

The Parish Plan

Parish of Crookham Village, Hampshire 2010

Comprising the parish wards of Zebon Copse,
Netherhouse Moor and Crookham Village.

**This Parish Plan represents residents' views
on the present state of the parish and the way
parishioners wish it to develop in the future.**



**Crookham Village
Parish Council**



- Some Parish landmarks
- a Hitches Lane
 - b Netherhouse Moor
 - c Kiln Workshops near Crossways
 - d Grove Farm
 - e Post Office, The Street
 - f Malthouse Bridge
 - g Crookham Wharf, Crondall road
 - h Canal swing bridge & Zephon Common
 - i Zebon Copse Estate
 - j Zebon Copse Centre
 - k Hancock's Farm
 - l St Nicholas' School

Crookham Village Parish Plan

Looking forward

The Government have asked each UK Parish to produce a plan, setting out what its parishioners want its future to look like.

This plan will provide the formal link between the Parish Council and our executive authorities, i.e. Hart District Council (HDC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC). It is a focused reference of agreed local priorities and will be used to help influence planning decisions and the programmes of service providers.

Our Parish Plan

This document has been compiled by volunteer residents, based on a questionnaire circulated to all parish households, as well as views expressed at numerous public parish meetings.

It describes the current state of the parish and parishioners' views in the context of Community, Natural Environment, Transport, Development, and Facilities – and it ends with a list of Actions residents wish to see promoted by the Parish Council, or which they want the Parish Council to recommend to executive authorities.

Crookham Village (Civil) Parish

The parish lies in the farmland and copses of the Hart valley. There are some arable fields, but most are grazed by cattle, sheep and horses. One of the copses is common land, another is public open space. The Basingstoke canal meanders through the farmland, with the towpath and a network of footpaths crossing the area.

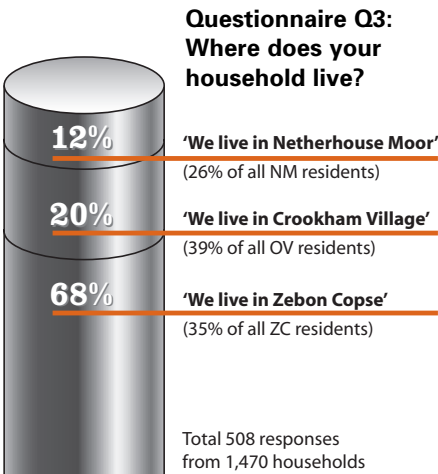
The settlements comprise the original, here called 'the old village' (OV), plus two recent self-contained residential developments built on greenfield sites, Netherhouse Moor (NM) and Zebon Copse (ZC), with around 230, 240 and 1,000 houses respectively at this time, and with a total population of around 2,700 people (see map). For Hart District Council elections, the OV is in the Crondall ward, NM in Fleet West ward and ZC in the Church Crookham West ward.

Taking local views into account

A respectable 508 households (out of 1,470) responded to the parish questionnaire, representing 1,235 people, from both sexes equally and including 225 young people under age 16. Some key results from their responses are illustrated in diagrams throughout this document.

This 2010 version of the Crookham Village Parish Plan has been submitted to Hart District Council, who will take it into account in the light of their own developing Local Development Framework. The Plan will be reviewed as required and progress will be updated on the Crookham Village Parish Council website.

