



**CHILD OKEFORD & HANFORD PARISH PLAN**

**The Child Okeford  
&  
Hanford  
Parish Plan 2004**



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*The cover photograph was taken by Chris Giles on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2002 at the War Memorial Child Okeford to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee.*

## **The Child Okeford & Hanford Parish Plan 2004**

The Child Okeford & Hanford Parish Plan was launched at a public meeting held in the Child Okeford Village Hall on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2002. The objective was to prepare a plan for the Parishes of Child Okeford and Hanford that would set out a vision for their future and identify the action needed to tackle the issues of current local concern. A Steering Committee was formed to prepare the plan and this we have done through consultation with clubs, societies and residents, two public presentations and a survey of all residents.

This report is the outcome of all the work that has taken place over the past 21 months. It has noted the concerns and views of the residents of the parishes and makes specific suggestions on the way forward on the issues that have been raised. In some cases immediate action can be taken, and may have already been taken. In other instances those who need to progress matters or develop solutions are identified.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who have made the preparation of the Parish Plan possible. The members of the Steering Committee; those who helped to distribute and analyse the questionnaire; but above all the residents of Child Okeford and Hanford who have expressed their views enthusiastically and responded beyond the call of duty.

Robin Bucknall  
Chairman, Parish Plan Steering Committee  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2004

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## BACKGROUND

Two years ago the Government produced a White Paper “Our Countryside – The Future” in which they promoted the preparation of Parish Plans to set out a vision for the future of the Parish, identify action needed to tackle issues of local concern and map out facilities needed to safeguard the community’s future. This initiative was taken forward by the Countryside Agency in its ‘Vital Villages’ programme and many parishes across North Dorset are now in the process of preparing Parish Plans.

While our Parish Plan is important for our two parishes it is also an important part of a bigger picture as well. For instance, an Action Plan is being developed for the Sturminster Newton area, and will be developed for Blandford Forum. This helps to make links between key points which come up in villages and market towns and build a bigger picture of local issues and makes a stronger case, for instance, when asking organisations to change the way they provide services.

The Parish Plans can also be taken into account through the local planning processes, through what is called ‘Supplementary Planning Guidance’ enabling local views to influence the broader planning decisions.

### Early Discussions & Presentations

The Child Okeford & Hanford Parish Plan was launched at a public meeting held in the Child Okeford Village Hall on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2002 when volunteers were sought to form a Steering Committee to progress the development of a plan for the Parishes of Child Okeford and Hanford. The Steering Committee first consulted clubs, societies and residents to identify the issues, both present and future, that are of greatest concern to them.

Among the main concerns identified in the early consultations were the future for the shops and pubs; the need for affordable housing; the future size of the Parishes; the powers of the Parish Council; education and the local school; local employment opportunities; traffic and transport problems; facilities for the youth and elderly of the Parish; development of the Child Okeford Village Hall and Community Centre; sports, social and recreational facilities; the environment; and tourist needs. A public exhibition highlighting these matters was then held in the Child Okeford Village Hall on the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> February 2003. Over 130 people attended and further local views and opinions were obtained.

### The Surveys

Survey forms were distributed in the last two weeks of May 2003 to all dwellings in Child Okeford, Hanford and Fontmell Parva, which is part of Child Okeford. The surveys were designed to measure the characteristics of the houses in which residents live, collect some personal details, such as gender and age of each resident, and obtain the views of each resident on the questions raised in the earlier consultations. Thus, every family in the Parishes received a ‘Household Questionnaire’ and every adult a ‘Personal Questionnaire’. The opinions of the youth – those under 16 - were collected in a similar way, through a separate ‘Youth Questionnaire’, since their views are as important as everyone else’s.

The response was exceptional. 384 completed Household Questionnaires were returned; 681 Personal Questionnaires were returned from 402 different dwellings (not all dwellings returned the Household Questionnaire); and 79 Young People returned their questionnaire. These returns

are nearly 70% of those that could have been returned.

### **Use of the Surveys**

The analysis of the responses to the surveys provides the basis for the proposals presented in this Parish Plan. The Parish Plan surveys did not measure the exact number of people or dwellings in the village. These figures are available from the 2001 National Census of Population, which was designed to survey all households in the United Kingdom, and are updated by Dorset County Council to give estimates for 2003. The national statistics also allow comparisons to be made, for example on age distributions, with the surveys carried out for the Parish Plan.

While completing the analysis of the surveys two events occurred that may have changed the answers received in response to the surveys. The Cross Stores and the Saxon Inn changed ownership. The answers presented in this Plan refer to the services provided by the previous owners and should be interpreted in this context where the Cross Stores and Saxon Inn are mentioned.



**THE NATURE OF THE PARISHES**

Child Okeford is recorded in the Domesday Book under the spelling Acford. Under the Shadow of Hambledon Hill the settlement had developed on a spring line where layers of greensand and clay met. Wells in the greensand were shallow and the rich, fertile clay of the Blackmore Vale supported a farming community.

Before the Second World War Child Okeford was a typical Dorset village, relying on small farms for a livelihood and as it was not on either of the main roads linking Blandford and Shaftesbury, or Blandford and Sherborne, it had to be mainly self-supporting. Most of the villager’s needs were met in the village. They had a village school, a Co-operative store, a Post Office, grocers, bakers and dairymen delivering bread and milk daily, a blacksmith, undertaker, cobbler and a saddler. There were very few cars. Cattle and horses of all kinds passed through the High Street daily. Not everyone had mains water or electricity. Transport was limited to a carrier service several times a week to Blandford, but there were frequent trains from Shillingstone. In 1939 there were ten farms, as well as small-holdings, only four of which were over 150 acres. Most were dairy farms, but some wheat, barley and root crops were grown to support cattle. Sturminster Newton weekly cattle market was a venue where the farmers met. The population then was six hundred and five.

After the Second World War there were more changes to the village than at any other time during its history. As farmland was sold for housing the population increased until by 1991 it was 1017. As footpaths became roads and hedges vanished, the intimate nature of the village disappeared. The 1991 census showed that the village had a greater number of retired people than ever before, that there were more lone pensioners, more owner-occupiers and more households owning two or more cars than at the 1981 census. Fewer people were employed in the village than in 1945 and this resulted in a steep rise in the number of people commuting to neighbouring towns.

**Population**

According to the 2001 Census of Population 1126 people lived in Child Okeford in April 2001 (489 Males, 637 Females) and there were 492 dwellings. By 2003, when the Parish Plan surveys were carried out, the population is estimated to be about 1140. Similarly, the population of Hanford is estimated to be 68, making a total of 1208 people living in the two parishes in an estimated total of 527 dwellings.

The age distribution of the population in Child Okeford, as measured by the 2001 Census and the Parish Plan surveys, is:

	2001 Census	2003 Parish Plan Surveys
Age 0 to 15	23.8%	14.2%
Age 16to 59	44.4%	45.9%
Age 60 and above	31.8%	39.9%

The difference between age distributions obtained from the two surveys suggests that a higher proportion of older people responded to the Parish Plan surveys than those who are younger, with the danger that the views of older people are over represented. This has not proved to be too

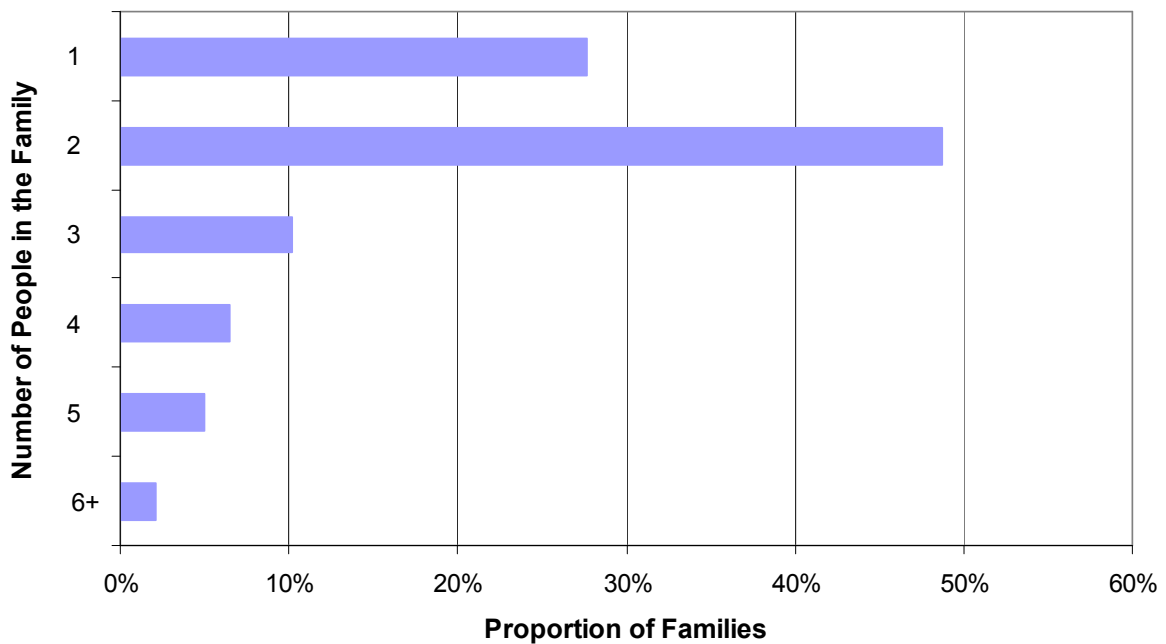
important, since the under 16's were surveyed separately and among adults the majority of views are, in general, consistent across all age groups. Where there is a relevant difference between age groups the difference is noted in the report.

It will not surprise anyone that the Parish has a large retirement age population or that 43.4% of the population is male and 56.6% female, but a more detailed analysis of the age of residents does raise a point of potential concern. While there are an encouraging number of children and young people under the age of 20 (19.4% of the population) fewer than 6% of residents are aged between 21 and 35, a disproportionately small number that seems to imply a majority of young people move out of the Parishes as they become independent of parents and do not move back once they have left.

### Family Size

The Parish Plan Household Questionnaire gave the following results on family size:

### Family Size in Child Okeford & Hanford



While the number of families with 1, 5 and 6 people in them are in line with national averages the number with 2 people is above the national average, even allowing for a possible over reporting by the elderly. This is compensated by the number of 3 or 4 person families being less than the national average. The reason, in part at least, is a result of the high proportion of elderly, the survey results showing that 66% of the people living alone are over 65 as are half of the people in 2 person families.

