



EPWELL
COMMUNITY PLAN

Final Report

November 2014





Message from
George Reynolds

Community plans are the result of a lot of work and effort by local residents. They show how the village is and what many would like the future to be. Parish Councils and other village groups find them very useful and they are also a great help to local Councillors when discussing local issues.

I for one am grateful for the information here and guidance given.

Councillor George Reynolds (CDC and OCC)
November 2014

“What I love most about Epwell is it's off the beaten track, away from the madding crowd.”



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The Epwell Community Plan

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Epwell village is situated in the north west corner of Oxfordshire, close to the boundary with Warwickshire and approximately 6 miles from Banbury. It is set in an attractive, panoramic landscape of rolling ironstone hills, the most prominent of which rise to over 200 metres high. Epwell village itself is about 175 metres above sea level. Part of the village is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while the remainder lies in a designated Area of High Landscape Value.

The surrounding countryside is criss-crossed by footpaths, bridleways and three well known trails. A stream, the source of which is in Epwell, meanders through the village across a ford (The Plank) and flows into the River Cherwell. With a harmonious mix of long-term residents and relative newcomers, the population of 285 (2011 census) enjoys facilities which include St Anne's Church, the Village Hall (formerly the school), the Chandler's Arms pub, a nursery group and village recreation area.

“It has a rural atmosphere not towny and not a through route for traffic, but is close to market towns.”

Epwell

through the ages

The surrounding area has a rich history dating from mesolithic times (12,000 – 6,000 BC). Flints from this period have been found within the current parish boundary. An axe found in Two Stiles Field is Bronze Age (4,000 to 900 BC) and there is believed to be a Bronze Age burial mound on the parish boundary to the south of the village. The Romans were here, and built a road skirting Epwell near the present village pub.



800 & 900AD

Epwell was named after a Saxon chief Eoppa, sometime between 800 and 900AD, whose circular ring settlement (much as it is today) guarded a clean and reliable source of water.

1185 - 1802

In 1185 we became Eppewella and in 1537 Epwell. The community has faced ups and downs in fortune over the years. In the Middle Ages, Epwell benefited as a midway point between Banbury and Shipston-on-Stour. All that changed with the Enclosure Acts (1773 for Epwell) and then by the construction of the turnpike road (now the B4035) which effectively by-passed Epwell.

19th Century

So the 19th century began with Epwell very much in decline as a community. However we now benefit from these changes in that Epwell is not a “ribbon village” along a busy road, and its charm lies in its peace and tranquillity, not to mention the safety it affords the children of the village and its strong community spirit. And our village has retained many of its features and much of its character over the years.

You may like to compare present day Epwell with how it was in 1898 by reading this poem. It was written by the grandmother of Nat Taylor*, whose family lived in the village for many years.

Epwell poem (circa 1898)

*I will tell you a tale and all of it true
Tis not about me, nor yet about you.
It's about our village and of what we can boast
Although we have no Telegraf we do have a Post*

*We have carpenter one and shopkeepers two
But never a man that can make a shoe
There is Publicans 2 and Blacksmith 1
But never a Mason to build up the stone*

*We have Carriers one and sometimes three
If you want to go to market you can ride you see.
We have a Butcher, a Miller and a Baker
A Sexton but no Undertaker*

*There is farmers and labourers and some as loves port
But never a man that can make a new coat.
Parson and Doctor I must leave out
But if you want these they soon come about*

*Of watercress we have plenty, it's of this we can boast
If anyone wants it tha can get it by post.
It is always fresh for the water is clear
And there always is some all tha year*

*All this is true as I have told you
If you want to know more you must guess that too.
I hope no offence in what I have said
But some way or other it came into my head.*

* Nat Taylor wrote a publication called 'Epwell, a village history' – a copy of which is in the Village Archives. Another pamphlet of interest is 'Epwell – a short general history' by Rev John Stewart, who was Rector of Epwell from 1970 to 1975.

Developing

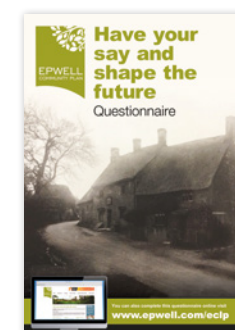
the Epwell Community Plan

In Nov 2012, Epwell Parish Council agreed to support the development of a Community-Led Plan. It was envisaged as a consultation exercise to develop a shared vision for the future, highlighting areas of concern and exploring ways forward. The final Plan is the result of a co-ordinated effort by volunteers from the village during 2013 and 2014. Here's how we did it.

Aimee Evans of Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council (ORCC) led an open meeting in Feb 2013 to outline how to get going. A small steering group then organised initial meetings, produced plans, approximate time scales and had a first shot at deciding the areas of local life to cover. A graffiti wall was set up in the Village Hall and everyone in the community was encouraged to put ideas on sticky labels and post them on the wall.

In March 2013, a meeting was held for all volunteers at which plans were refined and working groups set up to generate material for discussion. The five working groups looked at: Environment, Community Facilities, Roads, Traffic & Footpaths, Business and Economy, Housing and Planning.

The following month the Steering Group began a regular series of meetings.



The main resource was to be a questionnaire distributed to all residents. This document took weeks of careful preparation, before being distributed to all Epwell residents ahead of Christmas 2013. All completed questionnaires were collected, and online responses logged, by mid January 2014.



The analysis of results was distributed to all villagers in a second document during Spring 2014.



Meanwhile, village organisations were asked to consider their response to issues and opportunities highlighted by the questionnaire.

In the Autumn, a third document was distributed which contained proposed actions by Epwell Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee, the Parochial Church Council and Epwell Gardening Group. These responses formed the core of an interim plan.

The Epwell

Community Plan

“

The rural character of the village, safe environment, green areas, stream and wildlife make it special.”

November 2014

KEY to village organisations. Epwell Parish Council (EPC), Village Hall Committee (VHC), Parochial Church Council (PCC), Epwell Gardening Group (EGG)

Environment

Questionnaire summary

Tranquillity, landscape and friendly support are important aspects of life in Epwell, and while the majority feel the village appearance is generally satisfactory, some improvements might be made with, for example, flowers and planting, seating and street lighting. There is support for maintaining footpaths and wildlife habitats. However, dog and cat fouling, and dog behaviour is an issue. The feeling is that renewable energy schemes and other large scale developments should have low impact on the environment.

Parish Land

EPC will endeavour to establish what land in the parish it is responsible for and produce a definitive map. The map will show all parish council and common land and also all highways land. Highways land will be maintained by EPC according to the grass cutting rota and on advice from Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department will ask that obstructions be removed.

Maintaining open spaces and green areas

EGG gets involved from time to time in specific projects such as tree and bulb planting on verges and open areas.

Tubs and planters

EGG has an ongoing commitment to planting up the tubs outside the village hall and on the green area near Westwell. This is done 3 times a year on a seasonal basis. The tubs in The Square are approaching the end of their life and EGG would be interested in organising and funding replacement tubs in due course.

Footpaths & Bridleways

EPC are responsible for certain footpaths (eg the tchures from the Leys to Sibford Road) and these will be maintained by the council. For all other footpaths EPC will support and assist maintenance by the landowner. We will also support the work of the footpath wardens and encourage all volunteer groups to report problems to the wardens and EPC as soon as possible. Stiles and gates are the responsibility of the landowner. Footpaths, bridleways etc and all of the gates and stiles will be marked on the definitive map mentioned earlier.

Dog Fouling

Dog fouling appears to be a declining problem and EPC will encourage dog owners and dog walkers to continue improving their habits. People who see dog fouling incidents should report them to EPC and the dog warden as promptly as possible.

Considered to be a problem by
50%
of respondents

54%

of respondents did not want large scale developments being built within or close to the **parish boundary**



Litter Picking

Litter problems within the village appear to be under control. EPC will assist a volunteer group to organise an annual/biannual litter picking event to try and clear up some of the surrounding hedgerows and verges.

Maintaining wildlife habitats

EPC will encourage and support all volunteer groups to maintain and enhance all types of wildlife habitats.

EGG has no specific policy but would always consider helping with any projects put in place.

Renewable Energy and Large Scale Developments

EPC recognises the concern over the possible adverse impact on the surrounding countryside of large scale developments such as wind farms, solar farms, open cast mining, biodigesters and so on. All planning applications will be considered on their individual circumstances and merits, and EPC's response will be based on material planning reasons (such as policy documents, the impact on the surrounding area, traffic and so on).

EPC understands the importance of renewable energy in the generation of power on a local and national level, and supports the installation of domestic scale renewable energy schemes. Larger scale developments would be considered sympathetically if well hidden from view. In all cases however, large or small, the Parish Council will look to ensure that any scheme protects and maintains the essential character of the landscape and the village.

Street Lighting

New street lighting will be finalised in the next few months and EPC will ensure that the lighting levels are kept at this new level.

85%

of respondents said current street lighting is generally sufficient

“ There are areas that could be left for wild flowers and plants that benefit wildlife and birds. ”

Community Facilities

Questionnaire summary

Main issues and opportunities include: improvements to the village recreation area, a wider range of events in the village hall with improved ambience and comfort, support for new clubs and activities, appreciation and support for St Anne’s Church, and an Epwell market.

Village Hall

The questionnaire comments were generally positive and no specific actions (beyond general maintenance and upkeep) are planned. In response to the largest suggestion (28 comments) re the planting of flowers, shrubs or hedging, this will not be pursued as the VHC has decided that the front of the hall should be kept clear and open to facilitate village and fundraising events.

At this point, all fundraising is being considered but it is the general view of the VHC that our primary role is to facilitate the use of the hall and not necessarily organise the events. The committee will support any agreed event and assist wherever possible.

There are, however, some events the VHC wish to organise to ensure a regular income, such as the Fete and the Easter Egg Hunt.

In addition, we will consider the regular events that were suggested although must express disappointment that the first event combining a quiz (62 requests – 2nd most popular) and themed supper (34) was cancelled due to lack of support!

Village Hall Improvements

Heating – The VHC recently installed roof insulation and work tirelessly to secure additional funding. We are presently working with ‘Awards for All’ in an effort to secure a grant for green heating solutions. In July we received notification that the grant application had been provisionally approved and we are currently working on finalising the paperwork.

Acoustics – Action to install acoustic boards is planned and it is hoped that work will be carried out over the summer – which should significantly reduce the echo.

