



# The Launton Village Plan 2005

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# 1 Summary

The Launton Village Plan has identified 24 issues which have resulted in 41 opportunities for action. Of these actions, Launton Parish Council have been identified as the sole or joint owner for 25, either to initiate the action (where other bodies are involved) or complete them under their own auspices. A further seven have been attributed, in part or in whole, to other established groups in the village. At this time, nine have no owner proposed, other than willing individuals or groups in the village itself. The full Action Plan is described in Section 4.

Villagers' concerns and aspirations were collected through a questionnaire, which had a 64% response and provided a strong basis for planning. Respondents were almost equally divided between the genders and the age distribution fairly reflected the population.

In total, nearly 1000 hours of effort both by the village, in completing the questionnaires, and by the committee, has been invested in defining the Plan.

The questionnaire identified that Launton's village structure and identity, a rural perspective and remaining a separate community from Bicester were highly prized factors. Less than 6% felt any of these features were unimportant. Likewise, the village school was universally regarded as important. Opinions on future development were divided – for the 60% who felt further housing was needed, the focus should be small affordable housing for young or single people. Forty percent felt there was no need for further development. Launton Lines magazine was read by 92% of the village to find out what's going on.

Amongst others, significant levels of concern were expressed regarding:

- Risks from speeding traffic, especially in Bicester Road but also in Station and Blackthorn Roads;
- Traffic volume and noise;
- The location, safety and standard of equipment in the children's playground;
- The closure of the Premier Stores, which happily has since reopened under new management.

The entire analysis of the questionnaire, structured in keeping with Cherwell District Council's *Cherwell Community Plan 2016*, is given in Section 5.

The creation of this plan has focussed attention on the issues that the village identified as important. Interestingly, many of the concerns expressed are an echo of those identified under the *Village Appraisal 1993*. Traffic volume, noise and safety, separation from Bicester, improvements to the play area and activities for the young were all identified then as now. The Village Appraisal stimulated action that initiated Launton Lines, The Launton Environmental Group and a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which have been of benefit to us all. Now as then, the extent to which this plan will result in change depends almost entirely on the enthusiasm with which the Parish Council and, more importantly, village residents approach the actions outlined herein.

## Statement on Behalf of Launton Parish Council

The Launton Village Plan represents the feelings and wishes of the people of Launton, and the actions in the plan itself present us with a means to achieve those wishes. We feel that this plan gives the Parish Council a clear mandate to work towards those goals, and provides all of us with a vision of how, by working together, we may achieve them.

The Parish Council would like to extend its sincere thanks to the members of the steering group for all their hard work in creating this plan, which we are happy to endorse and fully support.

Beverley Byrne  
Chairman, Launton Parish Council  
May 2005



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 What is a Village Plan?

All over the country, people with no previous involvement have been coming together to talk about their hopes for the future of their village communities. Supported by their parish councils, groups have formed committees and, with the widest involvement of village dwellers possible, created and implemented so-called Parish Plans for their communities. These plans differ significantly from village to village, but what they all have in common is that **they aim to deliver what communities want** not what people outside the community think they want. In our vicinity, Parish Plans have been developed (or are in the process of being developed) in many villages including Adderbury, Deddington, Enstone and Wheatley. Our Village Plan is, formally, a Parish Plan: but early in the process of producing Launton's plan, the committee decided to use the title "Village Plan" to reduce the possibility of confusion with ecclesiastical parishes etc. and make it clear that this was a plan for the entire village.

The government has recognised the value of such initiatives: *"Experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking responsibility to make things better. A new approach is long overdue. It has to be comprehensive, long-term and founded on what works."* (Tony Blair, Prime Minister, Bringing Britain Together; a national strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, 1998.)

### 2.2 What were our aims?

At one of the earliest meetings, discussions resulted in a simple statement of our goal for all future efforts:

**"Our Village Plan is a written representation expressing the villagers' views of how they want Launton to develop over the next 10 years."**

### 2.3 How has Launton's plan evolved?

The original idea to create a Parish Plan for Launton came from the Parish Council, following a series of workshops about Parish Plans held by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council in early 2003.

A public meeting was held in the Parish Hall in July 2003, when the idea of a plan was presented and volunteers were sought to take part in the work to create one for Launton. This led to the formation of a committee of villagers who have subsequently worked to gather views and translate them into a set of actions that can be developed into an action plan.

Originally, the funding for the plan was to have been provided by the Countryside Agency, but a freeze on new applications, followed by a change of guidelines when the freeze ended, meant that Launton's application was unexpectedly turned down; fortunately the Parish Council stepped in and agreed to fund the entire process of producing the plan.

### 2.4 Progress to date

Central to the committee's efforts was a village questionnaire, which aimed to give everyone the chance to make their concerns and wishes known. A software package that was designed to support village plans was identified and evaluated. A sub-group then set about tailoring the questions and preparing the surveys. The questionnaire was distributed in July 2004, the forms were collected and the data was analysed. This produced the raw material to enable issues and wishes to be identified and prioritised. It seemed to the committee that a logical way of setting out the findings was to organise them against the ten key priorities of the District Council's planning vision described in their *Cherwell Community Plan 2016* document. This approach has not limited us in any way but has given our analysis a structure that links into the bigger planning efforts that could affect our village.

The analysis was publicised to the village using the village magazine (Launton Lines), which the questionnaire had identified as being a highly effective communication vehicle. (Subsequently, the draft action plan itself was communicated the same way.)

The final significant element of the work was for the committee to try and distil the key issues out of the mass of data available, and create visions of the best solutions possible if these issues were addressed. At that point it was possible to generate action ideas and consider who the likely participants would be to see them through. In the event, most of the actions would either be initiated by the Parish Council or by willing members of the village themselves.

Once again Launton Lines was used to communicate the draft action plan to the village; at the same time, copies of this plan were sent for comment to various organisations and public bodies who had been identified as possible partners in the actions. Feedback received during this phase has been used in the production of the final version of the plan; in particular, where direct responses were made to the issues raised, these have been incorporated as notes in the action plan.

This final report will be passed to the Parish Council, the organisations and bodies who were asked for comments on the draft, and to any volunteers seeking to initiate any of the actions to support the plan initiatives; copies will also be made available for public inspection, and may be obtained (at a small cost) by anyone who wishes to have their own copy.

### 3 Key Findings of Launton's Village Questionnaire as They Relate to Cherwell District Council's Plan

Whilst Cherwell's 2016 Plan has been taken as a model for describing Launton's findings, not surprisingly the village's priorities are somewhat different:

#### **Cherwell's Planning Priorities**

1. Reduce crime and tackle the drugs problem
2. Improve health
3. Improve education
4. Promote prosperity and sound transport systems
5. Secure more affordable housing
6. Protect and enhance the local environment
7. Improve recreational opportunities
8. Rural perspective
9. Urban focus
10. Focus on Cherwell's people

#### **Launton's Priorities**

1. Focus on Launton's (Cherwell's) people
2. Rural perspective
3. Protect and enhance the local environment
4. Improve recreational opportunities
5. Secure more affordable housing
6. Promote prosperity and sound [local] transport systems
7. Reduce crime (and tackle the drugs problem)
8. Improve education
9. Improve health
10. Urban focus

What follows are the key findings identified in the analysis of the survey results grouped under Cherwell's headings and sorted by Launton's priority.

#### **1. Focus on Launton's People**

##### Community

- A strong village community, in a rural environment, distinct from Bicester are highly important factors to Launton's people. Less than 3% felt any of these features were unimportant (Q20).
- Of the people who responded specifically to the question of distinction from Bicester, 98% felt it was important or very important (Q20).

- 56% would be prepared to help in a good neighbour scheme (14% monthly or more frequently), and 16% would like assistance (Q55 & 56).
- Strong verbatim comments were received regarding the need to replace the Parish Hall.
- Launton has a vibrant communication vehicle in Launton Lines. 92% use it to find out what's going on (Q74).

#### Road Safety

- 81% of respondents felt endangered by speeding traffic in Bicester Road, and more than 46% in Station and Blackthorn Roads (Q41).
- The greatest support exists for action to improve traffic danger spots at the crossroads and the bend in West End, but feelings are also high in the other areas: the lane to the playing field, the bridge into Launton, outside Premier Stores and The Bull bus stop (Q40).
- There was no clear message about the best measures to restrict speed. All options, apart from one way systems, attracted 24% to 45% support (Q42).

## **2. Rural Perspective**

#### Streets and Footpaths

- More pavements, improvements to street lighting, cycle paths and more public footpaths are the key concerns (Q45).
- The state of roads, pavements, verges, lighting and footpaths was viewed as poor by between 31% and 45% (pavements) of respondents (Q62).
- Street lighting is an issue in Bicester Road, Station Road and Blackthorn Road (Q44). These are the worst areas for pedestrians and wheelchair/pushchair users (Q48).
- With regard to public footpaths, the key issues are mud/water, bushes/nettles and inadequate signposting (Q90).

#### Parking

- 31% have experienced problems with traffic blocking their road. 19% have had cars blocking the entrance to their home and 5% have been unable to park at some time (Q32).
- 57% do not think Launton needs a car park or lay-by. 25% think parking facilities are needed in Bicester Road, 10% in Station Road and 6% in Blackthorn Road (Q39).

#### Shops, Services and Church/Chapel

- The village shops and Post Office are used daily or weekly by over 60%. Less than 7% never use them. 46% use the pubs at least once a month, of whom half use them at least every week if not daily (Q65).
- 79% felt the church and chapel were important, mainly as a focal point for the community and as historic buildings. They were important to 25% for Sunday worship, 26% for baptisms, and 44% for weddings and funerals (Q80).

#### Development

- Virtually nobody supported large scale development. 54% did not support any of the development alternatives suggested (Q79).
- Amongst those who supported development in Launton the most popular proposals were small groups of houses and workshops (Q79). 43% were in favour of encouraging small

business development versus less than 25% in favour of small scale industry or tourism/attractions (Q27).

- 64% felt the publicity given to planning applications that affect Launton was inadequate (Q78).

### **3. Protect and Enhance the Local Environment**

- Noise in general, and traffic noise in particular, are the biggest causes of disturbance (Q87). Traffic problems might be summed up as the wrong type of traffic, at the wrong speed, for the wrong reasons (Q88).
- Meadows, woods and hedges are most prized. All countryside features except modern farm buildings are important or very important to over 70% of respondents (Q82).
- There is very strong support for rural preservation. Over two thirds feel all environmental improvements suggested (except cutting down trees and letting hedges grow naturally) should be undertaken (Q83). 26% said they would be willing to help maintain footpaths (Q89).
- Most (54%) feel Spring Clean Days are the best idea to keep the village tidy and there was significant support for a Best Kept Village competition and for putting up notices. 90% feel at least one of the actions listed should be taken (Q84).

### **4. Improve Recreational Opportunities**

- All aspects of the children's playground were seen as unsatisfactory. Range, standard, safety and cleanliness of equipment are all 'poor' (Q71).

### **5. Secure More Affordable Housing**

- 40% of respondents felt there is no need for further housing in Launton. The 60% who do see a need believe the priorities are homes for the young or single people, small family homes and affordable social housing (Q52).

### **6. Promote Prosperity and Sound Local Transport Systems**

- 43% were in favour of promoting small scale business development (Q27).
- High levels of vehicle ownership make public transport less of an issue but improvements to the bus service, both late night and weekend, were called for (Q37 and verbatim comments).

### **7. Reduce Crime**

- Providing more activities for the young was seen as very important, followed by a greater police presence and better street lighting (Q60).

