



Drewsteignton Parish Plan

Compiled by the Community – for the Community

a proposal for **ACTION**

The Parish of Drewsteignton covers approximately 10.5 square miles, predominantly within the Dartmoor National Park (DNP).

Its 626 inhabitants (over the age of 18)* reside in three main settlements – Crockernwell, Drewsteignton and Whiddon Down with small communities in the hamlets of Venton and Sandy Park.

Towards the end of 2006, the Parish Council requested the community consider producing a Parish Plan to inform the Council of the needs and desires of its constituents.

A Public Meeting was held to elect volunteers from across the Parish to form a Working Party. Aided by a grant from Defra to fund the project, the group began work on the formation of a Plan.

This document is the result of their efforts.....

* source: Electoral role - Drewsteignton Parish

Working Party
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Getting started.....

THE PARISH ROAD SHOWS

The Working Party held a series of open days around the Parish, inviting everyone to come and offer their comments on what they felt would enhance their village and its community. Over 400 people attended to make their views and concerns known.

A further meeting, specifically aimed at the business community was also held so that the Working Party could understand the issues that were important to this particular section of the Community.



COMPILING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

From the information gained at the open days, the Working Party compiled a list of issues that were felt to be important to parishioners.

Although many concerned the Parish as a whole, there were specific issues that applied to individual villages or hamlets which were felt important enough to include within the whole Plan.

Working with an outside consultancy, experts in compiling data, a comprehensive questionnaire was devised to be sent to each and every household in the Parish.

ANALYSING THE RESULTS

Questionnaires were sent to the 399 households in the Parish. Answers were invited from everyone in the family above the age of 11.

A remarkable 50% of these questionnaires were returned - from 201 households, making it possible to establish a consensus of the views of the community as a whole. In total 494 parishioners age 11 to 75+ answered individual questions.

Initial analysis was carried out by Corporate Consultation Services. However this data was considered to be too broadly Parish based, not taking into account the particular needs of the widely different communities within the villages and hamlets. A further analysis was then undertaken of the comments received within each community.

Whilst this, more in depth analysis, took a considerable amount of extra time, the Working Party felt the resultant recommendations for action would be more meaningful.

This report covers the main areas the Working Party felt required highlighting and to which solutions and action plans could be found – not a full breakdown of all of the data received. If any parishioner wishes to view the full data set this can be downloaded, in pdf format, from the Parish Council Web Site at www.drewsteigntonparish.co.uk as can further copies of this report.



Conclusion.....

The publication of this Plan is not the end of the Parish Plan process. It may be the end of the work by the volunteer Working Party whose efforts have resulted in a full and comprehensive survey of the Parish and its residents.

The continued success of the Plan is up to the Parish Council and the Community, who between them have to take all the suggested actions forward.

This Plan should be the beginning – not the end.

Many actions are proposed in this Plan – not all will happen overnight, some may never happen – some may get changed.

It will be the responsibility of the Parish Council, who are elected to work for the community, to maintain the momentum, along with assistance from the many groups in the parish, such as those that keep the Village Halls going, those who maintain and support the Playing Field, plus the many other sports, arts, social and children's groups who are all so invaluable to the community and make it what it is today.

COMMUNICATIONS

SAFETY

HIGHWAYS & ROADS

TRANSPORT & PARKING

HOUSING NEEDS

PLANNING

SHOPPING

VOLUNTEERING

LOCAL BUSINESS

SOCIAL GROUPS

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

Access to most forms of communication was reported as good with 87% having a BT landline and 83% a mobile telephone.

A total of 69% had a computer at home with access to Broadband and 33% had access at their place of work.

Asked to comment on the quality of communication within the Parish, over 90% felt the information received was either good/reasonable.

The most popular form of receiving communications about Parish activities was via the Parish Post at 83%, although Notice Boards and a Parish Website also featured highly. Although 82% of respondents read the Parish Post, 75% of 11-16 year olds answered no to this question, possibly indicating a lack of interest in the information it contains.

Over 78% of the Parish felt a "Welcome to the Parish" pack for new residents moving in would be a good idea, this consensus was spread equally across all areas of the Parish.