**Ownership of Dwellings**

The surveys show that just over 98% of the people living in the parishes are permanent residents. This figure is consistent with the 2001 Census of Population which suggests that 3.9% of dwellings are second homes. The ownership of dwellings within the parishes is as follows:

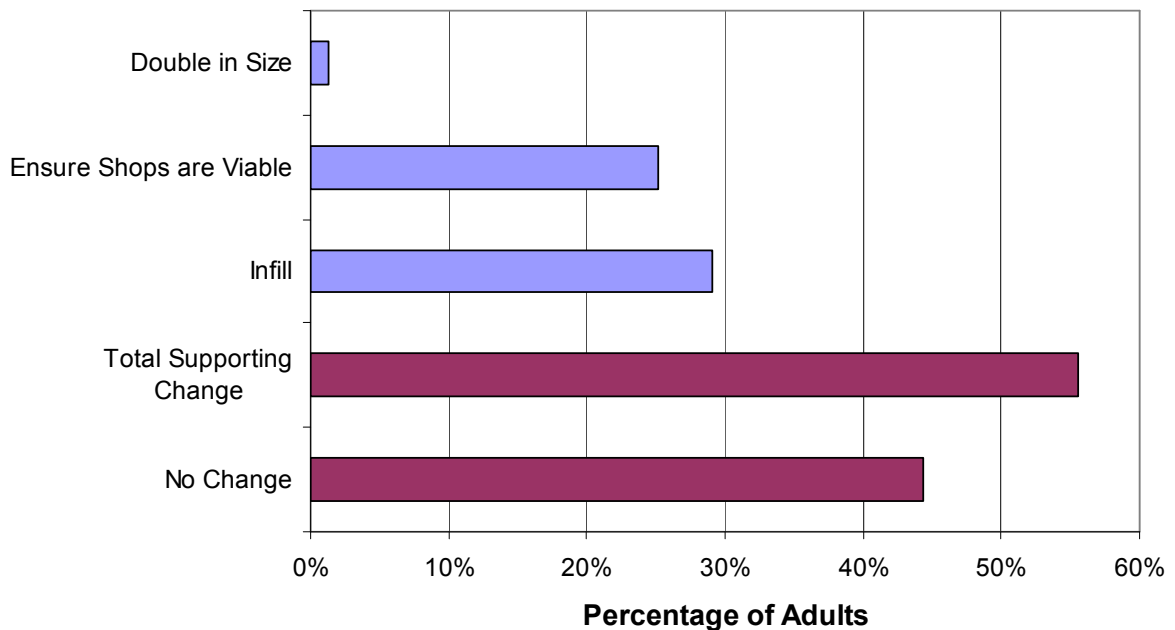
Owner Occupied	86%
Rented	3%
Housing Association	9%
Employer Provided	2%

The average time people have resided in the Parishes is 16 years 2 months, with 28% of residents having lived here more than 20 years.

**Future Size of the Parishes**

The future size of the Parishes gave rise to conflicting opinions in the early consultations, with the balance being in favour of only a modest and tightly controlled increase in size thereby preserving the nature of the village. One view was that there should be a moratorium on any further development apart from affordable housing and others noted that an increase in size will make the local facilities – shops and pubs – more viable, though increasing the size too much may exceed the present capacity of the public utilities. There was also a suggestion that more workplaces should be available in the village to provide work within easy reach of residents. The strength of residents views on these matters were tested in the Personal Questionnaire, which gave the following results from 660 completed replies.

**Residents' Views on Future Growth of Parishes**



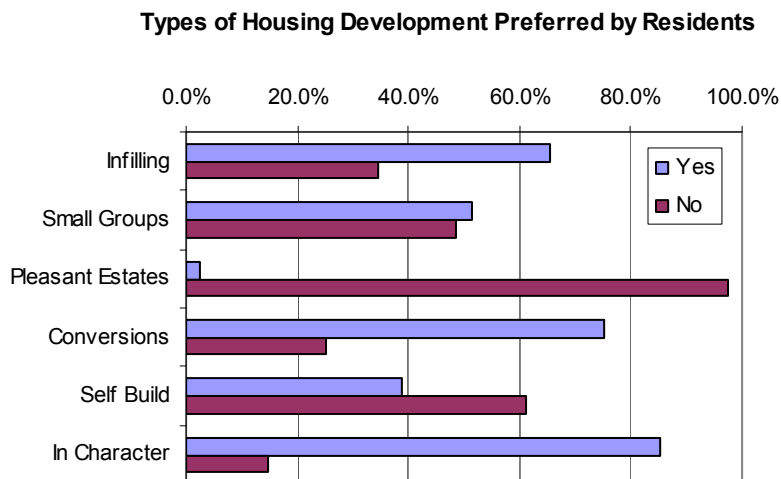
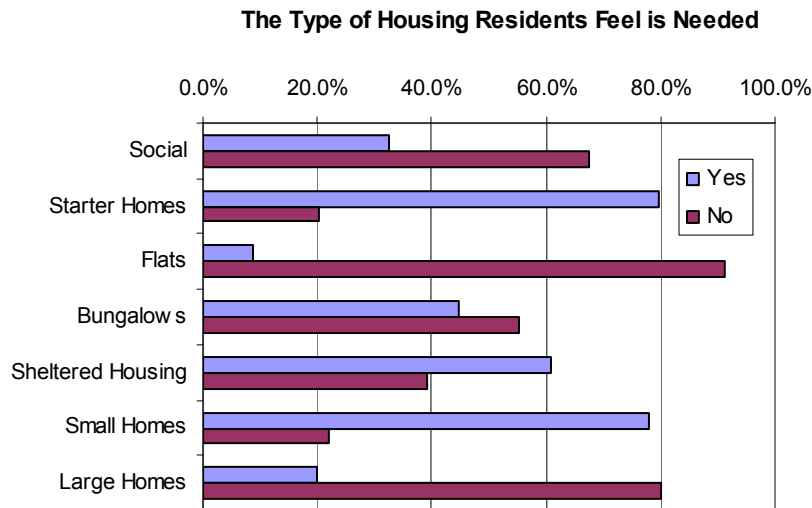
While the majority of residents will accept an increase in size, virtually no-one wishes to see the

Parishes double in size. The preference reflects the opinions expressed in the early consultations, with any increase arising from infilling and the need to preserve the viability of the shops.

**Future Housing**

The early consultations were consistent in highlighting a desire for more affordable housing, either as starter homes or as accommodation for young families. House prices were simply considered to be too high for young people and perhaps for people who have lived in the village for most of their lives. Consistent with the desire for affordable housing was a wish for a balanced community, particularly in terms of age, a point which gains importance from the disproportionately small number of residents aged 21 to 35.

The questions asked in the Parish Plan surveys measured the strength of feeling on the type of housing and housing development needed in the Parishes.



In response to these questions a small number of people expressed the need for sheltered housing for the elderly, ideally located near to the centre of the village and within easy reach of the shops.

**Employment**

In the initial consultations people suggested there should be more work places in the village within easy reach of residents and that facilities for working at home should be encouraged. There are of course several local employers including The Post Office, Cross Stores, St. Nicholas Church School, Hanford School, The Steam Fair, The Chicken Farm, Oasis, The Baker Arms, The Saxon Inn, as well as the farms.

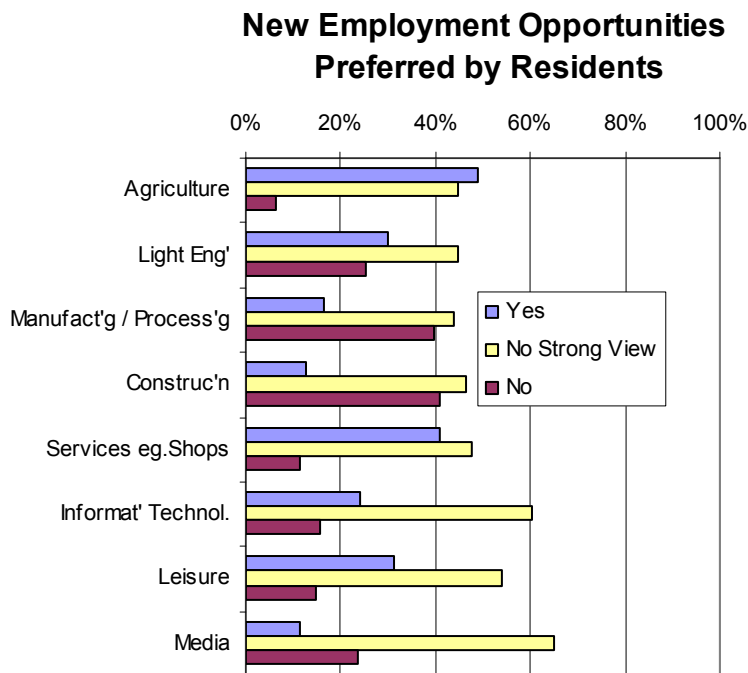
There were 705 replies to the question ‘are you employed’? 159 people are employed full time, 86 part time, 61 are self employed and 295 people are retired. The following table summarises these results.

Employed Full Time	22.6%
Employed Part Time	12.2%
Self Employed	8.7%
Unemployed	0.6%
Student	2.7%
Retired	41.8%
Sick/Disabled	2.3%
Voluntary Work	7.1%
Other	2.1%

(NOTE: Some people made two entries in their replies, e.g. Retired and Voluntary Work.)

Of the 306 people who indicated they were employed, at least part time, 58 worked from home and 57 elsewhere in Child Okeford (See the Section Traffic & Transport for a more detailed discussion of where people work).

Residents were also asked what type of new local employment opportunities they would like to see. The response was as follows:



## NATURE OF THE PARISHES

The preference is for more employment in agriculture, shops and services, but in present circumstances it seems difficult to create jobs in these areas and the greatest potential for sources of new work in the future maybe in light engineering, local manufacturing, information technology and craft industries.

There were specific suggestions made by residents for various craft industries; professional services e.g. accountant/financial advice; a farmers market; cottage industries; a chimney sweep; a fruit farm. Views were also expressed that new businesses might be located at the chicken farm or old mink farm, subject of course to planning permission and change of use. (Since preparing this report a 'Plant Centre' has been opened at the mink farm).

### Utilities/Services

All dwellings in the parishes are supplied with mains water and electricity, with the provision of other utilities as follows:

Mains Gas	59.6%
Calor Gas/LPG	1.8%
Oil	23.2%
Mains Sewerage	90.4%
Septic Tank	8.6%

Residents were asked how satisfied they were with the services provided to them. In general people are satisfied with the services they receive, though a small minority, between 4% and 6%, were dissatisfied with the water, sewerage, gas and electricity supplies. The Parish Plan Steering Committee feels it is up to individuals to take up their concerns directly with their suppliers. A similar minority were dissatisfied with the refuse collection, recycling and telephone services.

BT and others introduced a new service, Broadband, some two years ago. Broadband allows normal telephone conversations to be made at the same time as high speed data transmission on the same telephone line. This is a considerable benefit to internet users at whom the service is aimed.

The internet is already important to residents of the Parishes. 37.3% of adults (220+) said they already used the internet in response to the personal questionnaire and 83% of children replied 'yes'. 56% of those replying said they wanted Broadband and under a separate initiative the necessary signatures were obtained to persuade BT to modify the '01258' exchange to accept Broadband. As a result Broadband became available to residents of the parishes just before Christmas 2003.