### **8. Improve Education**

- 97% feel Launton School is 'important' or 'very important' (Q49).

### **9. Improve Health**

No strong messages.

### **10. Urban Focus**

No significant points.

## 4 The Launton Action Plan

Bold entries in the **Potential Owners/Partners** column indicate who is expected to be the 'lead organisation' for the action; non-bold entries indicate expected partners or other interested parties. Entries in the **Notes** column refer to comments made at the draft stage, which may be found in Section 4.1.

| Issue   | Vision   | Action   | Potential Owners / Partners  | Notes         |
|---|--|--|--|---------------|
| <b>Launton and its village identity protected</b>   |  |  |  |               |
| 1. The protection and enhancement of Launton is important to many, specifically: reducing traffic, saving energy, recycling and maintaining a clean and tidy village. | <b>Launton is an attractive village, well maintained, ecologically aware and a safe environment for all.</b>   | 1. Make sure that all villagers are aware of the recycling possibilities in the village.<br>2. Erect sign post to Bottle Banks at the Launton Sports and Social Club.<br>3. Initiate 2x Spring Clean days and publicise through Launton Lines.<br><i>[See also Issue 10 re traffic noise.]</i>                           | <b>Launton Lines Committee (LL Com)</b><br><b>Launton Parish Council (LPC)</b> / Cherwell District Council (CDC)<br><b>LPC</b> / CDC | 1, 2<br><br>3 |
| 2. It is important to a significant number of villagers that Launton remains separate from Bicester.  | <b>Launton retains its village identity, discrete and separate from Bicester with no erosion of the spatial separation from its surrounding settlements.</b> | 1. Create a Village Plan document, to be held by Launton Parish Council, which ensures the feelings of Launton residents are recorded and recognised.<br>2. Present the Village Plan to Cherwell District Council to ensure they are aware of the feelings of the village and consider them in their planning decisions. | <b>Village Plan Committee / LPC</b><br><br><b>LPC</b> / CDC  |               |
| 3. There is a significant wish to preserve and improve all aspects of the rural environment, particularly woods, meadows, fields and footpaths.                       | <b>Launton's rural environment is protected and accessible to all.</b>   | 1. Communicate the views of the village to the local farming community.  | <b>LPC</b>   | 4, 5          |



| Issue  | Vision  | Action   | Potential Owners / Partners                               | Notes         |
|--|---|--|---|---------------|
| <b>Community</b>   |   |  |   |               |
| 4. Villagers expressed a strong community spirit and a desire to become involved in village activities.  | The strong community spirit is harnessed for the benefit of all.  | 1. Initiate a 'Beating the Bounds' fun event or other 'whole village' activities and encourage village pubs to support them.   | The Village   |               |
| 5. Police presence in the village is inadequate.   | Launton benefits from an active police presence resulting in a safer environment.   | 1. Communicate strength of feeling and seek commitment from local constabulary to provide more police presence in the village.   | LPC / Thames Valley Police (TVP)                          | 6             |
| <b>Development</b>   |   |  |   |               |
| 6. Development to date in Launton has been "about right" with future requirements being affordable, small family or single person accommodation. | Support for any future development in and around Launton is properly voiced through the appropriate planning application procedure. The development strategy reflects the views of the village. | 1. See Issue 2, Action 2   | LPC / CDC   | 7             |
| <b>Traffic and roads</b>   |   |  |   |               |
| 7. Villagers feel at risk from speeding traffic.   | Launton is a safe environment in respect of traffic hazards.  | 1. Liaise with local police and councils to make them aware of these issues.<br>2. Look into possibility of relevant signs throughout the village and assess if traffic calming measures are feasible e.g. installing "gates" at the 3 entrances to the village. | LPC / TVP / Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)<br>LPC / OCC | 8, 9, 10<br>8 |

| Issue  | Vision   | Action   | Potential Owners / Partners                    | Notes                 |
|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| 8. There is a need for better parking discipline.                                | Vehicles are always parked responsibly in order to avoid obstruction to pedestrians and fellow road users.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Target problem areas through communication with residents/businesses using Launton Lines.</li> <li>2. Investigate the feasibility of a car park in Bicester Road (near church/school/Parish Hall).</li> </ol>  | <b>The Village</b><br><br><b>LPC</b>           |                       |
| 9. There are traffic danger spots in several areas of the village.               | The risks at Launton's traffic danger spots are minimised.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Liaise with local police and local councils to make them aware of these issues.</li> <li>2. Look into possibility of relevant signs marking the danger spots.</li> </ol>   | <b>LPC / OCC / TVP</b><br><br><b>LPC / OCC</b> | 8, 9, 11<br><br>8, 11 |
| 10. Noise pollution (in particular traffic noise) is a problem to the villagers. | Respect and consideration is given by all residents, businesses and their suppliers, to the peace and tranquillity of Launton.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use Launton Lines to seek a 'champion' for a peaceful environment and canvass ideas on how we can help ourselves re noise pollution.</li> </ol>  | <b>The Village</b>                             |                       |
| <b>Leisure</b>   |  |  |  |                       |
| 11. There are insufficient clubs and courses available in Launton.               | Where sufficient interest exists, adequate sports/leisure clubs and educational/recreational courses exist in Launton. These activities are adequately publicised and accessible to all. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek volunteers interested in setting up clubs for topics identified.</li> <li>2. Create a village web site. Seek a volunteer to administer the site and perhaps involve school in student project to construct site. Research availability of funding.</li> </ol> | <b>The Village</b><br><br><b>The Village</b>   |                       |

| Issue   | Vision   | Action  | Potential Owners / Partners                              | Notes  |
|---|--|---|--|--------|
| 12. The children's play area needs to be improved and made safer. More facilities and activities for teenagers and young people are needed.                   | Safe, clean play facilities in a secure, accessible environment are available in Launton and maintained to high standards.<br>The village supports its young people by ensuring activities are organised and maintained that appeal to them. | 1. Seek co-operation of Launton Playing Fields Association (LPFA) to ensure that children's play area is up to the standard required by the residents of the village and Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).   | LPC / LPFA   | 12, 13 |
|   |  | 2. Encourage LPC to find an alternative site for a children's playing field, which can be properly maintained.<br>3. Seek volunteers to work with relevant bodies and their Youth Workers to establish the needs for recreational facilities for older children and deliver them. | LPC<br><br>LPC / OCC / OPFA / OAYC / Football Foundation | 14     |
| <b>Services</b>   |  |   |  |        |
| 13. Pedestrian safety is at risk because pavements are absent or not adequately maintained and there is not enough environmentally sensitive street lighting. | Pedestrians of all ages and abilities have safe access around Launton and to and from Bicester, both day and night.  | 1. Ensure that these concerns are brought to the attention of the relevant Planning and Highways Authority for future developments.   | LPC / OCC  | 11     |
|   |  | 2. Pavement over Bicester Road bridge to be completed as quickly as possible.   | LPC / OCC  | 15     |
| 14. The bus shelters in Launton are seen to be in poor condition.   | The bus shelters of Launton are in keeping with the rest of the village and properly maintained.   | 1. Seek sponsorship to maintain (and advertise in) shelters e.g. Post Office, Greene King etc.  | LPC  |        |
| 15. Mobile phone reception in Launton is poor.  | Launton has good mobile communications across all networks.  | 1. Seek volunteer to approach the main service providers and research the possibility of improving coverage and its implications.   | The Village  |        |
| 16. The majority of villagers would like mains gas.   | Launton has mains gas.   | 1. Seek volunteer to research viability and cost of making mains gas an option in the village and conduct a simple survey to find out take up of households for a costed solution.  | The Village  |        |

| Issue   | Vision   | Action   | Potential Owners / Partners   | Notes        |
|---|--|--|---|--------------|
| <b>Education</b>  |  |  |   |              |
| 17. Launton School is seen as an important asset by the majority of the village.                                      | Launton School continues to thrive and prosper as a valuable community asset and continually improves its education standards.                                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Liaise with the local councils to ensure they are aware of the views of the village regarding the importance of Launton School as a community asset.</li> <li>2. Engage with the Board of Governors and the Friends of Launton School to ensure that the community is aware of the school's needs and publicise its work to the village.</li> <li>3. Encourage Board of Governors to charge a governor with 'Community Liaison' responsibilities.</li> </ol> | <b>LPC</b><br><br><b>The Village</b><br><br><b>Launton School</b> via LPC       | 16           |
| <b>Transport</b>  |  |  |   |              |
| 18. The bus service does not run early enough in the mornings or late enough in the evenings, especially at weekends. | The bus service is scheduled to accommodate early morning, evening and weekend users.  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write to OCC and, if required, the bus companies and ask them to conduct a viability study regarding running earlier and later buses.</li> </ol>   | <b>LPC / The Village</b>  | 17           |
| <b>Facilities</b>   |  |  |   |              |
| 19. The Parish Hall is inadequate and in need of a face lift.   | There are public hall facilities available which are accessible to all villagers, meet the requirements of their users and are properly maintained and funded. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate the feelings expressed by the villagers in the questionnaire to the Parochial Church Council (PCC).</li> <li>2. Communicate with all parties controlling access to public hall facilities e.g. Launton Playing Fields Assoc, Social Club, Oxford Diocese, etc.</li> </ol>  | <b>LPC</b><br><br><b>LPC / CDC / Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)</b> | 18<br><br>12 |
| 20. The church, chapel & school are viewed as important buildings.  | All public and historic buildings are adequately maintained for the benefit of future generations.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate questionnaire results to those responsible for public buildings in the village.</li> </ol>   | <b>LPC / The Village</b>  | 19           |

| Issue  | Vision  | Action  | Potential Owners / Partners   | Notes                    |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 21. The viability of the shops and pubs is seen as important.  | There are a variety of accessible shopping facilities and pubs within the village.                            | 1. Encourage villagers to use existing facilities or risk losing them.  | The Village   |                          |
| 22. Most villagers feel that footpaths need to be better maintained and that litter is a problem in the village.   | Footpaths are accessible throughout the year for the enjoyment of all. Launton is a litter free zone.         | 1. Seek a 'champion' for our footpaths to coordinate initiatives to improve access and liaise with parties involved.<br>2. Ensure anti-litter and civic responsibility messages are being put across in Launton School and Cooper School.   | Launton Environmental Group (LEG) / The Village<br><br>Launton School / CDC | 20, 21<br><br>1          |
| <b>Communication</b>   |   |   |   |                          |
| 23. Launton Lines is the primary communication route in the village but calls to action in it are rare and not taken up. It must be maintained and improved. | Launton Lines maintains its readership, informs, entertains, and stimulates community action and involvement. | 1. All village groups restate their remit (in successive issues of L.L.), encourage new members and creatively publicise forthcoming attractions.<br>2. L.L. includes a regular 'letters to the editor' article.  | LPC / LL Com<br><br>LL Com  |                          |
| 24. There is poor publicity for planning applications affecting the village and inadequate communication on council tax expenditure.                         | Information on planning applications and council tax expenditure is effectively communicated to all.          | 1. Write to OCC, CDC, LPC for information on how council tax is spent in relation to Launton.<br>2. Contribute a dynamic list of outstanding applications to L. L. and as new applications are sought, provide summary details for publication.<br>3. Document and publish planning application process in L.L. | LPC / CDC / OCC<br><br>LL Com<br><br>LPC / CDC / LL Com                     | 22, 23<br><br><br>24, 25 |

