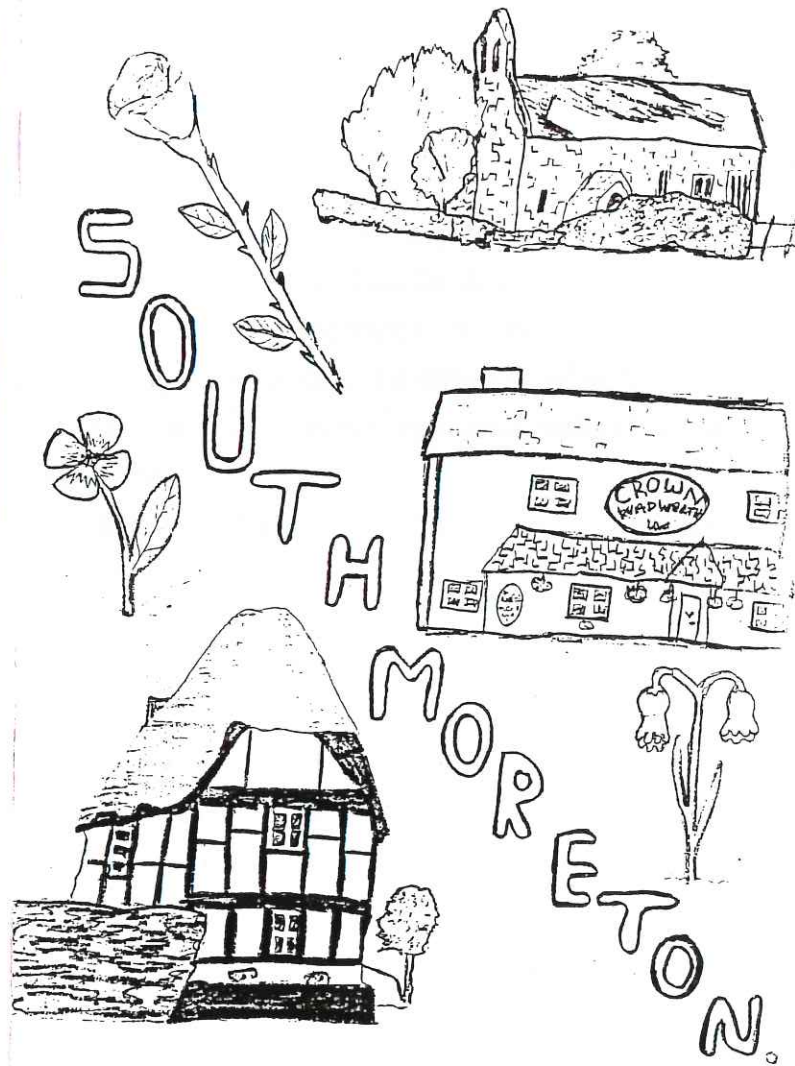


South Moreton Village Appraisal Report  
April 1999



### **What is a village appraisal?**

Essentially a 'village appraisal' is a comprehensive survey carried out by the community for the community. The information gathered from the survey can be used both to celebrate local distinctiveness and as a way for the community to identify possible actions for the future. It also provides a unique 'snapshot' of our village at the time of the questionnaire.

A public meeting was held on 14 Aug 1997 in the WI Barn and everyone in the village was invited to attend. It was decided at the meeting to proceed with this project. A committee was formed with the task of compiling a questionnaire which was felt to be relevant to our village. This was then distributed to the whole village in April 1998.

The completed questionnaires were then analysed by computer and manually, and the results were compiled into this report.

97 households responded out of a total of 146 (66.4% response)

A Youth Questionnaire was also distributed for the 8 – 15 year olds and their responses are also documented in this report.

# Contents.

Introduction .....	4
Map of Village .....	5
Appraisal Results .....	6
1/ Household .....	6
2/ Personal .....	8
3/ Traffic & Transport .....	9
4/ Planning .....	12
5/ Employment .....	14
6/ Environment .....	16
7/ Leisure & Recreation .....	19
8/ Health & Social Services.....	22
9/ Services .....	24
10/ Religion .....	27
11/ Local Government .....	27
12/ How would you like to see South Moreton develop & how can you contribute to the village?....	29
Youth Questionnaire Report .....	30
 <b>Appendices.</b>	
History of South Moreton .....	33
Four Parish Plan .....	36
Options for the future .....	37
Acknowledgements .....	37
Useful names & numbers .....	38

Details of full Report including the questionnaire, will be held by the Clerk to the Parish Council.

# *Introduction*

*by*

*David Ebbs*

*Chairman, Village Appraisal Committee*

Welcome to this Village Appraisal Report which aims to reflect the uniqueness of South Moreton and the people who live here.

The following pages reflect the past, present and future containing a mixture of fact, opinion, concerns and aspirations.

## **Facts and Figures**

The design of the questionnaire and the contents of the report have been driven by your suggestions about local issues, guidance from other village appraisals, the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, computer software and the broadly representative committee.

It is a response to the wishes expressed at 2 public meetings for a village appraisal to "take stock" and report.

The principal text is given to the answers you gave with comments selected to give an idea of the range of views expressed.

It provides an interesting portrait of South Moreton village life and contains some good ideas for the future of the community.

There is information, history and a commentary drawn from the opinions of the committee who have worked hard to give a balanced and fair picture but tables of facts and statistics sometimes obscure an overview which is provided by the range of different members .

## **The Future**

The report contains many suggestions and ideas for the future.

Whilst the job of Village Appraisal committee is now complete and many of your concerns and wishes have been passed to the relevant organisations it would be a shame if the enthusiasms and offers of help are lost.

On **Sunday 23rd May** there will be a **Village BBQ** at the school starting at **12.30pm** at which the report will be presented and discussed and any "actions" taken forward (a separate invitation is being sent to everyone).

## **Interpretation**

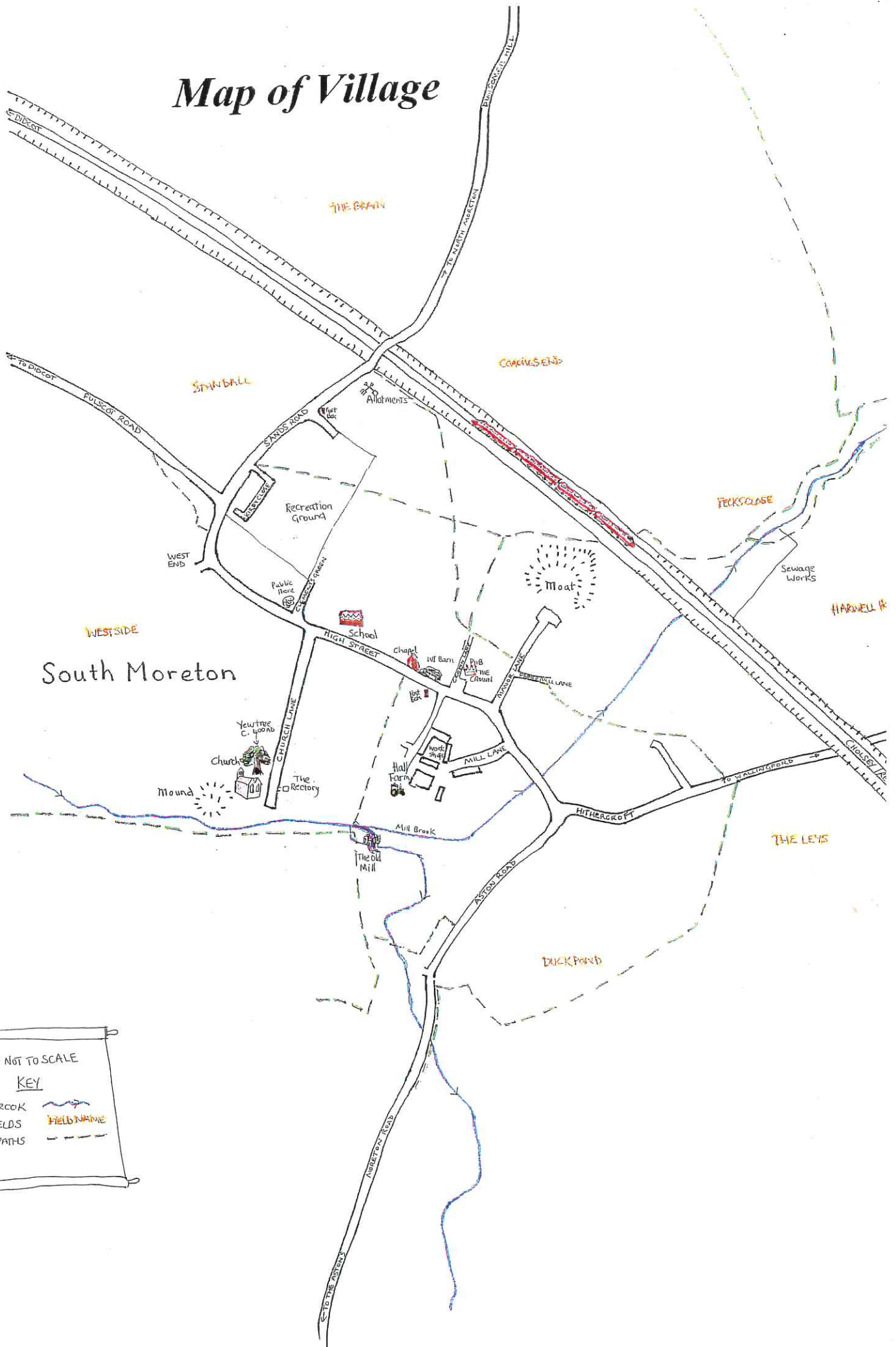
Caution should be used when interpreting some of the results. The total numbers and percentages do not always reflect the view of the majority of the village as not everyone has responded to all of the questions.

Furthermore the wording of some questions occasionally allows for different interpretations and responses to "what if " questions must be seen in the context of the true statistic of the main section question.

We are very grateful to all those parishioners who responded to the questionnaire – without them this report could not have been written.

*Thank you*

# Map of Village



MAP NOT TO SCALE

**KEY**

- BROOK
- FIELDS FIELD NAME
- FOOTPATHS

## Adult Questionnaire Report.

A total of 195 adults from 97 households filled in the adult questionnaire, however not all respondents answered all the questions.

Where possible we have noted the number of respondents to each question, and the figures given are the actual number and the percentage out of those who answered that particular question. It is important to bear this in mind when interpreting the statistics.

The graphs and charts have been calculated using the actual number who responded to that particular question.

