

# LOWER HEYFORD AND CAULCOTT

## PARISH PLAN 2010/11



# INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

## **Welcome to the Parish Plan**

This plan has been put together by the Parish Plan Steering group, which had representation from the Parish Council. The steering group has taken forward some of the quick wins whilst the plan was in the process of being put together, but the Parish Council has adopted the plan and has agreed to drive forward implementation in the future.

The Parish Plan Steering Group believes that this report has accurately recorded the opinions of those who answered the questionnaire. With a 70% response rate it is likely that those who mind most about the environment in which they live have given their comment. We trust that when decisions are made about potential changes in Lower Heyford and Caulcott the results of this report will be taken into account.

We live in a beautiful place, and there are many people of goodwill in the villages who contribute to our community life and our surroundings in a range of ways. But there is space for more! If you are interested in any of the areas covered in this plan, have any resources to offer, and you have not yet been recruited please don't hesitate to get in touch with anyone on the contacts page in this plan or make yourself known to a parish councillor,

If you are short of time, there is a one page summary of key findings from the village wide questionnaire towards the front of the report and an action plan summary at the back, but we hope that most may like to read the village snapshot and the more detailed analysis with recommendations that comes in between.

James Macnamara  
Chair of the Parish Council

Diana Boxall  
Parish Plan Co-ordinating  
Group

# INDEX

Item	Page
What is a Parish Plan and why do it?	3
Headlines from Survey Results	4
Map	5
Parish today	6
Parish history	7
Consultation process	9
Report structure	10
Who responded to the survey?	11
Communications	12
Housing and Development	13
Local Enterprise	14
Local services – shop and health centre	15
Safety, crime and policing	16
Environment - housekeeping	17
Environment	18
Transport – speeding and traffic calming	19
Transport – public transport, walking and cycling	20
Youth	21
Community – future of the village hall	24
Community organisations – church	26
Community organisations – sports and social club	29
Community activities	30
Relationship to Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy	32
Action Plan summary	35
Contacts list and acknowledgements	36



# What is a Parish Plan and why do it?

## **What is the Parish Plan and why do it?**

The Parish Plan seeks to draw together the views of the community, highlights strategic issues for input to local authorities and others, and suggests some local solutions. The Parish Plan has legal weight and it must be taken into account by decision makers.

## **Community participation**

The Parish Plan questionnaire, completed by some 70% of the residents of Lower Heyford and Caulcott was used to canvas views on Parish Council, communication, community and leisure facilities, housing and development, transport, tourism and the village environment. The main issues which came out of the responses are highlighted within the plan (and were also reported by newsletter in summer 2009).

## **Direct local action**

Some issues in the plan can be addressed through direct action by the community with little outside help. The local action plan shows that some of these are being put in place already, and has had the benefit of recruiting some new local voluntary action as well as helping to publicise some

of the activity which was going on already.

## **Influencing others**

Other actions, especially those linked to local services, cannot be addressed by the community alone and an important function of the Parish Plan, is to influence and inform others, linking to plans made by Local Authorities, other Statutory Partners and Voluntary Organisations. The local authority has reviewed the plan. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Cherwell devises and develops a strategic plan for the areas which it serves. Therefore the plan does consider some areas in which all we can do is “have a say”.

## **Gaining funding for local initiatives**

By demonstrating that there has been a needs assessment with full community participation the Parish Plan can help gain funding for local initiatives.



# HEADLINE RESULTS OF SURVEY

**Around 70% of households responded** to the survey in autumn 2008

## **Strong opinions** (more than 70%)

- Creating welcome pack is a very good idea
- Bottle bank is heavily used by the community
- Strong objections to allowing housing development beyond gap sites
- Vandalism is not seen as a problem
- From youth questionnaire a high percentage felt that there was not enough to do, nearly all had access to a PC

## **Majority wishes**

(between 50 & 69%)

- Parish Council needs to communicate more with the community
- Affordable housing is supported, and so is allowing “change of use” so that local businesses could use suitable sites
- Expanded sports and social club, and more development in the church is the preferred solution for a village hall (although not many

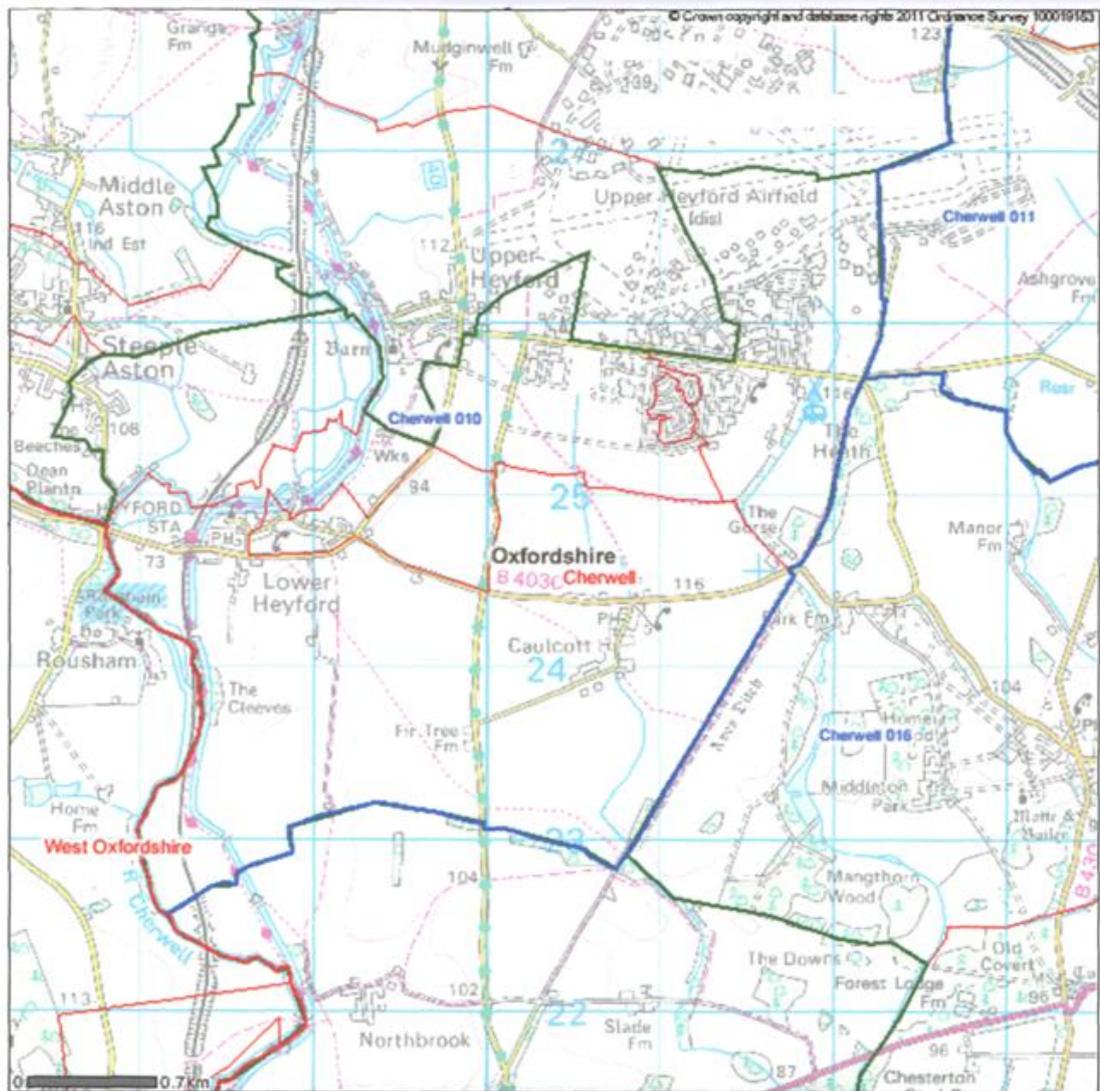
said they would use it)

- More than half of respondents do not see litter, and dog fouling as problems, although quite a few would disagree
- Bonfires were not seen as an issue
- 65% object to more street lighting
- Footpath between Lower Heyford and Caulcott is felt to be a good thing
- Moderate support for increasing tourism
- Some interest in a parish school
- The historic preservation of the church and being able to have baptisms, weddings and funerals was important to more than half the households, as well as help for locals in need.
- Interest in helping to set up a community shop is low.