Asked whether visitors to the Parish needed more information a total of 56% felt this a good idea. Whiddon Down residents were more in favour than other areas of the Parish, contributing 75% of the total yes votes. Only 21% of respondents had attended a Parish Council Meeting during the last two years, although most (60%) knew who their local Councillor was and 93% knew how to contact them (either directly or via the Parish Clerk).

In conclusion, the Working Party felt that communications were good and generally most people were happy with access to information.

However there are certain areas that could be improved or built upon



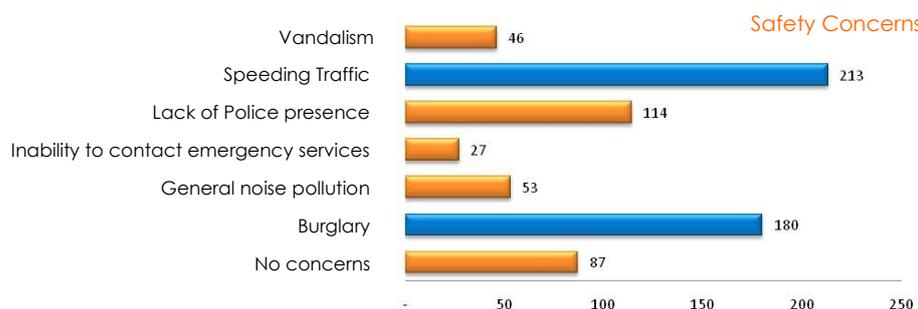
ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Survey local youngsters to establish what, if anything, would encourage them to read the Parish Post or to establish what form of communication would suit best.
- Continue to develop Parish Website - keep Parish Notice Boards up to date
- Establish the practicality of developing a "Welcome to the Parish/Parish Information" pack for residents - possibly compiled by individual working parties from each Village/Hamlet
- Consider producing a visitors map for tourists
- Parish Council may want to consider holding an annual "surgery" Council meeting to discuss general issues - this may encourage more parishioners to meet their Council

SAFETY

Generally the Parish has enjoyed a crime-free existence - lower than West Devon as an average. 95% reported not being a victim of crime over the last five years.

Concerns regarding potential crimes and safety issues were varied, with speeding and burglary being the top two worries



Note: Multiple answer question - figures shown indicate number of responses - respondents may have ticked a number of boxes

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- As the perception of crime is in excess of actual reality, we would suggest the Parish Council arrange a public meeting with the Police and other relevant authorities for a Q & A session of residents' concerns.
- Drewsteignton has by far the biggest perceived speeding problem (71%) - we would suggest the Parish Council address this concern by arranging a speed survey within the Village

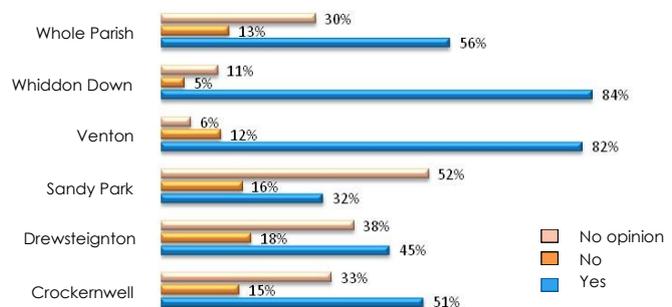
HIGHWAYS & ROADS

50% of residents of Whiddon Down (25% Parish Wide) felt there was a need for safer crossing points at the bus stops while the figure at Crockernwell was 26% (17% parish wide).

Problems were experienced at all the new slip roads at the Merrymeet junction. Of the 411 people responding, 377 cited problems experienced with the junction layout irrespective of direction travelled. Given that, depending on where you live in the Parish you may not always use some of the slip roads, this figure could be in reality much higher. The Working Party concedes that there is probably very little that can be done retrospectively but lessons must be learned!

84% of Whiddon Down (82% at Venton) residents felt something should be done about A3124/C50 junction. In fact almost 60% of the total Parish felt action should be taken here. **As this is the largest concern in the whole questionnaire, the Working Party felt this was one area that the Parish Council must address urgently.**

Is action needed at A3124 and C50 junction at Whiddon Down?



ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parish Council to seek provision from Highways regarding safer crossing points - one suggestion by the working party was traffic islands
- Parish Council to inspect full breakdown of figures regarding Merrymeet Junction carefully and to confront Highways agencies on these problems to see what measures may be taken to rectify situation.
- PC to campaign for changes to A3124/C50 - possibly enlisting help of local haulage companies using this junction.
- Size/weight restrictions at Netherton Hill could only be introduced if alternative access for large vehicles could be arranged. PC to investigate whether this is feasible. Perhaps if parking issues at Sandy Park are resolved allowing coaches to re-access Castle Drogo this could also be a solution. In the short term perhaps better signage could be introduced.

The problem regarding the rat run at Turnpike Lane/Chapel Hill is particularly relevant to the parishioners in Whiddon Down, 69% of whom would like to see some form of action taken.

In Drewsteignton, 38% said they would like to see size/weight restrictions on Netherton Hill, however 24% said no and 38% had no opinion.

Tackling speeding

When considering replies from individuals regarding their specific Village/Hamlet, results revealed that Crockernwell residents would like to see enforcement of current speed limits as a priority within Crockernwell (43%), Drewsteignton residents regarded reduction or introduction of speed limits a priority (18%). Sandy Park residents had little or no problems with speeding whilst Venton residents wanted enforcement of current speed limits. Whiddon Down residents seemed to have the most problems, requesting action in all areas.

TRANSPORT

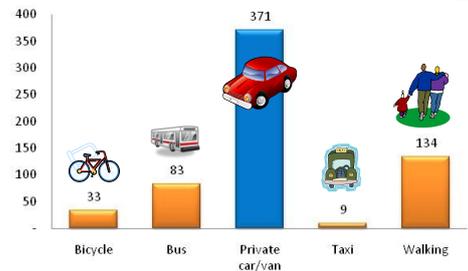
375 vehicles were reportedly in use from the 201 households responding to the questionnaire. As expected from a rural community, the most popular form of regular transport used was cars followed by walking and then buses. A significant number of bus users fell within the 17-21 age bracket. Whilst 21% of respondents regularly walked, it was felt this maybe more likely to be for pleasure rather than necessity.

Although the motor car features highly, 37% of respondents **relied** on public transport to get around. Of these, 3% used the buses daily, 5% on a weekly basis and 29% occasionally - a total of 153 parishioners who responded to our questionnaire. The biggest users of public transport were at Whiddon Down (not surprisingly - the best Parish bus service) and Sandy Park.

Almost a quarter of respondents had no problems with the existing bus services. Those citing problems felt that bus timetables were the biggest discouragement from using public transport.

Very few people felt isolated - in fact none of the residents of Venton answered yes to this question! Across the Parish, the 9% who answered yes to a feeling of isolation, claimed location was the key factor. Interestingly no one age group predominated.

Note: Multiple answer question - figures shown indicate number of responses - respondents may have ticked a number of boxes



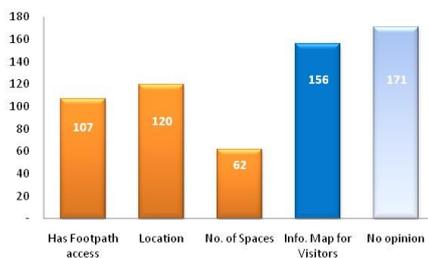
Getting around

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Although bus usage may seem to be low, many respondents placed reliance on regular use of public transport. The working Party feels that the Parish should at least protect the services provided at present.
- A suggestion that bust time tables be published in the Parish Post may encourage greater use.

PARKING

It was reported that only 10% of vehicles used within the Parish were regularly parked on the highway, indicating that parking problems, if any, were due to visitors to the area rather than residents.



The Working Party considered the current usage of Drewsteignton Car Park and wondered whether better signage would increase the usage of this facility within a Village used by so many visitors or locals visiting. A number of options were given. The largest number of people seemed disinterested (171)!