Lights – Lighting is an acknowledged concern but also a challenge to resolve. This will be actively reviewed following the resolution of heating and acoustics - albeit the only viable solution may be new down lights and dimmer controls .

Comfort – The VHC welcomes any suggestions in this area.

Décor – following the resolution of the above, this will be revisited. In the interim, the committee welcomes any suggestions.



St. Anne’s Church building

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has a legal responsibility for the church building and its general upkeep and running costs. These costs currently amount to about £1,000 a month. On top of this the current repair bill highlighted by the statutory Quinquennial Survey is in the order of £4,000. The church’s reserves will be used to meet this liability (total reserves held are currently £16,000). Unfortunately, St Anne’s church has no capital or trust fund endowments and, as was the case in the 1970’s when the chancel roof had to be replaced, the cost of any new major repair works will have to be met by approaches to national providers and the local community.



The PCC are considering establishing a body of ‘Friends of St. Anne’s Church, Epwell’. Its purpose would be to attract individuals to become ‘Friends’ based on their affection for the church building. Membership of The Friends would not require any religious affiliation. But the hope would be that through a membership fee funds could be built up to ensure the future of the fabric of the building. Membership would also bring with it a regular bulletin and invitation to events based at the church. The PCC will be looking for views from the community on this proposal.

The PCC has also decided to install under-pew heating. It is the hope that the installation work will take place before next winter. Thought is also being

given to the removal of all or part of the church pews which would affect decisions about the heating installation. It would make for a greater flexibility in the use of the building. This could be of benefit to the community, though we are mindful that the village hall (following its renovation) also provides an excellent venue for events and occasions.

St. Anne’s churchyard

The PCC has adopted a conservation policy with regard to the maintenance of the churchyard. This is to enable the wild flowers (and in particular saxifrage) to flourish. It means that parts of the churchyard are not cut until later in the year (July) to enable wild flower seeds to set. The PCC is conscious that this policy can leave the churchyard looking less than ‘tidy’ during parts of the year.

Recreation area

EPC is committed to maintaining the recreation area to an appropriate standard. Annual safety inspections are carried out by the relevant authorities. The plans for a small pavilion and BBQ area are to be submitted and on approval construction will start. When future funds become available EPC will provide extra equipment that will be aimed at adults/ older children.

Overwhelming support from respondents for a sheltered BBQ area with all-weather seating

“Open gardens are a good idea and the flower show in the village hall, but I never win!”



Regular Epwell produce market

EGG has run produce markets and plant sales in the past. We would be happy as a group to contribute to a larger village produce market and would consider setting up a sub committee to run such events, but would need the support of other interested bodies in the village if this were to become a regular event.

Flower Shows

The annual Flower and Produce Show run by EGG, with the 4th one taking place this year (2014), we see as one of our major achievements and a positive addition to the village social calendar. We are limited by space and manpower but are happy with the general presentation of the show as it stands. We would always be open to suggestions of combining the show with other events such as a village fete or perhaps an art and craft exhibition.

Garden visits

As a group, EGG continues to organise visits to gardens of interest both local and further afield. We provide coach travel for these events or if close at hand, encourage car sharing. Our visits are primarily for members and their partners but we open them up to the village if there is space available.

We generally organise 2 visiting speakers a year on a variety of horticultural subjects and again these talks are always open to all at a modest entry fee.

Open Gardens

Open Gardens has been run by EGG for the past 3 years. We were offered this by the Village Hall committee who at the time thought that EGG was

perhaps the appropriate body to organise this. It has run successfully each year with up to 14 village gardens opening. This has always been run as strictly a village event as house owners are understandably nervous about strangers having access to their property. We will be reviewing the event next year and may look for suggestions to give it a new lease of life. Again EGG sees this event as a positive addition to the social wellbeing of the village and worth continuing although its form may change slightly.



EGG membership

We are an open society welcoming membership from anyone within the village. Our annual membership fee is £10. This is used to subsidise visits and speakers, to fund running costs and expenses including Village Hall hire fees, stationery and advertising and refreshments at meetings.

Any profits we make at our events go into EGG funds and are used to run and forward the aims of the society. We make donations to charity from time to time on an informal basis. This policy is regularly reviewed. We hope to maintain EGG as a thriving social and educational group available to the whole village.

Neighbourhood Helping Hand

The PCC notes that there is a proposal to form a coordinating group to ensure that all those in need in the village can seek appropriate help. The PCC welcomes this initiative and we stand ready to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in the community. We would for example be ready to provide a contact telephone number if this was needed.

Welcome Pack

EPC will maintain a small welcome booklet that will be issued to all newcomers to the village.

Village Archive

The Epwell archive has the full support of EPC - many items have been purchased over the years - and the parish council will continue to support the archive both physically and financially in the future.



Recycling

EPC feel that there are enough recycling facilities around the area so there is no need to provide a facility within the parish.

Community safety

EPC fully supports the First Responder and Neighbourhood Watch initiatives in the village.

Allotments

EPC will actively try to find suitable land should enough people in the community request the provision of an allotment.

We hope to maintain EGG as a **thriving social and educational group** available to the whole village

Roads & Traffic

Questionnaire summary

The condition of roads in the parish is of concern to a great many residents, as is on-street parking, particularly when events bring more cars into the village. Speeding, too, is an issue together with concern for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Grass verges are seen as an asset but there are worries about damage caused by heavy vehicles to verges and road edges. Snow clearance by Oxfordshire County Council is felt to be inadequate and it was suggested that existing salt bins should be replaced by larger capacity bins. Only 30% of residents would regularly use a local bus service.

Road maintenance

This continues to be an ongoing battle with the county highways department. However, the Oxfordshire County Council Area Steward responsible for our part of the county has been to the village and discussed issues with two members of EPC. He offered useful advice, especially on who to contact for a particular problem, and was happy to be consulted again if necessary. EPC may consider at some stage the commissioning of a consultant to report on the condition of the local roads.

85%
of respondents considered parish roads to be poorly maintained



Parking

All event organisers will be encouraged to control parking themselves, with EPC help if required.

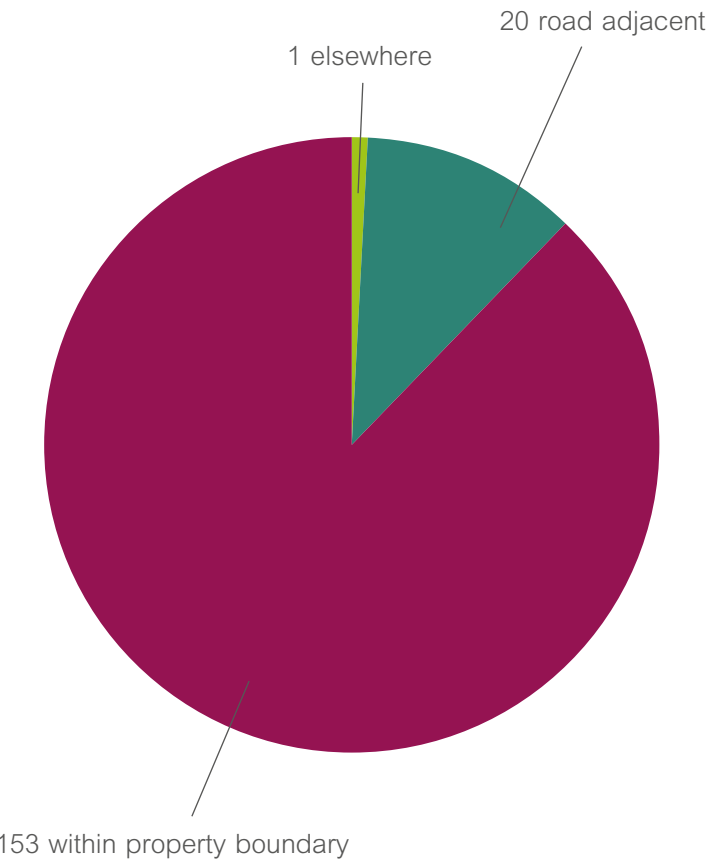
Village Square parking

The PCC is conscious that when there are large benefice services, parking can be a problem; on one or two occasions less than thoughtful parking has caused obstruction, especially potentially to ambulances and fire engines.

Cones have now been made available on such occasions. The PCC has also agreed to appoint a parking monitor to ensure the smooth flow/parking of traffic. It is the intention to divert cars to overflow parking down towards the Green.

Parking is not seen as an issue that the VHC can control but the committee is happy to assist the Parish Council (or other organisations) with any solutions.

If you have a car or van, where is it parked?



“ In 26 years incoming roads have never been remade ... on road parking in the village is sometimes hazardous on narrow roads. ”

2/3

of respondents
would support a
20mph speed
limit

Speeding

EPC intends to monitor traffic speeds on a regular basis and the collected data will enable us to see what further action is required. Persistent offenders will receive a letter.

EPC has traffic calming and general road safety high on its agenda and will continue to discuss possible strategies.

Grass Verges

All households will be encouraged by EPC to maintain grass verges and comply with Oxfordshire County Council recommendations.

Snow Clearance

A snow information letter will be sent out by EPC to all in the parish explaining the system of clearing and the provision of grit/salt, and residents will be encouraged to report empty snow bins. Snow bins will be monitored on a regular basis by EPC.

Transport Scheme

EPC will encourage and support a volunteer group for community transport.

70%

of respondents said
Oxfordshire County
Council snow clearance
is inadequate

Housing Development & Planning

Questionnaire summary

There is no support for large scale housing development in or around Epwell, and any new housing should be restricted to small numbers built in local vernacular style following consultation with local residents.

New housing

EPC will encourage those wishing to develop to liaise with the Parish Council prior to putting in any planning application.

Cherwell District Council will be consulted on exactly what sizes and styles of housing are considered satisfactory. It is noted that the new Cherwell Plan has yet to be released.

“People would support 3 bedroom houses and affordable homes for first time buyers more than any other type of housing.”



Communications

Questionnaire summary

Overwhelming support for the Epwell Echo and the Village Events email. The village website needs to be improved, with a balance of historical information and local services and news that is regularly updated. New contributors will be welcomed.

Epwell Echo

EPC fully supports the Epwell Echo, and would offer financial help if required.