## THE AMENITIES

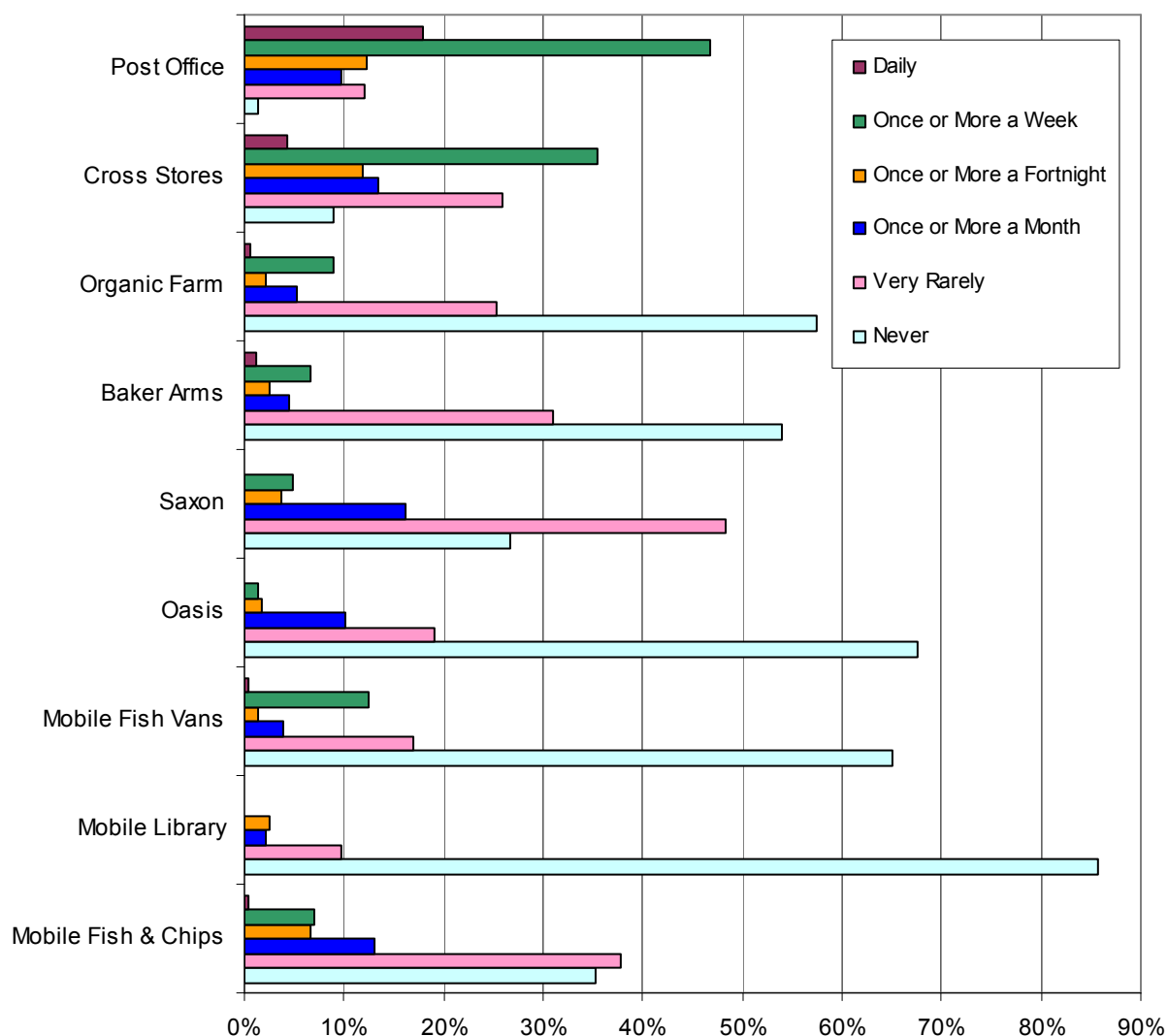
The comments received in the early consultations were remarkably consistent in expressing great concern about the future of the Post Office and Cross Stores. Many comments considered it essential to preserve them. In the words of one person “at all costs”. The Pubs and Surgery are also regarded as essential to the community and people would be distressed if the Surgery was lost from the Village. It is recognised that the future of the shops and pubs rests with the owners, who in turn depend upon the use people, especially residents, make of them. It was suggested that a photocopier would be used by residents and people might find village computer/internet facilities (a cyber café) attractive.

The results of the surveys, which are summarised in the following paragraphs, have been given to all the owners of the amenities and discussed with them.

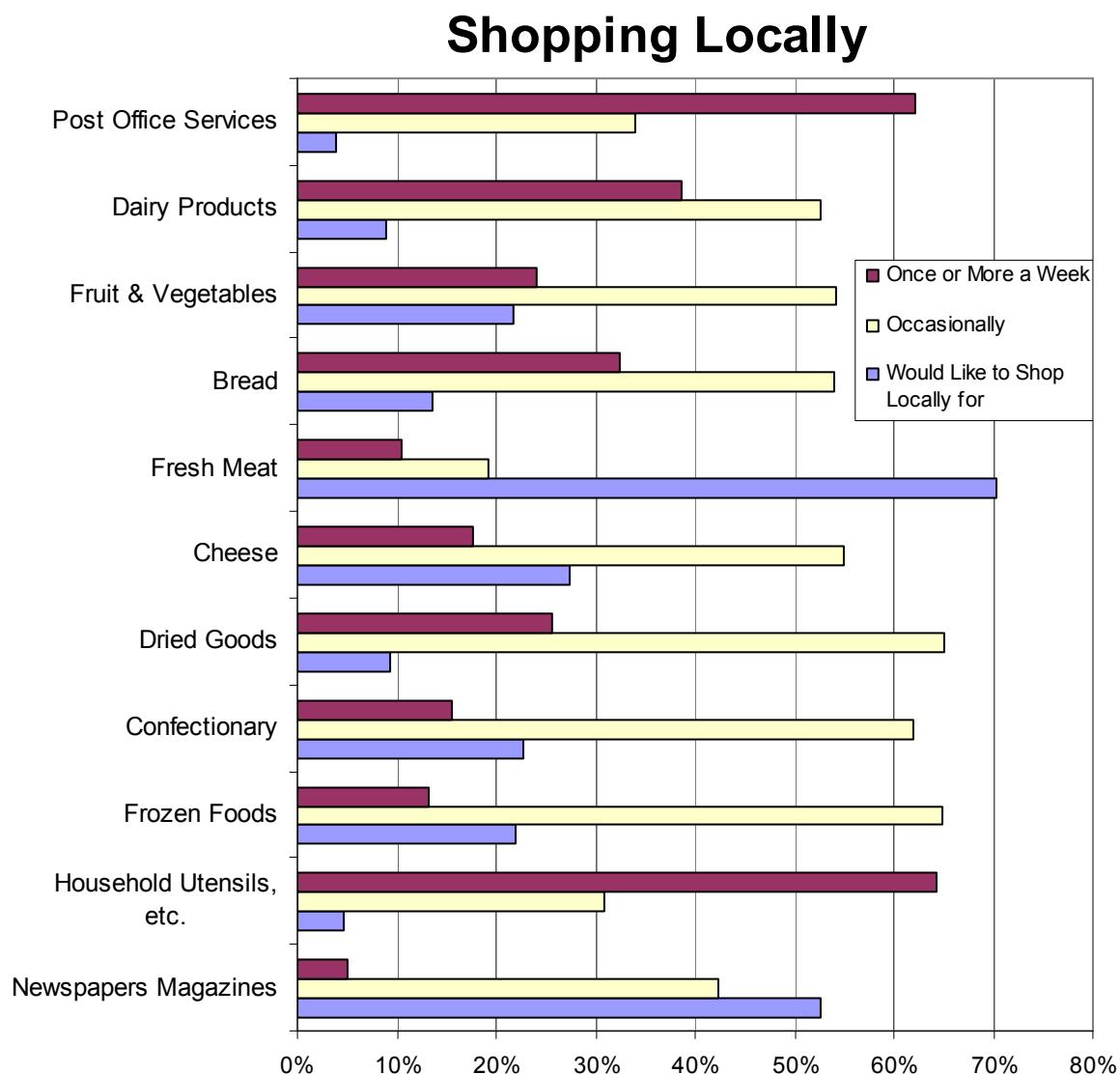
### Shops & Pubs

The surveys measured residents’ use of the parishes’ shops, pubs, etc. and confirmed the early views.

### Residents Use of Shops, Pubs, etc.



Asked what they shopped for locally the residents replied:-

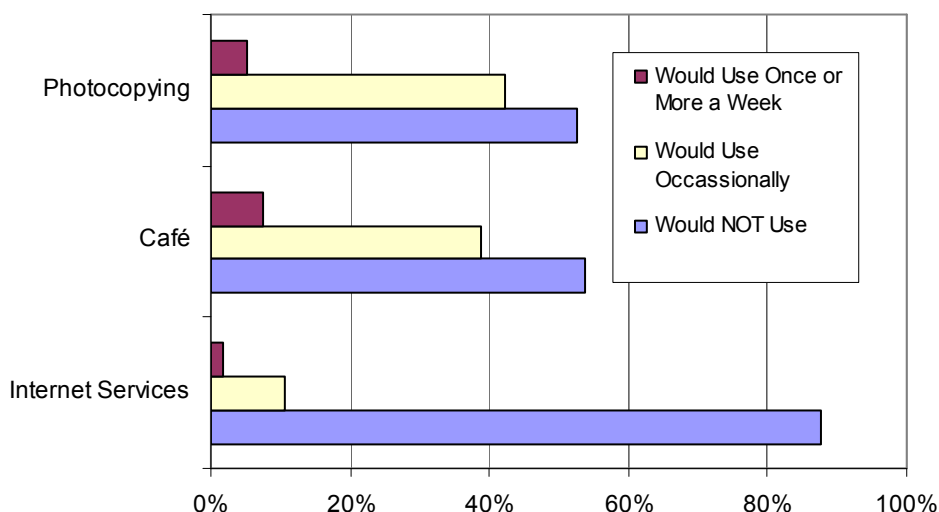


Nearly 340 people use the Post Office every week and over 200 use the Cross Stores (Please note that the Cross Stores has changed ownership since the survey was carried out). Residents use the Post Office regularly for Post Office services and dairy products, fruit and vegetables, bread and household utensils are high on the shopping lists for the two shops. Some would like to see a full range of P.O. services (note: since conducting the survey it has become possible to obtain new car licenses at the Post Office). There also appears to be a demand for a local butcher and for a better newspaper and magazine service.



Residents were also asked if they would use a photocopier, café and internet services if they were available in the village, and replied:

### Potential Use of New Services



Almost 300 residents said they would make regular or occasional use of a café and photocopier, but only 70 are interested in an Internet Service. The new owners of the Cross Stores are understood to be considering adding coffee shop facilities to the store.

The Baker Arms attracts a regular clientele of some 40 people, while The Saxon's regular clients number around 30. On the other hand, over 300 people never go to the Baker Arms, but only 168 said they never go to the Saxon. A comment that the Pubs might be used more often if they served good food may be relevant. The Saxon was taken over by new management as the survey was completed, so the comments made in the surveys relate to the previous owners. It is therefore pleasing to see that the new owners are again serving good food.

Residents made a number of suggestions for other services within Child Okeford, some of which are already available. Suggestions included a better range and quality of foods; dry cleaning (note: the Post Office already provides a service that returns the cleaned articles every other day); cash machine (note: cash can be obtained from the Post Office if you have a Lloyds TSB, Barclays or Alliance & Leicester Bank Account).

About 60 people use Oasis - the hairdressers – monthly; nearly 80 buy their fish and chips weekly; some 70 or more buy from the two fish vans visiting the village; about a dozen people use the mobile library each month; and over 50 people use the organic farm every week.

