CASTLE CARY & ANSFORD
Community Plan 2023

Community Review
Your future plan

Delivered by

smart communities
part of the CCS group

On behalf of

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Executive Summary (available as a separate document)

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Action plan (available as a separate document)
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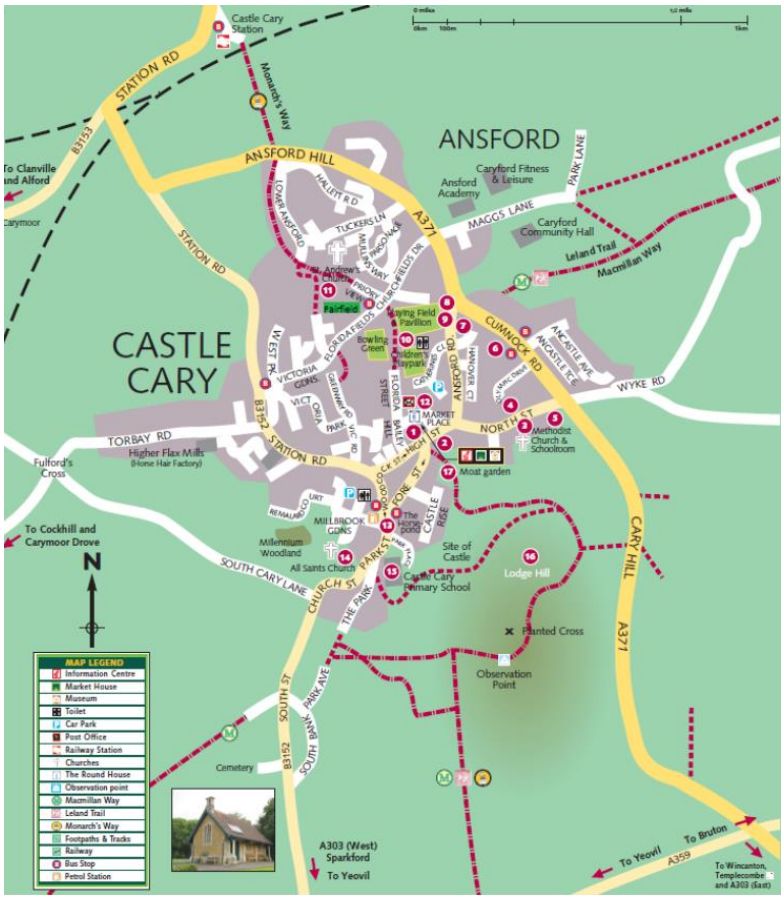


Introduction

Castle Cary is a thriving Market Town nestled in the beautiful Somerset countryside situated 3 miles from Bruton, 5 miles from Wincanton and 8 miles from Shepton Mallet. It is served by the mainline train station enabling travel to Paddington, Penzance, Bath, Bristol, Weymouth and beyond.

It has good road access via the A371 and easy links to the A303 linking London to the West Country.
Bus services have been reduced but a recent initiative ‘Bus it’ campaign promoting £2.00 single fare is proving successful.
Castle Cary and Ansford are two separate but linked parishes that provide joint facilities for the community.
Castle Cary and Ansford are growing communities. The 2021 Census records indicates that we have 3500 residents jointly. Employment has remained buoyant with unemployment rates in South Somerset at 2.1% which is below the national average 3.7% for Great Britain.

Source https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157380/report.aspx

The questions in this plan were geared to establish what the directions and priorities are for our residents. We chose questions that the Town and Parish Council could consider implementing within our influence and remit. We are particularly keen to welcome new residents and ensure that all the provisions are accessible and inclusive of everyone.

Having identified the direction our community wants us to go in, through the responses we received in the survey, some clear priorities were identified. From this we have identified a number of actions that we can deliver to meet these priorities. Some of the actions have already begun and some should be simple to achieve, others will be a long-term challenge and, in some cases, aspirational. Another key reason for the survey is to provide information and support for any grant applications by the Town or Parish council and any community group for grant funding.

The joint communities published a CanPlan in July 2006. The actions have largely been achieved and it is evident that some issues will always be ongoing and addressed as they arise. A major achievement was to undertake the renovation of the Market House and in 2019 the Town Council took responsibility for the whole building from the District Council (now Somerset Council) on a 999yr lease. There are new plans to further develop the Market House. In developing the Market House, a thriving Tuesday market has been well established and is a main attraction for local shopping and for people visiting Cary.

There was an intention to have a new Library, but this did not happen. However, we are pleased to have retained our Library, run entirely by volunteers from our community through a Community Interest Company with grants from Somerset Council, Castle Cary Town Council and Ansford Parish Council along with grants from the smaller surrounding Parishes. The siting of a skate park proved impossible, however, when the Fairfield was acquired, our priority was to provide a Pump Track which was more acceptable to neighbours. Other actions are in the outcomes of our new survey.

The Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in September 2018, clearly sets out a way forward for our joint communities, facilities, support and infrastructure and the environmental impact to enable our community to grow and enhance the town over the next 10-20 years.

Further less formal consultations, that have taken place over the last few years include; Fairfield Consultation 2021, Youth Consultations, Caryford Hall Consultations 2019- 2022. Other Informal regular consultations happen through Pavilion Consultation Group, Market House Project, Care 4 Cary, Cary History Society and a Community Conversation (twice a year) with representatives from our voluntary groups. The Annual joint Town and Parish meeting is another way of communication with residents.

Currently we have a Traffic Working Group in action looking at all aspects of the town's traffic, parking and footpaths. Other on-going consultations are taking place for the proposed Pavilion and Market House projects. The reason for choosing the five key headings was to find out the impact each area is currently having on life within the community and to highlight areas where improvements could be made.

The first section of the consultation was to establish the **Demographics** of the area which highlights the makeup of our community.

- **Our parish** was chosen to highlight the aspects of the town and parish that the respondents liked and did not like.

- The **Community facilities and services** were chosen to help us understand whether the facilities are suitable for the community where improvements or new facilities are needed.

- **Businesses** have changed over the last couple of years and how and where they are situated have been affected particularly by Covid 19. We wanted to establish what support the Town and Parish could provide to help maintain a thriving business community. Independent shops on our High Street continue to provide for a diverse retail experience. This contributes to our attraction for tourists along with our commitment to free parking.

- **Climate Emergency/ environmental issues** are concerns for the future and the aspiration is for us to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the information gained from the respondents will help highlight how this can be achieved. The rising cost of energy is also a concern and Councils are keen to provide information and support to keep houses warm.

- The **Transport** questions in the survey will help us understand how respondents use transportation and the demands on parking facilities in the town. An essential consideration was their concerns and suggestions about traffic and parking issues in general.

With the new Unitary Authority in Somerset established from April 2023 we wanted to understand if respondents appreciated how the Town and Parish councils work, what it might spend the annual precept on, what opportunities it might present and if and how it could do better.

In producing the survey Smart Communities shaped the questionnaire and Survey Monkey was used to implement it. The online delivery was preferred for its completion, but support was provided through the volunteers in the Information Office at the Market House and in the Library for individuals who were unable to complete the survey online themselves. The questionnaire was 20 pages long, so paper questionnaires were discouraged for environmental reasons. Alongside this document there will be an Executive Summary for the public to have an understanding of the findings and themes that have been identified and how we will respond to this and an Action Plan that will ensure findings are progressed as part of the Town Councils objects.

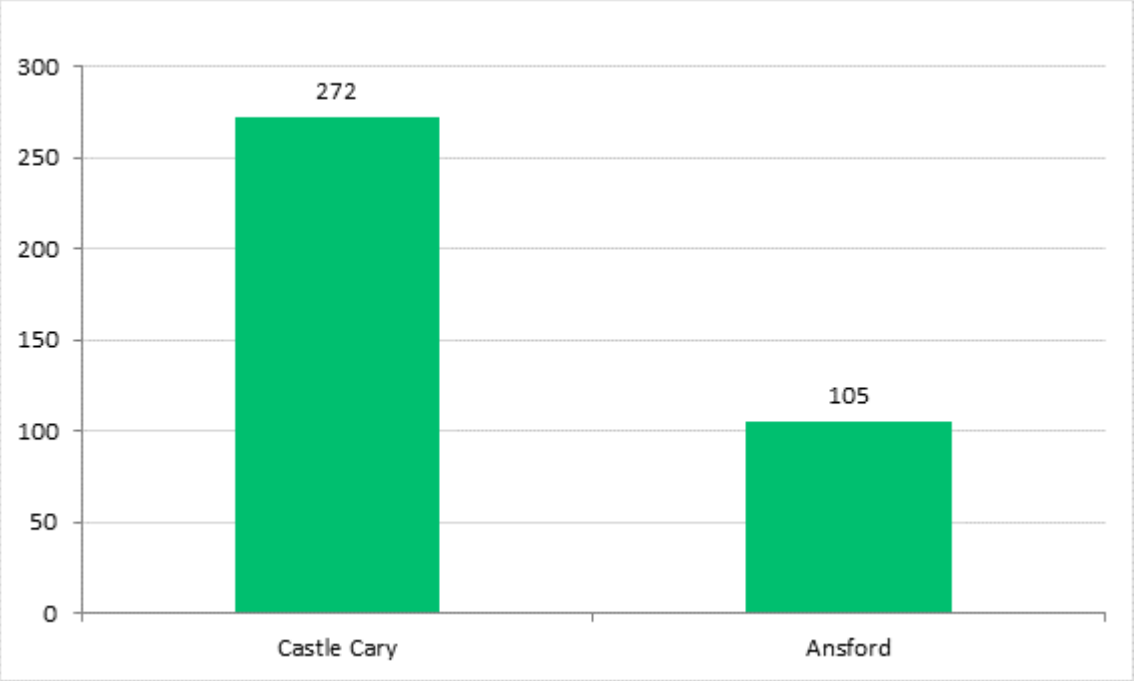
This report provides an analysis of the data that was provided by the 380 people that completed the survey. Where we have provided the option for people to their own comment in the ‘other’ choice, we have looked for the common themes and provided that information and some examples under the analysis of the data for that question. Where appropriate we have provided some further context and information around the issue raised within the question.

Findings

Demographics

This provides us with an introduction to who has completed the survey, including some basic background questions about age, household size and how long they have lived in the area. Please note that Census 2021 data is now available at https://census.gov.uk/census-2021-results

Q1. Please let us know where you live
Answered 377 Skipped 3



The number of respondents from Castle Cary & Ansford reflects the demographics of the residents with approximately two thirds of the population living in Castle Cary Town Council ward and one third in Ansford Parish Council. This provides us with the confidence to know that the two communities of Castle Cary & Ansford are fairly represented in this survey.
At the time of the survey the proportion of the population living in both Town / Parish council was approximately CCTC was 64% & APC was 36%

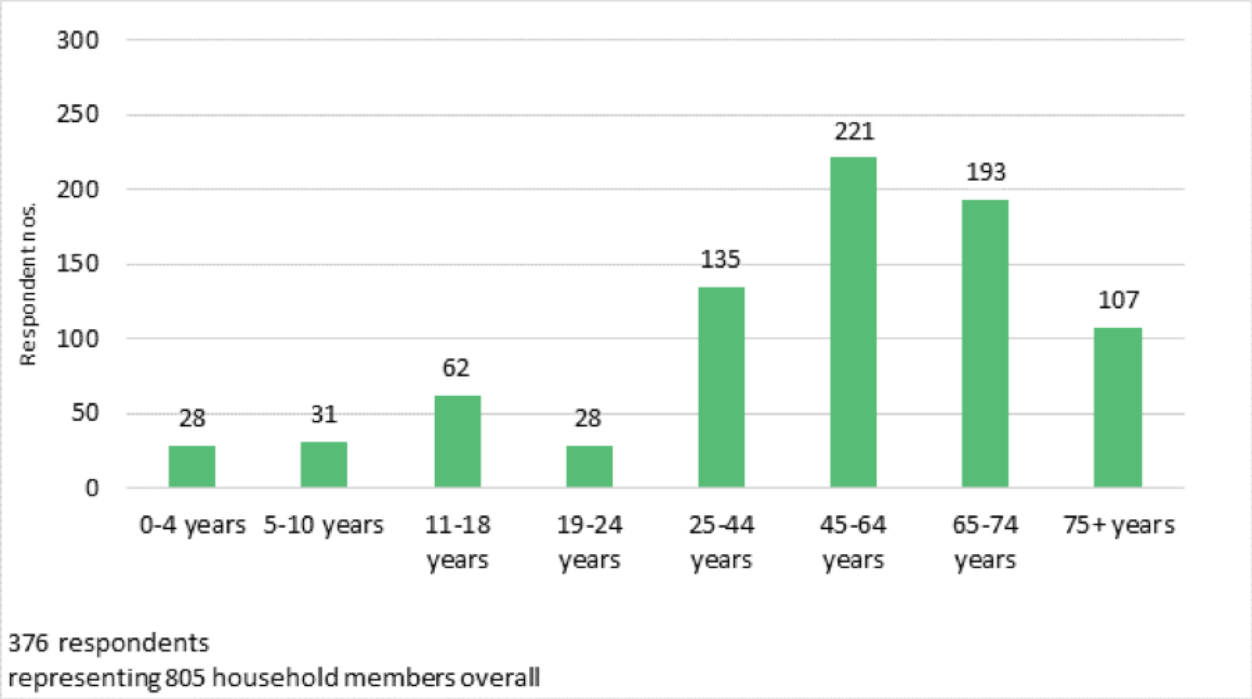
Q.2 How long have you lived in Ansford or Castle Cary?
Answered 380 Skipped 0

Answer Choices	Responses
12 months or less	19
1 - 3 years	71
4 - 10 years	87
11 - 20 years	75
More than 20 years	128

Of the 380 people who answered this question the highest proportion of responses came from people who had lived here for over 20 years (128), those living here for 3 years or less totaled 90 and those who have lived here for 4-10 years numbered 87.

Context: Respondents tend to stay in the area with most respondents having lived in the area for more than 10 years. The length of time the respondents have lived in Ansford & Castle Cary reflects the population, with four new housing developments with an average of 75 houses being built in the last 3 years and the majority being long term residents within the Parish & Town, and planning permission for a further 600 homes.

