



# The Complete Results Of The Crowmarsh Parish Appraisal

## You, And Your Views On The Parish





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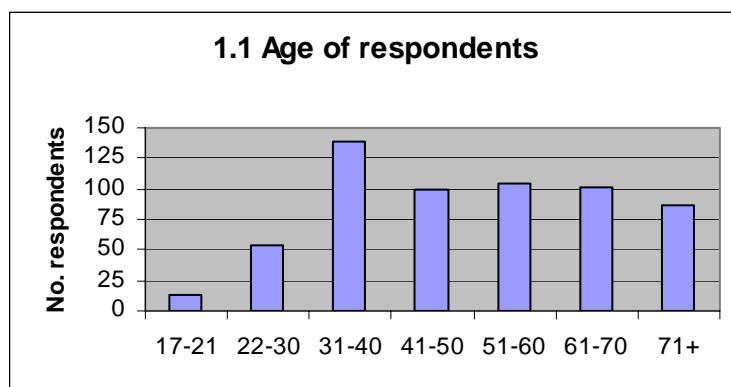
## Introduction

The Crowmarsh parish appraisal is probably the most comprehensive survey of parishioners and their interests in the entire history of the parish. It was carried out by a small group of local volunteers independent of the council. Some financial support from the parish council, Oxfordshire Rural County Council, and South Oxfordshire District Council was received to assist with the work. It began in May 2001, when the questionnaires were distributed to over 1,100 electors in the parish. By parish appraisal standards the response rate of 59% (or 654 completed questionnaires) was quite good, giving plenty of material on local views. The findings can make surprising reading, but remember that they represent the views of the 59% who replied – they may not reflect the views of parishioners who did not complete questionnaires! The findings below were put together by the team of local volunteers working in their free time over the past two-and-a-half years. We have endeavoured in all cases to represent the findings as completely and accurately as possible.

## The results of the adults' questionnaires

### 1 About you

#### 1.1 Age profile of respondents



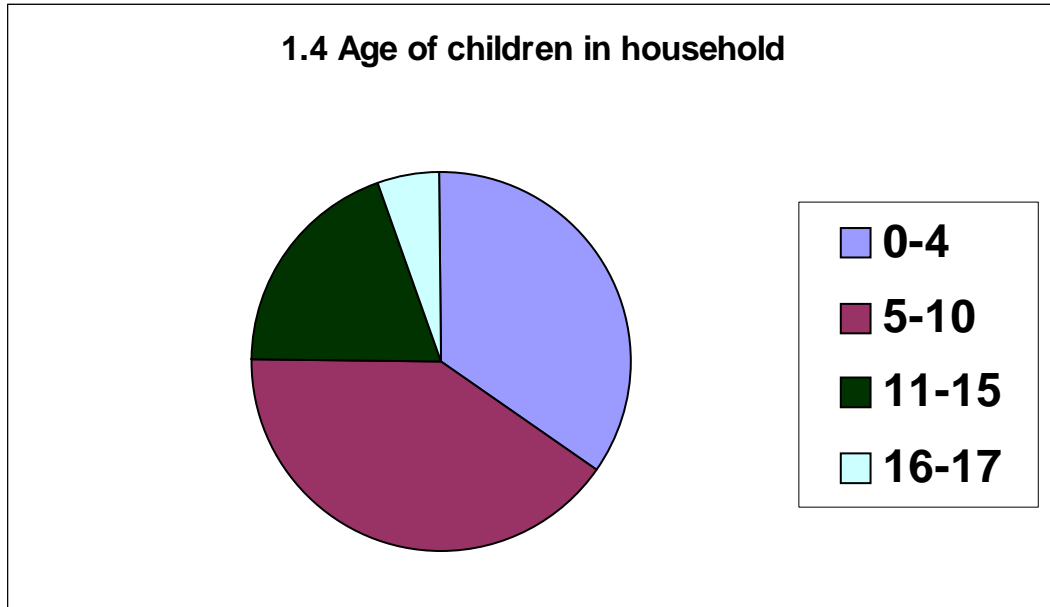
Most respondents gave their age (596, or 91%); the biggest single group was aged 31-40, but the majority of respondents were 41 or over.

#### 1.2 Sex of respondents

Interestingly, 56% of respondents were female and 44% male, which suggests that women are better at completing and returning questionnaires!

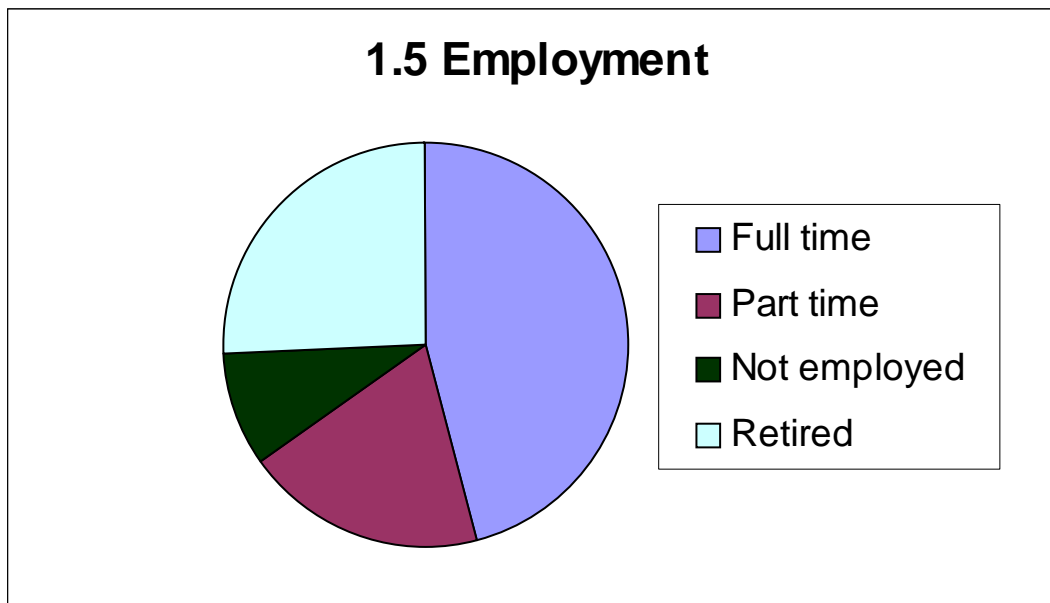
### 1.3 and 1.4 Number and age of children in the household

70% of the adult respondents didn't have children under 18. There were exactly the same number for 1 and 2 children (12% each), 5% had 3 children and just 3 Families had 4.



Our findings showed that the majority of children (40%) were aged 5 - 10, followed by those aged 0- 4 (35%), 11 - 15 (20%) and 16 - 17 (5%).

### 1.5 Employment



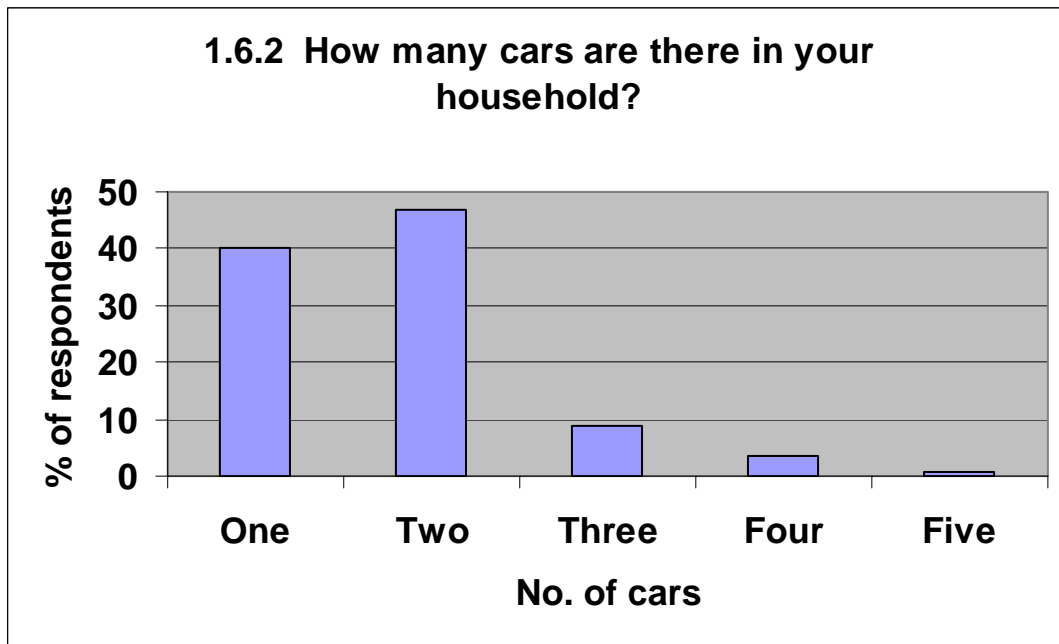
A total of 65% of respondents were in full- or part-time paid employment; another 9% said they were not in paid employment. Just over one quarter (26%) said they were retired.

## 1.6 Cars

### 1.6.1 Car access

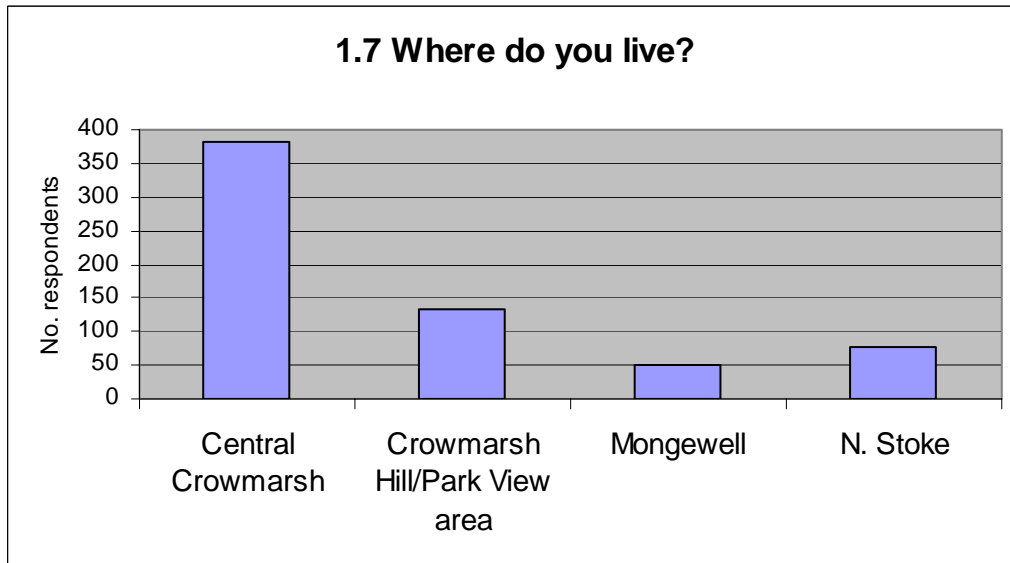
Almost everyone replied to this question (648 responses), with 91% of people saying they had access to a car.

### 1.6.2 How many cars are there in your household?



There were 583 responses to this question (89%). More than half said they owned two cars or more. Although one to two vehicles were the norm, 12% of respondents said they had 3-5 vehicles!

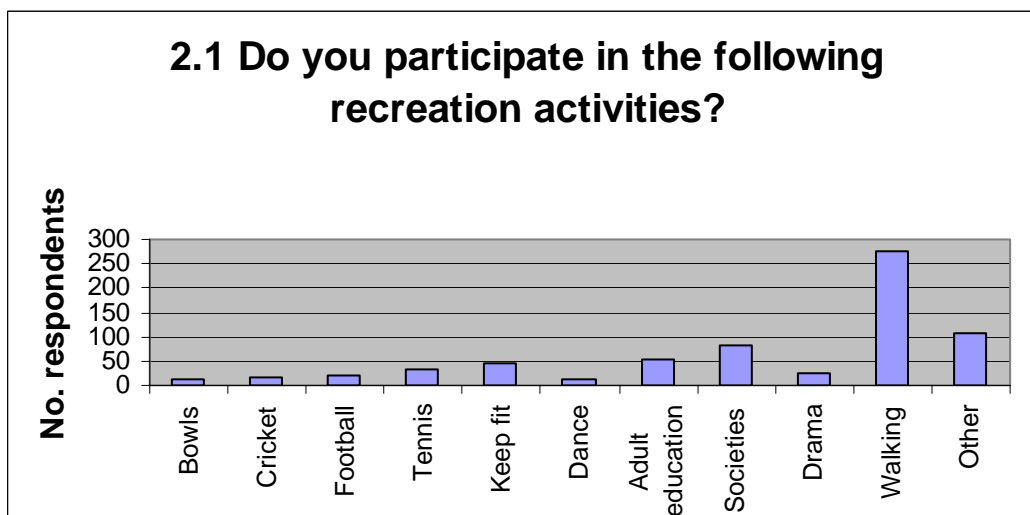
## 1.7 Where do you live?



648 replies were received for this question (99%). Of these, 59% (382 respondents) came from central Crowmarsh, 21% (136) from Crowmarsh Hill/Park View, 8% (52) from Mongewell, and 12% (78) from North Stoke.

## 2 Facilities and recreation

### 2.1 Do you participate in the following activities in the parish?



There were 686 responses, with some people saying they enjoyed more than one activity. The most popular activity by far was walking, including exercising on the recreation ground (40% of respondents). This suggests that maintaining footpaths and ensuring wide public access to the countryside would benefit the largest number of parishioners. After walking, clubs and societies, adult education and keep fit emerged as the most popular parish activities.



Other recreational activities commented on by respondents included ‘watching football on TV’, cycling, gardening, playing golf, church activities, and outdoor swimming. Of these, cycling was most popular (21 respondents).