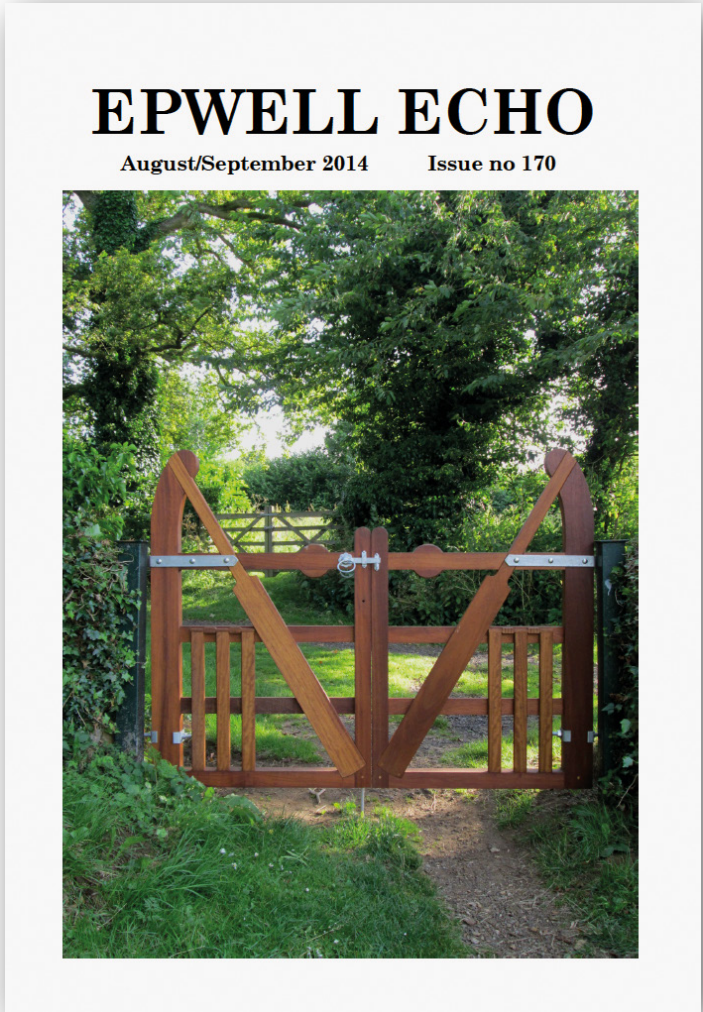
Village Website

EPC will help to find a team to look after a new and regularly updated website. This is under way.

Noticeboards

EPC will review the present provision of noticeboards around the village.

The Epwell Echo and village website welcome new contributors



Business & Economy

Questionnaire summary

There is general dissatisfaction with the performance of broadband and mobile phone services in the village. With a range of business activities based in the village there may be potential for networking to match needs with resources.

Broadband

EPC will continue working with Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council and BT to ensure Epwell is provided with fast broadband at the earliest opportunity.

“Both good broadband and reliable mobile signal are needed for a business in the village.”

Over
25%
of Questionnaire respondents own or run a business





Conclusion

This Community Plan is intended to be a working document, a blueprint for the future. At the very least, it is a snapshot of where we are now and what we want as a community as we head into 2015.

However, the Community Plan should be revisited frequently to measure the progress that we all make in securing a future that will help ensure Epwell is an even better place to live in and visit.

It has always been the intention to circulate this document to Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council, as some of the actions required by our community will need approval and practical help from these organisations.

“ This is an important project for the village because it enables us to influence what sort of village we wish to become. Now the village can move forward on our own preferences and wishes rather than anyone else's. ”

Charles Pollard, Chair, Epwell Community Plan

Appendix A

Questionnaire Results

We have included the results here as you might like to re-acquaint yourself with the level and nature of the responses to the questions raised, as these have resulted in the actions proposed in the final Community Plan.

234 questionnaires were distributed of which 178 were completed in hard copy or online, a 76% return rate. And 85% of parish households completed at least one questionnaire. As surveys go, these figures represent a high rate of return.

Here are the results of the community-wide consultation exercise carried out in December/January 2013/14.

Environment

Headlines

- Tranquillity, landscape and friendly support are important aspects of life in Epwell
- The majority feel the village appearance is generally satisfactory
- Some improvements might be made with, for example, flowers and planting, seating, street lighting and regular care
- There are suggestions about The Square and surrounding areas
- Maintaining wildlife habitats attracts support
- Footpaths are well used and need maintaining
- Dog and cat fouling is a concern, as is the behaviour of dogs
- Renewable energy schemes and other large scale developments should have low impact on the landscape

Living in Epwell

Q1. What are the key attributes of living in Epwell that you most value?

	Responses	Completely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Compact Village	171	4	9	42	79	37
Friendliness and Support	175	2	0	20	77	76
Landscape & Views	175	0	0	14	60	101
Peace & tranquility	175	0	3	17	63	92
Capacity for outdoor activity	173	1	6	29	82	55
Central position	174	3	17	64	69	21

The features most valued are landscape and views (161), peace and tranquility (155) and friendliness and support (153). Outdoor activities (137), compact village (116) and central position (90) followed on. Other desirable features are its location away from the main road but in reasonable distance of nearby towns and its safe environment for children.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q2. Open Spaces. The Village has a number of Grass Verges as well as open spaces such as The Triangle and seat below the Pub, The Green at the bottom end of the village and The Ford. Are these areas adequately maintained?	145	18	11

A large majority felt the areas were adequately maintained.

Do you think there is anything that might make a difference to these areas?

Of the 49 comments the main suggestions were to keep the spaces mown and tidy (6), add more seating (2), add planting and wild flowers (6), protect the grass from traffic

(2), maintain the Green better (13), and remove stones from the verges (6). Some however preferred a less manicured look and wanted things left as they are (5).

Q3. The Square is at the heart of the village with the Village Hall and the Church dominant features. Do you think there is anything that might make a difference to these areas?

There were 86 comments, including concerns about the mowing regime and tidiness of the churchyard (17), the state of the Manor farm buildings (11) and about car parking in the Square (10). Others commented that the phone box should be repaired or removed and others would like more flowers and more seating.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q4. Do you consider the Village Hall's appearance meets the requirements of a village centre?	136	22	15
Do you think the Village Hall grounds are satisfactory?	130	21	20

There was general satisfaction with the appearance of the Village Hall and its grounds.

What would improve the presentation of the hall or grounds?

Suggestions included a wish to see more planting of flowers, shrubs and hedging (28, the most popular request), improving the front aspect (8), particularly the porch and door, moving the bins out of sight (5), more outdoor seating (2), improving the patio area (3), relocating notice boards (2) and dealing with general maintenance (5). The now absent clock (4) received a mixed response!

Q 5. Flowers and Tubs

	Yes	No
Do you notice tubs of plants and flowers or wild flowers around the village?	150	26
Do you think these have an impact on the ambience of the village?	150	26
Would you like more planting around the village?	101	43

150 residents said that they noticed the tubs and flowers and considered they had an impact on the ambience of the village. 101 residents would like to see more planting around the village.

Q6. Street Lighting is on all night			
	yes	No	Don't know
a. Does this make you feel safe and secure?	106	48	21
b. Does this make sleeping difficult?	13	156	6
c Does it spoil your enjoyment of the night sky?	38	131	7
d Do you feel it's a waste of energy?	51	106	12

106 residents said that our street lights gave them a sense of security, but 13 said they made sleeping difficult, 38 that they spoilt the enjoyment of the night sky and 51 considered it's a waste of energy.

In the comments some residents (7) said they would prefer no street lighting considering it out of place in a rural area. Others (8) regard it as essential and asked for more lights, particularly along The Lane from The Square to Sibford Road, the Green and several other spots. There is a mixed response to the new 'orange' lights with comments ranging from 'pathetic' to 'great improvement'. A return to switching off the street lights during the night, say after midnight, would be welcomed by 11 respondents. The new street light in The Square received only criticism (4)!

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q7. Have you encountered problems with overly offensive smells?	76	95	2

76 residents said that they had encountered problems with overly offensive smells but 95 have had no such problems. Most of the 90 additional comments mentioned pig, cow or chicken manure and some added that these unpleasant smells occasionally lasted for long periods before being ploughed in. About a third of those commenting believe that these smells should be accepted as part of rural life. There were a few concerns about bonfires and two people mentioned the coffee smells from General Foods in Banbury!

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q8. Would you support a move towards a voluntary "Quiet Time" in Epwell, so, for example, motorized devices in gardens on Sundays would be avoided for the enhancement of the neighbourhood and the chance to appreciate Epwell's tranquil surroundings?	41	123	10

The proposal of a voluntary 'quiet time' when motorized devices would not be used, for example, on Sundays, was rejected with 123 saying 'no' and just 41 saying 'yes'. The comments showed that some had sympathy with the idea although felt it would be difficult to enforce. A large majority wanted or needed the weekend for gardening and DIY, some of these feeling a 'quiet time' would be an unreasonable restriction on their personal freedom.

The natural environment

Q9. Which wildlife areas and habitats are important to you? For the majority (around 165), woodlands, hedgerows and streams are the most important habitats. Ponds, verges and species-rich wasteland are also important to over 100 residents.

Q10. Habitats. 93 residents consider it very important to manage our wildlife habitats, 63 thought it not very important and 5 thought it of no importance.

Most would support the creation of wildflower areas for other wildlife with birds coming top of the list (157 responses) followed closely by butterflies and bees (149) but bats came a poor third though still with 96 positive responses.

The most popular choices for wildlife areas were the common land (131) and the churchyard and graveyard extension (108). Many would also like the village hall grounds improved for wildlife.

Q11. Volunteers. A promising number of residents (60) would be willing to join a working group for managing general areas around the village with 46 interested in joining a working group for trees and woodland and 46 would join a working group for the churchyard and extension.

Footpaths and Bridleways

Q12. Do you use the footpaths and bridleways and, if so, what do you use them for? Please tick all that apply.

Don't use	12
Recreational (running/walking)	133
Horseriding	5
Cycling	35
Dog walking	82
Going about	76

Our footpaths and bridleways are well used particularly for walking or running (133), for dog walking (82) and for getting to village facilities (76). It appears that our bridleways are used more by cyclists (35) than horseriders (5). Others commented on their using the public ways for just enjoying the countryside, birdwatching, nature walks and maintaining good health. One person uses public footpaths to get work.

Q13. Do any footpaths/bridleways present a problem of access or ease of use?