## 4.1 Notes on the action plan

The following notes are drawn from comments and suggestions made by various organisations in response to the draft action plan, with attributions as follows:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>CDC</b>  | Cherwell District Council  |
| <b>LEG</b>  | Launton Environmental Group  |
| <b>OCC</b>  | Oxfordshire County Council   |
| <b>ONCF</b> | Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum  |
| <b>OPFA</b> | Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association   |
| <b>PCC</b>  | St. Mary's Parochial Church Council  |
| <b>TVP</b>  | Thames Valley Police (Inspector Oliver Wright, Bicester Neighbourhood Inspector) |

1. **[CDC]** The Environmental Services Department can offer some advice and support in achieving aims 1 & 22. Contact is Gabi Kaiser 01295 221962 or [gabi.kaiser@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:gabi.kaiser@cherwell-dc.gov.uk).
2. **[OCC]** We have a Waste Reduction Officer, Katie Zabel and she would be able to help encourage the village to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste. We have a pack and other items that can be sent on to villagers that request them. ([Katie.zabel@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Katie.zabel@oxfordshire.gov.uk), 01865 815908)
3. **[OCC]** Caroline Lowery (07793 647190, [caroline.lowery@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.lowery@oxfordshire.gov.uk)) will be able to support you by either:
  - Setting up a Community Action Group as part of your Environment Group
  - Passing on hints and tips on how to hold effective spring clean days.
4. **[CDC]** With regard to issue 3, the village should be made aware of the projects and organisations that the Council supports through grant aid that aim to enhance the countryside and biodiversity e.g. landscape conservation grants, annual grants to FWAG and the Oxfordshire Woodland Group. Further information can be obtained from Sue Marchand and our website.
5. **[ONCF]** I can see the point and agree with this but I can also see that local farmers have to run their businesses and that villagers with leisure time/aesthetic sensibilities have to take that into consideration, as do groups like ourselves. What you can easily do is enhance all aspects of the natural environment that remains within the village – any streams, hedges, the cemetery, churchyard, verges, safeguard ivy-covered trees, village pond, village playing field, etc.
6. **[TVP]** In terms of the level of policing devoted to the village, I understand that you would like to have more. Indeed, that is a repeated concern in most places. I have a limited number of staff covering a large area, so inevitably we have to prioritise them to those areas where we have the greatest problems. All of our work is 'intelligence-led', which means that we target our officers to crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots and to the people who we know are committing most crime. This policing activity is what we undertake over and above our response to emergencies.

Clearly, if we become aware of a situation within Launton village, whether it be a crime or anti-social behaviour hotspot or series, or an individual of concern, then we would task resources accordingly. It is therefore very important for people to report suspicious or outright criminal activity to the police -- on 999 if an emergency or crime in progress, or otherwise by dialling 0845 8 505 505. Without a flow of information, we will not have an accurate picture to enable us to effectively prioritise.

On top of my response officers, I do have a team of Area Beat Officers, each of whom is responsible for working closely with the neighbourhoods within their area. I have only been in post here at Bicester for two months and I am currently looking at how best to ensure that this team of officers can maximise their efforts. On top of this, I am pleased to say that next month we have two Police Community Support Officers starting at Bicester. These PCSO's are not police officers, but they have certain powers and shall play an invaluable role in being seen in around my area, reassuring people by their presence and deterring criminals. There is also a key role for other agencies in tackling low-level criminality, including anti-social behaviour. A good example are the nuisance officers employed by Cherwell District Council, who work closely with my police officers.



You have my assurance that I am committed to providing the best level of policing across my area. However, I simply can not promise to have an obvious police presence everywhere. It would be unrealistic of me to say I could achieve this. Therefore, inevitably, they will go to the places where the greatest problems are.

7. **[CDC]** Item 6 – future affordable housing issues are a problem District wide. Further specific information on this matter can be obtained from Alison Davies.
8. **[OCC]** We are aware of the villagers' concerns about speeding traffic. A potential traffic calming scheme was assessed in 2001 but did not achieve enough points and was too costly to gain a place in our Capital Programme. If the Parish Council feel the situation has changed since then, they need to write to the Deputy Area Engineer, Steve Bowden at Kidlington Area Office who will consider a reassessment.
9. **[TVP]** In terms of the concerns of speeding traffic and danger spots, I shall ensure that our Traffic Management Department are made aware. This is a specialist department within Thames Valley Police, based locally at our Howes Lane Roads Policing base, who work closely with Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department to work on ways to make our roads safer. I shall ask that they make contact with you.
10. **[CDC]** In response to items under Road Traffic, the responsibility for traffic and roads is with the Police and the County Council as highway authority, not the district council. Whilst we may help in the process should you have any difficulties in this respect, it would be beneficial for the plan to be explicit in this respect. Further information can be obtained from Geoff Bell *[CDC's Community Safety Officer]*.
11. **[OCC]** A walk round the village with our Deputy Area Engineer, Steve Bowden may be able to identify problem areas. Please contact him on 01865 844300 to arrange a visit.
12. **[CDC]** The availability of grant aid from the District Council to support the enhancement of play areas and parish halls is obviously relevant to issues 12 and 19 and could be included in the plan. Further information can be obtained from Sue Marchand and our website. ORCC should also be contacted re advice on the Village Hall – 01865 883488.
13. **[CDC]** I am aware that there is some planning agreement money available for sports and play provision in the parish. This needs to be acknowledged in any intentions to address issue 12 in your draft action plan and with the input of Cherwell officers.
14. **[OPFA]** *[Roger Davis, Community Development Officer for the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association, made valuable suggestions at the draft stage of the plan, and pointed out possible sources of help and funding for youth activities, particularly sports. Two suggestions in particular are noted here; the full text of his e-mail is available to interested parties.]*  
Oxfordshire Association of Young People's Clubs (OAYP) can give support, training and encouragement if called upon.  
The Football Foundation has literally millions of pounds to invest in grassroots football (and other community sports/leisure activities allied to a football club). Check out their website and see for yourself. This may be one positive way forward if the football club, LPFA and LPC (in partnership with the District Council and Football Foundation) really want to maximise a valuable community asset such as the playing field.
15. **[OCC]** Steve Bowden is aware of the problem in the Bicester Road area and is looking into providing a footpath to resolve the issue within the next six months.
16. **[OCC]** Learning & Culture is keen to support all its schools to enable them to thrive and prosper. In particular it strives, through a combination of challenge and support, to help schools raise levels of pupil achievement and attainment.
17. **[OCC]** Oxfordshire County Council is about to commence their 4-yearly Review of Subsidised Bus Services in the Bicester area, that includes Launton. Consultation letters will be sent out at the end of May this year to Parish Councils seeking their views on public transport issues. The results

of this consultation will be incorporated in to tenders inviting bus companies to bid for revised bus services to be introduced in December.

18. **[PCC]** Item 19: Parish Hall. The state of the Parish Hall and its future is a matter of ongoing concern for the PCC. We have recently consulted the Diocesan Solicitors and their findings confirmed that this issue is complex and, therefore, we continue to assess the options available to us. Meanwhile, money is being spent on the upkeep of the hall as it is apparent that it is a much used facility by both the village and wider community and would be a great loss if it were to be closed. These repairs, improvements and running costs have meant that money that might have been set aside for future plans for redevelopment/refurbishment has had to be spent.
19. **[PCC]** Item 20: St. Mary's Church. The PCC is committed to maintaining this historic building to the best of its ability. However, there are just 72 members on the Church's Electoral Roll and, therefore, resources are limited. At the end of last year the building was reassessed by our insurers and the valuation was tripled. We are told that the church, which is Grade 1 listed, needs to be insured for at least £3 million pounds. The insurance premium alone will cost church members over £50 every single week. This is in addition to the general expense of maintaining the church. One aspect of this is staffing: this year the PCC will have to pay nearly £21,000 (known as Parish Share) to the diocese, an increase of 9% over last year but considerably less than the actual cost of providing a vicar for the church and community.

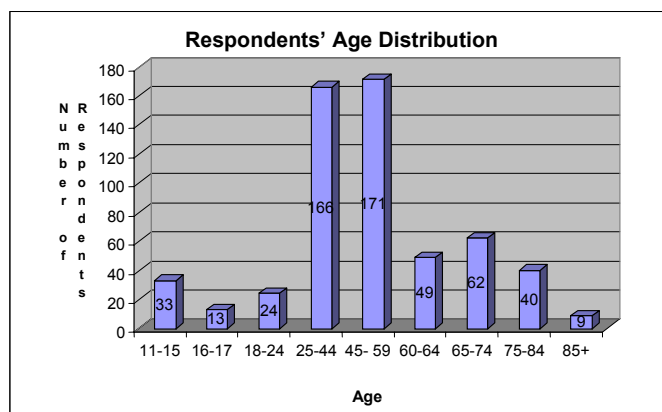
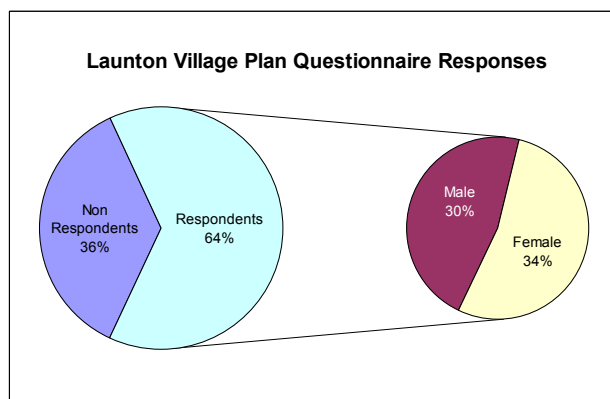
We are, of course, encouraging all our members to consider increasing their giving to meet these increasing costs but, with all these additional annual expenses, the PCC is concerned about its ability to meet the costs of any future repair or maintenance work on the church.

The PCC is pleased that the questionnaire has shown that St. Mary's is a building of significance and importance to very many people in the wider community. It would be good if some way could be found for those people to assist the PCC in maintaining and preserving the village's oldest historic building for this and future generations. We would be grateful for any suggestions or proposals on the long term maintenance of this Grade 1 listed building.
20. **[LEG]** This is an area very much of interest to LEG and we are keen to be involved with this Action. The Group has some experience of the local footpaths – some seven or eight years ago, LEG did a series of "Welly Walks", which covered all the footpaths of the Parish. As an environmental group, we also think it is important that access to the footpaths is maintained. Therefore we think LEG would be well placed to act as a "Champion" for Launton's footpaths.
21. **[OCC]** When the Parish appoints their 'champion' please contact Sarah Aldous, Public Rights of Way Field Officer, Countryside Service, Holton, Oxford, OX33 1QQ (tel. 01865 810222, email [sarah.aldous@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.aldous@oxfordshire.gov.uk)). Sarah can then explain our policies about maintenance etc of public rights of way and advise on the best way for the Parish to advise her of problems etc.
22. **[CDC]** Further information can be provided on Council Tax expenditure. Please let us know what you require.
23. **[OCC]** Information on Council Tax is available from Cherwell District Council.
24. **[CDC]** The issue at 24 concerning consultation on planning applications is important. Our consultation policies and processes are being reviewed through the preparation of the new (statutory) Statement of Community Involvement. This Statement will be published for public consultation in June/July this year, providing an opportunity for all to influence its content prior to the submission of a finalised version, which is to be the subject of public examination before an independent inspector. Please note our consultation on planning applications already includes neighbour letters, sites notices, press notices, Parish Council consultation, consultation with the Launton Environmental Group, weekly lists and Cherwell website pages.
25. **[OCC]** The County Council deals with planning applications for minerals and waste development, and for the County Council's own development – schools etc. When such applications are submitted to this office, we publish a notice in the local paper, lodge a copy of the application in the local library, and notify individually residents immediately adjacent to development proposals.