Community
Environment
Transport
Development
Facilities
Summary & Actions



Community

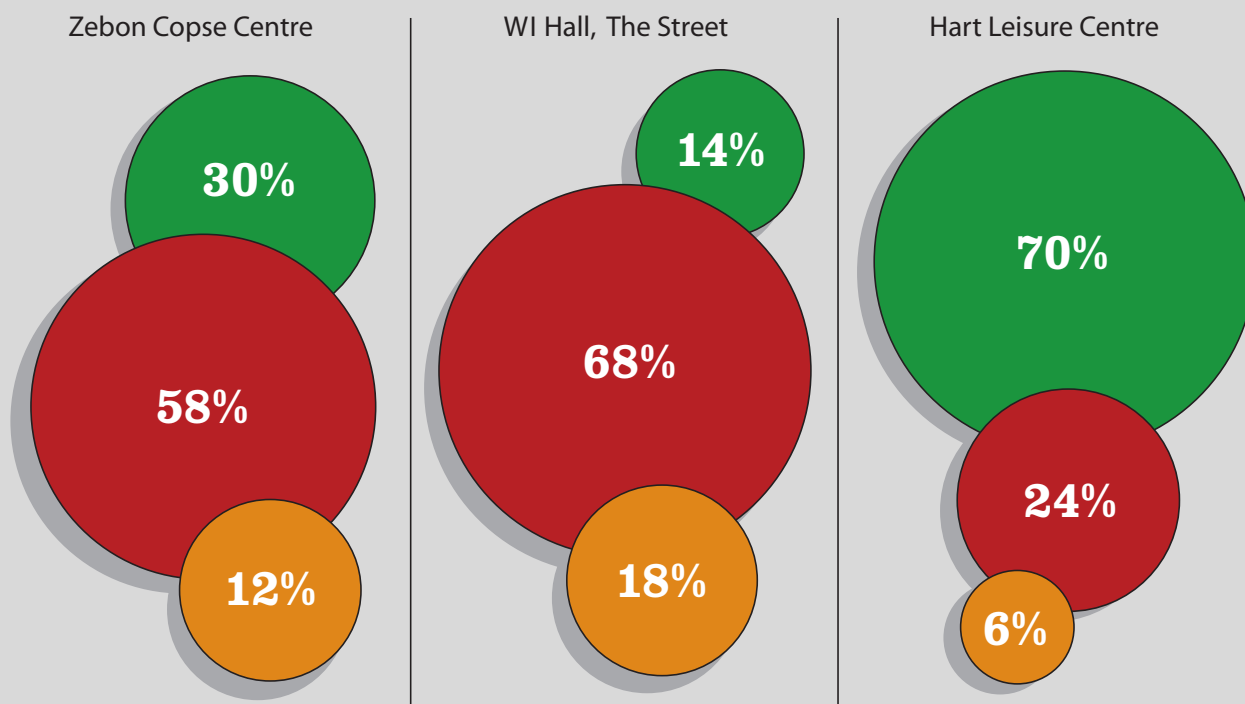


There is plenty to enjoy locally and many fellow parishioners share interests. But comparatively few residents know about or make best use of local clubs and activities.



Q28: Are you aware of what is on offer at the following places?

Yes No Not interested



The Questionnaire results show that parishioners do have some strongly held common interests, but parish-based community activities are less well supported than might be expected.

This can be attributed to modern lifestyles and the proximity of Fleet, with its wide range of opportunities. It is disappointing to learn that many residents are unaware of the variety of village activities.

The effects of historical boundary changes

In 1953, Church Crookham (with church & school) was split away from Crookham to join the urban district of Fleet. The remainder became Crookham Village civil parish in the rural district of Hartley Wintney. In 1971, these districts amalgamated to form HDC.

CV then consisted of just the four roads radiating from Crossways, plus surrounding farms and cottages, with a population around 600, now comprising the ward we call OV. The CV population greatly increased during the 1980s-90s by the building NM and ZC housing developments. The latest change was to re-allocate these three parish wards of the village among three HDC electoral wards.

Common trends

Residents in the parish wards are similar in many ways: they are mostly professional and tradespeople. Old properties have been kept in good repair. There are no landed estates, no large commercial premises or areas of great deprivation. Residents' satisfaction is reflected by 95% of respondents wishing the Old Village to stay as it is, as a 'working community', with no greenfield development.

However, over 65% claim not to know about parish based activities and 80% never use the facilities, despite newsletters, website and posters. 46% had 'no opinion' on the PC's role in planning decisions.

Community activities

Most parishes would expect a wider range of clubs and societies than ours. The reason is perhaps the lack of church and school, plus our proximity to Fleet, which supports a greater variety of activities.

However active village groups, like Crookham Village Association and Zebon Copse Residents Association, put on a variety of social events as well as the summer fete. There are two WIs and a Social Club. The ancient Crookham Mummers play is presented every Boxing Day. Crookham Village has been Twinned with Lévigien for 25 years now, with annual exchange visits fostering many international friendships.

Leisure activities

Some of the questionnaire responses are conflicting. Responders' major entertainment activities are cinema, theatre and music, of necessity located in major centres outside the parish. A significant number say they would attend groups like badminton, keep-fit, tennis, yoga, golf: yet these are already available nearby. Over 100 people would like to see a village based film club and a rambling club.

34% of respondents assert that they are not interested in local leisure facilities, perhaps explained by the large proportion who work and play outside the parish. 33% think social activities for children and the young are very poor.

