

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Leader's Portfolio Meeting held on  
Thursday, 17 May 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Ray Manning

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor: James Hockney

### **Officers:**

|                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Linda Browne    | Community Liaison Support Assistant   |
| Richard Hales   | Team Leader (Communities)             |
| David Hill      | Accountant                            |
| Jo Mills        | Planning and New Communities Director |
| Maggie Jennings | Democratic Services Officer           |

### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

### **36. STAPLEFORD PARISH PLAN**

Linda Browne, Community Liaison Support Officer, Geoff Hale, Clerk to Stapleford Parish Council and James Foreman, Vice-Chairman of Stapleford Parish Council were in attendance for this item.

Geoff Hale addressed the meeting stating that the parish plan process had commenced in 2009 with 8 volunteers. It began with the distribution to residents of a love/hate survey, followed by a questionnaire to gather suggestions and comments that culminated in the completion of the Parish Plan report and associated Action Plan. The recommendations contained in the Action Plan were as follows:

- To preserve and enhance the country village feel
- To improve access to the countryside around the village
- To reduce traffic nuisance, improve traffic flow within and around the village, and enhance transport links
- To strengthen community life and communication throughout the village
- To improve community sports and recreation facilities
- To enhance community services and employment opportunities within the village
- To maintain confidence in Stapleford as a low crime area

Voluntary Action Groups had been created to take forward the recommendations and address the issues raised.

Following discussion on the lengthy bus journeys into Cambridge City, the route being via Addenbrookes, Hills Road and Station Road, it was suggested that linking to the services at Trumpington Park and Ride could help alleviate that problem. It was noted that the

County Council was undertaking a review of routes as part of its Transport Strategy and that that suggestion could be submitted during the consultation process due to take place later in the year.

In conclusion, the Leader **ADOPTED** the Stapleford Parish Plan and thanked the representatives of the Parish Council for attending the meeting.

Linda Browne, James Foreman and Geoff Hale left the meeting following the conclusion of this item.

### **37. GRANTFINDER (GRANT FUNDING SOFTWARE)**

GRANTfinder is a database of EU and UK funding sources carrying over 6000 funding programmes. These can be searched using a number of criteria such as geographical location, applicant type, project value and purpose of funding.

Purchasing a GRANTfinder licence would enable all corporate service areas to search for funding for the Council itself, as well as supporting community groups to source funding for local projects.

It was noted that licences were currently held by a number of neighbouring authorities and there was the possibility of securing a reduced subscription fee for multiple licences if a consortium could be formed between the authorities.

The Leader was keen to hear how the councils that had already purchased GRANTfinder had benefited from its purchase and requested that officers provide a case study detailing the findings for consideration at his meeting in September 2013.

With that proviso, the Leader **AGREED** to the acquisition of a GRANTfinder licence for a trial period of up to one year, subject to:

- (a) Cross-service commitment to resourcing the multi-user licence facility in order to source funding for this authority (resources include a financial commitment to purchasing the licence and personnel to manage the system);
- (b) The development of an implementation plan, detailing timescales for launch, how the service will be used, managed and promoted;
- (c) A monitoring and evaluation plan, to enable this Council to assess the impact of purchasing the system in terms of external funding sourced as well as benefits and resource implications for individual service areas.

### **38. COMMUNITY CHEST GRANTS - UPDATE**

The Leader **NOTED** the information contained in the report.

### **39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Leader requested the future meetings be held on a quarterly basis, commencing in July 2012. (*Post-meeting note: The next meeting will be held at 10am on 23 July 2012*)

---

**The Meeting ended at 10.55 a.m.**

---



# Stapleford Parish Plan



## **WELCOME TO THE PARISH PLAN**

Almost five years ago, Stapleford Parish Council called a village meeting to explain the concept of a Parish Plan. The hope was that a group of interested residents would take on the task of gathering the views and aspirations of villagers about how Stapleford should develop its facilities, amenities and services over the next few years. A Parish Plan Steering Committee, consisting of volunteers from the village, was established in February 2009 and has since then been working hard to gather all your suggestions and comments, and distil them into a Report and associated Action Plan. These provide a snapshot of where Stapleford is now and, more importantly, what the community wants to achieve over the next five years and beyond.