## 5 Full Survey Findings

### Questionnaire Dimensions

- 570 people responded out of a population of 888 (aged 11 or older)
- Responses were returned from 288 households with 708 occupants (Q1)
- There was an even split of male/female respondents (Q17)
- Where a question was answered by all respondents, we can be 99% sure that the response would be no more than 2.4% different if every resident had responded
- Majority (59%) were in 25-59 range (Q18)
- 12% were aged 11-24
- 28% were over 60



### 1. Focus on Launton's (Cherwell's) People

#### Community

- A strong village community, in a rural environment, distinct from Bicester are highly important factors to Launton's people. Less than 3% felt any of these features were unimportant (Q20)
- Of the people who responded specifically to the question of distinction from Bicester, 98% felt it was important or very important (Q20)
- In the context of the other aspects of this question, the church, pubs and school were less important (in that order)
- 56% would be prepared to help in a good neighbour scheme (14% monthly or more frequently), and 16% would like assistance (Q55 & 56)
- Launton has a vibrant communication vehicle in Launton Lines. 92% use it to find out what's going on (Q74)
- 44% use the notice boards and 39% the Post Office to gain information on what's going on (Q74)

#### **Verbatim Comments**

*"Continuing to maintain its own identity by promoting activities/groups to cater for all age ranges and social groups. Would like a more positive approach to 'outsiders', particularly from other cultures."*

*"More projects which will pull the community together – too many of the clubs etc which meet here are used by people from outside the village. A village website. Annual produce show. Newcomers' packs."*

"I would like to see Launton support its elderly population more, and to develop a single community, as well as all the clubs & societies, so that we all pull together for the village,, even if it is only Best Kept Village."

"Launton thrives because of the diversity of its inhabitants. We can grow by small incremental developments that will bring new families to us. We need to maintain a balance."

"A clean tidy remote village."

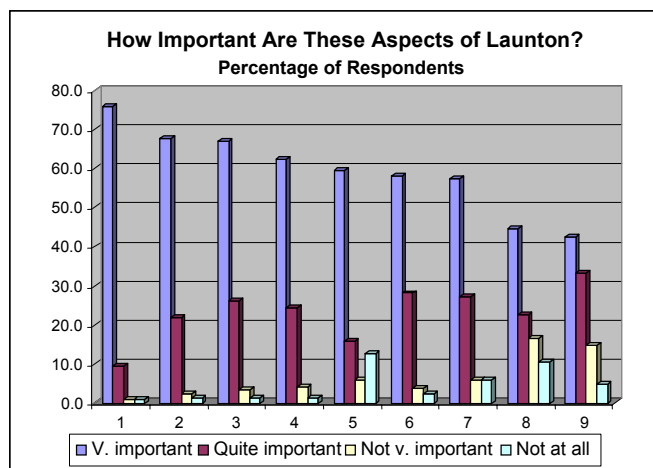
"Develop Village Hall. Stop noise abuse by aircraft towing gliders."

"Develop/improve/rebuild Parish Hall."

"No more building - but much more community spirit. To remain a village separate from Bicester."

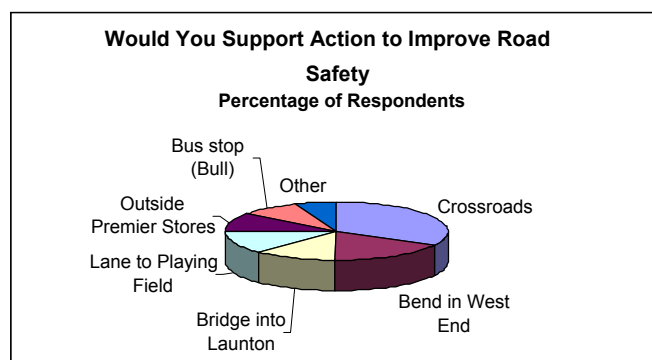
"No more housing. Keep Launton a village. Better upkeep of public areas e.g. Parish Hall & surrounding area. More communal events e.g. celebrations, street parties."

"Remain a distinct community. Some expansion inevitable even desirable, but compatible with existing village. Affordable housing. Things for young people to do. Traffic big problem. Keep shop, pubs etc. Village employment."



1. Launton remains a village community distinct from Bicester
2. Rural environment
3. Local shops
4. Location
5. School
6. Village community
7. Transport links
8. Church
9. Pub

## Road Safety



- 81% of respondents felt endangered by speeding traffic in Bicester Road and more than 46% in Station and Blackthorn Roads (Q41)
- The greatest support exists for action to improve traffic danger spots at the crossroads (79%) and the bend in West End (42%), but action in the other areas (lane to playing field, bridge into Launton, outside Premier Stores and The Bull bus stop) was supported by 20% to 30% (Q40)

- There was no clear message about the best measures to restrict speed. All options, apart from one way systems, attracted 24% to 45% support (Q42)

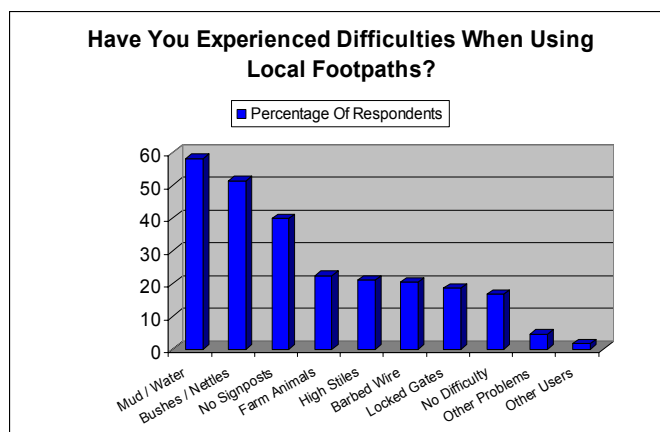
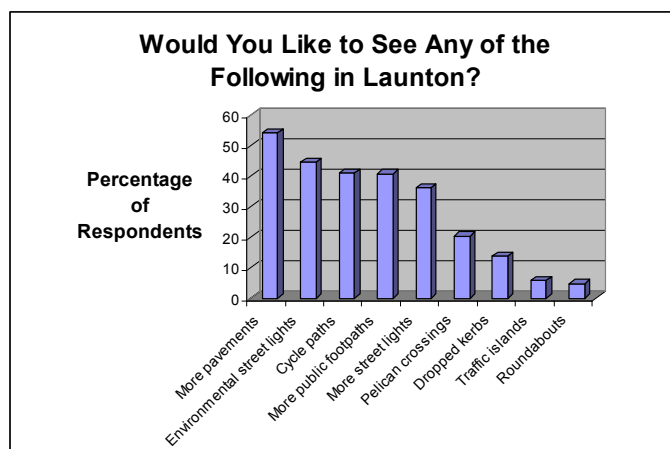
## 2. Rural Perspective

### Councils and Planning

- Only 31% were satisfied with the way local councils spend council tax. 54% didn't know how it was spent (Q76)
- Nearly 60% were satisfied with the way local councils publicise their decisions and activities. 41% were not (Q77)

### Streets and Footpaths

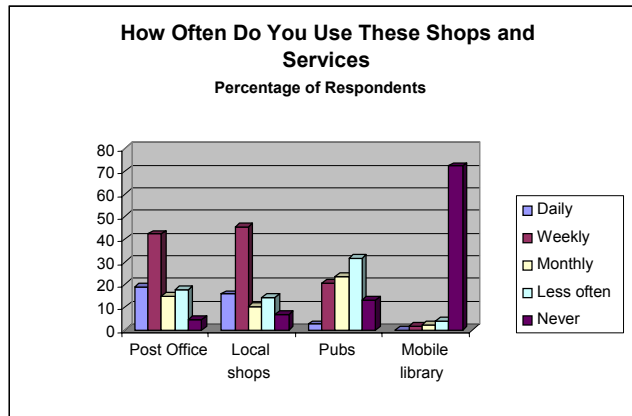
- Street lighting is an issue in Bicester Road (bridge?), Station Road (beyond Blenheim Drive?) and Blackthorn Road (Q44)
- Pedestrian facilities are worst in Station Road (beyond Blenheim Drive?) and Bicester Road (bridge?) (Q47)
- Elsewhere pedestrian facilities are good (Q47)
- Bicester Road (bridge?) and Station Road (beyond Blenheim Drive?) are the worst areas for wheelchair and pushchair users (Q48)
- More pavements (54%), improvements to street lighting, cycle paths and more public footpaths are the key concerns in relation to paths and street lights (Q45)
- 41% were seeking more public footpaths and 45% more environmentally sensitive street lights (Q45)
- Around 40% felt street cleaning and winter weather (snow clearing) services were poor (Q61)
- The state of roads, pavements, verges, lighting and footpaths was viewed as poor by between 31% and 45% (pavements) of respondents (Q62)
- With regard to public footpaths, mud/water, bushes/nettles, and inadequate signposting are the key issues (Q90). 26% would be prepared to help maintain paths (Q89)



### Parking

- 31% have experienced problems with traffic blocking their road. 19% have had cars blocking the entrance to their home and 5% have been unable to park at some time (Q32)
- 57% do not think Launton needs a car park or lay-by (Q39)
- 25% think parking facilities are needed in Bicester Road, 10% in Station Road and 6% in Blackthorn Road (Q39)

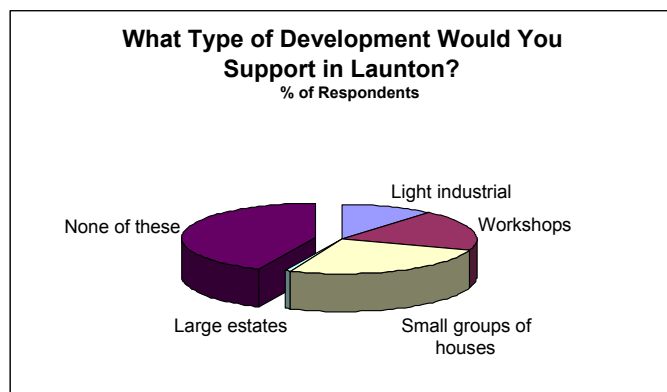
### Shops, Services and Church/Chapel



- Village shops and Post Office are used daily or weekly by over 60%. Less than 7% never use them (Q65)
- 46% use the pubs at least once a month of whom half use them at least every week if not daily (Q65)
- Mobile library usage is very low (Q65)
- 56% would like to be connected to mains gas (Q63)
- Of all communications media, mobile phones had the poorest reception. 45% had problems (Q75)

- 79% felt the church and chapel were important, mainly as a focal point for the community and as historic buildings (Q80)
- They were important to 25% for Sunday worship, 26% for baptisms, and 44% for weddings and funerals (Q80)

### Development



- Amongst those who supported development in Launton the most popular proposals were small groups of houses and workshops (Q79)
- Virtually nobody supported large scale development (Q79)
- 54% did not support any of the development alternatives suggested (Q79)

- 43% were in favour of encouraging small business development versus less than 25% in favour of small scale industry or tourism/attractions (Q27)
- 64% felt the publicity given to planning applications that affect Launton was inadequate (Q78)

### **Verbatim Comments**

#### Stay as it is

*"As a Village" - "As it is at the moment." - "As it is now." (times 4)*

*"Does not need to get any bigger" - "Don't develop it any bigger than it is"*

*"I am happy with the way Launton is at present. Hopefully now that the drain problems have been sorted, things will be a lot better."*