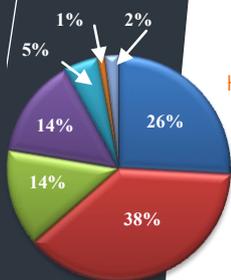
Increasing the use of Drewsteignton Car Park

In association with the above question, restrictions on parking within Drewsteignton Square were also considered. Opinions were sought on whether parking should be restricted to residents only or restricted to short term parking by all. Only 10% overall felt parking should be residents only (mostly those from Drewsteignton!), whilst 25% would like to see short term parking (mostly those out of Drewsteignton!)

There was an overwhelming response for action regarding parking problems at Sandy Park, 55% of Sandy Park residents would like residents parking (52% Parish wide) and, unsurprisingly, the majority of people outside Sandy Park would like to see parking for the Pub (60%).

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- PC encourage better use of car parking (see chart for ideas).
- PC to deal with car parking issues both at Drewsteignton & Sandy Park.



Household Sizes

Two people households dominate across the Parish, except for Drewsteignton where 25% of respondents lived in a four person household.

Most homes were owner-occupied with Crockernwell topping the chart. The largest percentage of privately rented accommodation was in Drewsteignton and Sandy Park. 28% of Whiddon Down consisted of Housing Association/West Devon Homes.

Of the 14% looking for accommodation within the next five years 48% wanted to buy and 41% wanted to rent. In both instances, two bedroom accommodation was the preferred choice. The majority who wished to buy lived in Drewsteignton and Sandy Park - the areas with the highest privately rented households. With 90% of respondents wishing to stay within the Parish, these figures indicate a need for additional housing stock to be available for rental **and purchase**. Housing needs could be met by a combination of affordable rental and affordable purchase. In the latter case, somewhat controversially, it would mean the current planning attitude of DNPA against allowing private building may be detrimental to the growth of the community, forcing potential buyers to leave the Parish.

Response to questions regarding affordable housing planned in Drewsteignton revealed that almost everybody in Drewsteignton wishing to rent accommodation would apply for occupation of one of these houses.

Asked to comment on second home council tax bandings, opinion (63%) was equally spread across the Parish that the current rate of 90% should be increased.

The final question regarding housing needs related to the Travellers Camp at Whiddon Down. Unsurprisingly, over 50% would like to see the camp moved outside the Parish, but 26% would not object to the camp being located within the Parish.

HOUSING NEEDS



ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Long term need for smaller houses available for rental and purchase - suggestion that Parish Council consult with DNPA regarding its long term plans on relaxing planning restrictions
- Desire identified for Housing Ass. homes in Drewsteignton should be used to justify go-ahead
- Is second home ownership causing a problem for potential local buyers?

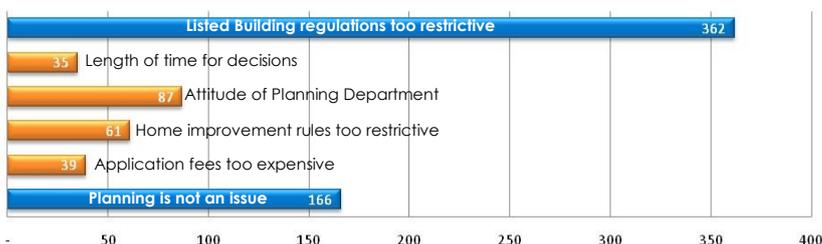
PLANNING

Only 27% of respondents had concerns regarding general planning decisions within the Parish, although this rises to 60% when dealing with individuals' specific planning applications. Their concerns are detailed in the table below although the Working Party feel that there may have been a problem with the way this question was interpreted as it is contradictory to have 40% without a planning issue and 88% finding listed building regulations too restrictive! Also 79% of people would like to see the Planning Authorities support domestic renewable energy proposals (eg Solar Panels etc) within their planning objectives - this has now been adopted.

It would appear that the majority of respondents were happy with the decisions made on Planning within the Parish and the Working Party felt congratulations were due to the Parish Council for this. However it is obvious that many respondents encountered problems with individual applications. Almost 40% would be willing to attend a public meeting with the Planning Authorities to address these concerns.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parish Council to inform Dartmoor National Park/West Devon of these results and consider arranging a meeting to address the issues.
- If indeed a problem with listed building regulations maybe a "listed building" group of householders could be set up to lobby for change.