### The Church

St. Nicholas Church is the most significant building in the village, yet its use is limited. In preparing the questionnaires the Steering Committee was asked by the PCC if two questions could be added about the re-organisation of space within the Church to make it more flexible.

Over 450 people (78% of those replying) would like to see greater flexibility in the use of the Church and over 300 (59% of those replying) would support some sort of re-arrangement of the interior. These results were passed to the PCC as well as the un-attributed comments that were made. A recent discussion in the Church, hosted by the PCC, considered these points, including

the possibility of moving the organ to the North aisle and using the resultant vacant space for a meeting place, lectures, toilets, etc.

### The Surgery

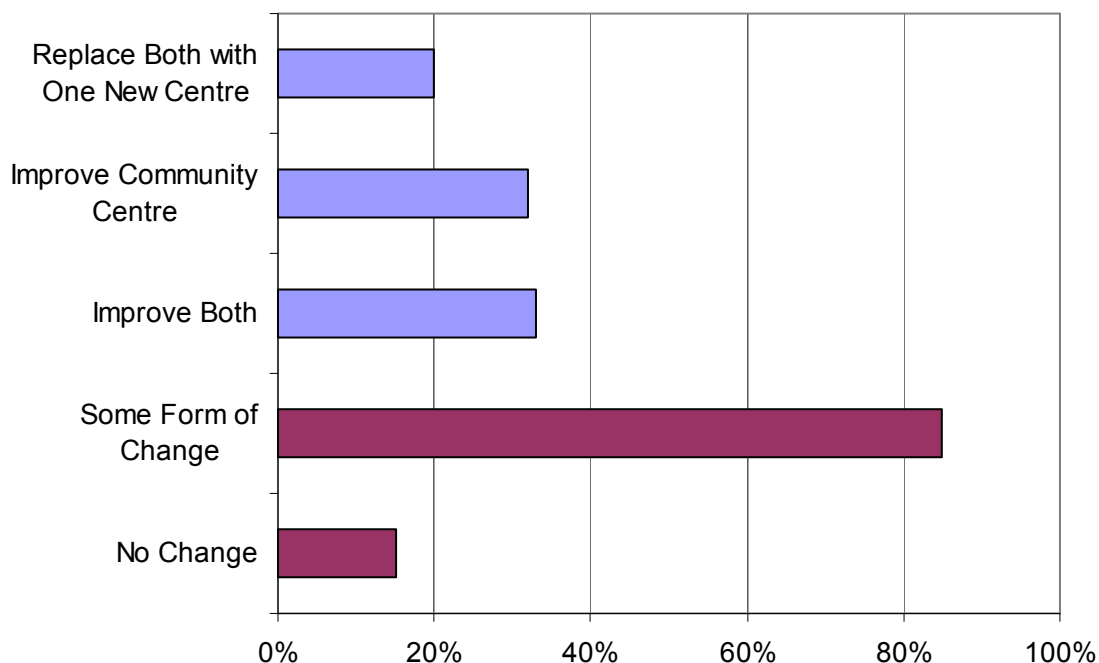
550 adults replying to the questionnaire (83 % of respondents) are registered at the Surgery. The Surgery is highly valued and residents would be very concerned if it ever closed. Over 60 % of those replying would use a Chiropodist (a private service is available occasionally at Oasis), 67% an Optician and 63% a Dentist if these services were provided. A few residents would like to see a full pharmaceutical service provided.

In response to these points the Practice Manager has said that the Child Okeford Surgery cannot provide dentistry, opticians or additional chiropody. These are provided by Private Contractors and therefore patients will have to pay for these services. The North Dorset Trust does provide chiropody but patients have to satisfy certain criteria, if they do so, they do not pay. This service is limited because of the budget provided.

### The Village Hall & Community Centre

The Village Hall and the Community Centre are highly valued but viewed in many ways as inadequate for future needs. The dilemma about their future was expressed by one person in the following words: “Why do we have an inadequate village hall and an inadequate community centre rather than one building that meets the needs of the village for the foreseeable future?”.

#### Developing the Village Hall and/or Community Centre



In response to the questionnaire 499 adults (85% respondents) and 59 children (80% respondents) said they would like to see some form of improvement to the Village Hall and/or the Community Centre, though the type of improvement was split, as shown above, between 3 options. Improving both halls (33% respondents) was favoured slightly over improving the Community Centre only (32% respondents), while replacing both facilities with a completely

new one found favour with 20% of respondents.

Both the Village Hall and Community Centre Committees are formulating their own plans to improve each one. Improving either is expensive and there are planning covenants that would make it difficult to use the Village Hall for other purposes. Based on the residents' responses, both adults and children, the Steering Committee concludes that improvements must take place, but that a final decision on their exact nature cannot be taken at this moment. The Steering Committee suggests that the next step is for a meeting to be held, which would include the users of both facilities and the two Committees to formulate the best solution for the parishes. The Steering Committee notes the success of the approach taken by the Pre-School Group as well as the proximity of the Community Centre to the School. Could the two benefit from each other's plans?

Residents were also asked if they would like to see any new facility attracting non-residents and functions, such as wedding receptions. 53% of respondents said 'no'!

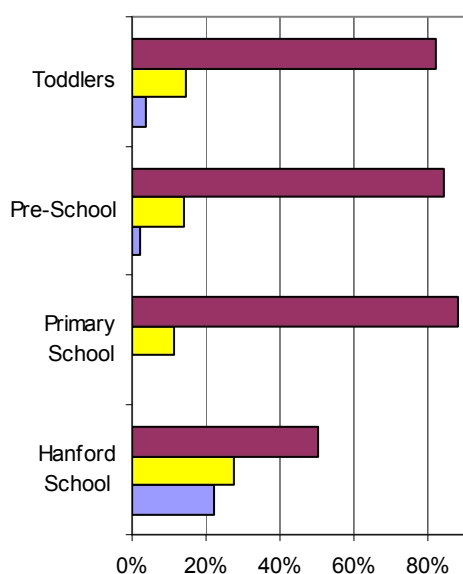
## EDUCATION

### The Parishes' Schools

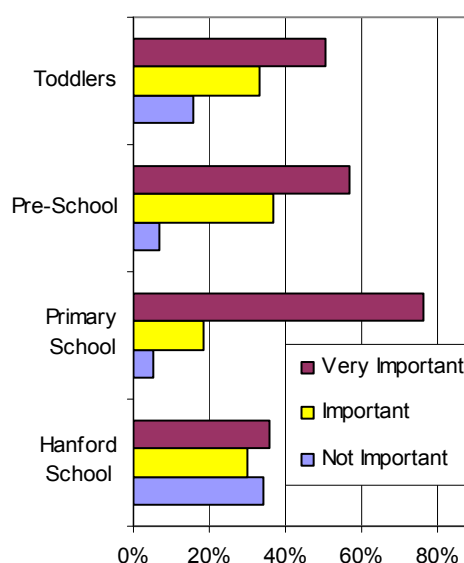
The results of the surveys and the consultations show that residents, both adults and children, consider it very important to keep the local schools and are fully behind the plans to develop the Pre-School facilities.

### How Important is it to keep the Local Schools ?

#### Adults' Views



#### Childrens' Views



A comparison of the performance of St Nicholas School with similar schools shows it is one of the best in the area with very good Key Stage 2 results. Residents clearly feel that this high level of performance must be maintained. The Parish Plan surveys suggest that there are about 30 children under the age of 5 (Pre-School age) living in Child Okeford and Hanford and a further 69 of Primary School age, numbers which support the plans to improve the facilities at St Nicholas School.

### Higher Education

About 110 children or young adults (under 21) living locally attend a Middle School, Upper School or other form of higher education. The majority of those attending a middle or upper school go to Sturminster or Blandford with others attending Shaftesbury or Gillingham. The great majority travel to these schools by school bus (80%+) with the remainder travelling by scheduled bus or by car (See the section on Traffic & Transport for comments on travel to school)

A comparison of the performance of these four schools at Key Stage 3 shows they are of similar quality, with Gillingham being top of the class. Gillingham also has the best GCSE results although not as good as Poole Grammar School, Bryanston or Clayesmore at ordinary level.

### **Adult Education**

Residents were asked if they would like to attend adult education classes and over 250 answered 'yes' (51%). There were over 60 varied suggestions on the type of classes that might be arranged with computer technology and various hobbies, crafts e.g. pottery and languages being the most popular. This high potential demand suggests that the proposed new pre-school facilities will find use out of school hours if appropriate courses are arranged and facilities provided.

**SOCIAL, RECREATION AND SPORT**

**Existing Clubs and Societies**

At least 170 different residents are members of one or more of the existing clubs and societies in Child Okeford and a similar number said they would like to join an existing club or society. This implies that the number of people who would like to join would increase the membership of some of the clubs by more than 100%. The number of adults saying they are already members of clubs or societies and the number expressing an interest in joining are:

	Existing Members	Interested in Joining
Womens Institute	24	11
St Nicholas Wives	36	7
Cricket Club	5	18
Football Club	11	7
Badminton Club	9	43
Short Mat Bowls	19	33
Table Tennis Club	4	23
Gardening Club	60	62
Floral Club	26	18
Sequence Dancing	5	23
Fitness Club	18	82

Of the young people replying to the surveys 40 (16 are over 15) attend the Youth Club and 51 do not. A small number of children play football or table tennis and 5 girls were members of the brownies.

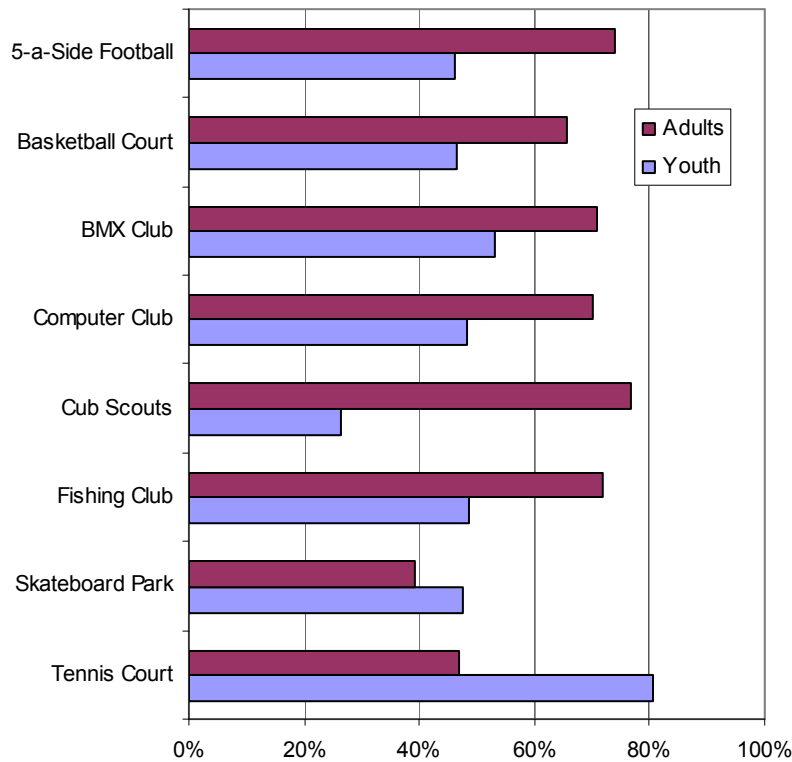
**New Ventures?**

While the need for new recreational ventures (clubs and societies) is strong among the people who completed the questionnaire, the youth of the village sometimes have conflicting views to those of the adults. The comparative views in favour of the possible new activities and facilities are shown in the chart that follows.

