

Chilcompton Village Plan 2013

Brought to you by Chilcompton Village Plan Committee:

David Aldridge (Parish Council rep), Tony Barnes, John Golding (Treasurer),
Caroline Husband (Chairman), Justine North, (Secretary),
Marlene Pickford (Parish Council Chairman),
Jon Pike (Parish Council Vice-Chairman), John Scarterfield,
Martin Stanford (Parish Council rep)



Some of the Chilcompton Village Plan Steering committee members at their launch day in April 2011

PHOTO: Courtesy of Mark Adler, Mendip Times



Chilcompton residents visit the information and consultation exhibition, 9th April 2011

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A letter from the Chairman

As chairman of the Chilcompton Village Plan committee, I would like to say a big thank you to all those people that have helped create this document. Many, many hours of work have been given freely to support this work; it has taken 2½ years of committee meetings (i.e. 42 meetings!), open days, fund-raising, newsletter reports, and consultation events with residents, including our young villagers, youth and elderly residents. Many people have been working behind the scenes sharing their expertise in editing, spread-sheets, report-writing, artwork and photography and community inclusion. At various stages we have enlisted the help of external agencies, many of whom will continue to work with the community as and when needed. Their support and encouragement has been much appreciated along the way.

During the process of creating a village plan documenting the community's hopes, needs and aspirations for our village, many people gave voice to their concerns and small working parties have already sprung up tackling some of the issues raised in the Questionnaire. It is testament to how much people love their village and appreciate their surroundings that they are willing to volunteer their spare time to help keep this village active; taking pride in their surroundings.

On behalf of the Committee, I hope that you will feel encouraged and proud to be part of the community living in Chilcompton; also, that you too will feel inspired to contribute some time and energy in helping to keep the community spirit alive and active throughout the village for all its members.

With best wishes,

Caroline Husband

April 2013

A User's Guide

This report has been compiled in response to a lengthy consultation process culminating in several Questionnaires seeking individual responses from village people. We have included the youth and children's reports and the results from a business Questionnaire.

Full reports incorporating the questionnaires and responses can be found at www.chilcomptonplan.co.uk or can be accessed through the Parish Council (PC) at www.chilcompton.org For more information please contact the Parish Clerk parishclerk@chilcompton.org or Tel. 232974.

Paper copies can be obtained through the Parish Council, at Mendip District Council and the local library.

These reports have been written by individual members of the Committee who have been dedicated to their individual subjects.

An action plan has been included providing a summary of issues. Where appropriate, copies of this report will be given to outside agencies for their consideration.



About the Village Plan

What is a Village Plan and why do we need it?

In 2000, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued a Rural White Paper – “Our Countryside – A Fair Deal for Rural England”. One of the recommendations made in the White Paper was that rural communities should have a say in their future through development of a village plan. The White Paper describes the village plan as ‘an opportunity to develop community agreement on local priorities and options for discussing them’. A village plan should aim ‘to preserve valued and local features and to map out the facilities and services which the community needs to safeguard the future’.

The village plan is the result of a process which allows the whole community to voice their opinions on what actions they wish to see taken in their village in the future – what’s good, what’s bad and what needs to be improved to make Chilcompton a better place in which to live. The plan may highlight actions that can be taken by community members, or be used to influence service providers such as local authority and act as evidence of need when applying for funding.



A well-executed village plan will:

- Reflect the views of all sections of the community
- Identify features and local characteristics that people value
- Identify local needs and opportunities
- Include an Action Plan
- Be a living document

How the Plan was Created

Inaugural Meeting

In October 2010 the Parish Council called a public meeting to ascertain interest and support for a village plan. During that meeting Keeley Rudd (Involvement Officer, Community Council for Somerset) explained what a village plan is and how the process evolves into a final published plan. A Village Plan Steering Committee of 14 volunteers was then elected.

The Committee

The committee members were: David Aldridge (PC representative), Tony Barnes, John Golding (Treasurer), Caroline Husband (Chairman), Nick Jones (resigned June 2011), Vivienne Moon (resigned February 2011), Justine North (Minutes Secretary from June 2011), Jessica Parry (PC representative until May 2011, resigned May 2012), Grahame Pickford (resigned May 2012), Christine Scarterfield (Secretary until June 2011, resigned April 2012), John Scarterfield, Martin Stanford (PC representative from May 2011).

Marlene Pickford and Jon Pike, Parish Council Chairman and Vice-chairman respectively, were ex officio members. Officers were elected and a constitution and equal opportunities policy written.

First Steps

In the first few months a website was set up and grant applications were made. Newsletters were planned, written and delivered to every household. Villagers were informally consulted and made aware of the committee's presence and remit. Recognising a need, people came forward to set up a litter picking group and a river watch group. In March 2012 a Volunteers Evening was held when villagers put their names forward for other groups and activities.

The Budget

Income and grants were awarded as follows:

Donations from businesses	£ 900
"Chilcompton Celebrates"	£ 500
Grant from Rackvernal Old School Hall	£3,500
Fund-raising from Gala Evening	£1,174.50
Calendar sales	£ 766.43
Other fund-raising	£ 292.34
Parish Council donation	£ 100
Total	£7,233.27

Fund-raising events

Quiz night

Gala night

Flower Show

Village Calendar

The youth and Somerset Rural Youth Project organised their own funding



Performers at the Gala Night, 2011

Consultation

In April 2011 a Launch Day Exhibition was arranged and local interest groups, churches, doctor's surgery, housing association and Somerset Rural Youth Project (SRYP) were invited to promote their groups. About 130 people attended the event. Views of villagers were sought on economic, environmental and social matters. Litter, dog fouling and speeding traffic were identified as being common concerns. Also consulted were Wessex Water, Somerset Community Council, the Mendip District Council Local Development Plan leader and local businesses.

During the following months presentations were made to various groups. SRYP worked with people aged 11 to 18, putting on a pizza and games event in January 2012 and devising a bespoke questionnaire for that age range. Committee members arranged projects in conjunction with the school for 5 – 11 year olds to provide input. Footpath, river, tree and architecture walks were led by knowledgeable volunteers. Feedback from newsletters, group presentations and the open day were all recorded and put on the website.

Questionnaire



Based on findings from the consultation process a detailed trial Questionnaire was devised with subjects covering: employment, housing, health, religion, village facilities, social well-being, communication and the natural and man-made environments.

The Questionnaire was piloted by 20 people of all ages to identify anomalies and leading questions and to check for ease of use. Every household in Chilcompton then received the final Questionnaire from volunteers, who returned a week later to collect it. Almost 800 were delivered and 550 completed copies were returned, giving a return rate of 69 per cent.

Forty five businesses received a tailor-made Questionnaire and 43 of these were returned. It was not possible to identify and survey sole proprietor businesses run from home, however such homes all received a domestic Questionnaire.

Results and Analysis

Volunteers then entered all questionnaire data into a spread sheet. Five per cent of entries were checked to ensure accuracy. Data was then analysed by committee members. Percentage results are given as 'stand-alone' results, meaning that they correspond to the number of responses for that question.

The Report

Sections of the report were written by different committee members. Two volunteers proof read the report, helped with layout and oversaw the final draft to ensure consistency of writing. A list of issues and actions was devised and prioritised. Various agencies were identified, who would be responsible for implementing the identified actions.

The Parish Council and Mendip District Council will be asked to endorse the plan after which it will be sent to appropriate agencies. Data and comments from the Questionnaire were put on the village plan website, where the report will also be made available. It is intended that Chilcompton Village Plan will be officially launched in April 2013. The report will be printed and be made available to all residents.

Working Parties

A number of initiatives have already begun to take shape around the village since the planning of the Village Plan began, these include the river watch scheme, a zebra crossing, upgrade of equipment at the Old Rec', improvement to park benches, speed watch, neighbourhood dog watch, a spring clean of the village and some improvement to village communication methods. To find out more about these schemes or to join in please contact us through any of the methods stated on page 2.