"I feel as a whole Launton is unspoiled the way it is and should stay that way."  
 "I just want it to stay as a village you enjoy living in. Much as it is now."  
 "I would like Launton to remain a rural gem, with much improved roads and pavements and the village store to re-open."  
 "I would like it to stay as it is - with less traffic and noise."  
 "I like it as it is, except for traffic speed."  
 "I like it how it is now" (times 3) - "I love Launton at it is" (times 3)  
 "I think it is nice as it is." - "I would like it kept as the nice rural village it is."  
 "I would like it to stay as a large and friendly village with a Post Office and two shops and a small village school."  
 "I would like Launton to stay the size it is now with more woodlands and special places around it."  
 "I'd like to see Launton remain about the same - friendly, low crime, good local shops (but small) with less 'rat run' traffic."  
 "It is OK the way things are."  
 "It should stay as it is, a good village community."  
 "Keep it as it is" (times 3)  
 "Keep it small and retain village community spirit"  
 "Keep its identity as a village. No further housing developments. Improved leisure facilities for teenagers. Encourage a sense of community and care for the village environment."  
 "Kept as a rural community."  
 "Kept as a village. No more large scale building development."  
 "kept the same."  
 "Launton has been developed enough & does not need any more housing etc. Village Hall in desperate need of refurbishment & repair. I don't appreciate a garden full of screaming children (nursery at no 7) especially in Summer."  
 "Leave it alone. It requires evolution not revolution."  
 "Leave it as it is - as a village." (times 3)  
 "Maintaining its village nature. Conservation of 'green' areas within the village."  
 "No further development. Let it remain the very nice village that we now have."  
 "No major redevelopment. Maintain & improve local facilities & services. Introduce mains gas. Improve public transport (evening buses to/from Bicester)."  
 "No more development. Speed restrictions."  
 "No more housing. Preservation of Post Office, shop, Butchers and pub."  
 "No more housing. Preservation of Post Office, shop, butchers, pub and church."  
 "No more significant development. Launton to stay separate from Bicester. Existing services/facilities to be maintained and where necessary ... Above all, the village/community atmosphere to be preserved."  
 "Please leave it as it is." - "Remain the same." (times 2)  
 "Retain Village atmosphere and characteristics"  
 "Should be kept as a village, with every effort to maintain existing agricultural farms and horse activities, should be aware of countryside and slow down."  
 "Stay a village with very few new houses. A new Parish/Village Hall really would make a great difference."  
 "Stay as a nice quite, comfortable, cosy, loveable, gorgeous, tremendous, spectacular exquisite environment"  
 "Stay as a village & only infill housing. No more estates."  
 "Stay as is." (times 3) - "STAY AS IT IS" - "Stay as Village"  
 "Stay as it is but just needs tidying up."  
 "Staying as a village. Get Jewson out - they are in the wrong place. Lorries park outside and block The Green from 7 am!!"

### **Develop Slowly**

"Slowly & evolutionarily. No big changes/developments."  
 "Slowly and in an architecturally way remaining a village. Stop car sales from house nr shop, detract from main st appearance."  
 "Slowly without vast changes. Ayl/Bic route should run through Launton as advertised. Driver should be less aggressive to older people. Oxf/Launton bus should run later for people working standard day, finishes at 5.40."

"Slowly!" (times 4)

"Slowly, as befits an English country village."

"Slowly, keeping it a village. House building will hopefully be kept to smallish plots."

"Slowly, to be kept as a village (not joined to Bicester)."

"Slowly, to be kept as a village and not become part of Bicester."

"Slowly. Re-open shop. Update Village Hall. Traffic islands/road narrowing at shop & school (with appropriate lighting). Footpath to Bicester better signed & encouraged."

### **Discrete From Bicester**

"Be retained as a proper village without being integrated into Bicester by encroaching housing/industrial estates"

"I want to stay a nice country village, and not to become part of Bicester. I want more footpaths and less litter & pollution from Bicester factories. In other words, a miracle needs to be performed."

"I would like to see Launton continue to develop as a village community distinct from Bicester. I would also like to see better facilities for young children/toddlers re. playground/swings (see Wendlebury)."

"I would like to see Launton looking a little tidier! but staying small and detached from Bicester."

"I would like to see Launton stay a village separate from Bicester"

"I would want Launton to remain as a village and not to become part of Bicester, through future erosion of the very limited green spaces that currently exist between the two."

"if expansion has to happen then should be out towards Blackthorn/Stratton Audley, not infill. Also, this keeps Launton separate from Bicester."

"Independent from Bicester."

"Keep its character as a village separate from Bicester. No further development and traffic restriction to stop rat-run from Aylesbury Rd."

"Keep Launton as it is and divorced from Bicester."

"Kept apart from Bicester. Stay as Village community"

"Kept as a village separate from Bicester. Car parking sorted in the Glades. Cycle path from bridge to Church. Local shop re-opened. Noise from S&S Club reduced."

"Kept as a village, not a part of Bicester"

"Launton must maintain its status as a village and not become a suburb of Bicester. The Parish Hall is important. It is in a poor state and may be difficult to insure in future. We should get funding to build a bigger and better hall."

"Launton should be kept as a rural village, and not joined up with Bicester by housing."

"Launton to stay as a village, with no large housing estates stretching into Bicester."

"Launton to stay separate from Bicester. No more development."

"Less traffic and light pollution. Small affordable homes for local people. Keep Bicester out. No asylum centre!! More visible police presence. More re-cycling."

"Maintain independence from Bicester. Have mains gas."

"Maintain its friendly, independent position to Bicester,"

"Maintain its separate village status and not be enveloped by Bicester. To remain clean, tidy, smart and attractive for all residents. No extra development (housing & business)."

"Maintain its village concept and not become a Bicester suburb."

"Maintain Separation from Bicester while improving local shops and pubs"

"More low cost housing for first time buyers and traffic calming for the children. Keep it apart from Bicester."

"Most importantly to remain as a discreet village and not be integrated into Bicester. Any building development to be proportional to the surrounding environment and not significantly alter the balance between housing/building and agriculture/open space"

"NOT as a suburb of Bicester"

"Not joined to Bicester, clean and tidy."

"Not too fast - keep the shop & Post Office - keep separate from Bicester - keep the Village Hall and try to improve things for the youngsters."

"Only if it can remain as a separate entity from Bicester"

"Remain a village not swallowed by Bicester. Prioritisation for first-time buyers. Provision for teenagers. Decent village hall."

"Remain as a village not a suburb of Bicester."

"Remain independent of Bicester."

"Remain separate from Bicester. Speeding cars problem but calming could reduce through traffic and viability of shops/pubs. Bus service important - would like it more frequent and running later in evening. New Village Hall. Retain sense of community."

"Staying away from Bicester."

"Staying permanently separated from Bicester."

"To continue to remain a village - separate from Bicester - and maintain its individuality."

"To remain as a rural village separate from Bicester"

"To stay as a reasonably small village with no dramatic changes. Remain independent of Bicester and have no large housing developments."

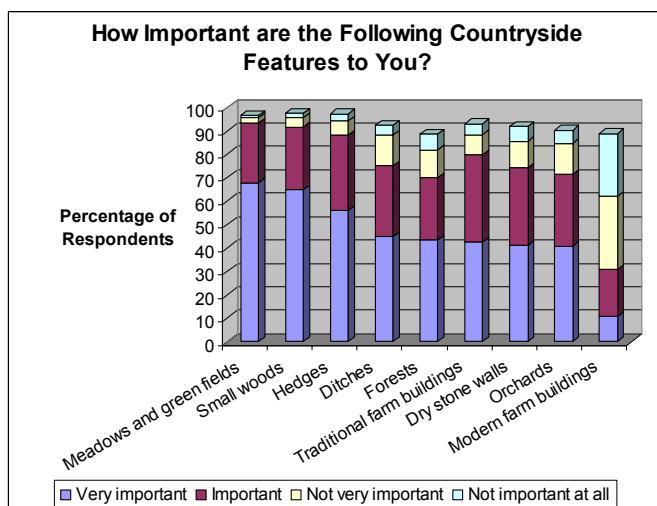
"To stay as it is - no more building new houses - there's not the space, and making sure we stay a village and don't become part of Bicester!"

"To stay away from Bicester, keep a divide. Shop needs to re-open. It needs to keep a village community. Stop the Rat Run. And probably most important, it needs to give the locals a chance to stay in the village, instead of being"

"We should be careful to keep Launton a village otherwise it will link with Bicester."

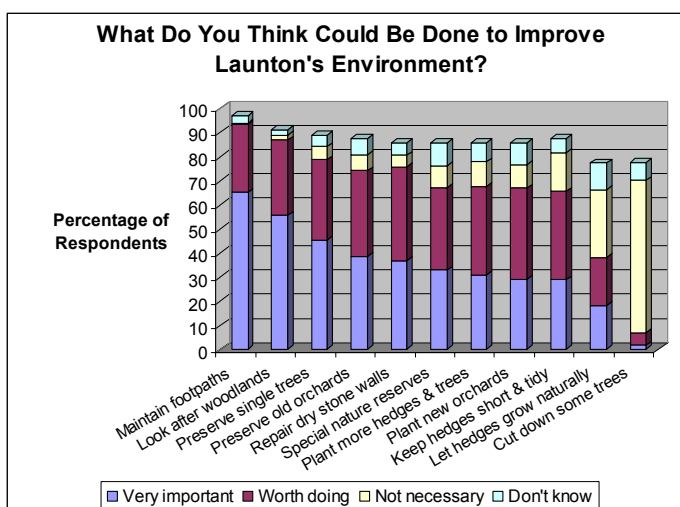
"Become part of Bicester. Encourage small businesses for local employment. Desperately in need of facilities for children and young adults."