The Steering Committee and the Parish Council thank everyone in the village who has contributed to this activity over the past three years. Without your input and support, the Parish Plan report and Action Plan would be far less comprehensive.

As we move into 2012, which will see the election of a new Parish Council in May, it seems fitting that the Parish Plan is now complete and the new Councillors will have the opportunity to promote and implement the key recommendations which form the basis of the Action Plan. The Parish Council will raise your views with relevant policy makers at district, county and even national level where appropriate. However, successful implementation of the Action Plan depends on involvement by the Stapleford community. One of the highlights emerging from questionnaire responses was the high level of community spirit within the village. The Parish Council is confident that this spirit can be turned into real positive action to make things happen.

Geoff Hale  
Chairman, Parish Plan Steering Committee

David Pepperell  
Chairman, Parish Council



|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>                                     |    |
| <b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>  | 7  |
| <b>3. BACKGROUND</b>  | 8  |
| <b>4. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND OTHER RESEARCH</b>          | 10 |
| <b>4.1 Stapleford – The village</b>                             | 11 |
| 4.1.1 The country feel of the village                           | 12 |
| 4.1.2 Countryside access  | 13 |
| 4.1.3 The street scene  | 15 |
| 4.1.4 Allotments  | 17 |
| 4.1.5 Green living  | 17 |
| 4.1.6 Parking   | 18 |
| 4.1.7 Crime and policing  | 19 |
| 4.1.8 Planning and development                                  | 21 |
| 4.1.9 Social and community life                                 | 25 |
| 4.1.10 Information about village matters, events and facilities | 27 |
| 4.1.11 Community venues   | 29 |
| 4.1.12 Shops and services                                       | 32 |
| Shops, pubs and commercial facilities                           | 32 |
| Healthcare services   | 33 |
| 4.1.13 Schools and links with the community                     | 36 |
| 4.1.14 Activities for young people                              | 39 |
| 4.1.15 Adult education  | 41 |
| <b>4.2 Transport</b>  | 42 |
| <b>4.3 Business and employment</b>                              | 45 |
| <b>4.4 Rôle of the Parish Council</b>                           | 47 |
| <b>4.5 A Stapleford hub</b>                                     | 49 |
| <b>4.6 The Parish Council budget</b>                            | 50 |
| <b>5. CONCLUSIONS</b>   | 51 |
| <b>6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>                                      | 53 |



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Parish Plan sets out how residents would like to see Stapleford flourish over the coming five years and beyond. It has been prepared at the request of the Parish Council by a Steering Committee of volunteers, including a Parish Council representative. It is based on a survey undertaken in summer 2010, with further research and analysis by the Steering Committee.

Residents are mostly very positive about the quality of life in Stapleford. Survey responses highlighted five main factors as contributing:

- community spirit and neighbourliness
- availability of essential services – corner shop, health centre – in the village or nearby
- convenient access to the wealth of facilities in Cambridge and further afield
- a safe and secure environment
- the sense of being in the country and the green appearance of the village.

Residents appreciate the way these factors work together to provide the best of both worlds: living in a country village yet with good access to city facilities. **Maintaining these advantages is the top priority for the Parish Plan.**

A concern for many, however, is the steady erosion of local employment and services. Residents do not want Stapleford to be merely a dormitory suburb of Cambridge. To maintain Stapleford's vitality, there is widespread recognition that some development may be necessary, particularly to provide for recreation and employment as well as housing. Residents do not want to see any encroachment on the Green Belt, so any such development is likely to involve in-filling and brownfield land in the small niches that might become available in the village. We recommend that Stapleford should welcome limited development of this kind with the objective of maintaining village vitality.

There were also concerns about social connections within the community. In many cases, however, where opportunities were thought to be inadequate, relevant activities do in fact exist. Our recommendations therefore focus particularly on improving the availability of information about community life, so as to make participation easier.

