



PARISH PRIORITIES SURVEY: SUMMARY

Background and methodology

Background

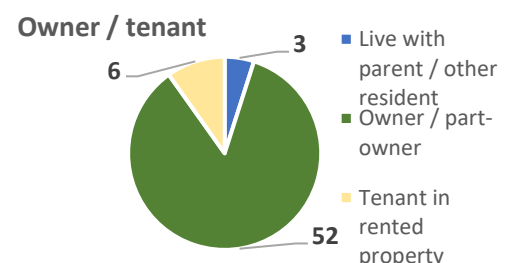
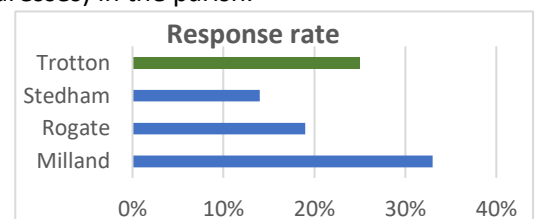
1. The parish council (PC) decided to respond and take advantage of the initiative by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to encourage any parish with no approved neighbourhood plan to produce a "Parish priority statement", promising to take these into account during its next review of the SDNP local plan.
2. The SDNPA made it clear that, to be taken seriously as part of this process, parishes would need to show they had consulted their residents in producing their parish priority statements, so a working group (of PC members and other volunteers) was put together to produce a draft statement and, after discussing this with the PC, to design a survey of all residents. The questionnaire is included at appendix 1.

Survey method

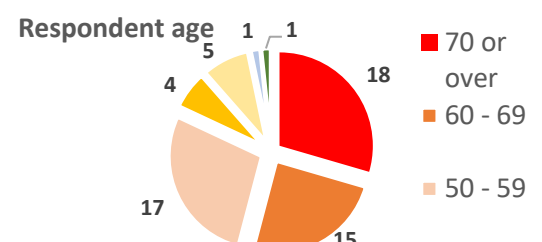
3. Online survey: The survey was made available on the internet using a secure Microsoft Forms questionnaire within the parish council's MS 365 system. This was split into two parts in an effort to collect overall resident priorities even from those not prepared to take the time to complete the whole survey. This version was launched via an email from the chairman to all residents who had signed up to the parish council's email list – 109 in all (covering 73 addresses).
4. Paper survey: A paper copy of the survey was printed out by the clerk and delivered by volunteers to all households with no occupant on the email list (69 addresses), with spare copies available in both churches or, on request, from the clerk. Residents were given 8 addresses to return the questionnaires and the clerk's telephone number if they wanted it collected.

Survey sample and response

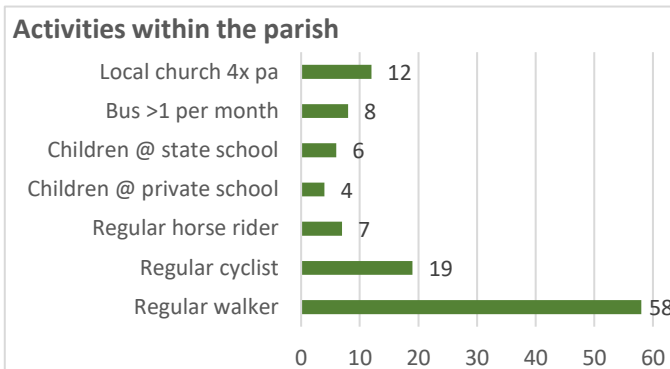
5. Survey sample: There are 248 people on the electoral register for the parish. This includes 13 at Chithurst Monastery and 5 people who have since moved, so we included just the one person at the monastery who has registered for our email list, and we included the five new residents who are not yet on the register. We also included two people who do not live in the parish but work at the Southdowns Manor and Aylings Garden Centre. For statistical purposes, we have counted the total universe as 248 but the true number is probably a few less. According to our database, there are 138 occupied households (ie addresses) in the parish.
6. Response rate: In all, we received 61 responses – 58 online (from the 109 email invitations) and three paper copies (from the 69 home-delivered invitations). This equates to 25% of all residents and 44% of all households. For context, in the surveys they did for their neighbourhood plans, Stedham received 14% response rate, Rogate 19% and Milland 33%.
7. Response breakdown: We asked respondents to classify themselves in three ways:
 - a. Occupancy: 52 of the 61 responses (85%) were owner occupiers, with 6 (10%) tenants of rented properties and the other 3 (5%) were living with parents or others.