## **Split opinions**

- Speeding is seen as a problem by 46%, and there is support for traffic calming but 27% say it is not an issue, and there is no clearly preferred method for speed reduction.
- No clear views on the adequacy of public transport (1/3<sup>rd</sup> say they do not use it).

# PARISH TODAY



This map is Crown Copyright. Permission to reproduce it has been granted under a Click-use licence from the HMSO. Further information can be obtained from [www.clickanduse.hmso.gov.uk](http://www.clickanduse.hmso.gov.uk)

## Parish today

The parish of Lower Heyford and Caulcott lies midway between Oxford and Banbury and 4 ½ miles from the market-town of Deddington. Lower Heyford and Caulcott together have around 400 adults on the Electoral Register.

Facilities include two pubs, St Mary's church, a shop at the canal marina and a sports and social club at the Lower Heyford playing field.

The marina and an agricultural business based in Caulcott are the main employers.

Lower Heyford has a mainline railway station with regular train services to London via Oxford and Birmingham via Banbury. The South Oxfordshire Canal passes through Lower Heyford and has a number of residential boats.

There are a number of community groups and several organisations, sometimes with complex inter-relationships which exist to manage community assets such as the playing fields, and a village charity

## Census data

The 2001 census is the most recent data available. All the information below is Crown Copyright and taken from the data tables available at: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> Further data is also available, free at this web address.

### People

At April 2001, there were 484 people in the parish. The average age was just over 40, with 24 people over 75 and 36 under 4.

### Households

Out of 199 households in total 148 were owner occupied, and 55 had dependent children in the house. 41 households had one or more persons with limiting long term illness.

### Employment

259 people were employed, with a further 8 economically active but unemployed. 150 people classified their occupations as Managerial and Professional.

### Travel

There were 330 cars or vans owned in the parish, only 17 households had no car or van. On average, inhabitants of Lower Heyford and Caulcott travel 26km to work and 182 travel mainly by motorcycle, car or van.

# PARISH HISTORY

## **How long have people lived here?**

Lower Heyford has been settled since at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD and probably since prehistoric times. There was a Roman villa in Caulcott: a Roman road, Portway, crosses the high plateau to the east of the village. There was an Anglo-Saxon pre Christian cemetery and possible an Iron Age hill fort outside the village near Cold Harbour. The site was popular, no doubt, because it was close to two fording points of the River Cherwell, and is plentifully supplied with water from springs and wells.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Caulcott was larger in size than Heyford, and the joint parish was among the most prosperous in the Ploughley Hundred. Caulcott had fallen into decline by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and much of the previously cultivated land has reverted to rough pasture.

## **What was the village called?**

Until the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century, the village was called

Heiford, probably because the ford was used at hay harvest. The spelling Hegford was used in the Domesday Book (1088). After the building of the bridge in 1255, it became known as Heyford ad Pontem (Heyford at Bridge). From the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century until the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was sometimes known as Heyford Purcell, after the locally important Purcell family. Nether Heyford was first recorded in 1474, and later Little or Lower Heyford was used.

## **Who owned the land and houses?**

By the time of the Domesday survey most of the land in the village was divided between two estates. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the manors were held by the Earls of Conwell and Gloucester, but the freehold estate was established by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In mediaeval times the two manors passed through the hands of a number of minor gentry and lords before being sold in 1533 by Sir Edward Baynton to Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

For the greater part of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Corpus land was farmed by yeoman families, mainly the Bruces and the Merrys. The Varney family of Caulcott dates from the Tudor period, and their descendants still thrive.

# PARISH HISTORY

From the building of the bridge in 1255 until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village had a market. The 17<sup>th</sup> century mile was enlarged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An enlightened Rector named Filmer owned wasteland on either side of the lane, now the upper part of Freehold Street; he gave several leases to people who build on the land. Between 1771 and 1881, the number of houses in the village more than doubled from 56 to 116.

## Roads and railways

As in so much of the country, local roads were appalling. They were deeply rutted and impassable in wet weather, and preyed upon by highwaymen. The turnpiking of the Bicester to Enstone road in 1793 brought some improvement and tollgates were built at the eastern end of Heyford bridge and the Town Gate close to the Bicester turn.

The Oxford to Banbury branch of the Great Western Railway opened in 1850, employing a Station Master and six porters at Heyford station. For some distance near the village the railway runs along the

old course of the river Cherwell, which was diverted as a consequence. The engineers failed to provide sufficient culverts beneath the embankment, and this led to an increase in flooding. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century villagers were using the trains not just to Oxford or Banbury, but to take holidays and event day-trips to the seaside.

## How old is the Church?

St Mary's church was consecrated in 1065 by the Saxon Bishop Wulfin of Dorchester, but the current building dates from its rebuilding around 1350, with substantial 15<sup>th</sup> century alteration and modernisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest possession is the 12<sup>th</sup> century Heyford Chest and the font, though dated 1662, is 14<sup>th</sup> century. An Elizabethan chalice is kept safely in Christ Church Cathedral Treasury and only used on special occasions.



# CONSULTATION PROCESS

After an initial meeting in the Village Hall in January 2008 to determine the level of interest, the move to consult the community and create a parish plan started in Spring 2008. A group of residents came together to carry the idea forward, and a grant was obtained from the ORCC (Oxford Rural Community Council).

In April 2008 a consultation day in Lower Heyford Village Hall enabled people to express their appreciation at living within the Parish, together with some of their concerns and desires about the future of Lower Heyford and Caulcott.

These thoughts and ideas were used to inform the development of a questionnaire which was circulated to all households in the Parish in autumn 2008. Volunteers called personally on every house to try and ensure that the process included the whole community.

There was a good response, and after processing the results there was a public presentation of the key messages and a summary of recommendations in April 2009 at the Annual Parish meeting and on the website. This was a substantial milestone reached, and there was, perhaps understandably, some loss of people and energy within the Parish Plan co-ordinating Group at this phase in the process, as other aspects of

their lives had to come to the fore. However a small core have persevered as a co-ordinating team, deciding to focus initially as much on getting some of the volunteer actions off the ground as on publishing the plan document. This has been partially successful and a number of village successes have flowed from the parish plan draft recommendations. However this approach probably has delayed the completion of the final document

An update newsletter was delivered to every household in early June 2009 so that the whole community was kept up to date. A follow-up meeting was held at the end of the month at the Sports and Social club to collect further feedback, ideas and attract some new volunteers.

Meanwhile the chair of the Parish Plan co-ordinating group reported on progress in writing to the Parish Council in September 2009 and April 2010. The Parish Council adopted a first draft of this Plan in Sept 2010 and it was reviewed by the Local Authority in summer 2011 -the Oxfordshire County Council Partnership & Communities Team were supportive in general, although they had some specific points to make about speeding and traffic calming.

# Report structure

To aid clarity, the findings from both the parish-wide questionnaires and other consultation exercises have been divided into the following sections:-

- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Housing and Development
- ❖ Local Enterprise and local services
- ❖ Safety Crime and policing
- ❖ Our environment –housekeeping issues
- ❖ The Environment
- ❖ Transport, including walking and cycling
- ❖ Youth facilities
- ❖ Community facilities and activities

For each section the report describes **what the survey said**, which is the basis for the **long term objectives** then **short term recommendations and actions**, then highlights **successes and progress so far**.

An action plan summary at the end of the report draws together the recommendations for local action.



Image Copyright Len Williams. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>

# Who responded to the survey?

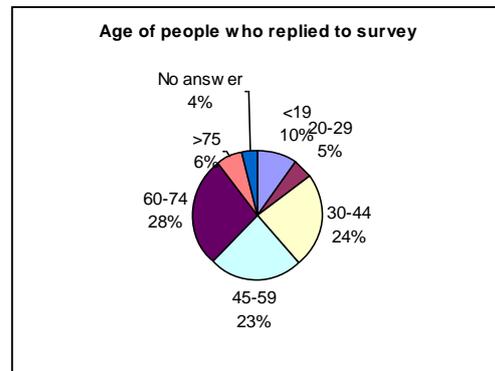
## Good participation rate

265 returns were received, 80% of those were from Lower Heyford residents.