The two ventures that received a negative response from the adults were the tennis court and Skateboard park. Among the youth, 81% were in favour of having a communal tennis court, suggesting that the children would at least like to try playing tennis.

Among adults the BMX club, Fishing club, Computer Club, Basketball Court, 5-a-side Football and Cub Scouts all received between 65% and 77% support, while the youth of the village only gave more than 50% support to the BMX Club. A Skateboard Park received less than 50% support from both the adults and the youth and the Steering Committee rules this out as something the community should try to provide. There is a comparatively new Skateboard Park in Blandford that enthusiasts can use.

### % Residents in Favour of New Clubs/Facilities



In the early consultations suggestions were made for new clubs/coffee mornings for the elderly, perhaps along the lines of ‘Silver Threads’ in Sturminster, and for transport to take the elderly to existing clubs in nearby towns/villages. The surveys suggest the young do not see transport as a problem and only 11% of the elderly indicated they were more likely to join clubs or societies if transport was available.

Written comments received from the youth indicate an interest in other sports, such as athletics, hockey, swimming, gymnastics, boxing, netball, cycling and a riding club. There is also an interest in drama, a non-choir singing club and discos for older children. A telling comment is “the existing clubs need to be advertised. I didn’t know about half of them”.

## COMMUNITY ISSUES

### **Making Local Decisions**

In the early consultations the concerns over development, past, present and future manifested themselves in a series of comments about the power of the Parish Council and its relationship with the higher levels of government. There was a strong view that decisions on local planning issues should be made by local people. This view was confirmed by the surveys, with over 85% of residents saying it was very important or important for the Parish Council to have greater authority in granting planning permission for village developments.

The majority of residents will accept a modest growth in the size of the parishes, in particular to ensure the future viability of the shops, Post Office, Pubs, Doctor's Surgery and Church and there is a strong desire for any new development to maintain the present character of the Village. Infilling, conversions and small estates are the preferred type development for any new housing and residents see a need for affordable housing to maintain a balanced community. Almost no-one wishes housing estates to be built, even if they are pleasant, nor do residents want the Parishes to double in size! Residents see the need for more local employment opportunities, possibly with an element of work places for younger residents, and they consider jobs in agriculture, light engineering, services, information technology and leisure to be appropriate. Modest employment increase might be achieved by allowing more mixed development and appropriate development of the Mink and Chicken Farms.

The function of the Parish Council is to support the Parish in a fair, impartial manner. The Parish Council always invites comments from local residents about planning applications and after reaching their own view passes this on as a recommendation to North Dorset District Council or Dorset County Council who make the final decision. While it is unreasonable to expect the Parish Council to be given more authority over these issues in the near term, there is no reason why the community's views shouldn't be of paramount importance when North Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council are making planning decisions. The views expressed by residents in preparing this Parish Plan are being communicated to these higher levels of government and through the Countryside Agency to central government.

### **Keeping People Informed**

'The Hill' is our Parish magazine. 95% of those replying to the surveys say they receive it and it clearly performs an important function in keeping residents informed on the social life of the village. There is a feeling that more people would take the 'The Hill' if they thought it was not solely concerned with Church affairs. Over 60 constructive comments were made about ways in which it might be improved and these have been passed, un-attributed, to the editor and the PCC. Most people consider it to be a useful source of information, some think there should be specific reports on subjects such as sport, planning, etc. and there should be a correspondence column.

The Editor has already responded to these comments in last November's edition of The Hill, asking people to contribute and the Steering Committee endorses this request.

Suggestions were made for other forms of communication, notably the development of a village web site. This seems to be a task that could be taken on by the young people in the village and discussions will be held with the Schools and Youth Club to see if this can be achieved. In the meantime don't forget to read the parish notice boards.



## **Home Watch**

Residents were asked three questions in the surveys about crime. 208 families said they were kept informed of crime in the village by their Home Watch Co-ordinator, but 157 (43% of replies) said they were not. Comments from residents suggest awareness might be better than the answers to the question imply, since some residents say they learn about the level of crime in the village from The Hill, the shop windows or the Home Watch Telenet.

22% of respondents said that they have been a victim of crime in the village at some time, so it is disappointing that only 9% of residents have visited the Dorset Police Support Unit, whose van is parked at The Cross once every month to assist residents and provide advice.

Residents were invited to identify crime/issues that are of continuing concern to them and 117 comments were received. Police presence and response and the speed of traffic are the matters most frequently raised in the responses. A few specific problems are raised, for example vandalism, petty theft and abandoned cars.

The Police and the Home Watch team were given copies of the questionnaire for comment before it was distributed and have since been given a copy of the responses. The Police have been given a copy of all the comments, which are un-attributed, and have responded positively, saying they “would be happy to discuss specific experiences with any of the respondents and would be grateful if you (the Steering Committee) could forward details of anyone willing to be identified”.

The Police Support Unit is parked by The Cross in Child Okeford once each month and the Steering Committee asks residents who would like to tell the Police about their experiences and concerns to call at the Unit or arrange an appointment. Residents can also contact the Home Watch Chairman who can pass your name to the Police. Times of visits by the Dorset Police Support Unit are given in The Hill and on the Child Okeford Parish Notice Board.

## **The Local Environment**

There is a strong desire to maintain and enhance the village environment and its surroundings. There is particular emphasis on hedgerows and trees, with 83% of residents wishing to see native species planted when new planting takes place.

At the time of the surveys, May 2003, 58% of residents said the roads leading to Child Okeford and Hanford were kept clean and 60% thought the roads and verges were adequately maintained. With over 40% responding negatively there is still room for improvement and for all residents to take a pride in the village.

To satisfy the strong feeling that the village, its surroundings, hedgerows and trees need care and enhancement, a specific report should be made to the Parish Council about the planting of native species each time there is a need of replacements or new plantings, for example where new housing is to be built. A Parish Councillor might be given the responsibility for monitoring such replacements/enhancements. The appointment of a Parish Councillor with these duties is a matter the Parish Council should consider.

It is noted that an improved kerbside collection for recycling has been started by North Dorset District Council, which includes the collection of glass. Also special arrangements will be

available, on request, for collection of garden waste.

Comments were received in the early consultations about light pollution and residents were asked in the surveys if they would like more street lighting. 67% of residents said 'no'! The Parish Council are asked to take note of these strong views against more street lighting.

### **Tourism**

Two early comments suggested making the village more attractive to tourists and making more of an effort to provide basic tourist facilities, for example "a nice place for 'teas' during the spring/summer months" and the need for toilets. Both suggestions are rejected by the residents responding to the surveys. 63% said the village should not try to attract more tourists and 59% said no toilet facilities should be provided for tourists. Similarly 57% of residents said there should be no more designated parking places that could be used by tourists.

There might be some developments towards these ends however. The new owners of the Cross Stores intend to open a tea room in the shop and the Parochial Church Council is examining the means of providing toilets for the Church.

English Nature has been contacted to see if they have plans for Hambledon and Hod Hills. They do not intend to promote Hambledon or Hod Hills as major tourist attractions, for the following reasons: poor parking, no toilets, steep climb, preservation of important archaeological site. However, they intend to continue their present leaflet distribution and will probably lay-on future events on the Hill similar to the Wimborne Theatre Company's outdoor presentation in Summer 2003.

**TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT**

**A Car Dependent Community**

Child Okeford and Hanford are car dependent communities. Only 8% of households, representing about 42 dwellings out of a total of 527, do not have a car available to them. Of those without a car approximately two thirds are households where all the members of the family are of retirement age. The national statistics show that in Great Britain about 26% of households do not have a car available to them and for the South West Region the figure is 18%.

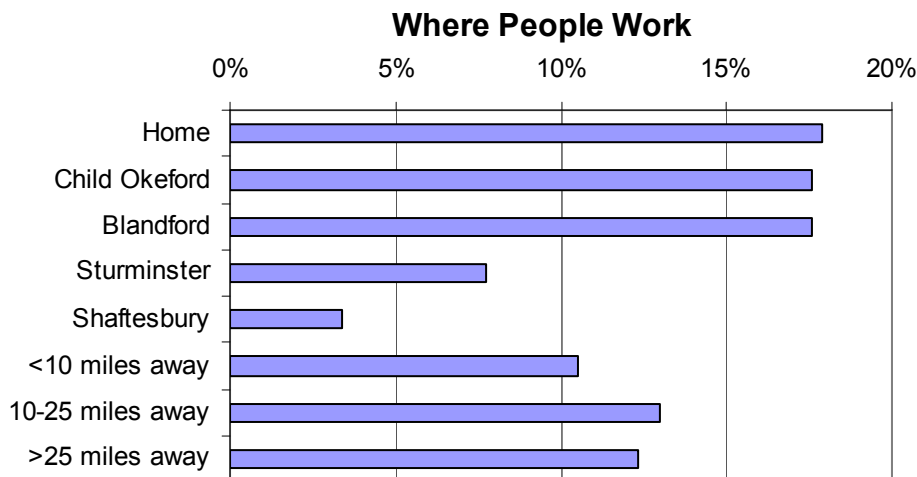
The number of families with two or more cars is correspondingly high compared to national statistics and the total number of vehicles based in Child Okeford and Hanford is around 800. Of these, the surveys suggest about 7% are kept on the local streets, 45% off-street and 48% in garages.

One of the implications from these results is that most of the vehicles we see on our roads belong to people who live in the parishes or are vehicles delivering goods locally. About two thirds of the traffic seen in the High Street is probably locally based.

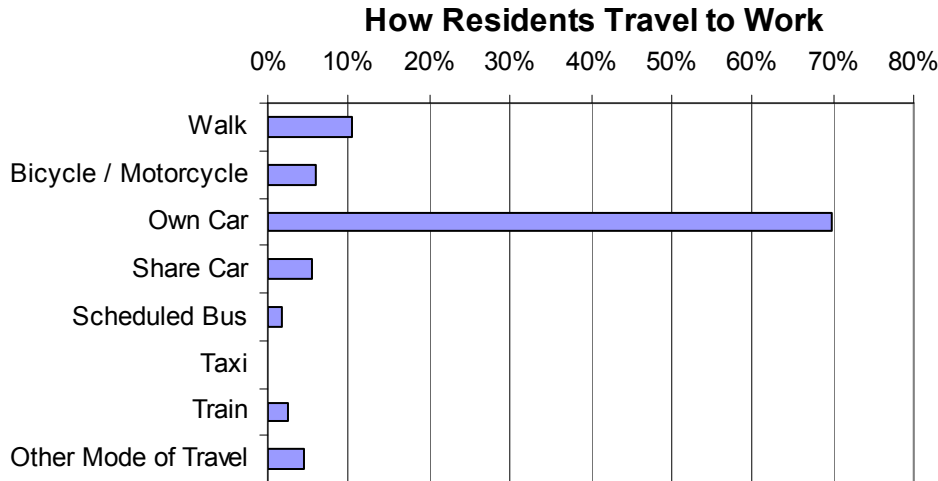
Among the adult population over 88% of residents have a driving licence, again emphasising the personal mobility of residents. Of the 120 adults (approximately) who do not have a driving licence, all, except a very few people, are aged over 35 or are under 20, an age when young people are still in the process of obtaining driving licences. There is a direct correlation between driving licences and cars owned and these results imply that any increase in car ownership will be modest, keeping pace with those under 35 getting older and any increase in the population of the parishes.