Natural Environment



Our unique and diverse local landscape and wildlife habitats are appreciated and valued.

Parishioners call for their support and protection.

Our landscape is truly valued. The Basingstoke Canal was identified as the feature most requiring protection and financial support, followed by the footpath network and open areas for walking.

Our parish retains a remarkably picturesque character. Its rural environment has long been recognised as special and much of it is protected by a variety of existing designations – including two Conservation areas and over 30 listed buildings. The value of these areas depends on maintaining the quality of their landscape context.

The Basingstoke Canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), nationally important for dragonflies and water plants. Zebon Copse is an eight hectare Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC). Significant WWII anti-invasion defences form an historic addition.

A unique and fragile natural environment

Our local landscape is exceptionally rich in natural beauty and wildlife and is a mosaic of a variety of habitats: woodlands and copses, wet and dry flower-rich meadowlands, arable fields and hedgerows, the River Hart and the Canal. Other natural features include ancient trees, ponds and heathland. Netherhouse Copse is exceptional, containing over 17 species of Ancient Woodland indicator plants.

The blend of different characters makes the environment appealing – and a good network of footpaths, bridleways and the canal towpath allow people to explore the parish and the countryside beyond. Parish walks have highlighted this wealth of wildlife and natural beauty.

The landscape supports a wide diversity, including threatened birds, plants and insects. Significant populations of badgers, roe deer and a variety of bat species occur throughout. Birds of interest include the skylark, swallows and yellowhammer on farmland, the lesser-spotted woodpecker, marsh tit and buzzard breeding in the woodland and the kingfisher on the river Hart. Bird song is a key Quality of Life indicator.

Some of the woodland supports rare butterflies such as the silver-washed fritillary and white admiral, and there are populations of early purple orchid. Wet meadows hold marsh marigold, pepper saxifrage and ragged robin. Stag beetle, great crested newt and declining birds like the house sparrow, song thrush and bullfinch are all present.

Strong response from the questionnaire

The responses highlight the value residents place on good access to our parish landscape. All landscape features scored highly, suggesting that local people fully appreciate the existing environment quality. There is a strong preference for the parish to stay as it is, rather than to develop in other directions with substantial extra development.

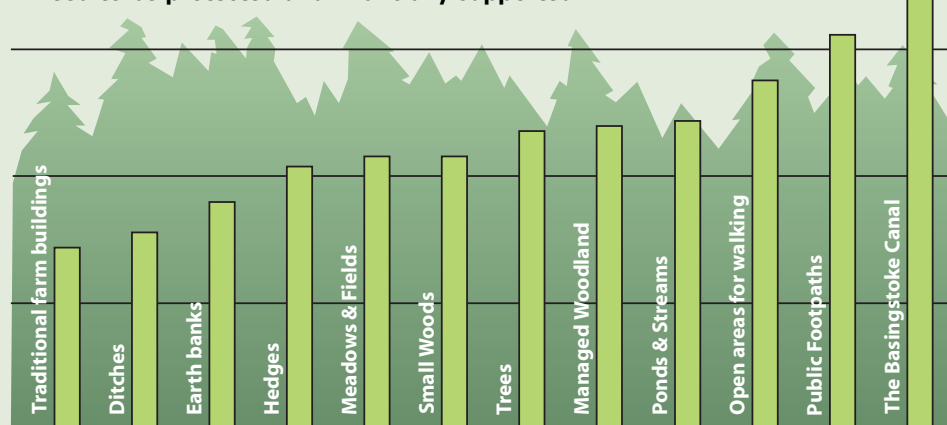
A question examining the state of the parish footpaths received most responses at 890. The majority felt that they know where the footpaths are and could use them without difficulty, but some felt that they could be better signposted. 20% of respondents declared themselves ready to assist in maintenance of the footpaths.

Many respondents called for measures to enhance the wildlife habitats, improve street cleaning and roadside verges, clear up litter, reduce footpath dog fouling and remove fencing of Zephon Common.

100%

Percentage selected by the 824 respondents

Q42: Which features of the Parish landscape need to be protected and financially supported?



Nearly all the landscape features were selected for protection and were scored highly, with greatest emphasis on the Canal, footpath network and open spaces.

Other questionnaire responses support a walking/rambling club.

Conclusion: that our unique rural landscape character and wildlife are enjoyed, prized and require protection from development.