Q.3 How many people in each age group live in your household? (please place a number in the relevant boxes)
Answered 376 Skipped 4



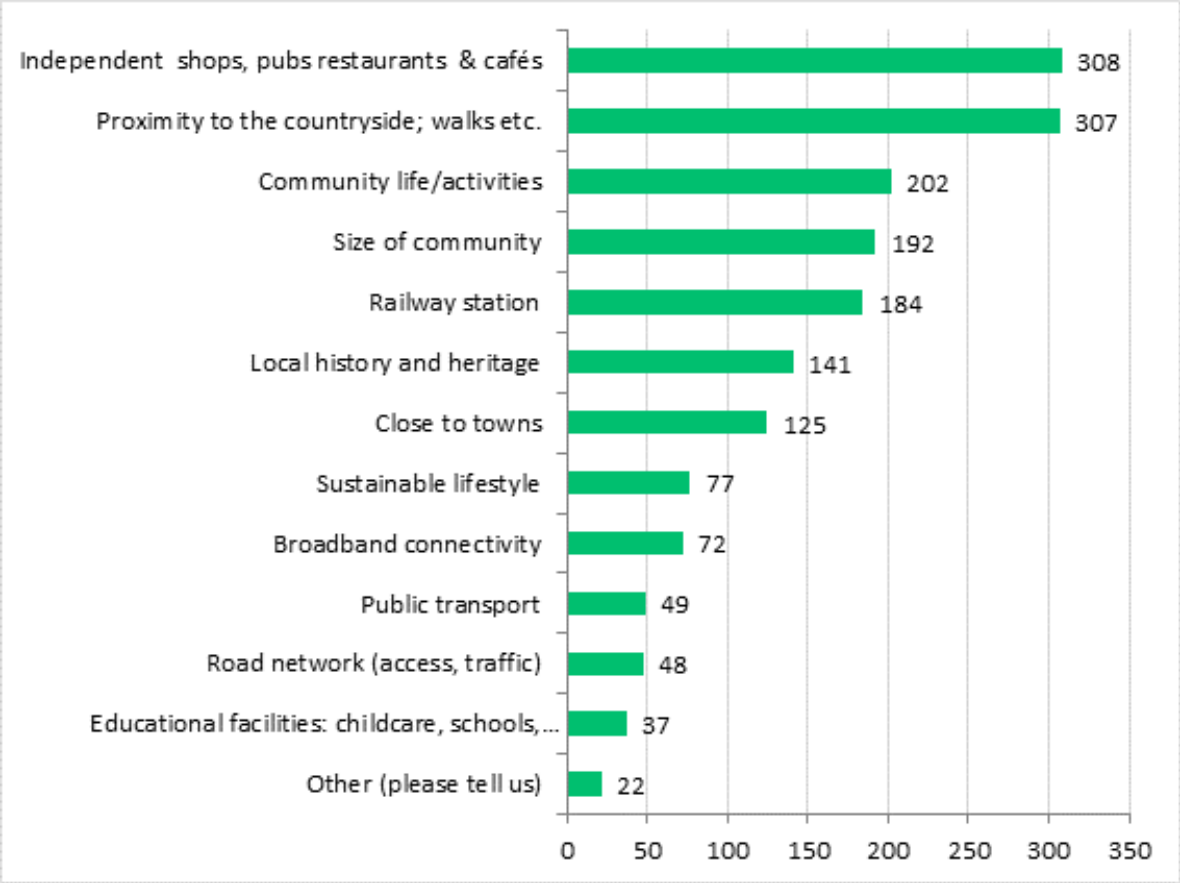
The ages of respondents living in each household reflects the 2021 census results. Most respondents living in households are older than 45 years (521 people living in respondents houses were older than 45 years) which is above the national average. See Appendix 1 – 2021 Census Finding

Your Parish

Your views on living in Castle Cary and Ansford and a snapshot of what aspects of the Parishes you like and don't like.

Q.4 What do you like the most about living in Ansford and Castle Cary? Choose 5 that are most important

Answered 376 Skipped 4

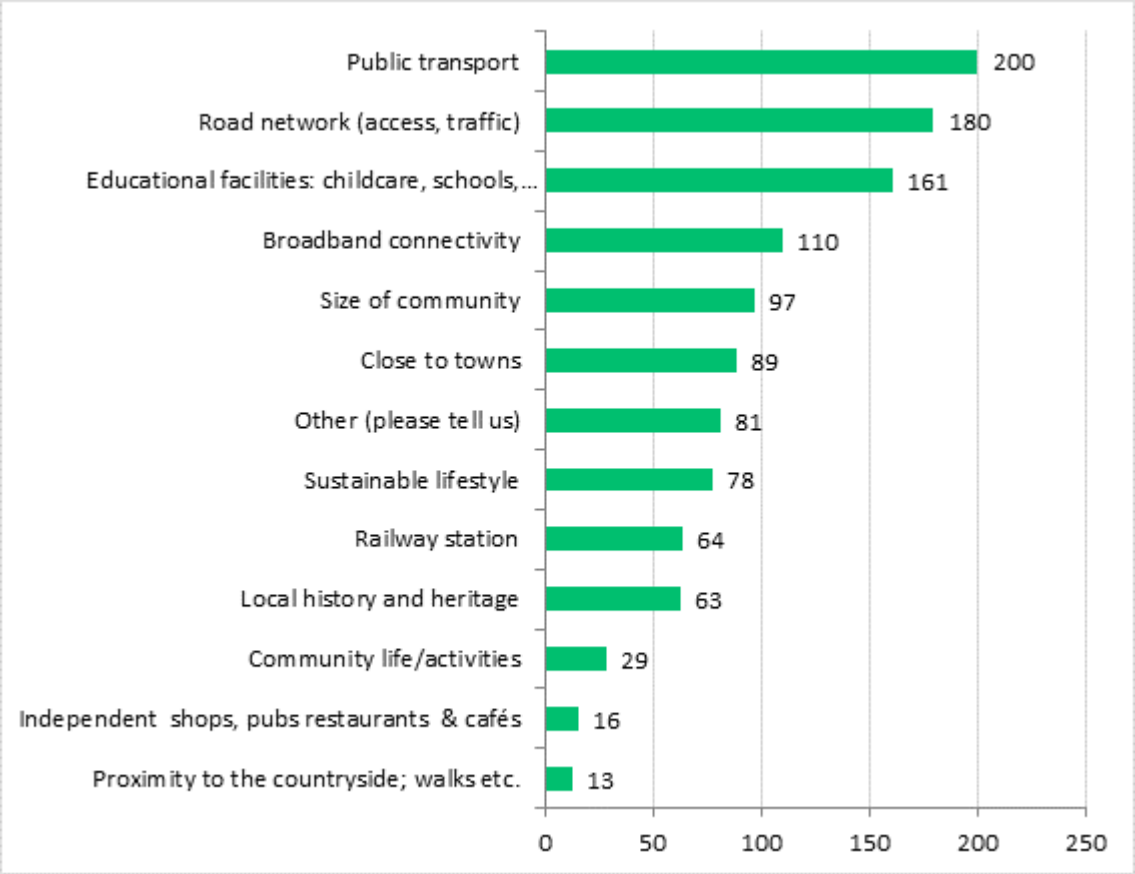


The majority of 376 respondents like living in Castle Cary & Ansford because of the 'Independent shops, pubs, restaurants and cafés' (308 respondents) and the 'Proximity to the countryside' (307). Other important aspects of Castle Cary & Ansford life are that people enjoy the 'Community life and activities' (202 respondents) along with the 'Size of the community' (192) and the 'Railway station' (184).

The 22 'Other' comments in general reflected the answers we received above:

- "*Almost all the services I need are available in the town"*
- *"Friendliness of local people"*
- *"Job opportunities and security"*

Q5. What do you like the least about living in Castle Cary and Ansford? Choose 5 that are least important to you.
Answered 344 Skipped 36

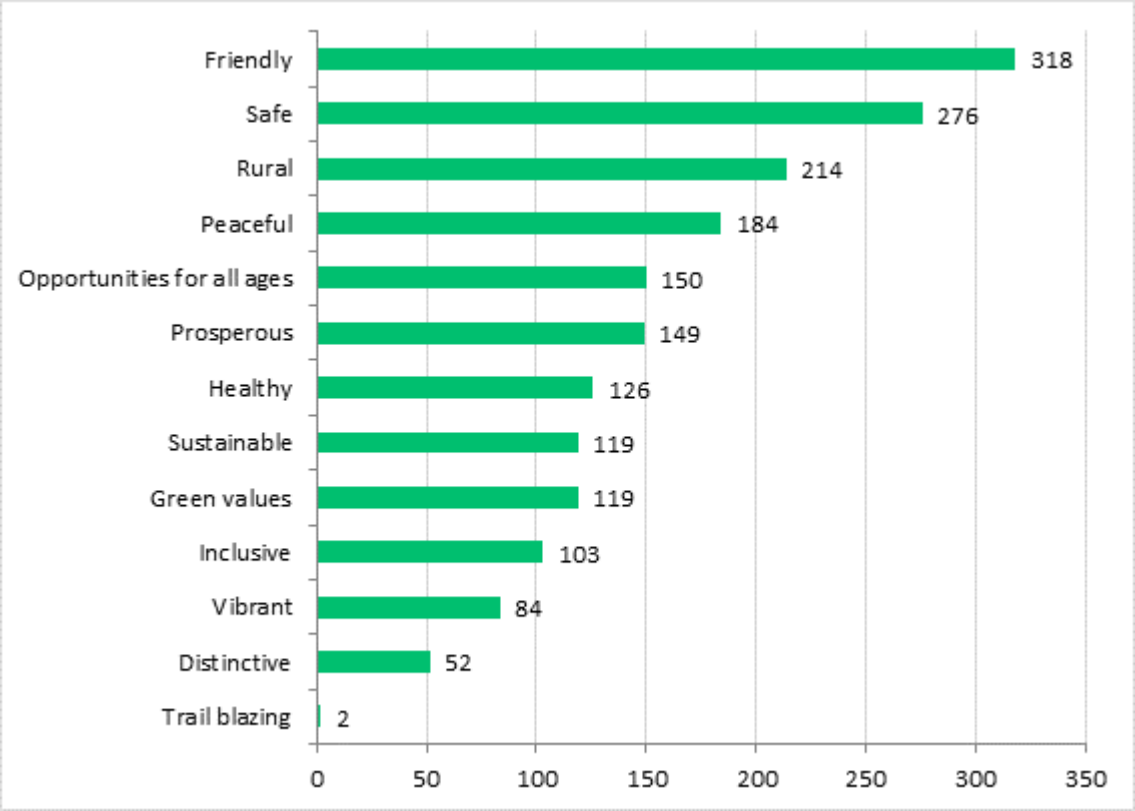


The respondents reported the aspects they least like about living in Castle Cary and Ansford are 'Public transport' (200 of 344 respondents), the 'Road network' (180), followed by 'Educational facilities' with 161 respondents. This is likely to be a reflection of the demographics of the respondents, i.e., many not having children of school age as can be seen in question 3 where over 300 out of the 805 being represented in this survey are over the age of 65.

In the 'Other' section, respondents did not like the over-development of the town, the new housing developments and the impact this was having on the town's infrastructure with 42 respondents commenting on too many new houses and lack of supporting infrastructure (31) and traffic (11):

- *"All the proposed building expansions, putting a strain on the community"*
- *"Expanding community. Becoming more busy with traffic and higher demand on services due to recent housing developments"*
- *"Poor coordination of new housing developments, infrastructure and particularly parking (particularly at the railway station)"*

Q.6 What do you want Castle Cary and Ansford to look like in 20 years' time? (tick your top five)
Answered 375 Skipped 5



The top 5 attributes that the 375 respondents to this question wanted Castle Cary & Ansford to look like in 20 years' time were 'Friendly' (318 respondents), 'Safe' (276), 'Rural' and 'Peaceful' community' (combined 398) and 'Opportunities for all ages' (150).

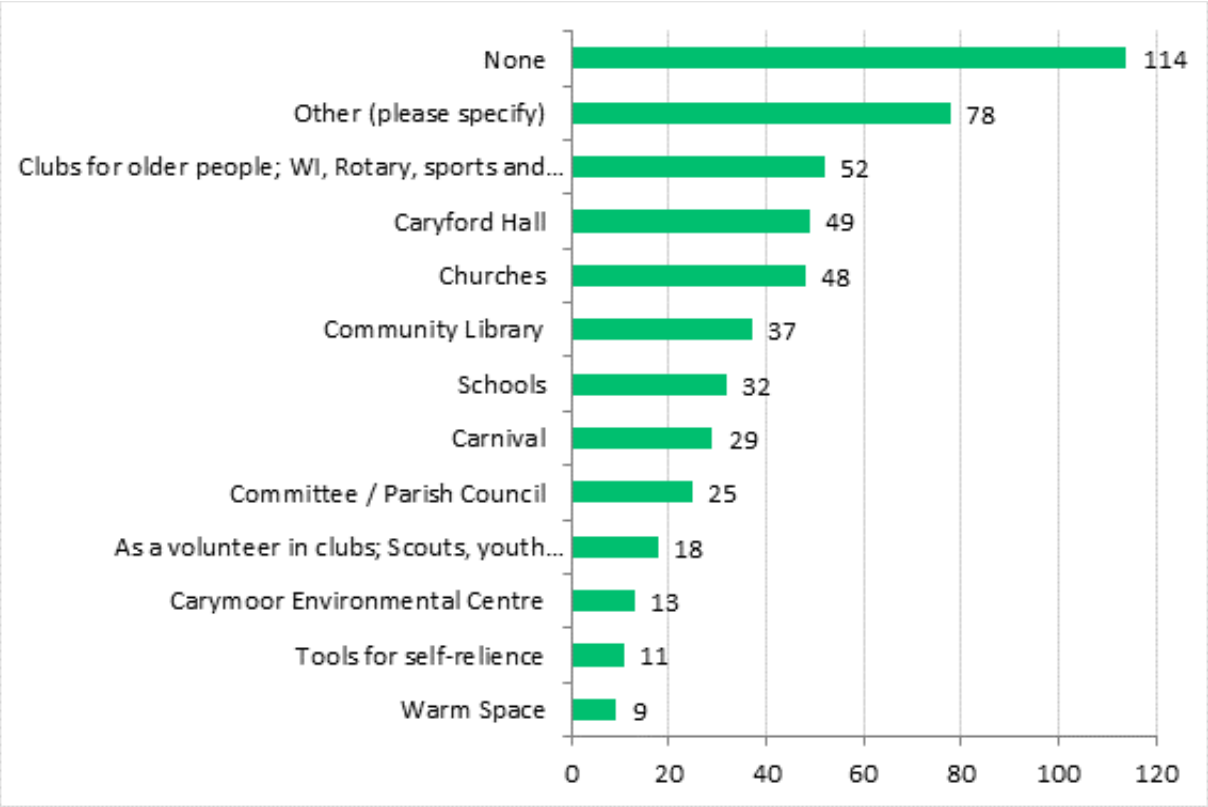
These attributes are strong indicators of the aspects that are important to our residents and that we should work to maintain and improve on.

Community facilities and services

We have a number of community facilities in the Town and Parish by that we mean buildings, equipment for recreation and places to assemble for meetings, events and social gatherings. These questions have helped us understand whether the facilities are suitable for the community, where improvements are needed or if new facilities are needed.

Q.7 Do you currently engage with the community in any way (volunteering, organising events, committee member)?

Answered 315 Skipped 65



Of the 315 people who answered the question 'Do you currently engage with the community in any way?' 114 people stated 'None', therefore the remaining 201 are involved in volunteering, organising events, or as a committee member in the community. The top three responses were for 'Clubs for the elderly' (52), 'Caryford Hall' (49) and 'Churches' (48).community. The top three responses were for 'Clubs for the elderly' (52), 'Caryford Hall' (49) and 'Churches' (48).

In addition to those listed other groups included ‘Cary Cares /Community Larder’, ‘Eat Cary’, ‘Care 4 Cary’, ‘Allotments’, ‘Charity shops and Charities’, ‘Litter picking’, ‘Footpaths’, ‘Museum’, ‘Market House Information Office’ and ‘Twinning’ along with multiple other community groups and societies highlighted in the ‘Other’ comments.