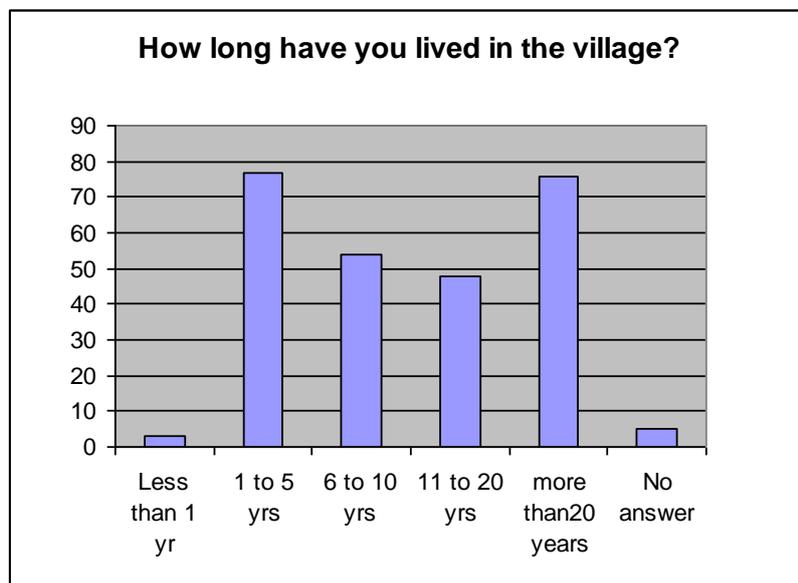
## Representative range of response

The gender of those filling out the form was evenly split between male and female.

We know that 86% of those who replied were over 30 years old but there a response over the whole range



76 (29%) of those who replied had lived in the village for more than 20 years, and a similar number were in the 1-5 years bracket.



# Communication

## **What the survey results said**

Whether or not Caulcott was part of the Parish Council title was not a particular issue, but there seems to be some desire (43% “yes”) to know more about the roles and responsibilities of the Parish Council. More conclusively, 150 replies (57%) said that the Parish Council needs to do more to communicate with

the community. A newsletter is seen as the most preferred method of communication but a website and notice boards also were substantially suggested. Attending parish meetings was the least preferred way to find out about information and activities within the parish.

216 replies supported the creation of a welcome pack, a strong message.

## **Overall Objectives and longer term outcomes**

- Useful information about the villages and the locality is readily available to residents and visitors.
- New residents are given introductory information in a friendly and personal way to ensure that they feel welcomed
- Communication between the Parish Council and residents is easily accessible, open and up to date.

## **Short term recommendations and action points**

- Continue to develop village website
- Create a welcome pack
- Parish council minutes onto website and in Valley News.  
Parish Council explain precept via website & Annual Meeting
- Participate in trial of web-interactive “focus-point” at Canal shop

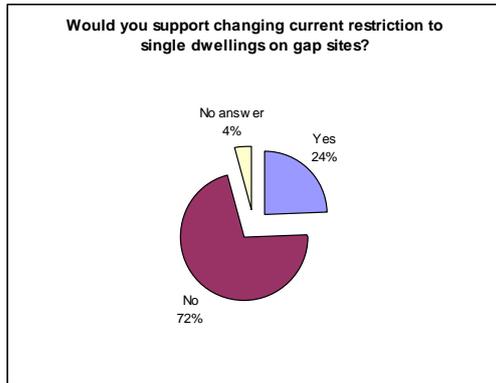
## **Progress so far**

- ✓ Parish Council agreed pass update information to webmaster for posting on the website and an article has been put in the Valley News
- ✓ Welcome pack, aimed at new residents and also to be placed at key village public points is at final proofing stage and has been seen in draft by the Parish Council.
- ✓ Heyford Wharf has been trialling a “Link Point” provided by Cherwell District Council, containing direct online access to train and bus times and the government’s DirectGov website.

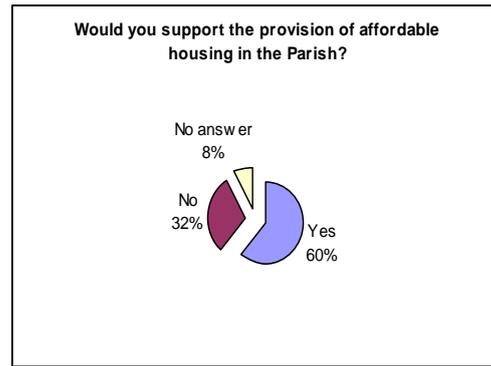
# HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

## What the survey said

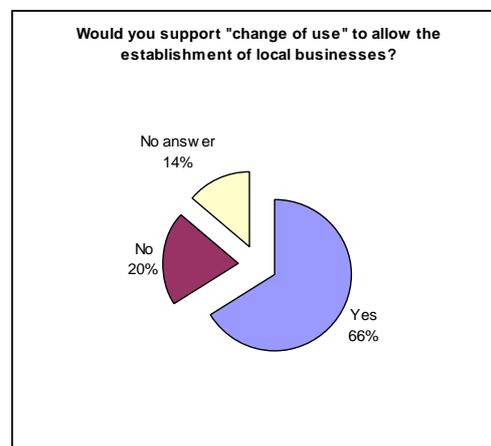
There are strong objections to extending new general housing development beyond single dwellings on “gap” sites.



However there was support for the (limited) provision of affordable housing – 60% “yes”. We also asked if people would prefer affordable housing grouped on a single site or within small general developments, but opinion was pretty evenly split and we understand that the mixture is not a real option because, by definition this housing is on “exception” sites.



There was 65% support for allowing “change of use” of suitable sites/buildings or redundant farm building to permit the establishment of sustainable local businesses and enterprises. As an aside the Steeple Aston plan (published 2010) reported an 81% vote in favour when asked the same question.



## Recommendations

- Don't extend general housing development beyond gap sites
- There is a mandate to progress development of affordable housing for the identified need (we understand this is about 6 dwellings.)
- There is support for “change of use” permission for suitable sites/buildings or redundant farm buildings to permit the establishment of local businesses and enterprises.

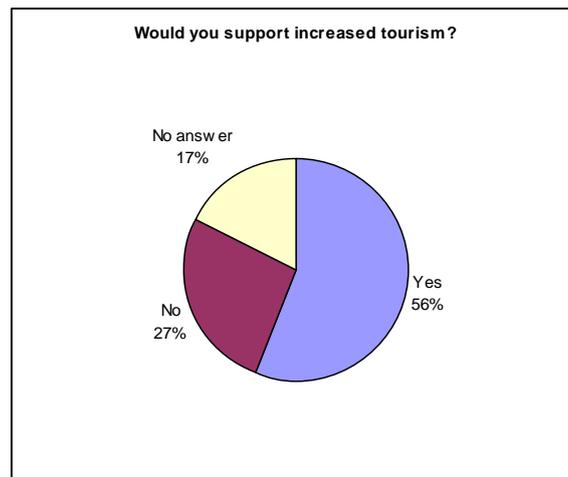
# LOCAL ENTERPRISE

## What the survey said

Most people work outside the parish, 17 respondents said that they worked in a micro-business in the parish and between them employ 10 staff from out-of-parish.

Alongside agriculture, the main employers in the Parish are the Boatyard and Pubs which rely on tourism.

Something over half of the replies supported increased tourism.



The point made on the previous page about “change of use” is also relevant to the

development of local enterprises in the parish.