No footpaths or bridleways present problems	95
Poor access - overgrown vegetation	26
Poor signposting	12
Poor access due to track being ploughed or planted	25
Restrictive access due to animals being present	25
Restrictive access for horses or cyclists on bridleways	4
Awkward stiles/gates/bridges	28
Poor access for dogs through stiles/gates	14
Poor access for less agile people	22
Restrictive access for pushchairs	9

Most people have not encountered any problems. Some however reported overgrown vegetation, the ploughing or planting over of footpaths, grazing animals (particularly horses) and awkward or damaged stiles, gates or bridges causing difficulties at times. Additional comments mentioned one or two tracks needing attention to improve access. Better signposting and a map of parish paths were requested as well as more dog gates in stiles and more gates replacing stiles. There are difficulties for the less agile and most of our footpaths and bridleways are unusable almost all of the time by those who are mobility impaired.

Perhaps not surprising, as we already have so many tracks, this received a limited and split response with 47 saying yes and 37 no.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q14. Should we consider extending or linking up some of the footpaths and bridleways, eg, to create a circular walk?	47	37	87

A very large majority are not aware of misuse of footpaths or bridleways.

In the comments cyclists, quad bikes (5) and horses (4) on footpaths were mentioned. Also fouling by dogs (8) and people straying away from the designated track (6) are concerns.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q16 Should we consider re-grading any footpaths to bridleways?	4	118	45

Pets

	Yes	No
Q17. Do you have any dogs in your household?	82	93

	Yes	No
Q18a Do you consider that fouling by dogs is a problem?	85	84
	Improving	Getting worse
Q18b Is the situation -	48	37

Dog fouling is considered to be a problem by 50% of respondents. 56% say the situation is improving.

	Yes	No
Q19. Have you experienced any problems with dogs, cats or other animals in the parish?	77	91

46% of respondents have experienced problems mainly involving dogs and cats. There were also comments about noisy cockerels and one rogue mole.

Fouling by cats (20) and dogs (18) are mentioned, with a degree of frustration and annoyance, and dogs barking for long periods of time is a matter of concern for a number of respondents (21). Other comments include dogs off leads (14) and aggressive dogs (11). There are two reports of dog bites. The impact of cats on wildlife is mentioned by 6 people.

Energy Saving

	Oil	Coal	LPG	Wood	Electricity
Q20 . How is your home heated? Please tick one option to describe your MAIN heating supply	147	2	5	3	16

There is a variety of other heating systems such as an air sourced heat pump, biomass energy, storage radiators, ground source heat pump and solar hot water.

	Oil	Coal	LPG	Wood	Electric
Q21. How is your home heated? Please tick one option to describe your SECONDARY heating supply	9	23	3	100	34

	Yes	No
Q22. If you use oil for heating are you in a bulk-buying scheme?	53	95
Q23. Would you consider joining one?	61	56

A number of respondents belong to a Bulk Buying Scheme (53) whilst others (95) did not. There is some interest in joining such a scheme (61) but others prefer to do their own thing (56).

Q24. Do you use or would you consider using home produced energy? Please tick as many as apply.	Already Use	Would Consider	Would not Consider
Ground source heat pump	2	76	79
Air source heat pump	6	50	96
PV panels	6	74	76
Solar water heating	6	80	74
Domestic wind turbine	0	54	99

There are already a number of homes that use some of these other sources of energy such as a ground source heat pump (2), air source heat pump (6), photovoltaic panels (6) or solar hot water heating system (6). There is a considerable amount of interest in these different options for energy production and about how cost effective these systems would be. Water turbines and biomass were also mentioned.

Q25. Have you ALREADY taken or would you consider taking any steps to improve heat retention in your home and reduce your energy costs? Please tick as many as apply.	Already Use	Would Consider	Would not Consider
Loft insulation	124	39	3
Cavity wall insulation	66	24	48
Solid Wall insulation	28	34	58
Double Glazing	133	17	8
Draught proofing	110	32	12
Condensing Boiler	37	59	41

A large number of people already use loft insulation (124), double glazing (133), and draft proofing (110) in their homes, with cavity wall insulation (66) and solid wall insulation(28) also being used in many houses. There are many respondents already using condenser boilers (37) whilst many may consider changing to one of these in the future. For some the age or listed status of the building restricts what can be done.

Refuse Collection and Recycling

	Yes	No
Q26. Are you satisfied with the fortnightly refuse collection (Green Bin)?	142	32
Q27. Are you satisfied with current arrangements for recycling in Epwell? These include the Blue and Brown bin collections.	111	62

Most respondents are satisfied with the Green bin collection (142). Many are satisfied with recycling arrangements (Blue and Brown bins) but over a third were not.

Monthly glass collection	53
Monthly shoes, clothes etc collection	16
Weekly Brown and Blue bin collection	28

Q28. If you answered NO to Q27 would you be in favour of

Monthly glass collection	53
Monthly shoes, clothes etc collection	16
Weekly Brown and Blue bin collection	28

Suggestions for additional collections were for a monthly bottle and glass collection (53) and also for shoes and clothing (16). A weekly collection for Brown and Blue bins also received support (28).

	Yes	No
Q29. Would you like to see a 'Bottle Bank' sited in Epwell? Where?	70	98

Opinion was divided about a bottle bank with 42% of respondents in favour and 58% against. If there were to be a bottle bank suggested locations included the pub car park area (29), Village Hall (23) and well away from houses (9).

	Yes	No	Don't know
Q30. Do you consider litter a problem in the village and surrounding lanes?	30	135	9

	Improving	Getting worse	The same
Do you think the problem with discarded litter in Epwell is....	14	6	103

Litter is not considered to be an issue of concern in the village or surrounding areas to the majority of respondents. Most people say it has not changed.

	Yes	No
Q31. Would you be likely to volunteer to join a village 'Litter Picking Team' to occasionally, as the need arises, walk the Epwell Parish roads and lanes and collect discarded litter?	77	96

Many people (77) would volunteer to join a team to pick up litter around the village or along the lanes and parish roads.

Mining and Renewable Energy Schemes

	Yes	No	Don't mind
Q32. Are you in favour of large scale renewable energy schemes (eg solar farms, wind turbines) being built within or close to the Epwell Parish boundary?	35	94	45

94 (54%) of questionnaire responses rejected large scale renewable energy schemes such as solar farms or wind turbines being built within or close to the boundary of Epwell Parish, whilst 35 (20%) approved and 45 (26%) did not mind.

The (many) comments highlighted concern over the adverse impact on the countryside and landscape (36) and others expressed doubts over the efficiency of the schemes (7). Some supported the need for renewable sources on environmental grounds (20), and 16 had no objections if there was good screening in a suitable location. 14 said they were against turbines but would accept well concealed solar panels.

	Yes	No	Don't mind
Q33. Are you in favour of nearby agricultural land being used for large-scale development e.g. open cast mining, polytunnels, bio digesters (20ft high domes)?	14	128	29

Developments of agricultural land such as open cast mining, polytunnels or bio digesters were strongly rejected by 75% of responders, with 8% positive and those who did not mind recorded at 17%. Comments mentioned the unsightly and adverse impact on the landscape of some of these developments. Mining, in particular was disliked: it would be disruptive, noisy and dirty. Others, however, thought that schemes should be considered on their merits and what the impact would be to the locality, regarding the countryside as a working environment where farmers have to make a living.

	Yes	No
Q34. Would you like to know more about any of the following energy saving measures and other environmental issues? Please tick		
Reduce fuel costs	95	68
Heat Loss	85	73
Carbon footprint	65	94
Recycling	76	83
Generation for the community	83	78
Habitat conserving	80	81
Renewable energy	74	86
Minining and biodigesters	34	122

Between 40-50% of responders were interested to know more about recycling, reducing fuel costs and heat loss, their carbon footprint, renewable energy and generation for the community and habitat conservation.

Additional points on environment not raised already included

- the desirability of a village map with paths shown
- late night noise from parties
- noise from karting at Shenington
- an annual village tidy up

Community Facilities

Headlines

- Wide support for new clubs and village activities
- Recreation and Play Area – requests for a BBQ area and all weather seating
- The Village Hall – a significant number of respondents would use it more with improved heating, acoustics, together with a wider range of events
- The overwhelming majority of people thought the Chandlers Arms should cater for both drinkers and diners
- St Anne’s Church is appreciated by the village and has potential for other community events
- Home grown produce – support for an Epwell market

Q35. Would any new activities be of interest, please tick those that apply. Would you be willing to help run this activity?	Yes	Help to Run
Archery	25	5
Drama for adults	13	4
Bridge/Whist	24	2
General Games	9	3
Local History/Archives	50	7
Book	17	5
Bingo	13	0
Mother and Toddler	8	1
Chess	6	0
Jogging	14	3
Social	21	2
Scrabble	11	2
Computers for beginners	14	4
Speakers on general interest topics	41	6
Cycling	26	4
Walking	26	5
Film	56	6
Youth Club	8	3

This question resulted in an excellent level of response to all of the listed categories and attracted in excess of 20 additional suggestions. Film Club, Local History Club and Organised Talks topped the indoor activities each with 50+ replies whilst the outside ventures centred on Cycling, Weekend Walking and Archery all with 26 replies. It is most reassuring that each of these six top nominations has between 5 and 7 people willing to help organise and run each activity.

There were fewer responses towards Bridge and Whist, Book Club, Social Club, Jogging, Computers for Beginners, Scrabble, Drama and Social Club, but these are still worthy of consideration as all have people who have indicated a willingness to organise and run.

	Yes	No
Q36. Do you use the Village Recreation / Play area?	68	102

37% indicated that they used the recreation area.

Q37. What future uses and developments would enhance the Recreation/Play area?

By far the most popular proposal was the construction of a sheltered BBQ area with associated all-weather seating. This was echoed with requests for a dedicated Picnic Area with tables and seating.

More seating spread around the playing field was a continuing theme and this was closely linked to the request “something for the grandparents”.

The comments identified needs for a small soccer pitch with “proper” goals, a Basketball hoop, more swings, slides and a roundabout for the 3-5 year olds, and exercise equipment for older people.

Health and Social Care

	Yes	No
Q38. Is there anyone in your household that is housebound or has mobility problems?	10	166

Q39. If YES to q38 would any of the services below be of benefit to a person with a mobility problem?