Age range: Nearly 30% of respondents were in their 70s or older, another quarter in their sixties and another quarter (28%) were in their 50s, so just over 80% of all survey respondents were over 50, which may well be an accurate picture of the whole parish.



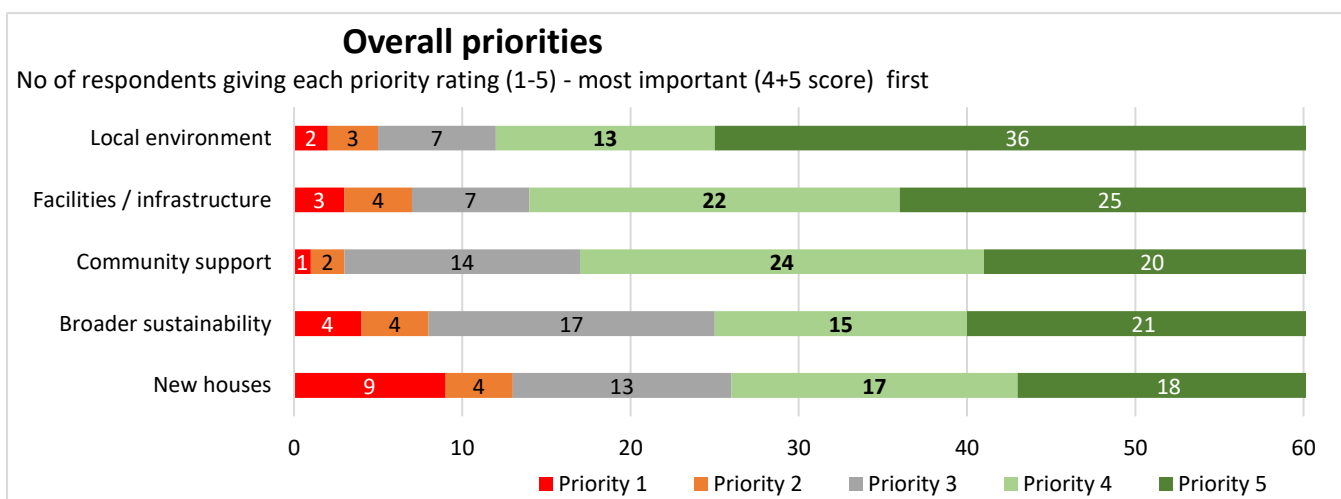
- b. Activities in the parish: We asked respondents which local activities are important to them and walking was the clear leader here: 95% of respondents walk regularly within the parish, with cycling a distant second at 31%. 20% said they attend a local church four or more times a year, but the number attending weekly (or even monthly) would be much smaller.



Part one: Overall priorities

8. Respondents were asked to rate five overall priorities identified by the PC in terms of importance. The five were:
- *Community support*
(Provide support for local residents that need it, and co-operate with other organisations that can help)
 - *New houses*
(for local residents and essential workers: affordable to rent / small starter homes for youngsters / downsizers)
 - *Community facilities and infrastructure*
(community event facilities, pedestrian and cyclist routes, improved broadband etc)
 - *Local environment*
(Protect and enhance our open spaces, rights of way, views and historic buildings, bus routes, noise etc)
 - *Broader sustainability imperatives*
(Global climate change and biodiversity initiatives)
9. The table and graph below show the number of people giving each score (out of 5) for each priority, where 5 was the most important and 1 the least – they are presented below in order of resident priority.

Option	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
New houses	9	4	13	17	18
Broader sustainability	4	4	17	15	21
Community support	1	2	14	24	20
Facilities / infrastructure	3	4	7	22	25
Local environment	2	3	7	13	36



10. Either way, local environmental issues such as noise, open spaces and rights of way were considered the most important, with 59% of respondents rating them as 5 and over 80% rating them as “important” (4 or 5). Community facilities and infrastructure came a clear second with 41% and 77%, and community support the clear third with 33% and 72%. Broader sustainability issues (climate change, biodiversity etc) had the highest number of respondents rating it at 3, but the parish council suspects this was probably because these are considered very important but not within the local parish council’s powers.
11. We asked respondents to list (and rate) any other priorities they wanted the PC to consider and received a range of both positive and negative comments, all of which will be taken into account when the parish council produces an action plan based on this priority work.