**Travel**

Residents travel habits reflect the dependence upon the car. The following two figures show where people work and how they travel to work.



Other places where people work include Winterborne Whitechurch, Iwerne Minster, Okeford Fitzpaine, Shillingstone, Pimperne, Durweston, Hinton St Mary, Hazelberry Bryan, Fontmell Magna, Bovington, Sherborne, Bishops Caundle, East Knoyle, Yeovil, Dorchester, Bournemouth and Weymouth.



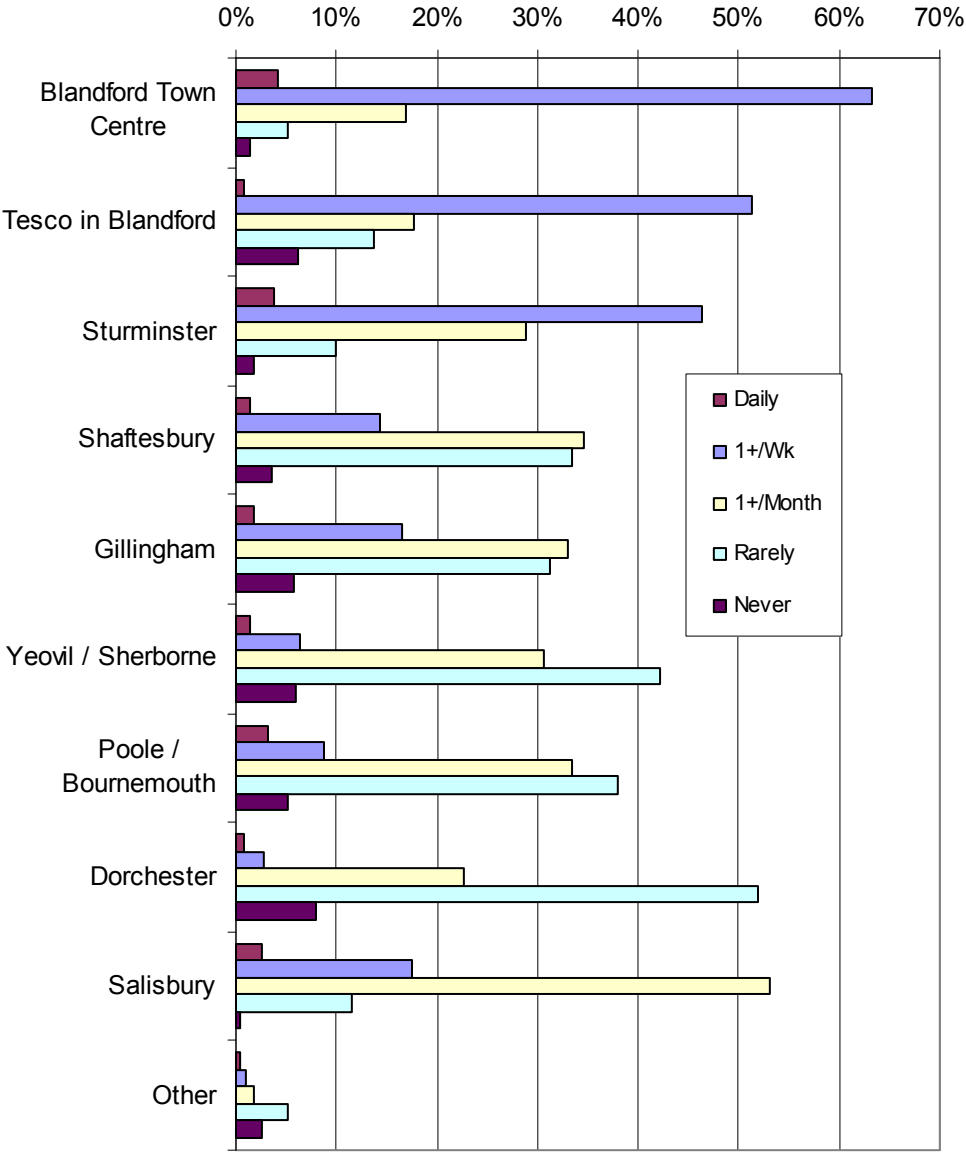
The places where people work are scattered in all directions from Child Okeford and with this pattern of movement it is not surprising that the car is the dominant mode of travel to work. Buses running on fixed routes cannot satisfy this journey pattern economically, the best that can be done is to encourage people who live on a bus route that goes directly from the village to their place of work to use the bus. There is no evidence from the surveys that people who can do this do not do so already.

Residents were asked to say how their journey to work might be improved and 64 people commented. There is no dominant theme. A few commented that the buses do not run at convenient times for their journey to work or they did not run on time or were too infrequent. A few said the journey could not be improved. Other comments concerned road safety, speeding and the dangers for pedestrians. Some asked for lower speed limits, others for no speed limits, a few wanted more cycle ways, a few wanted the railway reinstated.

The children attending schools outside the parishes were asked how they travelled to school and how this journey might be improved. Most of the travel is by school bus (39%) and by car (28%). Scheduled buses account for very little travel to school. The children’s comments tend to relate to their particular journey, for example the need to change from one service to another and the fact timetables are not co-ordinated. More generally, safety and the condition of buses/coaches was an issue and their condition needs to be improved.

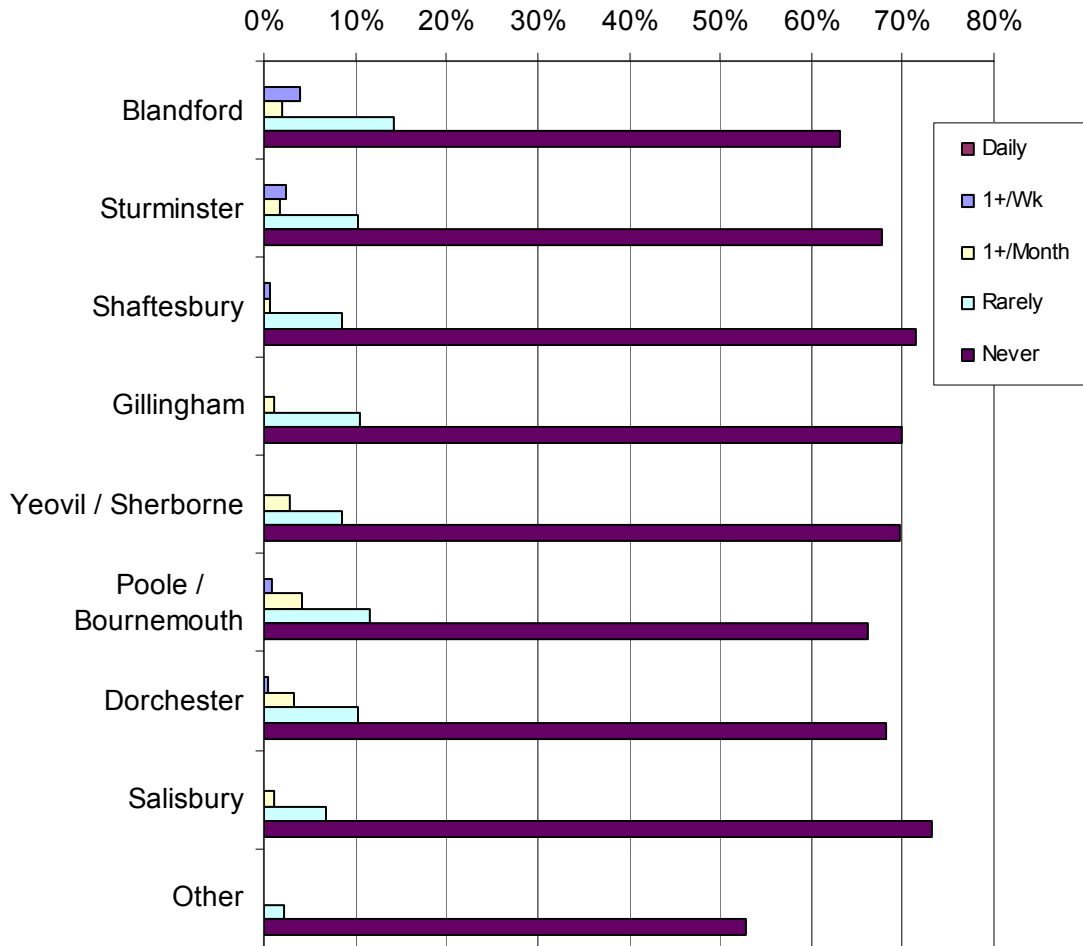
Residents were asked how regularly they used their cars and a bus to different places. The answers again reflect the dominance of the car as a means of transport for residents.

**Frequency & Destinations of Journeys by Car**



Other places visited frequently (once a week or more) by car included Wimborne, Ferndown, Gillingham, Milborne St Andrew, Iwerne Minster and Southampton.

**Frequency & Destinations of Journeys by Bus**



No other place was identified as requiring a regular bus service..

Just over 7% of residents said they depended upon the bus services (a figure that is compatible with nearly 8% of households having no car) and 54% of residents said the buses ran at convenient times for them. The 46% who did not consider the buses run at convenient times suggested greater frequency of service, new routes and buses running on time would improve the bus service, but the potentially low demand suggests some of these improvements will be difficult to justify.

The surveys explored the possibility of providing a minibus service based in Child Okeford and car sharing for those without a car. 79 residents said they would be willing to drive a community bus occasionally, but since only 3% of residents said they ever needed lifts the Steering Committee concludes that a new minibus service is not justified and residents should be made more aware of the existing NORDCAT service.

Sharing cars, particularly for work and shopping journeys, would reduce traffic and might help those without a car. 48% of residents said they would be willing to share a car with other

villagers and 62% said they would shop for a neighbour. Exploring the opportunities for car sharing seems a more likely way of reducing the traffic on our local roads, but the difficulties of organising this must not be underestimated.

19% of residents said that they used taxis. Taxis provide a more flexible service than buses and for those who have no car, and where individuals are socially excluded, subsidised taxi services may offer better value for money than subsidising a more extensive or frequent bus service. There are already concessionary fares for the elderly and the disabled which provide some of the needed flexibility. Anyone aged 60+ and those who qualify as disabled can claim a bus pass, which provides half fare travel, or alternatively can claim taxi tokens. The half fare bus pass can be used on the scheduled bus services and on the NORDCAT community bus service, which is centred on Sturminster Newton (01258 472164). Anyone interested in these passes/tokens should contact Customer Services at North Dorset District Council (01258 484174) for details and application forms. Both the elderly and disabled should also remember they may qualify for cheap rail travel and Customer Services at North Dorset District Council can also advise on this.