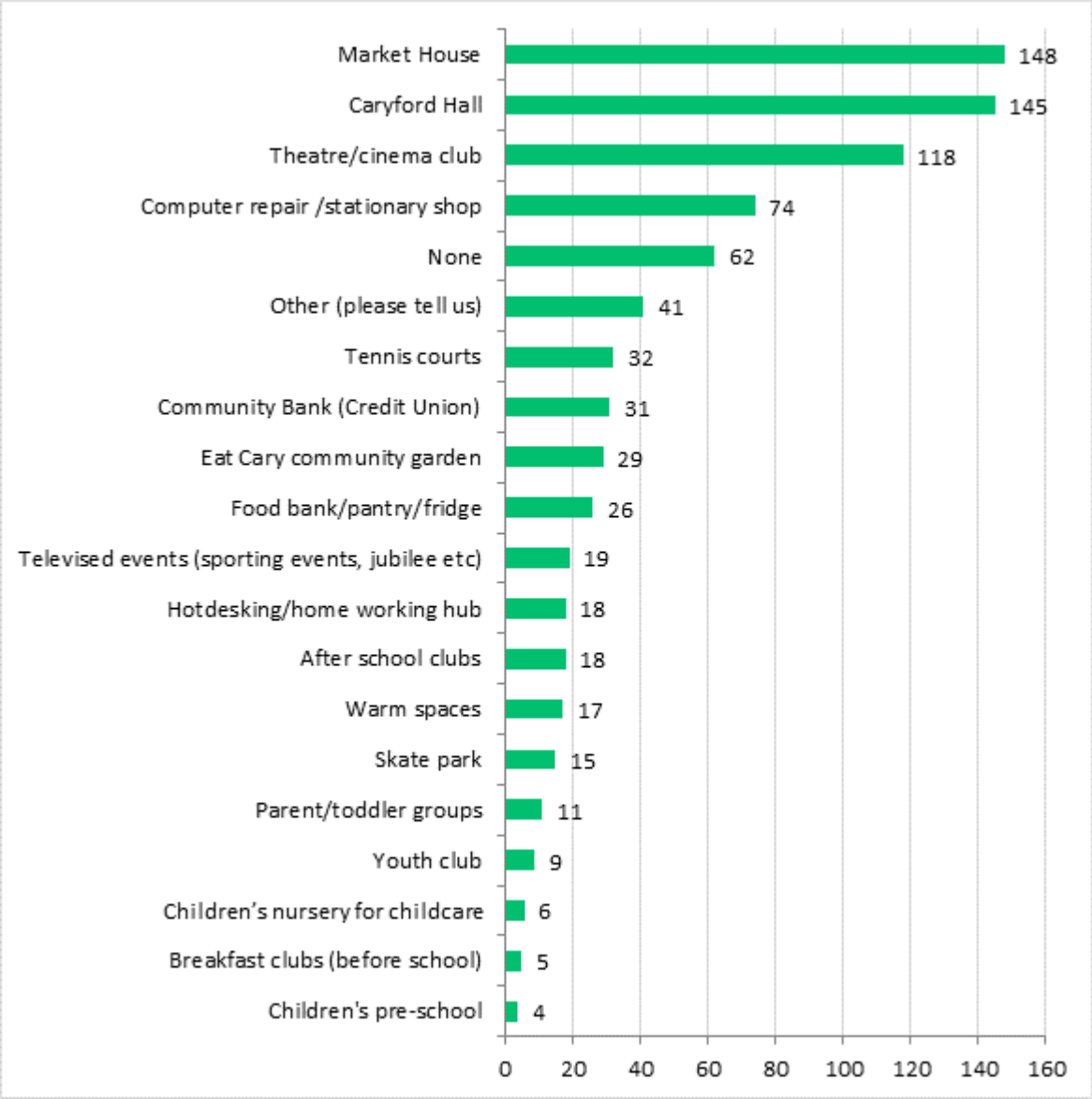
Context: Cary Cares and the Community Larder are an important feature of the town. These results lead us to think there is a culture of volunteering in the community.

However, many groups have recently requested help to recruit more volunteers to enable them to deliver their services. In order to address this the Councils are advertising opportunities and planning to have information on the town’s website and access to the voluntary organisations.

CARY CARES

Registered Charity Number: 1196363

Q.8 Which other resources do you currently use as an individual, or would like to use if they were available in Ansford and Castle Cary? (tick any that apply)
Answered 319 Skipped 61

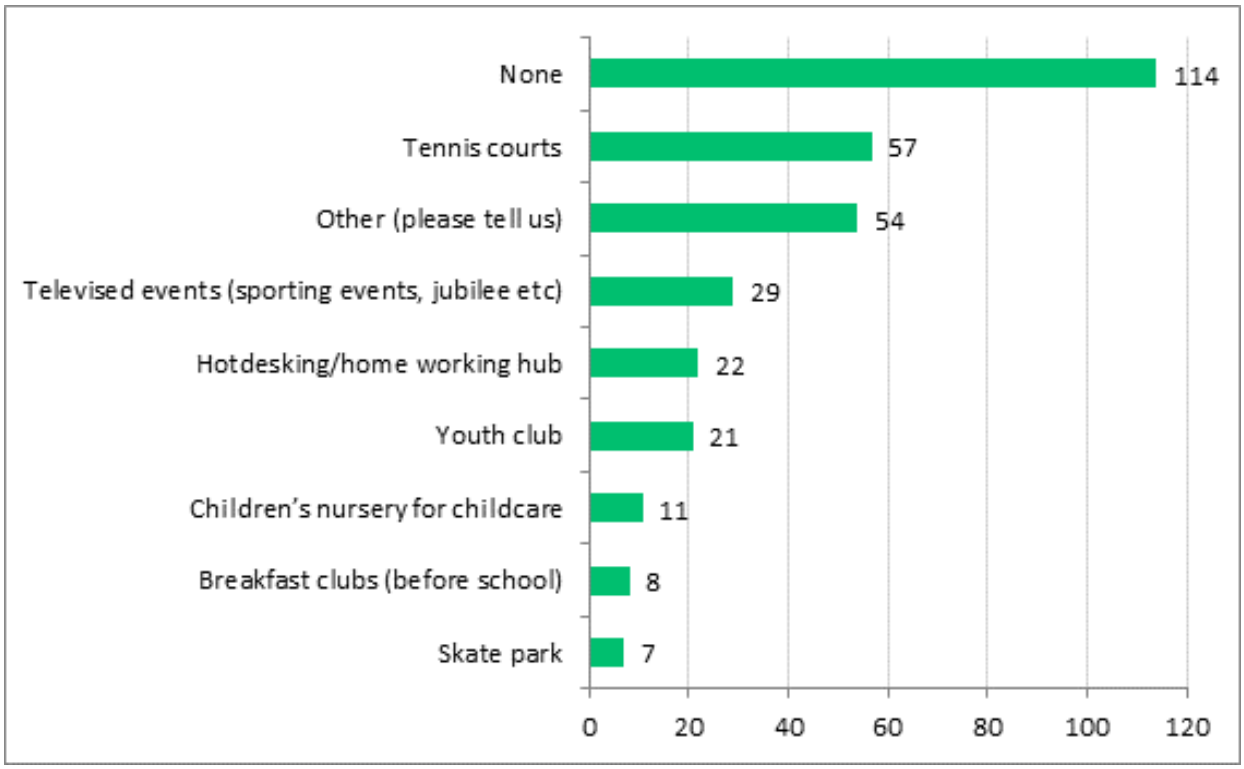


Of the 319 people who answered this question 'Which other resources do you currently use as an individual, or would like to use if they were available in Ansford and Castle Cary?' Respondents indicated they are currently using the town facilities the 'Market House' (148) and 'Caryford Hall' (145) and supporting the activities that take place in them and 'Theatre / Cinema Club' (118). Facilities that if made available respondents would use included a computer repair/ stationary shop (74), tennis courts (32), community bank (31).

In the 'Other' comments respondents indicated the desire for community gardening opportunities , repair shop, more groups for the over 60s including a social meeting place for individuals support, extended nursery hours and fitness and leisure facilities. The responses in this question didn't highlight a theme; resources or resources that received a larger portion of responses.

- *“Sports and fitness”*
- *“Over 60’s Club or more for lonely elderly to meet up”*
- *“No nursery pre school starts at 9:15 and finishes 3:15 no Wrap around care I have a two year old and still work 9 until 5”*
- *“Community out door spaces (eg moat garden)”*

Q.9 Which other resources would you like to use if they were available in Castle Cary and Ansford? (tick any that apply)
Answered 249 Skipped 131



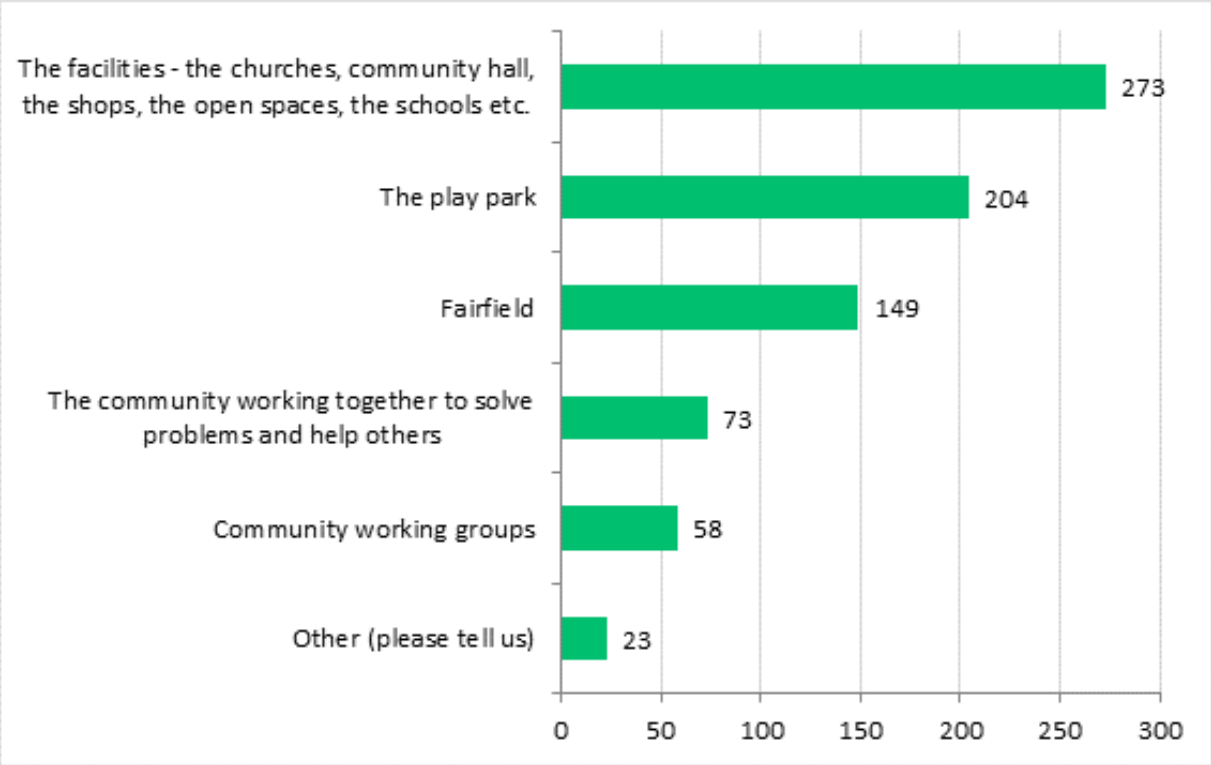
Of the 249 people who answered the question ‘Which other resources would you like to use if they were available in Castle Cary and Ansford?’ respondents stated that they want a Tennis Courts (57) and a Youth Club (21) and in 'other' comments a Swimming Pool (11) and Gym (39), are among the resources that respondents would like to use if they were available in Castle Cary and Ansford. The 1610 gym is a particular issue as the facility has recently closed down. This is comparable to question 8 and these facilities were also mentioned in lower numbers in the previous question’s ‘other’ section.

Additional comments included more cafés/coffee shops/ restaurants, wine bars and groups for older people, 11 people want a nursery for increased childcare options. With 114 respondents selecting ‘none’ it indicates a good proportion of people are happy with current resources within the town.

Context: Post covid experience is showing that Swimming Pools and Leisure Centers are very expensive to run and as a result are currently under threat in other areas, therefore other means to develop a resource of this type for the community to access will have to be considered. The cost of living crisis saw warm spaces

provided for people of all ages by existing groups, churches and the Scouts. We will consider talking with associated providers and investigate the Ring & Ride CAT bus to take regular trips to the gym and pool in Wincanton.

Q.10 Which of the facilities do you most value? (Please tick your top three)
Answered 327 Skipped 53

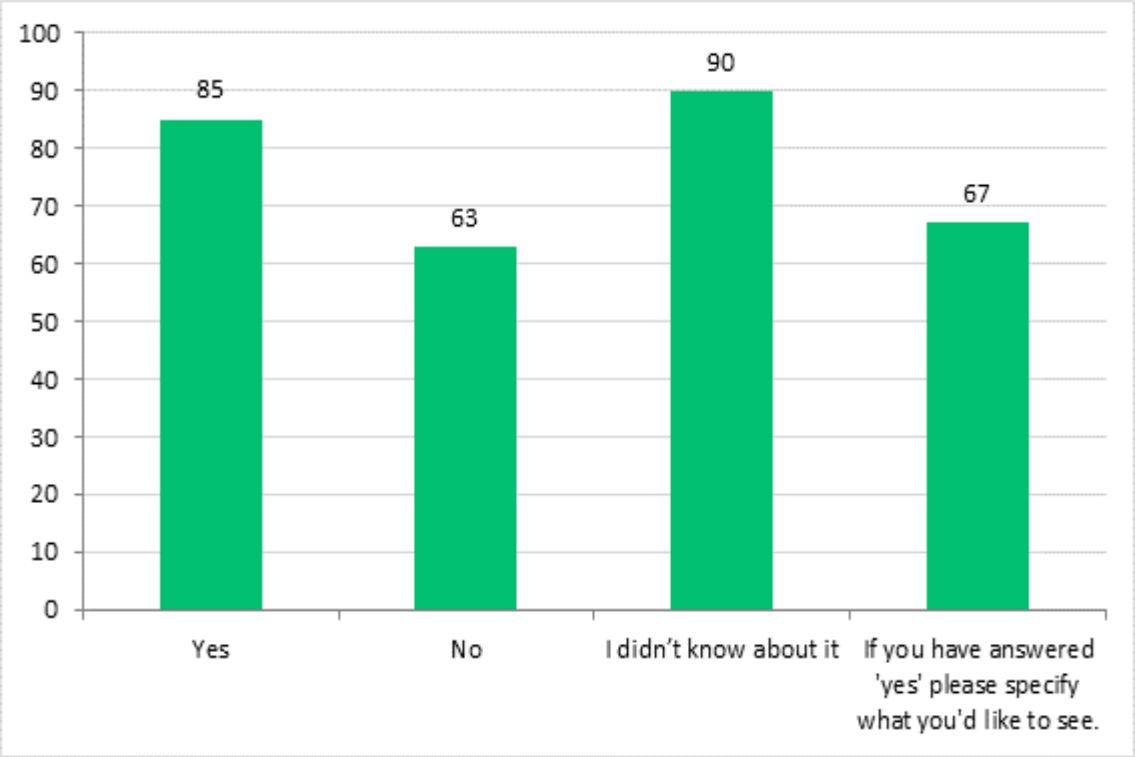


Of the 327 people who answered the question 'Which of the facilities do you most value?' the majority of respondents valued the town facilities (273) the play park (204) and then the Fairfield (149).