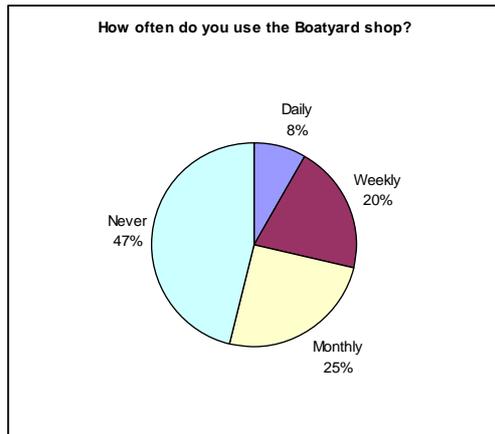


Image Copyright Sarah Charlesworth. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>

# LOCAL SERVICES – SHOP AND HEALTH CENTRE

## What the survey said Shops

We already have some retail provision in the parish via the Boatyard shop, but just under half of the parish residents never use it.



The prioritisation question in the survey suggested great enthusiasm for a community owned village shop. When asked to select the top three extra facilities they would like to see in the village, 119 replies indicated that the shop was one of these.

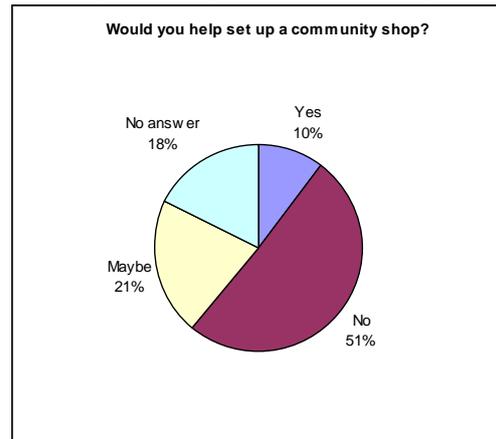
However the underlying commitment for the idea seemed really quite weak. It is true that some more people

## Recommendations and actions

- Inform Health Centre of outcome of survey
- In order not to waste community energy, rule out investigation of development of a community shop for the time being.
- ✓ Health Centre informed

said that they would visit a community shop then the marina -44% said they would visit weekly and “never” down to 38%.

But only 10% were prepared to help set up such a shop.



Giving time to help run the shop or contributing financially were also not something the overwhelming majority felt willing to commit to, even in theory.

## Health Centre

It was good to hear that few parishioners seem to have problems in attending or seeking medical attention from the Health Centre.

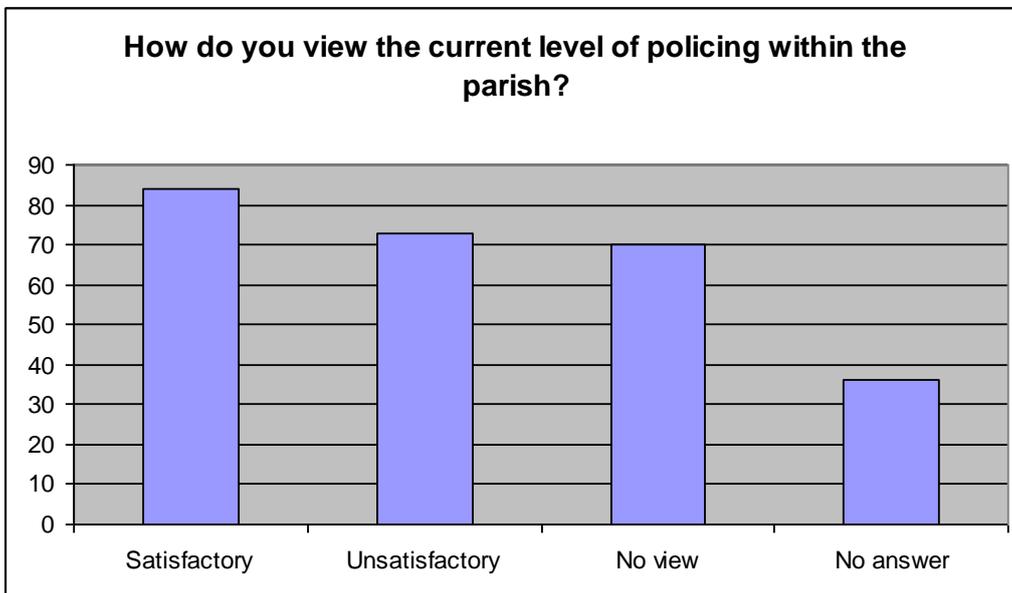
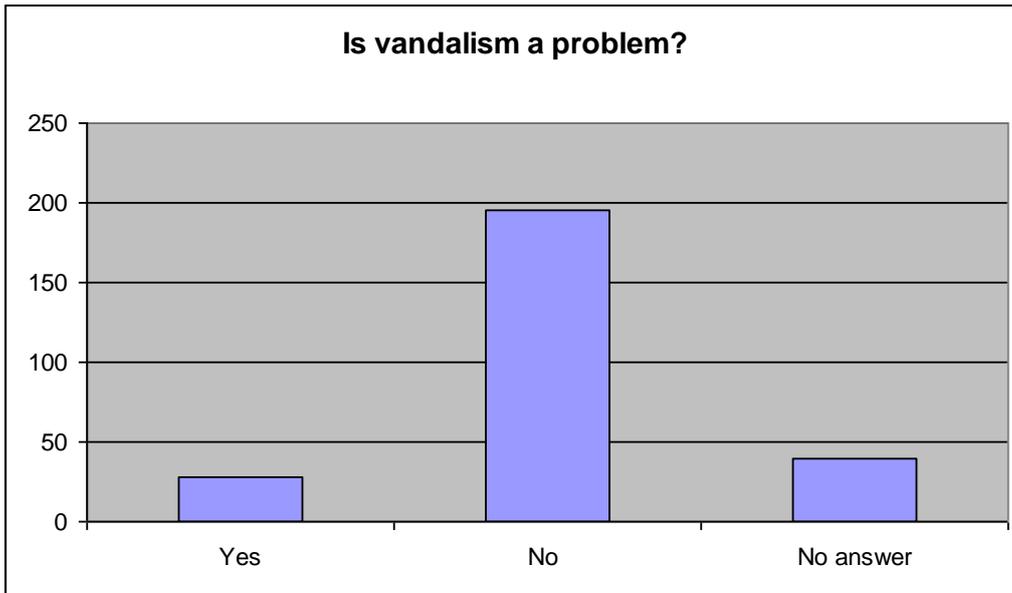
# SAFETY: CRIME AND POLICING

## Vandalism

Positive news, in that people generally do **not** feel vandalism is a problem. 74% said “no problem” and only 10% definitely “yes”.

## Policing

More people were negative or undecided in their view of the current level of policing. 32% definitely said “satisfactory”, but 40% marked “no view” or gave no answer.



## Recommendations

- Ensure the Community Police Officer is briefed on these results (and the views about speeding).

# ENVIRONMENT - HOUSEKEEPING

## **What the survey results said**

### **Recycling**

215 respondents said they use the bottle bank, and 180 agreed that the facilities were adequate.

### **Burning garden waste**

172 (73%) said that burning garden waste was not a nuisance and support for a bylaw banning it was correspondingly low (75% = "no").

### **Litter and dog fouling**

Slightly fewer, 166, did not feel that litter is a problem in the villages, perhaps due in part to the impact of the annual litter pick. A question asking whether dog fouling is a problem had a more mixed

response, but a majority (55%) said "no" compared to a 33% yes answer

### **Street lighting**

The majority feeling (65%) rejects the suggestion of more street lighting with 10% undecided and only 24% definitely saying yes. There was no consensus among those saying yes about which areas should be improved. Therefore there is no recommendation about street lighting made in this report, even though there were strongly worded comments during open meetings about safety of the route from the railway station to towards the village, and this was the most supported request for new lighting (33 replies).

## **Overall Objectives and longer term outcomes**

- Residents are able to access adequate recycling facilities and make use of them.
- Residents feel that they live in a pleasant environment -litter and dog fouling is under control
- Residents feel that there is adequate street lighting and the parish council has some indication of where problem areas are.

## **Short term recommendations and action points**

- Any new street lighting should be minimal so as not to cause additional light pollution but there is no specific recommendation
- Participation in the annual litter pick should be increased
- The Parish Council should continue to support bins for dog waste.