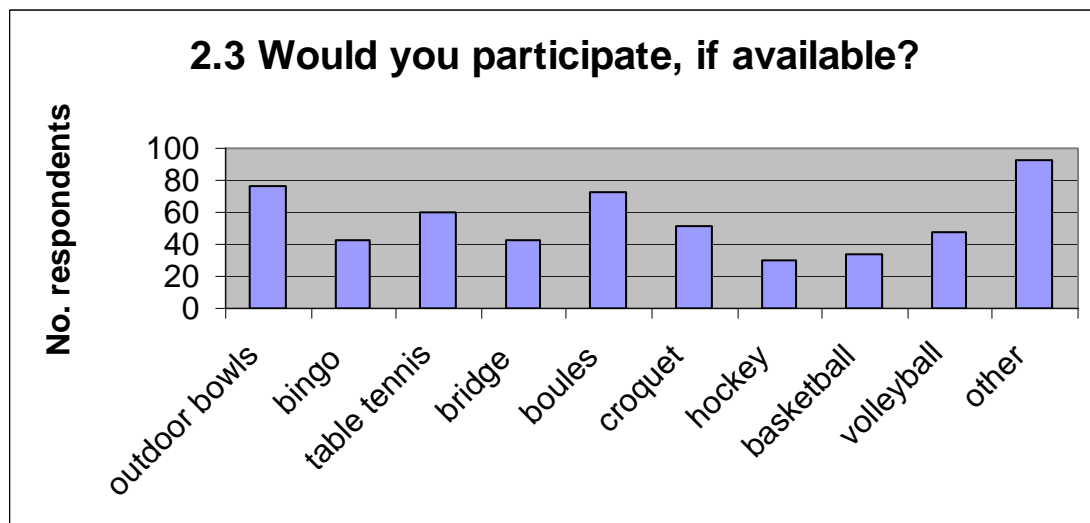
## 2.2 Sports courts. Have you ever hired or used the all-weather tennis courts and five-a-side football pitch in Crowmarsh village?

595 respondents (91%) replied to this question. However, only 42 (7%) of them said they had ever booked the tennis courts. Of these, 80% were from central Crowmarsh and 20% from Crowmarsh Hill.

### If not, why?

42 respondents said they didn’t know that these facilities existed! Another 27 said they didn’t use them because of concerns over cost and availability, and 29 respondents preferred to use similar (free or better) facilities elsewhere. Other reasons were given by 48 who said they were too busy; 81 who said they were unable to play; and 188 who said they didn’t require such facilities.

## 2.3 Would you participate in any of the following, if available?



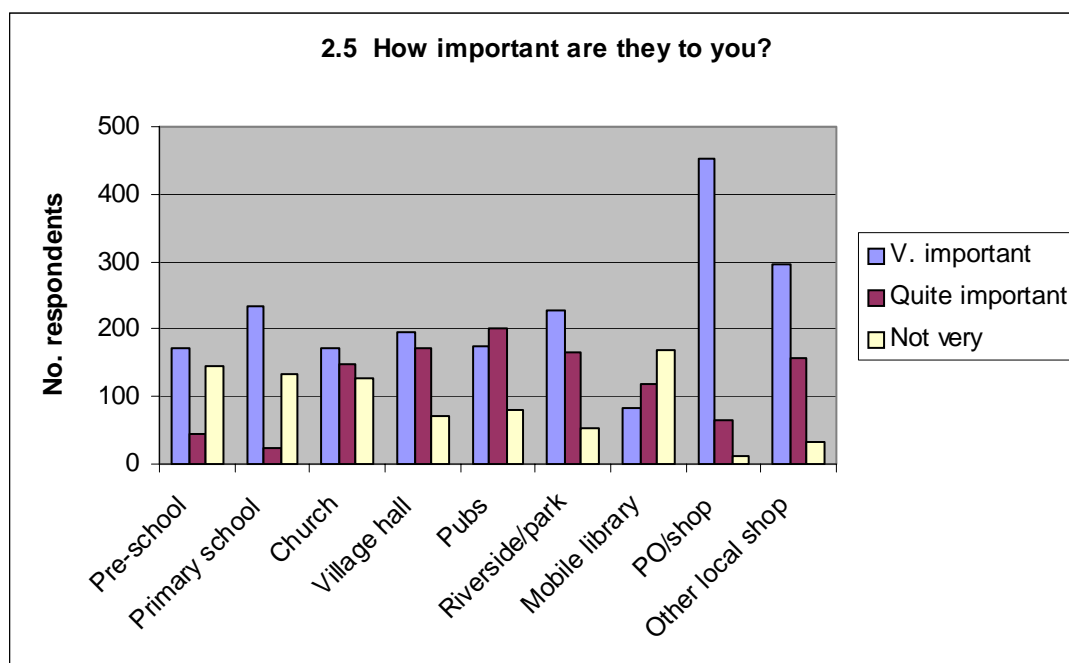
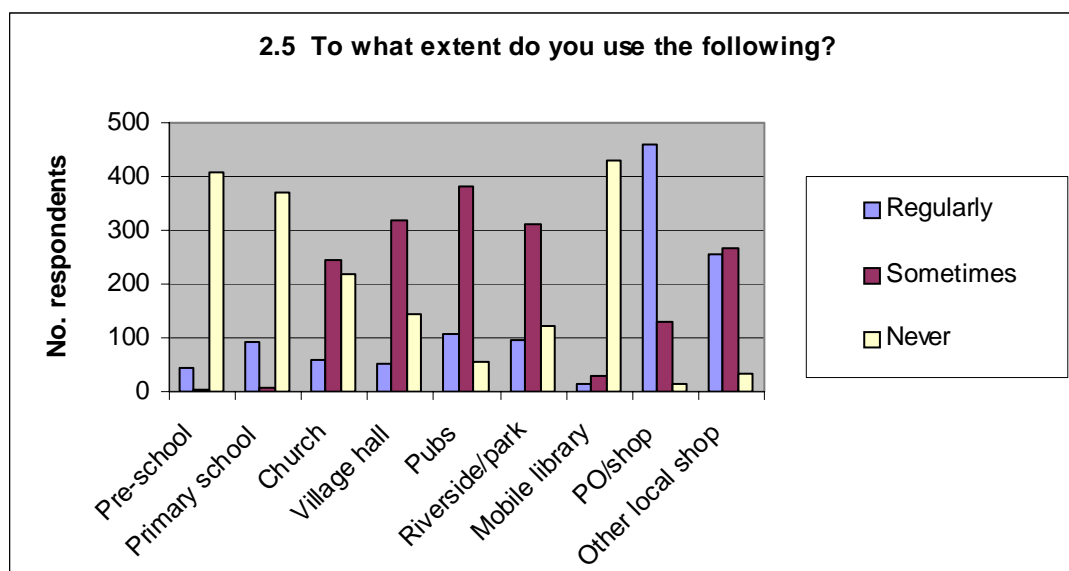
At least 30 positive responses were received for each suggestion. The most favoured possible sports were outdoor bowls and boules (76 and 73 respondents), followed by table tennis (60) and croquet (51).

When asked what other sporting activities they would participate in, if they were available, 21 mentioned more local swimming facilities. Another 12 suggested crazy golf, while 8 were in favour of badminton. One or two respondents suggested archery.

## 2.4 Allotments

When asked, 47 respondents said they had an allotment at either the Park View or the Thames Mead sites, and 62 respondents said they would like an allotment at either site. (Note: in some cases two people from the same household could have said they were using, or wishing to have an allotment).

## 2.5 To what extent do you use the following?



The PO/shop was the service/facility most regularly used by 461 respondents, and 453 also considered it to be very important. Other local shops and businesses were also regularly used by 257 respondents. Interestingly, 296 respondents considered them very important, indicating that some respondents who said they did not use them still liked to have them locally.

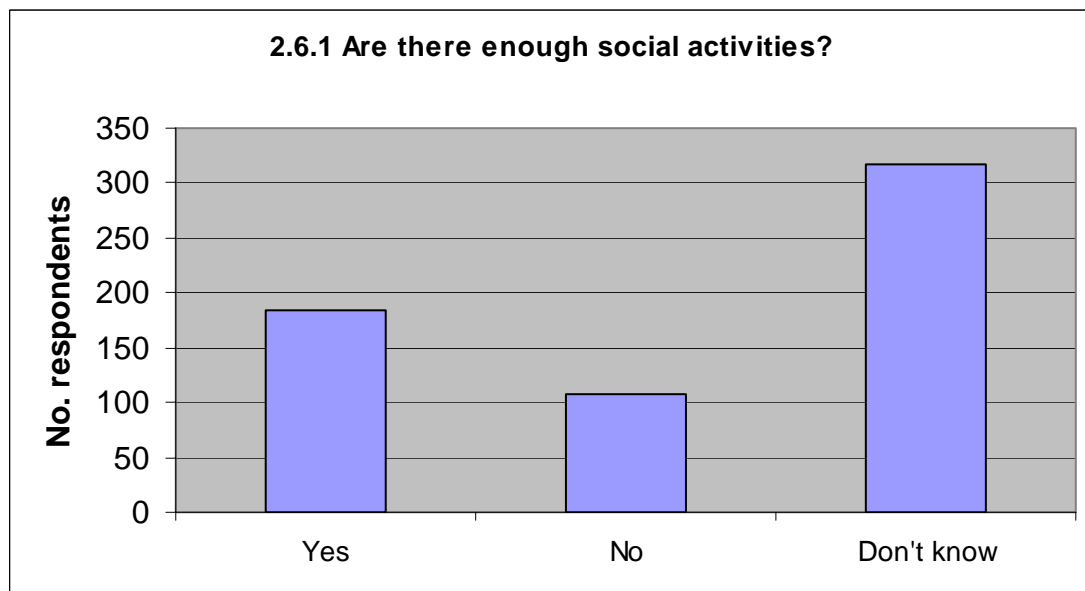
A combined total of 214 respondents saw the pre-school as very or quite important; 43 respondents said they used it regularly. The school was also seen as very or quite important to 258 respondents; 91 said their families used it regularly. Of the 59 respondents (9%) who said they went to church regularly, 63% were women. Another 244 respondents (38%) said they went to church sometimes, suggesting that 47% of respondents would go to church at some time. This appears to be borne out by the finding that 320 respondents (49%) said the church was very or quite important to them.

The facilities at Riverside were also seen as an important aspect of life in the parish. 407 respondents (62%) indicated that they used Riverside regularly or sometimes, and 394 (60%) saw it as very or quite important to the parish.

The findings showed that the mobile library had 14 regular and 29 infrequent users (7% of respondents), but 202 respondents (30%) saw it as very or quite important to the parish.

## 2.6 Social activities

### 2.6.1 Are there enough social activities in the parish?

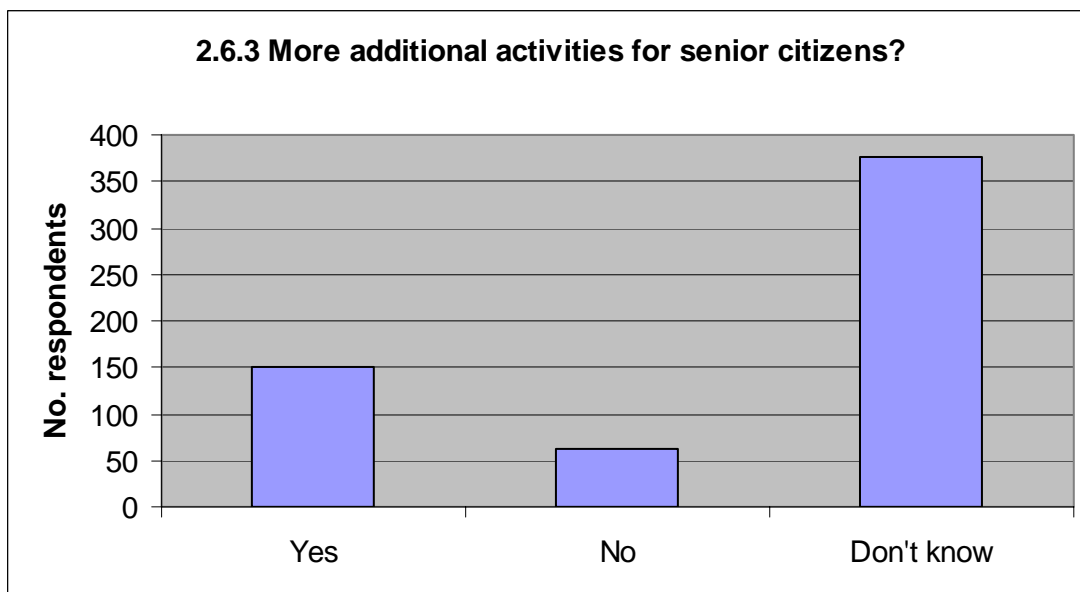


610 respondents (93%) replied to this question. The majority (317, or 52%) said they didn't know if there were enough social activities in the parish. Another 185 (30%) said yes and 108 (18%) no.

### 2.6.2 If no, what would you suggest?

There were 92 responses to this question. The suggestions included: special events such as New Year's Eve Party, fireworks and BBQ (20); more activities for youngsters (18); more sports with a social flavour, such as croquet and boules; setting up a local tennis club (17); musical evenings, dances, and Karaoke (10); and more local cultural events such as art exhibitions, trips to the theatre, films, lectures and discussions (10).

### 2.6.3 Should additional social activities be provided for senior citizens?

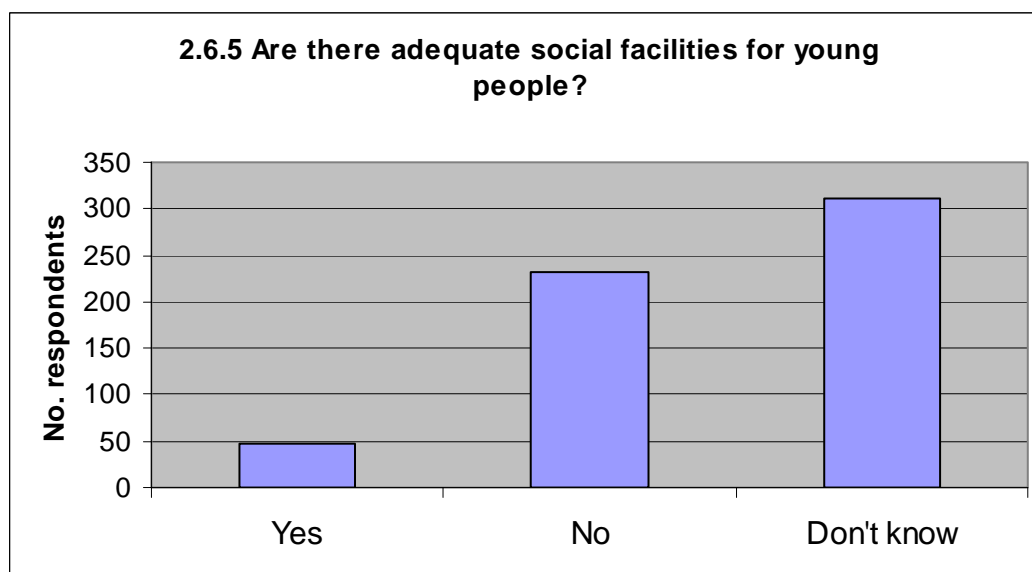


588 respondents (90%) replied to this question. The majority (376 or 64%) did not know. Although 62 (10%) thought there was no need for additional activities, another 150 (26%) thought there was a need for more social activities for senior citizens.