Note: Multiple answer question - figures shown indicate number of responses - respondents may have ticked a number of boxes

SHOPPING

It was encouraging to find that many local businesses (over 20 people) would be interested in supplying a local produce market

Do you shop in the Parish?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less often	Never
Crockernwell	13%	42%	13%	15%	15%
Drewsteignton	40%	27%	8%	9%	7%
Sandy Park	2%	43%	16%	16%	18%
Venton	35%	24%	-	5%	12%
Whiddon Down	22%	29%	9%	18%	14%

The overall response to this question was fantastic with 85% of the 377 responses using their local shops, either daily, weekly, monthly or at some time. Technically, the Parish has only two local general shops (Drewsteignton Village Stores and the mini-mart at Whiddon Down). With such a high response from other communities within the Parish, the Working Party believe that "local" to

these parishioners were indicating Cheriton Bishop and Chagford - never mind still a loyal local support.

Although parish wide 14% say they never shop local - shame on you!

Of those who shop locally, the main reason given was to support local shops, followed by the need for last minute items, the social contact, saving transport costs and saving time.

Those who shop out of the Parish do so mainly for more choice, then because goods are cheaper, goods are unavailable and lastly, because it is more convenient to their place of work.



Using your local Post Office?

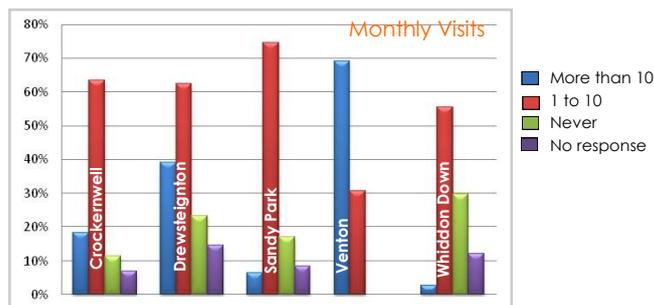
Visits to local Post Offices was again varied - but 19% of the Parish said they never visited!

As with shopping we have assumed that "local" also refers to those Post Offices outside the Parish (Chagford and Cheriton Bishop)

In response to the question of usage of Post Office facilities, Postal services was the most popular answer (73%), with more than 34% paying their bills and 27% banking.

A Produce Market?

Overwhelmingly, 73% (300 people) say they would support a local produce market, and given that more than 20 businesses said they would be interested in supplying one this sounds very feasible.



ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- The local shops are an essential community resource and we must encourage the community to support them as much as possible. Pressure must be placed with all relevant authorities to keep the local Post Offices open.
- Publicise the Hittisleigh Farmers Market in Parish Post and on website, set up community based committee to investigate possibilities, ie. Find out how they're run, investigate which Village Hall would be preferred, Whiddon Down, Drewsteignton or both.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Volunteer slips to be handed over to relevant people for them to be contacted directly
- A "Clean up of your Parish" day should be investigated as should an emergency self-help plan

Rather impressively more than a third of respondents said they currently do voluntary work (20% in the parish, 16% outside). When asked about whether they would participate in a local "Clean up of your Parish Day", 39% said they would, while 16% said they would be willing to help compile an emergency self help plan of the parish. Regarding helping on specific tasks, 8% said they would help by collection prescriptions, 8% would visit lonely/ elderly parishioners, 6% would help with transport to the Post

Office, Shop, Doctors or Hospital.

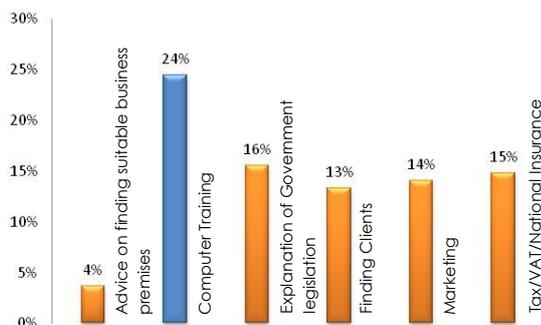
We would like to thank the numerous people who filled in the volunteer section at the end of the survey - your details have been noted and passed onto the relevant people!