Part two: Going into a bit more detail

The PC, and its working party, would have liked to go into much more detail in the survey but were conscious that making it too long would reduce participation. As the PC had agreed that broader global sustainability issues should be retained in the parish priorities statement - but by referring to a linked but separate sustainability charter - part two focussed on the other four areas.

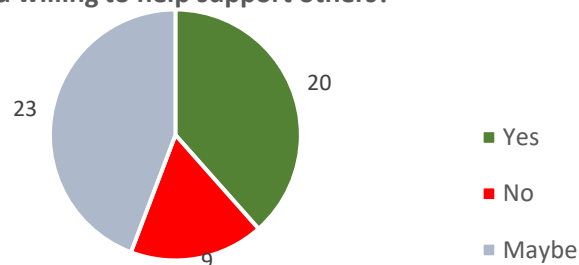
We should note that 9 respondents filled in only part one, so that the total response number for these questions is 52. The sections below show the questions and responses . . .

Community support

12. *Would you be willing to help to support people in our community who need help?*

Of the 52 part-two respondents, 20 (almost 40%) said yes and a further 23 (44%) said maybe, so only 9 (under 20%) said no.

Are you willing to help support others?

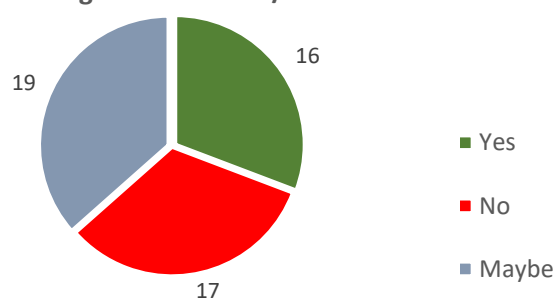


13. Answers to the question: "Please give a brief idea of how you think you could help?" suggest that there is a wide range of help residents are willing to offer and part of the action plan work will be to consider whether a suitable system to co-ordinate supply and demand is practicable.

14. *Would you be willing to join a register of people willing to share power tools, personal skills etc?*

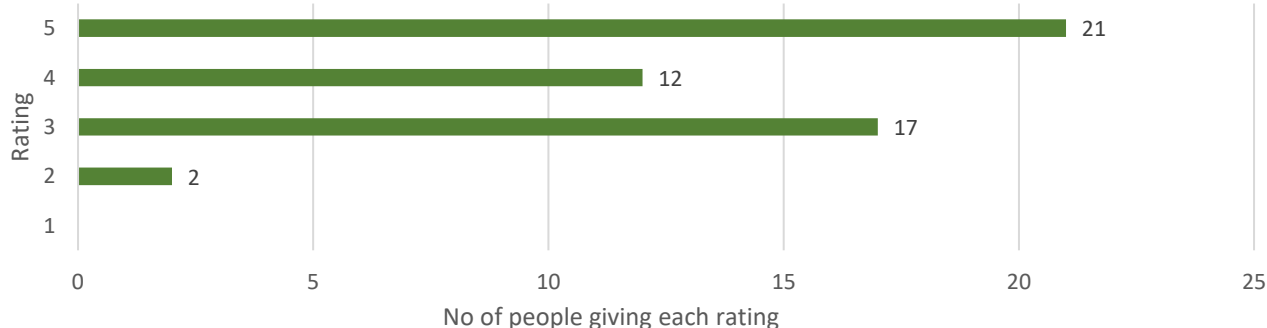
Around 30% each said yes or no to this question, with the balance answering maybe. Again, if a system of matching demand and supply could be set up, this could be a significant community support mechanism.

Are you willing to share tools / skills?



15. *How do you rate our existing programme of events to bring our communities together? (eg First Friday, Trotton Fete, concerts and presentations in the church etc) 1-5 where 5 is excellent*

Ratings for event programme (1-5)

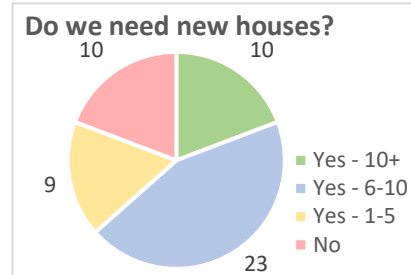


16. The existing programme of community events were rated "Excellent" by 40% of respondents and a further quarter rated it 4 out of 5. We then asked for suggestions of any other types of event, or support, that might bring our community closer together and the comments and suggestions, again, merit further discussion.