## **Progress so far**

- ✓ In 2010 the number of village volunteers participating in the Annual Village Litter pick increased from around 6 to over 16.

# Environment

## Overall objectives

- Awareness of the natural assets within the parish, protection of its beauty and biodiversity
- Preserving access to the countryside

Biodiversity questions were not included in the questionnaire.

At open events a number of residents said how important it was to preserve the natural beauty of the area.

## Progress so far

- A number of areas within the parish have an environmentally sensitive status and should be a key aspect of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) if one is produced



# Transport – speeding and traffic calming

## What the survey said

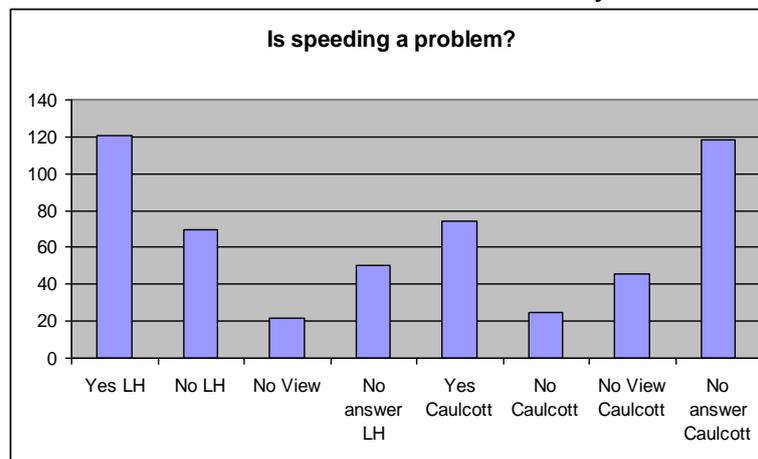
### Speeding

When asked whether speeding was a problem there were quite a lot of blank replies for one centre or the other – perhaps people did not travel equally through both villages. Of those replies that indicated a yes or no, 63% thought speeding a problem in Lower Heyford and 75% in Caulcott.

Further answers indicated that there were problems within village centres, at the top of Station Road, and on village approach roads, with the latter being slightly more emphasised.

### Traffic Calming

Opinion was split on the preferred traffic calming options but illuminated signs were preferred by 71 replies, with reducing speed limits chosen by 51.



## Overall Objectives and longer term outcomes

- Traffic travels through and into the villages at a reasonable speed and speeding is not highlighted as an issue by residents

## Short term recommendations and action points

- Current links with Community Police in providing speed checks and liaison generally is maintained
- 40mph limit through Caulcott
- Remove 40mph section on Station Road to have 30mph throughout the village and extend along B4030 to all properties.
- Investigate traffic calming measures such as speed indicator

## Successes so far

- ✓ Introduction of 40mph speed limit at Caulcott. However OCC feedback to our plan stresses that changes for Lower Heyford village are very unlikely to be implemented.
- ✓ Funding for speed indicator in parish council budget 2010/11. Parish Council. In Nov 2011 the Parish Council has allocated responsibility for this device to a specific councillor

# Transport – public transport, walking and cycling

## **What the survey said**

98 replies said “did not use” public transport, 86 agreed it was OK and 55 disagreed.

Walking is popular, and good use is clearly being made of existing footpaths. 46 people said they walked daily and 66 weekly, making walking the most popular leisure activity.

There is solid support (59%) for a continuous footpath from LH to Caulcott, and for widening the towpath for walkers (57%). On the question of widening the towpath for cyclists, agreement and disagreement were equally balanced, perhaps because of worries about other types of vehicle coming onto the towpath.

## **Overall Objectives and longer term outcomes**

- Footpaths and cycle paths are well maintained and signposted
- Accessible right of way joining Lower Heyford and Caulcott.
- Towpath is kept accessible to walkers
- The co-ordinating group and volunteers had 3 ideas for additional footpaths for linking Lower Heyford and Caulcott and extending circular walks here, but it is recognised that this would require co-operation from the landowner and can only realistically be recommended as a longer term outcome.

## **Short term recommendations and action points**

- We recommend that the Parish Council keep dialogue open with British Waterways (BW) and others to ensure that towpath is kept clear for walkers – particularly if BW may be in financial difficulties.
- Although the questionnaire revealed some interest in upgrading the towpath for cyclists, priority should be given to walkers if this moves forward.
- The Friends of Heyford Station continue to liaise with the railway operators.

## **Successes and progress so far**

- ✓ Towpath has been strengthened and widened on the stretch between the station and the swing bridge.
- ✓ Cherwell Council have helped to enhance the signage and documentation of circular walks around the villages, new leaflet available.
- ✓ Screens now in operation on the station platform.

## Youth

### **What the survey said**

There was a specific part of the survey for young people, for which we received 29 responses, split evenly between male and female, 2/3 from LH, 1/3 from Caulcott. This probably represents a smaller proportion of young people in the parish as a whole than was received for the adult part of the survey.

Half of those who responded had lived in the villages for all of their lives, and nearly all were still at school.

Just under half had used public transport in the last month, which may have been linked to the 40% who use a bus to get to school or college. A 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of them indicated that they had problems in getting transport to go places.

69% feel safe on the road/footpaths, with only 5 (17%) not feeling safe which is fairly positive.

On the other hand, 80% feel that there is not enough to do in the parish and 69% do not think that young people's views are considered. 57% supported the idea of some form of young people's council/forum to raise issues with the parish council.

It seems that computer access is good, at least among those who replied to the survey, only 2 said that they did not have access.

Young people reported regular participation in a pretty wide range of activities (both in and outside the parish, we did not distinguish), of which cricket, football, social club tennis and youth club were the most popular.

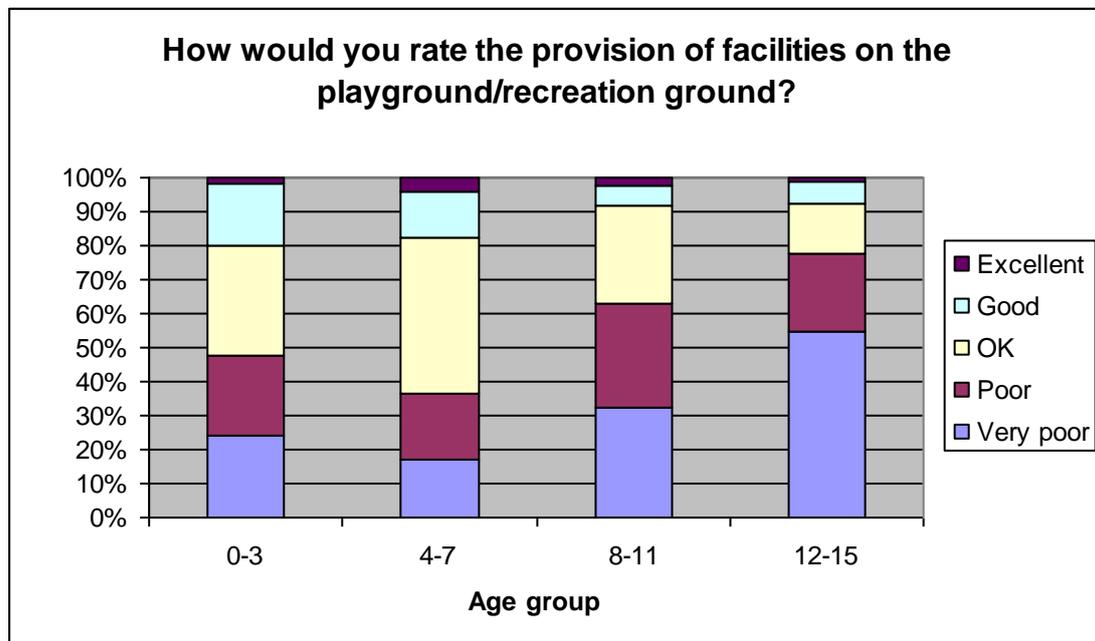
The adult survey looked at the interest in the idea of a preschool and/or privately financed primary school in the parish and there was an indication of interest from the parents of more than 50 children. Although there are no actions directly relating to a new school in this plan, there are current proposals to open a "free school" in Heyford Park, which proposes to take children through from 8 to 19.