### 2.6.4 If yes, what would you suggest?

Of the 76 respondents to this question, 29 were in favour of more social get-togethers, including coffee mornings and Christmas events. There were 23 votes for more social outings with transport provided, which would let disabled parishioners take part. There were also votes for whist/bingo (10) and tea dancing (9).

## 2.6.5 Are there adequate social activities for young people?



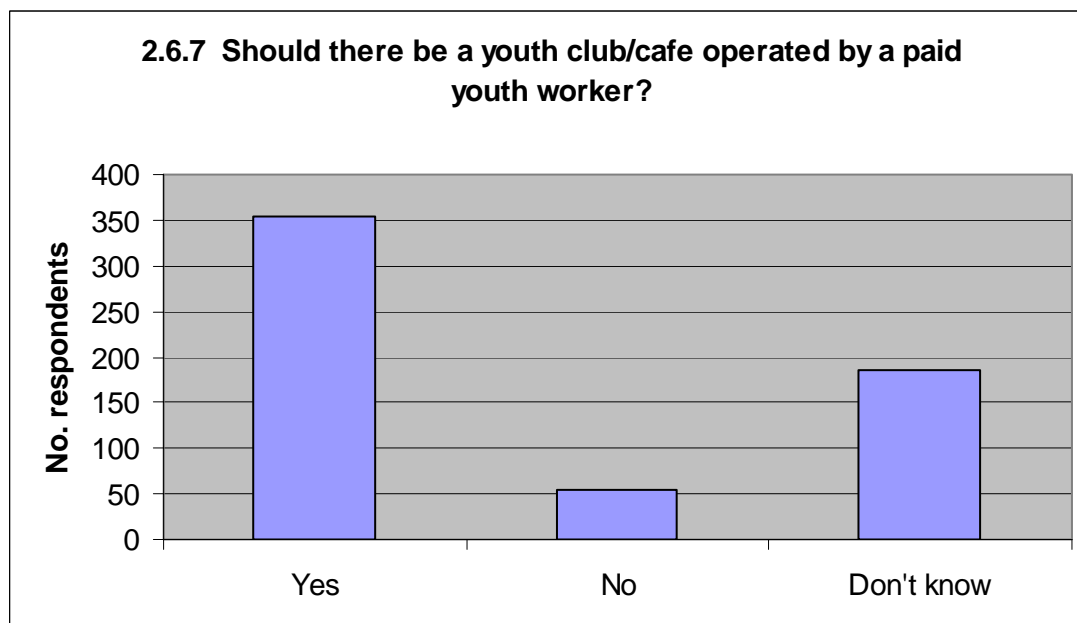
Of the 590 (90%) of respondents to this question, only 48 (8%) thought there were adequate social facilities for young people in the parish. However, 231 (39%) thought that there weren't. Another 311 respondents (53%) said they didn't know.

## 2.6.6 If no, what would you suggest?

There were 203 responses to this question. The most favoured option was a youth club/place to meet/Internet café/disco, with 93 votes. The next most popular, with 31 votes, was the provision of more sports facilities, ranging from netball, basketball, pool and table tennis, to bowling, aerobics and even wall climbing! 21 respondents were interested in the provision of more unsupervised facilities, such as a big slide, a skate boarding/BMX bike arena, and more football goals.

In total, there were 20 requests for more play facilities for children living in North Stoke and Crowmarsh Hill/Park View. Other requests (with 10 votes or less) included the provision of evening classes in IT and DIY, more scouts/brownie clubs, and dancing lessons.

## 2.6.7 Should there be a youth club/café operated by a paid youth worker?



594 respondents (91%) replied to this question. Of these, 355 (60%) thought that the parish should have its own youth club/café. Only 54 (9%) said no, whilst 185 (31%) said they didn't know. This suggests considerable support for the idea.

### 2.7.1 Are the needs of the sick and disabled adequately covered?

614 responses were received to this question. Of these, only 55 (9%) thought the needs of the sick and disabled were adequately covered, whilst 486 (79%) said they didn't know. Another 73 (12%) thought that their needs were not adequately covered.

### 2.7.2 If no, what extra help is necessary?

A range of suggestions was provided by 66 respondents, including improved access/mobility for disabled/wheelchair-bound residents in the parish (19 votes); an organised visiting system for the sick/disabled (11 votes); a village transport system for the sick/disabled; and a weekly surgery that could be held in Crowmarsh by Wallingford Health Centre.

## 3 Information

### 3.1 Do you get information from a village noticeboard?

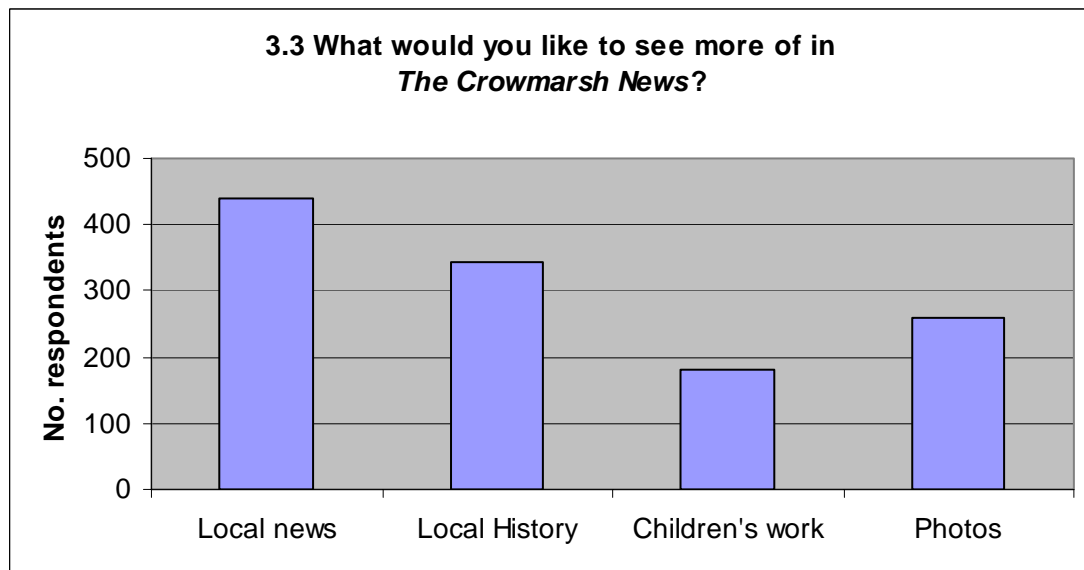
619 responses were received to this question. 413 respondents (67%) said they did get information from village noticeboards, while another 206 respondents (33%) said they did not use them as a source of information. 120 people suggested some additional possible locations for notices. These included the post office (38), the school entrance

(20), and a number of alternative sites at Crowmarsh Hill and Robert Sparrow Gardens (13). A village website was also suggested by 11 respondents.

### 3.2 What is your opinion of *The Crowmarsh News*?

626 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents (385, or 61%) thought *The Crowmarsh News* was good. Another 208 (33%) thought it satisfactory, and only 33 (6%) as poor.

### 3.3 What would you like to see more of in *The Crowmarsh News*?



Respondents indicated that they would like to see more local news (441), more local history (342), more photographs (260) and more examples of children's work from school (181). 118 people offered additional suggestions about what they would like to see in *The Crowmarsh News*. These included more information on local events (not necessarily in the parish) and some travel timetables, as well as more articles by local people (including children) and biographies of local people (past or present). It was also suggested that coverage of local sporting and other events could be increased, and there could be more reports about local teams. Job adverts, poems, drawings by local people, gardening tips, and nature notes were also put forward! Others suggested more information on government and district council planning strategies, and the impact they might have on Crowmarsh.

## 4 Development

### 4.1.1 Should there be more housing developments in the parish?

570 responses were received to this question (87%). 158 respondents (28%) thought there should be more housing developments in the parish, whilst 412 (72%) were against further development.

#### **4.1.2 If yes, where should they go?**

There were 140 respondents (21%) to this question. The most frequent suggestions were the Benson Lane area (45), followed by Carmel College (27) and Wilder's Yard (26).

#### **4.1.3 If yes, how many houses would be appropriate?**

There were 77 respondents to this question (12%). The majority said only a few dwellings, or not more than 25 altogether (34 votes). Others thought that 25-50 houses would be acceptable (25 votes). 15 people indicated they could live with 50-100+ new houses in Crowmarsh.

#### **4.1.4 If yes, what type of houses would be appropriate?**

There were 132 respondents to this question (20%). The majority (73) thought affordable 1-2 bedroom housing would be appropriate. Another 30 thought a mixed development would be sensible, while 11 others suggested 2-3 bedroom family homes. A handful of respondents voted for more luxury houses, or housing for the elderly. A number felt it was important that the houses should be of 'traditional design', to blend into the parish.

#### **4.1.5 Is there a need for affordable housing in the parish?**

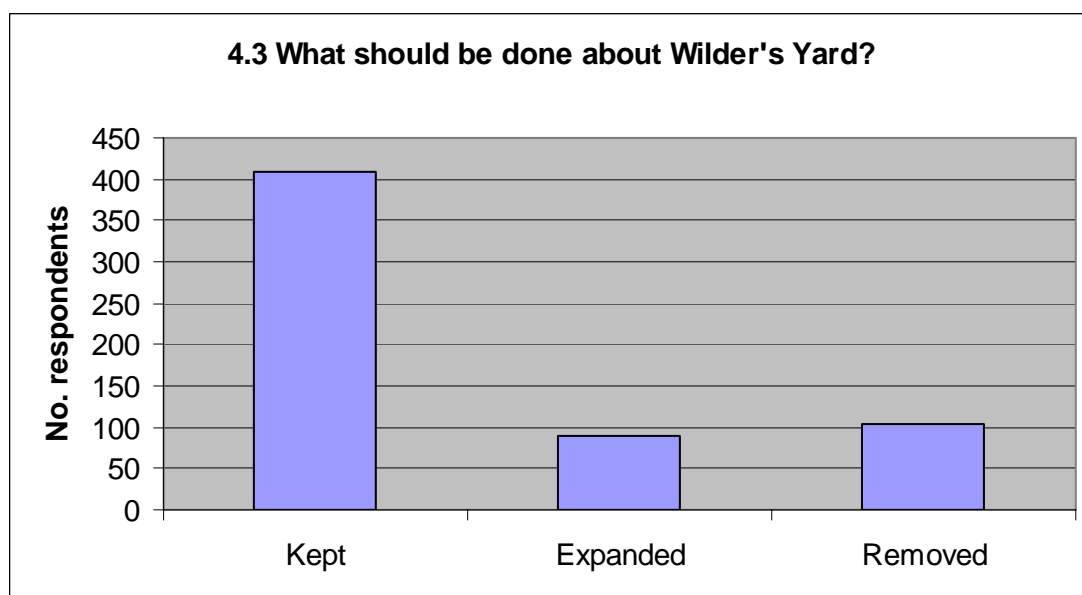
473 responses were received to this question (72%). Ironically, 357 respondents (55%) said there was a need for affordable housing in the parish, whereas only 158 said there should be more housing development in the parish, in answer to the previous question! Only 116 respondents (18%) thought that there wasn't a need for affordable housing in the parish.

#### **4.2 Is it important to maintain employment opportunities in the parish?**

627 responses were received to this question (96%). A whopping 587 respondents (88%) thought it was important to maintain employment opportunities in the parish, with only 40 (12%) disagreeing.



### 4.3 Should the small industrial area at Wilder's Yard be kept, expanded or removed?



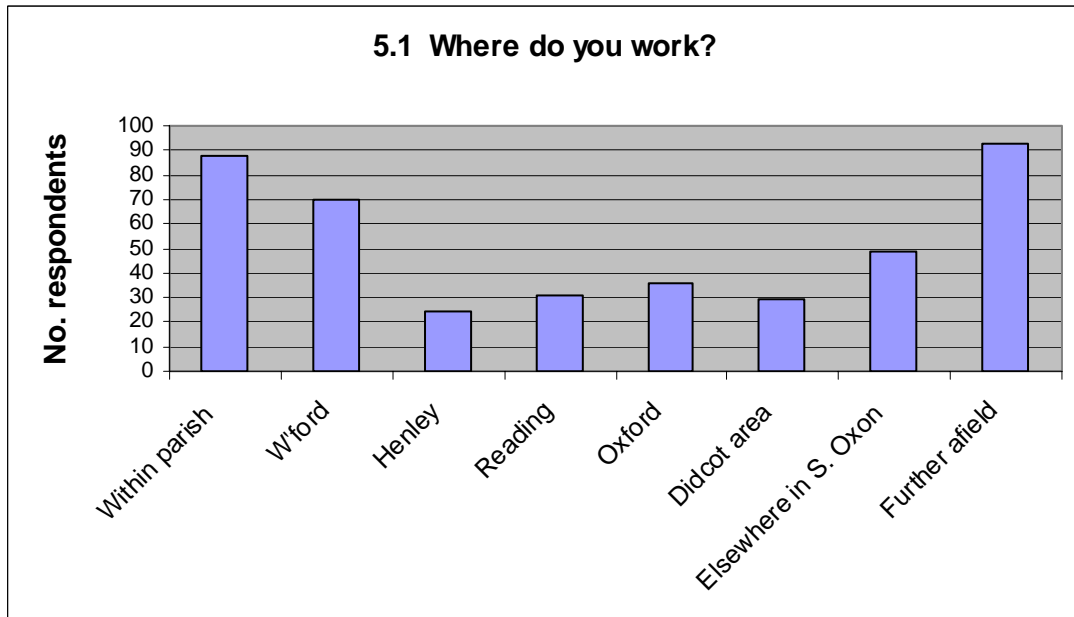
602 responses were received to this question (92%). Only 103 respondents (17%) thought that Wilder's Yard should be removed, whereas 410 (68%) thought it should be kept. Another 89 (15%) even thought it should be expanded!