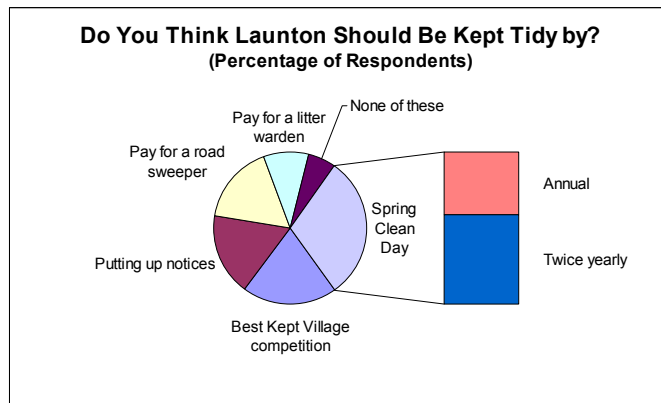
### 3. Protect and Enhance the Local Environment



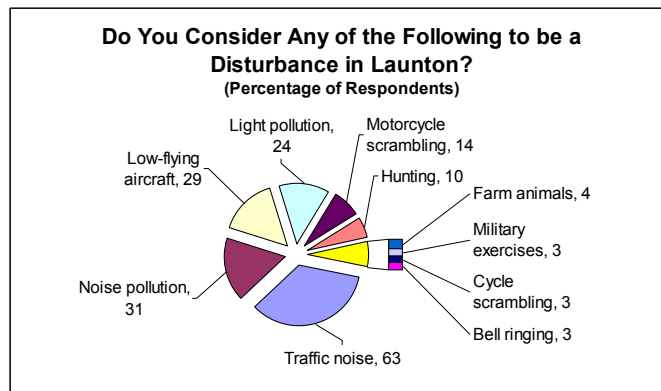
- Meadows, woods and hedges are most prized. All countryside features except modern farm buildings are important or very important to over 70% of respondents (Q82)

- Very strong support for rural preservation. Over two thirds feel all environmental improvements suggested (except cutting down trees and letting hedges grow naturally) should be undertaken (Q83)
- 35% criticised bus shelter appearance (Q85)
- 26% said they would be willing to help maintain footpaths (Q89)

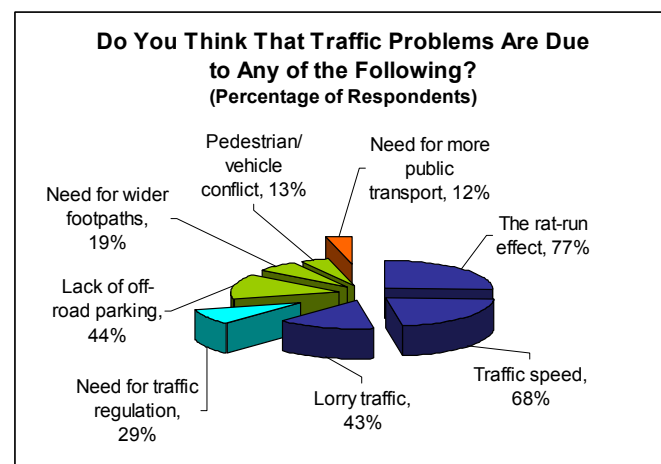




- Most (54%) feel Spring Clean Days are the best idea to keep the village tidy and there was significant support for putting up notices. 35% favoured a Best Kept Village competition (Q84)
- 90% feel at least one of the actions listed should be taken (Q84)



- 80% have had frequent or occasional problems with cars parked on pavements while shopping (Q66)
- Noise in general and traffic noise in particular are the biggest concerns (Q87)



- Most important factors in protecting and enhancing the local environment were recycling, energy saving, reduced traffic and improved public transport (Q81)
- Wrong type of traffic, at the wrong speed, for the wrong reasons. 77% rat-run effect – 68% traffic speed – 43% lorry traffic (Q88)
- Lack of off-road parking with some inadequate footpaths perhaps contribute to pedestrian/vehicle conflict (Q88)
- Only 12% see 'need for more public transport' as improving traffic problems – perhaps due to very high vehicle ownership (Q88)

## Verbatim Comments

"A quieter village as far as traffic goes. Stop the rat-run traffic and one way speed humps on entering & exiting - like Wendlebury, or rumble strips like Marsh Gibbon."

"Improve on traffic situation using Launton as short cut, and improve crossroads situation coming from Station Rd."

"... reduced traffic (esp. lorries)."

"Less commercial & rat-run traffic."

"Reduce traffic rat-running. ..."

"Reduced speed & rat-run. Cycle path by the bridge. ..."

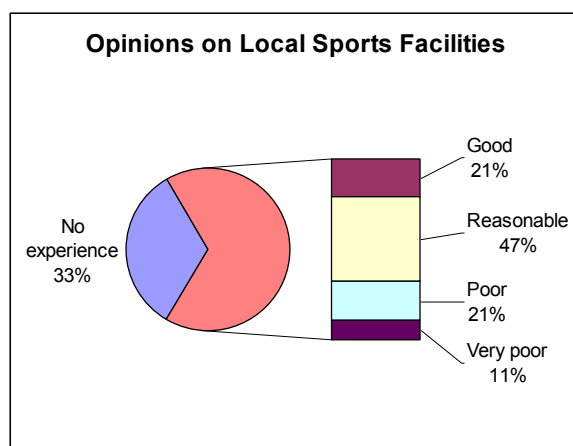
"Somehow stop the 'rat-run' effect."

"Traffic calming and speed reduction measures"

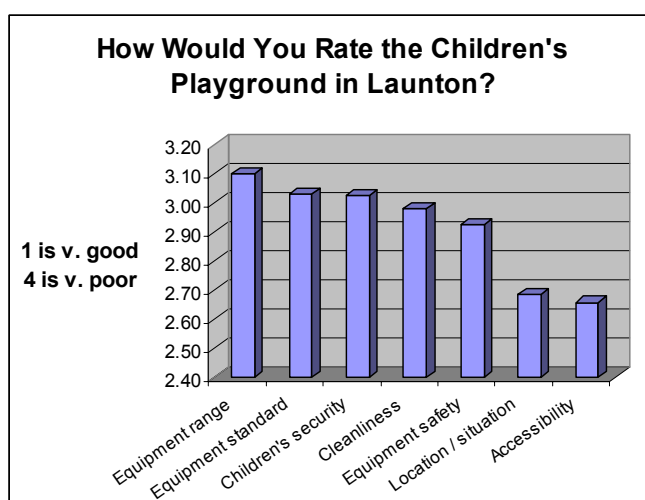
"Traffic calming/Bicester Launton Blackthorn and Station roads. ..."

"Traffic reduced, speed restrictions ..."

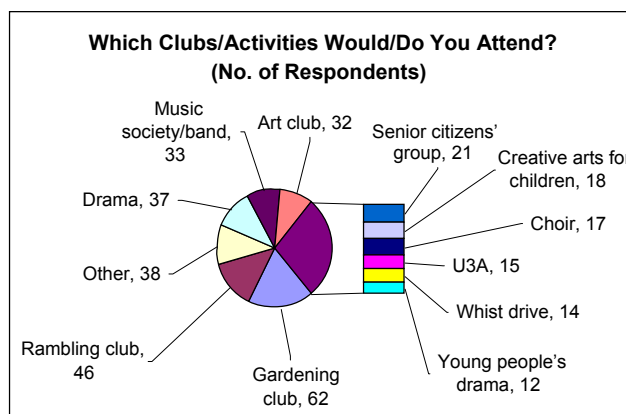
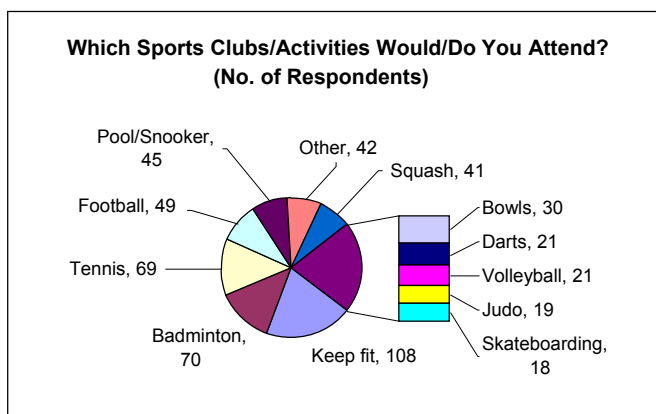
## 4. Improve Recreational Opportunities



- Of the 67% with experience, 68% felt sports facilities were good or reasonable, 32% poor or very poor (Q68)
- For the 32% of respondents who had experience of facilities for people with disabilities, 77% (86 respondents) felt they were poor (Q69)



- All aspects of the children's playground were seen as unsatisfactory (Q71)
- Range, standard, safety and cleanliness of equipment are all 'poor' (Q71)



- 108 people were interested in keep fit classes (Q70), about 70 in tennis and badminton (Q70), and 62 in a gardening club (Q72)

### Verbatim Comments

"I should like to see more provision for teenagers e.g. club, ..."

"More children/teenager things to do! More activities ..."

"More recreational facilities for children and teenagers ... Much improved playground for 2-12 year olds ..."

"More things for kids."

"Something for us kids to do, I don't care what. Better lighting as you come over bridge into Launton."

"A decent playground for my children with more up-to-date facilities. It's accessible but just too far away from any houses. More needs to be developed for teenagers."

"A more updated play area and cricket net would be good. ..."

"A small park/playground area for children. The present one is badly situated and badly maintained. A park would, in my opinion, greatly enhance social interaction."

"Better parks. More street lamps."

"Better playground in a safer location ..."

"Drastically develop sports field. Rugby posts and a local cricket team. More public toilets where the light works and there is toilet paper with refills."

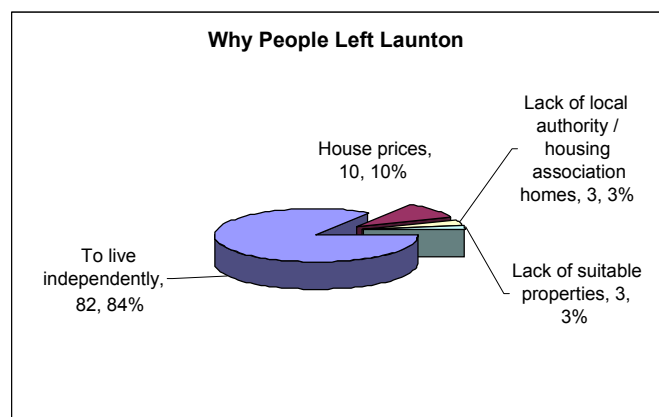
"I would like to see more input into the development of the park. ..."

"New park. Speed restrictions. Footpath over bridge."

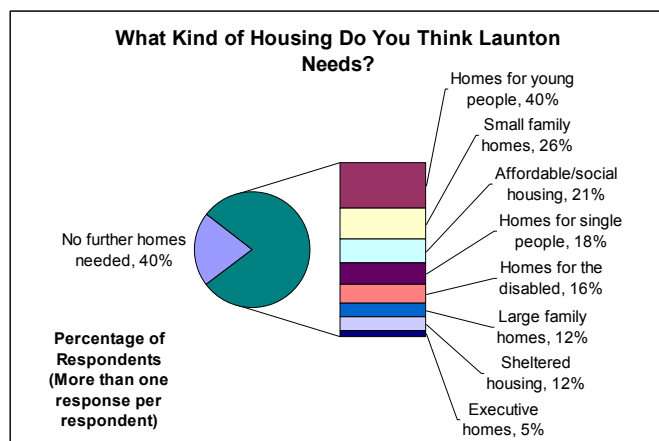
"Playing Fields kept better. ..."

"The park is the main area of Launton that needs improving - it is unsafe and unclean."

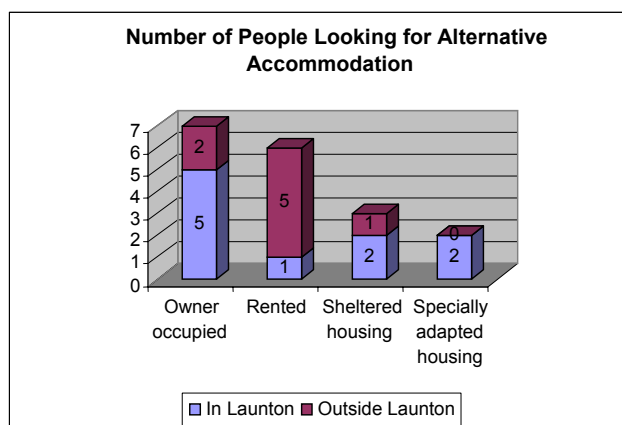
## 5. Secure More Affordable Housing



- From 288 households only 3 people have left Launton due to lack of suitable housing (Q11)
- In the 4% of houses where alternative accommodation is required, 18 people are affected (Q8). Ten people have left due to price (Q11)
- 40% of respondents felt there is no need for further housing in Launton (Q52)



- The 60% who feel further housing is needed believe the priorities are homes for the young or single people, small family homes and affordable social housing (Q52)





## Verbatim Comments

"A small number of new houses (infilling) and, if possible, affordable housing to enable younger people to remain in the village."