It is also worth noting that in some of the questions, respondents were able to tick more than one answer.

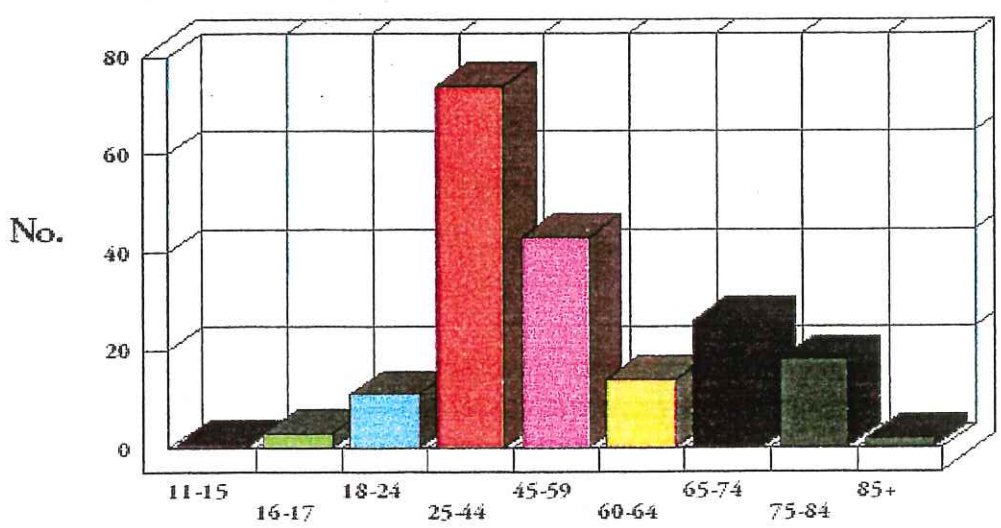
1/1 How many people, including children normally live in your house?  
280 living in 97 households.

1/2 Please enter in the boxes below the number of people in each age group in your household.

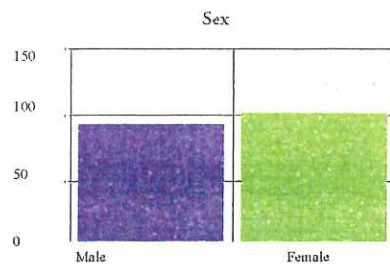
Age	0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17	18-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Male	12	19	11	3	5	33	23	8	10	8	0
Female	10	16	13	2	6	43	22	6	16	12	2

### 1/3 Respondents Age Distribution

### What age group do you belong to?



### 1/3 Distribution of respondents sexes.

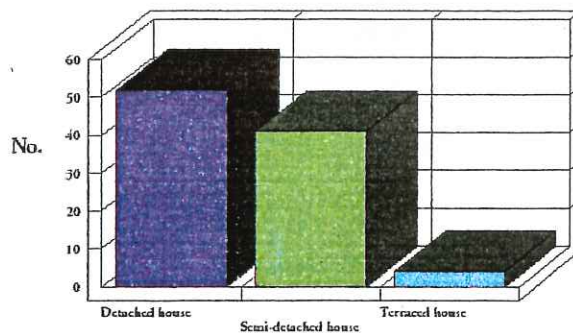


### 1/4. Is this dwelling:

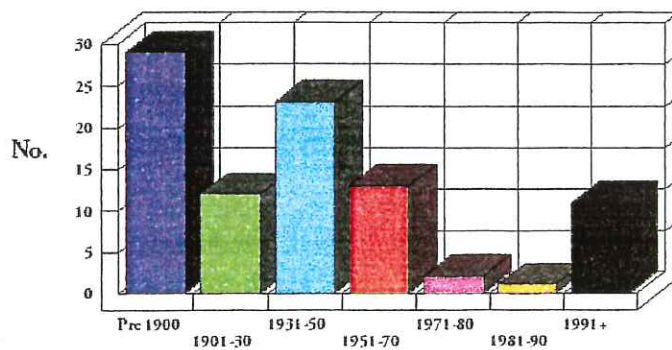
\* % do not make 100% because not all of the 97 households completed this question

Private rented	10	10.3%
District council rented	14	14.4%
Owner occupied (mortgaged/owned)	67	69.1%
Shared Equity	2	2.1%
By virtue of employment (tied)	2	2.1%
Other	0	0%

### What type of dwelling is this?



### When was this dwelling built (approximately)?



1/6. How many bedrooms does your dwelling have?

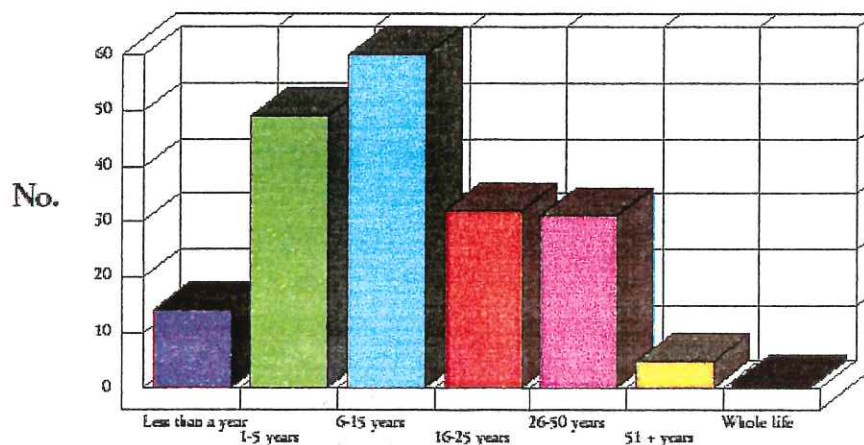
1	2	3	4	5	6+
1	22	39	15	13	6

1/7 How many roadworthy vehicles are kept by your household?

Cars	Vans	Motor Bikes	Lorries
161	13	8	0

### Personal Section.

How long have you lived in your current home?



2/11. How did you come to live in South Moreton? (Multiple answers allowed)

Availability of suitable housing	90	47.9%
Country area	70	37.2%
Village community	40	21.3%
Job Location	41	21.8%
Born here	23	12.2%
Family reasons/ Marriage	38	20.2%
Schools	11	5.9%
Retired	5	2.7%
Other - specify	5	2.7%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>188</b>	



## Transport & Traffic

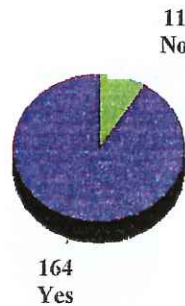
2/12. If responsible for a vehicle, where do you normally park it?

In a garage	54	33.8%
Off the road(on your property)	101	63.1%
On the High St	1	0.6%
Other	4	2.5%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>160</b>	

It was noted that the one respondent who parks in the High St. does so to reduce the speed of the traffic.

2/13

Are you a driver who has daytime access to a vehicle?

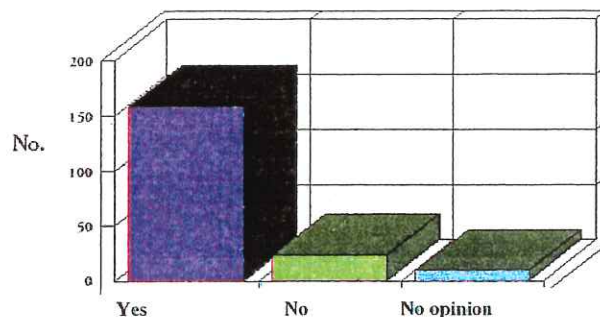


2/14 If you have daily access to a car, what do you use the vehicle for? (Multiple answers allowed).

Transport to work	103	62.8%
Transporting children to school/college	34	20.7%
Shopping	115	70.1%
Leisure	126	76.8%
Other - specify	7	4.3%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>164</b>	

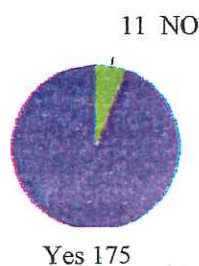
2/15

Do you think speeding traffic is a problem in South Moreton ?



2/16

Would you welcome a 30mph speed limit?



Almost 85% of respondents felt that speeding traffic was a problem, supporting the long term Council proposal to introduce a 30mph speed limit.

*'It is totally ridiculous to have a 60mph limit through a residential area with a school, whilst the main A road between Didcot and Wallingford is restricted to 50mph'*

2/17 Does the volume of traffic through South Moreton concern you?

Greatly	To Some Extent	No	Total Respondents
44 (24.2%)	100 (54.9%)	38 (20.9%)	182

People were less concerned about the volume of traffic than its speed, but specific concerns were raised about the number of cars at peak times.

*'It seems the village is used as a 'rat run' am and pm.'*

**Parking** - Although there was no specific question about this, concerns were raised about parking at school drop-off / pick-up times

*'The amount of parking along the main street at school dropping off time and especially picking up time has always given me a lot of concern'*

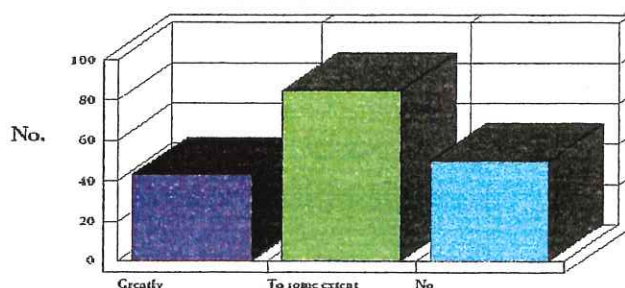
**Traffic calming measures** - Although opinion was divided on the type, some form of traffic calming measure was thought to be necessary by many. Suggestions included - speed humps, chicanes, cameras, warning signs, and textured grid.

2/18 Would you be prepared to take part in a scheme to share private vehicles for?

	Often	Occasionally	Never
Shopping	7	36	91
School	14	11	77
Social or Leisure	6	34	91
Work	5	18	90

2/19

Are you dissatisfied with the maintenance of the village roads?



*'The pavements are bad, narrow and non-existent in some places. Speeding cars or heavy transport is very unnerving for elderly pedestrians.'*

2/20 If you use the bus, what do you use it for and how often?

	Often	Occasionally	Never
Work	0	4	123
Shopping	5	11	122
Medical visits	2	9	124
Social / Leisure	3	10	125
Other	0	1	93

2/21 Would you like to see any improvements in the bus service with regard to;?