### 4.4 What, if anything, should happen at the Carmel College site?

473 responses were received to this question (66%). The most frequent suggestion was affordable housing, often with the rider 'for locals' (111 respondents). However there was also support for a public indoor swimming pool (82), and a leisure centre (75). Another 86 thought it should remain as some sort of educational establishment. Among other suggestions were turning it into a nature reserve/public park (35), perhaps with a playground (6). Some rather different views were that it should become either an entertainment complex (17), or a business/shopping area (22).

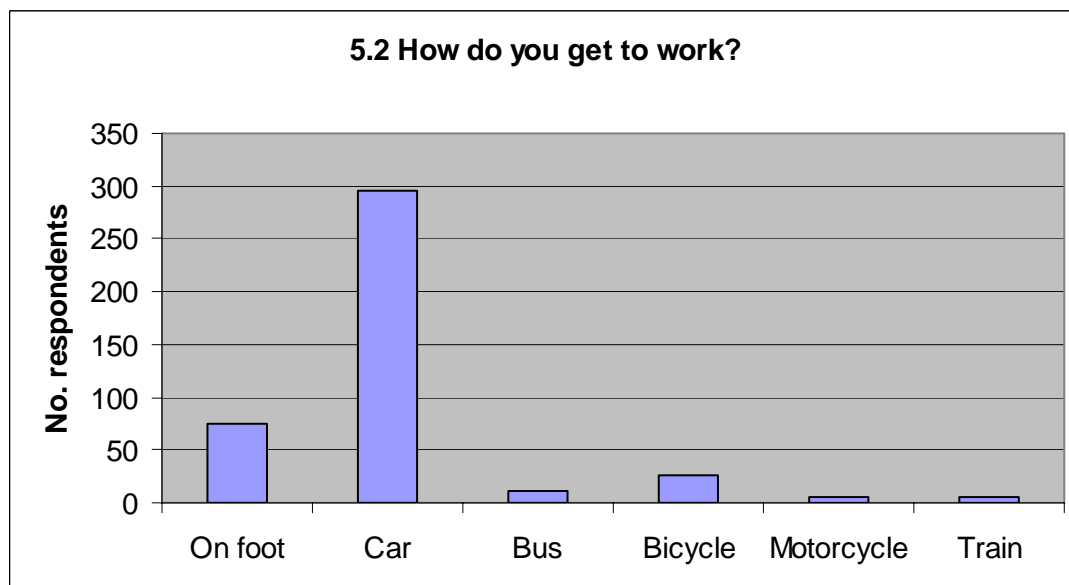
## 5 Road safety and transport

### 5.1 If you are employed, where do you work?



There were 420 responses (64%) to this question. This appears to tally with the 65% of respondents to Question 1.5, who indicated they were in full, or part-time employment. The greatest number of respondents said they worked within the parish (88) and Wallingford (70), a combined total of 158. 36 parishioners said they worked in Oxford; Henley, Reading and Didcot netted between 20-30 respondents each. In total, 50 respondents said they worked elsewhere in S. Oxfordshire; another 93 said they worked further afield.

## 5.2 How do you get to work?



There were 417 responses (64%) to this question. (Note that one person could combine more than one form of transport to get to work.) The most important means of transport by far was the car (used by 296 people, or 71%). The bus had only 11 (3%) takers, and the train 5 (1%)! 74 local people (18%) relied on their own footpower, and a further 26 (7%) said they took to their bicycles. The findings show that 100 people (24%) were using non-polluting methods of travel to work, which is probably high by village standards. In Question 5.1, 158 residents said they worked either within the parish or in Wallingford, suggesting that 58 of them were using either the bus, a motorcycle or a car to get to work locally.

### 5.3.1 Are additional traffic-calming measures necessary in the parish?

595 respondents (91%) responded to this question. 340 people (57%) thought more traffic-calming measures were necessary. But a sizeable minority (255 people, or 43%) disagreed.

### 5.3.2 If yes, what and where?

326 respondents (50%) made suggestions for further traffic-calming measures. 166 of them indicated a need for more general speed-reducing measures, including sleeping policemen, road width constrictions, speed cameras, coloured tarmac, and more 30 mph signs. The single area of greatest concern was the by-pass at Cox's Lane, where traffic lights (and a pedestrian crossing) were suggested by 60 respondents. 38 people (more than 50% of respondents living in North Stoke) thought that more traffic-calming measures were needed there. In central Crowmarsh, 30 people raised concerns about the mini-roundabout in The Street, and suggested stop signs or traffic lights. 19 people thought more traffic-calming measures were needed in Benson Lane, and 13 people thought more measures were needed to reduce speed on Crowmarsh Hill.

### 5.3.3 What, and where, is your greatest road safety concern?

366 people (56%) responded to this question. The greatest issue was speeding traffic generally (116), followed by concerns about crossing the A4074 which divides Crowmarsh (82). Respondents were also worried about safety at the mini-roundabout in The Street (62). 31 people said they were concerned about the lack of facilities for crossing The Street; 33 people also mentioned the large lorries visiting Jewson's in North Stoke, 38 people were concerned about fast traffic.

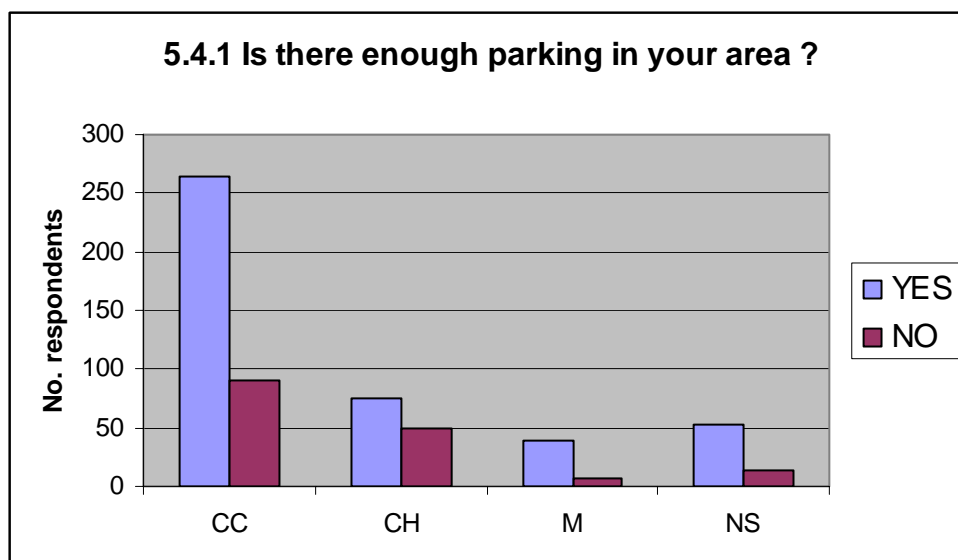
### 5.3.4 Do the footpaths and pavements let you move round the parish safely?

589 people (90%) responded to this question. The large majority (460 respondents, or 78%) said they were satisfied with the pavements. But 129 respondents (22%) disagreed.

### 5.3.5 Has the Sustrans cycle route improved safety?

445 respondents (68%) answered this question. Whilst 194 people (43%) thought that Sustrans had improved bicycling safety, the majority (251, or 57%) disagreed. It appears that Sustrans does not wholly resolve safety issues for cyclists in Crowmarsh.

### 5.4.1 Is there enough parking in your area?



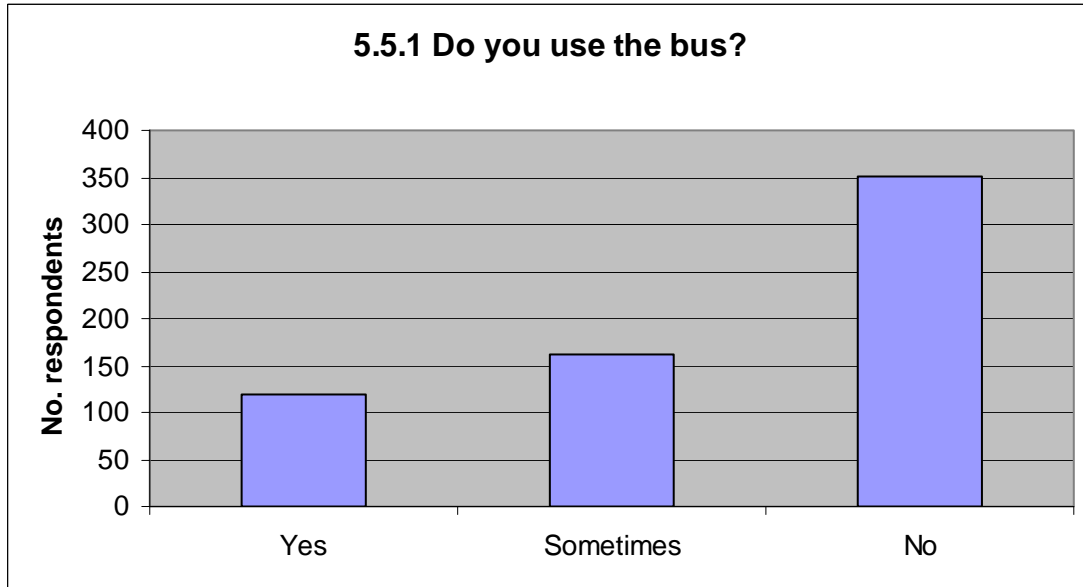
There was a 100% response rate to this question (654 replies). Of these, 493 (75%) were satisfied, but 161 (25%) said that parking was insufficient. The biggest proportion of dissatisfied residents by lived in the Crowmarsh Hill/Park View area.

### 5.4.2 If not, how could this be tackled?

There were 112 responses to this question (17%). The most common suggestion was that people should use their garages/driveways more (29 votes). Other suggestions,

with 10-20 supporters each, included the introduction of residents' parking permits, more double-yellow lines, a public car park at Wilder's Yard, and separate parking for Jewson's staff.

### 5.5.1 Do you use local bus services?



Out of 633 respondents (97%), 119 people (19%) said yes, 162 (25%) said sometimes, and 352 (56%) said no. Our findings show that at least 281 (44%) of local residents use the bus service to some extent. The results of Question 5.2 seem to indicate that this bus travel was largely for 'social, domestic and pleasure' purposes, rather than for travelling to work.

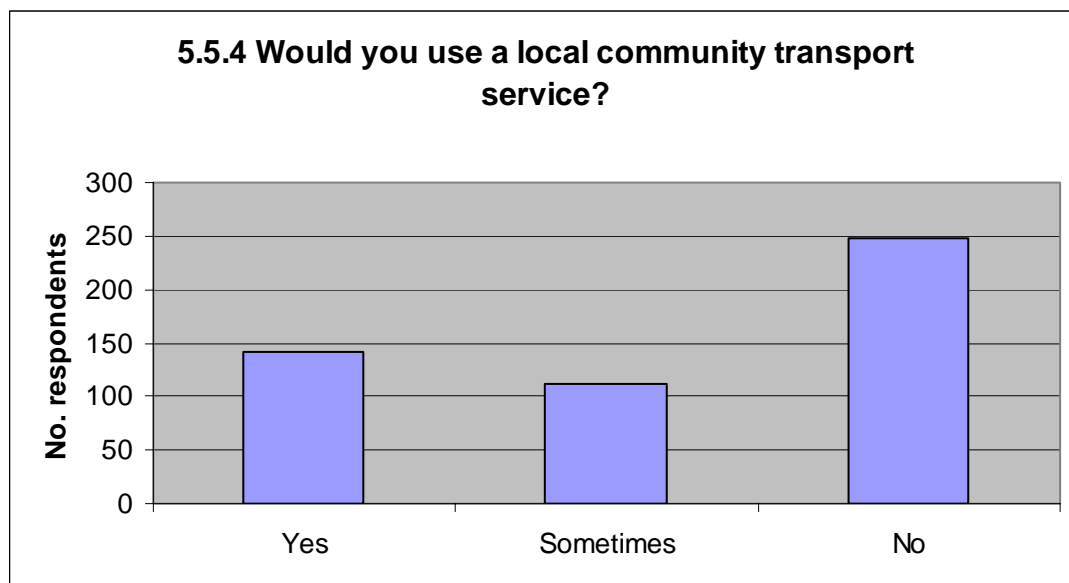
### 5.5.2 Do the present bus services meet your needs?

Of the 390 responses (60% of returned questionnaires), 195 (50%) were yes, 62 (16%) sometimes, and 133 (34%) no.

### 5.5.3 If not, where else should buses go?

There were 129 responses to this question. The most popular suggestion was for a fast bus service to Reading (40), followed by the return of the service to Heathrow (39), and a service to London Victoria (34). More buses to Cholsey to connect with trains were suggested by 10 people. Less than 10 people asked for more services to Ipsden, Woodcote, Sonning Common and High Wycombe.

### 5.5.4 Would you use local transport provided by a voluntary community service?



There were 500 responses to this question (76% of returned questionnaires), with 141 saying yes, 111 saying sometimes, and 248 saying no.

## 6 The environment

### 6.1.1 Is the maintenance of grass verges/trees adequate?

573 people (88%) responded to this question. In total, 395 (69%) said they were satisfied with grass/tree maintenance, and 178 (31%) said they weren't.

### 6.1.2 Is litter removal adequate?

568 responses (87%) were received to this question. The majority (342, or 60%) thought it was adequate, but 226 respondents (40%) disagreed. (This was a greater proportion of respondents than those who were dissatisfied with grass/tree maintenance.)