A Potted History of Chilcompton

It has been estimated that Celtic Gauls settled in Chilcompton before 300 BC, and certainly around this time the Belgian Gauls invaded, and conquered the previous inhabitants. The most likely area of occupation was around Manor Farm, which was then a crossroads. The next invaders were the Romans, who came to Chilcompton from AD 43 to AD 430. Then came William the Conqueror in 1066; Chilcompton was mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086, when the Lord of the Manor was Walter Tirrel.

There are two derivations of the name Chilcompton; one being a corruption of Ceald Coombe (Cold Valley) in Anglo Saxon and the other from the Domesday survey giving the name of Contone (which is an old Saxon word for an inhabited stockade). Contone could have become Compton and the prefix, 'Chil' is thought to be derived from either a family called Childe or, from a 'child' of noble birth. (It was called Childecumpton in 1227.)

Up to 1872 Chilcompton was part of the Chewton Hundreds, a parish in the district of Chewton. It was later administered by Clutton Rural District Council and Shepton Mallet Rural District Council. In 1974 Chilcompton became part of Mendip Rural District.

The first parish church was certainly in existence by 1188, but this was totally destroyed and a new one built in 1450. It was rebuilt in 1839 and under the control of the Diocese of Bath & Wells. Other places of worship were the Methodist Chapel, 1854 – 2001 and Christ Church, Downside 1839 – 1983. St Aldhelm's R.C. Church was built in 1839, rebuilt in 1976 and remains active.

The Wells Road from Bennell Cottages to the Somerset Wagon was built in 1835 to replace the old road, which was a main route from London to Falmouth.

The Somerset and Dorset Railway arrived in 1874, transporting goods such as coal, primroses and watercress to London until the station closed under the Beeching programme in 1966.



Farming, coal mining and quarrying formed the main industry. New Rock Colliery shafts were first sunk in 1835 closing in 1968. It was one of many local pits.

The stream passing through the village starts from a spring behind the Old Down Inn. However, in warm weather it dries up and is fed by two large springs at the head of the valley. This stream was previously known as 'Thickthorn Waters' until the name 'Somer' took over.

Population records in the Domesday Book recorded 18 people in 1086, growing to 260 people in 1790 (60 houses). In 1872 there were 730 inhabitants (155 houses). The census of 1951 states the number of residents as 1454. In 2012, the population was 2100.

This report was written by David Aldridge, in consultation with David Strawbridge

Economic Report

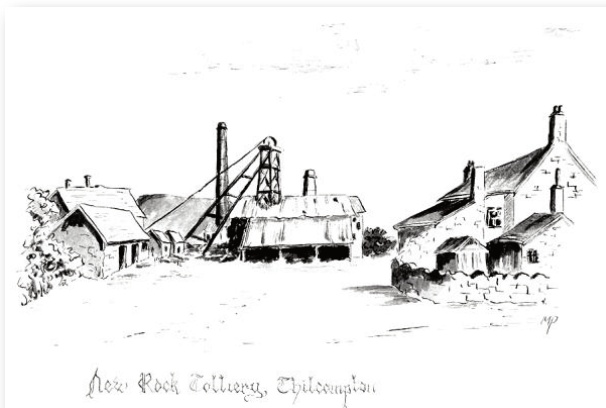
Employment

(Questions 1-6, and the Business Survey)

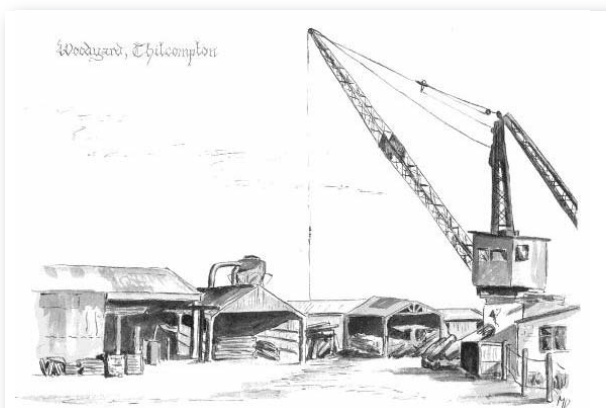
Past Employment

Natural springs and the water course that runs through the valley in Chilcompton attracted settlers in the early days as it was a source of energy for several mills and other activities.

The main occupation for centuries was farming until the coal mines opened in the 18th century. The coming of the railway in 1874 provided more employment and a means of transporting commodities.



During the last century mines, sawmills and concrete works were the major industries. Numerous shop keepers and traders provided all manner of provisions and services, ensuring that the residents' needs were met without them venturing beyond the village boundary.



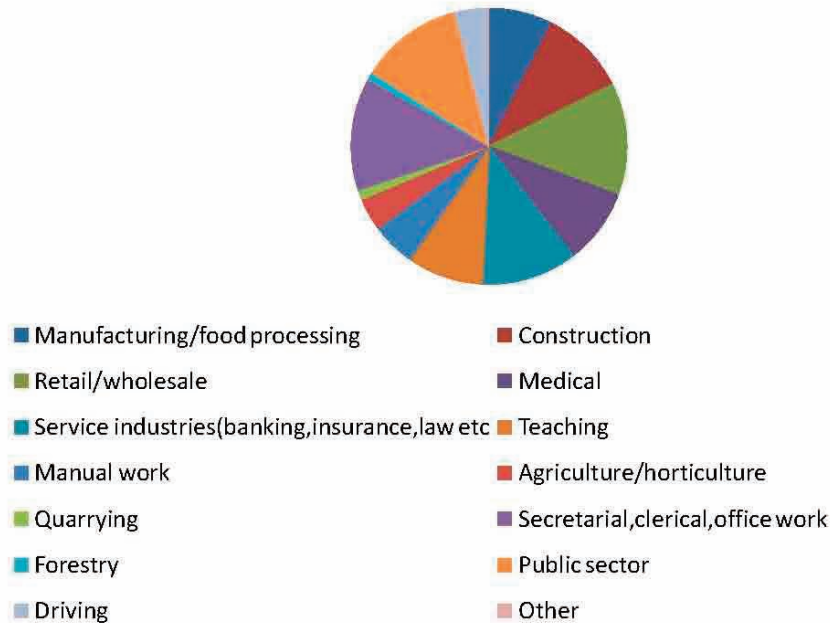
Present Employment

The largest current employers are Mulberry (leather goods and fashion), Massey Wilcox (haulage) and Occam (data marketing solutions). Most businesses are on the New Rock and South Rock industrial estates and at Broadway and Northside on the Wells Road. More recently, some firms now occupy converted farm buildings. There are also several individual companies and an unknown number of sole proprietors working from home.

Occupations

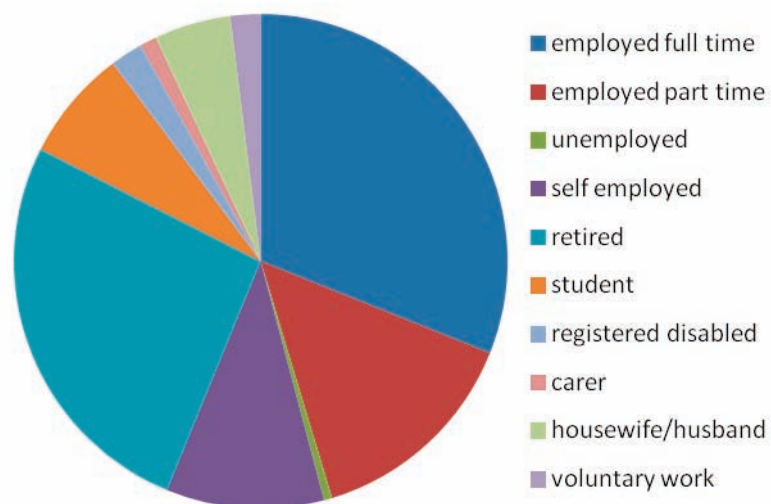
From villagers' answers in the Questionnaire, it will be seen that the highest employment is retail and secretarial work, both at 13%, also public sector 12%, and service industries 11%. This is followed by building 10%, teaching 9%, medical 9% and manufacturing 7.5%. Manual work, agriculture and driving together accounted for another 13%. Quarrying and forestry recorded 2%.