"Affordable housing for young people."

"After Sherwood Close development slow down on more housing. A decent community hall suitable for village this size in 21st century. Learning to live with a certain amount of rat-run traffic as this ensures our village shops/pubs stay in business."

"Close Jewsons & Q8 and use land for housing"

"I am not in favour of any more housing especially given the expansion at Sherwood Close. Need to get ADSL telephone and gas."

"I would like to see some 1 bedroom accommodation built. Have money spent on Playing Fields, ... it looks rather neglected."

"More realistically priced housing"

"No more housing developments."

"Only small housing plots. The building depot could relocate on ring road."

"Small individual homes in keeping with the local stone architecture. ..."

"... No further housing development. More areas like Island Pond Wood which is very relaxing and peaceful."

"More reasonably priced homes for young people brought up here. Island Wood a total waste of money only appreciated by people who's homes back on to it. Laings should have been allowed to build low cost homes on it."

## 6. Promote Prosperity and Sound [Local] Transport Systems

### Prosperity

- 27 respondents said there were barriers to actively seeking employment but no one cause was significant (Q23)
- 43% in favour of encouraging small business development versus less than 25% in favour of small scale industry or tourism/attractions (Q27)

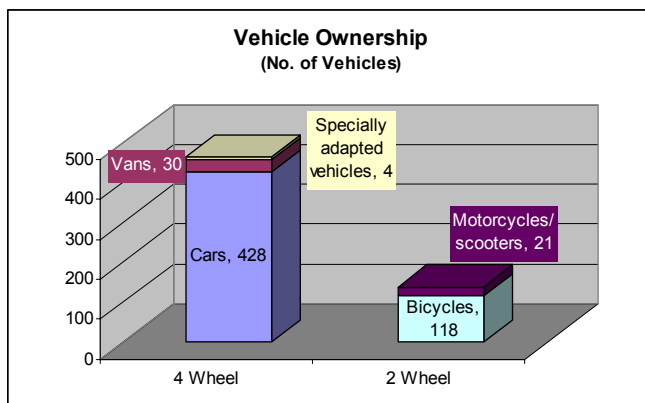
### Verbatim Comments

"Small developments of not more than six houses at a time. Non-intrusive office and/or workshops in order for village people to work near home. Buildings to be very rural in appearance but not just 'oldie-worldie'."

"Small scale affordable development, but open to commercial development that has a positive impact on local employment and entertainment."

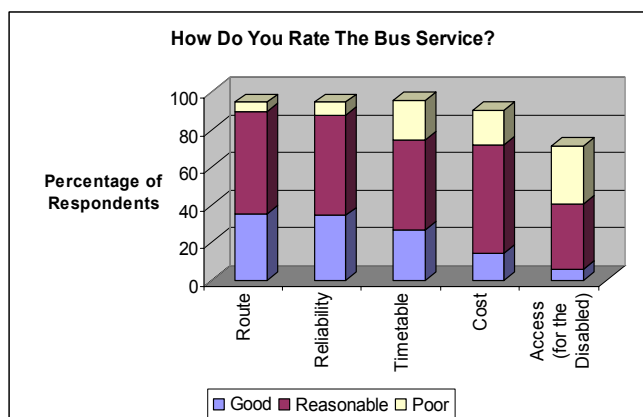
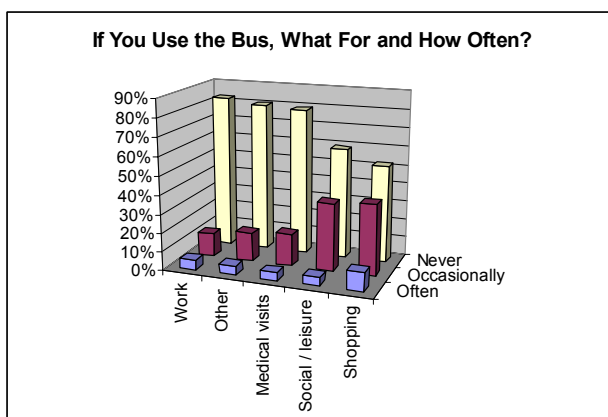
"The size of business limited to reduce the amount of HGV traffic."

### Transport



- 458 cars and vans provide transport in 288 households (Q16)
- Over 30% use buses occasionally for shopping or leisure (43% in total for shopping). Only 9% make frequent use for shopping and less than 5% frequent use for any other reason (Q36)
- Those who do use the bus are very satisfied with route and reliability but slightly less (still a good majority) were satisfied with price (Q37)
- Fewer people had a view on disabled access but their view was less satisfied – 30% poor (Q37)

- 86% never use taxis and only 4% use them weekly or more frequently (Q38)



## Verbatim Comments

"Better bus service & cheaper (especially for young people). ..."

"Bus service in the evening/weekends. Complete pavement up to railway bridge. Increased street lighting between bridge & school. ..."

"Bus service too expensive. Better street lighting ..."

"By having better public transport and having safer footpaths."

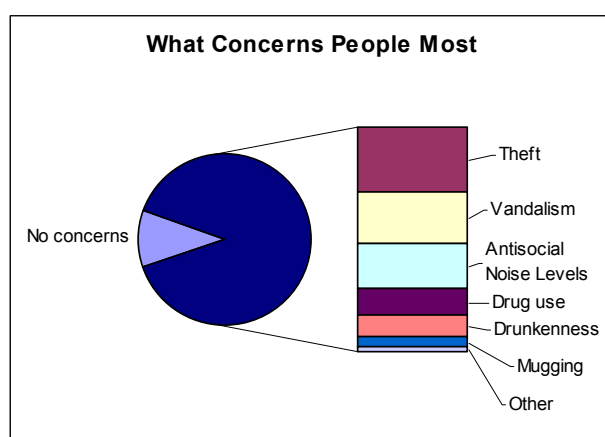
"Cycle lane Bic Rd frm R/wy bridge pst Church. Speed warnings on Bic Rd. Stop front gardens fr com purposes/car sales nr Prem stres/building mach on verges. Imprve sodium lghts to avoid orange glw. Buses on Sndys, run to route, later buses for workers."

"I would like more buses later at night & Sundays into Bicester. Need lighting and pavement on Launton side of bridge."

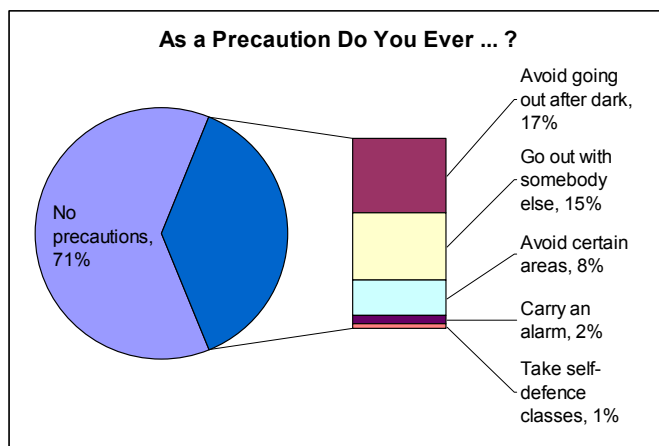
"Launton is a lovely village. Needs to improve public transport during daytime and provide service in evening. Without a car you are trapped unless pay for taxis. More local shops, perhaps a Tesco Express and Chemist."

"Speed restrictions Blackthorn/Bicester Rd. Cycle path entrance and exit Launton and more policing."

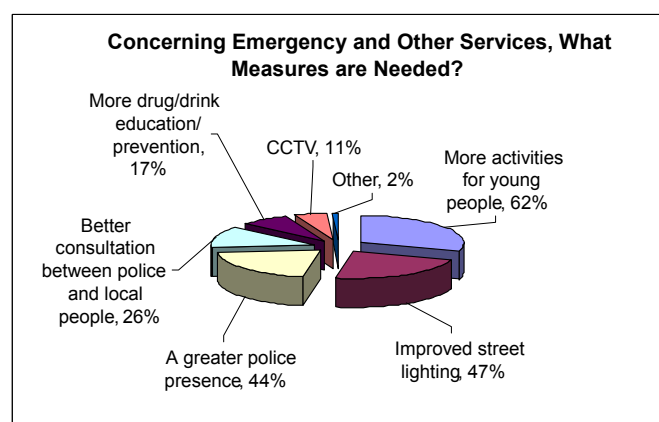
## 7. Reduce Crime (and Tackle the Drugs Problem)



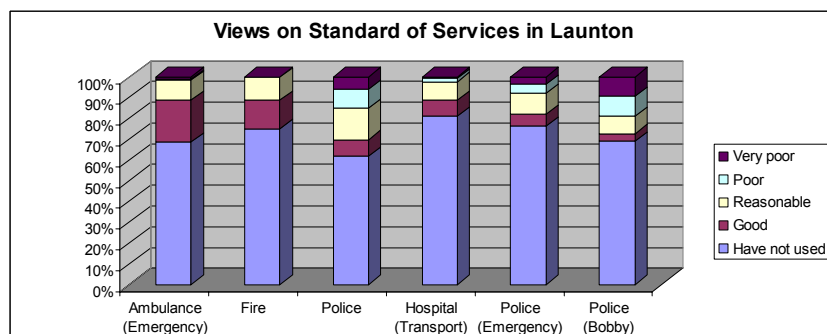
- 21% had no concerns about crime in Launton (Q58)
- Amongst those who had concerns, theft, vandalism and anti-social noise were the major concerns (Q58)
- 11–15 age group were more concerned about mugging and drugs crime than other groups
- 16–17 age group were less concerned about crime in general than other groups but their biggest concern is theft (23%)
- Apart from 16–17 age group 30% to 50% were concerned about theft and vandalism



- The majority of people did not take any of the listed precautions when going out (Q59)
- Where precautions were taken, the most popular were avoiding going out after dark (17%) and avoiding going out alone (15%) (Q59)
- 8% of respondents said that they avoid certain areas (Q59)



- 60-74% had no experience of the emergency services (Q57)
- People with experience of the services were least satisfied with policing, particularly community policing (Q57)
- In the context of the section looking at Emergency and Other Services, 62% felt more activities for the young were needed. This was followed by the need for greater police presence and better street lighting (Q60)



## Verbatim Comments

"More activities for children and teenagers"

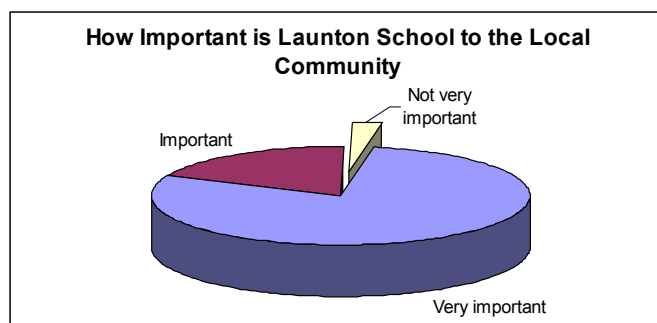
"More activities for the younger generation to remain occupied"

"A better park and a place for teens to hang"

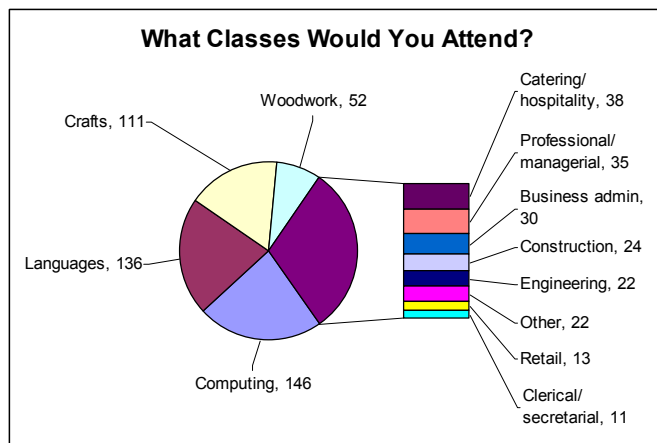
"Facilities for teenagers."