### 6.1.3 Should more money be spent on the appearance of public areas?

Out of 476 responses (73% of returned questionnaires), a slight majority 259 (54%) thought that more money could be spend on improving the appearance of the parish. Another 217 respondents (46%) disagreed.

### 6.1.4 Should more trees and flowers be planted?

There were 485 responses (74% of returned questionnaires) to this question. Of these, 271 (56%) agreed and 214 (44%) disagreed. The majority was in favour of more expenditure in this area.

### 6.1.5 If yes, where?

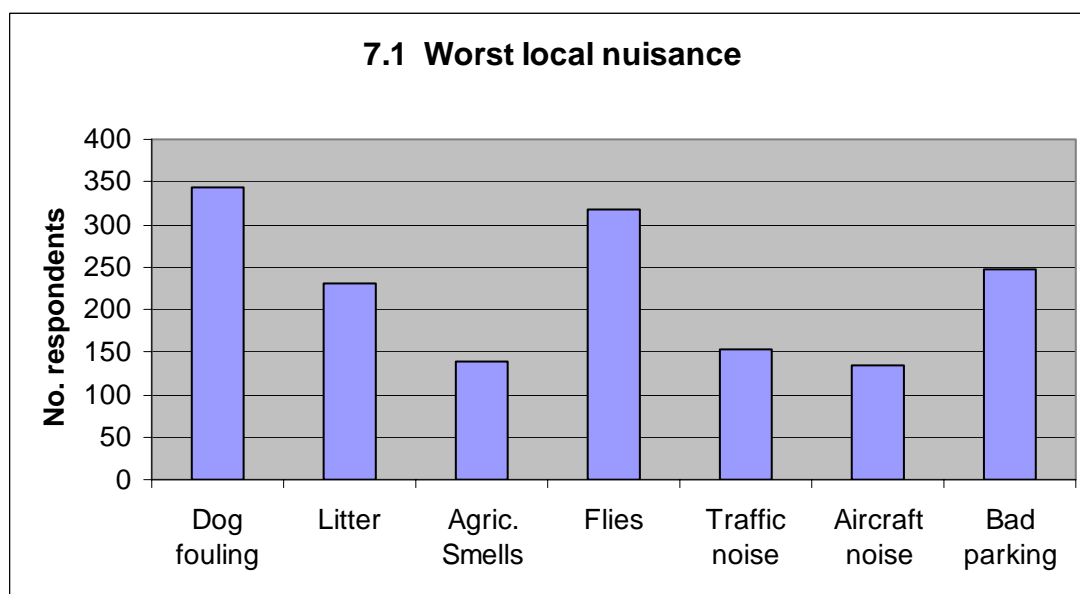
Although only 251 people thought more money should be spent on improving the appearance of the parish, there were 440 suggestions as to where additional trees and flowers could be planted! These were dotted all around the parish. 87 people wanted more in The Street, Crowmarsh, and 45 suggested more planting at the entrances to Thames Mead and Cox's Lane. 68 wanted more planting on the roundabouts, and another 68 thought there should be more planting on verges in the upper Crowmarsh area, North Stoke and Mongewell. Other locations included planting alongside the by-pass and A4074, around the Village Hall in central Crowmarsh, at the recreation ground, and at Riverside.

### 6.1.6 What single item would most improve the appearance of the village?

There were 269 responses (41% of returned questionnaires). The biggest single supported issue was a request to move or improve Wilder's Yard (100 respondents). This was followed by requests for more trees, flowers and shrubs to be planted (58 respondents), and better control of litter, including road sweeping (40 respondents). Other suggestions included improved path and road maintenance (24), a reduction in traffic and speed (12), an improvement to Jewson's appearance and a reduction in the number of lorries visiting it (10), and an improvement in recreation facilities (8).

## 7 Nuisance

### 7.1 Which local nuisances most upset you?



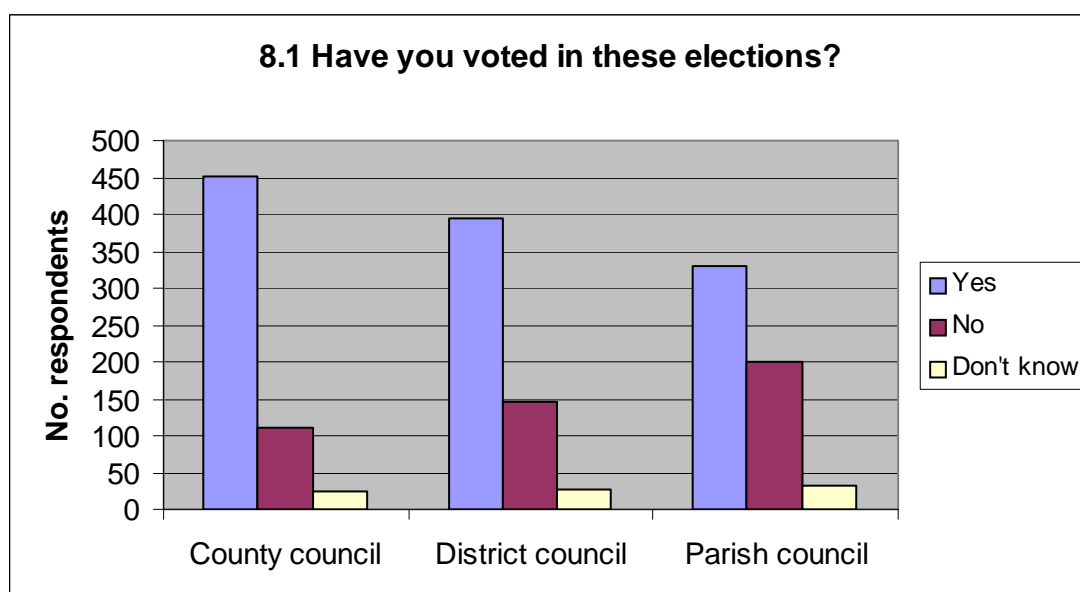
Respondents were asked to tick no more than three issues. Dog fouling was singled out by 343 people as the greatest nuisance, followed by flies (317), bad parking (246) and litter (230). Agricultural smells, traffic noise and aircraft noise were also said to be annoying, each receiving 130-150 votes.

## 7.2 Are there any other nuisances?

Only 67 respondents (10%) came up with other nuisances, but some suggested more than one. These included traffic speed (13), inconsiderate neighbours (11), disturbances caused by late-night parties/music/noise (11), light pollution (5), Jewson's and visiting lorries (11), uncontrolled kids/youths (7), and vandalism/petty crime (6).

## 8 Parish council performance and local democracy

### 8.1 Have you ever voted in county, district, or parish council elections?



451 respondents (69%) replied that they voted in county council elections, while 395 (60%) said they voted in district council elections. However, only 331 respondents (51%) voted in parish council elections. At least 25-30 respondents weren't sure if they had voted in each of these elections, or not.

#### 8.2.1 Do you know, or have you ever met, any parish councillors?

There were 633 replies to this question (97% of returned questionnaires). Of these, 429 (68%) said yes, and 204 (32%) no.

#### 8.2.2 Have you ever written to the parish council, or given your views at a parish council meeting?

There were 612 replies to this question (93% of returned questionnaires). 146 (24%) said they had written to, or made their views known at some stage, to the parish council, whilst 466 (76%) said they had not done so.



### 8.2.3 Do you feel the parish council is accessible?

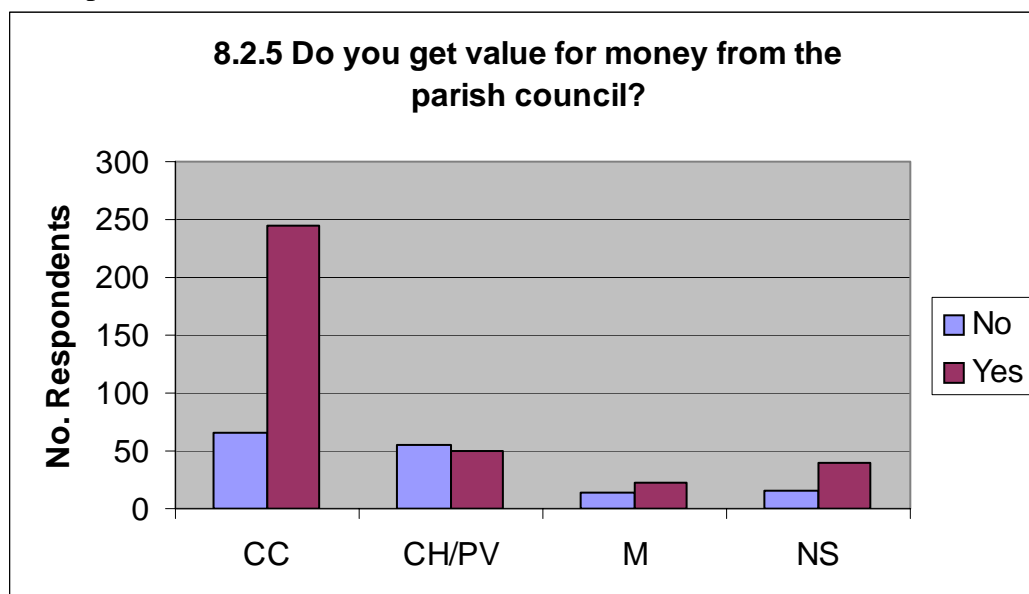
There were 555 replies to this question (85% of returned questionnaires). 375 of those who replied (67%) thought the parish council was accessible, whilst 180 (33%) didn't agree.

### 8.2.4 Do you know you that you can attend parish council meetings as a member of the public?

Of the 620 replies to this question (95% of returned questionnaires), 452 (73%) were aware that they could attend parish council meetings, whilst 168 (27%) said they were not aware.

### 8.2.5 The parish council obtains around 5% of your council tax each year. Do you think you get value for money?

There were 516 replies to this question (79% of returned questionnaires). Of those who replied 361 (70% of respondents) said that the parish council gave value for money, while 155 (30%) disagreed. We can break down this result into a little more detail by examining the relationship between where people came from and their views on the parish council.



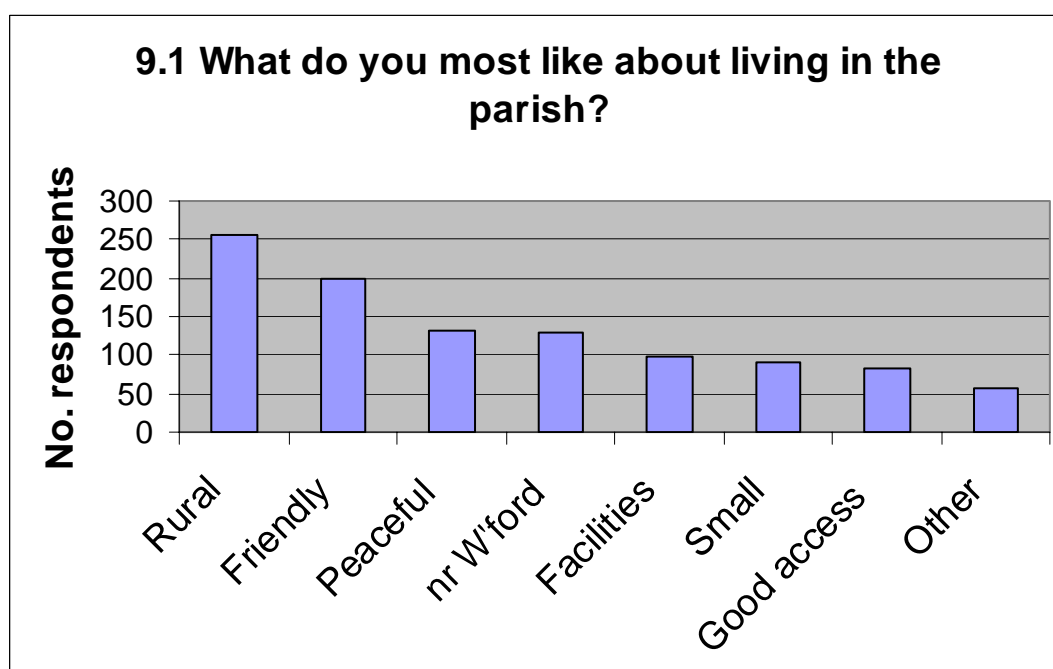
Our results showed that the vast majority of residents in central Crowmarsh believed they got value for money from the parish council. This was also true for North Stoke and Mongewell, but the majorities were not so large. However, in the Crowmarsh Hill/Park View area, more than half of respondents did not believe they got value for money from the parish council. Clearly, the parish council must work to improve its performance in the eyes of these residents. In terms of age, those most likely to be dissatisfied were aged 18-30 and 51-60. Those most likely to be satisfied were in the 71+ age bracket.

## 8.2.6 Do you have further comments on the parish council?

There were 227 responses to this request for comments (35% of returned questionnaires). 57 people criticised the parish council's performance in the areas of litter collection and tree maintenance, and gave vent to a feeling that the Crowmarsh Hill/Park View area is not treated as an integral part of the parish. 55 people thought the council could do more to encourage community spirit, and a number of positive suggestions were offered. 51 people made negative remarks about the parish council, such as its approachability, financial management and the content of The Crowmarsh News. However, another 42 people took the opportunity to offer positive remarks about the parish council and its works. 21 people asked for greater publicity and openness about important parish council decisions.