### **Safety**

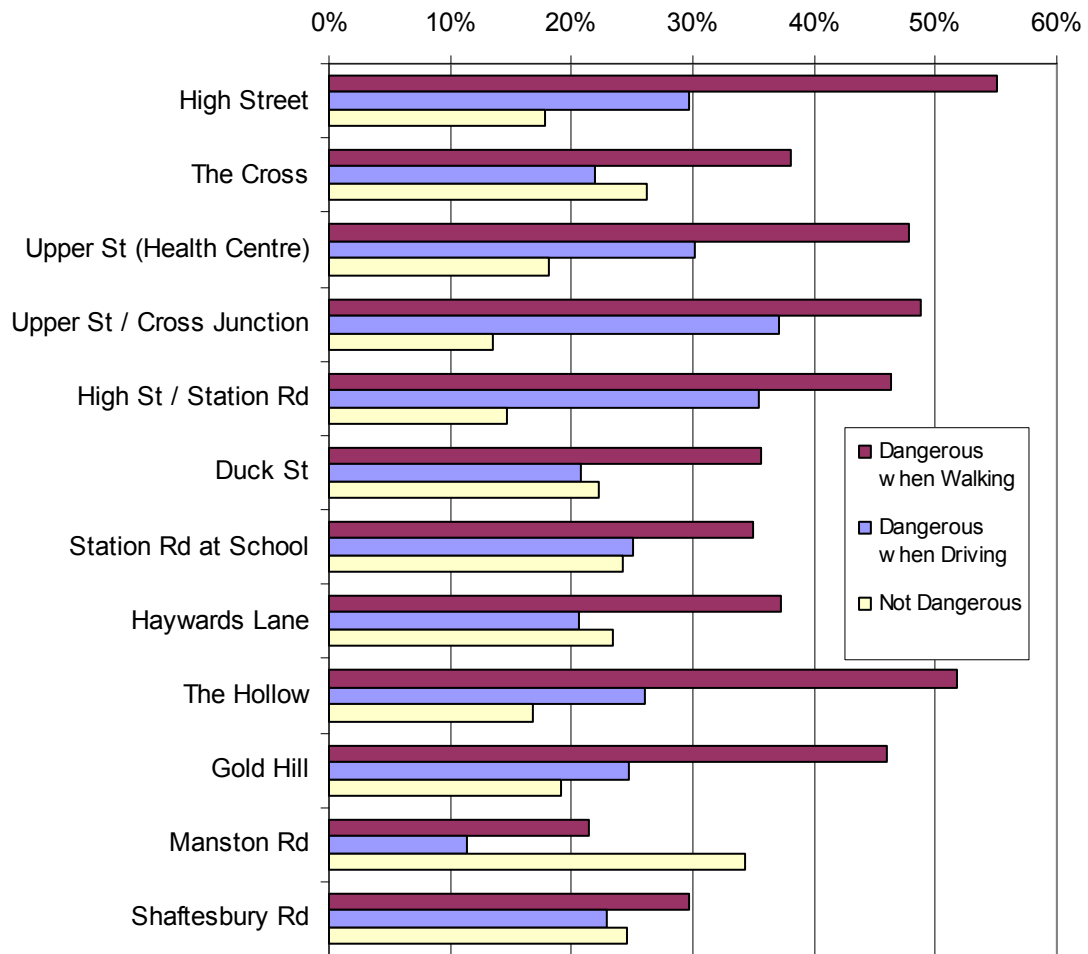
The intrusion of traffic on village life has provoked more comment from residents than any other topic. The primary concern is the safety of pedestrians, arising from the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. The concern is expressed in various ways: the amount of traffic is getting worse; cars are travelling too quickly; tractors are intimidating and travel too fast; can't walk safely; there are no footpaths; there are too many parked cars; and we have to walk in dirty gutters are typical of peoples feelings.

The responses to the survey questions highlighted the strength of these concerns:

- 86% of children think the speed of cars, lorries and tractors should be slowed down to make it safer for people walking on the road, especially by St. Nicholas School, Gold Hill and the area around The Cross.
- 83% of adults and 81% of children walk regularly on the roads.
- 66% of adults think that pedestrians should have priority on the roads.
- 66% of adults and 80% of children said there should be more footpaths in the centre of Child Okeford. 60% of adults would also like more off-road footpaths.
- 61% of adults said that they would find 20 mph speed limits acceptable.
- 60% of adults do not want more cycle routes in the village.
- 51% said that they would find safe routes to school acceptable.

Members of the Steering Committee identified 12 locations they felt could be dangerous, usually because sight distances are short, and asked residents whether they felt the locations were dangerous when driving a car and when walking. The response is summarised in the following figure.

**Dangerous Locations**



A very high proportion of respondents feel all the locations are dangerous, especially when they are walking.

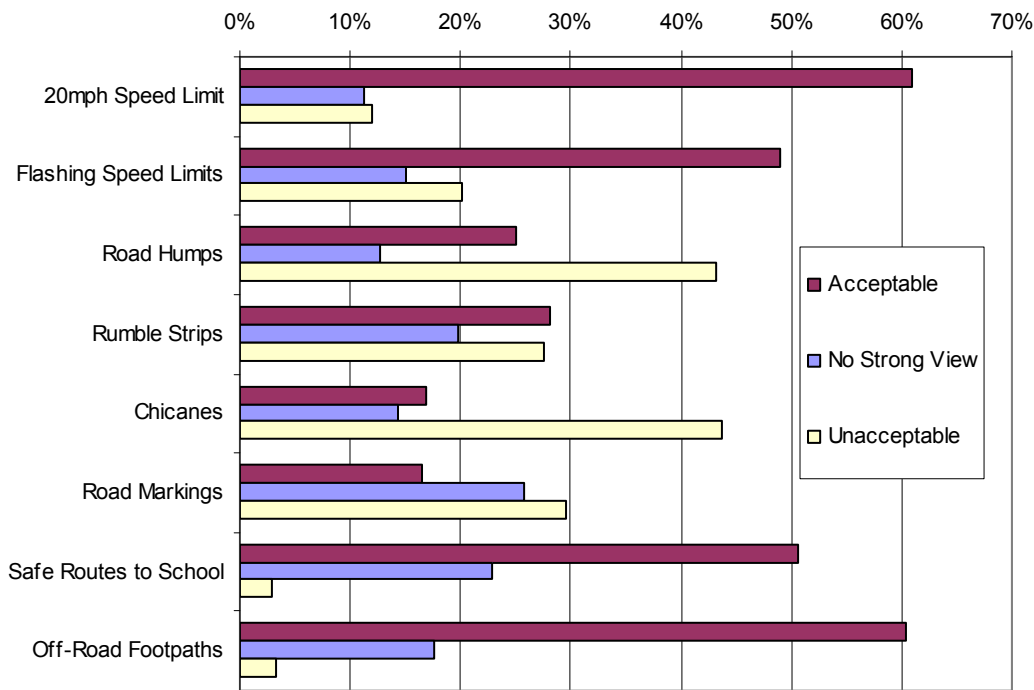
Over the past seven years several speed and other traffic surveys have been carried out in Child Okeford at the request of the Parish Council. The surveys have been conducted on the roads leading into the village outside the 30mph limits, in Station Road outside the School, in Duck Street and in the Hollow outside the Village Hall. In general within the Village, the surveys have shown that almost 50% of traffic exceeds the 30mph speed limit, though very little travels more than 35mph. On the basis of these results the Police have been to the Village and set up a speed trap on one occasion but have not told us of the outcome.

The concern over speed in the Village has been discussed on several occasions with the County Council. The new footpath on Station Road leading from the Car Park at the Recreation Ground to the School is in part due to a request from the Village for this footpath after the first speed surveys in 1997. More recently the County Council have offered to loan the Parish Council 'SID' a portable 'Speed Indicator Device' for a couple of days. SID will show drivers the speed they are travelling at and is a portable form of the permanent indicators on the A350 at Stourpaine, Iwerne Minster and Fontmell Magna. The Steering Committee expects SID to appear for a couple of days sometime in May or June 2004.



Finding a solution to the concerns residents have over traffic speed on the local roads is important and has to be an ongoing action. There is no single or simple solution and with this in mind residents were asked to say which type of traffic measures they would find acceptable. The response is summarised in the following figure (the percentages are based on the total sample of 681 replies).

**Solutions to Speeding Traffic**



A 20mph speed limit, flashing speed signs, off-road footpaths and designated safe routes to school are acceptable. Residents do not want road humps, chicanes, rumble strips or road markings. Children hold similar views. The experts tell us that road humps, which they accept are controversial and split communities down the middle, are the most effective way of reducing speed.

Discussions with the County Council have identified another important problem in solving the speed issue. There are no funds currently available for Child Okeford and Hanford to implement safety measures within the village. Other villages within Dorset have similar problems and are well ahead of Child Okeford and Hanford on the priority list. Perhaps it will surprise many residents that there are funds available to install 40 mph speed limits on rural roads under advice on achieving the central government’s safety targets. As a consequence we can expect 40mph speed limits to be installed on the roads entering the village prior to entering the current 30 mph limits, but the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit in the centre of Child Okeford is still being resisted by Dorset County Council.

Discussions on the solutions and funding need to continue as a matter of urgency and the Steering Committee suggest the following are explored.

1. There is already a useful network of footpaths and with few additions they could provide a safe alternative route for pedestrians and safe routes to school. However, we recommend that all footpaths within the village be properly surfaced so that they can be used throughout the year.
2. More striking traffic signs are required on all four roads as they approach Child Okeford. The Parish Council should ask Dorset County Council to make Child Okeford an area where pedestrians have priority over vehicular traffic and again ask for speed limits to be reduced to 20 mph.
3. Line markings and/or coloured road surfaces could be used to produce roadside 'walking zones', as an alternative to constructed footpaths, and to create a number of 'pinch points' with priority in one direction..
4. Permanent signs that illuminate at hazard points when excessive speeds are detected, as in Stourpaine, Iwerne Minster and Fontmell, should be investigated.
5. Residents are encouraged to keep their hedges within their own boundaries and to provide bolt holes for pedestrians to take refuge from traffic.
6. Children often play on the road without paying attention to traffic while waiting for and departing from their school buses. Barriers and shelters might help to improve safety at all bus stops and regular pickup points. Hazard signs could also warn motorists of the increased danger when children are about. Both of these options need to be explored in more detail.
7. 'The Hill,' and 'Blackmore Vale', magazines have a role to play in reminding residents of the need to moderate their speed, especially as the majority of speed offenders will be residents of the parishes.
8. Alternative sources of funding need to be explored.

### **Other Traffic Topics**

**A Child Okeford Bypass?:** A year or so ago the Blackmore Vale suggested there were plans to by-pass the A350 with a new road running alongside or using the A357 and cutting across to join the A350 again around East Knoyle. The Steering Committee have ascertained that there are no current plans to improve the A350 although there is a study of the A36 corridor between Bristol and Southampton which could recommend improvements to the A350. Residents were asked two questions in the surveys. 61% of respondents said they considered the A350 was dangerous and needed improving. 61% of residents would oppose a re-alignment of the A350 that ran parallel to the A357 adjacent to the old railway line at Shillingstone.

**Traffic Noise:** Residents were asked if traffic noise was a problem to them. 92% of residents said traffic noise is not a problem to them.