Transport



The volume and speed of vehicular traffic endangers and discourages other more vulnerable road users, like cyclists and pedestrians, who share the same space.



Cars are central to modern life, but few of our local through-roads were built to take current traffic volumes and this has increased the risk to local residents.

Traffic volume

Parish car ownership is high at 1.7 per household. Over 70% use a car for work and over 90% for leisure. Our roads carry increasing through traffic, avoiding congested nearby urban areas. Development at QEB and Hitches Farm will worsen this situation in the future.

The problems differ in the three village wards. NM is a cul-de-sac, so most of its traffic is self generated; ZC has two entrances: the through road is sinuous, but attracts through traffic, wishing to avoid the school congestion and difficult Wyvern junction.

In the OV the four roads centred on Crossways attract through traffic avoiding Fleet. The HCC highway authority does not favour attempts to reduce this flow except for restrictions on heavy vehicles. The intersection at Malthouse bridge is sometimes congested, but this does have the benefit of slowing traffic entering The Street.

Traffic speed

The biggest consistent worry is traffic speed (56% of responses), in particular on OV roads, currently controlled by 30mph limits and weight restrictions. In Pilcot Road, the main problem is protecting children walking to Dogmersfield school. The PC has been pressing for a footway for some time, but HCC have not yet accepted our proposals, even with a substantial PC contribution.

In Crondall Road, residents regard traffic speeds as dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. HCC have offered extra signage, but it is always difficult to find effective calming measures: Chicanes were trialled in 2003-4, but rejected by both residents and motorists as actually increasing dangers without reducing speed. Speed bumps, needing extra street lights, have also been rejected. Separating road users would require acquisition of land to form a verge: The PC has been attempting to do this for years on Brook Hill, without success.

Parked cars in The Street have a temporary calming effect!

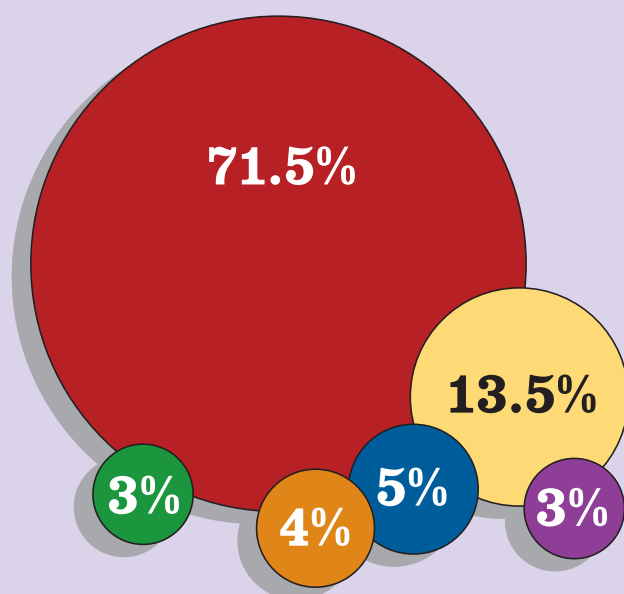
Cycling: Respondents ask for more cycle routes, but the roads are not wide enough for cycle paths. Hitches Lane has a footway which could be improved to form a cycle path. A new cycle route through NM to The Lea allows cyclists to avoid traffic on Crookham Road.

Public Transport: Better bus service routes and timetables could reduce local traffic, but would have little effect on through traffic.

Street lighting: NM and ZC lighting appears to satisfy residents, but attempts to light footpaths there have been frustrated by vandalism. Most residents appear happy with the lighting in the OV. However 39% call for more environmentally-sensitive lighting. Some suggested lighting e.g. along the Canal, though such ideas were not popular.

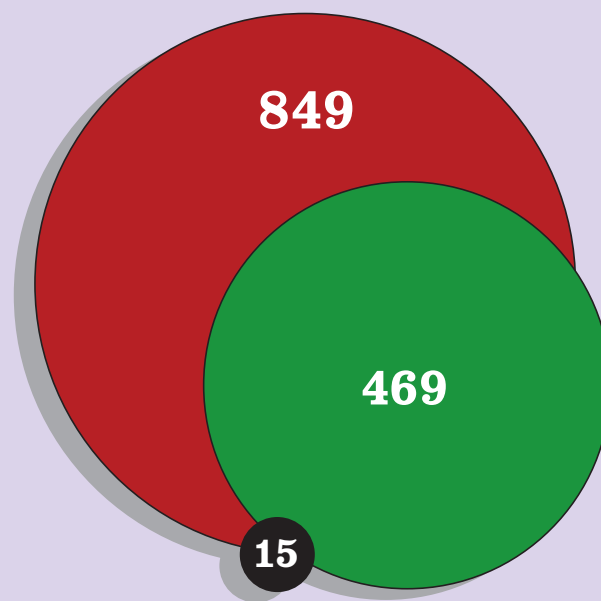
Parking: while 92% have off-street parking, inadequate parking continues to be a niggle in NM and ZC. Consequently the PC has opposed some applications for conversion of garages to living areas.