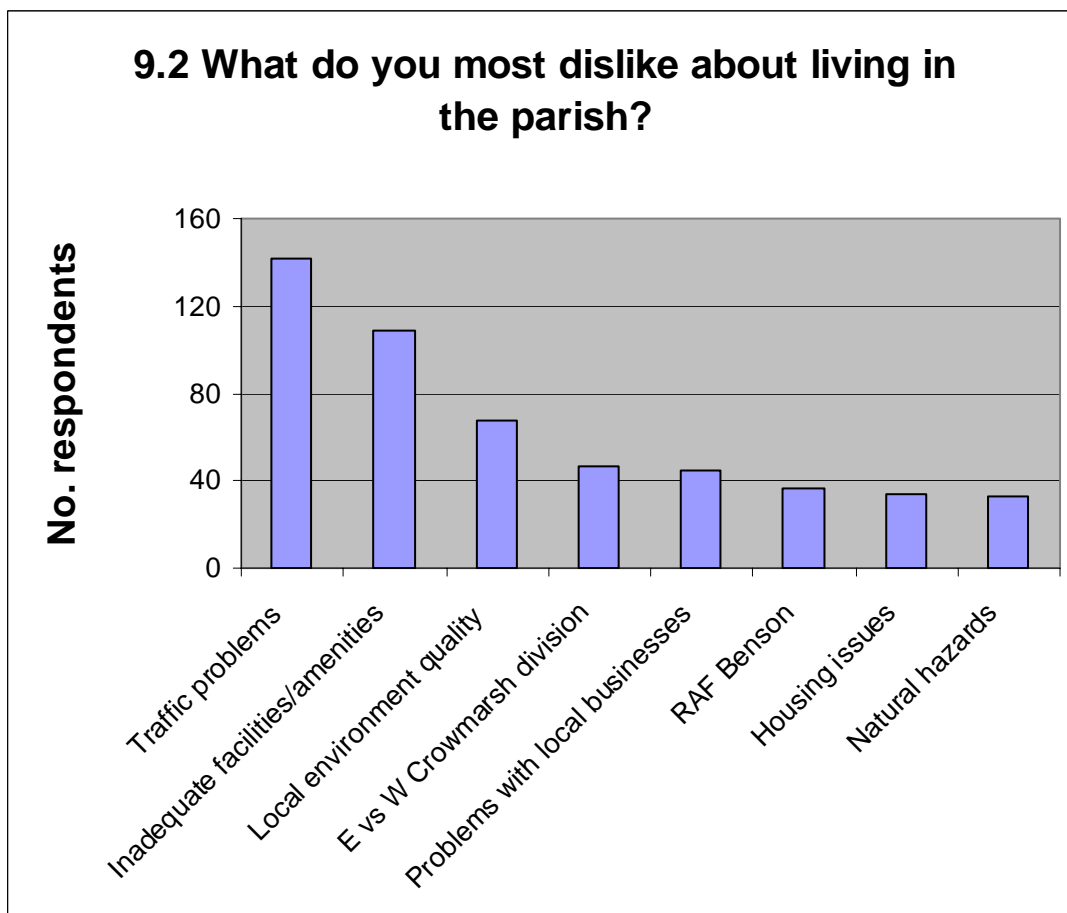
## 9 And finally ...

### 9.1 What do you most like about living in the parish?



490 respondents replied to this question (75%), but as they frequently identified more than one thing that they liked, there were 1,044 specific responses. 24% said they liked the parish because of its rural location, close to the river and countryside. The next most popular reason was the friendly people and good community spirit (19%). The parish was also appreciated by many people for its peace and quiet (12%), and for being conveniently close to the facilities of Wallingford (12%). 9% singled out good facilities in the parish, including the pubs, church, school and shop. The attractive appearance of villages in the parish was also appreciated by 9% of respondents, plus the fact that they weren't too big, and generally clean and tidy. 8% said they appreciated the good location with regard to proximity to other towns and transport links. 5% appreciated other things, such as its safety, its history, not being bothered by major roads, and proximity to work.

## 9.2 What do you most dislike about living in the parish?



396 respondents gave their views to this question (60%). Since they frequently identified more than one dislike, 515 answers were given. The biggest complaint was related to traffic (142 respondents, or 28%). This was principally concerned with safety and speed issues, but also included inconsiderate parking, and bicycling on the pavement. The next biggest issue was related to inadequate local facilities, amenities and entertainment (109 respondents, or 21%). This was followed by issues related to local environment quality (68 respondents, or 13%), including litter, dog fouling, inconsiderate neighbours, and inadequate local maintenance. A number of other issues were raised by 30-40 respondents each. These included a perceived East/West divide in Crowmarsh, problems with what were seen as inconsiderate local businesses (e.g. Jewson's, Wilder's), caravan sites and local pubs. Other dislikes included the disturbance from RAF Benson, the high price of housing, worries over future developments, flies, ants, agricultural smells - and the risk of flooding!

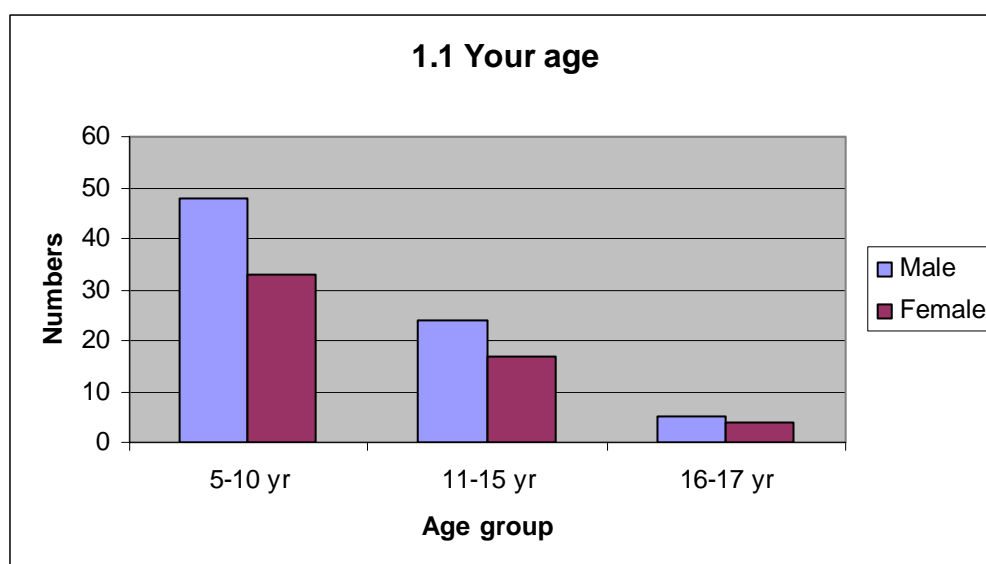
# The results of the Crowmarsh parish appraisal for children (5-17 years)

## Number of respondents

There were 132 returned and completed questionnaires from our May 2001 village appraisal. According to the 2001 National Census, children under 16 represented 16.6% of the total population living Crowmarsh ward (including Crowmarsh, Ipsden and two other parishes). As there are 1,100 electors in the parish, 16.6% equates to 218 children, so the 132 questionnaires completed and returned to us give a response rate of around 60%. The findings can therefore be said to represent the views of the majority of children/young people in the parish.

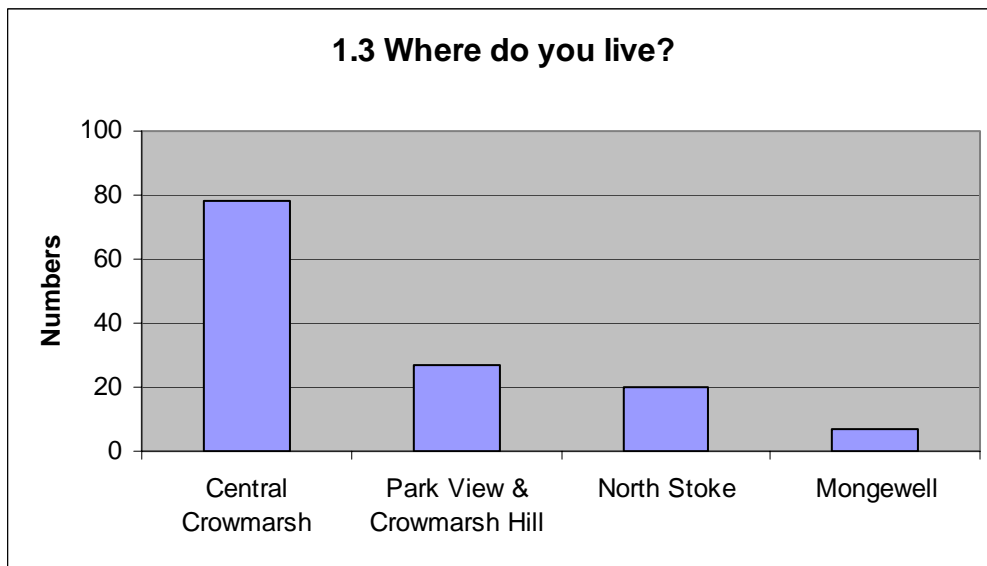
## 1 About you

### 1.1 and 1.2 How old are you? Are you a girl or a boy?



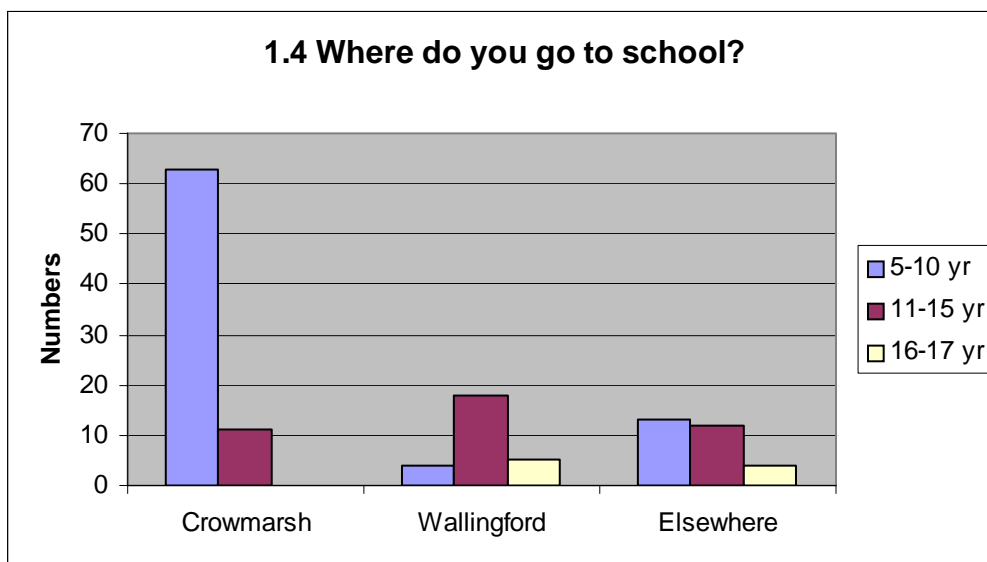
The bar chart shows that there are more 5-10-year-olds living in the parish than older children, giving the impression that the number of children is increasing in Crowmarsh. In all age groups, boys slightly outnumber girls. Interestingly, this appears to be borne out by the results of the 2001 National Census, which also show more males (53%) than females (47%) living in Crowmarsh ward. This is in contrast to the average for South Oxfordshire (49% male and 51% female).

### 1.3 Where do you live?



As you might expect, the village appraisal found that the majority of children/young people live in central Crowmarsh. The views of children living in all parts of the parish (including Mongewell) have been noted and will be taken into account. In 2001, 59% of child respondents were living in central Crowmarsh and 41% in other parts of the parish.

### 1.4 Where do you go to school, college or work?



All but two of the children/young people replied to this question. 74 went to the primary school in Crowmarsh, and 17 to primary schools in Wallingford and elsewhere. A total of 63 children attending primary school in Crowmarsh were aged 5-10; 11 were in the 11-15 age group. Another 18 young people in the 11-15 age group indicated that they went to school in Wallingford, and 12 others elsewhere. Among those aged 16-17, 5 said they were at school in Wallingford, and 4 elsewhere.

## 2 Your voice

### 2.1 Should there be a youth forum in Crowmarsh to discuss local issues of importance to young people?

There were 117 responses to this question, with a large majority (97, or 83%) in favour of setting up a Crowmarsh youth forum to discuss local issues of importance to children and young people.

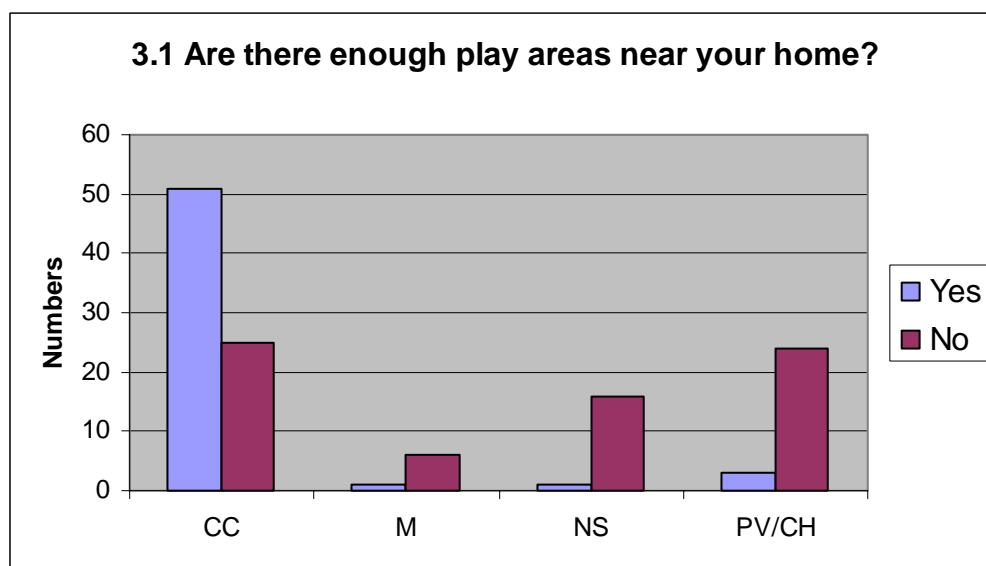
### 2.2 Would you go to such a meeting?

53 young people said they would be prepared to attend, and 53 said they would not. However, it would seem that many of those who would not attend still believe it is a good idea!