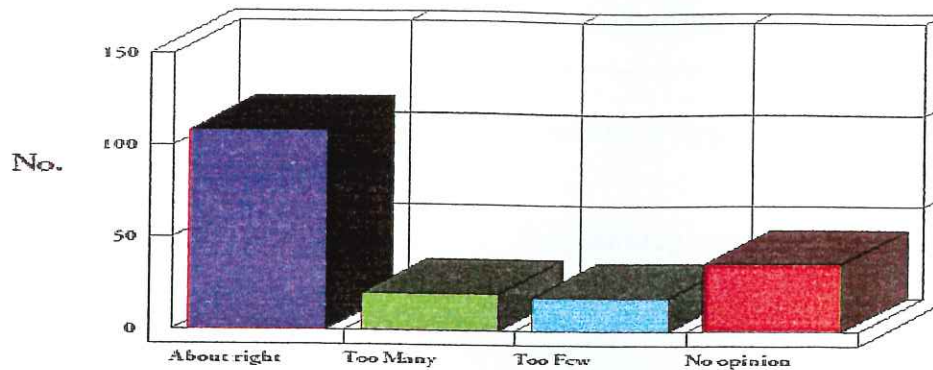
(Multiple answers allowed)

Routes	22	31.9%
Timetable	23	33.3%
Frequency	52	75.4%
Signposting/Bus Stop	30	43.5%
Respondents to question	69	

Approx. 8% of total respondents to the questionnaire make use of the current service, but there was a proportion of people who would like to see improvements in the frequency.

## Planning

What do you think about the number of new houses that have been built in South Moreton over the last 10 years:



2/23. What type(s) of housing development would be acceptable in South Moreton?  
(Multiple answers allowed)

None	73	43.2%
Infilling with single buildings	64	37.9%
Infilling with small groups	35	20.7%
Large sites within the village	1	0.6%
Expansion on the edge	19	11.2%
Other	2	1.2%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>169</b>	

2/24 What type(s) of home(s) is/are needed in South Moreton? (Multiple answers allowed)

None	64	39.5%
Executive	20	12.3%
Small private cottage type	69	42.6%
Mixed housing association properties	36	22.2%
Other	6	3.7%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>162</b>	

A few specific suggestions for suitable locations for development were made. A list has been passed to the Parish Council.

**2/25 In the event of any new building taking place, do you have views concerning the character of such buildings?**

<b>No opinion</b>	17	10%
<b>Use of building materials to complement character of old village but in a modern style</b>	76	44.7%
<b>Use of traditional building materials and traditional styles</b>	74	43.5%
<b>Use of modern materials irrespective of surroundings</b>	3	1.8%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>170</b>	

**There was considerable concern about the use of appropriate building materials on any future development.**

**2/26 What is your opinion of the way the planning system is implemented in South Moreton?**

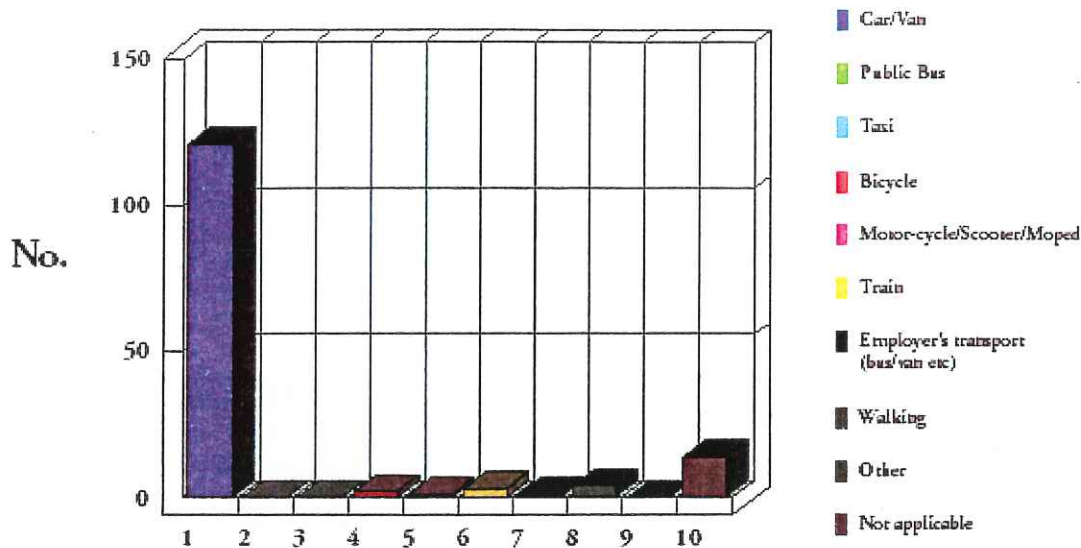
<b>Totally satisfied</b>	8	4.8%
<b>Quite satisfied</b>	66	39.8%
<b>Quite dissatisfied</b>	26	15.7%
<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	10	6%
<b>No opinion</b>	56	33.7%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>166</b>	

**Two points were mentioned specifically:-**

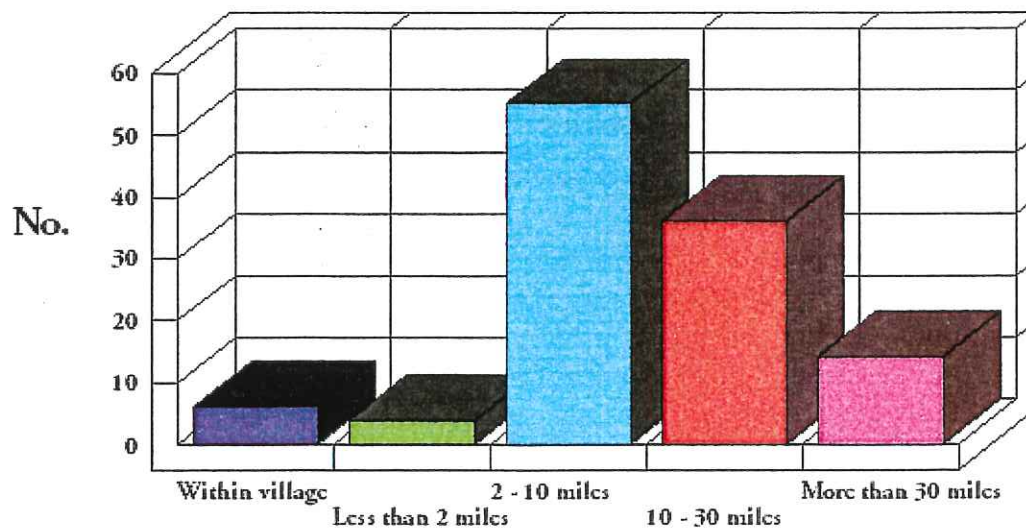
- 1) Lack of proper consultation over the type and volume of new building in the village.
- 2) Inconsistencies in monitoring planning applications in the village.



### What is, or would be, your main means of transport to work, training or study?



### Please indicate the distance travelled to work - on average for one way



**2/31. What is your opinion about employment in the village?**

I would like to see more	77	52.7%
I would like to see no change	68	46.6%
I would like to see less	1	0.7%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>146</b>	

Those who would like to see more, generally indicated that a slight increase in small businesses similar to those in Hall Farm would be acceptable.

**2/32. Are you aware of commercial enterprise in the village?**

Yes	108	65.1%
No	58	34.9%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>166</b>	

**2/33. What is your opinion about commercial enterprise in the village?**

I would like to see more	75	43.9%
I would like to see no change	51	29.8%
I would like to see less	1	0.6%
No Opinion	44	25.7%
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>171</b>	

A body of opinion was strongly in favour of a village shop and expressed how much the South Moreton shop was missed since its disappearance.

**Environment****2/34. In relation to local footpaths & bridleways, can you answer the following questions?**

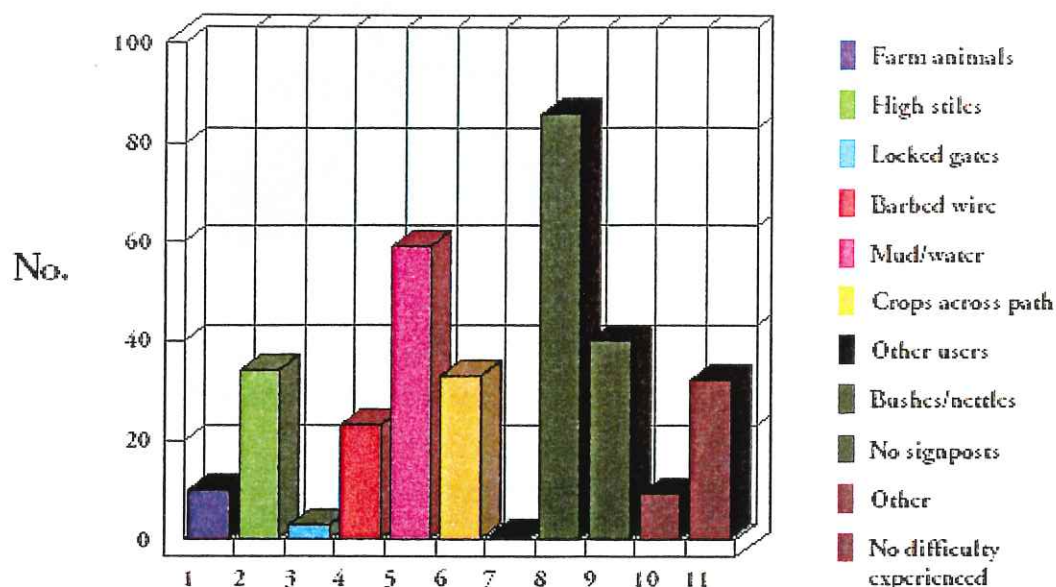
	Yes	No	No Opinion
Do you know where the local paths are?	145	34	1
Can you use them without difficulty?	95	51	13
Are they well signposted?	73	73	10
Would you be willing to maintain them?	39	89	9

There is a proportion (almost ½ of respondents) who do not feel that the paths & bridleways are well-signed, or in good condition

A small but significant proportion said that they would be willing to help maintain them.



2/35. If you experienced difficulties when using local footpaths and bridleways, which, if any, of the following difficulties did you find?