New houses

17. *Do you agree that we need a (small number of) new houses for local families? (as long as they fit into the local environment?)*

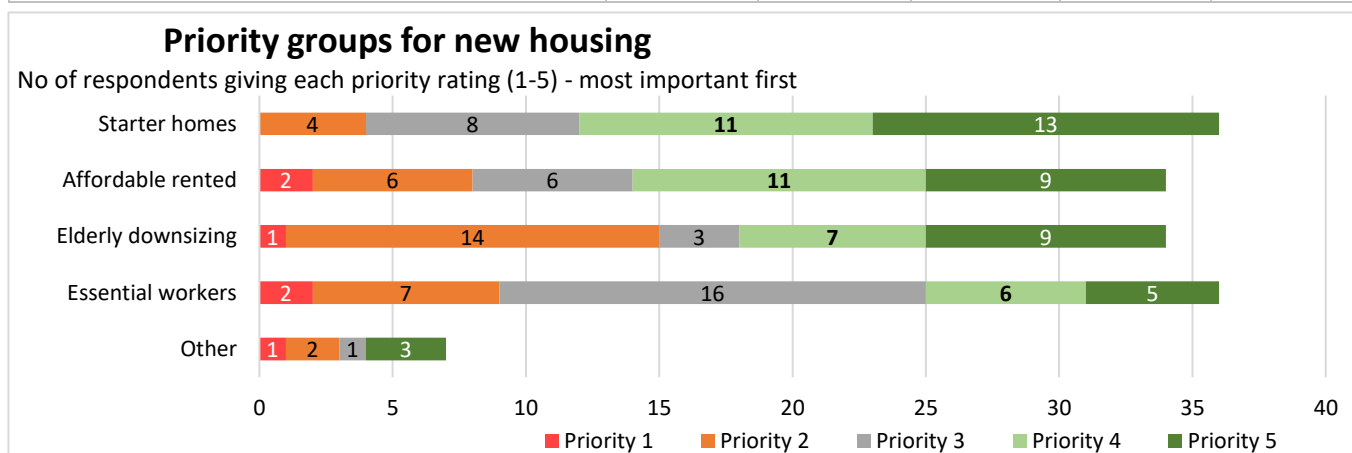
Although this was rated as the least popular priority in part one, 81% of respondents believed that the parish does need new houses, with 10 people (19%) seeing a need for ten or more houses and 23 (44%) seeing a need for 6-10 houses. Only 10 (19%) said no to the question – and some of these seem to have done so because they do not believe the SDNPA will allow any.



18. *For new housing, how would you rate the importance of the following groups?*

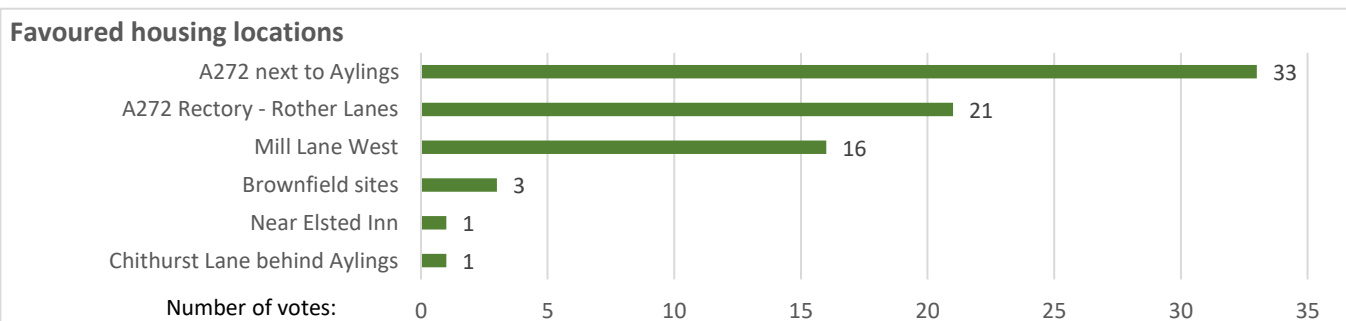
The table and graph below show the number of respondents rating the priority they would give each group (where 5 = most important, 1 = least important).