In combination, our recommendations support two broad objectives:

- sustaining and enhancing the local availability of jobs, services and activities, including making it easier for younger families to establish in Stapleford, while accepting that this may require some limited development; and
- sustaining, extending and strengthening the range of community and social networks and activities to encourage and promote involvement of all sections of the community.

We have also made recommendations to address other concerns raised in the survey responses, such as traffic nuisance and countryside access. Several recommendations relate to long-standing issues which the Parish Council is already pursuing: the Parish Plan suggests how further progress might be made, with reinforced backing from residents.

Implementation will require a community effort. The Parish Council will have a co-ordinating rôle and will seek to influence relevant public bodies. It may also be able to provide limited funding, though there are many competing priorities for its small budget. But the Parish Council cannot do everything. We have suggested various ways in which voluntary groups could move implementation forward. To achieve the improvements set out here will require residents to take the initiative.

In our analysis we have set out to chart a way for Stapleford to continue to thrive in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The current Government plans to devolve more responsibilities to community level. The Parish Plan is intended to provide a strategic framework to help Stapleford grasp that opportunity.





## 2. INTRODUCTION

A Parish Plan is a way for people to say how they want their home area to develop, to identify the facilities and services they need, and to set out the problems that should be tackled. One important benefit is that it tells official bodies, such as the Parish, District and County Councils, the NHS and the Police, how we in Stapleford would like to see our future.

This Plan was formally received and endorsed by Stapleford Parish Council on 14 December 2011, and it will be presented similarly to South Cambridgeshire District Council. It is accompanied by an Action Plan, showing how our recommendations could be implemented. Both documents are on the village web-site, and a summary has been distributed to all Stapleford households. Having completed these tasks, the Steering Committee is standing down.

It will then be for the Parish Council to co-ordinate and facilitate implementation with other relevant bodies. We suggest that a community-based implementation group would be a good way to pull in the necessary energy and engagement, with volunteer action groups to take work forward on particular issues. There are proposals for these groups in the Action Plan. Over time, these volunteer groups may develop further ideas for action on behalf of the community, but our recommendations will provide at least an initial guide to residents' priorities. The Parish Council will also want to involve residents in monitoring progress year by year. After five years, the outcomes should be reviewed and an updated Parish Plan should be prepared.

The Stapleford Parish Plan has been developed by a Steering Committee of volunteers from the village, at the request of the Parish Council (see names in Section 6). Work started in February 2009 with information-gathering. A "Love it / Hate it" survey was used to gain an overview of the issues that matter to Stapleford residents, and consultations were held with groups and organisations across the village. A background paper was issued in November 2009 to inform debate by providing facts and statistics. On the basis of these consultations a detailed questionnaire was prepared (on which the Parish Council was also consulted) for the purpose of obtaining systematic data and opinions on the aspects of Stapleford life that had been identified as important to residents. This was distributed to all households in June 2010. The responses to that survey have now been analysed, and the results are combined here with other research undertaken by the Steering Committee to produce this Parish Plan.

The Steering Committee are very grateful for the contributions of ideas, funding and practical help that we have received from many quarters. Details of our funding are recorded in Section 6. The total cost of preparing this Parish Plan was £3600. Just over 95% of this was the cost of data-processing and of printing questionnaires, the final report, action plan and a summary document for all households in the village.

The Steering Committee is arranging for a full set of statistics from the survey to be retained, including the written-in comments that many people contributed. These will be available for the volunteer implementation groups that we propose, so that they have a full understanding of residents' views. This record will of course be set up in such a way as to protect respondents' anonymity.

In this Parish Plan we have attempted to set out a coherent view of how Stapleford people want to see their community develop over the next five years, and how they would wish the Parish Council and other bodies to work to deliver these aspirations. We hope that it provides a clear agenda, and that residents will feel encouraged and empowered to pursue these initiatives through voluntary and informal means as well as pressing official bodies to help sustain a thriving Stapleford.

## 3. BACKGROUND

Stapleford is home to about 1880 people<sup>1</sup>, in a little over 700 households.