Q10: What is your main means of transport to work or study?



880 responses

Q11: How many roadworthy vehicles are kept by your household?



497 responses with 1,333 vehicles

■ Bicycle
 ■ Car/Van
 ■ Bus
 ■ Motorcycle
 ■ Walk
 ■ Train
 ■ Do not travel

Development



In 20 years, the addition of Netherhouse Moor and Zebon Copse estates have increased the parish population from 600 to 2,700 electors.

A large majority want the parish to stay as it is, with no further greenfield developments to encroach on our environment. But many would accept small scale developments in appropriate locations.

Current development situation

Two of the three village wards, NM & ZC, are self contained built-up developments butting up against Fleet and Church Crookham on one side, but with open areas on the other sides, including Lea Green and the Zebon Copse Centre sports field.

The Old Village ward is based on ribbon development along four roads, surrounded by open fields. The Basingstoke Canal is a Conservation Area, as is much of The Street. The OV has a number of Grade II listed buildings and many village trees are protected by TPOs. Small scale businesses operate in historic workshop units at the Hop Kiln and Grove Farm. The parish is in the vicinity of the Thames Basin Heaths, with far-reaching restrictions on new development. The River Hart flood plain east of Crondall Road is safeguarded as a sand and gravel area in the 2008 Hampshire mineral plan.

Public opinion

In order to maintain the rural landscape character and quality of life, 55% of respondents want no further development. The remainder would accept small scale development in appropriate locations for local people only, e.g. Rural Exception Schemes (RES), affordable dwellings for young or single people, light industry, shops & services, especially a doctors' surgery.

Most want to retain the existing rural environment and village identity, with open spaces between developments. 94% of respondents want the parish to 'stay as it is', as a living and working community. In the highest attended public parish meeting in recent years, there was 100% rejection of the proposed SHLAA housing development sites.

Planning policy and powers

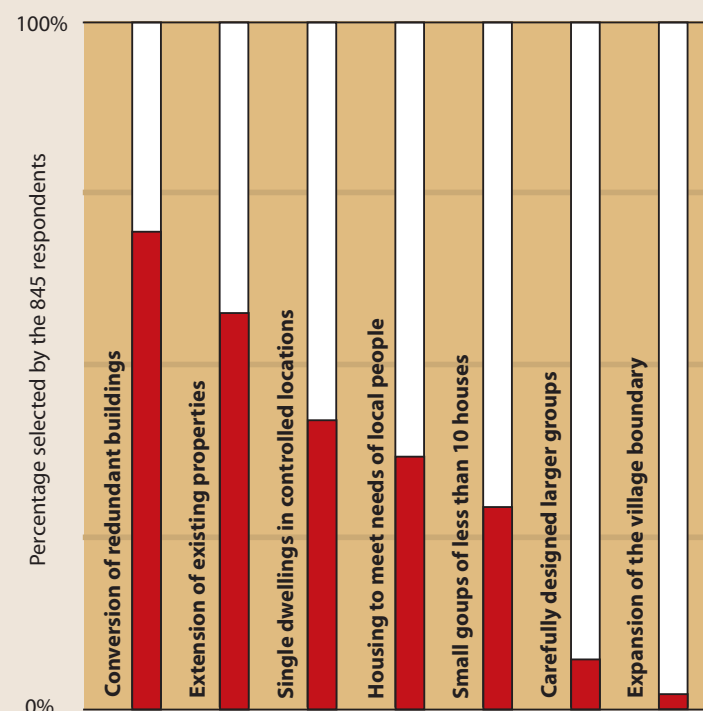
As the planning authority, HDC set the local planning policy within Government guidelines. The PC has no planning powers. HDC will take residents' wishes as expressed in this Parish Plan into account in their considerations.