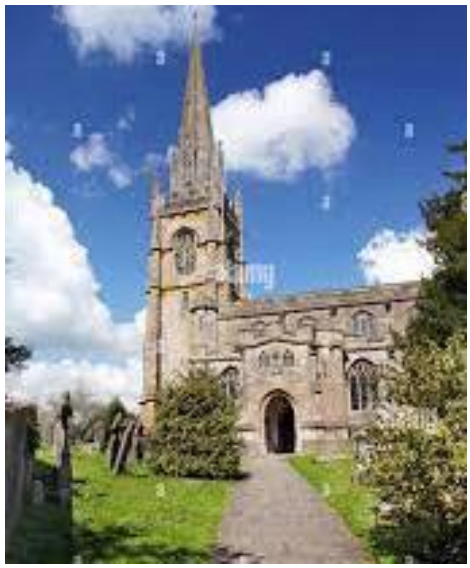
The 'Other' comments highlighted facilities including the:

- *"Library"*
- *"Cary Cares"*
- *"Train station"*

Q.11 Would you like to see more community groups, concerts and arts activities happening in All Saints' Church.
Answered 305 Skipped 75



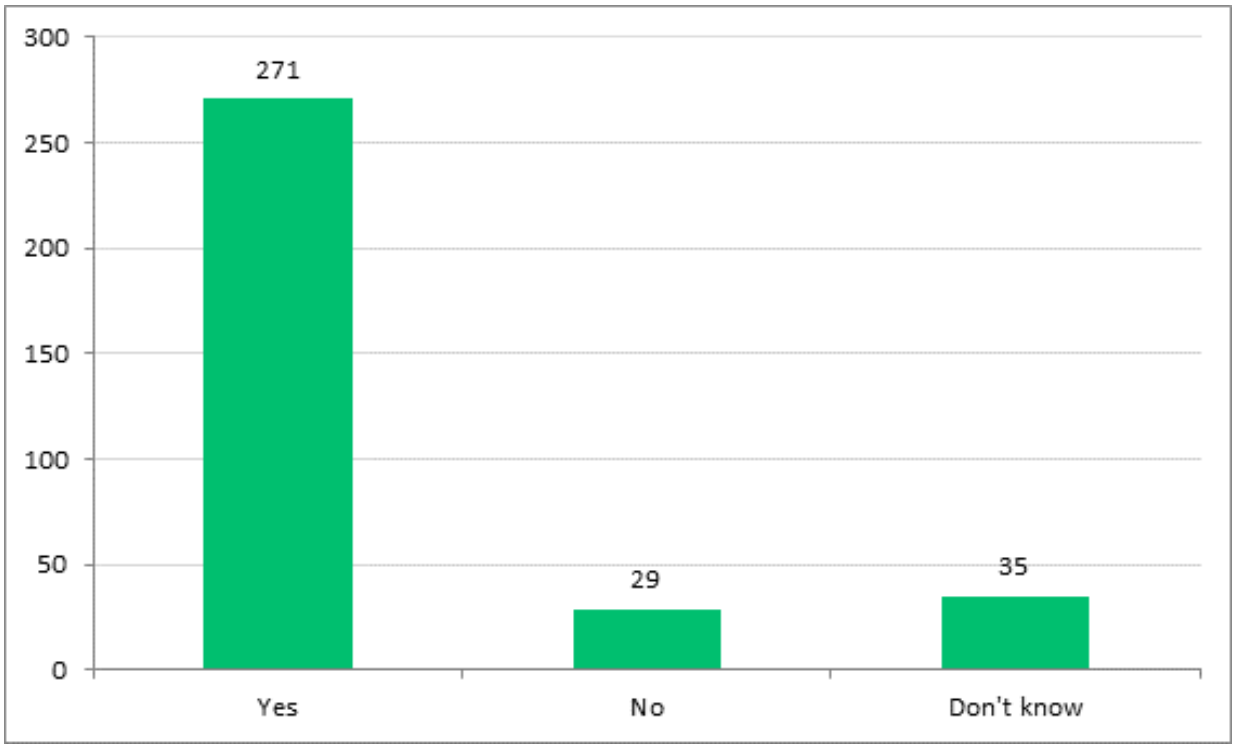
The question about 'Would you like to see more community groups, concerts and arts activities happening in All Saints' Church?' was included because the church is a prominent space in our community and the Diocese is currently reviewing its viability as a place of worship. Of those answering this question (305), the highest proportion (90) stated they weren't aware of the activities taking place in All Saints Church. 85 people wanted to see more activities taking place and 65 people stated they wouldn't.



Respondent suggestions of activities that could take place in the church include art and musical events and exhibitions, open church serving refreshments accessible through the day.

- *"A more flexible space to accommodate more community focused activities."*
- *"Choral and orchestral music."*
- *"music and talks, youth drama/creative space"*

Q12. Please tick if you support the development of The Market House (making it fully accessible by installing a lift to the Museum and the Assembly Room)
Answered 344 Skipped 46



Of the 344 people who answered this question 271 respondents are in favour of the development of the Market House, with a further 35 stating 'don't know'.

Eight people made additional comments and were adamant that the advantages of a fully accessible building would be beneficial to the whole town. However, five people felt that it is a waste of money and five people commented to say they would like to help.

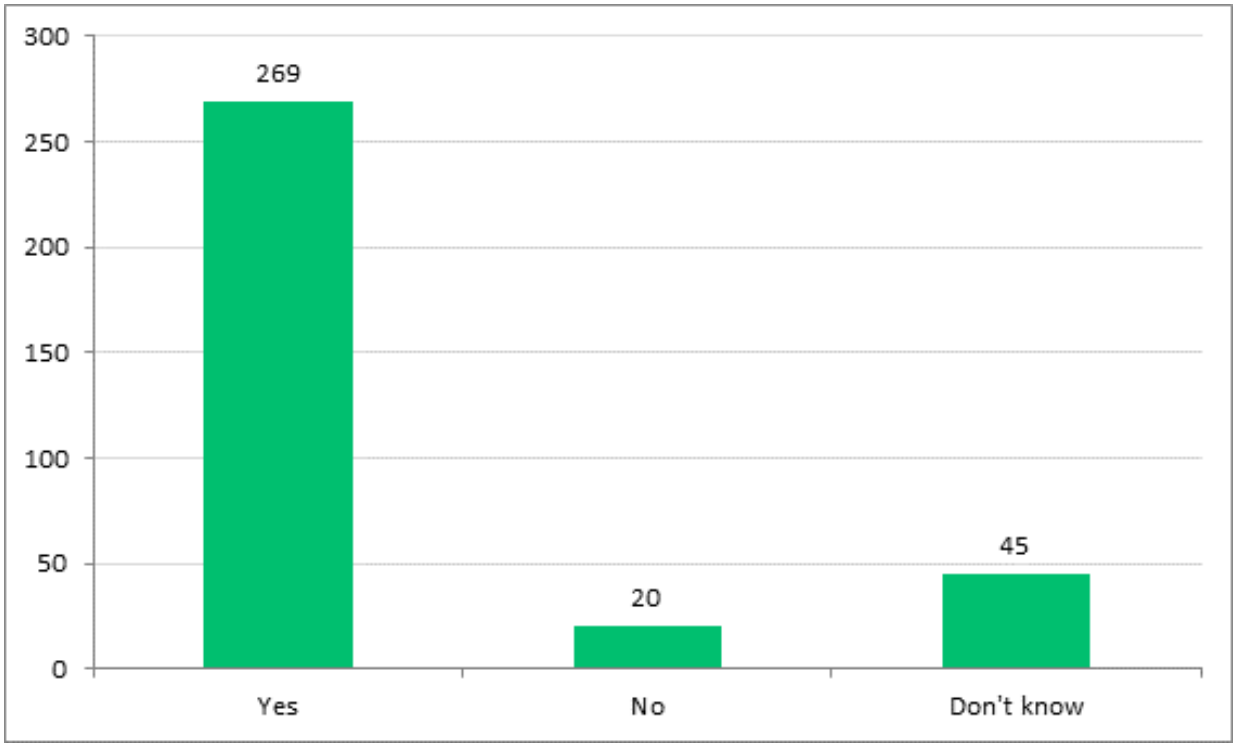
Additional comments included:

- *"This has to be made disabled friendly."*
- *"Now Caryford Hall will have additional funding (which we are paying for) Market House development feels like a luxury local tax payers can't afford"*
- *"Excellent idea and wishing to help."*

Context: The Town Council very much hope to get grants to make the Market House fully accessible, thereby complying with statutory law on access to buildings. At the time of writing Planning Permission has been granted and phase one of the development can commence once funding has been secured.

Q.13 Please tick if you support development of the Pavilion on the Donald Pither Memorial Field to make better facilities for the Football and Cricket clubs to include women's and girls' sports facilities and for other sports groups.

Answered 332 Skipped 48



Of the 332 responses, 269 respondents support the development of the pavilion project to improve the facilities, 45 ‘don’t know’ and 20 not in support.
Many of the respondents felt the development must be inclusive for all genders and other sports groups that wish to share the facility.

The ‘Other’ commented on the need to have inclusive facilities for more sports such as rounders and particularly for girls and women's teams.

- *“A vital development for young people and general fitness”*
- *“It would be great to have junior cricket”*
- *“The groups who use it should be self-funding rather than from the council precept”*

Other respondents commented that they felt that it was important that funding for the development was raised primarily by the current clubs and through external sources rather than it being funded by the Town and Parish Council.

- *“this would have to be with the willingness of the clubs to fundraise and match fund support.”*

Q.14 Are there any buildings / locations that you would like to see improved?
Answered 179 Skipped 201

Of the 179 people who answered the question 'Are there any buildings / locations that you would like to see improved?' the brown field sites including 'Constitutional Club' (52), 'Hillcrest school' (26), 'BMI' (13) and general comments about derelict buildings (15) were mentioned, along with improvement to the Pavilion and Caryford Hall. Pavements in the town and improvements to dog waste bins and public toilets, plus parking issues were also high on the list. Parking issues are further explored in other parts of this report.

- *"The constitutional club is privately owned and has planning permission for nine houses."*

Context: Cary History Society have formed a derelict buildings project group and is pro-actively working on behalf of the town to improve the privately owned brown field sites.

Q.15 Which recreation facilities do you currently use in Castle Cary and Ansford, and where are improvements needed? (tick any that apply)
Answered 315 Skipped 65

	Currently use	Needs Improvement
Footpaths	240	114
Walking / Running provision	76	39
Play area	47	14
Cycle paths / Cycling	27	41
Pump track	26	10
None	24	3
Other (please specify)	23	23
Gym / Outdoor gym equipment	10	43
Football club	10	17
Cricket club	8	11
Basketball	4	13

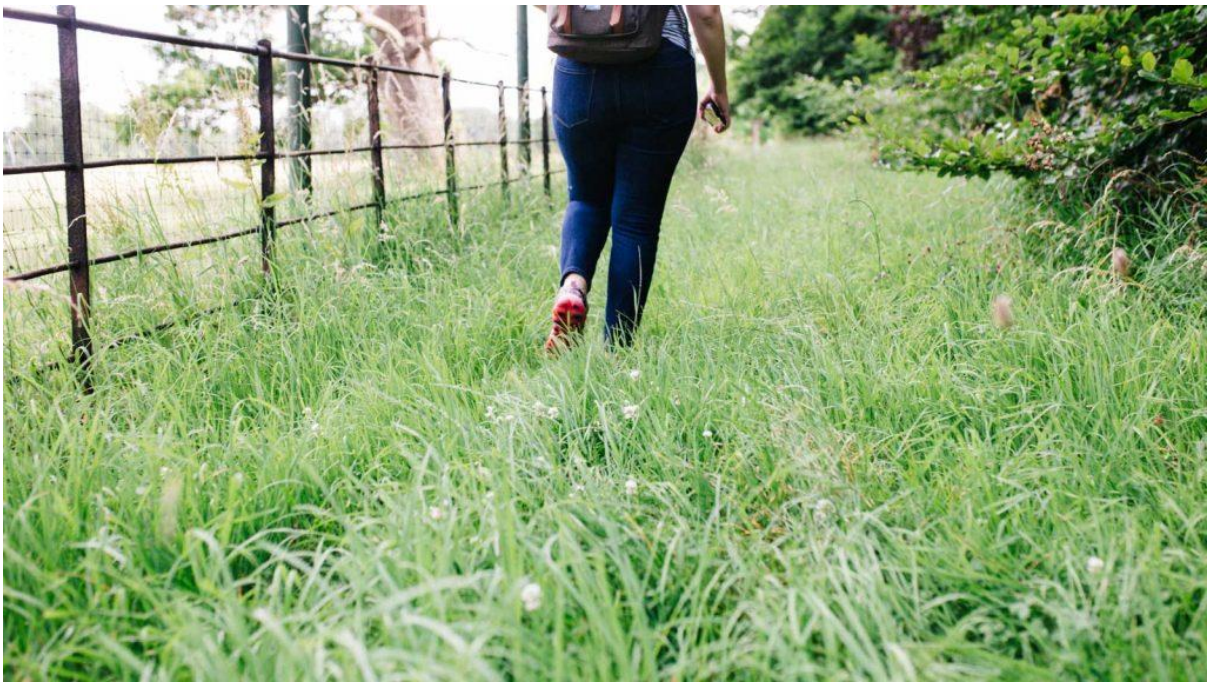
Of the 315 people who answered the question 'Which recreation facilities do you currently use in Castle Cary and Ansford, and where are improvements needed?' the highest number of respondents (240) use the 'Footpaths' but equally they were also the resource that had the highest response in requiring improvement (114), this was

followed by ‘Walking/running provision’ receiving 76 responses. The ‘Play area’ was reported as the third highest resource used with 47 responses.

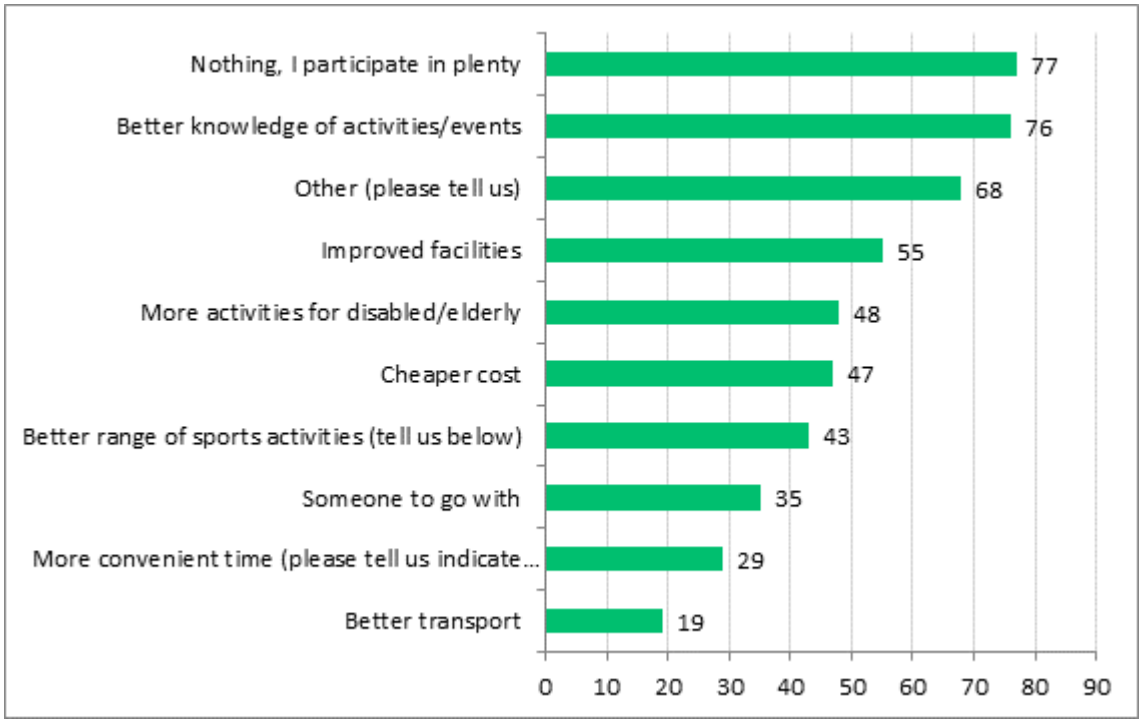
Gym and outdoor equipment was stated as needing improvement by 43 people and cycle paths / cycling was reported to need improvement by 41 people.

