



Assets, Community & Environment Meeting

Date: 17th February 2022

ACE029d Annual Parish Council Survey Feedback

1. Introduction

Council resolved to undertake a survey in late 2021 to understand how the Parish Council could support the local community for people living and / or working in the Parish.

2. Approach

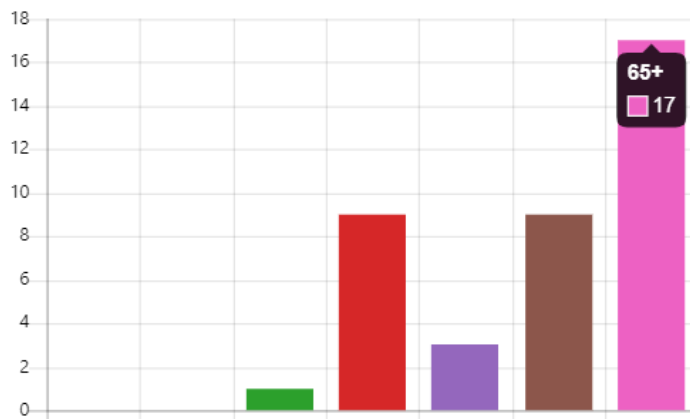
The survey was launched on 17th November 2021 and was promoted via Facebook, the Parish Council website and Cuckfield Life magazine. The survey closed on 24th January 2022.

3. Findings

39 responses were received and the average time it took respondents to complete the survey was five minutes. A breakdown of responses follows.

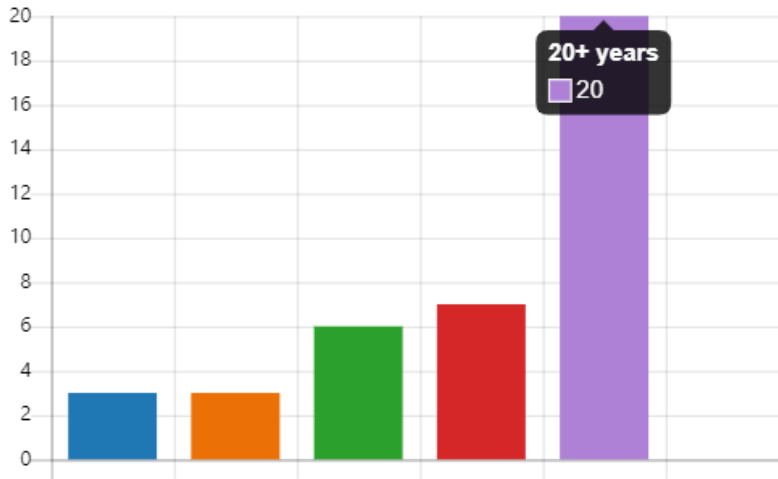
Age group

Age groups were split into the following: under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+. There were no respondents in age groups under 18 and 18-24. One respondent was in the age group 25-34, 9 respondents were in the age group 35-44, 3 respondents were in the age group 45-54, 9 respondents were in the age group 55-64 and by far the most responses were received from the age group 65+ which attracted 17 responses.



How many years have you lived in the Parish

20 respondents had lived in the Parish over 20 years, 7 respondents had lived in the Parish 10-20 years, 6 respondents had lived in the Parish 5-9 years and both 1-5 years and less than a year attracted 3 responses. No-one who lived outside of the Parish responded.



Gender

29 respondents were female, compared to only 8 male respondents. 1 respondent identified another way and 1 respondent preferred not to say.

Involvement in the Parish

All 39 respondents were residents and of these, 2 were business owners and one a business employee within the village. Businesses included online sales, garden design and maintenance and consulting. The only business to employ staff was the garden design and maintenance business who had two employees. All three businesses wished to expand. The biggest issues identified was the difficulty posting goods due to the closed Post Office and the need to secure land for expansion.