Over a third of parishioners run their own businesses - 135 people. Of these, 97 people work within the Parish, the remaining 38 running businesses outside the Parish. Not surprisingly, the largest percentage are involved with Farming and/or

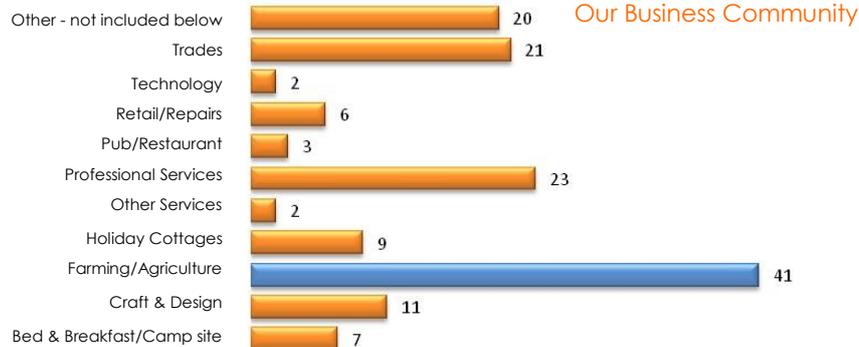
Agriculture. The Working Party was impressed with the all round variety of business operating within the Parish, which represents 33% of the total number of adults responding to our questionnaire. Having had a great response to our public meeting for business groups during the run-up to preparing the Plan, the survey rather disappointingly revealed only 16% (21 people) would support a business discussion group, 7% (10 people) a training group and 14% (19 people) would be prepared to share knowledge with other local businesses.

Asked to comment on what help and advice on running and operating a business would prove useful, almost a quarter of respondents would like to see help available on computer training...



VOLUNTEERING

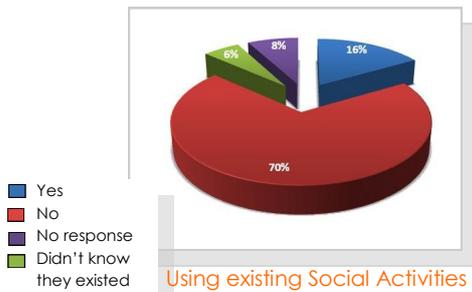
LOCAL BUSINESS



ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parish Post could be used to advertise people getting together and Parish Council could organise annual or bi-annual networking meetings similar to one held by Working Party to air business concerns.
- Parish Council to pass figures onto training authorities who could organise courses which could be advertised in Parish Post
- Adult evening classes timetables should be made available (possibly published on Parish Web Site/Parish Post)

SOCIAL GROUPS

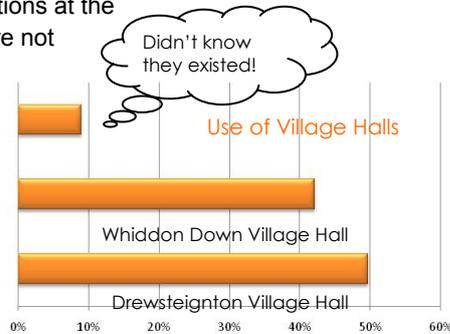


Rather disappointingly 70% said they did not participate in any of the social activities currently running in the Parish at the moment - and shockingly, 8% said they did not know they existed!

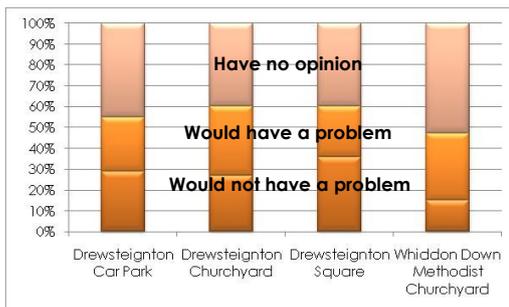
More reassuringly, 92% had attended social functions at the Village Halls although, across the Parish, 9% were not aware they existed - at Whiddon Down 11% were not aware of their Village Hall!