There was also a musician, writer, journalist, counsellor and a member of H M Forces.



The Workforce

Retirees make up 29 per cent of the population. Of those who stated they are unemployed, 70 per cent say that accessing the job centre is difficult - it is costly and time-consuming. There were suggestions that Job Centre Plus could be located at the village hall.



Employment Sites and Types of Employment

Seventy nine per cent of respondents think that there should be more employment opportunities in Chilcompton and most respondents have said that more employment should be on existing industrial sites rather than green field sites.

When asked what type of new employment people want, more than 100 commented and answers were varied. Of those, 32 per cent want to see light engineering while a further 13 per cent favoured small, rural, cottage-type industries. Also suggested were a coffee shop and retail (17 per cent), as well as high tech and service industries.



Comments from Questionnaire

- *'More opportunities for young people to get training on site of employment'*
- *'Office space for those who work outside Chilcompton, as an alternative to working from home'*

Many would be grateful for any local work. Several people cautioned that too much industry could destroy the rural, village ambience, but if only existing industrial sites are used then those fears may be mitigated.

Working from Home

Just over half of self-employed respondents run an office from home and over a third of employees responding also occasionally work from home. However, another 35 per cent would like to do some work at home but are unable to, either because the job cannot be done at home, the employer will not agree to it or the fact that broadband services are too slow.

The Business Survey

Forty three business surveys were returned from employers who have premises in the village and who employ staff. Those surveyed employed up to approximately 600 people and the businesses have been in existence for between 4 weeks and 157 years.

Employers' Perspective

Employers unanimously found Chilcompton a good place in which to run a business and all said they used village facilities such as post office, shops, pubs and garages. Comments included, *'Good base, good location, accessible, peaceful, quiet, friendly, rural, economical, relaxed atmosphere to work in, good local facilities'*

Employers' satisfaction with local facilities was evident with mail delivery rated as good by 86 per cent, fair 12 per cent and poor two per cent and the Post Office service scoring exactly the same percentages. Employers were satisfied with roads (90 per cent), signposting (98 per cent) and utilities (100 per cent). Parking facilities were rated good 37 per cent, fair 39 per cent and poor 24 per cent.

Poor broadband speed was a problem for many and the following comment sums up their concerns: *'We are largely an internet based consultancy. In the past we had broadband capacity equal to our clients in London etc. However, we are, sadly, falling behind as other locations have access to high speed fibre optic broadband. This will be a consideration as to whether we stay here long term'*

Car parking was also limited in some cases and it was thought that signposting to industrial estates could be improved.

Employment Sites

Respondents were divided as to whether business premises were in good supply in Chilcompton and a third did not know. They were also unsure as to whether more business sites were needed, although some thought more service based and retail units were required. Comments included: *'I feel that if more sites were made available, whilst it might provide employment opportunities, it runs the risk of detracting from the 'village' and, 'I would object strongly to any move to change the natural nature(sic) of what is essentially a village with all the accompanying features good and bad'*

Sixty six per cent thought that present employment sites should be preserved for industrial or business use with two per cent against and 32 per cent who didn't know. Employee numbers have stayed fairly static in the last five years and 69 per cent of firms have more than half of their workforce living in Chilcompton or within five miles. About 55 per cent offer training to employees. This comment seems to sum up the general feeling amongst employers: *'We enjoy the peaceful village location. The setting proves very popular with clients and local amenities are sufficient'*

Conclusion

Broadband speed needs to be much improved to attract new firms, to prevent existing employers from leaving the village and to enable more people to work from home. More employment opportunities are needed to train and employ the young, to appeal to those who can only work part-time, to create a more sustainable village and save commuting time, fuel costs and carbon emissions.

More employment needs to be allowed only on existing brownfield sites and these must be preserved solely for employment, otherwise these brownfield sites will be lost and future employment opportunities curtailed.

However welcome more employment opportunities are, new work places should not be to the detriment of the village and its rural nature. It is important to the residents of Chilcompton that the quiet country ambience of their village is preserved.



This report was written by Marlene Pickford and Martin Stanford.

Housing and Development

(Questions 7 & 8)

Housing

In general (more than 2 in 3) villagers would like to see any new housing to be built on 'brownfield' sites and be of a more affordable nature with the majority being 1, 2 & 3 bedroom homes rather than 4 or 5 bed homes. Flats however were generally not supported; it must be pointed out though that the question was not split into 'block of flats' and the odd bespoke minor (say less than 5) development, so there may be a presumption in favour of the latter. Any developer's contributions should benefit the village directly and go towards the maintaining of sites of interest, public parks / footpaths and road / infrastructure improvements. There was also strong support for a retirement / sheltered housing scheme(s) within the village.

Again, the majority agreed that any proposals should be assessed on sustainability grounds and should reflect / respect the general character of the area in terms of design.

There was a general feeling that 'garden grabbing' and over-development should be resisted but not at the expense of re-development where an overall improvement could be had. The idea of a minimum garden area per dwelling relative to the size of house was supported by over 70% as a possible way of achieving this.



It is clear that any mass scale housing estates would be resisted and therefore any future changes should be small scale and relatively progressive, especially on green field and agricultural land beyond the village boundary where any medium / large scale development should be strongly and vigorously opposed. Many appreciated that Chilcompton needed to grow in the longer term, but it was suggested that this be done slowly, progressively and organically so the village remains a village and not a suburb. This

may be achieved by allowing redevelopment of brownfield sites by way of encouraging noisy / polluting industry to relocate to more suitable nearby premises (such as the one in Emborough) and by keeping an open mind to smaller 'farmyard' style conversion / renovation projects and one-off sustainable self builds in or around the periphery of the boundary of the village, on the basis that an overall environmental benefit could be achieved and be assessed on a 'case by case' basis.

On the whole there was little concern about people needing to move out of the village by being priced out of it.

The question of whether industry and small business premises should be mixed in with housing was generally not supported, but this is not thought to include those that work from home.

Industry and commerce

There was almost an equal balance of 'for and against' with regards to the construction of new industrial units within the village. People generally wanted to see greater employment (see other sections) but as long as the premises 'weren't in my back yard', which is understandable if a gross generalisation. Again, it is noted here that certain discreet farmyard areas may be more appropriate for such proposals as and where required over and above any retail style outlets. It is generally thought that the odd extra shop or two would be encouraged if the environmental factors were acceptable.

Overall Design / Assessment Criteria

In summary it is suggested that the following criteria be used when assessing any future development proposal, in terms of new housing, which would seem to be reflective of the overall view of the residents:

1. Does the proposal reflect the needs and requirements of the local community i.e. are the houses of 1,2 & 3 Bedroom nature?
2. Are there plenty of green areas, with trees and shrubs?
3. Will the proposal be of general benefit to the village and its inhabitants?
4. Does the design reflect / respect the character of the village?
5. Do the proposed materials reflect this? i.e. Natural stone* in place of a poor quality reconstituted alternative. * This could be broken up with Brick, Timber or Render to assist in supply / cost issues.
6. Are there a variety of roof heights to add interest and promote light ingress?

It is appreciated that not all of these guidelines will be able to be adhered to, but where they are not other factors of overall environmental / village benefit could be brought into play as a counter-balance.

General Comments

The amount of comments received were too numerous to single any particular ones out, however, the underlying theme was fairly consistent. Most villagers were very keen to preserve green spaces and wildlife areas and to improve the overall aesthetics of the village e.g. areas such as the old railway line, Fry's Well, the War Memorial, the areas around the river Somer from the valley, through The Street, toward the Church and beyond.

Suggestions including opening up the old railway line as an extension of the Midsomer Norton cycle / recreation track (which is already in the Local Plan to some extent) were put forward. There also appears to be some support for a Farm shop, cafe, take-away and /or something similar in some shape or form.