## 3 Play areas for younger children

### 3.1 Are there enough play areas near your home?

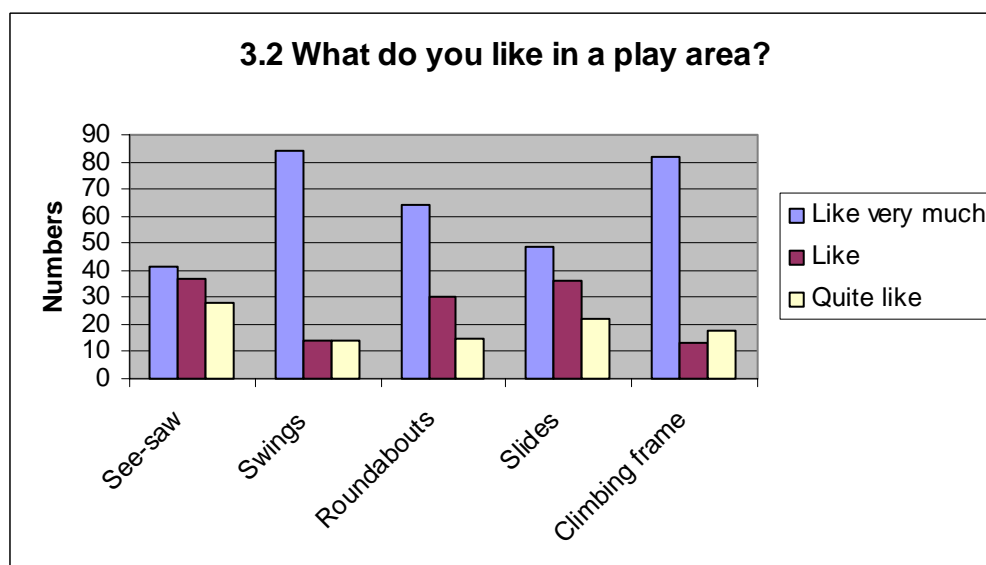
127 of the children/young people answered this question. A majority of the children (71, or 56% compared to 56, or 44%) thought there were not enough play areas near their home. Looking at this in more detail, we can establish where those who were content, or not content with the situation, came from.



Note: CC refers to central Crowmarsh, M to Mongewell, NS to North Stoke and PV/CH to Park View/Crowmarsh Hill. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the children who were most content with the play areas lived in central Crowmarsh, where the purpose-built recreation ground exists.

Whilst only one third of the children in central Crowmarsh were dissatisfied with play area facilities near them, over 90% of child respondents in Mongewell, North Stoke and Park View/Crowmarsh Hill felt that there were not enough play areas near them.

### 3.2 What kind of things do you like in a play area?



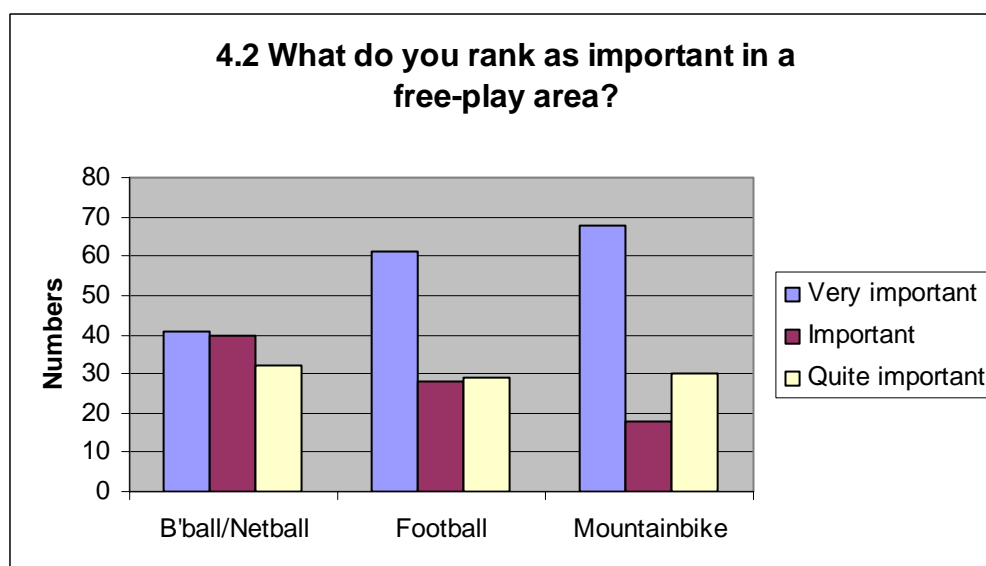
The things that children had greatest enthusiasm for were swings and climbing frames, followed by roundabouts, slides and see-saws. When asked what other things they liked, 45 children suggested, among others: skateboard/scooter ramps (12); monkey bars (11); and a zip wire (10). These were followed by BMX/cycle ramps (6); a basketball net (6); a tunnel (6); a sand pit (4); and a large slide (2).

## 4 Sports and games

### 4.1 Would you like more free-play/games facilities to use without adult supervision?

130 children/young people responded to this question. 116 said yes, they were in favour, and only 14 said no!

## 4.2 What do you rank as important items in a free-play area?

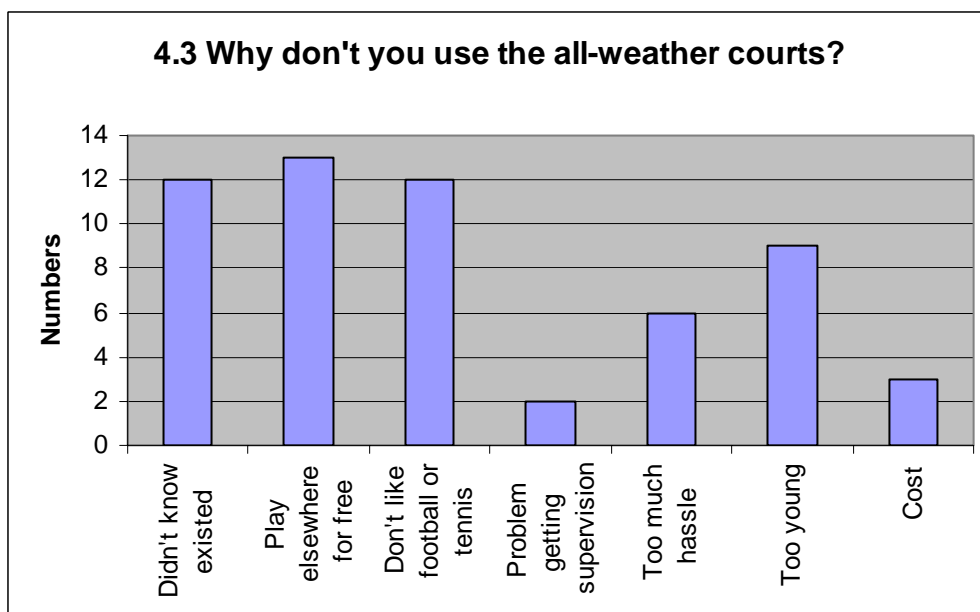


A mountain-bike zone was seen as the most important asset for children and young people, followed by more football goals and basketball/netball stands. Only 7 children thought that no additional items were needed. Many respondents offered suggestions: the most popular were a skateboard ramp/circuit (16); free tennis (9); and an obstacle/assault course (5). A trampoline, a running track, some cricket nets and some half pipes were also suggested.

## 4.3 Have you ever hired or used the all-weather tennis courts/five-a-side football pitch at the Crowmarsh recreation ground?

128 children/young people responded to this question. 93, or 70% said they had never used these facilities, whilst 35, or 26%, said they had. Those that had used the facilities came from all areas of the parish except N. Stoke.





58 children/young people gave reasons why they had not used these facilities. Some admitted they were not interested in football or tennis, or were too young to use the facilities (21 combined). Others said they used similar facilities elsewhere, which were free. Some thought it was simply too much hassle to book the courts. Only three cited cost, two mentioned a problem in getting adult supervision, and 12 didn't even know the facility existed!

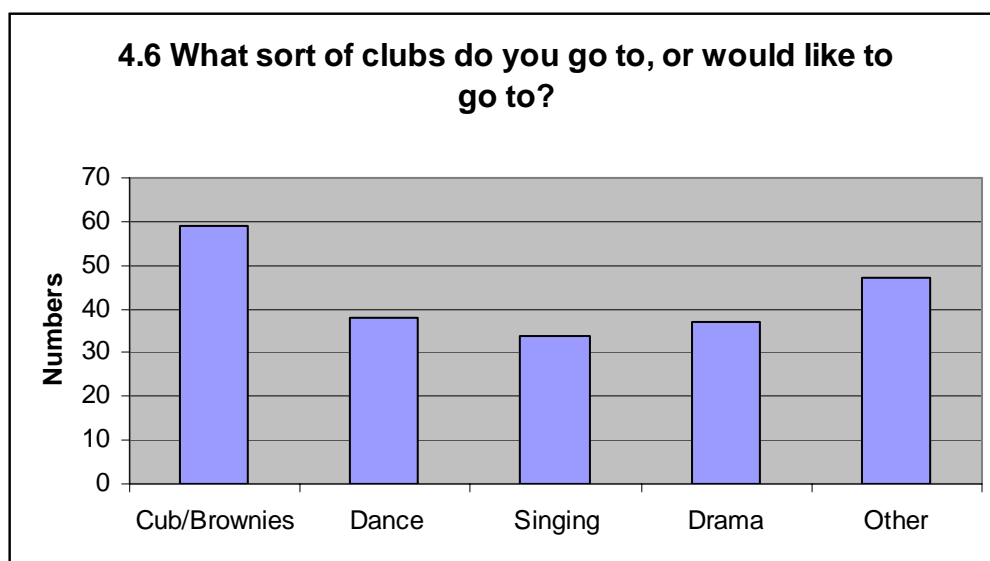
#### **4.4 Should there be a time set aside for local children to use the all-weather tennis/five-a-side courts in Crowmarsh?**

There were 129 responses to this question; of these, 62% said yes, 13% said no, and 25% said don't know.

#### **4.5 Should there be more indoor games equipment to use in the sports pavilion?**

There were 121 responses to this question. 109, or 90% were in favour of having more indoor games equipment that could be used in the pavilion whilst only 12 (10%) disagreed.

#### 4.6 What sort of clubs/activities do you go to, or would like to go to?



This question established what clubs/activities children were going to, and what they would have liked to go locally, if they had the opportunity. 27 children made suggestions for other local facilities, such as a tennis club with coaching (8), ice skating (6), and martial arts (4). Netball, computer games, archery, yoga and golf were also suggested as activities of interest.

#### 4.7 Would you use any of the following indoor games?

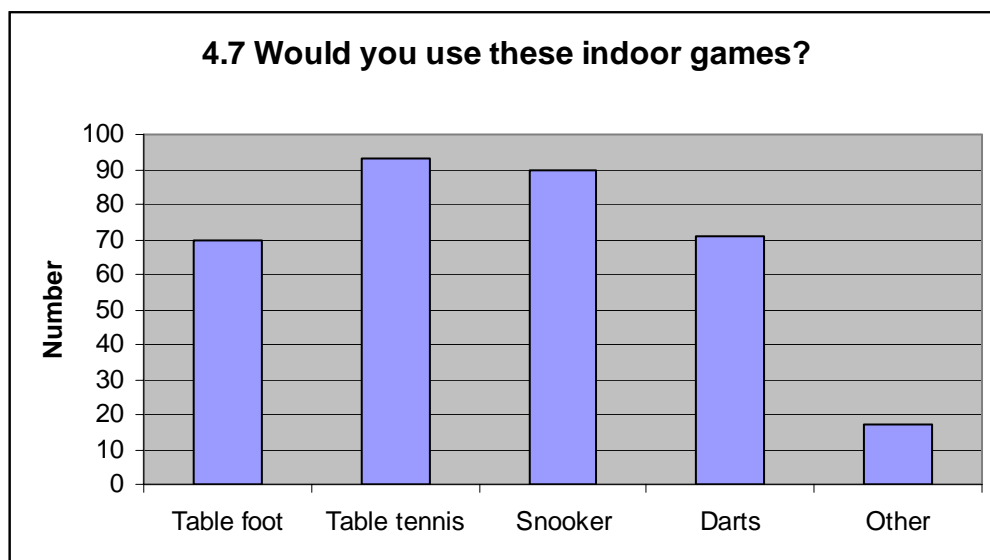
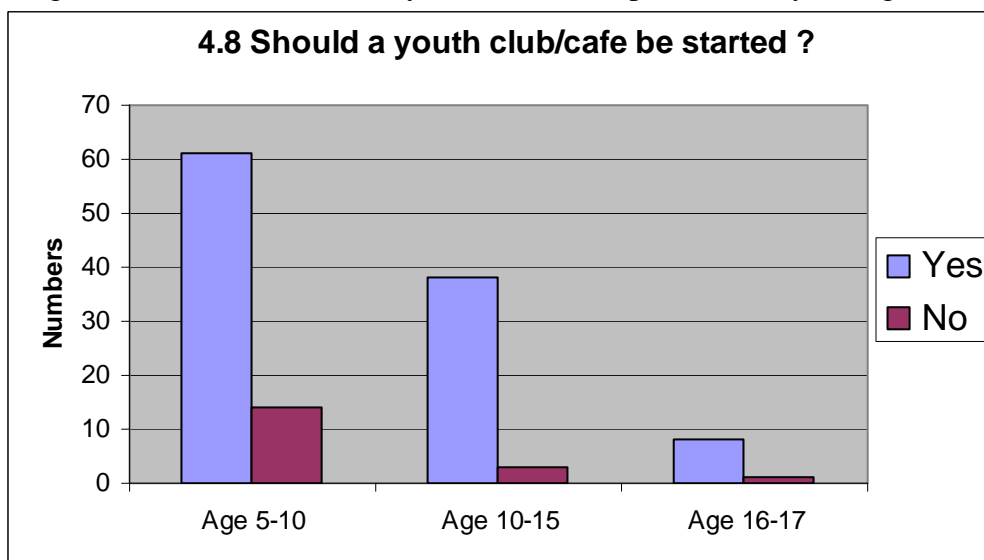


Table tennis (93 votes) and snooker (90 votes) received the greatest support, followed by darts (71 votes) and table football (70 votes). There were 14 other suggestions, including board games, games machines, gym equipment and badminton.