In addition to the youth survey the adult survey asked residents to rate the provision of facilities on the playground/recreation ground for different age groups up to age 15. In each category 50%-65% of the answers were "no opinion", indicating perhaps that only about half of the parish visits enough to have formed a view.

# Youth

The graph below shows only the scores for those who did have a view, somewhere

between 93 and 120 replies depending on the age group.



We can see that poor or very poor (dark red and blue parts of each column) is a significant proportion of the ratings which ever age group we are talking about, with the 12-15 age group apparently particularly badly served.

In the prioritisation question of the survey 85 people put new playground facilities in their top 3 priorities for action.

## Overall Objectives and longer term outcomes

- Young people feel that their views are considered
- There is a range of activities for young people available in the parish
- The playground/recreation group facilities and activities are improved and expanded
- Possibly, interested parents will take forward the interest in private primary education

## Short term recommendations and action points

- The Trustees of the playing field should be encouraged to move forward with the lease for King George Field so that the playground project can proceed.

## Youth

- Recognising the work already put in by the events committee and others, the community should try to have “more to do” for young people and encourage contact, whilst being realistic that there are a number of regular activities provided at nearby schools which may well be preferred to activities in Lower Heyford and Caulcott. The fact that the village is served by so many different schools does not encourage village children to get to know each other.
- The Parish Council should consider developing a youth council/forum.

### **Successes and progress**

- ✓ Village events such as the May Day and Christmas carols do involve a number of village families in village activities.
- ✓ Children’s tent event on the playing field was well attended.
- ✓ A group of local residents have taken leadership of efforts to improve playground facilities. There have been fundraising activities and a public consultation event where children and adults could vote for their favourite from a selection of designs. It is estimated that it will cost around £50,000 to completely refurbish the area and grant aid is being sought.



# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE HALL

We know that there are a number of existing community groups and organisations which all have a role in the community of Lower Heyford and Caulcott – to mention some of them, we have the LH Sports & Social club, the football club, the allotment holders association, the church, LH Playing Field Management Committee, Trustees of the Playing fields, Heyfords WI, the LH Bowls Club, the Lower Heyford Charity, the Village Hall Trustees. In addition of course the pubs contribute to village life.

In general, the consultation for the parish plan concentrated on gauging commitment to a community “village hall” facility and in assessing appetite for different types of interest groups and facilities. At the time of the survey the village hall, poorly used and in need of refurbishment, had been offered for sale and was in the final stages of purchase by the Church of the Later Day Saints (an out-of-parish organisation). This plan therefore addresses the situation after sale when there is no dedicated village hall building.

## **What the survey said Future of the Village Hall**

We asked people what would be their preferred option between:-

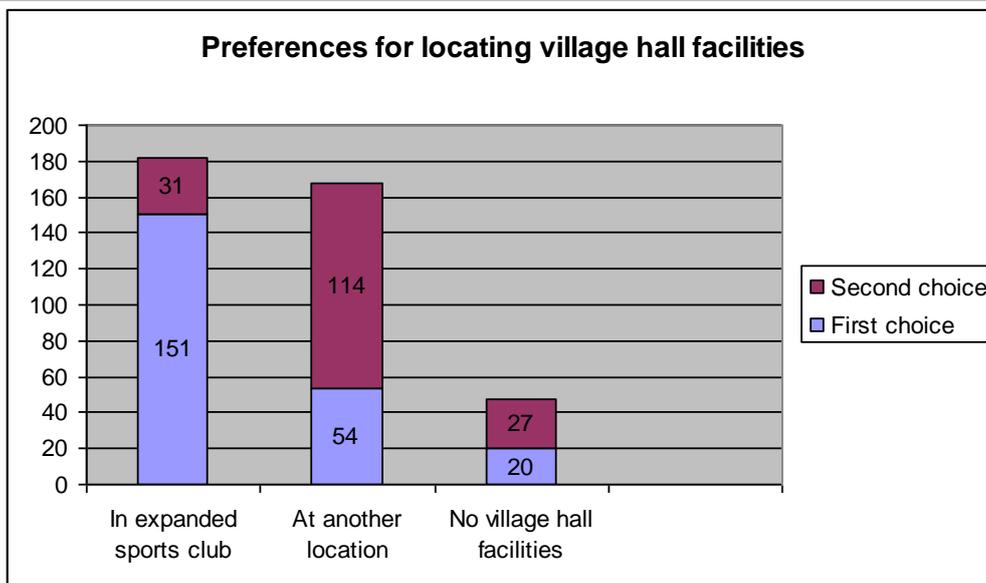
- Not having a village hall in the parish at all,
- creating a shared facility in an enlarged Sports and Social Club,
- having a village hall in another location.

The graph on the next page shows the first and second

choice responses added together. There is clearly solid support for a village hall facility somewhere, with an expanded Sports and Social club being the first choice of 151 people.

In a follow-up question 168 people supported looking to the church to provide a village hall facility if there were no village hall

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE HALL



However, as with the community shop, there is some discordance between a strong expression of general support and commitment to make use of the facility. 87% said that they never used the village hall at the moment and this would not apparently change, since 87% also said (in a separate question) that

they would never use the village hall as a venue if it were available in the future. There is also some desire expressed in attending organised interest clubs which might require accommodating, the evidence is interesting rather than overwhelming. (See the activities section for more detailed numbers).

## Conclusions

- There does not seem to be nearly enough forecast activity to make a standalone village hall viable or worth investigating. Therefore integration with an existing building and village organisation seems desirable.
- Expansion of the sports and social club to create a shared facility on the King George's Sports Field should be investigated; equally there was strong support also for investigating community facilities provided as part of the church accommodation. Obviously it is important that these two developments are kept complementary rather than competing with each other.

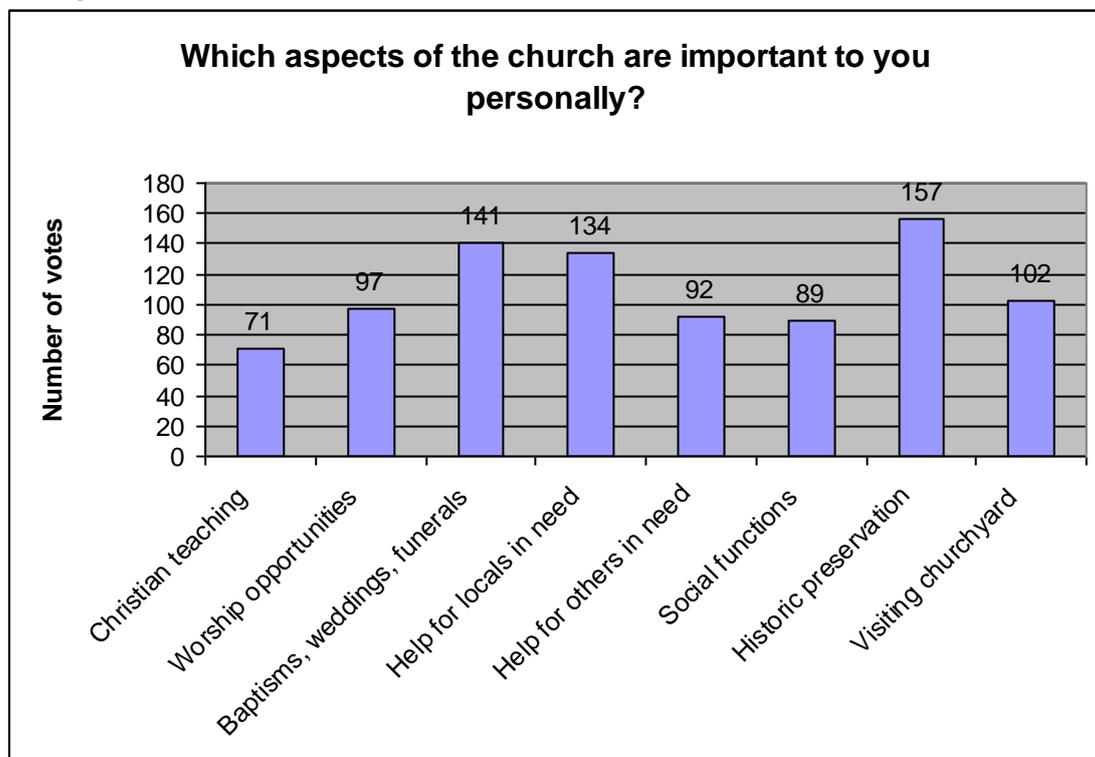
# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS - CHURCH

St Mary's Parish church is the oldest organisation in the parish and has had a major influence on our heritage and sense of community. The church in Lower Heyford has grown in confidence over the past three years or so and there is considerable optimism for the future. It currently has 25-30 parishioners registered on its electoral roll, and everyday congregations averaged about 20 last year with congregations of over 100 people, largely drawn from the parish, attending for festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Recent community focused events held in the church have included choir, jazz, silver band and violin concerts, Advent Fair, Living Crib, children's art and craft activities.