- *“Remove the blocking on the public pathway in Clanville”*
- *“Cycle tracts to link in with the Somerset Strawberry route’*
- *‘It would be awesome to see more lighting along the footpath from the station to into town.”*
- *“The loss of the 1610 gym is a great disappointment to some of the respondents.”*
- *“Used to use 1610 and a definite loss to community”*
- *“We need a gym, snooker club, youth club”*

The ‘Other’ comments highlighted that the provision of dog waste bins was sadly lacking, this issue is addressed in other parts of the report.



Q.16 What would help you to take part in more sport or physical activities? (tick any that apply)
Answered 276 Skipped 104



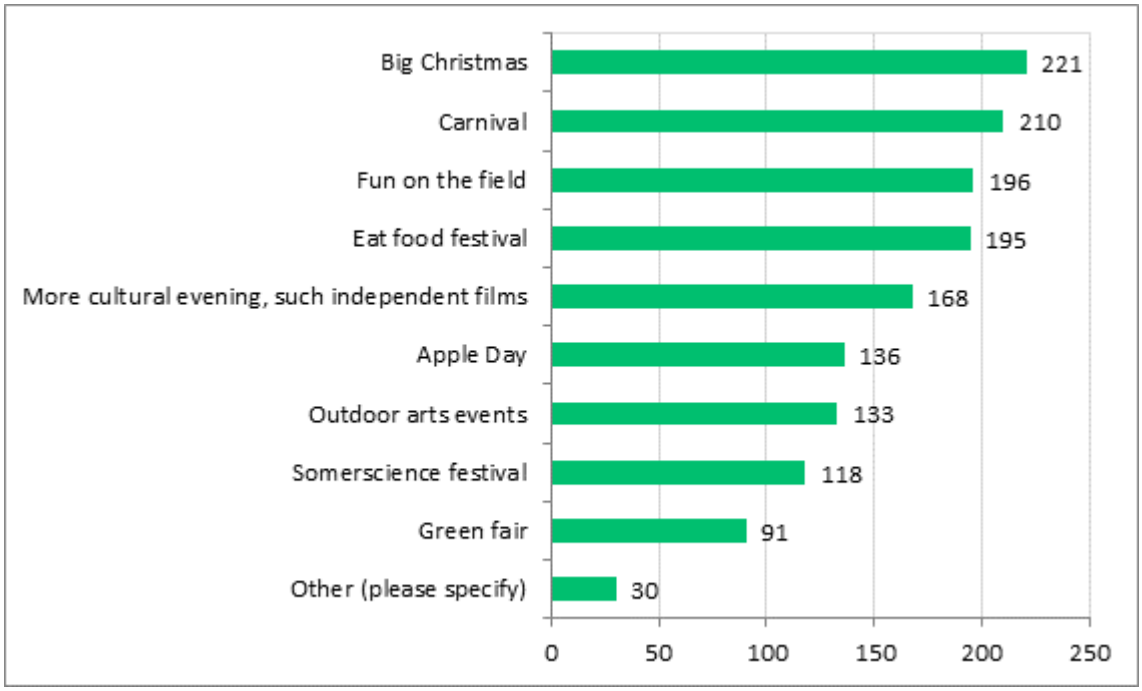
The highest response to the question 'What would help you to take part in more sport or physical activities?' was 'Nothing, I participate in plenty', with 77 ticking this response. To help respondents to take part in more sport or physical activities 76 people said they would like improved 'Knowledge of activities and events', 'Improved facilities' received 55 responses and 'More activities for the disabled and elderly' was requested by 48 people.

In the 'Other' comments respondents would like to see a gym (13) and tennis courts (9). In addition, there were 9 comments suggesting individual exercise classes, in particular outside of working hours.

- *"Tennis and swimming"*
- *"Desperate need a gym and climbing wall, classes etc"*
- *"There are not enough exercise /aerobic classes since the gym closed."*
- *"There is very little for people who work full time to do in the evening"*
- *"Evenings and weekends"*

Context: Throughout this section these two facilities that have consistently been brought up and mechanisms to address this will be added to the Action Plan. Respondents would also like activities to be available in the evenings and at weekends, be cheaper and have someone to go with.

Q.17 What community events would you like to see continue in the town?
Answered 326
Answered 54



Of the 326 people who answered the question 'What community events would you like to see continue in the town?' respondents would like to see all of the main community events continue. It was pleasing to see that 221 respondents supported the 'Big Christmas' and 210 respondents supported the 'Carnival'. 196 supported 'Fun on the Field'.

The 'Other' comments provided further suggestions, these included:

- *"Music - classical, jazz, folk, etc"*
- *"Local History events and talks"*
- *"Everything I love community events and we are very lucky here to have such a friendly community"*

Businesses

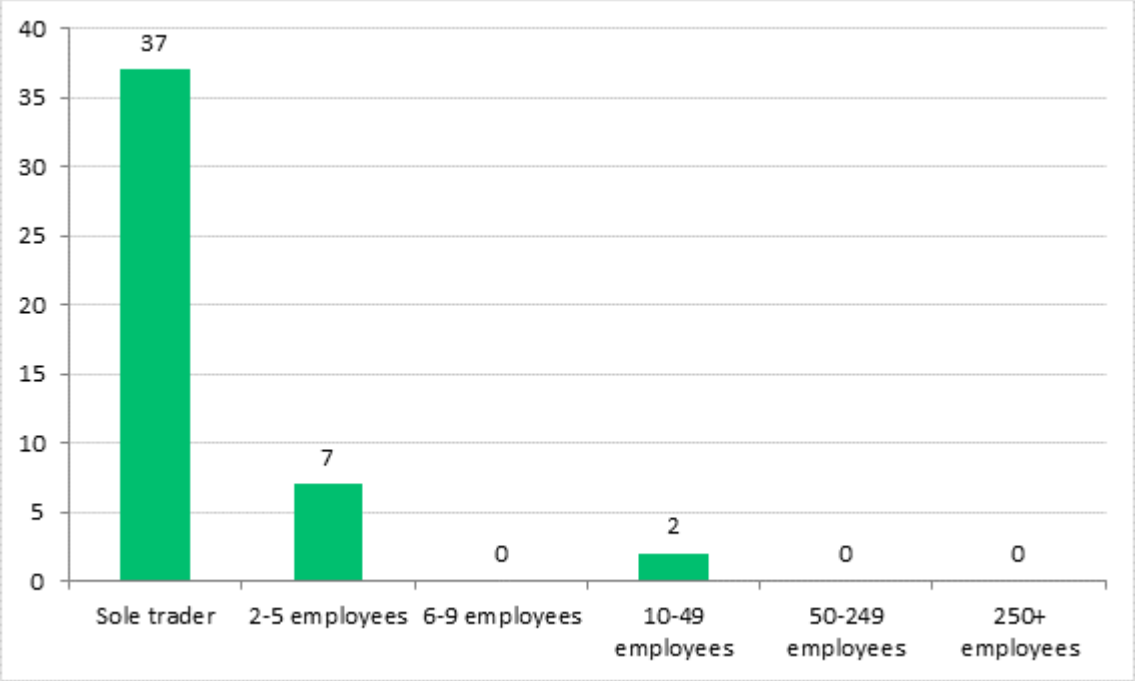
Business has changed over the last couple of years and how and where it takes place has been particularly affected by Covid. These results have endorsed that there is a thriving business community that is supported and maintained in the Town and Parish. Independent shops are clearly an important factor in the quality of life for residents and we note that our High Street has very few empty shops. As this is a residents survey we wanted some idea of how many people are either working from home or running businesses in the town or parish.

Q.18 If applicable, do you run a business or a social enterprise/charity in the Ansford or Castle Cary?
Answered 50 Skipped 330

	In commercial premises	From home	Total
Business	**7**	**36**	**43**
Charity	**1**	**8**	**9**
Social enterprise	**0**	**0**	**0**

It is to be expected that this question will have a low response rate as it was targeted at people who run businesses and charities. Of the 43 people who reported to run a 'Business' 36 were from home and of the 9 running a 'Charity', 8 were from home.

Q.19 If 'yes', what size is your business?
Answered 46 Skipped 334



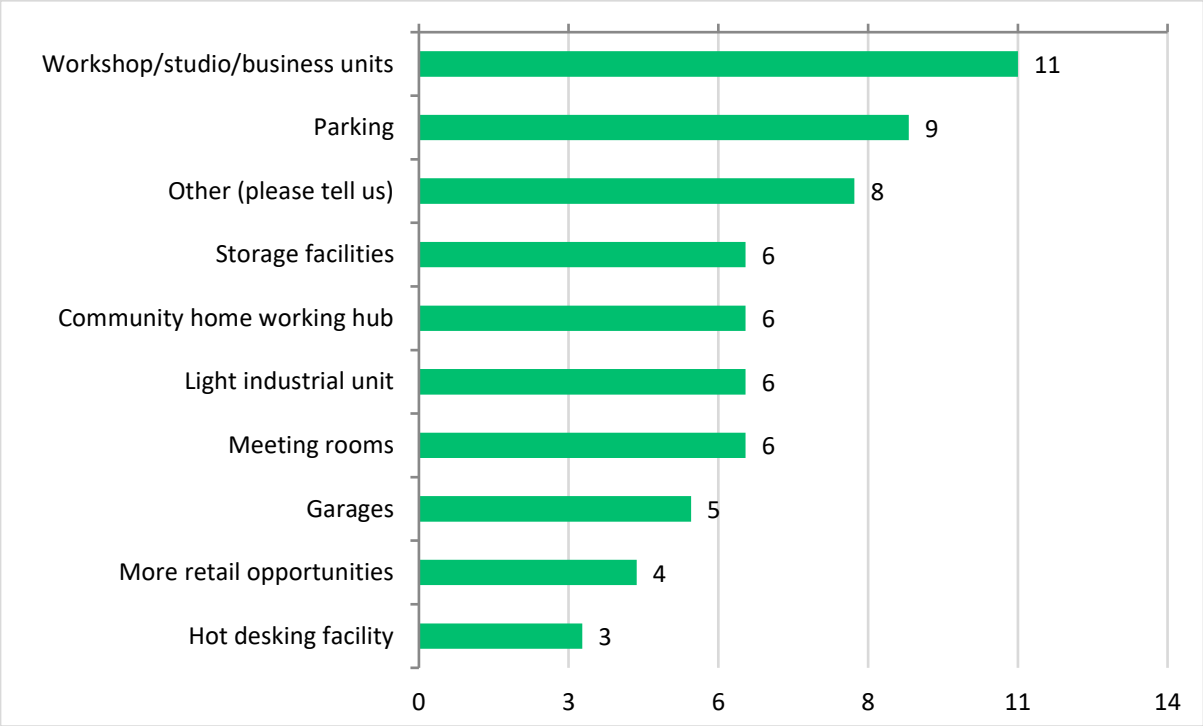
Of the 46 people who provided information on the size of their business, 37 were sole traders, 7 had 2-5 employees and 2 had 10-49 employees.

Context: The findings from question 18 and 19 are in line with Somerset's profile of sole traders. https://www.somersettrends.org.uk/topics/business/business-size/
Large business owners who live away from Castle Cary and Ansford would not have seen this questionnaire.

A new business group might tackle the support for sole traders and the Council will offer hot desk facilities and networking opportunities in the Market House.

Q.20 What additional space will you need in the next 5 years? (please tick any that apply)

Answered 34 Skipped 346



Of the 34 people who answered the question 'What additional space will you need in the next 5 years?', 'Workshops/studio/business units' came top with 11 responses, 'Parking' received 9 responses and 'Storage facilities', 'Light industrial unit', 'Meeting rooms' and 'Community home working hub' all received 6 responses.

One comment was about a desire for crafting community to have a space to meet, other comments were opportunities to share ideas and work together.

Context: The responses to a community home working hub ties in with the previous question about looking into how we can support home workers.

Q.21 What works well and what can be improved for business, employment, training and education in our community? (please tick all that apply)
Answered 94 Skipped 286

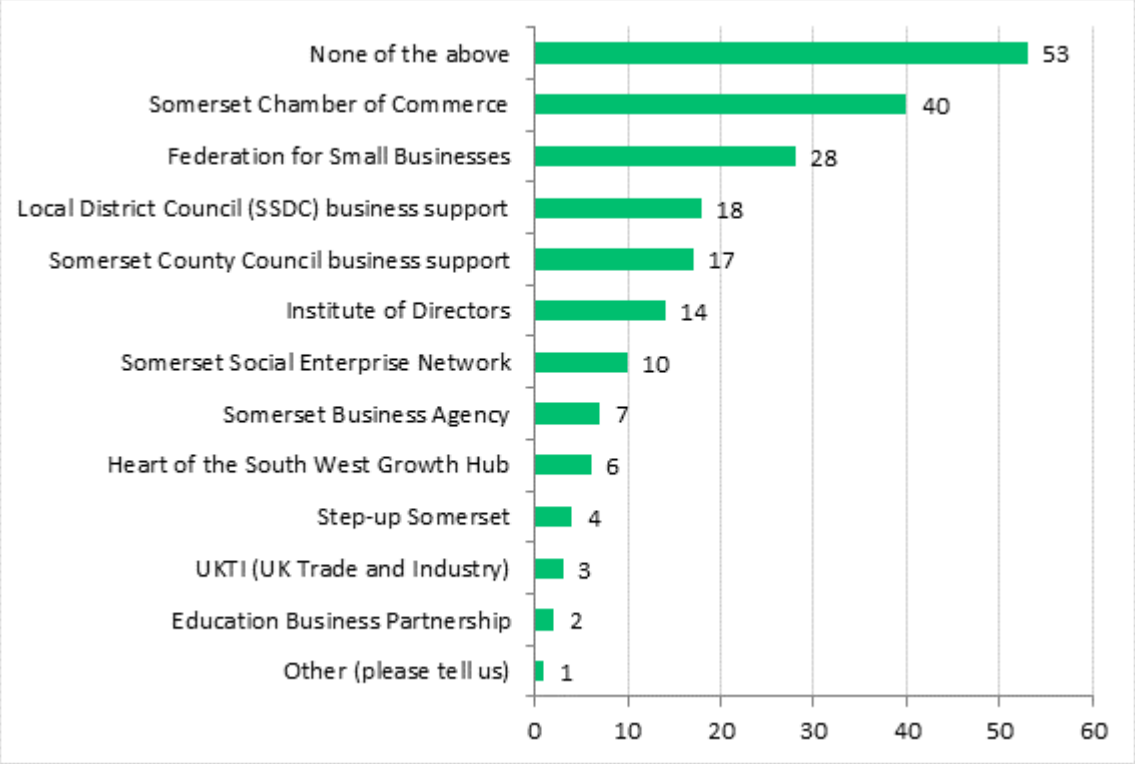
Answer Choices	This works well	Needs improvement
Broadband	25	23
Location	22	7
Parking	20	42
Local amenities	15	21
Work life balance	13	16
Public transport	9	43
Access to local business networks	8	15
Education support for young people	6	20
Education support for adults	6	19
Apprenticeships	5	26
Availability of premises	5	23
Other (please tell us)	5	5
Access to training	4	24
Chamber of Commerce	4	14
Mentoring opportunities (as mentor and/or mentee)	4	15
Career progression	3	16
Employment and skills advice	3	12
Enterprise sites/hubs	3	11
Business advice and support	3	8
Eligibility for funding	2	20
Recruitment	2	12

Of the 94 people who answered the question on ‘What works well and what can be improved for business, employment, training and education in our community?’, ‘Public transport’ (43) ‘Parking’ (42) ‘Apprenticeships’ (26) and ‘Access to Training’ (24) are the four most important areas for improvement. The top four aspects that are working well are ‘Broadband’ (25), ‘Location’ (22), ‘Parking’ (20) and ‘Local amenities’ (15).