The map on the front cover identifies the area of the civil parish. Stapleford is about 5 miles south of Cambridge, at the southern end of the built-up corridor running out from the city through Trumpington and Great Shelford. The village lies close to one of the tributaries of the River Cam. From there the parish rises gently to the Gog Magog hills, taking in Magog Down and Wandlebury country park. One of the railway lines from Cambridge to London skirts the village (there is a station in Great Shelford) and there are convenient road links north to the city and south towards Saffron Walden.

Stapleford is a good place to live in many ways. For example, crime levels are low, life-expectancy is high, unemployment is low<sup>2</sup>. Government statistics confirm that Stapleford is relatively untroubled by the disadvantages that blight life in some places. Stapleford ranks among the 2% least deprived localities in England. Access to housing and services is the factor on which Stapleford rates most poorly (about 35% of localities are ranked better than Stapleford on this measure)<sup>3</sup>.

The location provides the feeling of living in the country: the village is surrounded by open agricultural landscape, and trees and gardens give the built-up area a green and leafy appearance. At the same time Stapleford is close to the wealth of facilities available in Cambridge, and is convenient for access to London.

An important factor in maintaining the attractiveness of Stapleford is that it is located in the Green Belt that surrounds Cambridge. This keeps the landscape open. There are a few houses amidst the fields, and small clusters at Wandlebury and Fox Hill, but the great majority of the population lives within the village. The Green Belt restricts further development outside the village envelope, and the limited amount of recent house-building has mostly taken the form of in-filling within the village. These constraints on development combined with the attractiveness of the village mean that house prices are high, while rental accommodation (whether social housing or private) is in short supply.

For access to employment and most activities and services, Stapleford residents generally have to go elsewhere. Stapleford is fortunate to retain a village shop<sup>4</sup>, selling food and household necessities, and three pubs. Other services are limited, however. Residents rely substantially on access to Great Shelford, a mile away, which has a wider range – banks, public library, health centre, post office – and similarly Sawston, two miles south. Stapleford has a highly-regarded primary school, and for secondary education is served by Sawston Village College.

There are few employment opportunities in Stapleford, though quite a high proportion of residents run single-person businesses from home. The range of recreation and leisure facilities is limited. Many local services that used to exist in the village – notably the post office – have ceased to be available; to buy children's clothes, for example, the nearest shops now are in Cambridge.

The population includes a high proportion of pensioners. Access to services for this age-group is a concern. With high house prices, limited scope for further housing development, and few local job opportunities, it is difficult for younger people to set up home in Stapleford. This raises questions over maintaining the vitality of the village.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council estimate for 2010

<sup>2</sup> Many statistics about Stapleford were included in the Parish Profile prepared by the Steering Committee: this is available on the village web-site, [www.staplefordcams.org.uk](http://www.staplefordcams.org.uk), under "news and coming events". The ONS Neighbourhood Statistics web-site has a comprehensive range of local statistics: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk).

<sup>3</sup> See the Indices of Multiple deprivation, at [www.imd.communities.gov.uk](http://www.imd.communities.gov.uk).

<sup>4</sup> The village shop has long been known as the Spar or as Colin White's; currently it operates under the Londis name.

For many residents, Stapleford is the focus of a rich community life. However, many others have little such engagement locally: they look more towards Cambridge. Some younger residents reckon that Stapleford is boring. The strength of community spirit will come under further strain as the population continues to age.

In short, Stapleford is becoming primarily a dormitory village, with all the advantages and disadvantages which that implies. These are summarised in the box at the end of this section. Stapleford is an attractive place to have a home, but is in danger of losing its remaining vitality.

In preparing this Parish Plan, the underlying question has been to explore whether residents are satisfied with that balance of advantages and disadvantages. It is possible to imagine a livelier Stapleford, but that might mean bigger and more crowded. Or Stapleford might give priority to maintaining its quiet residential character, but that might mean local access to services continuing to deteriorate. The survey in summer 2010 was designed to gauge opinion on these issues.

From the survey responses the Steering Committee are clear that residents generally are happy with the benefits of living in Stapleford, and are wary of change which might reduce them, while recognising that there are problems that should be fixed. However, change is built in, as our age-profile, already elderly, continues to get older. The recommendations here are intended to preserve the advantages of living in Stapleford while reducing the risks of further decline.