## What the survey said St Mary's church

We asked which aspects are important to parishioners personally. There were nearly 900 ticks overall in the various categories. Historic

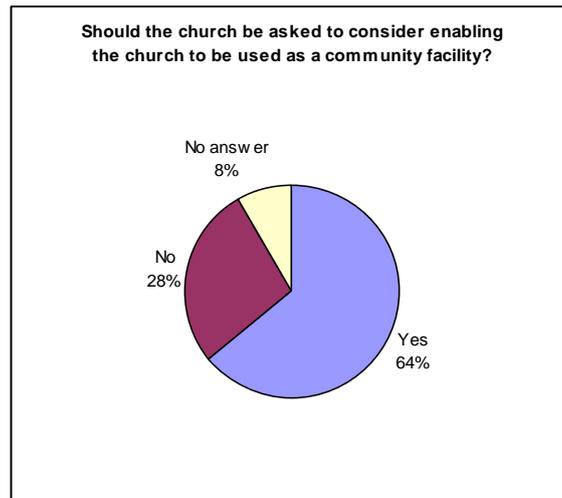
preservation, baptisms, wedding, funerals and help for locals in need were the most selected. A score of 130 or over means more than half the replies marked that aspect.



Also 64% agreed that an approach be made St Mary's Church wardens' to enable

the church to be used as a village hall facility.

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – CHURCH



## Overall Objectives

- As a key objective, the PCC (Parochial Church Council) seeks to continue the development of the church's ministry in Lower Heyford, and bring St Mary's back to a central place in village life. This development is, of course, more about people, their lives and beliefs, than about buildings.
- However the church building is also an important asset for the village and could have an enhanced role if the facilities it offers were improved, particularly since a village hall is no longer available. It is envisaged that the improved facilities in the church would sit alongside possible developments of the Sports and Social club.

## Short term recommendations and action points

- Within a context of carefully preserving the historical heritage of the church building, the PCC has identified a number of needs to enable it to better serve its regular and occasional congregations and children and also the wider community – water and kitchen facilities, provision for children and a meeting space for community groups.

## Successes and progress so far

- ✓ After initial needs assessment, sketches of possible changes to the back of the church (the suggested development will not change the exterior in any way at all) were drawn up by the church architect
- ✓ The church warden gave a report to the Annual Parish meeting 2010

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – CHURCH

- ✓ An open meeting was held to present the sketches, talk about the proposal and therefore give the community the chance to feedback on the development, a lot of positive feedback and some caveats arose from this
- ✓ Various interested out-of-parish parties such as the Diocese office, ORCC, English Heritage, have been initially consulted and have given positive opinions.
- ✓ Drawings and an outline budget have been prepared, applications for grant funding are in progress



# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

The sports and social club is a members club with some 20 members and is open on Saturday evenings and some Wednesdays. The facilities it provides support the Heyford Athletic Football club and are also widely used at community events such as the May Day parade and the recent children's tent event.

## **What the survey said**

### **Sports and Social Club**

As displayed on the graph in the "future of the village hall" section. Nearly 70% of survey replies indicated that an expanded sports and social club building would be their first or second choice.

Leisure activities on the field are used, albeit by a small proportion of the villagers, and there is some interest in interest clubs, some of which would be able to use a new facility.

## **Recommendations and action points**

- Expansion of the sports and social club to create a shared facility on the King George's Sports Field should be investigated.
- This would involve some modification of the membership basis and also key input from the Trustees of the Playing Field into the future of the sports and social club building and renewal of its lease.

[PICTURE OF FIELD – FOOTBALL?]

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – LEISURE ACTIVITIES

## What the survey said Facilities mostly used only by a few

The statistics from the survey about the current and future use of leisure activities suggest that most are used only by a few – in the graphs below the “never” score is compared with the “sometimes” score. The data was collected as daily, weekly or monthly use but since the numbers are small these categories have been added together to form “sometimes”.

Walking is the most popular pursuit, with 140 people

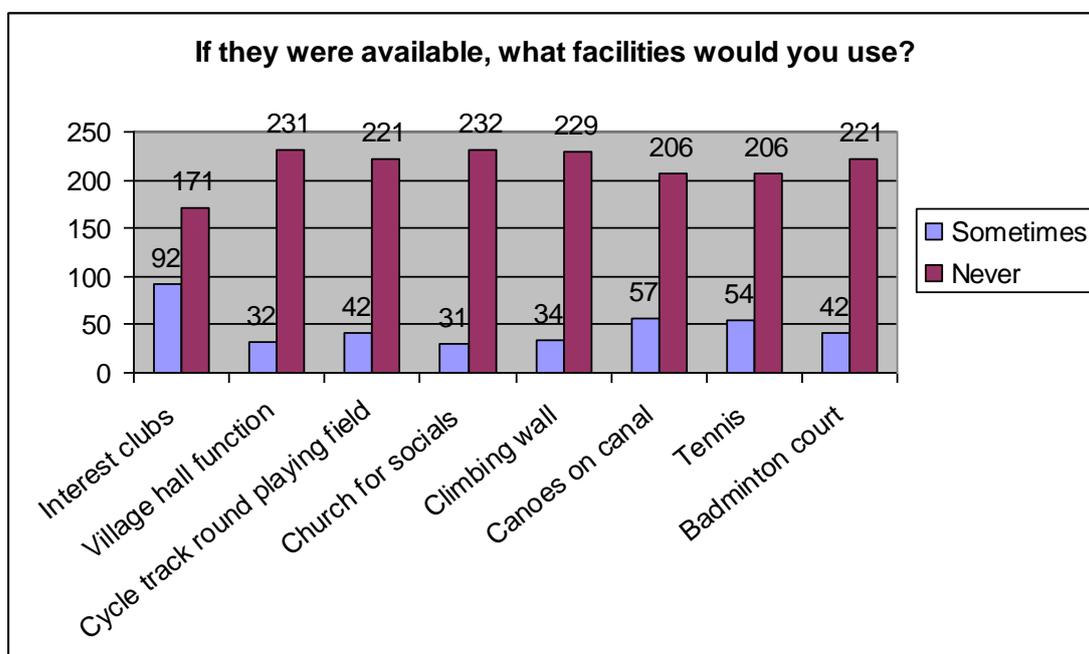
saying they walk regularly, of the other areas on the playground and the playing field are used by more than 50 people.