Only 4% said that a lack of transport restricted them from taking part in Parish activities.

Numerous suggestions were put forward for activities to be introduced, space prohibits a full listing but included film and music evenings, jumble sales, language classes, dancing and sports events such as rambling, cross country running and netball.



Where our children play....



18% of parishioners in Drewsteignton said their children normally play at the Playing Fields as compared to 2% in the rest of the parish. Little interest was displayed towards being part of a team to achieve a playing field local to them - in fact only 8% expressed an interest.

The age-old debate about where children should be allowed to play will carry on undecided with an almost equal split for and against - with the majority, in all cases, being those with no opinion.



As a Parish, 91% said they had no problem with the later opening hours of local Pubs. The most affected by this was Drewsteignton where 6% said they were adversely affected by the longer hours

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

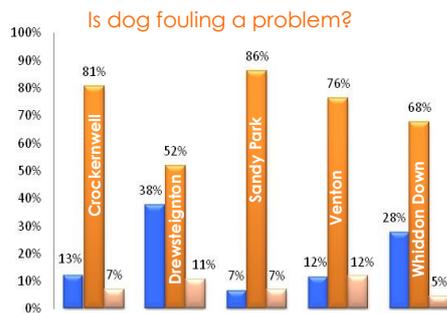
- Better advertising of Village Halls and current social activities on noticeboards, in the Parish Post and on the Website.
- Consult with Village Hall committees to see how to increase usage and profile.
- The areas of concern about where children play is very emotive - perhaps the best idea is that our children are taught to respect these places (ie don't go trampling on fresh graves, avoid games that might damage property/cars) and to be made aware of the dangers (watch out for moving cars etc).
- Parish Council to write a polite letter to our public houses asking them to ensure noise levels are kept to a minimum at closing time, especially in summer when residents windows are more likely to be open.

ENVIRONMENT

With the exception of Venton where 41% of respondents expressed concern, respondents felt the local roads and lanes were adequately maintained. Litter and pot holes are locals biggest bugbear.

An impressive 60% of respondents regularly use footpaths and bridleways.

Problems experienced with our footpaths were mainly overgrown hedgerows and lack of signage. As Parish Councillors walk every Parish footpath each year and report back to the DNPA any actions required (normally at the September or October meeting), it was felt that this situation could be resolved by parishioners reporting problems to their local Councillor prior to any inspections.



The emotive issue of dog fouling appeared to be a problem in Drewsteignton (38%) and Whiddon Down (28%). A solution to this problem will be difficult, as providing disposal bags is counter intuitive to the environment and/or providing bins needs specialist disposal which will have a financial impact on the parish.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Venton Councillor to investigate the localised problems with road conditions.
- Place notice in Parish Post informing residents of who to contact to get pot holes repaired.
- PC to investigate options for dealing with the litter problem eg. Litter clear up days, litter monitors etc.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to report problems with footpaths to the PC before their annual inspection.
- Easy steps to encourage greater use of footpaths would be to place maps up on notice boards and to resurrect the 'Beating of the Bounds' to introduce people to walking the local paths.
- Encourage people to be more responsible for their dogs. If problems persist consider a name and shame campaign.
- PC to contact WDBC to introduce plastic recycling points, due consideration should be made to any additional costs. Publicise existing recycling facilities at Chagford and Waitrose Car Park in Okehampton
- PC to consider budgeting for improvements to our environment. Perhaps a community committee (Gardening Club?) could action this.



As regards our Environment, there would appear to be support for additional expenditure to improve our local environment (over 35% of respondents). Tree Planting, flowers and tubs won the most support.

and 9% offered to make it happen!.....

ENVIRONMENT

How about street lighting?