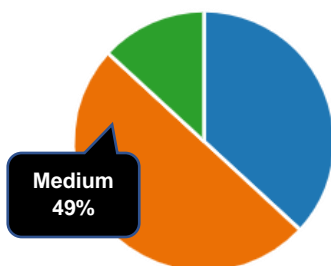
Charities

Only one respondent was involved in charity work (NSPCC), and they were able to get involved in local events to raise awareness of the charity. The respondent answered that there was nothing that the Parish Council could do to support the charity.

NSPCC

Inclusion in the community

Respondents could answer high (*I have lots of local friends and family, I know my neighbours well, and I socialise a lot*), medium (*I have some local friends and family, I socialise occasionally and I know my neighbours names*) or low (*I have a few local contacts, I socialise rarely and I don't know my neighbours*). 19 respondents recorded medium inclusion in the community, 14 respondents recorded high inclusion whereas only 5 respondents recorded low inclusion.

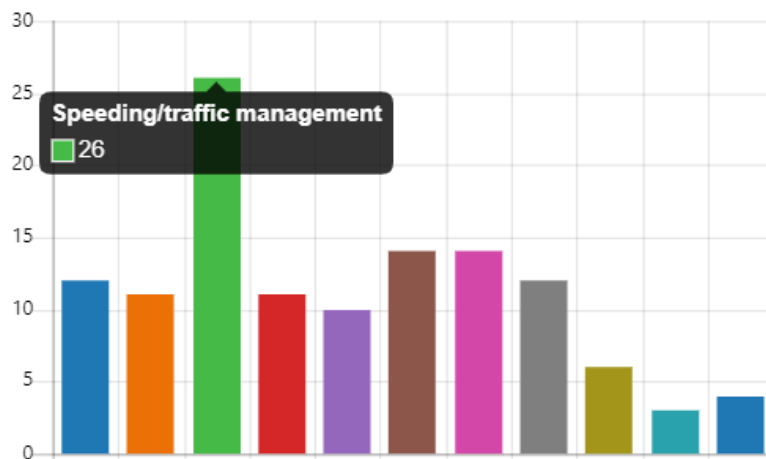


Priorities for the next five years

Respondents were invited to select three issues for the Parish Council to prioritise over the next five years – scorings as follows:

- Improvement of outdoor spaces (12)
- Youth engagement (11)
- Speeding/traffic management (26)
- Community pride - such as the quality & appearance of the local environment (11)
- Supporting local businesses (10)
- Community events (14)
- Sustainability/recycling (14)
- Improvement of local amenities and buildings (12)
- Raise awareness of the village (6)
- Supporting local charities within the Parish (3)
- Other (suggestions included parking facilities, electric charging points, a footpath to access the sports pavilion at Whitemans Green, stopping the over development of the area and support groups for minority groups or people with disabilities) (4)

Scoring was relatively even (64% of priorities received between 10-14 responses) whilst speeding/traffic management was considered the greatest priority totalling 26 responses. Sustainability/recycling, coupled with the additional suggestion of electric charging points, highlighted respondents desire to prioritise environmental issues. Supporting local charities within the Parish and raising awareness of the village were deemed to be the least priorities.



How could the Parish Council best support local business

Respondents were encouraged to enter free text responses – the following were received:

“Support opening of shared working space”

“Continue with events like the Christmas high street, encourage Cuckfield business participation”

“Help cut business taxes”

“Affordable business rates”

“Help to keep costs down and lower business tax”

“Traffic management to reduce congestion, encourage more diverse use of retail units available in the village”

“Provide more parking to attract more visitors/business into the village”

“Persuade MSDC to offer free parking for visits to the local shops”

“Including all businesses in the monthly Cuckfield Life and website”

“They could start listening”