In general though it was felt that the parish could be more positive and pro-active toward shaping the Chilcompton of the future, and that it needed to embrace change rather than resist it, which means encouraging renovation, restoration and the odd new build here and there, but also embracing the vitality of the village for the benefit of all its inhabitants be that flora or fauna.

These findings will be relayed to the Parish Council for future consideration in the Village Design Statement and a Neighbourhood Plan should they pursue this.

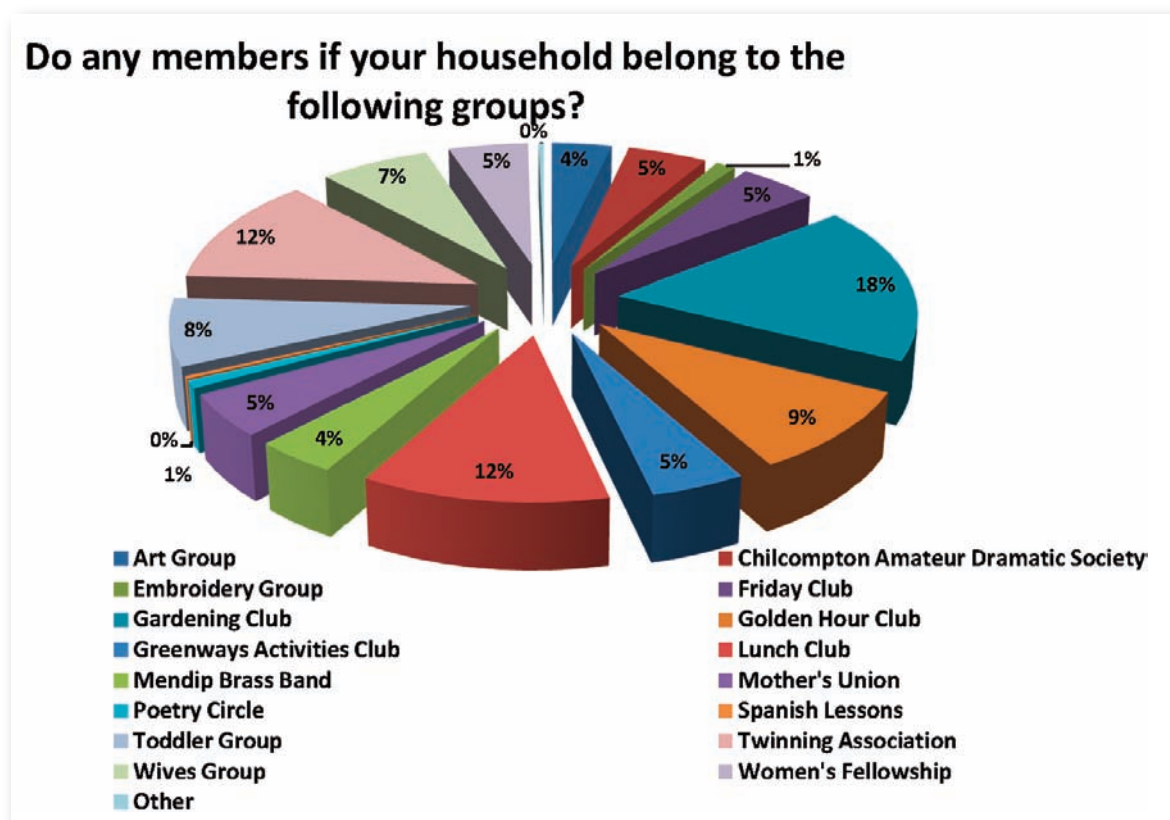
This report was written by Tony Barnes

Social Report

Community Facilities and Services

(Questions 9 - 11)

The survey asked villagers for the organisations or groups that they use in the village. All categories attracted at least one response. The largest group is the Gardening club where 18 per cent of those surveyed stated membership, followed by the Twinning Association, Lunch Club and Golden Hour Club.

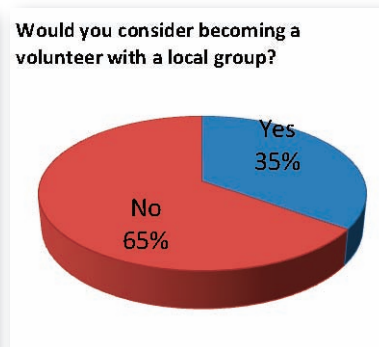
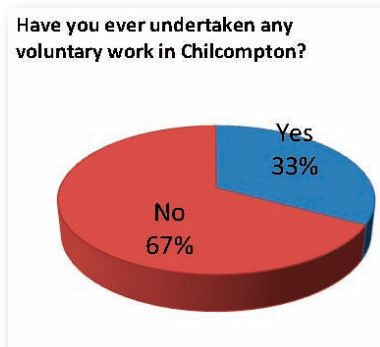


Comments suggest there is a need for groups for the young. Comments such as: 'other things for children', 'it seems sad there are so few clubs for boys in the village, e.g. scouts, cubs, judo, gymnastics, etc.', 'Brownies, Cubs, youth club or similar', 'youth group', 'youth centre', 'children could be [in] the village hall', and 'youth club would be useful for teenagers' all lead to this conclusion. The two main themes that emerged are scouts and cubs to a lesser extent, and the more prevalent youth club. This was further emphasised by comments which related to the lack of opportunities for teenagers and secondary school children which showed this as being the area of most concern.

Potentially, village clubs may not be publicising their activities to the fullest extent and additional members may be attracted. Comments such as a request for a choir or singing group suggesting a lack of knowledge of the 'Sing Your Heart Out' Choir may illustrate this. Village groups need to be more proactive in making villagers aware of the opportunities they present, not only for new members but also in the drive towards recruiting volunteers.

Most groups are dependent on volunteers. However, when questioned, the majority of villagers (67 per cent) did not currently volunteer for anything and approximately the same amount do not envisage doing so in future. Although disappointing, it is probably indicative of

a wider situation regarding volunteering nationally. It should be noted that this survey was carried out before the Olympic Games and the success of the volunteers in that event. Perhaps this will encourage more volunteering locally.

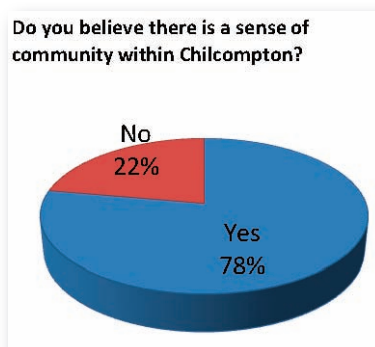


Overall, villagers felt that there was a real sense of community, with over 75 per cent of those responding believing this.

Two suggestions to encourage volunteering are:

- to launch a village campaign to encourage volunteering. Clubs and groups will be encouraged to publicise the need for volunteers within their organisations, making clear there are a wide variety of tasks that need to be filled (There may be a perception that sports clubs only need coaches, where there will be a need for non-sporting roles, e.g. secretaries, treasurers, etc.)
- to launch a volunteer award where village clubs can nominate their volunteer of the year and winners are rewarded at an event, perhaps Chilcompton Celebrates?

From the results returned it is apparent that many villagers take part in sports and games within the village or in the near vicinity.