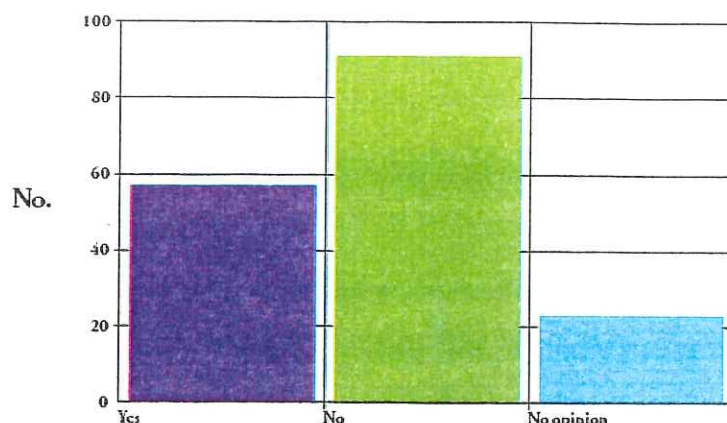
Certain difficulties seemed to cause more problems than others, significantly bushes and nettles, mud & water, high stiles and crops across paths. Lack of waymarking is also worth noting.

2/36. What do you think could be done to improve the environment of South Moreton?

	Very Important	Worth doing	Not necessary	Don't know
Plant more trees	37	68	23	2
Remove litter	66	53	15	1
Let roadside verges grow	21	35	58	4
Keep roadside verges mown	67	48	24	6
More signposting	20	34	63	7
Less signposting	1	7	69	10
Creation of more permissive footpaths	26	55	37	7
Other	0	3	0	0

As far as verges are concerned, opinion seems divided between mowing and letting them grow (provided growth does not obstruct drivers' vision). Signposting was generally considered sufficient. A small proportion felt more & better signposting was needed, particularly directional. A village sign was mentioned; also the unsympathetic character of new street signs in the village.

### Is litter a problem in South Moreton ?



2/37.

**If you, answered Yes, would you be prepared to help tackle the problem?**

There were **4 volunteers** who offered to help deal with the litter problem.

**2.38. Are there any areas in the village which you think are an 'eyesore'?**

Specific eyesores were listed and passed on to the Parish Council. Anyone wishing to discuss these should contact the Clerk of the Parish council (See Appendix)

**2/39 How important are the wild plants, birds and animals of the countryside around South Moreton to you?**

	Very Important	Important	Not very important	No Opinion
<b>Wild Flowers</b>	127	41	5	1
<b>Birds</b>	137	34	3	1
<b>Trees</b>	131	36	3	1
<b>Butterflies</b>	112	43	10	2
<b>Insects</b>	96	39	21	6
<b>Other</b>	5	2	0	0

**Would you like to be involved in a village environment group?**

Yes	No	No Opinion
57	91	23

There seems to be sufficient number and interest here to be able to form an active group.

2/40 In your opinion is the amount of street lighting in South Moreton:

Good	Reasonable	Poor	No Opinion	Total Respondents
22	24	113	16	175

*The Appraisal Committee would like you to note that unfortunately this question has an element of ambiguity, but the statistics show that the majority of respondents feel that the amount of street lighting is poor. However the additional comments made, strongly expressed reservations against street lighting.*

### **Leisure & Recreation**

2/41 What are your views on local social facilities for?

	Good	Reasonable	Poor	No Opinion
Children up to 16	13	38	73	31
Young people 17-25	2	4	110	31
People 26-60	9	35	70	32
People over 60	12	20	58	49

Many people feel that social facilities within the village are poor, particularly provision for teenagers.

*'I imagine the young teenagers get bored around here. There is nothing for them to do other than hang around the 'rec.'*

2/42. Which new sports clubs/ activities would you attend in South Moreton if they were provided?

Keep Fit	58		Tennis	31
Badminton	26		Yoga	24
Billiards/Pool	24		Youth Football	14
Darts	13		Skittles	12
Volleyball	7		Judo	6
Respondents	108			

Other suggestions included; cricket, bowls, volleyball, basketball, brownies, cubs & scouts etc., group dancing, rollerblading, whist drives, bingo, and dominoes.

2/43. Would you be prepared to help organise and run any of the above?

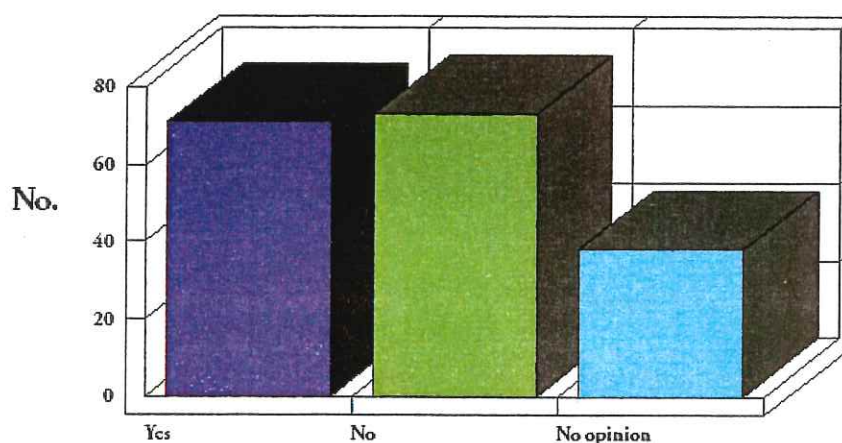
Tennis	Keep Fit	Billiards/Pool	Darts	Badminton	Youth Football	Total Respondents
9	7	6	5	5	5	24

## 2/44 How often do you use the following facilities?

	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never
W.I.Barn	0	11	78	70
Recreation Ground	27	6	47	78
Footpaths	75	20	57	15
Bridleways & Horserides	45	9	22	77
Satellite P.O.	14	7	25	112
Mobile Library	2	3	4	146

Many people were unaware of the existence of the satellite Post Office in the pub and the mobile library service.

### Do you think the W.I. Barn is adequate for the needs of South Moreton ?



People are equally divided about the adequacy of the W.I. Barn.  
Some comments made included;

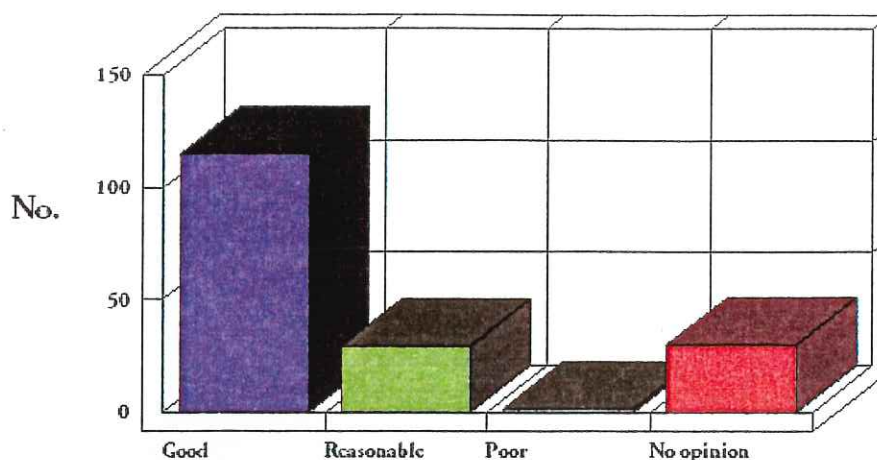
- Modernising & upgrading cloakroom facilities and reflooring.
- W.I. Barn is privately owned and has limited facilities and bad parking.
- Organising events at Aston Village Hall and including transport by bus.

### 2/46 If suggestions raised by the questionnaire require money for implementation, where should that money come from?

Fund-raising	127
Sponsorship	80
Private Contributions	52
Other	42
Respondents	153

Other suggestions included ; Grants, Council Tax, SODC grant, Local Government support, Lottery, European Fund, Rates.

## Are the facilities provided in the children's playground?



The majority felt that the recreation ground facilities were a great improvement but there were frequent comments suggesting that the provision for teenagers might be improved.

*'But very much geared towards TODDLERS. It would be nice to see a bit more done for teenage sports - hard area enclosed for tennis/basketball/ volleyball etc.'*

**2/48** Would you like the facilities of the School / Pre-School (Playgroup) to be made available to the local community?

Yes	No	No Opinion	Total Respondents
62 (39%)	32 (20.1%)	65 (40.9%)	159

Particular mention was made that the school playground could be used for rollerblading, basketball, etc.

**2/49** Would you be prepared to help with the following? *(Multiple answers allowed)*

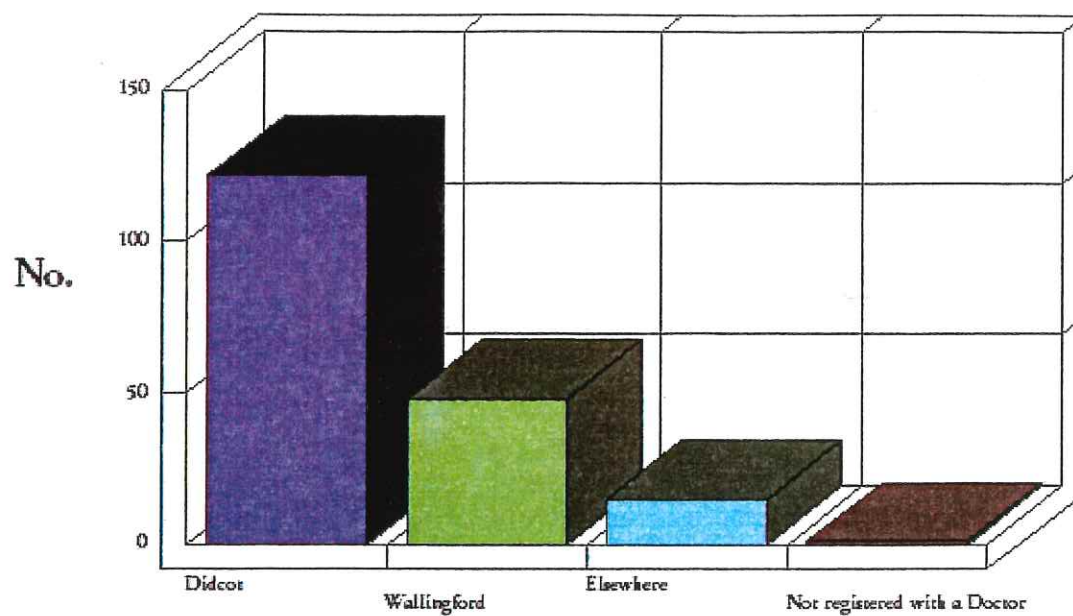
Youth Club	15 (60%)
After School Club	14 (56%)
Uniformed organisations	4 (16%)
Other (Sport's club)	1 (4%)
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>25</b>