The ‘Other’ comments offered:

- *“Free parking in town misused by train commuters & coach trip parking etc. Too many airbnb visitors taking local resident parking places. Local town centre residents with no onsite parking need to park. Shop workers and local business staff need to park.”*
- *“Market House rent should be reduced to encourage events such as the Vintage Market”*

Q.22 Which is these business support services and networks in Somerset do you know? (tick any that apply)
Answered 144 Skipped 266



Of the 144 people who answered the question ‘Which is these business support services and networks in Somerset do you know?’ 53 people responded with ‘None of the above’.

Of the resources available to support local businesses 40 people knew of the ‘Somerset Chamber of Commerce’, 28 knew of the ‘Federation for Small Businesses’ and 18 the ‘Local District Council (SSDC) business support’.

Q.23 If anyone in your household works from home what would help improve this experience? (tick any that apply)
Answered 120
Skipped 260

Answer Choices	Responses
I do not need anything more	54
Better broadband	42
Community hot desking facility	17
Improved postal service	16
Meeting rooms for hire	14
Better public transport	13
Networking events to meet other home workers	10
Access to training opportunities	7
Other (please tell us)	4

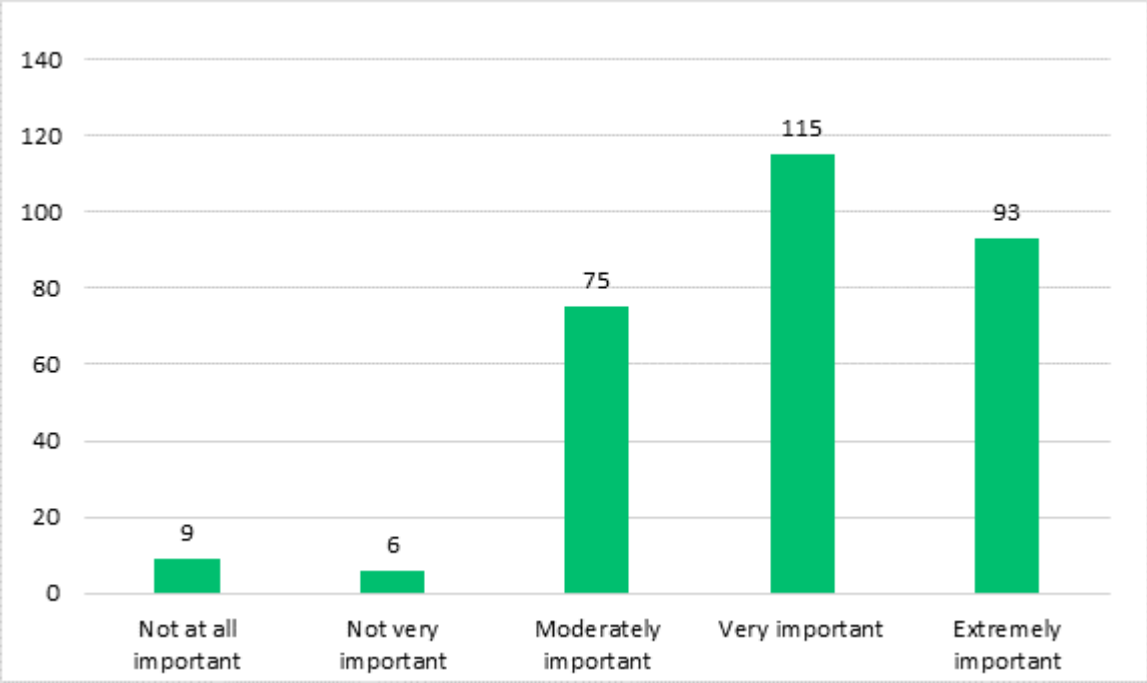
Of the 120 people who answered the question 'If anyone in your household works from home what would help improve this experience?', the highest response was for 'I do not need anything more', which received 54 responses. 'Broadband improvements' (42), 'Hot-desking opportunities' (17) and 'Improved postal service' (16) were identified as the next three requirements.

The 'Other' comments offered *"a cafe with work space would be* great".

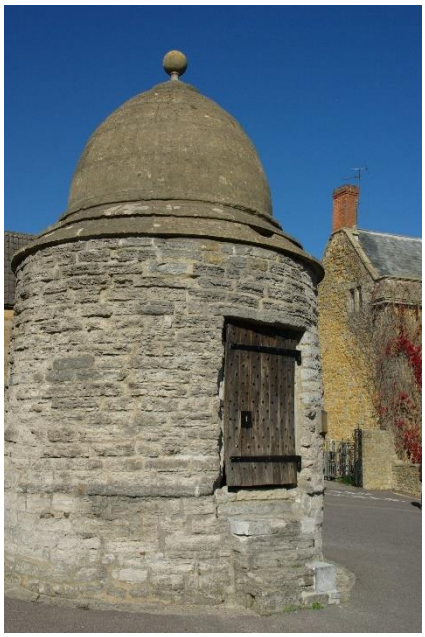
Climate emergency/Environmental issues

Climate change is a growing concern for the future. To address this, it is going to require positive changes to all our lifestyles. The information gathered from our residents, businesses and other key groups in the parish will highlight what we can all do as a community to help achieve the aspiration to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

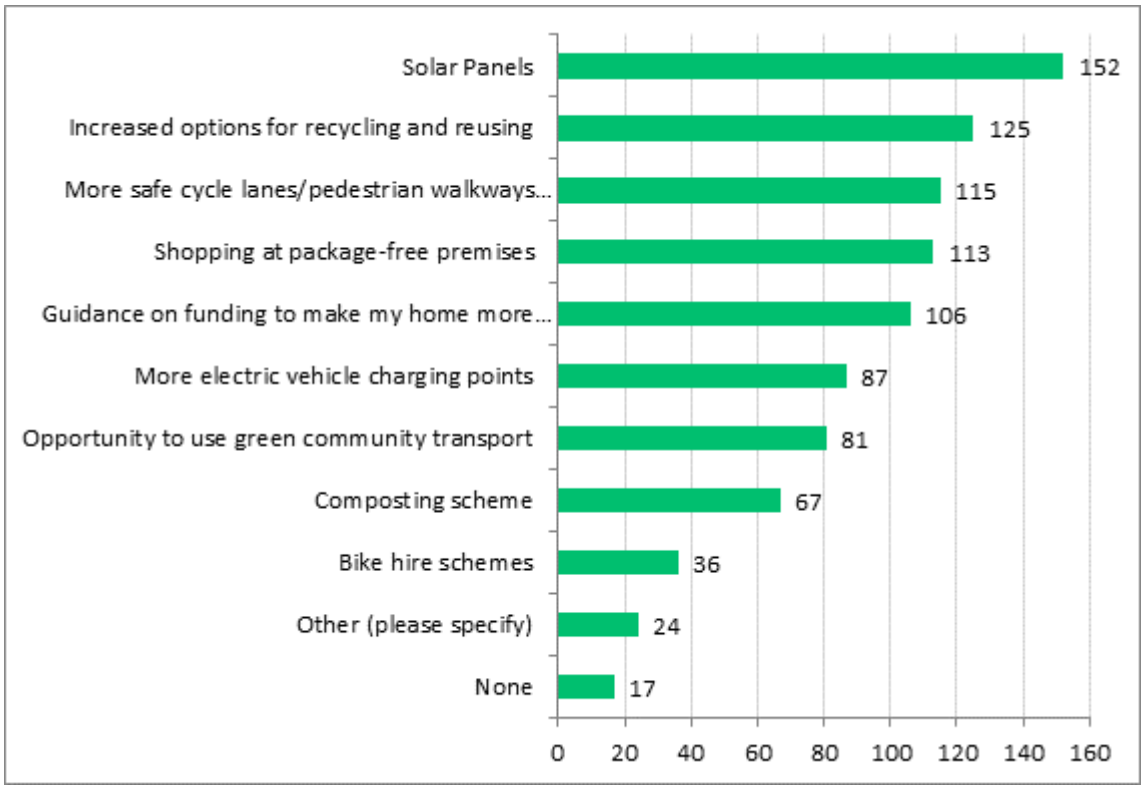
Q.24 How important is the climate and nature emergency change to you?
Answered 298 Skipped 82



Climate change is clearly important to most of the respondents. Of the 298 people who responded to this question, 115 people stated it was ‘very important’ 93 stated it was ‘extremely important’ and 75 believe it is ‘moderately important’. A total of 15 people felt it was ‘not at all important’ and ‘not very important’. This gives us a clear mandate to develop some actions that need to be considered as a priority.



Q.25 What do you think would reduce your own carbon footprint and help restore nature? (tick any that apply)
Answered 296 Skipped 84



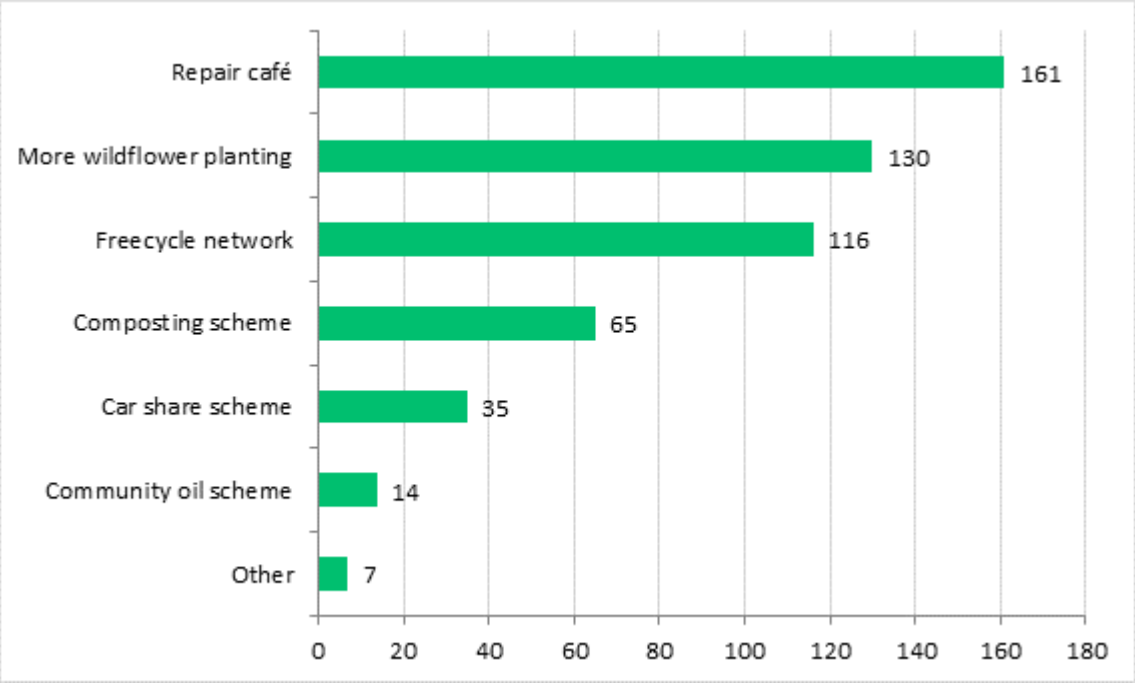
Of the 296 people who responded to the question 'What do you think would reduce your own carbon footprint and help restore nature?' the top replies were 'Solar panels' (152), 'Increased recycling' (125), 'Increased safe cycling walking paths' (115), with 'Shopping at package free shops' (113) and 'Making homes more energy efficient' (106), following closely behind.

The 'Other' comments offered:

- *"Facility at waste disposal site to allow things to be taken and reused."*
- *"Allotments"*
- *"Safe pavements/pedestrian areas/cycle track"*
- *"Solar panels on all new build houses should be compulsory"*

This provides us with a clear understanding of the support communities of Castle Cary and Ansford would like us to provide to enable them to reduce their carbon footprint.

Q.26 What services or facilities would you use if these were available in Castle Cary and Ansford? (tick any that apply)
Answered 243 Skipped 137



Comments
Of the 243 people who answered about services and facilities they would use if available in Castle Cary and Ansford, 'Repair Café' received 161, 'More wildflowers planting' received 130, and 'free cycle networks' received 116 responses. This demonstrates a commitment by the communities of Castle Cary and Ansford to making the environment eco-friendlier and some of the communities preferred mechanisms to do this.

Q.27 What, if anything, is currently stopping you from being more environmentally friendly?
Answered 86 Skipped 294

Of the 86 residents who provided information on what is stopping them from being more environmentally friendly, the biggest barrier for 39 people was around the cost of making their homes more energy efficient. 24 people wanted more reliable information about solar panels. Confusion about reliable advice (heat pumps v retrofitting), and already installed gas boilers in new houses prohibits a change was mentioned by a handful of people.

- *"Having to drive to Wincanton for weekly shop"*
- *"Dreadful public transport"*
- *"Cost of energy and high cost of heat pumps"*

Q.28 Some of the future climate change actions are likely to involve changes in Castle Cary and Ansford. Do you agree or disagree with the following changes?
Answered 304 Skipped 76

Answer Choices	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Plant more trees	276	3	12
A solar light street scheme	265	7	23
More recycling facilities on our streets and reusing services / facilities such as a repair shop	261	6	19
More cycle paths and pedestrian walkways	229	12	35
Adopting a Green Charter (good environmental practice) by the Parish Councils	228	14	43
Local solar projects (solar farms or community renewable schemes)	211	29	46
Develop heat networks; sharing heat amongst several buildings to reduce total energy usage	167	13	80
More electric vehicle charging points	157	36	62
Wind farm	145	66	62
Other (please tell us)	20	20	20

Of the 276 responses to the question asking people's opinion on various actions that could help address climate change, there was a resounding support to 'Plant more trees' (276 agree, 3 disagree and 12 don't know), 'A solar streetlight scheme' (261 agree, 6 disagree and 19 don't know), 'More recycling facilities' (261 agree, 6 disagree and 19 don't know), this was followed by 'More cycle paths and pedestrian walkways', 'Adopting a Green Charter' and 'Local solar projects'. The action that largest number disagreed with, was for a 'Wind farm', which received 66 'disagree' responses.

The 'Other' comments included:

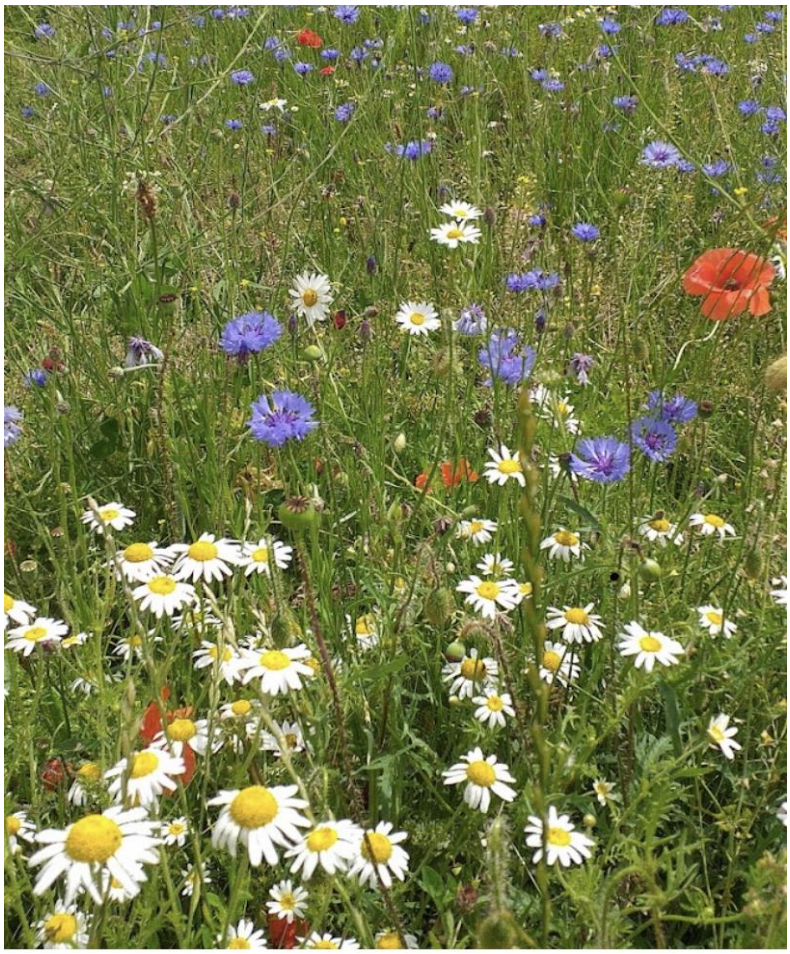
- *"New houses should have solar panels"*
- *"We have to do everything we can to protect our environment"*

Q.29 If you feel that dog poo/tipping/litter is a problem on our streets and community spaces, where does it often happen?
Answered 189 Skipped 191

There were a total of 189 responses to this question and dog waste is an issue for half of the respondents. It is clear that Station Road, Fore Street, High Street, South Street and lanes close to Ansford Academy are the areas affected. 21 respondents said that dog waste was ‘EVERYWHERE!’ .