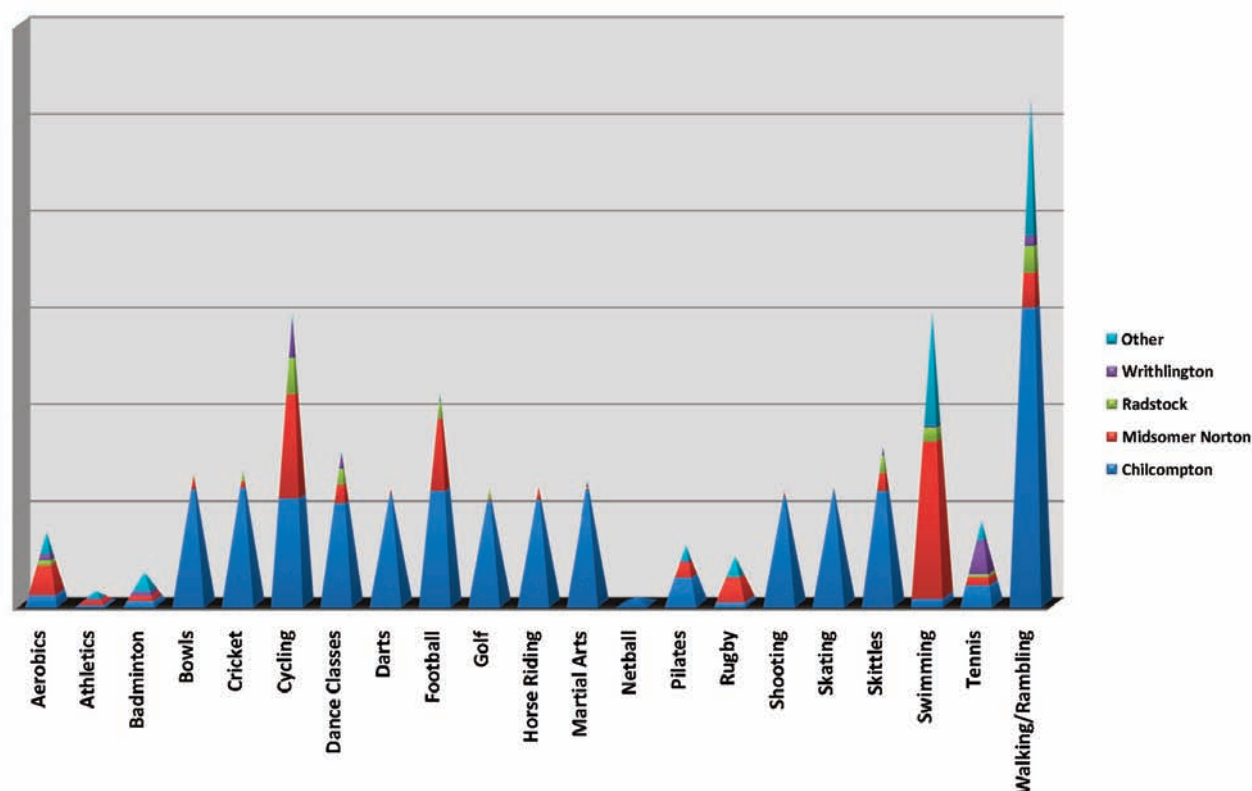
The most popular activity is walking, with over 500 people engaging in this activity, undoubtedly utilising the large amount of footpaths within the parish. This was followed by bowls and cycling, the former being undertaken largely outside the village. The largest organised team sport is football with the majority of participants taking part within the village club.

Most respondents stated that they took part in their chosen activity in the village, although some of the activities do not actually have specific facilities in the village. An example of this is that 107 people state that they play golf in the village, whereas there is no golf course in Chilcompton.

The most common response given for non-participation in activities in the village was lack of facilities. In spite of this the number of people taking part in these activities is sufficiently high, suggesting that this does not preclude participation. Cost, the second highest reason, accounts for less than a fifth of the responses for non-participation.

Some recipients listed themselves as 'too old' to participate in activities. It is perhaps beholden on our sporting clubs to target these age groups. Most sports have veteran sections, so this is a possible area of growth for our clubs. Disability is also listed as a reason not to attend. This group is another possible area of untapped growth that clubs could be encouraged to explore for new membership.

Sporting Activities of Villagers



Recreational Facilities

There are a several existing facilities within the village; the use of the facilities are as follows.

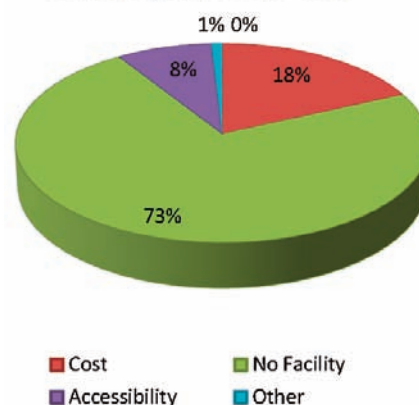
From the results it would appear that a majority of villagers do not use any of the village facilities at any time, however the Old Playing Field (The Old Rec) and Playing area and the Sports Field at Bennell have large user groups.

Perception of the quality of the facilities is good. At least 75 per cent who expressed a preference perceive the facilities as fair or better for all of the facilities listed. The newer facilities in the village: Bennell Sports Field and School MUGA (multi use games area) score highest, perhaps not surprising given the considerable investment.

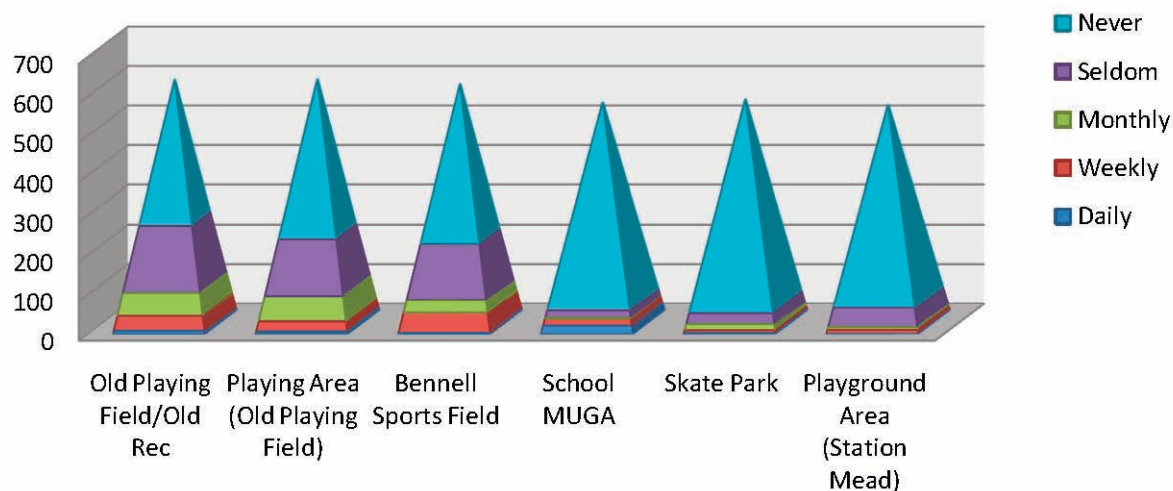
Several comments state the need for the Bennell Sports Field to have a club house with games facilities associated with it. This could encourage greater use by young people.

The two play areas attract a number of comments regarding the need to improve the facilities. The recent investment programme of the old Rec play area equipment by the Parish Council may go some way towards alleviating these concerns.

If you would like to pursue any of these sports in the village but do not do, please state why?

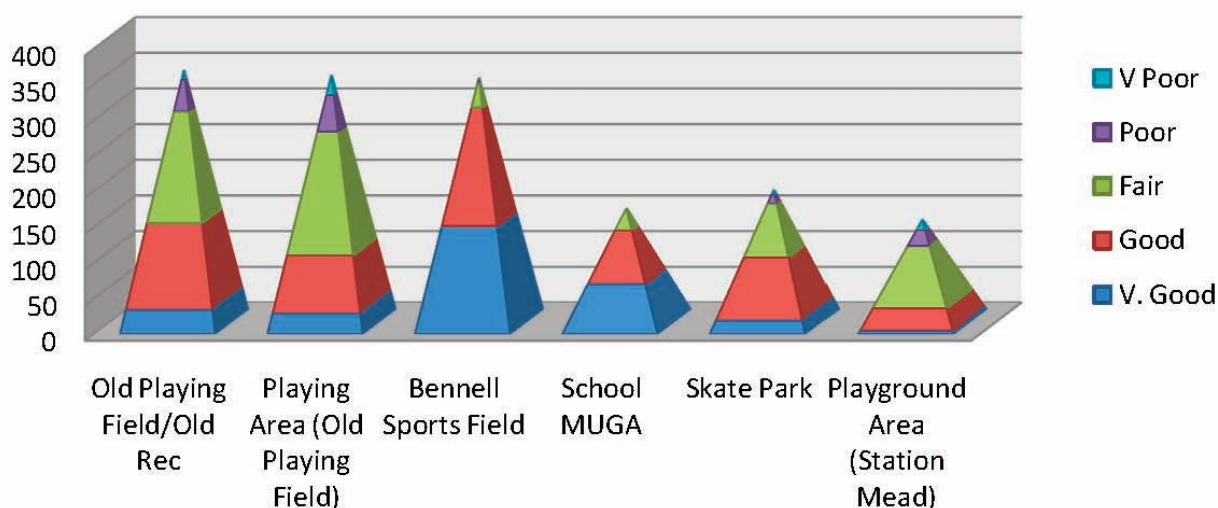


How often do you use the following village facilities ?