Visits and conversation	5
Reading aloud	0
Minor home improvements	3
Lifts to and from meals	3
Local Shopping	2
Light Gardening	3
Lift to local Surgery	7
Lift to Hospital	6
Library book selection and collection	0

	Yes	No	I'd like to know more
Q40 Are you aware of the First Responder Service in Epwell?	149	19	6

Other Village Facilities

Some easy to implement suggestions aimed at enhancing the well-being of the village were:

- An Information / welcome pack delivered personally by a member of the community to newly arrived residents to Epwell
- A good neighbour service for the elderly
- A Prescription ordering and collection service from local surgeries
- Information Board (long term notices) – about bins, maps, paths etc
- Pack of recommended walks.

	Weekly	At Least once a month	For Special events	Never
Q41. How often do you visit the Village Hall?	8	17	132	16

This question dealt with the frequency of visits individuals made to the Village Hall. 75% of the responses visited the hall only for special events whilst 10% visited at least once per month and an equal number never at all. Weekly attendance was at about 5%.

Q42. Would you use the Village Hall more if it improved.....	
Comfort	23
Acoustics	38
Other	0
Light	26
Heating	44
Decor	21

This question asked what improvements might be made to the hall in order to encourage greater usage. The two major areas identified were heating and acoustics with lighting, décor and comfort close behind. The general comments reinforced the listed options with further emphasis on insulation, curtains, general maintenance and cleaning regime.

Q43. What kind of regular events would encourage you to use the Village Hall more? Please tick		
	Quiz	62
	Theatre	36
	Live Music	52
	Themed Suppers	34
	Films	79
	Art exhibitions	55

The 4 top categories were Film shows, Quiz nights, Art exhibitions and Live Music performances. Themed Suppers and Theatre shows also gained a good level of support. The individual comments introduced monthly Produce Markets and ongoing usage by new leisure clubs and activities previously identified.

	Yes	No	Possibly
Q44. Would you support extending the Village Hall?	30	57	80
Q45. Would you support building a new Village Hall on a different site?	9	117	42

Extending the Village Hall

The major response (48%) was “Possibly” with a further 18% answering “Yes” and 34% not seeing it as an issue and responding “No”.

New Village Hall – New Site

70% answered “No” to this proposal, with 5% saying “yes” and 25% “possibly”

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Special occasions	Never
Q46 How often did you visit The Chandlers Arms?	1	45	35	27	57

These questions were posed during a period when the Chandlers Arms was closed and there was some uncertainty as to its future.

Of the 165 responses 35% never visited the pub at all and 38% visited once a month or only for special occasions. 27% (45 people) visited at least once a week.

	Drinkers	Diners	Both	Don't know
Q47 Do you think The Chandlers Arms should cater for ...	1	4	159	8

The overwhelming majority (92%) felt that the Chandlers Arms should cater for both drinkers and diners.

Q48 Would you visit the pub more if it had/was		
	Games (dominoes etc)	18
	Dogs Friendly	41
	Children Friendly	33
	Enclosed garden	40
	TV sport	28
	Open all day	29

From the listed possibilities it emerged that Dog Friendly was the major requirement followed closely by having an Enclosed Garden. Perhaps surprisingly, being Child Friendly trailed some way behind, with TV Sport registering some importance and pub games a much lesser degree. Individual comments highlighted good food, 7 day opening, Guest Beers and “No TV Sport”.

Q49. Do you attend worship at ...

	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never
St Anne's Church	8	5	58	94
Outside the village	8	5	58	94

The results were equally distributed between St Anne's and elsewhere. 57% never attended any place of worship. 35% attended occasionally and about 5% attended on a weekly basis.

Q50. Would you like to see other types of events being held in St Anne’s on a more frequent basis?

Plays	16
Exhibitions	33
Music	63
Talks	20
Markets	34

Musical Concerts proved to be by far the most popular choice followed some way behind by Markets and Exhibitions then finally Talks and Plays.

Would you be more likely to attend St Anne’s Church, or events in the church, if it improve

Acoustics	7
Seating comfort	15
Lighting	6
Heating	34

People indicated that they might be likely to attend events held at the church if it improved its heating (34) and its comfort (15). Lighting and acoustics figured to a much lesser degree. Taken from the individual comments, toilets would be seen as beneficial, and more flexible seating.

Food Sourcing

Q51. Please tell us where you do your food shopping		Main shop	Occasionally	Never
	Supermarkets	138	35	0
	Online	38	51	53
	Farmers Markets	1	103	38
	Farm Shops	11	119	25
	High St shops	10	122	14
	Village Shops	4	153	6
	Veg Box Scheme	3	8	120

Main shop

The results showed that 67% of people use Supermarkets for their main shop and a further 19% an online ordering and delivery service. Farm Shops and Markets are used by about 7% and very few use the village shops.

Occasional

When we look at the Occasional usage the trend reverses sharply with the village, town and farm shops being very popular.

Q52. Which village shops do you use?

Tysoe Stores	147
Tysoe Butcher	71
Tysoe Post Office	96
Brailes Butcher	32
Brailes Baker	39
Sibford Store	123

Tysoe Stores is the most popular shop (147), Sibford Stores comes second (123).

In the comments mention is also made of Wyatts, Wykham Farm and Warmington farm shops, and the shops in Shipston.

	Yes	No	Maybe
Q53. Would you be interested in receiving more information on locally sourced food, farm shops, direct sales from local farms and vegetable box schemes (i.e. seasonal vegetables delivered regularly to your door)?	64	63	42

38% (64) of responses would like more information on locally sourced food with 25% (42) answering maybe.

	Yes	No
Q54. Do you grow your own vegetables and/or fruit?	98	72

58% (98) of the responses grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Q55. Would you support an occasional Epwell market either by:	Yes	No
Supplying food	31	108
Help organise	29	105
As a customer	144	26

The response to this section showed an overwhelming desire to be customers (144) with 31 prepared to supply and a healthy 29 to help organise.

	Yes	No
Q56. The village could have allotments if there is sufficient interest. Would you be interested in renting an allotment?	33	135

	Yes
Q57. If you answered 'Yes', would you be prepared to be involved in the organisation and setting up of allotments?	19

33 people expressed an interest in renting an allotment and 19 in being involved in setting up and running such an organisation.

Roads and Traffic

Headlines

- On street parking is felt to be a concern, particularly when events bring in more cars to the village.
- Epwell’s roads, whilst seen as generally safe for drivers, are not safe enough for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Traffic speed is a significant issue and a 20 mph speed restriction is supported by many Epwell residents.
- All Epwell’s roads are criticised as being poorly maintained and there is a consensus for urgent major road surface replacement both for safety and vehicle damage prevention.
- Whilst most residents accept that access for heavy vehicles, including farm vehicles, is necessary, there is some concern about their speed and the road and verge damage caused.
- Grass verges are seen as a village asset and they should be respected and protected without the use of kerbing.
- Snow clearance by the OCC receives much criticism as inadequate and it is suggested that existing salt bins should be replaced with larger capacity bins.
- Less than 30% of residents would regularly use a public bus service if it were available.
- The rural character of the Epwell environment should be maintained.

	Zero	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Q58. How many cars / vans do you have in your household?	2	16	97	32	14	13

	Within boundary	Road adjacent	Elsewhere
Q59. If you have a car / van, where is it normally parked?	153	20	1

	Yes	No
Q60. Do you feel that 'on road' parking is a problem in Epwell?	108	61

	Yes	No
Q61. Have you ever been 'blocked in' by parked cars in Epwell?	44	124

64% of respondents (108 out of 169) quote on-road parking as a problem, mainly in the area around the Church, The Square and the pub. Around 25% (44) of householders have, at some time, been blocked in by parked vehicles. Difficulties are exacerbated when events are on in the village.

	Yes	No
Q62. Do you feel there should be designated parking areas / restrictions in Epwell village?	46	127

Of the responses, 127 (73%), do not feel that there should be designated parking areas or parking restrictions in Epwell. Most believe that if people parked sensibly and with consideration for others there would not be a problem.

	Yes	No
Q63. Do you consider that there is a problem for emergency vehicles accessing the village?	70	58

Just over half (70) of respondents consider that emergency vehicle access is a problem in Epwell, particularly in the areas around the Church and in Back Lane. Most suggest that parking of vehicles in the narrow lanes and at 'pinch points' pose the biggest hindrance to emergency vehicle access.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Q64a. Do you see traffic noise as a problem in the village?	9	159	7
64b. Do you see traffic speed as a problem in the village?	73	89	13

An overwhelming majority of respondents (159 out of 175) do not see traffic noise as a problem within the village.

About 40% feel that traffic speed is a problem, particularly of vehicles entering the village on Sibford Road and Church Lane. The comments identify commuter and school run drivers, delivery trucks and farm vehicles as possible offenders.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
64c. Would you support traffic calming measures in the village?	72	76	23
Speed humps	20	135	11
Chicanes	21	130	11
20mph limit	101	51	15
Village Gate	39	101	20
Speed warning lights	46	101	15

Would you support traffic calming measures?

Two thirds (101) would support a 20 mph speed restriction in the village and a third (46) favour the positioning of 'speed warning lights'. A large majority (135), however, are against other physical traffic calming measures such as speed humps or chicanes.

	Yes	No
Q65. Do you consider the roads within Epwell Parish are maintained to an acceptable standard?	26	150

Q66. If you answered 'No' to Question 65 please state why and give examples	
Potholes	160
Edges	123
Drainage	76
Mud	92

The majority of respondents (150, 85%)) consider Epwell parish roads to be poorly maintained with 'pot holes' and dangerous broken road edges forming the greatest level of complaint. The situation is serious.

The effects of poor drainage (standing water) in Sibford Road, the bridge leaving the village towards Shutford and around Mill Corner are suggested by some respondents as exacerbating the deterioration of the road surfaces. There is a general consensus that major road refurbishment is urgently needed both on the approach roads and in areas around the village centre.

	Yes	No
Q67. Do you think that large heavy vehicles passing through the village are a significant contributor to road and roadside damage?	118	51

Over two thirds (118, 70%) of respondents consider that a significant proportion of road and roadside damage around Epwell is caused by heavy vehicle transit through the village. Large trucks, buses, delivery vehicles and tractors are mentioned in the comments. However, a large number also accept that this is a rural community and that heavy farm vehicles have to use the roads.

Criticism is voiced at the high speeds of some of the heavy vehicles, contributing to safety fears and to road damage.