### Summary background analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• favourable quality of life</li> <li>• countryside location</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few local jobs</li> <li>• poor access to countryside</li> <li>• shortage of affordable housing</li> <li>• limited space for any development without removing land from the Green Belt</li> <li>• limited provision for teenagers and young adults</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economic growth in the Cambridge-Stansted sub-region</li> <li>• to build a more influential relationship with Great Shelford</li> <li>• use the availability of improved online services (and greater social acceptance and use of them) to counter need to travel</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ageing population</li> <li>• development encroaching on Green Belt</li> <li>• lack of influence over services managed from elsewhere</li> <li>• increasing cost and unreliability of both public and private transport</li> </ul>                               |

## 4. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND OTHER RESEARCH

871 people, or about 46% of Stapleford's estimated current population, provided responses to the survey in summer 2010. We were glad to receive 79 responses from residents under 18: young people's particular perspectives are analysed separately below (Section 4.1.14). 748 respondents identified themselves as aged 18 or over: that is about 53% of Stapleford's adult population. All age-groups contributed, though people over 50 were a little over-represented, and those under 50 under-represented, compared to the total population. There were more identified female respondents (412) than male (365); 94 did not say.

The scale and spread of responses are sufficient for us to be confident that they provide a sound basis for our conclusions from the survey analysis. We assume that people who did not return the survey had no particular concerns about life in Stapleford. The survey also invited respondents to write in comments: many of these are quoted in the analysis, and they have been particularly useful in clarifying residents' views. The survey allowed respondents to skip questions that they were not interested in, so in the analysis the number of responses to each question is shown as a guide to the relative strength of views on each issue.

In drawing conclusions and making recommendations, the Steering Committee have also used published statistics as indicated, and have drawn on discussions and consultation events within the village. We are very grateful for residents' willingness to share information and opinions with us.

## 4.1 Stapleford – the village

Residents are mostly very positive about Stapleford. Examples of comments in the survey include:

*“A very welcoming, family-friendly village with beautiful green spaces and access to the Downs”*

*“Access to the Countryside. Small and friendly – being part of a community. The feeling of being safe”*

*“Combination of village community and easy access to Cambridge and London”*

*“I love the village 'feel' of Stapleford. The greenness, the farm land and crops (apart from oil seed rape), the care most people take of their homes and gardens, the friendliness of people and the facilities offered. It's a great place to live”*

*“Peace and quiet, good relationship with close neighbours, low crime rate, feels safe place to live”*

Further confirmation of the popularity of Stapleford is the length of time people live here. 57% of respondents have lived in Stapleford for over 10 years (449 out of 785 respondents to this question).