Context: The placing of bins has been mapped, the lack of bins on the new estates and more dogs after Covid are a contributing factor and the Councils are in discussion with Somerset Council to install new bins in relevant places.

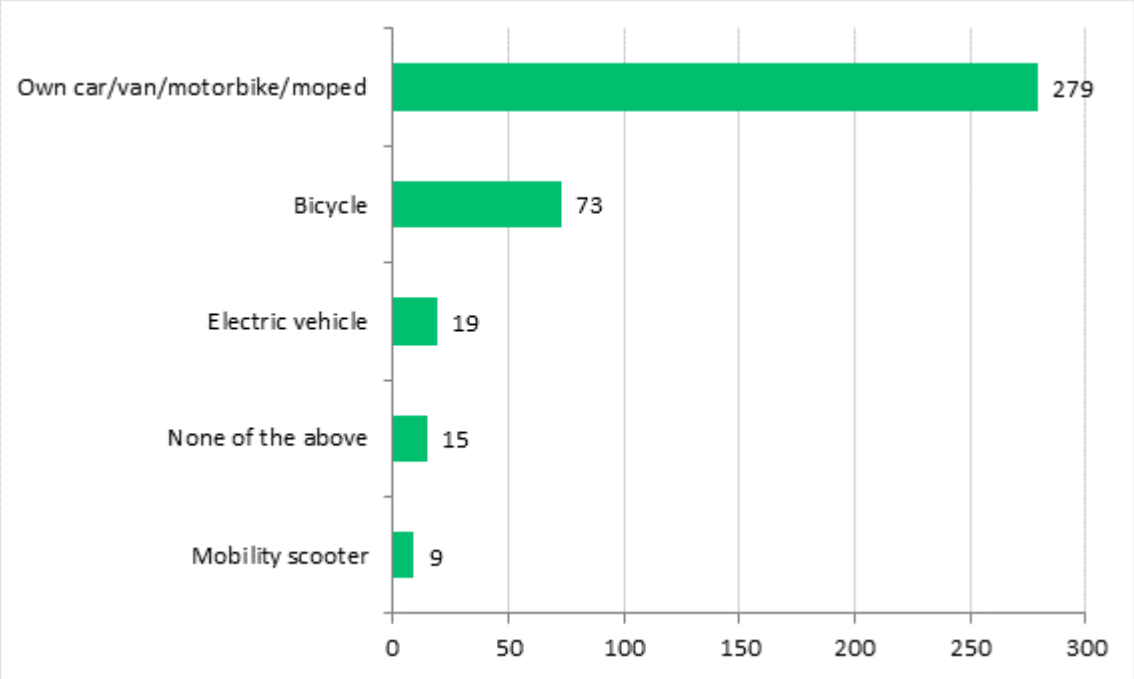
Similarly litter has been highlighted in certain areas and the Councils are grateful to the members of the community who regularly pick up litter and the organiser of the Litterati group which undertakes monthly clean ups.



Traffic, Travel and Transport

An important aspiration of Castle Cary Town Council and Ansford Parish Council is to have a safe and pleasant place to walk, shop and work in our town. These questions will help us understand how respondents use transportation and parking facilities in the town, as well as their concerns and suggestions about traffic and parking issues in general.

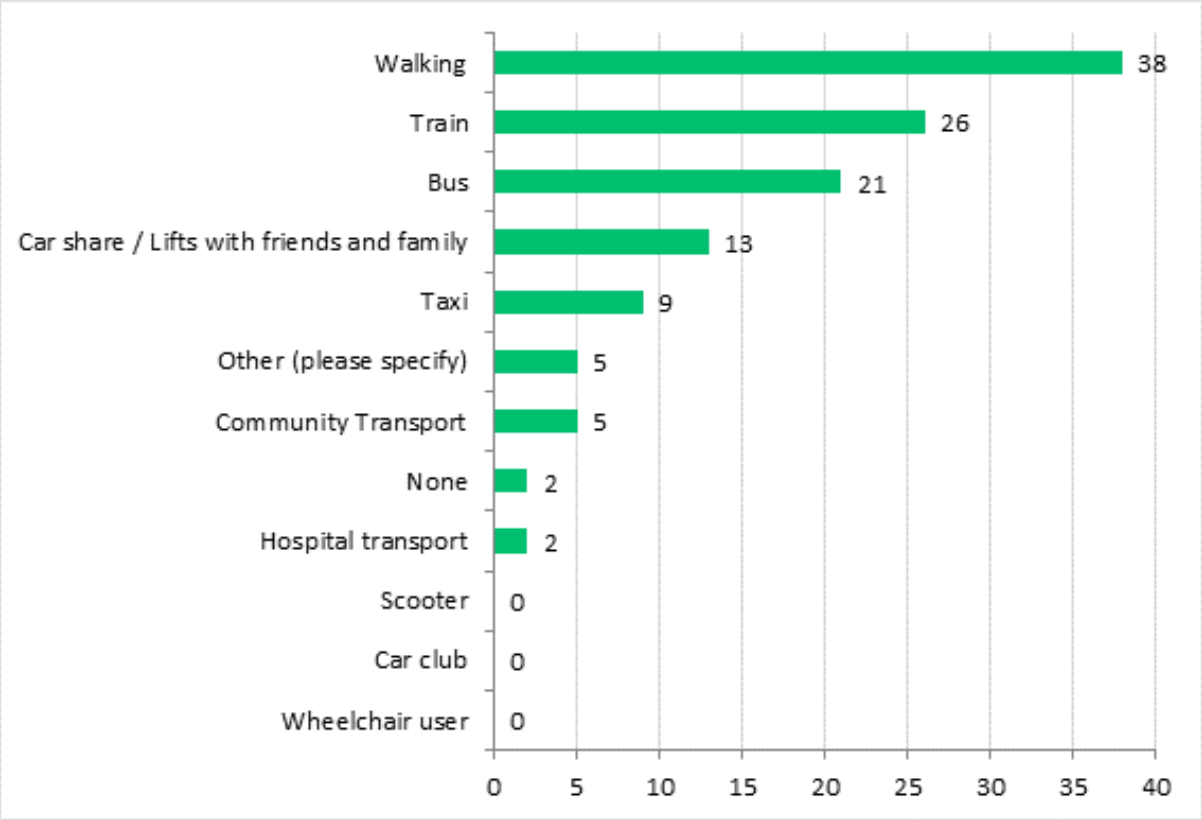
Q.30 Do members of your household use the following modes of transport?
Answered 300 Skipped 80



Of the 300 people who answered the question 'Do members of your household use the following modes of transport?' a large number of the respondents own their own 'Motorised vehicle' (279), followed by 'Bicycle' (73) and there were a small number owning an 'Electric vehicle' (19).

Context: There were a small number of respondents, that said they do not own their own form of transport. This reflects the transport requirements when living in a rural community.

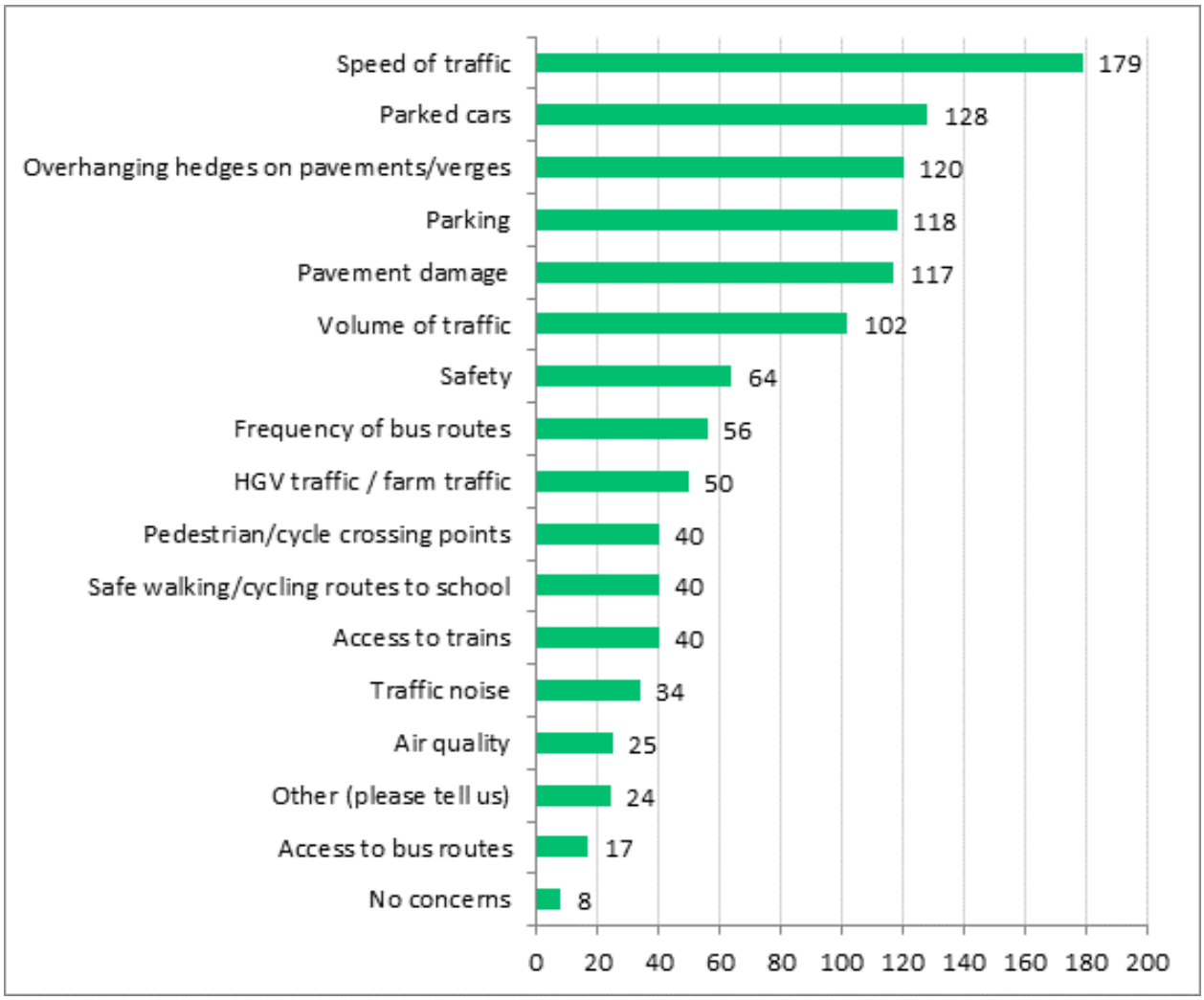
Q.31 If you've answered 'none of the above' in the previous question, which form of transport do you use? (Please tick all that apply)
Answered 52 Skipped 328



Of the 52 people that responded to the question ‘If you've answered 'none of the above' in the previous question, which form of transport do you use?’ The main forms of alternative transport, to those listed in Q.30, are ‘Walking’ (38), ‘Train’ (26) and ‘Bus’ (21).

The ‘Other’ comments were clarifications of respondents’ choices highlighted above.

Q.32 If you have concerns about the local traffic in the town, which currently affect you? (please tick your top three)
Answered 300 Skipped 80



Of the 300 people who answered the question 'If you have concerns about the local traffic, in the town, which currently affect you?' the 'Speed of traffic' was clearly the concern of the largest number of respondents (179). After 'Speed of traffic', there were similar numbers of respondents stating 'Parked cars' (128), 'Overhanging hedges' (120), 'Parking' (118) and 'Pavement damage' (117) as concerns. Only eight respondents stated 'No concerns'.

There were a variety of individual concerns expressed in the 'Other' responses, a few respondents were concerned about safety issues walking across the High Street, and a few concerned about parking problems at the train station.

Parking at the Station was quoted as being a 'nightmare' along with ‘noisy exhausts’.

- “*Dangerous parking outside the primary school”*
- *“Cars/lorries left 'idling' in Fore Street whilst unloading/loading”*
- *“Parking at station is a nightmare”*
- *“Path to station needs completely refurbishing”*

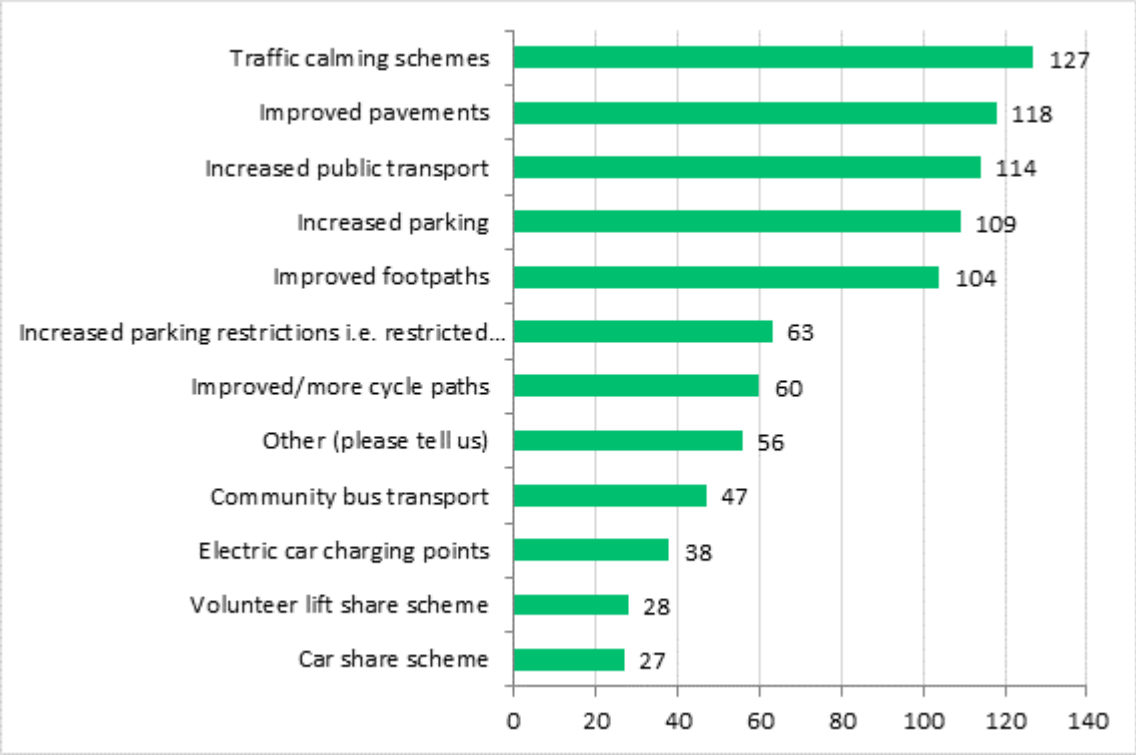
Q.33 Do you know that the CAT community bus (for those who do not have their own transport or find it difficult to access public transport) is available?
Answered 286
Skipped 94

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	**218**
Yes and use it	**8**
No	**60**

Of the 286 people who answered the question ‘Do you know that the CAT community bus (for those who do not have their own transport or find it difficult to access public transport) is available?’, a large number respondents stated that they knew about the CAT bus (218) but only 8 stated that they used it. A further 60 respondents did not know about the CAT bus.