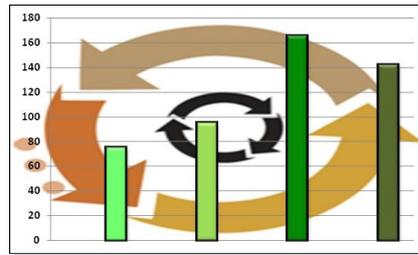
Proportionately across the Parish, very few people felt there was a problem with street lighting (14%). However asked whether they would be in favour of an earlier switch off time, over a third would welcome this. Currently most street lighting in the Parish is timed to switch on between dusk and dawn. Our investigation has shown that many local authorities across the country are now considering switching off street lights (at least during the quieter times of the night) to see to what extent they can reduce their

carbon footprint and overcome complaints about light pollution. The Working Party would like to see the Parish Council investigate this with either West Devon Borough Council or Devon County Council.

What facilities would you like to see introduced to your area?

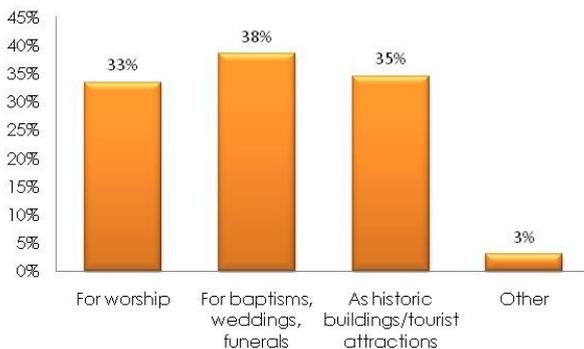
- Bottle Bank
- Dog waste bins
- Plastic recycling bins
- None of the above

Plastic recycling (40%) was by far the most popular facility residents would like to see introduced. However, residents at Sandy Park and Venton also responded with a clear "none of the above" to this answer. This may well be that they envisage the introduction of large skips into their hamlets. With recycling such an important issue, the Working Party felt that it may be possible to persuade West Devon Borough Council to include the collection of plastic (at the very least milk bottles) within the normal weekly recycling collection currently being provided across the Parish (green recycling boxes).



How important are our places of worship?

Our churches should be pleased to know that they are still a very valued part of our community - 55% said that our Parish Churches/Places of worship were important to them.





Devon was recently voted the best county in the country. For the parishioners of Drewsteignton, not only do they live in a beautiful and widely envied county, but also within a happy and thriving Parish.

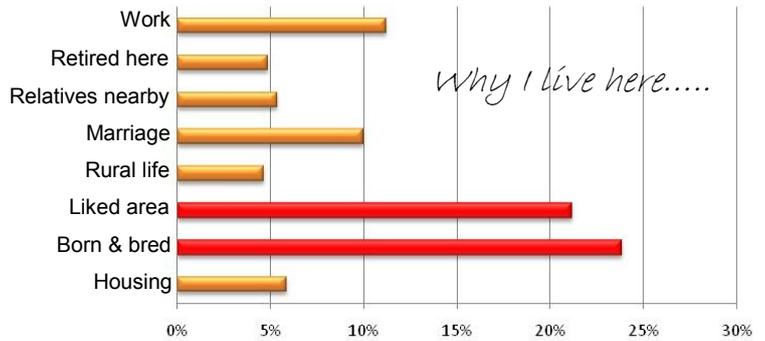
It was apparent from the answers received during our survey that most people are pleased with their environment and quality of life.

Our Parish contains a mix of people, some who came to live here from elsewhere because of the way of life and even more who were born and bred here and stay, also because of the way of life.

With very little crime, there are no real safety issues. Nobody feels isolated and most facilities provided by the Borough and County are considered adequate.

Situated amidst the protected backdrop of The Dartmoor National Park, the Parish has a long history of farming and agriculture. Along with many rural communities, changes have had to be made, but the community remains just that, a community that has adapted to these changes, operating many thriving businesses and bringing up families as has been the way for generations.

Our Plan highlights some areas of concern but they are not daunting and, with the help of a pro-active Parish Council and the will of the parishioners themselves, will help to make the Parish of Drewsteignton an even better place to live.



The Trafalgar Way plaque at Crockernwell



Castle Drogo—the last "Castle" built in England



Drewsteignton Village Gardens bench and picnic table designed & made by local artist Peter Randall-Page



The Working Party would like to thank the parishioners of Drewsteignton for their help in making this plan possible.