A number of comments regarding Station Mead, such as: *'playground area Station Mead attracts older children not as intended'*, *'Station Mead is used as a den for teenagers'*, and *'Station Mead is designed for 2-5 year olds. Attracts children of all ages'* suggests that school age children need additional meeting places in the village. Other comments also suggest it is poorly located: *'Should not be located directly outside homes'* and *'Causes disruption, inappropriately placed'*. Another comment, *'Residents at Station Mead tell people inc (sic) children they cannot play there unless they live in the area'*, suggests this sentiment is shared by some local residents.

How do you rate these facilities ?



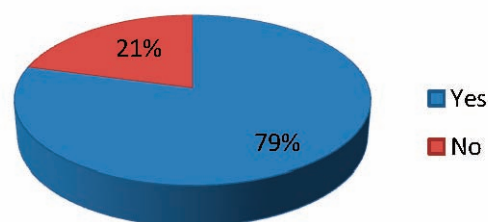
Despite the very high satisfaction rating for the school and community MUGA there are a few negative comments regarding this facility. However comments such as: *'school MUGA open and advertised for public use'*, *'access to school MUGA for outside groups'* and *'school MUGA publicity'* suggest that the community use aspect of the facility is not fully understood and possible use of the facility may be increased if this was rectified.

The Old Rec generated the most and wide ranging views. However, there is a degree of consensus that it needs new and more contrasting play equipment which may attract a more diverse age group. In particular, better amenities for parents accompanying children e.g. *'add picnic benches/tables'*. There appears to be a general consensus to improve the area, *'old rec needs more maintenance'* and *'the old rec may be tidier especially the garden corner made more maintenance friendly'*. Improved access and parking facilities at the site would help to improve its usage. Other comments related to possible developments, include *'allotments and an Old Rec part rented for stables'*, *'the Old Rec needs to be preserved as a tranquil space'* and a *'wild meadow/nature reserve'*. There are other areas of this report where possible uses of the Old Rec are discussed in greater detail. It is worth noting however that there appears to be a deep undercurrent of affection for the Old Rec with some people valuing it in its current form; one respondent stating, *'Leave the old rec alone – it's not yours to mess about with!'*

- Playground area needs more activities
- More equipment for playground
- Refurbishment and update of equipment
- The village seriously lacks playground activities
- Current facilities are poor and in urgent need of updating

Undoubtedly a wide variety of potential improvements to recreation facilities would benefit the community; however, these would need to be funded. One comment, *'as long as it does not cost us more'*, does not appear to be representative of the view of the village in general. When asked, *'Would you support the use of public money (council tax) to improve these facilities?'*, the overwhelming response was yes (79%). It is possible that this principle has already been established in the village e.g. a public-works loan was used to purchase the Bennell Sports field repayable through the village precept over a twenty- five year period thus already part of the parish budget meaning that villagers are both familiar and comfortable with this principle. Certainly it does leave greater room to manoeuvre when considering possible future developments.

Would you support the use of Public Money (Council Tax) to improve these facilities?



Conclusion

Chilcompton possesses a number of clubs that cover a wide range of interests, with most aspirations for clubs already being provided by village organisations. Cost does not seem to present a threat to their wellbeing although a possible lack of volunteers may become an obstacle in the future.

Villagers perceive that lack of facilities is the major barrier to participation, although the facilities that are in the village are perceived as good or better. In spite of this there are improvements that could be made at all the facilities within the village; there is large agreement that public money should be used to fund any such improvements. There is a need to reach out to groups that are not currently represented within clubs who could provide potential future members.

This report was written by Jon Pike

Education and Schooling

(Questions 12-13)

Brief History of Schooling in Chilcompton

The current St Vigor and St John's School was opened in 1993, and is a Voluntary Aided school, meaning that the church has ownership over the building, has a financial interest and a majority on the Board of Governors. This new school replaced the three local primary schools - Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Chilcompton Infant school, which was situated on Church Lane, and Downside Junior School, on Stockhill Road. The first school on the Church Lane site was built in 1849, and then rebuilt in 1876 when education became compulsory; eighty two children attended. The building is now a private house. Downside school was first built in 1844, and by 1895 had 150 pupils on its roll-call but by 1980 it had 80 children.



Chilcompton Infant School 1876



Downside Junior School 1970s

Current Facilities

St Vigor and St John's School now has 209 children on its roll, drawn predominantly from Chilcompton and Stratton-on-the-Fosse. Because of its excellent reputation, children travel from the surrounding villages to attend. It obtained an 'outstanding' at its last OFSTED inspection in 2006/07. Within the grounds of the School stand the Mill Children's Centre which is a modern purpose-built facility, opened in August 2009. It houses The Nursery, and Sure Start Children's Centre. Both are managed by the school's Board of Governors. The Nursery takes children on a privately-paid basis, and has 30 places each day. The Children's Centre has as its aim: *'to provide high quality care and learning opportunities, enabling happy, confident and lifelong learners'* Its sole purpose is to support families with children age zero to five years, of which there are 115 living in Chilcompton. Its reach is a 20 mile radius around Chilcompton.

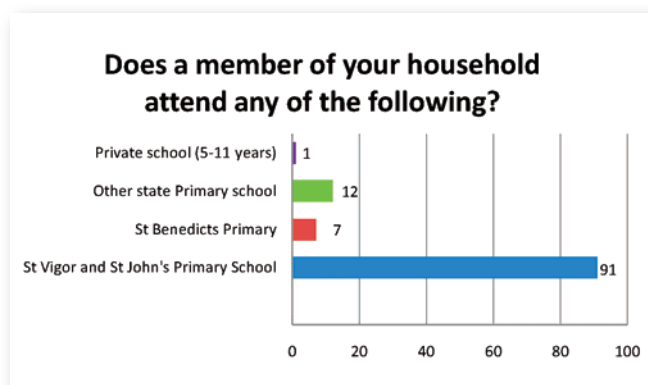




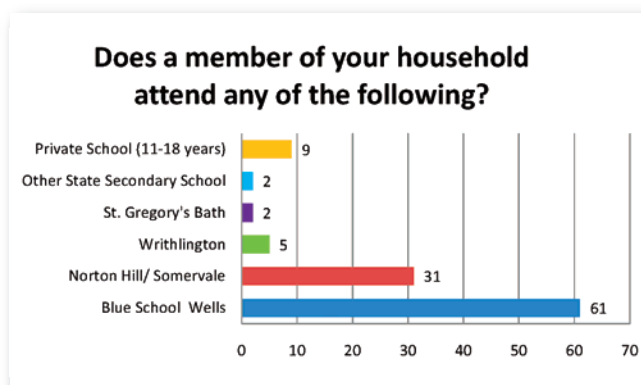
St Vigor & St John School

Schools

The following charts depict the distribution of village children around the local schools:



Primary School Attendance



Secondary School Attendance

There was no opportunity within the questionnaire for villagers to make comments about the education available in the village. However substantial work was carried out with children within St Vigor and St John's school, and with teenagers from the village to gather their opinions of the school facilities and village as a whole.