## New facilities would not change this pattern

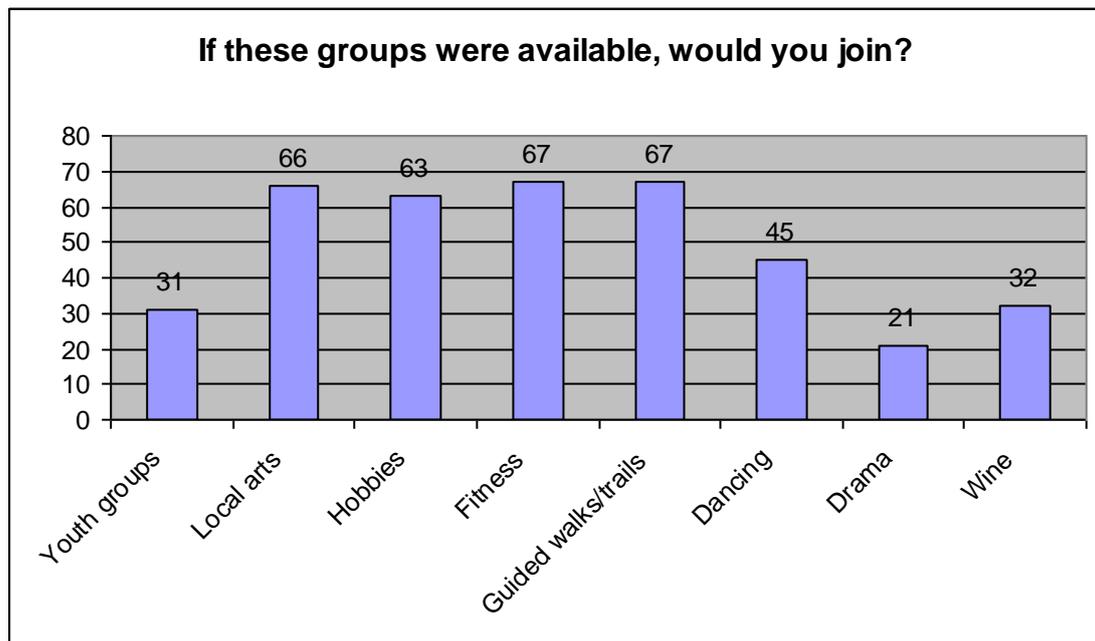
When people were asked about possible new or enhanced facilities, the predicted pattern of use is, perhaps rather realistically, little changed.

## Potential for new interest groups

However there does seem to be interest in several types of organised interest clubs.



# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS – LEISURE ACTIVITIES



## Recommendations

- Recognising the contribution already made by the village Events group to parish events such as May Day, Summer Fair, Heyford Feast, Bonfire Night and carol singing, this data could be used to develop some new parish events
- Publicising these results on the website and in the Valley News newsletter might draw out some parishioners willing to take the lead in developing new interest groups

## Progress so far

- ✓ There are already some art groups in the village
- ✓ The WI has speakers which cover interests (meetings currently held in the Upper Heyford Village Hall on the third Wednesday of the month).

## Relationship to Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together the public, private and community sector organisations within Cherwell. The LSP devises and develops a strategic plan for the areas which it serves. Most recently, in February 2010 they published their “*Our District, Our Future*”, the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy, which sets out the long term vision for the district (until 2030). The whole document can be downloaded from the Cherwell Council website <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/scs>.

The strategy lays out priorities and actions for the next 5 years, listing overarching district priorities and then a “local focus” in Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and then “rural areas”. It is this last category of objectives that are listed in the table below and mapped to priorities that have emerged in this plan.

	Cherwell Community Strategy rural area priorities	Mapping to relevant sections of the Plan
1	<b>Community –Rural Areas focus</b>	
	Design and deliver appropriate services to the right people on an outreach basis or at least be sure that there is adequate transport to centres of support	<p>P16 –residents happy with health centre, but (P7) in census information, 41 households had a member with limiting long term illness and public transport rating mixed</p> <p>P13 Welcome pack helps to signpost information about services</p> <p>Cherwell’s promised support for volunteer organisations is welcome</p>

## Relationship to Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

	Define the role of police in rural low-crime areas and what it can reasonably be expected to deliver	Page 16 –no key action points, but survey response suggested more clarity would be helpful
	Provide a range of and more affordable housing and include the villages in the planning process	P13 – Support for the (limited) provision of affordable housing
	Increased support for youth, senior and community activities in rural locations	P23 – young people do not feel that there is enough to do, but parish does propose to improve playground P32 – there is interest in leisure activities
	Explore the options for creative use of community buildings	P26-31 Debate about village hall, use of church and sports and social club show this is a priority in parish, given that standalone village hall does not seem viably supported
<b>2</b>	<b>Economy – Rural areas focus</b>	
	Support local shops and businesses to serve their rural communities and create jobs	P16 – some difficulties in marrying aspiration with
	Encourage diversification of farms and other rural businesses to enable the creation of local employment and reduce commuting	P13 support for “change of use” permission for suitable sites/buildings
	Explore opportunities to pool resources and community facilities to provide new community and commercial opportunities	P16 -community shop not solidly enough supported to pursue

## Relationship to Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

	Ensure that broadband provision is improved to support increase home working	At feedback event this was raised as priority, but not listed as parish action
<b>3</b>	<b>Infrastructure and Environment – Rural Areas focus</b>	
	Identify where traffic control is both desirable and beneficial	P20 – New speed limit in Caulcott, further action suggested on speed indicators, response to where and what traffic control was mixed
	Invest in community-based and alternative transport solutions	No key actions in Parish Plan on this
	Include rural communities in the plans for developing both housing and commercial development	Parish Council has data from parish survey to inform their work P14-P16

# Relationship to Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy



# ACTION PLAN

WHAT?	STATUS
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	
Create newcomers' welcome pack	Virtually complete
Update village website	Under consideration by Parish Council (PC)
Parish Council communication	With PC
Trial of web-interactive "focus point" at Marina	Under way
<b>HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Progress affordable Housing	With PC
Business planning as required	With PC
<b>LOCAL SERVICES</b>	
Update Health Centre about survey	Completed
<b>SAFETY, CRIME AND POLICING</b>	
Brief the Community Police officer on survey result	With PC
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
Explore creation of biodiversity plan for Parish	Not under way
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Speeding restriction in Caulcott	Created
Other speeding restriction changes (e.g. remove 40mph section on Station Road)	The OCC Highways and Road Safety team note that that this unlikely
SID for village	In operation at different locations
Towpath upgraded for walkers from Lower Heyford to Upper Heyford	PC funding
Towpath upgraded for walkers and cyclists from Lower Heyford to Tackley	Completed
Create continuous roadside footpath between Lower Heyford and Caulcott	Not yet under way
Upgrade to circular walks	Cherwell Council have done this
<b>YOUTH FACILITES AND ACTIVITIES</b>	
Enhance playground	Planning & fundraising under way
Take forward interest in private primary education in parish	Not under way, but note Heyford Park proposal
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
With a number of different organisations involved in actions that have an interlinked impact it is important to ensure community developments are coherent and well supported	Church warden reports to Annual Parish meeting. Playground reports to PC
Enhance sports and social club with emphasis on community use	Initial discussions, PC renewing lease, but enhancement not under way
Put toilets, servery and meeting room into church and use as a community facility	Church members, working with community

# ACTION PLAN

Encourage development of new outdoor activities and new interest clubs	Not under way
--	---------------

# CONTACTS TABLE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Parish Plan co-ordinating Group

The time and effort of all those who have contributed to the creation of the plan by working on the parish plan co-ordinating group is gratefully acknowledged. Thank you to:-

Nick Acaster, Frances Bristow, Diana Boxall, Chris and Elaine Cox, David Dare, Rob Davies, Ross Gardler, Robin Hepworth, Graham Morley, Lisbeth & David Nesbitt, Kate Wagstaff, Sue Watson

We are also grateful for the contributions of:-

**ORCC** (Oxfordshire Rural Community Council), which supported the Parish Plan with a grant and advice.

The **Parish Council** which was represented on the co-ordination Group and has adopted the Plan.

## Photographers:

Robin Barker ([www.robinbarkerphotography.com](http://www.robinbarkerphotography.com)), Chris & Elaine Cox ([www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk)), and Diana Boxall who have donated their photographs to this plan, whilst retaining copyright. Other geograph photographers are acknowledged individually.

## Contacts

Organisation	Contact details
Parish Council	James Macnamara
Parish Plan Co-ordination Group	Diana Boxall Chris Cox Kate Wagstaff
St Mary's church	Church wardens: James Macnamara Willie Shepherd
Sports and Social Club	
Events committee	Terry Hawkins
New Playground initiative	Emma Mortimore
Welcome pack	Diana Boxall