Hart DC is currently required to plan for 4,840 dwellings before 2028 (including QEB and Hitches Farm). It estimates that around 2,100 homes will have to be built on greenfield sites. HDC have surveyed the District for potential sites and two of these are in the parish: Grove Farm and south of Watery Lane, both with attached Public Open Space (see the Parish Council website).

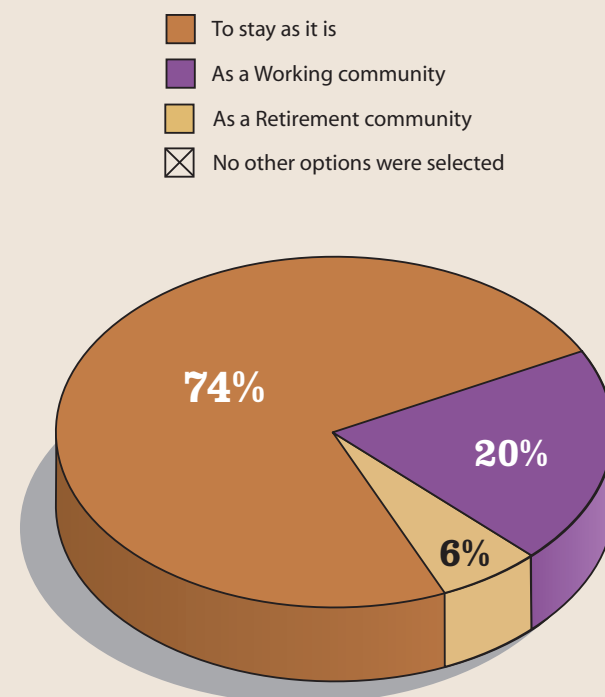
The PC has made reasoned objections to these possibilities, pointing out that both are contrary to parishioners wishes as expressed above.

Crookham Village parishioners are very concerned about the already overloaded and inadequate infrastructure, but in the past, the planning system has taken little account of the infrastructure required to support significant developments.

Q17: What types of new housing would be acceptable in the Parish?



Q46: How would you like the Parish to develop?



Parishioners do not want major new developments, that close rural gaps and affect the village identity.

But they will consider any sensitive, small scale builds on their merits.



Facilities



Modern living needs access to a host of facilities, from work and health to leisure and relaxation.

The more local facilities, the less need for car journeys.



Responses suggest that most parishioners are satisfied with available local services, but they did call for better health services including a doctors' surgery, better bus services and youth facilities.

Local business: The Old Village has a newsagent, two pubs and a general store with a Post Office (a well used asset, especially for postal services, but also for pensions, bills and banking). The shops are used by about half of the respondents weekly.

The OV has a vehicle repair business and a car display area. The Kiln and Grove Farm workshops house a variety of small businesses. There are three working farms and two sets of stables – the rest of the agricultural land worked by farmers based outside the village. ZC also has two shops and a dental surgery. NM has no businesses.

Beyond these there is little employment in the parish, but 11% of respondents work from home, perhaps facilitated by the availability of broadband internet. Although several people ask for a mobile library, less than 4% of respondents use the existing fortnightly service.

Social Venues: The parish has three venues for social activities: the Zebon Copse Centre (ZCC), the Crookham Street Social Club and the Women's Institute hut. However their activities programme does not appear to awake much interest among residents.

The ZCC and playing fields have been transferred from HDC to CV parish ownership, with refurbished facilities which should make it more useful to the community and reduce running costs. There are further venues nearby, like the Memorial Hall at Church Crookham and Hart Leisure Centre, with swimming pool and exercise facilities.

Public Services: The majority of respondents considered public services (refuse, streets, gritting, recycling) acceptable, though a minority of 20 - 30% were dissatisfied with waste collection. Litter clearance was identified as inadequate. The emergency services, though little used, were judged to be satisfactory.