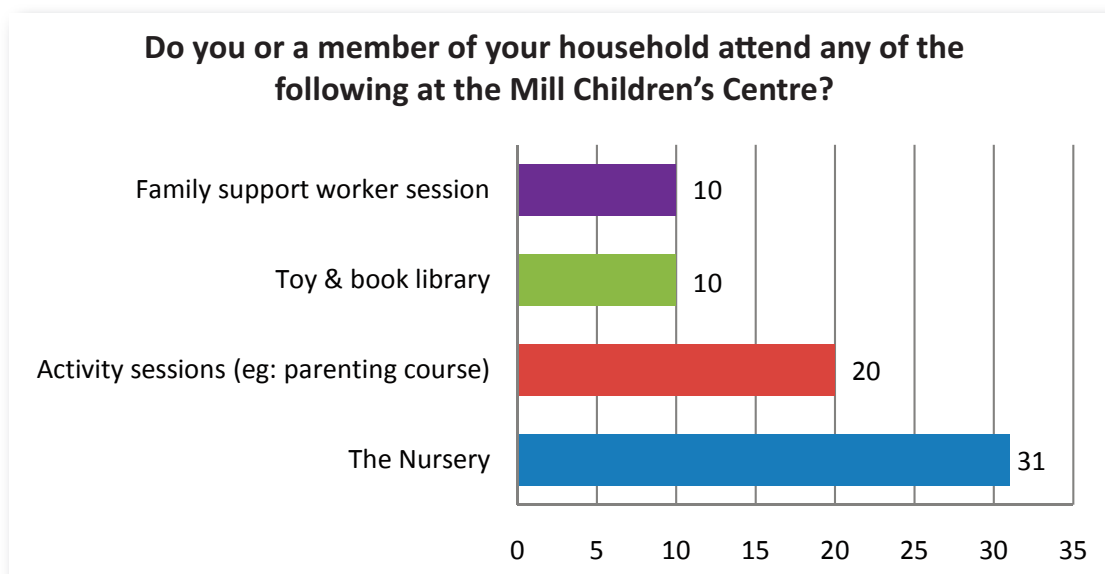
The Mill Children's Centre

There was a very positive response to the questions about The Mill Children's Centre, and therefore it was felt appropriate to liaise with staff there in preparation of this report, so a meeting was held with the family support worker and Lead Centre Officer for family services at The Mill.

The Mill was used by a large number of people as reported in the questionnaire (71 in total).

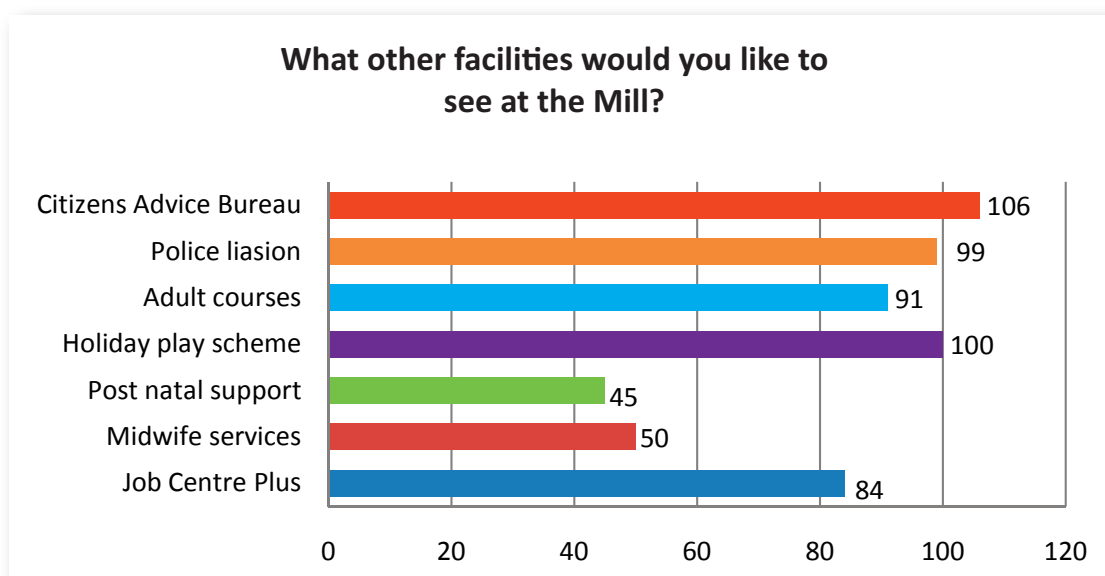


The Mill Children's Centre



There were several comments made that people hadn't heard of The Mill, possibly because people without young children would not need to use their facilities. However, this may also indicate that better advertising may be required.

The Questionnaire asked about other facilities people would like to see at The Mill. Large numbers of people expressed the wish to see services extended; the Mill currently offers provision for children in the age range of 0-5 years.



Several other ideas were mentioned, including a youth club, afterschool care, parenting courses, and healthy living groups.

All these groups were discussed with The Mill staff, who made the following comments about the suggestions:

- The Citizens Advice Bureau have already been asked if they could operate a service from The Mill however, they do not have the capacity to do so. The staff at the Mill will accompany service users to a local CAB service if required.
- Police and fire liaison staff visit the Mill regularly, and again, staff at the Mill would support service users to visit the Police when necessary.
- Adult courses such as literacy, language and maths, self-esteem, parenting, first aid and educational psychology and behavioural management are already provided, depending on need.
- Holiday play scheme. A trial was held in Chilcompton for zero to seven year olds in the summer of 2011, but the scheme struggled to fill all its places.
- Midwife and Post natal services - there has been work carried out to look at the practicalities of these services being offered at the Mill, but due to problems of the location and local authority boundaries it is not possible to offer these services.
- Job Centre Plus - The Job Centre representative will visit the Mill if required.
- After school care and youth club - this is not possible since the remit is only for age zero to five years, and the Nursery is currently full to capacity.

Staff emphasised that they are very keen to support children's services and facilities in the village, visiting local toddler groups and offering a range of activities for children and their families. They also seek to respond to local and individual need, in order to encourage healthy and happy family life.

Other Pre-School Facilities

Twelve villagers said they use a child-minder, and 17 said they use a playgroup or nursery other than The Mill. There are currently three registered child-minders in the village. With 64 per cent of respondents feeling there aren't enough child-minders in the village, this demonstrates a potential business opportunity within the village.

Conclusion

It would seem that we are very fortunate in Chilcompton to have such a high standard of services available to our children - both from the School and the Children's Centre, with staff who are totally dedicated to the children in their charge. The staff are very stretched, but work extremely hard to advocate for and support family life, and bring an all-rounded education to our children. The community is grateful for such an investment in our young people.

The questionnaire demonstrates that there are lots of ideas for other uses of the facilities, but also a lack of knowledge as to what goes on particularly at The Mill. Education is clearly needed to better inform the villagers as to the role of The Mill, particularly the Children's Centre.

This report was written by Justine North

Amenities

(Question 14)

Village Amenities

It was evident from the business survey that the 43 companies who responded all said they use village facilities with one employer having conferences and business meetings in one of the pubs. The questionnaire results show that village facilities are well used by residents.

Shops

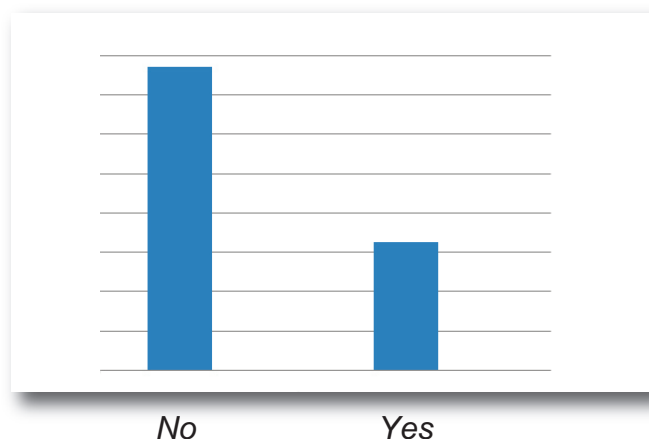
Only three out of 836 respondents have never used the Co-op and similarly the Post Office is well patronised with only 32 never having used it. Both are thought to be excellent and must be supported to retain them in the village, although comments were made that chairs for the elderly would be appreciated, that car parking is inadequate, leading to road parking near a busy junction, that a wider range of goods would be an improvement, that another shop providing competition would lower prices, that the PO needs more space and privacy and that some would like to renew their driving licence at the PO.



