer to see in the Chesil Bank parish area?

We took the opportunity to ask for people’s opinions on the type of business development that would prefer to see locally. This question was open to all respondents (including those that were retired).



As illustrated in the graph, there was good support for small-scale businesses (including workshops) and further tourism enterprises, but no real appetite for attracting larger scale enterprises to the local area. Whilst some respondents didn’t want to see any further business development, this was outweighed by those that disagreed and would support more development.

What need is there from local businesses or entrepreneurs looking start up or relocate here?

Most businesses (57%) surveyed felt that their future business prospects were much the same compared to the last year, with about equal numbers suggesting either a decline or improvement, or not sure. This may of course have changed with the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the national economy and the tourism sector.

We asked local businesses what changes, if any, they foresaw making to their business in the next 5 years. The main change (mentioned by 60% of the businesses responding) was to improve their current premises through repairs and internal alterations. One in eight (12%) were looking to enlarge their premises, and almost as many (8%) looking to downsize, or close (8%). This suggests little pressure for change / new employment sites from existing businesses.

We also asked through the residents' survey whether anyone was looking to establish a new business in the parish or relocate an existing business to here within the next 5 years. Of those responding to our survey, a total of 4 people answered 'yes'. Whilst they did not indicate the type of business, the type of premises required included studio and old barn / redundant buildings.

How do local businesses rate the Neighbourhood Plan objectives?

As a final question, we asked local businesses to rank the Neighbourhood Plan objectives in order of importance. The top three priorities common to most businesses were:

- To respond to the need for a demographically mixed population, a viable economy, and training and employment opportunities within the parish
- To provide appropriate levels of housing and other facilities to meet the needs of the local community
- To maintain the beautiful, quiet, accessible rural landscape and villages which its residents and visitors value so highly