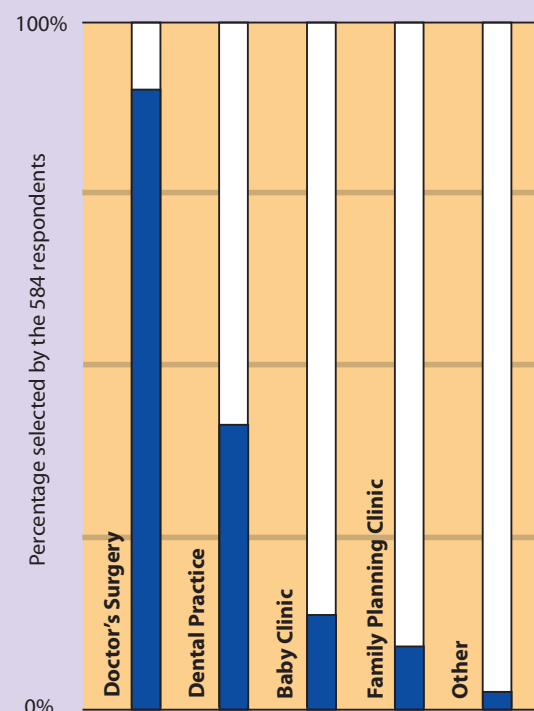
Public transport: The parish is poorly served with limited bus routes and timetables, which are changed frequently to seek better usage. ZC has two services a day, to Fleet station, Aldershot and Farnham – the OV has none. 32% of respondents want to see improvements, but 68% expressed no interest. A Call-and-Go bus service subsidised by HDC and parishes has been operating, but has attracted little custom by parishioners and the future of the service is uncertain.

Local health services: A clear requirement for a doctors' surgery was requested by 89%. Although there is already a dental surgery in the parish, 41% still identified an NHS dentist as a requirement.

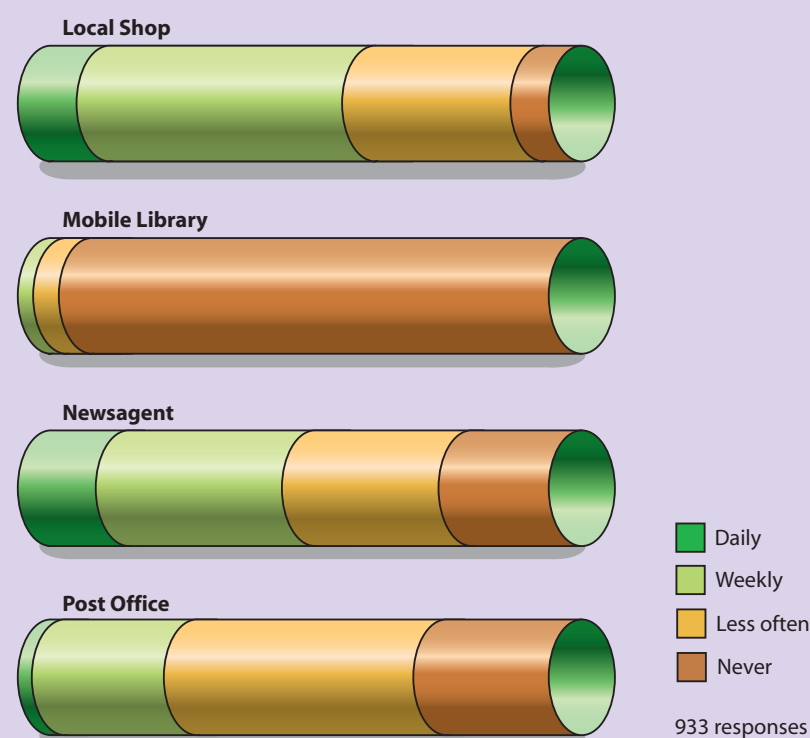
Police presence: ZC & NM are covered by Fleet based teams and OV has two constables in Crondall & Odiham who also cover several other, larger villages. Vandalism did feature in responses, but there were relatively few crime concerns.

Youth facilities: Pre-school children are catered for at ZCC and the WI hut, but respondents deplored the general lack of youth facilities. The PC is trying to involve Hampshire Youth Services, including the Youth Bus, but as yet there are no such facilities in the parish.

Q17: Is there any demand for the following health facilities in the Parish?



Q26: How often do you use these shops and services?



Summary & Actions

Parish residents call for action in all areas. Their major points of concern are related to traffic, housing development, support infrastructure and the maintenance of our rural environment and Village identity. The Parish Council acknowledges these issues and will help champion practical solutions on behalf of parishioners.