Are more shops needed in the village?

Those wanting more facilities in the village mainly want, in order of popularity: fish & chips or food takeaway, coffee shop, baker, butcher, chemist, farm shop or market, grocery, fruit & veg, crafts and gifts and hardware. A feasibility study may need to be undertaken to further understand the needs of villagers.

The idea of a community café run by volunteers was supported by 54 per cent with 23 per cent not in favour and 23 per cent who don't know.



62 per cent do not want more shops

38 per cent do want more shops

Halls

The survey showed that 23 per cent of villagers have never been to the village hall and 49 per cent have had no occasion to use the church hall. Further activities suggested for the halls were carers and IT courses and Job Centre Plus, as well as youth and teenage clubs, markets (farmers, craft, artisan), a coffee shop, village library, historical archive storage, cinema or Parish Council office.

All-age social events like the Gala Evening were applauded and more of the same called for. It was pointed out that the village hall needs to be upgraded, especially the kitchen and toilets.

The church hall was thought to be *'a lovely space, but goings on not advertised properly'*.

Pubs

Over the centuries there have been numerous public houses in Chilcompton. In the 1960s and 1970s there were five. Questionnaire figures suggest the remaining three, The Somerset Wagon, The Redan and The Court Hotel are all popular and have a regular clientele. Unfortunately, The Court Hotel was inadvertently omitted from the Questionnaire, so it can only be reported that it is known that residents use the hotel as their local pub and also frequent the restaurant there. All respondents seem very satisfied with pub provision, although themed evenings and special offers were requested. The pubs offer valuable social venues and should be patronised to ensure survival.



The Naishes Cross Inn closed 1972



The Britannia Inn closed 1981

Garages

Like all the other facilities the two garages serve an important need and are appreciated. Broadway Garage serves a wide range of customers with fuel, shop and motor repairs, including villagers, passing trade and patronage from local companies. Downside Motors serves a much wider area with car sales and repairs and is used somewhat less by residents. These are valued by members of the community and every effort should be made to retain them.

Comments from Questionnaire

- *'There seems to be a lot for the very young and the old/pensioners, but nothing for middle age bracket re: 20-50 years'*
- *'Would like to see more inclusive activities for all ages at a time when everyone can go i.e. at weekends'*
- *'Need to keep petrol garage in the village'*

Hairdressers

The two hairdressing shops, which cater for 38 per cent of Chilcompton respondents, appear to satisfactorily meet the needs of their clients.

Mobile Library

The mobile library has served the village for more than 50 years, but few people use this facility now, as it only comes monthly and there are only two stops, both in Stockhill Road. Several people were unaware that there was a mobile library and others had no idea when it comes or where the stops are. Some were interested to learn more with a view to using it, so there is potential for this service to expand.

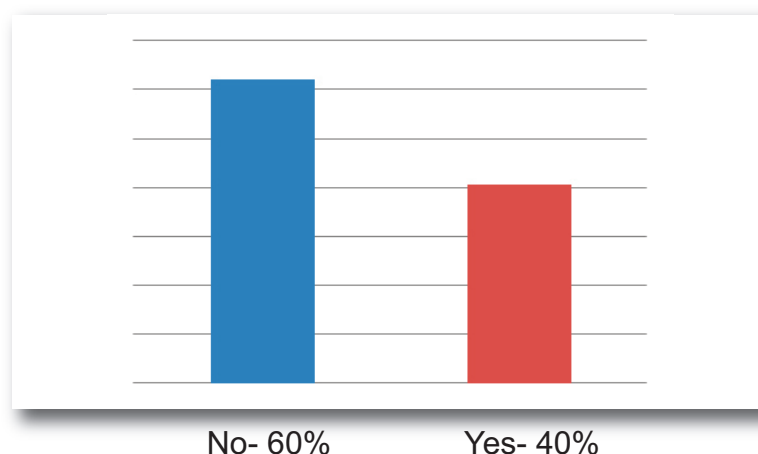
Conclusion

- More shops are not needed or wanted, except perhaps for weekly specialist mobile visits.
- The Co-op needs more space, a wider range of goods and more competitive pricing.
- Co-op needs more and better designed car parking.
- Post Office needs more space for privacy.
- There is scope for a community cafe run by volunteers.
- Pubs are catering to villagers' needs, but could promote special events.
- There could be different and more imaginative uses for the halls.
- Better publicity for the mobile library might give wider access.
- A volunteer village library would probably not be supported.

Comments from Questionnaire

- *'We must retain village retail facilities. They must be given every support.'* *'I think all the facilities serve a good purpose and should remain as is.'*

Would you support a village library run by volunteers?

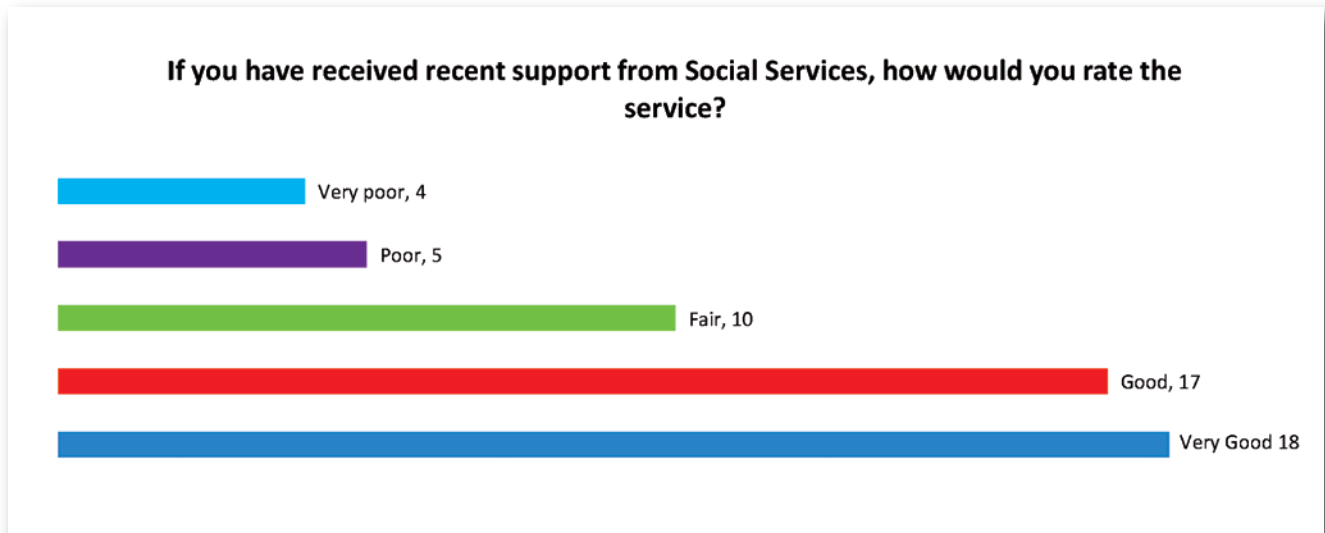


This report was written by Marlene Pickford and Martin Stanford

Social Services

(Question 15)

Fifty four responses were received regarding the quality of the support obtained from Social Services. Overall, the majority of those felt it had been a good service:



A wide range of comments were received regarding social service provision with many wanting enhanced service. Typical comments include:

- *'Better information for carers; about benefits; for disabled people; what services are available'*
- *'More support for the elderly, including transport, home care, visiting at home'*
- *'Return of meals on wheels'*
- *'Better organisation, communication and understanding'*

Conclusion

- Communicate the results of the Village Plan Questionnaire to Somerset County Council
- Somerset County Councillors to discuss feasibility of the suggestions made in the Village Plan Questionnaire

This report was written by Justine North