"More activities for older teenagers."

## 8. Improve Education

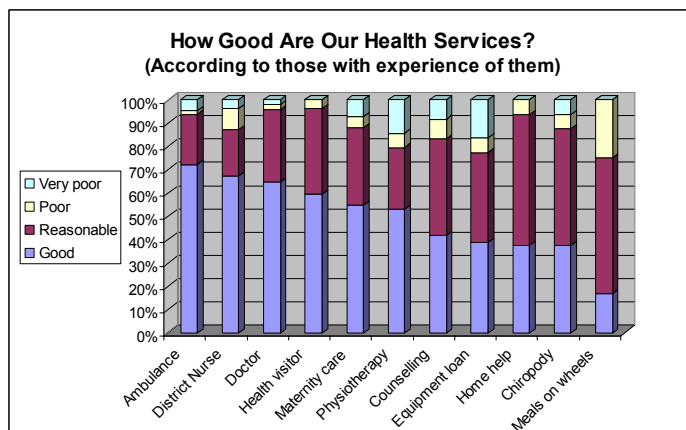


- 97% feel Launton school is important or very important (Q49)

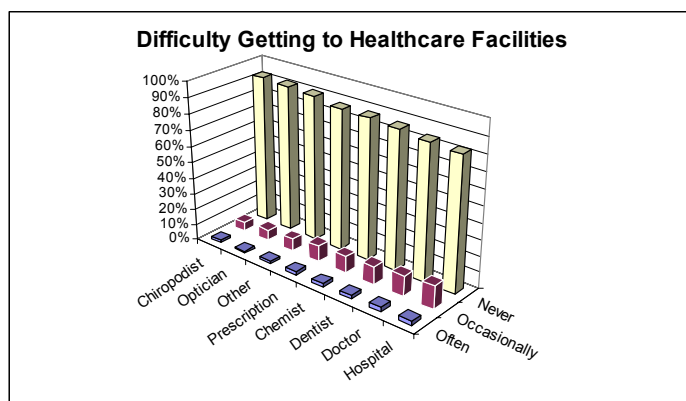


- If classes were available in Launton the most interest was shown for computing, languages and crafts (Q50)

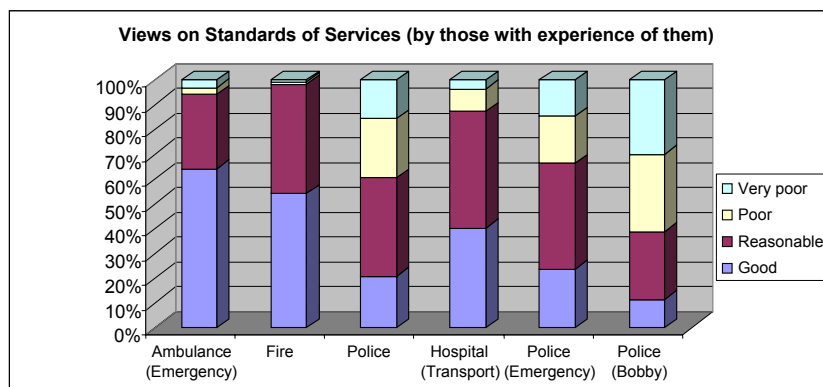
## 9. Improve Health



- With the exception of the doctor where 72% have recent experience, other services have only been used by 24% or less (Q54)
- Where services have been used, satisfaction is generally high (Q54)
- Meals on wheels is only rated 'good' by 17% of 12 users and 'poor' by 25% (Q54)



- Very few people have experienced difficulties getting to healthcare facilities (see car ownership) (Q53)



## Verbatim Comments

*"... I would like to see people trained in the village to use a defibrillator for CPR & have one on hand in the village."*

## 10. Urban Focus

Not applicable to Launton

## Addendum

The following represent all of the comments to question 91 in the questionnaire that have not already been included before:

*"Close Jewsons & Q8 and use land for housing."*

*"1. not to grow too big. 2. More cycle paths. 3. More small clubs computer, photography etc."*

*"1. Opening the village shop is essential."*

*"A more modern and larger Village / Parish Hall is needed"*

*"Become more community orientated"*

*"Better facilities for disabled/elderly. Schools protected from traffic. Slow down change of use of farm buildings. More up-to date activities for youngsters. Community bus for w/e. Stop village being fast track for Aylesbury/M25. + MORE"*

*"Better roads and paths priority. More social facilities."*

*"Better roads and pavements. Lack of social facilities - need improving."*

*"Bicester Rd entrance to village returned to a rd to be proud of as it used to be! Council to do something about unsightly mess outside owners property on land owned by council."*

*"Bit more life."*

*"By natural development & local initiative only."*

*"By putting into practice some of the suggestions in this survey."*

*"Careful increase in housing. More local business/workshops. Some facilities for teenagers/children"*

*"Cheaper available housing for young couples. Distractions, entertainment, diversions for young age group. More public transport to larger towns - Aylesbury, Oxford Banbury, Milton Keynes."*

*"Conserve. Seriously restrict/close Blackthorn Rd."*

*"Consolidate not expand"*

*"Continue as a discreet village. Grow as in Q52."*

*"Develop within the community & not by expansion. Increase services & reduce road traffic & speed."*

"Embargo on parking outside school. Controlled development to encourage employment & modest housing growth for young families. Develop existing Sports and Social Club and replacing Village Hall and a self-clean toilet facility with appropriate signage."

"Encourage off-road parking - especially West End. Discourage rat-running."

"Fitness Trail in Island Pond Wood."

"Good schooling. Good Parish Hall. People keeping their property tidy (verges not churned up or cars parked on them). Village shop reopened. No more housing as it will not be a village it will become part of Bicester."

"Increase local services & ????. Reduce traffic speed & volume. Avoid expansion (nr of houses). Restrict planning permission."

"Infilling only."

"Into a pretty little colourful farm village attracting small birds and not starlings. If anything could be done to remove starlings from the Glades nesting in roofs. Also clean and safe."

"It will be linked with Bicester in the next few years both geographically and politically."

"Lots of new houses and lots of hunting."

"Maintain village atmosphere. Reduce traffic speed through village. More encouragement from local shops to use their service, perhaps vouchers?"

"More entertainment facilities within easy reach."

"More housing for young people. Perhaps in Island Pond Wood which I feel was a waste of time and money."

"More road safety."

"More shops and leisure activities e.g. cinema, CD/video shops."

"Organically, without interference from any planning/social engineering groups. Planning control is necessary but it is the consumer that will change it i.e. PO. No dog mess. (see attached sheets for further comments)"

"Quietly."

"Solve the parking problems at the church, shop, butcher. Instead of infill & backland developments create more open space and parks. Make more of the duck pond. ..."

"Solve village hall problem by building new joint school/church/hall. Restrict traffic speed coming into Launton from Blackthorn and Station Rd."

"Take measures to exclude the dangerous road junctions e.g. crossroads by butchers, entrance into Station Rd."

"To be a tidy, clean village that isn't used as a rat run for traffic."

"To remain as a village, with better transport for those that need it (affordable) - we must keep the Post Office and the School - a local policeman would be an asset"

"Traffic calming at entrances. Little new housing 3 beds only. Extn of Island Pond Wood. Protect the School. Gas and Cable available. Purpose build shop. Greater variety of indoor/outdoor sport."

"While keeping people in the village. Therefore, low cost housing is a must."

"With more people taking responsibility for their actions - especially dog owners."

"With quality not quantity"

"Would like to see the shop re-open and better public transport and more footpaths."

"Would like to see the supply of mains gas to Launton. The sooner the better."



## 6 Next Steps

Most of the actions described in the plan already have “owners” who can now move forward with carrying them out. Some of the actions require volunteers or champions to be found from within the village; it is hoped that some, if not all, of these roles can be filled at the Church Fête in May 2005 (where there will be a Village Plan stand). Launton Parish Council will act as a contact point for any of these actions that do not immediately attract volunteers.

The plan is the property, and responsibility, of the village as a whole. It provides a vision of how Launton should develop over the next 5–10 years, a framework for future action, and clear evidence of the village’s needs and desires: such evidence can be very useful when applying for grants and other funding to realise particular goals. It can facilitate dialogue between the village and other bodies (local councils, service providers, etc.) to ensure that Launton’s views are taken into account when policies are formulated and decisions are taken. Most importantly, the plan should be regarded as a means to an end (actually, several ends) rather than an end in itself.

The Parish Council may be seen as the plan’s “guardian”, and any initiatives to update it (perhaps eventually leading to a follow-on plan in a few years) are likely to come from there; but as far as the actions themselves are concerned, naturally not all of them can be undertaken by the Parish Council alone – a number of them will need to be taken on by villagers (both individually and in groups). People or organisations interested in getting involved, at any level, should contact the Parish Council in the first instance.

This is Launton’s plan – it is now up to the people of Launton to make it happen!

## 7 Acknowledgements

The Launton Village Plan Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following who assisted in the creation of this plan:

Sandra Clayton for publicity artwork;  
Peter Cox for the use of meeting facilities;  
Nikki Fine for statistical support in the data analysis;  
Gamil Hadad for inputting questionnaire data;  
Anton Nath from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council for process support and guidance;  
All the volunteers who helped with questionnaire distribution, collection and data input.

The Village Plan committee comprised the following, all of whom are Launton residents and can be contacted via the Parish Council:

Chris Baldwin  
Bev Byrne  
Jenny Dixon  
Keith Dixon  
Jane Hawes  
Lucy Liddicot  
Pat Mitchell (Secretary)  
Joan Packer (Co chairman)  
John Stephens  
Lesley Thompson  
Simon Turner (Treasurer)  
Paul Warriner (Chairman)  
Graham White

## 8 Bibliography

- *The Community Planning Handbook*, Nick Wates, published by Earthscan, 2000;
- *Cherwell Community Plan 2016 (delivering a better quality of life in Cherwell)*, Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, published April 2002;
- *Community action planning in Oxfordshire*, published by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, January 2003;
- *Parish Plans – Guidance for parish and town councils*, published by The Countryside Agency, March 2003;
- *Village Appraisals for Windows®* software package, University of Gloucestershire.

## 9 List of Appendices

In order to keep the report to a manageable size the appendices are held in a separate volume, the contents of which are as follows:

| Section No. | Appendices  |
|-------------|---|
| I           | "Launton 2004 Individual Question Counts" – Full report of the responses to the Village Plan questionnaire generated by the questionnaire software;                       |
| II          | "Verbatim Comments from Launton Plan Questionnaire" – Written responses to questions giving an option to specify 'other' and responses where no 'other' option was given; |
| III         | Supplementary Actions – List of actions considered for the plan but filtered out in deference to others with more practicality or impact;                                 |
| IV          | Questionnaire Analysis – Article published in Launton Lines Issue 54, December 2004;  |
| V           | Draft Plan Summary – Article published in Launton Lines 'Extra' Issue 0001, March 2005.   |