## 4.8 Do you think a youth club or café should be started in the parish?

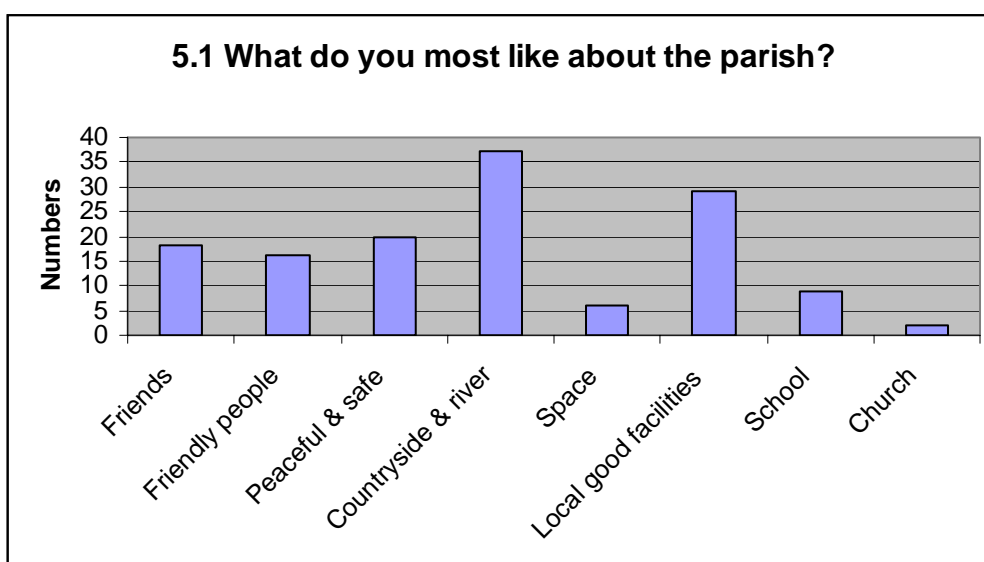
There were 126 responses to this question. There was considerable support for setting up a youth club/café in the parish (108 respondents, 86% agreed; only 18, 14% disagreed). In fact, there was a youth club in the parish some years ago.



All age groups were very interested in the idea of a youth club/café.

## 5 And finally ...

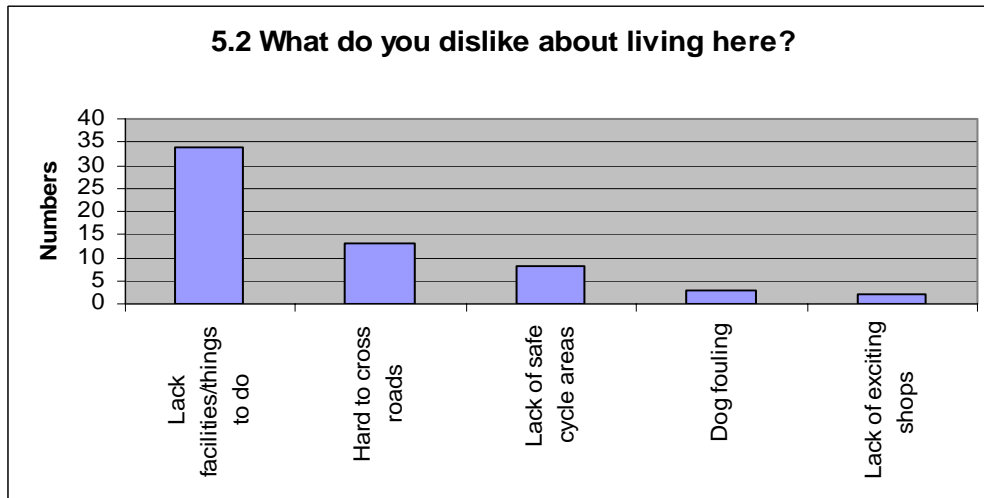
### 5.1 What do you most like about living in the parish?



It has not been easy to translate the thoughts and feelings of respondents to this question into simple categories. However, we have tried to give as accurate a breakdown as possible of our children and young people's views in this chart. A total of 94 children/young people responded to this question. The children and young

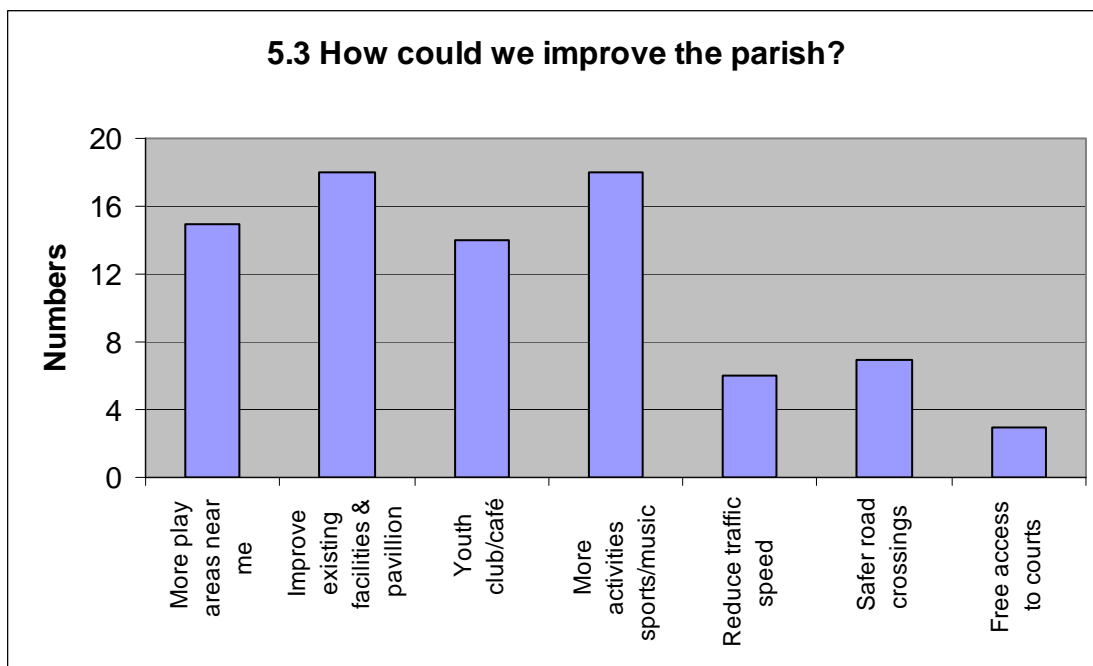
people cited the surrounding countryside and river as the thing that gave them most enjoyment in the parish. This was followed by an appreciation of good local facilities, including the proximity to Wallingford. Like many adults, our child respondents said that they appreciated the peace and feeling of safety that exists in the parish. Perhaps not so surprisingly, they also said they appreciated local friends, and friendly local people. A feeling of space, the good school and the church were also mentioned as enjoyable aspects of living in the parish.

## 5.2 What do you most dislike about living in the parish?



Fewer children and young people commented on things that they disliked about the parish. The 60 who did reply threw up some interesting contradictions. In answer to the previous question, 30 respondents indicated that they liked the parish because of its good facilities, but another 34 responded to this question, saying there was a lack of facilities and things to do! Traffic appeared to be the main dislike among child respondents, who cited a lack of safe places to cross roads and the lack of safe cycling areas and cycle lanes. Other dislikes were dog fouling, and a lack of exciting shops.

### 5.3 What could we do to make the parish a better place for young people?



In total, 74 children/young people responded to this question. There was no clear answer, but a number of suggestions were made, relating to issues raised previously in the questionnaire. These included reducing traffic speed, and getting more safe road crossings. It was also suggested that more sports activities could be laid on, and more music (discos). The formation of a youth club/café and an improvement in the facilities at the recreation ground were suggested by many, along with the establishment of additional play areas in Crowmarsh Hill/Park View and at North Stoke/Mongewell.

## **A few selected comments taken from the adults' and children's questionnaires**

### **What do you like about living in the parish?**

Crowmarsh is a nice village with all the things you need.

.....um.....good question.....

I like the countryside around me. When I wake up in the morning I can always hear the lovely sounds of the birds singing.

It's nice and quiet and I have friendly neighbours.

It is a nice place to live but things must improve or people will not buy homes here.

I have been in Crowmarsh for 37 years and am very happy.

Location, location, location – lovely community feeling and parents looking out for and helping one another.

It is a lovely area with interesting, intelligent and friendly people (mostly).

We moved from London and living here is literally like coming to some sort of paradise.

Lived here since I was 6. And like it.

We are a village and should stay one. We don't need expanding by more houses or shops.

The people in the community make Crowmarsh a great place to live in.

Good pub and post office. Active church, excellent vicar.

The friendly people.

It is a green and pleasant location.

It has an excellent bus service – probably better than at any time in the last 40-odd years that I have lived here.

I would not wish to live anywhere else.

Peace and quiet.

After living in a city for three years I like the community feel in a small village.

The wonderful community spirit.

I like the social mixture and general lack of snobbery.

When people need support, there is always someone willing to help.

The sense that people actually live here rather than treating it like a dormitory.

Not a lot – it used to be really nice (pre-1975).

Relative peace, convenience to Wallingford, some attempt to preserve history – it's a nice place!

It is a pleasant place with pleasant people.

I like it just the way it is.

Peace and quiet and strong sense of community in North Stoke.

It feels like a village should – together!

It's great being able to live in a village with the countryside feel and yet have all the shops you need close by in Wallingford.

The improvement in local transport.

Have lived here long enough to value the improvement in traffic noise and pollution made by the Crowmarsh and Wallingford bypasses.

Red kites overhead.

A brilliant post office stores with friendly staff.

It is safe for my children and it is safe for my cats.

Generally very safe and secure – a good environment to bring up children.

I enjoy receiving my Crowmarsh News which keeps me up to date with local issues.

It is a good community which could be better.

The riverside and riverside meadows have provided hours of relaxation.

I like the huge community spirit that you don't realise is here until you live here.

Lovely countryside with the beautiful Thames flowing through.

It's just your average small village. No better, no worse, than any other.

It is a working village and not a dormitory. The working community is essential to its character.

Crowmarsh still maintains the atmosphere of a village. We should use and appreciate the school, church, shops and businesses. It is too easy for people to criticise and not be prepared to participate.

I have lived here 52 years. Very happy.

The community spirit, the relaxed feel of the village, the fact that many facets of modern multi-culturism have not caught up with our “little corner of England”.

Flowers along The Street and friendly local people always smiling and saying “hello” to each other.

## **What do you dislike about living in the parish?**

Old people moaning about where we play.

It’s a very boring place.

It is a commuter belt tacked on to Wallingford.

It is fast becoming a geriatric parish run by Victorian councillors who feel that children should be seen and not heard.

Too full of people who don’t want change.

Lots of things revolve around the church – what about us Atheists?

Knowing that many of my old school friends can’t afford to live in the area they grew up in.

Struggling to find my way around the numbering system of Thames Mead.

The bypass has split the village.

East of the bypass is not in the Parish Council working plan. Everything stops at the roundabout.

One day I will have to leave and it will be almost impossible to find a place to compare with Crowmarsh.

RAF Benson.

Nothing for teenagers – seen as a problem rather than community members who need special facilities.

A bit of a semi-urban sprawl.

The untidy and filthy streets.

We don’t see much of neighbours, many of whom leave for work very early in the morning, come back late at night and seem to sleep all weekend.

Not close to the sea – but you can’t have everything!

Interfering newcomers who want to change everything. If you want the high life, go live in a city!



The extremes of noise from RAF Benson and the failure to reduce and slow traffic.

The fact that we don't make the most of the riverside pool and campsite.

Allowing the big roundabout to cut the village in half.

The boy racers that scream down The Street in their cars.

I do not feel part of the parish of Crowmarsh because we live at Carmel College and not in the main village.

Lack of a village centre or focal point.

The fact that we residents in North Stoke do not get any benefits from the Council.

There are no community events to us proud of Crowmarsh. Wallingford Carnival, Wallingford Beer and Blues....Let's do something in Crowmarsh.

The appearance of the Wilders industrial area – the building and the surrounding area are an eyesore and a bad first impression.

Let's do something to tidy up Wilders Yard.

Nothing. I love living here.

The mess / untidiness / hazardous car parking around the industrial units in Wilders Yard.

There is no real play equipment for the little ones. It's a long walk to Bullcroft Park, especially when you're small and you've only got an hour to fill.

I consider the village has deteriorated terribly. It's untidy and scruffy. People seem to have no respect for their houses and garages. It was nice here.

Difficult and expensive to get back from Oxford and Reading at night.

We both work long hours and have no kids and we feel quite isolated from the community.

I was shocked, coming from the city, at the lack of ethnic diversity in the community.

It is difficult to integrate into the community if you do not have young children or boys who play football. I don't know most of my neighbours.

The cycle lanes along The Street which look ugly and are completely useless.

Twisting my ankles walking on cracked-up, bumpy and sometimes overgrown footpaths.

Heavy traffic – and getting heavier.

Unnecessary alterations to the highway and attempts to suburbanise the village.

Lack of police presence in residential areas.

Living in Crowmarsh Hill separates us from main Crowmarsh activities.

Recent suburbanisation of the village – cycle lanes, road humps etc., all expensive and in my opinion a total waste of time and effort.

The shortage of big family houses which could lead us to have to move out of the area.

There isn't anything I dislike that comes to mind. I'm happy!!

The aeroplane noises at weekends.

Not being able to afford a flat or house of my own in the area.

Not all of Crowmarsh is taken into account – Park View seems too easily forgotten.

Yuppies moving in.

I, like many other residents of Park View, am fed up to the back teeth of being the poor relations here.

Negative attitudes towards development of local initiatives – more housing, revamped industrial area, youth needs. Let's make this a positive and welcoming parish for everyone.

## **Acknowledgements**

A big thankyou to all the people who have given up so much of their time to help with this project: Alan and John Bromley, Anne Marie Carter, Sandie Clemas, Peter Evans, Tom and John Griffin, Edwina Johnson, Helen Johnson, Monika Jürgens, Anne Lowes, Ian Maher, Anita Napper, Michael and Heather Thorn, Heather Turner, Brenda Woodbridge, and Catherine Young. Financial support throughout the project from Crowmarsh Parish Council, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and South Oxfordshire District Council is gratefully acknowledged.

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