**2/50** Do you think that the amount of information available about what's going on in South Moreton is?

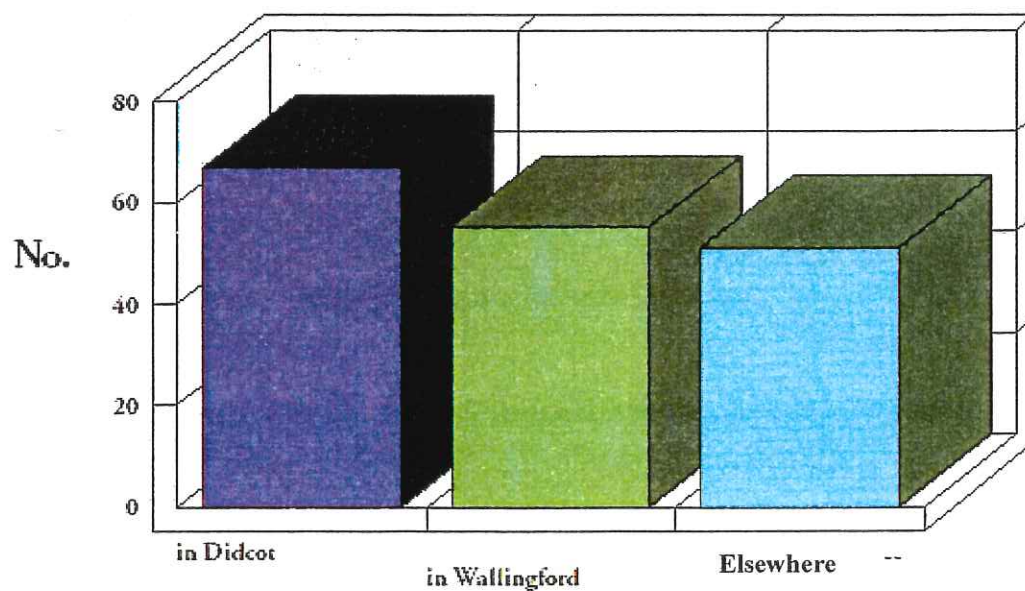
Good	Reasonable	Poor	No Opinion	Respondents
15 (9.3%)	60 (37.3%)	76 (47.2%)	10 (6.2%)	161

## Health & Social Services

Is your doctor's surgery/health centre in?



Do you use a Dentist



2/53. Have you used any of the following Health or Social Services in the last 5 years?

	Often	Occasionally	Never	Not Applicable
Doctor	23	72	48	3
District Nurse/Health Visitor/Midwife	3	16	73	24
Home Help	0	0	72	36
Ambulance/Hospital Car Service	0	5	91	15
School Nurse/School Dentist	2	2	61	44
Meals on Wheels	0	1	66	43
Loan of Medical Equipment	1	8	76	27
Out Patient Services at community Hospital	6	20	77	19
Nurse at Health Centre	8	33	59	18
Community Care e.g.local psychiatric services or services for elderly people	0	2	68	41

2/54. Do you have any difficulty in getting to the following?

	Often	Occasionally	Never
Hospital	1	8	154
Doctor	1	13	151
Chemist	1	8	151
Chiropodist	1	5	145
Optician	1	7	149
Dentist	2	5	153
Other Medical Facility	1	2	133

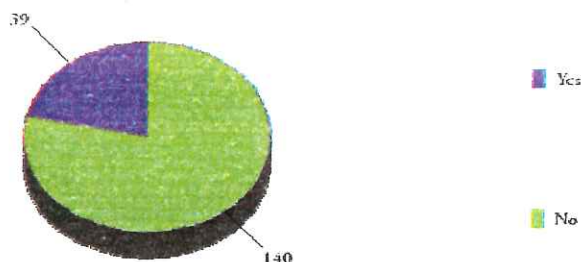
The majority of respondents experienced no difficulty in getting to Health Services at present.

However those without cars (a small minority) expressed concern at lack of public transport at appropriate times. This percentage will increase as the population ages and cannot afford use of a car.

Suggestions made were;

- a) as cost of taxi is prohibitive – more pensioners tokens would be appreciated
- b) rota of volunteer drivers – nominal charge for petrol

### Should dogs be allowed on the recreation ground?



This question registered a fair amount of extra comment, specifically pointing out the health risk involved.

#### Suggestions included:

- the posting of signs with the health warning
- provision of dog scoops and bins
- dogs to be allowed if on leads and only if fouling is cleared up
- dogs allowed but outside children's play area
- a special fenced area for exercising dogs off the lead (older people don't like walking dogs on roads)

It was also pointed out that the footpath is a public footpath, and therefore dogs must be allowed. Redirection of footpath was suggested.

### Services

#### 2/56. Do you regard the police coverage of South Moreton to be;?

Good	Reasonable	Poor	No Opinion	Total Respondents
6 (3.3%)	71 (38.8%)	73 (39.9%)	33 (18%)	183

The additional comments reflected the opinion that a higher police profile would be welcome

#### 2/57. Do you think that there are matters specific to our village that the police need to address?

The top 4 answers have been listed. The complete list of concerns has been passed to the police.

Excessive speed through village

Dangerous parking at school

Hare Coursing

Underage drinking on the recreation ground



2/58. What are your views on the standard of the following environmental services in South Moreton?

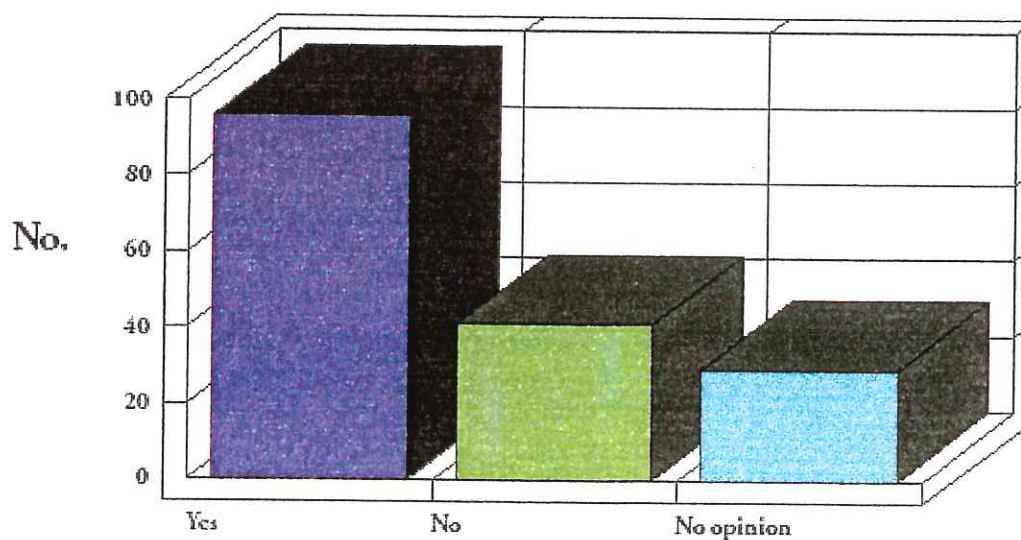
	Good	Reasonable	Poor	No opinion	Not Applicable
Roadside care/street cleaning	20	90	45	6	0
Refuse Collection	90	66	12	0	0
Provision of litter bins	5	54	87	10	3
Public Phone reliability	16	36	7	70	20
Domestic water quality	35	82	38	4	0
Storm Water Drainage	32	67	32	26	3
Provision of seats	0	15	96	43	3

2/59. What are your views on the service provided by the?

	Good	Reasonable	Poor	No Opinion	Not Applicable
Electric Company	50	89	16	11	1
Water Company	60	88	9	7	1
Gas Company	44	53	8	11	41
Telephone Company	68	83	7	8	1

2/60.

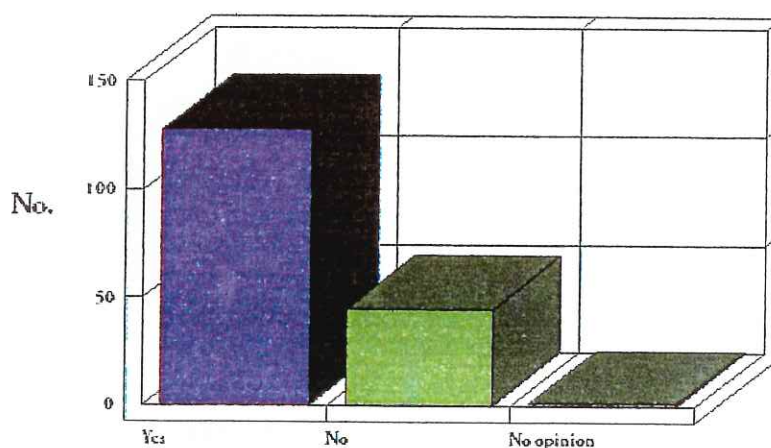
Would you like to join the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?



2/61. How many times a month do you use the following information services?

	More than 10 times	Between 5 – 10	Less than 5 times	Never
Village Notice board	21	30	74	45
Parish clerk	4	0	31	122
Local library	4	3	46	107
Church notice board	6	3	45	104

Does South Moreton require a newsletter?



If you answered Yes, would you be prepared to contribute in some way?

Yes	No	Perhaps
19	14	4

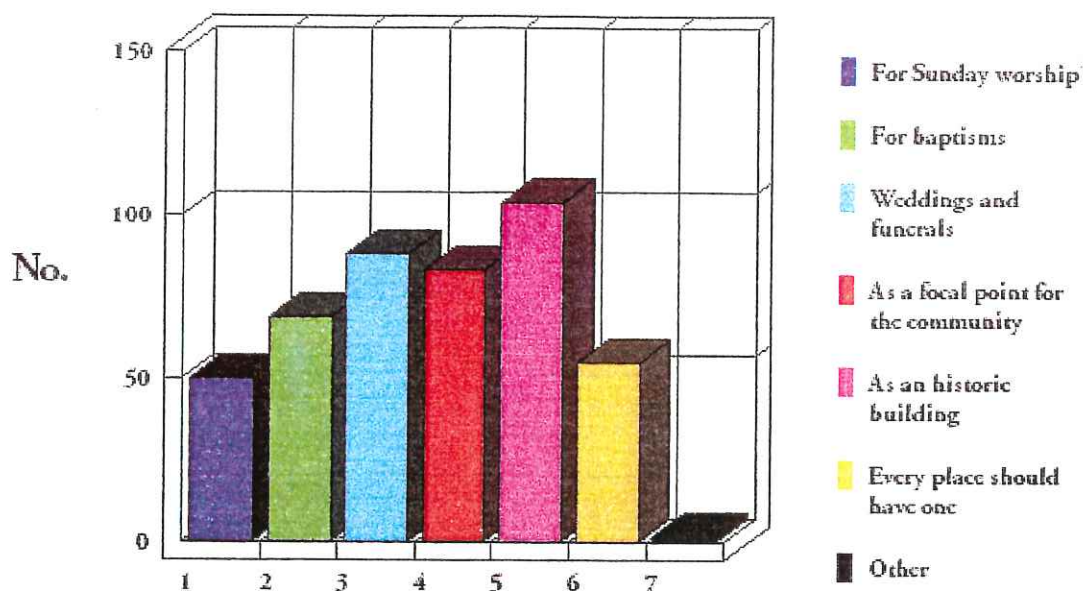
Seven respondents suggested that it might be combined with the 'Link'.