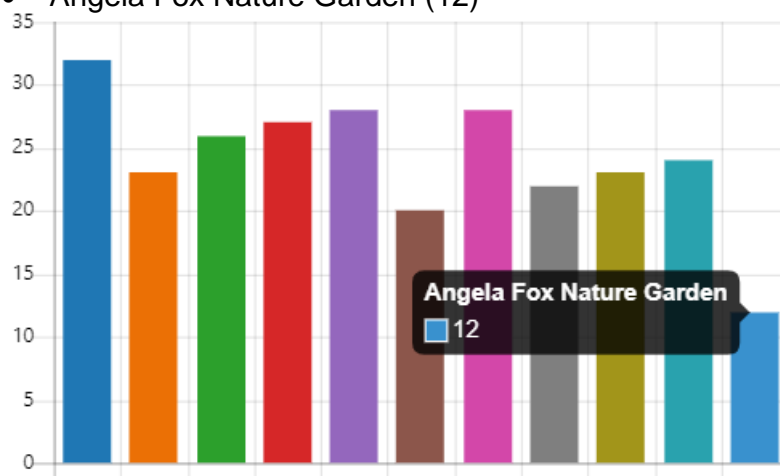
“Not sure you can”

Common themes included affordable business rates/taxes and traffic management such as easing congestion and providing additional/free parking in the village.

Awareness of Parish Council responsibilities in the village

Overall, there was good awareness of Parish Council responsibilities in the village, however the least known responsibility was the Angela Fox Garden. Respondents were asked to select from the following list which responsibilities they were aware of:

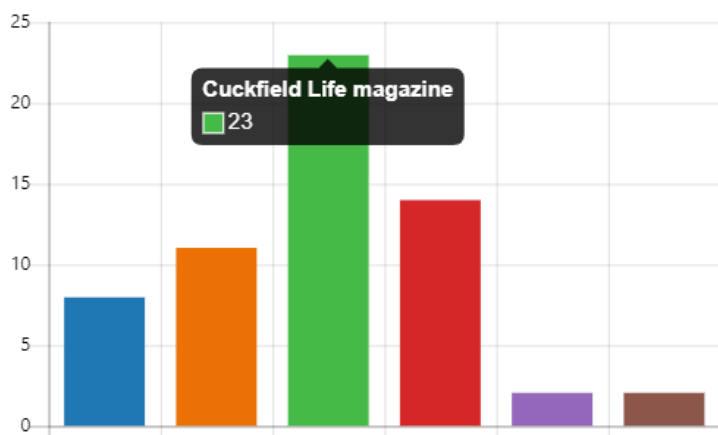
- Owns and manages the Queens Hall and the Village Hall (32)
- Owns and manages the Burial Ground and allotment gardens (23)
- Responsible for the skatepark at Whitemans Green (26)
- Village maintenance (clock, benches, bus shelters, litter bins, some street lights) (27)
- Hanging baskets and planting troughs (28)
- Roads maintenance liaison with WSCC (20)
- Commenting on planning applications in the parish (28)
- Support for urban planning through the Neighbourhood Plan (22)
- Public toilets (23)
- Local events (Christmas Street Festival, Skate Jam, Silver Sunday) (24)
- Angela Fox Nature Garden (12)



Receiving Parish Council news

Respondents were asked how they wished to receive Parish Council news – the preferred communication was via Cuckfield Life magazine. Whilst some respondents selected either the council website or social media, Cuckfield Life had a score greater than both social media platforms combined.

- Council website (8)
- Social media (11)
- Cuckfield Life magazine (23)
- Email (14)
- Council notice boards (2)
- Other – one respondent suggested flyers through doors (1)



4. Recommendations

It is encouraging that the majority of respondents had a high awareness of the Parish Council's responsibilities. To increase the awareness of the Angela Fox Garden, a regular feature, such as a gardener's blog, could be considered in Cuckfield Life magazine and posts on Facebook highlighting the garden's progress.

Overwhelmingly, the key priority identified for the next five years is speeding/traffic management. Turning to supporting Cuckfield businesses, the desired focus is upon affordable business rates and improved traffic management and parking.

Reflecting upon the 2019-2023 Business Plan, many of the priorities identified are already captured however the two notable exceptions are support groups for minority groups (currently a strategy for engaging with elderly residents is a short-term objective) and creating a footpath to access the sports pavilion at Whitemans Green.

Regarding the lack of provision of support groups for minority groups, a respondent added that the Parish Council does not represent the village demographic and noted that younger age groups and ethnic minority groups were not represented, and therefore additional resource to target these areas could be considered.

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Date: 27th January 2022