	Yes	No
Q68. Do you consider roadside grass verges in and around the village to be an asset?	163	9
If yes - should the verges be protected by kerbing?	36	132

The overwhelming majority of residents (163) see grass verges as a characterful asset although a significant number (132, 79%) would object to kerbing as a protection. Respondents commented that whilst kerbing is undesirable, verges should be maintained and respected.

	Yes	No
Q69. Do we have sufficient street lights?	151	25

If not, are there places where an additional street light is needed?

	Yes	No
Q70.Are there street lights that you consider should be removed?	21	145

The current level of street lighting in the village is seen as generally sufficient according to 151 (85%) respondents; however a significant number quoted a need to enhance lighting in Birds Lane, around The Green and also in the lane between Sibford Road and The Square. Whilst the comments from 145 (87%) householders showed a desire for Epwell street lighting to be left as currently installed, the positioning of a few particular lamps do cause annoyance to people in individual properties and possible re-positioning is suggested by some. The new lamp by the Village Hall is not popular.

Q71. Pavements. What is your view regarding the existing public pavement areas in Epwell?	
Not enough	13
Just about right	118
Well Maintained	4
Poorly maintained	17
Pavements unnecessary / Not required	27

118 (66% of total) respondents felt that there are enough pavements currently in Epwell village. The existing pavements require a higher level of maintenance but most thought the addition of new pavements is not feasible given the narrowness of the roadways. Also pavements would undermine the rural village character.

	Yes	No
Q72a. Snow clearance Do you think snow clearance by the Oxfordshire County Council within the Epwell Parish is adequate?	51	118

	Yes	No
Q72b. Do you think there should be more 'road salt' bins located around the village?	64	99

Snow clearance by OCC is seen by 118 (70%) respondents as inadequate. Despite this view there is not an overwhelming desire for additional 'salt bins' (only 39% in favour) apart from on the hills on the periphery of the village. However, a number of respondents have highlighted the need for the existing bins to be of a larger capacity/filled more regularly.

Q73a. In general, do you consider Epwell Parish roads to be safe for:	Yes	No
Vehicle drivers	147	17
Motorcyclists	128	20
Cyclist	118	43
Pedestrians	114	48
Horse riders	124	28

Q73b. Please indicate what you think constitutes poor road safety in Epwell.

Generally respondents (over 85%) commented that Epwell Parish roads are safe to use particularly for motor vehicle drivers. However a significant proportion (40-50) felt that the roads are less safe for pedestrians and cyclists. The lane from Sibford Road to the Square is regarded as hazardous, particularly for schoolchildren. Respondents are divided on the question of traffic calming measures, additional advisory/warning signage, and carriageway marking. Many believe that road safety depends on the road user far more than on the existence of signage. All the same, narrow and poorly maintained roads together with the high speed of some drivers are considered by many as the major contributors to poor safety. There is support for a lower speed limit within the village. A couple of comments suggest a one way system round the Birds Lane/ Back Lane loop.

Q74. If available, would you regularly use a public bus service for travelling to:	
Banbury	49
Shipston	17
Stratford	27
Work	5
Shopping	11
Transport links	25
Misc	17

Q75. Public & Community Transport - Please comment regarding frequency & timings of services

Regular use of a public bus service was not seen as important to respondents. No more than 49 out of a possible 176 (28%) would regularly use a bus to the nearby towns. Only 5 would consider using a bus to get to work. The primary reasons for these responses surround the current infrequency of services to and from the Epwell area. A more frequent service would most likely increase usage somewhat but responses suggest that there appears to be an overall lack of interest in bus services generally in the Epwell community.

	Yes	No
Q76. School Bus Services If used, are you satisfied with the school bus services for Epwell?	36	4

Of those who use school bus services, the majority are satisfied with the current service. It is suggested by some respondents that possible changes by OCC to school travel arrangements may reduce this level of satisfaction.

	Yes	No	Unaware
Q77. Community Transport Are you registered to use Oxfordshire Dial-a-Ride service?	0	128	38
	Yes	No	Maybe
Q78. Would you be prepared to participate in a local voluntary community transport scheme to help village residents visiting hospital, GP etc?	22	84	61

Only 22 respondents (13%) confirmed that they would be prepared to participate in a local voluntary transport scheme; however a further 61 (37%) said that they would be prepared to consider participating.

Q79. Additional comments on roads and traffic

A number of people wanted the issues mentioned above to be addressed but did not wish the attractive rural character of the area to be eroded.

Housing and Planning

Headlines:

- No support for large scale or significant housing development in or around Epwell.
- New housing in Epwell should be restricted to small numbers and built in local vernacular style.
- There is more support for 3 bed houses and affordable homes for first-time buyers than for large houses or social housing.
- Consultation with residents on planning matters is very important.

New housing. There is currently nothing within the Cherwell Local Plan requiring new housing in Epwell and nor can there be development outside the village boundary.

	Accept	Challenge	Don't know
Q80. If changes were proposed or if those proposals were to become a requirement, would you accept or challenge the proposals?	24	87	0

Two thirds of respondents expressed an opinion; 24 would accept such a change to the housing requirement within the Cherwell Local Plan but 87 would challenge a change.

	Infill	Demolition & Redevelopment	On the Leys	Don't know
Q81. If necessary, where would you be prepared to see new housing development in and around Epwell?	59	48	10	43

117 respondents expressed an opinion of which 59 are prepared to see infill and 48 prepared to see demolition and redevelopment. There is no significant support for development on The Leys.

Q82. If development within Epwell becomes necessary, what sorts of consultation with the village would you like to take place?	
Mail	108
Public Meeting	123
Referendum	83
Other	4

The level of response clearly indicates that consultation with the village on planning matters is important. Significant numbers of respondents were in favour of all the suggested methods of consultation ie. mail (108), public meetings (123) and referendums (83).

	Less than 5	6-10	11-20	More than 20
Q83. How many new houses do you think would be acceptable over the next 10 years?	67	61	23	10

The majority of respondents do not want to see large numbers of new houses; 67 respondents say the acceptable total is less than 5 and 61 say the acceptable total is between 6 and 10.

	1	2-4	5-8	More than 8
Q84. Within any new house build, what is the maximum number of houses you would find acceptable?	35	87	27	10

There is a clear preference for any new housing development to be restricted to small numbers. The majority (87) feel that a maximum number of 2-4 houses in a development would be acceptable with 35 in favour of a single house only. 27 respondents would be happy with developments of between 5 and 8 houses and a small minority prepared to see larger development.

Q85. What size of houses do you consider they should be?	
Executive style	16
4 Bedroomed	59
3 Bedroomed	113
1st Time Buyer	98
Sheltered	44
Social Housing	15

All the options presented in the questionnaire received some support, with the most support for three bedroomed houses (113) and first-time buyers (98). There was also support for four bedroomed houses (59) and sheltered housing (44) but much less support for executive style houses (16) and social housing (15).

Q86. What type of ownership do you consider they should be?		
Private		128
Social		12
Housing Association		20
Mixed		55

The majority opinion is clearly in favour of private ownership with 128 respondents expressing that view. 55 respondents are in favour of mixed ownership and there is some lesser support for Housing Association and social housing.

Q87. What style of houses should they be?	
Local Vernacular style	137
Bespoke contemporary	19
3 Bedroomed Developer style	7
4 Bedroomed family	8
No Preference	22
Other	0

There is a significant preference for houses built in the local vernacular style as expressed by 137 respondents. There is also some support for bespoke contemporary (19).

	Yes	No
Q88. Does anyone in the household own or run a business within Epwell?	46	124

There is support for all the options presented in the questionnaire. Most is for upgraded roads (106) and trees/woodland (90). Extra off-road parking (75), village recreation/play facilities (42) and play areas within housing developments (19) also received support.

Q89: Additional comments about Housing.

As might be expected, the subject of housing and planning has generated additional comments. Each comment makes its own point but the majority are covered by the following summary:

- The village should not expand with little, if any, new housing. There is a small minority of respondents opposed to infilling.
- There should be no building on The Leys and there is some expression of annoyance that The Leys was singled out in the questionnaire. Other areas are possible.
- Each planning application needs to be judged on its own merits.
- The village is unsuitable for sheltered housing; there are no shops or reasonable public transport.

Communications

Headlines:

- Overwhelming support for the Epwell Echo and Village Events email.
- There is some lack of awareness of the village website but also a desire for improved content.
- Responses suggest there are potential contributors to the Echo and website who are there to be “encouraged.”

	Yes	No	Possibly	Don't Know
Q90. Is the BT cordphone box in the Square still a valuable facility to keep?	28	79	45	22

Opinion seems a little divided on this question. 79 respondents thought it is no longer needed but 28 thought it is and 45 thought it is, possibly.

Q91 The Epwell Echo	Yes	No	Possibly
a. Do you read it?	164	9	
b. Is there still a need for a magazine in the village?	156	3	16
c. Would you like to contribute to it in any way?	24	51	92
d. Is a village magazine the best way to advertise village events?	112	11	48

There is overwhelming support for the Epwell Echo with virtually all respondents admitting to reading it and believing there is a need for it in the village. Most thought it was a good way to advertise village events. 24 respondents are willing to contribute to it but it seems there is something of an untapped resource with 92 respondents who would possibly contribute.

Q92. The Village Website	Yes	No	Possibly
a. Do you use it?	51	116	
d. Would you be prepared to update it regularly?	6	110	27

51 respondents say they use the website, but more than double that number say they don't.

There is a range of reasons why the website isn't used more which seem mainly to do with lack of awareness of the website, the perception that it is not updated regularly and there are some respondents who don't use a computer. There is some opinion that the Echo and the Village Events email is “better.”

Suggestions for information to be included on the website include local events, news, council minutes, village history, local services, village map and Echo online. 6 respondents are prepared to help with updating the website and another 27 are possibly prepared to help as well.

Q93. Village Event email	Yes	No	Possibly
a. Is this useful?	111	20	33
b. Do you want it to continue?	105	9	43
c. The safety of the system – are you happy with it?	70	16	65
d. Is this a useful medium to advertise village events?	108	8	40

There is substantial support for the Village Events email with well over 100 respondents thinking it is useful, that it should continue and is a good way to advertise village events. Fewer are happy with the safety of the system with 70 who think it is OK, 16 who do not and 65 who are only possibly happy with its safety/security.