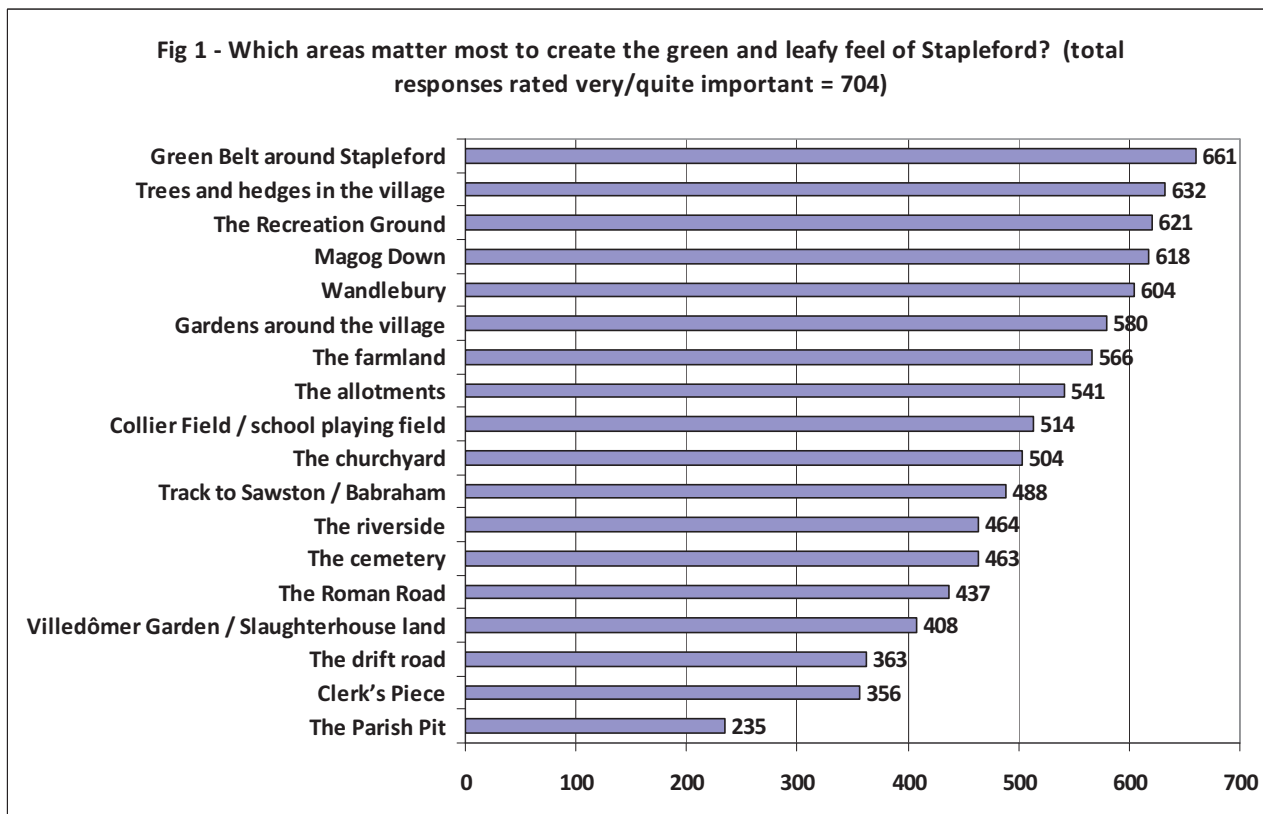
Comments highlight five main factors as contributing to the quality of life in Stapleford (as noted in Section 1 above):

- community spirit and neighbourliness
- availability of essential services – corner shop, health centre – in the village or nearby
- convenient access to the wealth of facilities in Cambridge and further afield
- a safe and secure environment
- the sense of being in the country and the green appearance of the village.

Residents appreciate the way these factors work together to provide the best of both worlds: living in a country village yet with good access to city facilities. **Maintaining these advantages is the top priority for the Parish Plan.**

4.1.1 The country feel of the village

Asked what contributes most to the country feel of Stapleford, almost all respondents (661 out of 704) rated the Green Belt very or quite important. Also highly rated are Magog Down, Wandlebury and the farmland. In questions about possible development, only 2% of respondents approved of encroaching on the fields (14 out of 692 responses). **Residents' overwhelming view is that the Green Belt must be protected.**



Within the village area, trees and hedges are rated as very or quite important by 632 respondents, and gardens by 580. The recreation ground, the allotments, Collier Field and the churchyard are also highly rated. In questions relating to possible development, 33% of respondents thought these green areas should be protected, a further 33% thought any development should be confined to brownfield land, and 22% opposed all development (respectively 228, 227 and 149 out of 692 responses).

Other green accessible areas in the village and countryside were rated very or quite important by over 50% of respondents. The only exception is the Parish Pit, rated very or quite important by 235 respondents. The Parish Pit was the only green area rated unimportant by more than 10 people (14). It is rather hidden away, and perhaps deserves more prominence as one of Stapleford's amenities.

**Residents' clear view is that these green features of the village and countryside should also be preserved.**

To achieve these objectives, **we recommend:**

- **the Parish Council with reinforced community backing should continue to work with planning authorities to maintain and enforce Green Belt protection**
- **the Parish Council should initiate a Village Design Statement with an emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the open areas and hedges, gardens and trees.**

Village Design Statements are usually prepared by a volunteer task-group.