Offers of specific help included delivering, typesetting, printing and advertising.

There seems to be sufficient interest here to warrant taking this further, especially as dotted throughout the completed questionnaires were references to villagers not being sufficiently aware of village affairs.

## Religion

Is the church important to you?



2/64 Did you know that the costs for maintenance and repair to the church building and churchyard have to be funded by the people of the Parish?

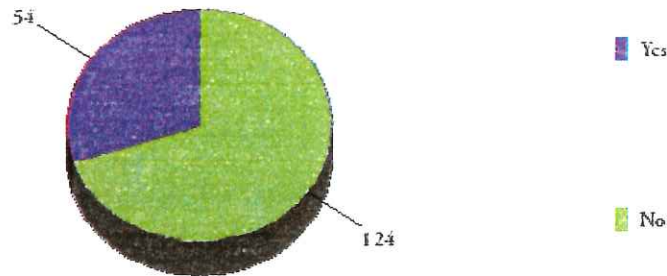
Yes	134	76.6%
No	41	23.4%
Respondents	175	

## Local Government

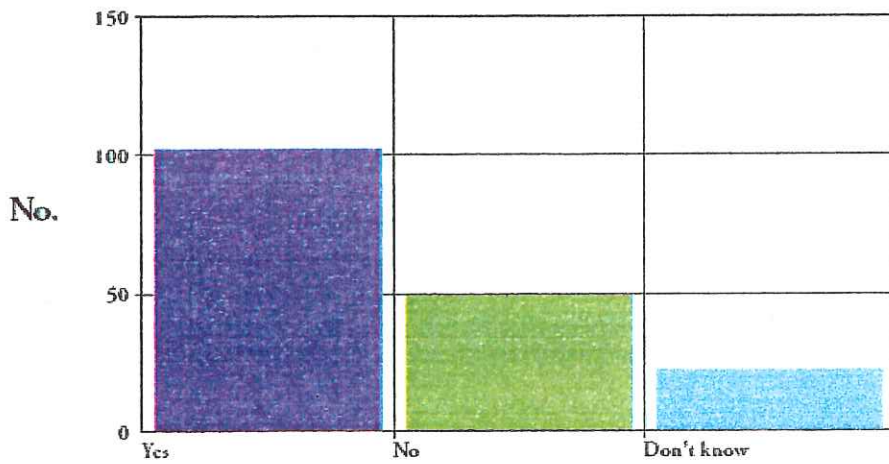
2/65. The local council is empowered to raise money through the council tax. Are you satisfied with the way this money is spent? (% do not make exactly 100% due to rounding)

Very satisfied	4	2.3%
Quite satisfied	62	36%
Quite dissatisfied	19	11%
Very dissatisfied	16	9.3%
Don't know how it is spent	57	33.1%
No Opinion	14	8.1%
Respondents	172	

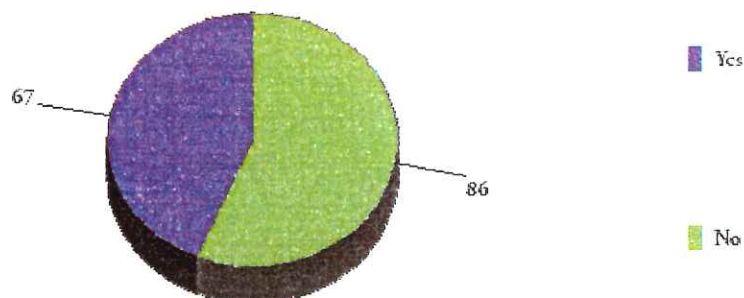
### Have you ever attended a meeting of the Parish Council ?



### Would you like more information about the activities of the Parish Council ?



## Do you think that 'Newcomers' to the village should be formally welcomed?



### The most popular suggestions were;

A 'Welcome Pack' giving details of local organisations & services,  
 Village get-togethers – annually, half yearly, quarterly  
 Visit from the Rector  
 Newsletter

### 2/69 How would you like South Moreton to develop?

A fair number of people took the opportunity to answer this question – their comments reflecting answers and comments already given in the previous sections.

#### The top 5 suggestions were as follows;

- 1) Remain as it is – as a rural village
- 2) To develop slowly, if at all
- 3) Re-establish village shop
- 4) Less Heavy Traffic
- 5) More activities for teenagers and children

### 2/70 Are there any ways that you and your family can contribute to the village?

#### There are people willing to help in various ways around the village. Specifically mentioned were;

Already involved with the church  
 Environment group  
 Litter collection  
 Help with youth club  
 Volunteer driving  
 Maintain footpaths  
 Reading at school  
 Could provide information on historical aspects of village

## Youth Questionnaire Report

This questionnaire was distributed to children aged from 8 – 15 years. (a rogue 7 year old crept in and has been included)

There were 39 respondents altogether.

Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Male		4	3	4	4	2	2	1	1
Female	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	2	4

1/ Which school/college do you attend?

South Moreton County Primary	17
Didcot Girl's School	7
St. Birinus, Didcot	2
Abingdon School	2
Stephen Freeman, Didcot	2
Sunningdale School, Berks	2
Rush Common, Abingdon	1
St. Helen's & St. Katherine's, Abingdon	1
Summer Fields, Radley	1
Wallingford School	1
The Manor, Abingdon	1
St. Andrew's, Pangbourne	1
Pangbourne College	1

2/ How do you usually travel to School/college?

Car	Bus	Walk
17	14	8

3/ Outside school time, school premises are often not used. Do you have any ideas for extra uses of the School/Pre-School (playgroup) premises after normal school hours or at the weekend?

Use of playing field for sports	7 wanted football, 1 rugby.	
Use of hard playground	5 roller-skating/blading. 1 remote control car club	
Use of school for youth meetings	6 youth club, 3 after school club	
Sponsored/Charity events	2	
Discos/Dance & Gym	2 for Discos, 2 dance, 1 gym classes	
Camps	2	
Adventure playground	1	
Craft groups at weekends	1	
Entertainment evenings	1	
Art & Design courses	1	
Educational clubs e.g. Maths, English	1	
Babysitting Club	1	
Sales	1	
Computer club	1	
Village meetings	1	
	Use of the swimming pool	1
	For pet walks	1

**4/ Are you a member of any club, society or other group that meets in the village?**

Yes	No	Respondents
1	37	38

**Which ones?**

French club and recorder group at South Moreton School

**5/ Do you attend any club, society, leisure activity outside the village?**

Yes	No	Respondents
30	8	38

**Which ones?**

Swimming	11	Music tuition & orchestras	9
Ballet	7	Football	5
Jazz & Disco dance	4	Gym & Aerobics	4
Cubs & Brownies	4	Youth Clubs & playschemes	4
Karate	4	Cricket	3
Rugby	3	Riding	2
Basketball	2	School activities	2
Badminton	1	Tennis	1
Sports club	1	Squash	1
Stage school	1	Church meetings	1

**6/ Are you happy with the way that the Recreation ground is being developed?**

Yes	No	Respondents
34	3	37

**7/ What do you especially like?**

Football Pitch	10	Ship adventure	7
Basketball Net	5	Slide	4
Swings	4	Bus shelter	3
Agility/Assault course	5	Monkey bars	1

**Other comments were:**

'Everything', 'How they have different things to suit different age groups', 'the variety of equipment', 'no graffiti - the cleanliness & tidyness of it', 'the fact that many of the facilities have been improved'.

**8/ What improvements/changes would you like to see?**

Hard surface under basketball net	3	More things for older children	2
Tyre swing		Mural in bus shelter could be improved	
Cricket square		Ramps for bikes & skateboards	
Mini rugby pitch		Mini golf course	
Allow bikes		More adult supervision	

9/ **Is there a problem with dogs on the recreation ground?**

Yes	No	Respondents
13	22	35

**If Yes, how could we solve it?**

Put up signs	5	Springs on gates	2
Stop dogs being let loose on the rec'		Not letting dogs in	
Pick up dog mess & put in bins		Fences & gates	

10/ **Are there any areas in the village which you think are an eyesore?**

Yes	No	Respondents
11	23	34

**If Yes, where are they?**

(Find listed below only those suggestions which had more than one vote)

Colour of bricks & tiles of new houses in Kirby Close	4
Rubbish around swings, bus shelter and on top of mound	2
Home Farm	2

11/ **Is litter a problem in South Moreton?**

Yes	No	No Opinion	Total Respondents
19	17	0	36

**If Yes, how could we solve it?**

More bins	12	More signs	5
Have the dustbin men clear up after themselves	2	Encourage people to take it home	
Get a litter man to clear it up			

12/ **Is there a vandalism problem in the village?**

Yes	No	No Opinion	Total Respondents
8	17	11	36

**If Yes, how could we solve it?**

2 'Don't knows'	CCTV in troublesome areas
A big sign that says 'Do not vandalise South Moreton!'	
Have a talk about it.	Not allowing people to climb on the bus shelter

13/ **Do you have any ideas on how to make South Moreton a better/more attractive place to live?**

No more new houses x 2	Speed limit signs
Village shop	Youth club in the Moretons
Slower & less cars through the village	Stop alcohol being drunk on the rec'
Bike & skateboard ramp	
Clubs for 1-5 year olds run by adults & teenagers where they can work together	
After school clubs – Keep fit, Tennis, Netball, Football, Rounders with our own village teams	
Renew village hall to make it warmer & more attractive to use for parties, weddings, clubs & council meetings.	
Make the roads safer by getting a builder to tar the road straighter.	
The corner of South Moreton down to Clements Green, pavement slopes towards the road & the hedge needs cutting back.	
The Yew tree in the church yard needs cutting back.	