Q94. Should Epwell news and events be reported weekly in the village section of the Banbury Guardian ?	Yes	No	Possibly
	54	35	83

Opinion seems a little undecided with 54 respondents in favour, 35 against but 83 who are only possibly in favour.

Business and the Economy

Headlines:

- General dissatisfaction on the performance of broadband and mobile phone services in the village.
- There are a range of business activities based in the village. There appears to be some potential for networking that could match needs with resources.
- Support for new businesses in the locality is tempered by the condition of services and infrastructure.
- The provision of additional information for visitors to the village has a measure of support but not with any significant level of promotion.

	Yes	No
Q95. Do you have a home / business Broadband Service?	158	13

The majority of respondents (158) do have a broadband service.

	Yes	No	Variable
Q96. If you answered ‘Yes’ to question 95, is the service you receive satisfactory?	37	63	58

37 respondents consider their broadband service to be satisfactory but 63 consider their service to be unsatisfactory and 57 who experience a variable quality of service. 108 respondents identified their provider of which 72 use BT with the rest spread thinly across a range of other providers.

	Yes	No
Q97. Is your Mobile Phone provider’s signal satisfactory for use in the village?	25	138

The majority of respondents (138) say their mobile phone signal is unsatisfactory while 25 respondents are happy with their service. All the major mobile phone providers are used by respondents, the main ones being Vodafone, O2 and Orange.

	Yes	No
Q98. Does anyone in the household own or run a business within Epwell?	46	124

46 respondents own or run a business. It is probably no surprise that the largest sector is agriculture/farming. Other sectors represented include various forms of consultancy, gardening/forestry, building/construction, various sectors of the service industry and childcare/health.

Q99. Would any of the following facilities be helpful in supporting your business(es)?	
Shared services eg couriers	1
Office/workshop/studio space	4
Business directory	1
Networking	5
Storage space	3

Not many respondents answered this question which perhaps suggests that there is little to be done in the village that would help businesses. Those that did respond picked work space/storage and networking as the main needs.

	Yes	No	Possibly
Q100. Do you have space or premises available that could be made available for use by existing or new local businesses?	4	149	11

4 respondents do have space or premises available with a further 11 Possibles. Given the response to Question 99 there is perhaps a need for networking in the village to match those who need space with those that have it!

	Yes	No	Possibly
Q101. Should more businesses and small industries be encouraged to establish within and around Epwell, with the potential to provide more jobs?	45	56	65

The response to this question is split between those who say Yes (45), those who say No (56) and those who say Possibly (65).

	Yes	No	Possibly
Q102. Should there be a promotion to attract more visitors to Epwell eg walkers, cyclists and to encourage stopovers or wider use of local facilities?	53	60	59

The response to this question is also split between those who say Yes (53), those who say No (60) and those who say Possibly (59).

	Yes	No	Possibly
Q103. Would it be useful to produce a local Guide Book about Epwell for use by visitors as well as local residents?	65	37	68

There does appear to be some support for a Guide Book with 65 respondents saying Yes and 68 saying Possibly as against 37 who say No.

Q.104: Additional comments about Business and the Economy.

26 respondents offered additional comments about business and the economy. The main points expressed in those comments are as follows:

- In general, respondents think visitors to the village are to be encouraged although there is no need for advertising/promotion. The pub is expected to attract and benefit from an increase in visitors. There are concerns about the lack of parking for walking groups who have been known to leave their cars all day, parked without consideration for residents.
- The lack of good, consistent fast broadband and good mobile phone signals are seen as hindrances to business in the village.
- Support for an increase in businesses operating in the locality is tempered by the condition of infrastructure, particularly roads and parking and the availability of affordable homes.

Demographical information, from the answers to the questionnaire

	Male	Female
Q105 – Gender	91	76

	12-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Q106 What is your age group?	3	7	12	24	39	42	30	17

	<1 year	1-5	5-10	10-20	>20
Q107 How long have you lived in Epwell?	4	19	22	37	52

	Owner occupied	Rental Private	Rental Social
Q108 Is your house ..	162	5	2

	Main home	Second home
Q109 Is your house ...	161	7

Q110 If you travel to work, school or college, what types of transport do you use?
--

School bus	7
Car or Van as driver	116
Car or Van as passenger	15
Taxi	1
Motorcycle	3
Train	8
Bike	6
Walk	3
Don't work or go to school	26

	<5 miles	5-10	11-20	21-50	>50	Work from home	Variable	Don't work	Studying from home
Q111 If you travel to work, school or college, how far is your journey from home?	6	27	18	21	9	17	29	18	0

Appendix B

Background Information

(Oct 2014 version of what appeared at the back of the questionnaire)

ENVIRONMENT

Much of Epwell village and some surrounding land fall within the boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Cotswolds was designated an AONB in 1966 in recognition of its rich, diverse and high quality landscape. It is the largest of the 38 AONBs in England and Wales, and the second largest protected landscape in England after the Lake District National Park. Covering 790 square miles the Cotswolds stretches from the city of Bath and Wiltshire in the south through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the north.

The Cotswolds is nationally important for its rare limestone grassland habitat and for ancient beech woods with rich flora. Some Cotswolds plants are so rare that they have specific legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Five European Special Areas of Conservation, 3 National Nature Reserves and over 80 Sites of Special Scientific Interest testify to the great variety of wildlife and habitats found in the Cotswolds AONB.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

We have a good network of public footpaths and bridleways. Some are of at least Roman origin and the Macmillan Way, the d’Arcy Dalton Way and the Seven Shires Way pass through the parish.

The Macmillan Way is a long distance walk of 290 miles from Boston in Lincolnshire to Abbotsbury in Dorset, with branches to Barnstaple, Bath and Banbury. Sponsored walks along the Macmillan Way raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The d’Arcy Dalton Way is a walk of about 65 miles along the western side of Oxfordshire linking the Oxford Canal Walk, Oxfordshire Way, Thames Path and Ridgeway.

The Seven Shires Way is a 234 mile long distance walk which criss-crosses the county boundary of Oxfordshire taking the walker into six other counties: Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, West Berkshire and Wiltshire

Footpaths are usually marked with a yellow arrow and are for the use of walkers only (may be accompanied by a dog, pram or wheelchair). Bridleways are usually marked with a blue arrow and may be used by walkers, horse riders or bicycle riders although cyclists must give way to walkers and horse riders.

PETS

By law, dog owners must pick up any mess made by their dogs. Dog-bins can be purchased from Cherwell District Council by the parish council which would be responsible for arranging emptying of the bins. Cherwell DC provide red plastic bins measuring approx. 700mm high and 475mm

wide and they must be located near roads to give easy access for emptying. The cost of purchase and fitting is £300 per bin. Cherwell DC recommends that dog-bins are emptied once a week in winter and twice a week in summer, a total of 78 visits. The present charge by Cherwell DC is £1.40 per bin per visit.

RECYCLING

Household Waste Collections

Green Bin – General waste collected once every 2 weeks

Blue Bin – Recycling waste collected once every 2 weeks

Brown Bin – Recycling waste collected once every 2 weeks

Bin Contents

Green – non-recyclable waste includes nappies, polystyrene, cling film, packaging shown as ‘not currently recycled’. (NB: normally goes to land-fill)

Blue – paper & cardboard, food tins & drink cans, magazines & newspapers, plastic bottles & containers, aerosols and generally most packaging showing the triangular PET logo.

Brown – food waste, grass cuttings, plants & leaves, pruning, cut flowers, pet straw & sawdust. Basically if it is ‘vegetable’ material it can be disposed of in the Brown bin.

Recently made acceptable on any weekly Refuse collection – small batteries, small electrical household items (e.g. kettles, toasters, radios, mixers, toothbrushes etc.)

Additional bins (apparently no limit on number) can be purchased from Cherwell District Council at £20 (last known price) including delivery.

What can’t be placed in Green, Blue and Brown bins

(but can be recycled at Alkerton or other Recycling Centres)

Large Batteries of any kind, e.g car & truck batteries

Televisions

Computers & monitors

Fridges, freezers, cookers

Bricks, stones & rubble

Heavy tree trunks / branches

Bottles

Sheet glass

Fluorescent lighting tubes

Oils and oil based products e.g. paint

Metals, kitchen foil and large metal containers

Toner & printer cartridges – take to Shipston recycling centre

What can be placed in Green bin but would be better placed in recycling centre:

Clothes, linens, curtains, upholstery

Shoes (also at Sibford Stores)

Road Verge and Hedgerow Litter Picking

Can be requested via Parish Council from Cherwell District Council Waste & Recycling Services

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

ROADS WITHIN THE EPWELL PARISH BOUNDARY

- Sibford Road from the lower edge of Epwell Wood, through the village, past Epwell Mill and left towards Shenington as far as Rough Hill Farm
- Part of the Shutford Road (c.500 yards) past Epwell Grounds
- The road from Sibford Road into The Square
- Thatchers Close
- Bird’s Lane
- Back Lane
- Church Lane from the village to Quarry Farm
- Part of the ‘top road’ from the Bridleway via White House as far as Broomhill Farm
- The road from the White House via Quarry Farm to the disused quarry beyond Rough Hill

EPWELL PARISH ROAD SAFETY

Signage Currently Installed on Epwell Parish Roads

Sign	Locations	No. In Total
30 mph Speed Limit	On entry to village – both ends of <u>Sibford</u> Road and Church Lane by Cotswold House	3
Blind Summit (Warning)	Lane at Rough Hill by Rectory (Harry Corbett’s) Farm	2
Bend (Warning)	<u>Shutford</u> Road junction by Epwell Grounds; either side of Epwell Mill corner; <u>Sibford</u> Road at <u>Chilaway</u> Farm gate	3
Give Way (Advisory)	<u>Shutford</u> Road junction, White House crossroads	2
Traffic in Middle of Road	Approaching bridge across stream under <u>Sibford</u> Road (from and to <u>Shutford</u>)	1
Unsuitable for HGV plus Width Restriction	Entry to Village from <u>Sibford</u> Road; Church Lane junction at Manor Farm; Back Lane at Quarry Farm junction and at corner by The Close	4

Signage Available but NOT installed on Epwell Parish Roads

Signage Type	Potential Locations
Illuminated Speed Warning	On LH verge of <u>Sibford</u> Road by ‘The Firs’ and approaching Cranes Farm from <u>Shutford</u> .
Priority Sign (Give Way)	On approach to bridge across stream in <u>Sibford</u> Road – replace existing ‘Traffic in Middle of Road’ sign
Hazard (I) Sign	Both sides of unsighted bend in Church Lane
Give Way (Mandatory)	Exit from village into <u>Sibford</u> Road
Ford	Both sides of ‘The Plank’
20mph Zone? (Village Entry)	<u>Sibford</u> Road – Approaching Chandlers Arms bend (from <u>Sibford</u>)and before <u>Lyndverbarn</u> drive (from <u>Shutford</u>), also on sharp bend into village from Church Lane (The Close)

Road Salt Bins – Locations

- Thatchers Close
- Sibford Road (Chandlers Arms and Cranes Farm)
- Church Lane by The Close
- Back Lane (2)
- Bird Lane

Snow Clearance

Cherwell District Council / Oxford County Council services:

- Salt Spreading – Sibford Road and to junction of B4035
 - Snow plough if needed – Sibford Road and road to Tysoe via White House
- Pavements in Epwell**
- There are, currently, 5 pedestrian pavement areas currently within Epwell:
- Thatchers Close
 - Village Hall round to Spring Cottage
 - Back Lane (in front of bungalows)
 - Outside ‘The Forge’
 - Bridge area across the ford in Birds Lane

CAR PARKING IN EPWELL

Epwell has a recognised lack of available parking. There is no car park and there are no allocated parking bays for domestic, village hall, church or nursery school use. Cars can in theory be parked anywhere, and there are no single or double yellow lines to prevent this.