## VISIONS AND ACTIONS

Child Okeford and Hanford stand at the beginning of the twenty-first century, poised to re-invent themselves if they choose. The character of the Parishes has changed considerably over the past century. What was once a farming community with a variety of shops and a meeting place on the way to the railhead at Shillingstone has become an attractive place for retirement and dormitory community for those with jobs in nearby towns. Happily the parishes have retained a farming and rural air, but farming is no longer the dominant activity. So, how can the parishes develop over the next half century?

### **Future Size, Housing, Employment and Education**

The population of Child Okeford and Hanford has more than doubled over the past century. All the evidence suggests that the parishes will continue to grow and the surveys show that residents will accept a reasonable and steady growth at rates that have happened in the recent past. Residents wish to retain the existing local shops, pubs and surgery and modest growth will help to strengthen their future. The vision is a population of around 1750 people by the year 2050.

Residents do not wish to see the growth in population accommodated in large, new housing estates, but will accept infilling and small developments that retain the character of Child Okeford and Hanford. Residents also recognise that there is a need for affordable housing for both the young and elderly. This begs the question of how to attract young families to the parishes and affordable housing and people with their own transport are key requirements. The provision of housing by housing associations is recognised as one way forward, but it should be a condition of offering accommodation to families in any new Housing Association dwelling that the means of getting to work or to shops already exists for them and that moving a person or family to Child Okeford or Hanford will not make them socially excluded through lack of transport provision.

An increasing population implies a need for more local employment opportunities, both in the parishes and nearby towns. At present just over a third of the employed residents work from home or elsewhere in the parishes. Creating new employment opportunities in a small community needs an environment which allows individuals to make their own decisions and the planning policies need to encourage this. A large company is never likely to choose to locate in Child Okeford or Hanford, but agriculture, light engineering, craft industries, information technology, leisure, shops and media activities can be encouraged. Growth in these activities was supported by a significant majority of the residents who responded to the surveys. Creating an environment that will encourage these types of jobs and activities will be helped by allowing mixed developments - housing with adjacent or attached office/workshop style accommodation.

The local schools are good and highly valued. As the population continues to increase and more young families are brought back to the parishes the role and importance of maintaining the schools increases. The Steering Committee sees the plans for improving St Nicholas School as an important element to achieving this Parish Plan and fully endorses them.

### ***Steering Committee Recommendations***

- 1. The Parishes adopt a policy of modest and steady growth in the population of the parishes and that this message is conveyed to North Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and Central Government.***

2. *The Parishes seek mixed development that retains the character of Child Okeford and Hanford and will encourage the type of local job creation residents are happy to see.*
3. *The Parishes actively support the plans to develop the local pre-school facility.*

### **Village Hall and Community Centre**

“Why do we have an inadequate village hall and an inadequate community centre rather than one building that meets the needs of the village for the foreseeable future?” was a view expressed by one resident and endorsed, in one form or another, by the large majority of the residents responding to the surveys. At present there are plans to improve both the Child Okeford Village Hall and the Community Centre, but finding the funds to do so is proving difficult.

This report has indicated a greater potential for a Village Hall/Community Centre than present plans will provide. As a matter of urgency the *Steering Committee recommends that*

4. *A joint meeting of the Village Hall and Community Centre committees together with the clubs and societies using these facilities should take place to determine the best solution for the parishes’ longer term social and sporting needs. It is anticipated that the meeting will form a task force representing all the interests and whose brief will be to produce a realistic plan for new community facilities by the end of 2005. The same task force can also review the responses from the residents and youth of the parishes to new clubs and societies and decide which of these can be accommodated.*

### **Traffic**

The intrusion of traffic on village life raised more concerns from residents than any other matter. The concerns are expressed in various ways: The amount of traffic is getting worse; cars are travelling too quickly; tractors are intimidating and travel too fast; can’t walk safely; there are no footpaths; there are too many parked cars; and we have to walk in dirty gutters, are typical of people’s feelings. The results of the surveys show that such concerns are held by a large majority of residents, both when they are walking and when they are driving. A solution needs to be found.

Sadly there is no easy solution and the Steering Committee concludes that action needs to be taken systematically, consistently and over time. The action required involves all levels of government as well as local residents. Central Government has two roles, it sets standards and transport priorities for the Country as a whole and provides most of the funds for implementing solutions, even at the parish level. The funds filter down to the County Councils who are responsible for implementing the local transport plans and schemes according to the priorities they have set within Central Government’s transport policy. Setting the local priorities is achieved within the Government’s policy framework from time to time with advice from the District and Parish Councils. The wishes of the residents’ is remote from this decision making process, but the residents are the cause of most of the local traffic problems and have a duty to their community to act responsibly in their travel and driving habits.

The priorities of Central Government and residents priorities are not necessarily the same. For example, Dorset County Council, which is the authority responsible for the roads in Child Okeford and Hanford, is willing to provide 40 mph speed limits on the roads entering Child Okeford but not a 20mph speed limit in the village, which many residents believe is a solution to their concerns over traffic. This is a direct consequence of Central Government's policy to reduce accidents on rural roads which are disproportionately high across the country.

It is very important to the residents of Child Okeford and Hanford to find and implement a solution to this traffic dilemma. It is the view of the Steering Committee that a solution can be found with the co-operation of Dorset County Council and with whom a plan and timescales can be agreed for solving residents concerns over traffic. In the Traffic and Transport section of this report eight topics are identified that can be the starting point for the discussions with Dorset County Council.

### ***Steering Committee Recommendation***

- 5. The Child Okeford Parish Council should develop a plan with Dorset County Council for solving the residents' concerns about traffic in Child Okeford. The plan, and its funding, needs to be agreed by the end of April 2005 with Dorset County Council when it can form part of the County Council's new Local Transport Plan.***

### **Transport**

Child Okeford and Hanford are car dependent communities. The number of cars, measured as cars per person, is among the highest in United Kingdom. This is both an advantage and disadvantage. The cars provide a flexible lifestyle for residents, allowing them to live in a pleasant rural community and be flexible about where they work. This continuing flexibility is seen as crucial to the future viability of the parishes. The disadvantages are the traffic problems (highlighted above) that are a direct consequence of the high personal mobility; the conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and the danger of social exclusion for those who do not have access to a car and will not have the same level of mobility as those with a car.

The number of families in the parishes who do not have access to a car is estimated at 42, and of these the members of perhaps 30 families are over 65. The longer distance travel needs of these residents without a car has to be satisfied by the bus services, NORDCAT, taxis, obtaining lifts from neighbours or be reduced by the provision or subsidy of new facilities, particularly shops, within the village.

Maintaining the existing public transport services to and from Child Okeford is important for everyone and retiming of services to ensure residents working in Blandford, Sturminster Newton or Shaftesbury can travel at convenient times needs to be explored by Dorset County Council with the operators. But the surveys have not shown that any radical improvement to the frequency of service, or new services to other places, is justified or likely to be viable.

***Steering Committee Recommendation***

- 6. As a continuing action the Parishes need to monitor the public transport services provided to the parishes and be active in encouraging car sharing, the use of taxis - if necessary with subsidies, and the continuation and development of the NORDCAT scheme, especially for those without access to a car.***

**Other Matters and Actions**

While preparing this plan changes have occurred, actions have been taken to advance the plan and other actions still need to take place. In summary these are:-

1. The ownership of both The Cross Stores and The Saxon Inn has changed. In both cases to the benefit of the community.
2. A broadband telephone service is now available to residents. This should help to make the parishes more attractive to small businesses and the self employed as well as encouraging the trend in home working.
3. People are broadly satisfied with the main services. Where residents are not satisfied, they should take their concerns directly to the utility companies providing the service.
4. The quality of TV and mobile phone reception is very variable within the parishes. The problem is caused by the local topography and the location of transmitters. The TV and mobile phone operators are aware of these problems and concerns.
5. The shops, pubs and surgery have been made fully aware of residents' views of the services they provide. All have responded positively to the information they have received and will act as they feel is appropriate.
6. The Police and the Home Watch team have been given the residents response to the surveys. The Police have asked that they are informed directly of any concerns or information residents have and have reminded us that the Police Support Unit is parked in Child Okeford once a month for residents to visit. The times the Unit is parked at The Cross in Child Okeford is usually given in The Hill and on the Parish Notice Board by the Cross Stores.
7. The Hill, which is produced for St Nicholas Church and purchased (£2.50 a year!) by most residents of Child Okeford, is the main means of keeping people informed of parish activities and events. The Steering Committee does not see the need for another newsletter within the parishes but would like to see more information about other village activities as well as the Church. The content of The Hill depends upon the contributions of residents and the voluntary work of its editor. A recent plea from the editor has resulted in the content being broadened.
8. The Steering Committee feels the suggestion for a village web site is a good idea and suggests it could be created with the help of the youth of Child Okeford and Hanford. To this end the Steering Committee encourage the Youth Club and School to explore, with the young people of the village, how the web site could be created and to report back to the Child Okeford Parish Council with their recommendation.
9. Preserving the character of the parishes is important to residents and there is a strong desire to maintain and enhance the village environment and its surroundings. The Steering Committee recommends that the character is maintained through the planting of appropriate hedges and trees. The Parish Council might also ask one of the councillors to monitor planning applications for the impact they will have on the environment and character of the parishes.

10. Residents are happy with the present level of tourism, primarily visitors to Hambledon and Hod Hills, and are not keen to encourage more tourism. This view is compatible with the plans and views of English Nature. If St Nicholas Church decides to provide toilet facilities the PCC should consider whether these are made accessible to tourists, otherwise the Steering Committee sees no need to recommend action in this area.
11. Residents do not want more street lighting.

### **Financing the Projects**

Most of the recommendations made in this report do not require special funding and are primarily dependent upon the willingness of people to act in the normal course of events, but there are three proposals in the report that require significant sums of money if they are to be carried forward. These proposals are:

1. The Pre-School Buildings. A committee already exists to take this project forward and this Parish Plan fully endorses their actions. This is the first of the projects that should be completed. The estimated cost of completing this is £400,000.
2. The improvement of Village Hall and/or the Community Centre is the second project. At present the two Committees are each seeking around £150,000 to improve both.
3. The traffic measures residents wish to see implemented to make the village safer requires significant funds, perhaps as much as £250,000, which may not be available in the near term from local or central government sources.

Some of the funding for these projects should come from the tax everyone pays, but it is possible that for any of these three projects residents of Child Okeford, Hanford and Fontmell Parva could be asked to dip into their pockets in one way or another.

### ***Steering Committee recommends that***

- 7. The Child Okeford Parish Council form a special 'Funding Committee' to establish how the necessary funds can be collected and managed for ensuring the successful completion of these projects over the next ten years.***

### **Who Will Carry The Plan Forward?**

Simply proposing a Parish Plan does not see it through to completion and when the Steering Committee was established its role ended with the completion of the Plan. So who should carry it forward? Child Okeford has a Parish Council and Hanford a Parish Meeting, though the Steering Committee understands that the future of Hanford as a separate parish is under review. In these circumstances and because Hanford has a small population the ***Steering Committee recommends that***

- 8. Child Okeford Parish Council should take on the responsibility of carrying forward this Parish Plan and should regularly monitor the progress against the recommendations that have been made.***