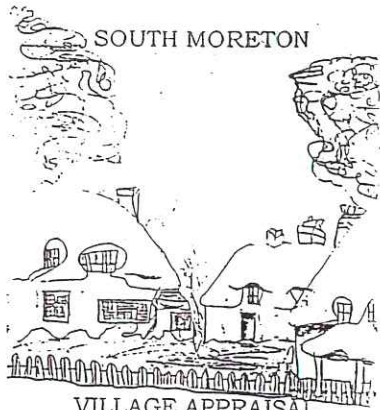
SOUTH MORETON



VILLAGE APPRAISAL

1999

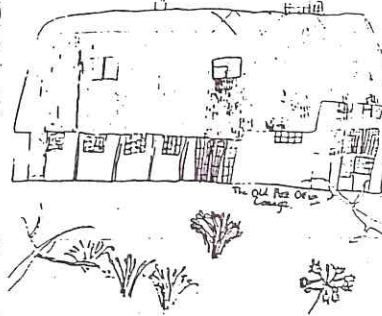
SOUTH MORETON



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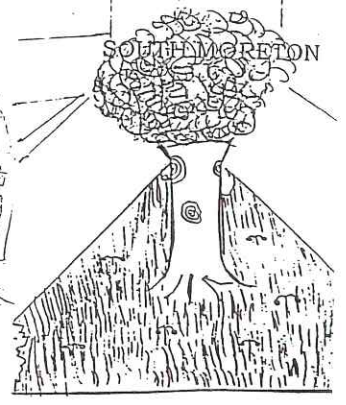
SOUTH MORETON



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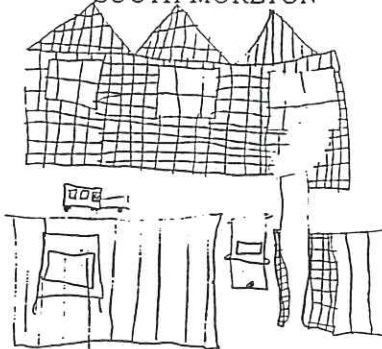
SOUTH MORETON



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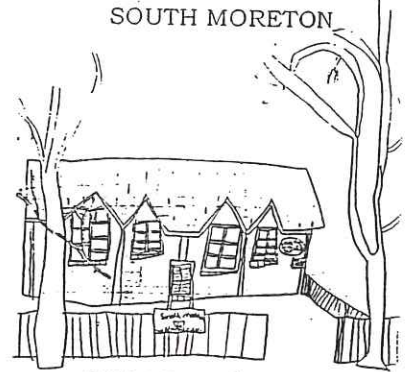
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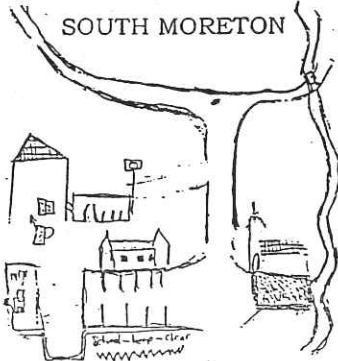


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SOUTH MORETON



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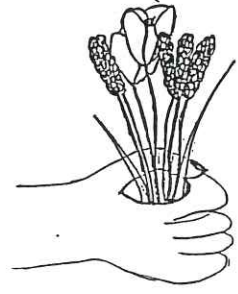
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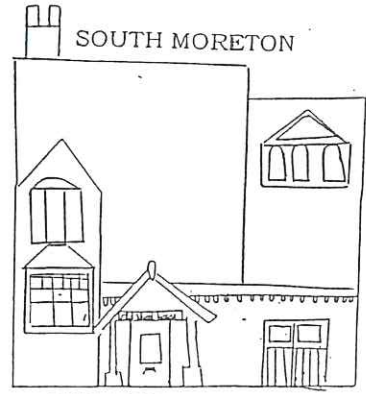
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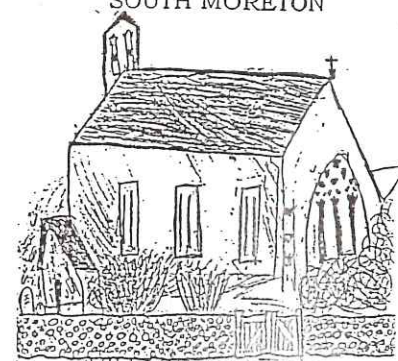
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SOUTH MORETON



VILLAGE APPRAISAL

1999

# HISTORY

The original Moor settlement was at North Moreton, so called because the land to the west, east and north of the settlement was a boggy moorland, reaching to the river on the northern and eastern sides. South Moreton too, had its marshland border, reaching from the southern side of of Hakka brook as far as Blewburton hill. The earliest inhabitants at South Moreton were Palaeolithic (Stone age) men, who may have used the marshes not only for hunting water fowl but also as protection against marauding tribesmen. These two areas of high ground were linked by an often submerged route of firm land through the marsh; a thoroughfare for the traveller. In the Roman period it connected Dorchester (a Roman settlement) to the North and Lowbury Hill (a Roman encampment astride the Berkshire Downs) to the South. Confirmation is provided by the reference in fourteenth century manuscripts to a Roman way, known as 'Stony Street' passing through South Moreton. The pathway was significant also to the coming of Christianity following the conversion of the West Saxon King by St. Birinus at Scutchhamer Knob in the early seventh century and in the subsequent pilgrimage route from Winchester to Dorchester.

The strategic importance of the path led to the development of two historical sites in South Moreton near its southern commencement. Early Churchmen took great interest in the welfare of the travellers and the first building on the site of the present Church was a wayfarers chapel presided over by a solitary priest. Evidence is provided by Saxon and later Norman doorways. Travellers would have stopped at the chapel to offer prayers of supplication or thanksgiving before or after crossing the ford and the treacherous marshland. Towards the south-west of the church is the second site of a ditch – motte castle, now designated as an ancient monument [English Heritage Inspector's Report AA62989/1(1999)]. Thus, although there might have been earlier defensive structures guarding the path, the existing earthworks are of Norman origin. It is reasonable to suppose that the motte castle also would have been part of the outlying defences of Wallingford Castle, which was of major importance during Norman and Plantagenet times.

The Church, as it stands today and now dedicated to St. John the Baptist at Bethabara, developed from the wayside chapel. There is evidence of building phases in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the last major restoration and addition being in 1849. The massive yew tree at the east end of the churchyard has been certified to be 1600 years old and is still in fine condition. Its survival testifies to the great age of this important site, which has and continues to exert a vital influence on the life of the village.

Again resulting from its strategic location, during the Dark Ages South Moreton had become a prosperous place for its size with four manors within the bounds of the modern parish. These manors were established by Saxon landholders and it was these men who gave the village its name. (The 'moor' was already in existence and 'ton' is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning enclosure or settlement, often with a village or manor estate) The Saxon inhabitants re-routed or leated the brook for the convenience of mills built on manor lands; the site of only one of which remains, (although remnants of the site of the water powered paper mill – built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century also exist).

Saunderville, the largest manor, now known as The Manor, was marked as an important place in Saxon times by its double moat. The current building dates from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and was used as a farmhouse before becoming a private residence. An ancient way from Hagbourne to Wallingford passes the manor to the north along the track now called Coaches End.

The manor of Bray or Huse lies on the southern side of the main street but the exact site of the house itself is uncertain. The third manor, known as Adresham, was built on the site of what is now Adresham House opposite the School. The fourth and smallest manor is at Fulscot and is a modern building on an ancient site. At the Domesday survey (1086) the four manors were owned by the Crown and entrusted to Norman noblemen as part of a Knight's fee, in return for the Knights service in battle should war occur. During the following centuries the fate of these manors was to be interlinked, sometimes becoming united on marriage or divided when willed between several family members. Saunderville once belonged to Cardinal Wolsey, and later to Cardinal Reginald Pole, the disgraced cousin of Queen Elizabeth I.

Malting was a staple industry in Elizabethan Moreton and the forge is mentioned for the first time in 1610. Many villagers must have kept livestock, as a village pound is recorded in 1628. It was here that straying sheep and oxen etc., would have been impounded under the auspices of the lord of the manor, to whom a fine for straying was payable.

South Moreton must have suffered an outbreak of smallpox in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as the Mill House, on the southern edge of the village, was hired as a Smallpox Hospital in 1799. The mill itself was still important to the village as late as the 1860's when Mr Kirby of Wallingford Castle, the principal landowner and resident of The Hall, installed a steam engine and chimney on the mill site. This would have ensured that milling could take place all year round, even when the stream became low or dried up in high summer. Corn milling continued there until 1910.

The commoners of the village kept their rights to graze animals on common land until the Enclosure Act of 1818, when a small trackway across the Common was replaced by a road leading to Cholsey and Wallingford. The Common itself was not enclosed until 1820.

The Victorian era saw several other changes in the village. Isambard Kingdom Brunel built his Great Western Railway through South Moreton begun in 1833, causing a significant stretch of the landscape to be disrupted by a large cutting and subsequent embankment between Cholsey and Didcot (then a tiny settlement). Brunel's navigators and local agricultural workers were well provided for as there were at least five inns or beerhouses in the village at the time. The road from South Moreton through Fulscot which crosses the line to the main Didcot road was laid down in 1834, although an earlier road to the manor, continuing as a footpath to Hagbourne, was in existence before this.

The original school, later the Parish Room and now known as Gothic Cottage, was built by a public subscription collected by a Mr. Colpoys, the curate-in-charge, in 1827. The current school was built in 1896 and the building has been extended in several phases as the numbers on roll have increased. The school originally took children from the village only but now has pupils from both the Moretons, the Astons and some from Wallingford, Didcot and Cholsey. ( A History of South Moreton School 1896-1996 was published by Pie Powder Press to mark it's centenary in 1996)

Changes in the village during the 20<sup>th</sup> century have generally reflected those of most rural communities throughout Southern England, with land use being a critical parameter. Up to 1932 the land in this parish continued to be farmed by several families. In that year Mr. AG Hedges purchased the farm at The Hall, South Moreton, following his acquisition of Fulscot in 1918, to become the main landowner in the village. Thereafter, AG Hedges Farms Ltd. continued to grow and by the Second World War had acquired most of the agricultural land in this parish ( as well as in the nearby parishes of Wittenham and Chilton) with a combined acreage of 2600 acres.

The company operated the main local slaughter house at Abingdon and distributed the produce of its farms and market gardens directly to its own retail outlets locally and in London. Growth in the farm was reflected by the population increase in South Moreton after 1931 (275 in 1931 to 395 in 1961). Accommodation was provided for agricultural and railway workers by existing dwellings and the new Council developments in Sands Road ( started in 1933) and Dunsomer Hill ( started in 1925).