The Parish Plan is a live document, so please refer to our website for updates on key local issues at www.crookhamvillage-pc.org.uk

Community

Building a vibrant local community requires the PC to take a lead in areas including:

- 1 continued support for Twinning activities: to strengthen village identity, community spirit and broaden horizons in a modern European context
- 2 maintaining noticeboards for publicising village activities, to inform residents and improve awareness of events and local facilities
- 3 improved facilities for children and young people, including access to the Youth Bus
- 4 considering how to establish a youth voice: for a fuller awareness of community needs
- 5 encouraging public participation at Parish Council meetings: to consider parishioners current views on key local issues and seek suggestions for improvements

Environment

People want the natural environment to be conserved and enhanced, with action to:

- 1 support the Canal conservation area as the highest priority for action and financial help: so that it can be protected and we can continue to enjoy this valuable amenity
- 2 improve public footpath signposting and information, also to arrange guided walks: in order to allow residents year-round access to appreciate our rich environment
- 3 maintain the existing network of wildlife corridors and habitats: to ensure our diverse wildlife populations and natural landscape are sustained for people to enjoy
- 4 create initiatives to involve those 20% of residents who expressed willingness to volunteer to maintain and enhance key landscape features, footpaths & wildlife habitats
- 5 protect the open space views and inter-visibility between key points, that characterise the rural landscape character of Crookham Village
- 6 keep the parish thoroughfares clear and presentable: e.g. by encouraging walkers not to drop litter and to prevent their dogs fouling footpaths
- 7 Assist farmers, landowners and gardeners to maintain their land in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive way: for the benefit of people and wildlife



Transport

The PC has no executive authority to effect road improvements, but will exercise its right to be consulted on traffic policies. It will base its responses on parishioners' concerns and make recommendations, to:

- 1 monitor and seek ways of reducing traffic speed: in order to protect more vulnerable road users who share the space – and reduce sound intrusion into homes
- 2 review traffic problems at key local road junctions (e.g. Redfields Lane/A287) and nearby housing developments – and explore suitable ways to reduce their impact on the parish
- 3 press for a footway along Pilcot Road and improvements to Crondall Road, including provision for a footway at Brook Hill
- 4 remind HCC of the limitations of local roads to accommodate 'rat runs' around Fleet
- 5 consider introduction of more environmentally-sensitive streetlights: to reduce avoidable and intrusive light pollution – and to reduce energy use
- 6 consider the siting of additional cycle routes from OV to Hart Leisure Centre/Calthorpe Park and from NM to Calthorpe Park, to help increase cycle usage ratio and reduce traffic volume

Development

Likewise the PC can only influence future development planning by recommendations to the planning authority, HDC. These will be based on residents responses to:

- 1 maintain the identity and characteristics of the village and canal Conservation Areas
- 2 oppose proposals for major building developments in the Parish, so as to preserve existing rural views, delicate wildlife corridors/habitats and our valued semi-rural village identity
- 3 support policies to maintain 'green gaps' between settlements: to distinguish OV from the Fleet/Crookham conurbation and maintain the valuable sense of place
- 4 carefully consider small-scale development proposals on their merits, in the light of residents' views of what is acceptable

Facilities

The PC will cooperate with local groups to maintain and improve local facilities, especially to:

- 1 press for improved infrastructure: to ensure our needs are better sustained locally
- 2 support parish shops, Post Office and businesses: to preserve a viable local economy
- 3 press for a doctors' surgery in the parish: to reduce travel, delay and inconvenience
- 4 seek improved public transport e.g. regular, reliable bus services: to reduce car journeys
- 5 utilise the improved facilities at the ZCC and set up a viable management structure
- 6 maintain and in due course replace the WI Hut: to retain Old Village meeting facilities
- 7 support police efforts to reduce crime and vandalism



Above: Sunset over Hillyburrow, west of the Zebon Copse Centre, in the Parish of Crookham Village.

References

Comments from Parishioners were noted at various public meetings, but the Parish Questionnaire provided most of the key insights in the formulation of our Parish Plan.

All the questions and answers data from the original Questionnaire are available for you to download from the Parish Council website below. As it is a large document, unfortunately it is not practical to supply hard copies.

The Parish Plan is a live document, so please check our website for updates on the themes and action points mentioned inside. We always welcome your feedback.



Updates on our website

The Crookham Village Parish Council website has news on a variety of local interest subjects. It also explains how and when you can attend and comment at public meetings.

www.crookhamvillage-pc.org.uk

Crookham Village Parish Council would like to thank Parishioners of all ages who gave their views in the parish questionnaire and especially Tony Clarke who, with others, volunteered their time, skills or photographs in the preparation of this Parish Plan.



**Crookham Village
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