Priority groups	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Other	1	2	1	0	3
Essential workers	2	7	16	6	5
Elderly downsizing	1	14	3	7	9
Affordable rented	2	6	6	11	9
Starter homes	0	4	8	11	13



Starter homes for youngsters, and homes for essential workers were clearly seen as the most important, with the elderly least important, although the comments in appendix 3 suggest some people would prioritise elderly downsizers in order to free up homes for the other groups.

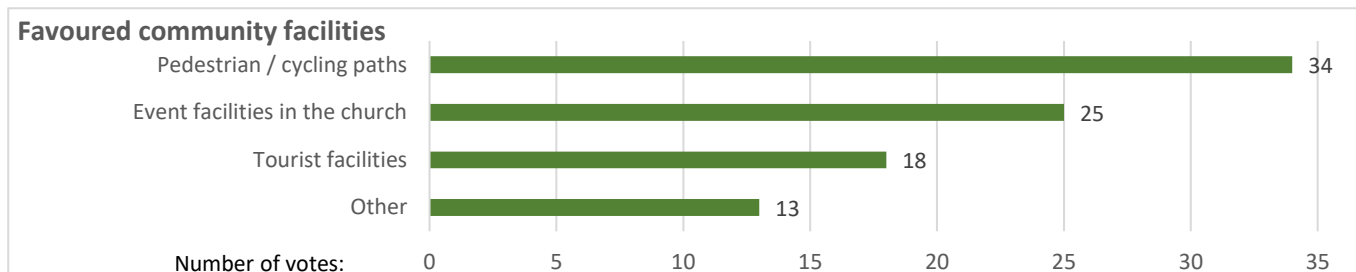
19. *Which of the following suggested locations (ideas only - not agreed with owners or authorities) would you support for these houses?*



Respondents were invited to tick all sites they would support, and some ticked all the options given as well as adding their own ideas. The graph shows that 33 people (63% of those responding) would support the site next to (East of) Aylings Garden Centre, 21 (40%) would support the side of the A272 between the church and Rother Lane, and 16 (31%) would support more houses on Mill Lane. The planning authority has already expressed doubts about all of these but we will pass on the views of local residents, as well as the other sites that just a few residents suggested.

Community facilities and infrastructure

20. Respondents were asked: “Which of the following do you think we should consider? [please choose as many as you like]
- Better event / meeting facilities in the church (eg toilets, kitchen facilities, remove pews to provide space)?
 - Pedestrian / cycling paths between eg Terwick Lane to Trotton Bridge
 - Facilities to encourage tourists (eg information boards, parking)
 - Other (please type in under comments below)”



“Pedestrian / cycling paths” was clearly the most popular improvement, supported by 34 (65%), with 25 (48%) voting for “Better event / meeting facilities in the church” and 18 people (35%) in favour of “Facilities to encourage tourists”.

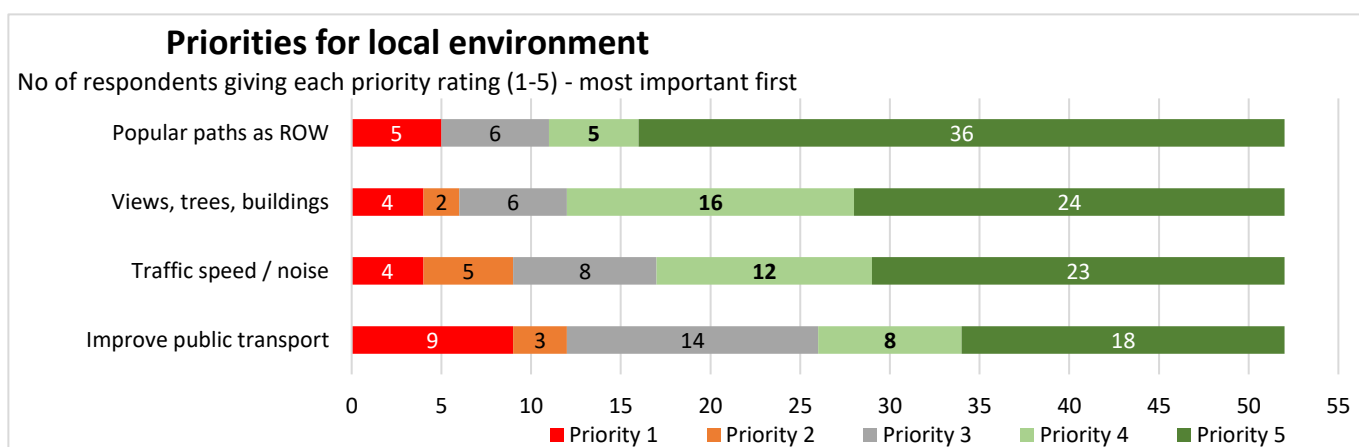
21. Another 13 (25%) voted for other improved facilities and the parish council will consider their suggestions regarding community facilities.