During the first 50 years of the century, employment of the majority of residents centred in the village, with AG Hedges (Farms) Ltd., being the largest employer (in 1945 – 67% of adult population). Ninety male residents were employed full time and thirty females part-time, particularly during harvesting and for market gardening activities. By 1985 only 15% of the population were employed full time within the village and an additional 18% part-time. The current number of employees are 9, with 6 at Fulscot ( AG Hedges Farms Ltd.) and 3 at South Moreton (now named Hall Farms (South Moreton) Ltd.) This dramatic decrease in the number of people employed in agriculture has resulted from major changes in farming methods and land use, as the overall agricultural acreage within the Parish has not altered significantly. Agricultural land disposed for home construction has been small; the only major area being the site of the village pound redeveloped in the late 1960s for the provision of bungalows and flats for elderly residents. One consequence of the change in agricultural activities and in particular the cessation of livestock management at Hall Farms (South Moreton) Ltd. has been the redevelopment in the late 1980's of an extensive complex of redundant out-buildings into small scale craft workshops. These now provide employment for 20-22 people – several being village residents.

The ability to commute to work and the opportunity to live in a pleasant rural environment attracted first, in the 1950's and 1960's retired ex-colonials and more recently professional/business people to purchase houses in the parish as they came onto the market. Therefore, during the last forty years, there has been major change in one of the traditional roles of the village of South Moreton, from being a place of work to essentially a dormitory settlement and providing employment for only a minority of residents.

Administratively following the Local Government Re-organisation in 1974, the parish moved from North Berkshire to South Oxfordshire. Ecclesiastical changes occurred first in 1922 with the creation of a United Benefice with North Moreton, followed in 1978 by linkage with the Parishes of Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold. At that time a new Rectory was built in South Moreton as being the geographical focus of the new United Benefice. Despite the inevitable alterations during the last half century in basic services and amenities, the village continues to act as a central place.

The most recent change to South Moreton has been the building of a small complex of Housing Association, privately owned and shared ownership dwellings on the site of the old 'Airey' houses in Sands Road. This is known as Kirby Close, named after John Kirby, a principal landowner during the 19<sup>th</sup> century mentioned previously.

Overall therefore, this brief history indicates how South Moreton developed and has survived by adaptation to the political, social and economic changes throughout the last 2000 turbulent years. At the approach of the third millennium this further provides the confidence that the village will continue to have an important role as a unique distinct entity in the settlement hierarchy rather than as an urban extension.

*Pamela Boswell, Rhoda Boswell & Dr. Michael Bennett*

# PARISH CONSERVATION PLAN / WHOLE FARM CONSERVATION PLAN PROJECT

## BRIGHTWELL / WITTENHAM / MORETON PILOT STUDY AREA

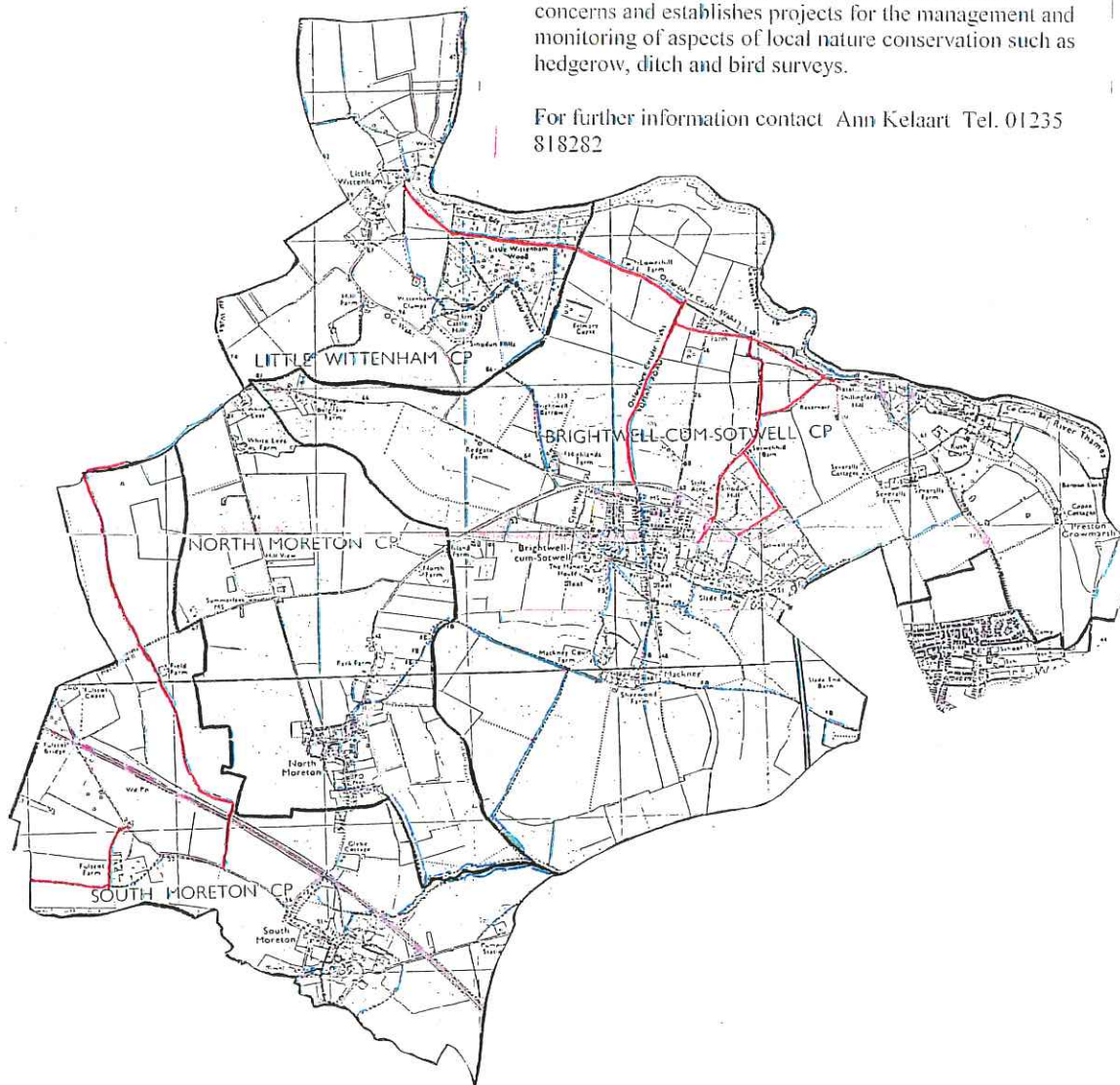
### The Four Parish Plan

The Four Parish Plan covers the parishes of North & South Moreton, Brightwell cum Sotwell and Little Wittenham.

The plan's objective is to combine the concepts of whole farm plans with the parish conservation plans and so attempt to integrate farm management with the wider management of the countryside. In doing so, it brings farmers and the wider community together to achieve common countryside objectives.

The plan group looks at a variety of environmental concerns and establishes projects for the management and monitoring of aspects of local nature conservation such as hedgerow, ditch and bird surveys.

For further information contact Ann Kelaart Tel. 01235 818282



## Options for the Future

The following people have agreed to act as contacts for the possible development of ongoing groups.

Village Historical Society - Keith Eaton – Headteacher, South Moreton School – 813110			
Environmental Group	-	Mrs Patricia Thomas	- 01235 812169
Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	-	Mr Anthony Ryder	- 01235 813104
Newsletter	-	Mrs Brenda Soper	- 01235 813216
Hedgerow Litter Collection	-	Mrs Julia Harland	- 01235 818331
Volunteer / Helpers group	-	Dr David Ebbs	- 01235 812294

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## Acknowledgements

### *Village Appraisal Committee*

*David Ebbs*                      *Chairman*

*Rosemary Ryder*              *Treasurer*

*Sandra Monk*                  *Secretary*

*June Paton*                    *Editor of report*

*Michael Aram*

*Charlotte Bennett*

*Rhoda Boswell*

*Keith Eaton*

*Julia Harland*

*Anne Kelaart*

*Richard Kidd*

*Mark Roberts*

*Brenda Soper*

*Edward Squires*

### **Our thanks also go to:**

*Richard Kidd & Yellow Pages* for printing the report

*Alistair & June Paton* for producing the report

*Dr Michael Bennett, Pamela Boswell & Rhoda Boswell* for compiling the historical information.

*Katie Harland* (age 9) for producing the front cover drawing and to all the other village children whose drawings are reproduced in the report, namely;

*Amy Astley, Holly Earl, Jocelyn Earl, Joseph Ebbs, Matthew Ebbs, Sam Ebbs, Kaley Ferguson, Leanne Ferguson, Alice Grove-Smith, Flora Grove-Smith, Eve Grove-Smith, Eleanor Paton, Jonathan Paton, Madeline Paton*

## Useful names & numbers

Church of England – Rector		
The Reverend Christopher Walker, The Rectory, Church Lane		01235 812042
Churchwardens		
Mr. Mark Thomas, Marigold Cottage		01235 812169
Dr. Michael Bennett, Three Chimneys		01235 813302
Parish Council		
Chairman – Mrs. Rosemary Ryder		01235 813104
Mr. James McLeod		01235 812048
Mr. Reg Rouse		01235 815906
Mr. Keith Eaton		01491 873483
Mrs. Janet White		01235 812597
Clerk – Mrs. Pam Fox		01235 815688
South Moreton School		
Headmaster – Mr. Keith Eaton		
Administrator – Mrs. Pam Clifford		01235 813110
South Moreton Pre-School & Toddler Group		
Supervisor – Mrs. Catherine Gregg		01235 819657
South & North Moreton Womens' Institute		
President – Mrs. Jacqueline Rickards		01235 816986
Secretary – Mrs P Thomas		01235 812169
Mayflowers – Residents of the Astons & Moretons, mainly older people, but any adults are welcome to attend, who meet on alternate Wednesday afternoons for various social activities and fun.		
Chris & Jean Conisbee		01235 850373
Pam Travers		01235 817942
Kate Evans		01235 813858
Youth Club		
Meets in Aston Village Hall		
Diana West		01235 851122
Pensions & Post Office		
At the Crown Pub on Wednesday mornings 9am – 12 noon		
WI Barn Hire		
Mrs P. Thomas		01235 812169
Mobile Library	-	alternate Fridays 12 noon at Clements Green
Refuse Collection Day	-	Thursday a.m.
Milk Deliveries	-	Mr Dave Allen
Newspaper delivery	-	Mrs B Membury
Skip in Clements Green	-	see notice board on WI Barn

*Correct at time of going to press  
April 1999*