Context: The bus covers a wide area of South Somerset generally in the area between Bruton, Castle Cary and Wincanton.
There were 981 passenger journeys on the CAT Bus in the year from 1st April 2022 according to the CAT Bus user statistics. As well as 281 users of the Social Car scheme.

Q.34 What do you think are the best ways to reduce traffic problems in the Ansford and Castle Cary? (tick any that apply)
Answered 290 Skipped 90



Of the 290 responses to the question 'What do you think are the best ways to reduce traffic problems in the Ansford and Castle Cary?' there were five options with respondent numbers significantly above the other options; 'Traffic calming schemes' (127), 'Improved pavements' (118), 'Increased public transport' (114) 'Increased parking' (109) and 'Improved footpaths' (104). Car share scheme(27) and volunteer lift share scheme (28) had the lowest number of respondent choices.

There were a large number of 'Other' individual respondent comments, and they were wide and varied, however a number of respondents proposed introducing a 20-mph speed limit in the town centre, and some respondents wanted a limit HGV passing through the town. A few also stated that they believed that there were no traffic problems.

- *"20 mph speed limit in town"*
- *"Bus stop at top of town"*
- *"Directing traffic away from the town centre... not a cut through. Addressing commuter use of the carparks - long stay charges"*
- *"Ensure people use the free car parks and keep them free to use."*
- *"In the 35 years I have lived in Castle Cary the traffic seems no worse and no better, it will always have some problems as it was never built for modern traffic. I am happy to live with it."*

Q.35 Castle Cary Town Council and Ansford Parish Council subsidise free parking in the car parks. Would you support?
Answered 295 Skipped 85

Would you support?	Yes	No
Residents' parking permits in the main car park for an annual charge	117	160
Car park charges	69	224

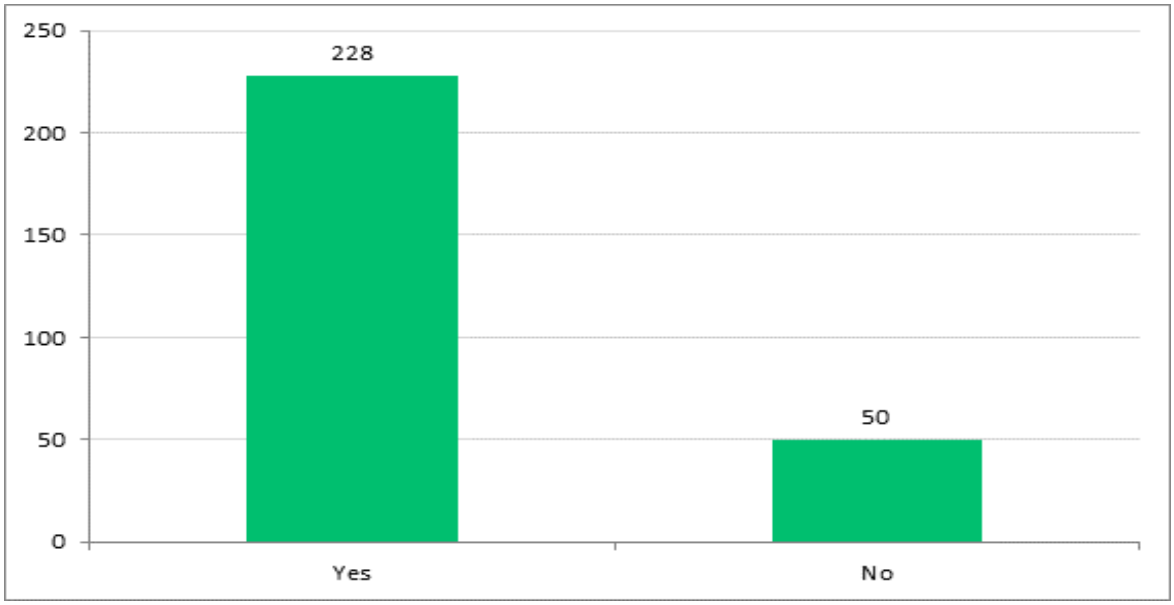
Of the 295 people that answered the question 'Castle Cary Town Council and Ansford Parish Council subsidise free parking in the car parks. Would you support?' 160 respondents did not wish to have a fee paid resident parking permit scheme in the town's car parks, and an even larger number of respondents did not wish to have car parking charges (224). However, 117 respondents support residents' parking permits in the main car park for an annual charge and 69 support car park charges.

Parish / Town Councils

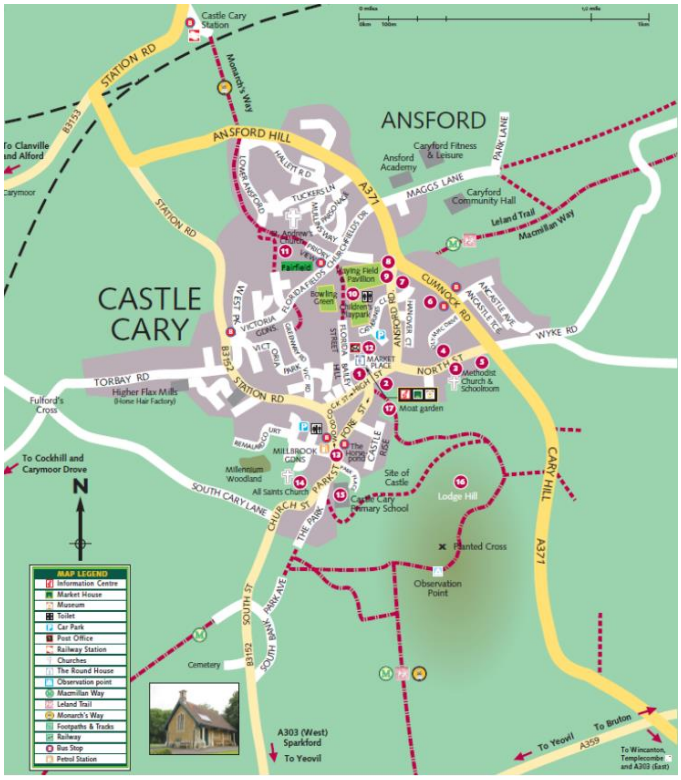
As we move towards the new unitary authority in Somerset from April 2023, you told us what you understood about the Parish and Town Council's work, what it might spend its money on, and what we could do better.

Q.36 Do you think Ansford Parish Council and Castle Cary Town Council should start to discuss merging?

Answered 278 Skipped 102

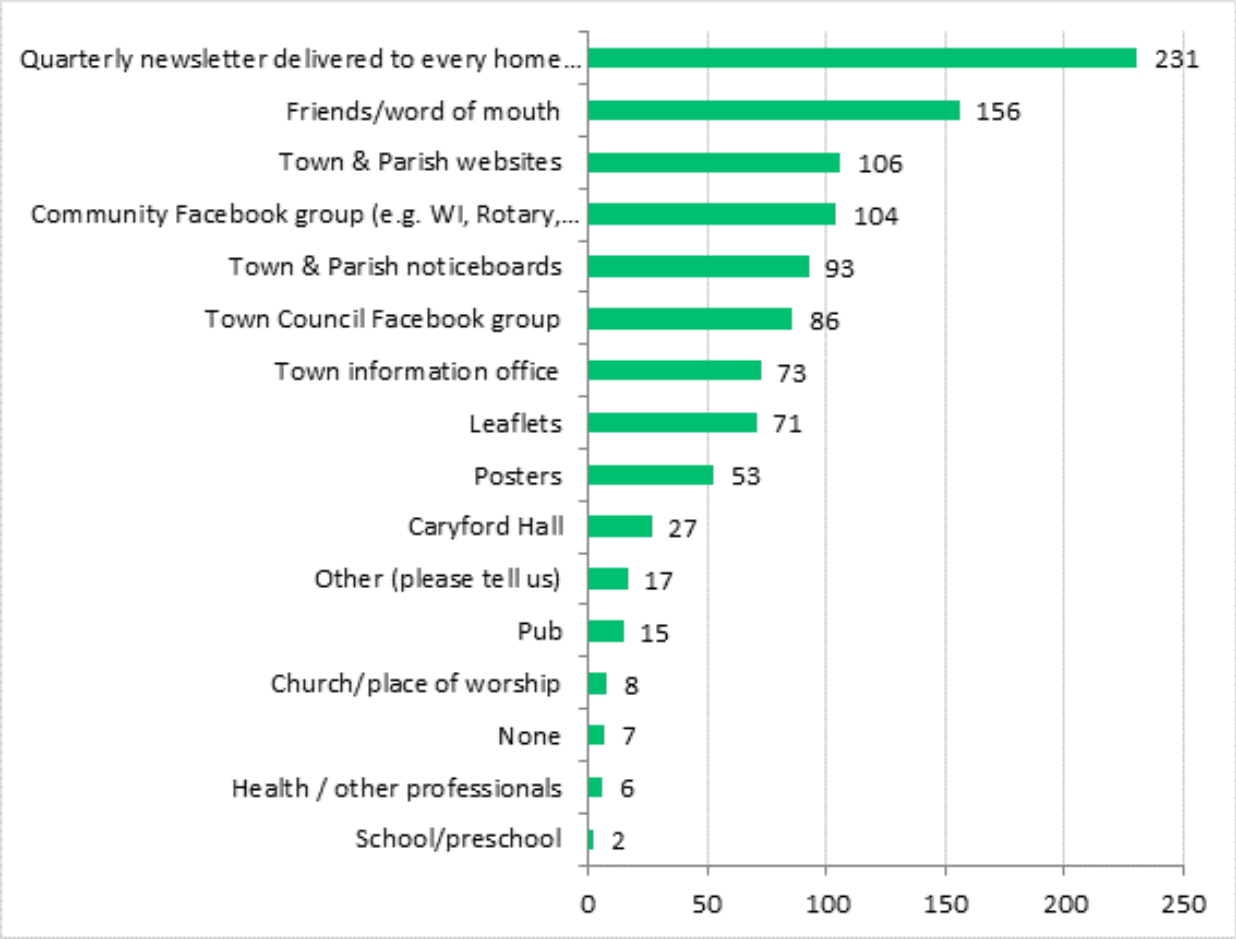


Of the 278 people who answered the question 'Do you think Ansford Parish Council and Castle Cary Town Council should start to discuss merging?' there was strong support for this with 228 respondents stating, 'Yes' and 50 answering 'No'.



Q.37 How do you find out about Parish/Town Council matters? (tick all that apply)

Answered 295 Skipped 85



Of the 295 people who answered the question 'How do you find out about Parish/Town Council matters?' the highest number of respondents used the 'Quarterly newsletter delivered to their home' to find out about Parish / Town Council matters (231), 'Noticeboards' (93), 'Leaflets' (71), and the town information office (73) to find out about Parish / Town matters.

Digital media such as 'Town/parish websites' (106), 'Community Facebook groups' (104), 'Town Council Facebook' (86) and the Cary Crier identified in the 'Other' comments were all also key sources of information for respondents.

Q.38 Do you think the Parish/Town Council should raise more money through a small increase in your Council Tax to support any of the following improvements? (tick any that apply for the community you live in)
Answered 285 Skipped 95

Answer Choices	Castle Cary	Ansford
Providing additional facilities – e.g., improving youth provision	99	43
No, I do not want an increase in my Council Tax	77	37
Addressing muddy stretches on popular paths to make more accessible	76	46
Health provision in the community	65	30
Providing additional amenities – e.g., benches, notice boards	64	34
Local charities and good causes	54	24
Caryford Hall	48	46

Of the 285 people who answered the 'Do you think the Parish/Town Council should raise more money through a small increase in your Council Tax to support any of the following improvements?' there was a mixed response to the Parish / Town Council raising money through a small increase in Council tax, with a total of 142 respondents voting yes across both Castle Cary Town Council and Ansford Parish Council for the provision of additional facilities for 'Providing additional facilities – e.g., improving youth provision' and to address muddy stretches on popular paths with 122 respondents from both Castle Cary and Ansford agreeing to this.

However, over a third of respondents (114 in total) from both Ansford and Castle Cary did not support an increase in Council Tax for small improvements.

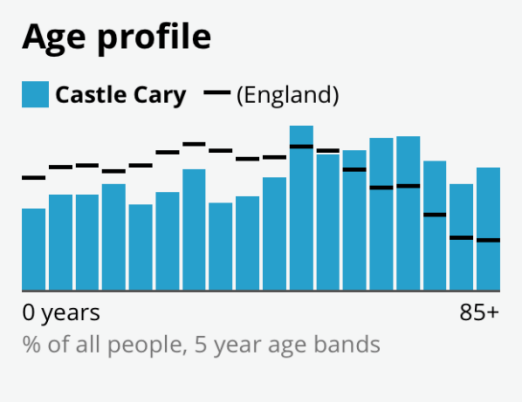
What Next

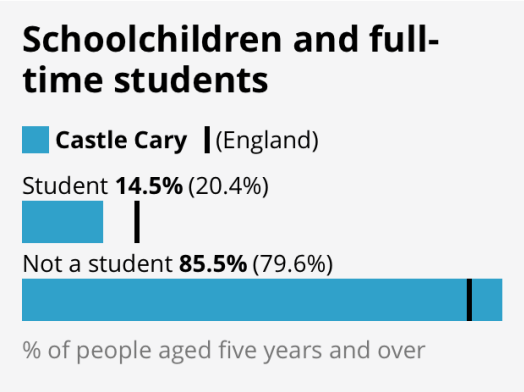
We have created an Action Plan which is based on the findings from this survey and incorporating other ongoing work which will ensure that action is taken, progressed and monitored. It may present challenges, but we have prioritised the actions and many can be achieved by our communities working together.

APPENDIX

Census 2021 https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/

Local Community Network https://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/lcn-meetings/





Privacy Statement

Analysis was conducted by Smart Communities Ltd part of Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Group. Data was captured for legitimate and contractual purposes. Information was collected and analysed in accordance with Smart Communities Ltd role as a Data Controller and Data Processor. Ansford & Castle Cary Community Plan group offered support clinics to anyone who wished to complete the survey but needed help with access to a computer or didn't have the capacity to complete the survey independently. All group members signed a non-disclosure agreement to protect your personal data. Digital copies are retained for 12 months and deleted after this period. Any personal data captured was anonymised with the report and held securely for the purposes of analysis. No data has been published which can identify an individual without their consent. If you entered your details to take part in the prize draw and you won, your data was shared with Ansford and Castle Cary Community Plan group.

If you would like to find out more about how we use your data or want to see a copy of information about you that we hold, please contact info@somersetrcc.org.uk or call 01823 331222. Protecting your Personal Data is important and we fully comply and adhere to the Principles of Data Protection set out in our Data Protection / Privacy Policy visit: ccslovesomerset.org/smart-communities-ltd-policies/.

Community Review
Your future plan

Delivered by smart communities part of the CCS group

On behalf of SALC

Funded by Somerset Council