

RESULTS OF THE GREAT MILTON VILLAGE PLAN

Now that the holiday season is over, it is an appropriate moment to publish the results of the Village Plan Questionnaire that so many of you completed a few months ago. The Village Plan team were impressed that no less than 249 people from the parish, including those from Milton Common and Middle Ground, responded by completing the Questionnaire. This represents 77% of the 324 households who live within the parish.

Quite a remarkable figure!

So thank you very much for all your help in making this questionnaire and answers such an important tool in clearly establishing the concerns and issues you feel strongly about. With such a figure, we have discovered what the majority of residents want for the village and it is a vast encouragement that will spur us the villagers, with the Parish Council and other organisations, to follow up all that you have identified.

All the age groups were well represented in the survey: 42 people under 19 years old and 90 over 60 years of age completed the papers - more women than men, with the majority living on the Green, Lower End and Thame Road. It was heartening to see how passionate people feel about shaping our village for the future and to what extent people are prepared to go to volunteer for certain activities - from litter picking, to fund-raising for new school classrooms, to setting up a good neighbour scheme.

Thank you to those valiant volunteers who distributed and collected the questionnaires and to Christine and Pat at the Village Shop for acting as a collection point. The questions were not created out of thin air by the Steering Group. They were taken from your hopes and concerns raised at two events over the last year in the Neighbours Hall and many individual discussions. Some issues raised did not appear in the questionnaire because it was felt they needed greater attention that could be dealt with in other ways. For example **Crime** did not come up as an issue in the village meetings, early discussions or with the **Neighbourhood Action Group**, and so did not feature in the survey.

Summary of the Key Findings

Below is a summary of the key findings, but if you would like to see the full results, look at the website www.greatmilton.org.uk, ask any of the signatories to this article; or at the copy deposited in the Post Office. It would be true to say that there were no huge divisive issues affecting the village over the last year, with the result that both questions and answers reflect people's "contentment" (if that's the right word) of life in Great Milton.

The impact of **Traffic** was one of the bigger issues: more people wanted a speed-activated flashing "slow" sign at Lower End and in Thame Road (60%), while 66% felt

that no parking on the village green should be enforced. There were many suggestions about a new communal parking area to reduce congestion -- the Recreation Ground or a strip off the Green being the most common. Few people want to see a mobile speed camera (26%), but neither did many wish to be involved with an M40 noise reduction scheme (57%) or campaign for it themselves (81%), although 20 people did put their names down to contribute to this. Those who felt most strongly about the M40 noise were those who lived in Thame Road and Lower End.

The Environment

While the majority would like to see the Parish Council paying for someone to clear litter (46%) and maintaining the public spaces in the village (66%), 30 people volunteered to help on a voluntary. 86% were prepared to maintain their own frontage, while 65% wished to see the village investigating **sustainable renewable energy sources** on public buildings. This information has been sent to the Recreation Ground Committee, Neighbours Hall, the Church and School. There was divided support for the **burial of overhead cables** with only 54% saying they should be buried. There was general enthusiasm for an **“Unwanted Items Swap-day”**, with 36 people giving their names to volunteer to help with this. Clare Blakeway-Phillips has agreed to head this one up.

Housing

It was felt that no more housing was needed in the village, but some could see the sense in infill and the Thame Road area as the natural places to consider, should the need arise. There was a significant number (18% and 14% respectively) who knew of family members who might need additional affordable or sheltered housing in the village.

Community Facilities

People were overwhelmingly in favour of maintaining both village halls - the Pavilion and the Neighbours Hall and generally enthusiastic about a street party or outdoor concert. 70% of people suggested the village needs a dedicated youth worker, and 63% thought that their salary should be taken from the parish precept as part of the council tax.

We were concerned that 21% knew of someone in the village who felt isolated and who might benefit from a **Good Neighbour Scheme** and were encouraged that 31 people volunteered to help set up such a scheme.

Sixty-eight per cent would like to see **the Church** investing in toilets while the removal of pews to make the church more flexible gained fewer votes (39%). The many suggestions about possible improvements to the **Neighbours Hall** have been passed to the Hall Committee. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents supported the replacement of the **School’s temporary classrooms** and the School has a note of the 21 people who volunteered to help raise funds towards them.

Bus Services

It is great news that the 103/104 bus service will continue as at present, as over 90% of respondents think that the service should be protected from cuts, and 67% think that the service is satisfactory. We are less clear that there is a demand to see a bus service to the Park and Ride at Thornhill, as 18% (37 people) indicated that they would use this service weekly with a similar 18% who would use the Oxford bus via Headington weekly.

Communication

While 43% had looked at the Great Milton **website**, 95% wanted to have more information about local events on it. The names of those who volunteered to keep it up-to-date have been passed to the Parish Council. Eight-two per cent of villagers use broadband, with an even split of those who thought the broadband speed was adequate. The Great Milton **Bulletin** was really appreciated with 86% of respondents usually looking at it. Between 64% - 76% of people read the different articles and notes, as well as forthcoming events and advertisements. Nick Belcher has a note of those who would like to be involved in a **Home Workers Network**.

The last question was about **Footpaths**. Ninety per cent say they actually use the Great Haseley footpath (65% to Little Milton), but an equal number would like to see a footpath to Wheatley. There also seemed to be a demand for a cycle path to neighbouring villages (86% to Wheatley, 77% to L. Milton, 76% to Gt Haseley, and 55% to Milton Common).

The various village groups have been asked to consider their responses to the findings – the Parish Council, Neighbours Hall, Pavilion, School etc. From these thoughts action plans will be developed and agreed upon and these will finally become part of the published plan to be taken forward by the whole community.

Once again, very many thanks from the Steering Group for playing your part in the Great Milton Village Plan. It is now up to us all to prioritise and take things forward.

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