Problems arise when ‘big’ events take place in the village hall, or large numbers of people attend church services, when parked cars not only block property exits and drives but also constrict the roads to such an extent that emergency services, for example, are occasionally unable to get through.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – EPWELL AREA

Public Buses

Epwell is served by a single public bus (50A Midland-Stagecoach) Monday to Saturday at 09.51 travelling to Banbury via Sibford, Swalcliffe and Tadmarton, arriving at Banbury 10.21. There is a single return bus at 12.45 and this diverts to Epwell only on “request” by a passenger already on the bus.

Although there are seven 50A buses throughout the day from Stratford-upon-Avon via Shipston to Banbury return, Epwell residents can only take advantage of them (other than the 09.51to Banbury) by travelling independently to the nearest fully functional route stop, at Sibford Gower.

School Buses

Epwell has two school buses, one for Sibford Gower and one for Warriner Bloxham

Community Transport

There is very little community transport available in North Oxfordshire and problems can be experienced by elderly residents without private means of transport in accessing medical services

This information is taken from Oxfordshire’s Transport Plan, 2011-2030 (2014 version)

There are nine objectives for Oxfordshire:

- 1. Improve condition of local roads, footpaths and cycle-ways, including resilience to climate change.
- 2. Reduce congestion.
- 3. Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel.
- 4. Improve accessibility to work, education and services.
- 5. Secure infrastructure and services to support development.
- 6. Reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- 7. Improve air quality and reduce other environmental impacts.
- 8. Develop and increase the use of high quality welcoming public transport.
- 9. Develop and increase cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health.

In relation to the first objective, the report goes on to say that they will be maintaining rather than improving roads. They will also seek to develop a programme of community-led low-cost highway maintenance schemes.

Each objective above has been rated as high, medium or low priority for different parts of the county. **The transport objectives for rural Oxfordshire are:**

- 1. Supporting access to work, education and services for the residents of rural Oxfordshire.
- 2. Supporting the rural economy through access to rural Oxfordshire for all (local residents and non-residents).
- 3. Maintaining and improving the conditions of local roads, bridleways, footpaths and cycle-ways, supporting access by all modes.

The following items have been selected from sections of the Plan as perhaps most relevant to Epwell:

- 1. An Area Steward has been appointed for each district to act as a point of contact between Oxfordshire CC and local communities. The Area Steward will develop detailed knowledge of transport issues in rural communities, and liaise with local partners and interest groups regarding transport improvements.
- 2. Where rural communities develop community based

proposals for improving access to services (for example, community run transport services), OCC will consider and support viable plans consistent with wider transport policy.

- 3. OCC aspires to increase and improve rural bus services on key routes and to retain a basic county bus network in other areas.
- 4. Most rural bus services are subsidised and OCC will be looking for ways to reduce the reliance on such subsidies.
- 5. OCC has no plans for major highway improvements in the rural parts of the county.
- 6. Locally led and funded solutions for mitigating problems caused by high levels of through traffic may be appropriate in some cases.
- 7. Rural road design needs to accommodate the needs of local users, local residents and the local economy, as well as through traffic. Where resources for road or junction improvements are available, the design will reflect the potential for walking, cycling, horse-riding and bus use in that location and not just consider the needs of motorised traffic.
- 8. Reduced speed limits can improve road safety and help facilitate walking, cycling and horse-riding as well as benefiting rural communities. OCC will support reductions of speed limits on single carriageway rural roads from 60 mph to 50 mph and the introduction of 20 mph zones in settlements, should the experience of the 20 mph speed limits in Oxford indicate that this would be worthwhile. A large number of residential roads were reduced to 20 mph in 2009 and this project is being monitored to assess whether it may have application elsewhere, although it is likely to be some years before any firm results are available.
- 9. OCC will look to improve walking and cycling connections from villages to the rights of way network and to nearby towns, where this is justified by actual or potential use. If resources allow OCC will develop rural cycle routes; these would take the form of signed routes on less busy roads, usually connected to the National Cycle Network or other existing cycle routes. In appropriate cases they will consider converting rights of way to cycle use, particularly where this will provide access to basic services or transport opportunities.

OCC have begun the process of developing a new Local Transport Plan (LPT4) which should be available in draft form for public consultation in early 2015

HOUSING AND PLANNING

Cherwell District Planning

Cherwell District Council produced a draft Local Plan which spanned the period from 2006-2031 and it was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in Jan 2014.

This new plan allowed for the provision of 16,750 new homes within Cherwell during the period 2006-2031. Most growth would be concentrated around the two towns of Banbury and Bicester. Growth in rural areas was to be limited and directed towards larger and more sustainable villages. The aim was to strictly control development in open countryside.

In April 2014 the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment was published and it required a new housing target to be set. CDC was to increase the target to 22,800 homes. The proposed modifications to the Local Plan were submitted in October 2014 and the Inspector should resume the Public Examination of the plan in December. If all goes well the Plan should be accepted by March 2015.

At this stage (November) it looks as if the new housing will, as in the earlier plan, be concentrated around Banbury and Bicester , together with a substantial number at the former RAF base at Upper Heyford.

New housing in the ‘rest of the district’ category will be allocated to groups of villages, keeping in mind the following guidelines. Development in rural areas will be:

- Distributed across the most sustainable villages with good access to village shops, services and job opportunities or with access to towns by means other than the car.
- Where existing rural services and facilities can best be supported by controlled population growth.
- With opportunities for affordable rural housing.
- Where there will not be significant environmental harm.

Epwell is in the group of villages where development should be restricted to conversions and infilling.

Much of the village also falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the only part of Cherwell to do so. The district council will seek to protect the Cotswolds AONB and its setting from potentially damaging and inappropriate development. Only development which supports the local economy, improves access to local services, and increases the opportunity for people to live and work in their local community will be promoted within the AONB. The Cotswold AONB Management Plan has been adopted by the Council and this states that development within the AONB will:

- Be compatible with the distinctive character of the location
- Incorporate designs and landscaping consistent with the above
- Respect local building styles and materials
- Incorporate appropriate sustainability elements and designs
- Maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity
- Have no adverse impact on local community amenities and services
- Protect/enhance biodiversity
- Reduce dependence of car travel

DEMOGRAPHICS

This information is taken from the 2011 national census statistics. For comparison, some details from the 2001 national census have been included.

	2011	2001
All dwellings	125	110
Number of households	116	104
Total population	285	293
Total male population	148	142
Total female population	137	151

Age profile

Age	2011	2001
0-9	27	48
10-19	34	41
20-29	21	11
30-44	53	74
45-59	78	72
60-64	26	15
65-74	28	16
75-84	12	12
85-90	2	4
90 or over	4	0
Mean average age	43 years	

Age profile – summary

	2011	2001
Number under 18 years	53	83
Aged 19-64 years	186	178
Aged 65 years and over	46	32

Working population - 2011

Full time employees	37%
Part time employees	12%
Self-employed	22%
Unemployed	2%

Health

87% of Epwell’s population said they were in good or very good health in 2011

Households

In 2011, 96 homes were listed as owner-occupied and 19 as rented

Number of bedrooms	2011
1	3
2	15
3	42
4	42
5 or more	13

All homes in 2011 were listed as having central heating:

Gas	3
Electric	8
Oil	91
Other	4
2 or more types of heating	9

Council tax bands for 116 households

Council tax band	
A	4%
B	2%
C	6%
D	16%
E	38%
F	21%
G	13%
H	1%

Vehicle ownership (cars and vans)

No. of vehicles	No. of households 2011	No. of vehicles 2011	No. of households 2001	No. of vehicles 2001
0	6	0	7	0
1	20	20	21	21
2	54	108	58	116
3	18	54	13	39
4 or more	17	68+	5	20+
Total no. of vehicles		250+		196+

Community First Responders

Community First Responders are volunteers that are trained and equipped by the ambulance service to answer certain types of medical emergencies in the local community while the ambulance is on its way.

When the ambulance service receives a call from our area and if the call is suitable for a volunteer to attend the responder receives a message on a mobile phone alerting them to attend. This means that help can be on its way within seconds of the call being made. Responders can arrive at the incident while the person is still making the 999 call!

Responders are not sent to all 999 calls in their area, only to the life threatening calls where time can make a difference. Remembering that sudden cardiac arrest is the UK’s biggest killer, and that the chance of successive resuscitation reduces by 10% every minute, it is possible that the early

arrival of the responder could make a difference to someone living in our community. There is good evidence that trained responders can save lives by arriving minutes before the ambulance.

At present there are three fully trained responders working within the team in Epwell: Jane Freeman, Julia Neal and Sandra Reynolds. Other volunteers are going to be trained in the near future. We operate a rota system, taking turns to be on call and having the life saving equipment including a defibrillator and oxygen. We regularly update our training and attend scenario nights to improve our skills further.

Thanks & Acknowledgements

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Chris Hurst (Secretary)

Mark Boyles
- Ian Bradley

Andrew McHugh

Paul Neal