Local environment

22. Respondents were asked: “Please rate each of these 1-5 where 1 means it is unimportant to you and 5 means you think it is very important. Then add up to three other priorities that are important to you and put a 1-5 score in brackets after each one.
- Efforts to reduce traffic speed / noise
 - Efforts to improve public transport (eg bus routes)
 - Efforts to protect popular paths as rights of way
 - Efforts to protect / register views, trees, historic buildings and open spaces”

The results are shown in the table below:

Priority rating	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Improve public transport	9	3	14	8	18
Traffic speed / noise	4	5	8	12	23
Views, trees, buildings	4	2	6	16	24
Popular paths as ROW	5		6	5	36



Perhaps not surprisingly, given the prevalence of walkers in the parish (see para 7c above), efforts to protect popular paths was, by a large margin, the most highly rated priority, with almost 70% of all respondents rating it 5 out of 5, and only five people (10%) rating it unimportant.

23. Respondents were then asked to add any further comments, suggestions and further priorities regarding the local environment, and these will be an important input for the action plan.

Conclusions

Survey findings

The analysis presented above is fairly self-explanatory and hopefully gives a fair and straightforward picture of the views expressed by respondents. The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- The survey was completed by 61 people - 25% of all residents and 36% of all households – compared with the surveys by neighbouring parishes for their neighbourhood plans: Stedham received 14% response rate, Rogate 19% and Milland 33%. 58 of these were done online and just three on home-delivered paper versions.
- Of these, (85%) are owner occupiers and 80% are over 50
- All but three respondents are regular walkers in the parish but other activities were much more varied
- Overall priorities: Of the four overall priority areas identified by the parish council, 60% gave local environment issues such as rights of way, open spaces, noise and local views / buildings the top importance rating and 80% considered them as important, followed by community facilities and infrastructure and community support. New housing and broader sustainability issues were rated significantly less important, although the latter is probably seen as much more important at higher levels of government.
- Community support: Within these overall priorities, 40% said they would be prepared to provide support to others locally (particularly through driving, shopping and visiting) and 30% would be prepared to share tools and equipment.
- The existing programme of community events was rated “Excellent” by 40% of respondents and a further quarter rated it 4 out of 5, but there were many ideas for other events which deserve discussion.
- New housing: Although new housing was rated as the least popular priority in part one, 81% of respondents believed that the parish does need new houses, particularly for youngsters and essential workers. Sites on the A272 (next to Aylings and between Rectory / Rother Lanes) are seen as the most popular locations.
- Community facilities / infrastructure: Pedestrian and cycling paths would clearly be the most popular improvement, supported by 34 (65%), with 25 (48%) voting for “Better event / meeting facilities in the church” and 18 people (35%) in favour of “Facilities to encourage tourists”. The comments and suggestions included many new ideas and are worthy of further discussion.
- Local environment: As the top-rated overall priority (see para 10) this one obviously merits the most immediate attention from the parish council. Paths are clearly the biggest concern but open spaces, views, historic buildings and traffic noise are also seen as important.

Guidance for the parish council and the SDNPA

This survey has elicited the views of a higher proportion of residents of the parish than many of the parish neighbourhood plan surveys used by the SDNPA to help formulate its last Local Plan. It will hopefully, therefore, be taken seriously in the Authority’s forthcoming review of that Plan.

It has also enabled the parish council to produce a Parish Priorities Statement and to start work on an action plan reflecting those priorities and the wealth of useful ideas given by respondents in their comments and suggestions