4.1.2 Countryside access

Several respondents commented that, although the village sits amidst fields, access to the countryside is limited. Walks at Wandlebury and Magog Down are popular, but these sites are generally seen as accessible from the village only by driving. There are few paths or tracks through the fields, and they do not provide circular routes.

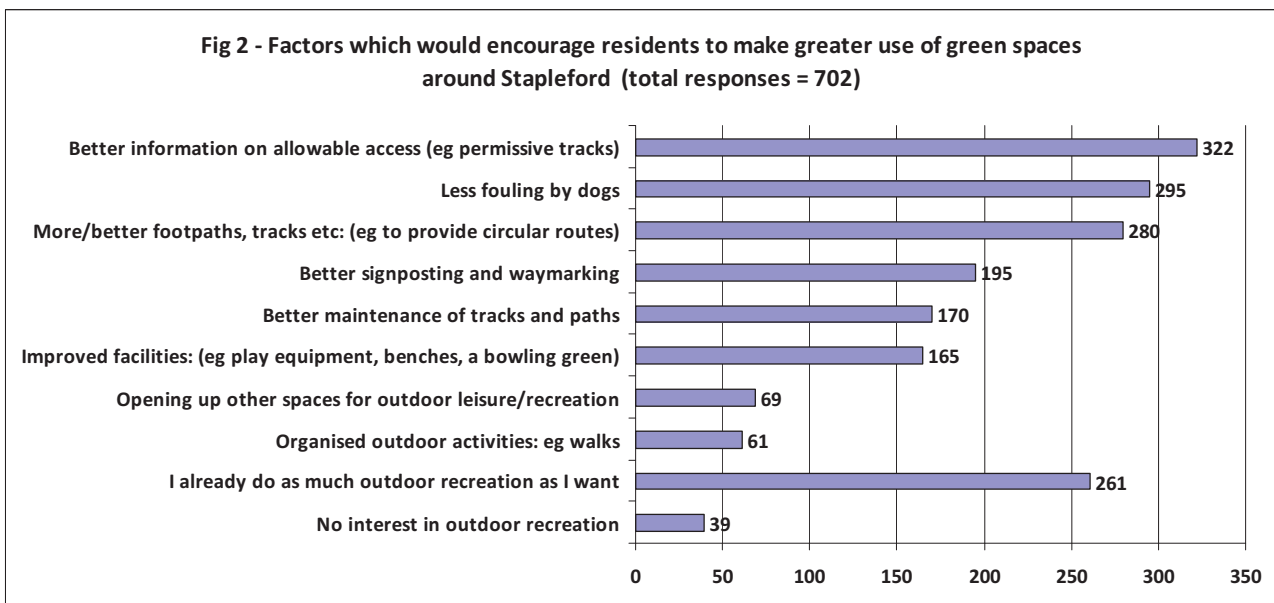
*“There aren’t enough footpaths. We are surrounded by countryside but it is difficult to access it”*

*“Need a circular walk to incorporate some of farm land”*

*“The ‘Stapleford end’ of the track to Babraham is boring open prairie, whilst a small amount of tree planting could make it very pleasant as the ‘Babraham end’ shows”*

*“Would be so great to have more leisure access to the River, eg to be able to walk from Stapleford bridge to Shelford, or access from Granta Terrace. I’d be interested in being part of a work party to try to facilitate this if at all possible”*

Asked what would encourage more use of the green open spaces, the most pressing need identified was better information on where access is allowed. Dog-fouling was a widespread concern. Also highlighted was a need for more paths and tracks, with better waymarking and better maintenance. There was support for improved facilities at the recreation ground and similar locations, with proposals including benches, a bowling green, a practice goal and play equipment. On the other hand 43% of respondents to this question were either not interested in outdoor recreation at all or not interested in doing more.



In questions about possible development, 40% of respondents (268 out of 677) thought there should be more public outdoor recreation space, as the current areas provide only about half what should be available for a population of 1900; on the other hand some comments pointed out that the countryside offsets this shortfall.

Improved countryside access is a priority for many residents. Comments in the survey have provided many imaginative ideas for routes and facilities, in particular a track beside the river. Providing more, and more attractive, countryside access depends on the co-operation of the owners and tenants of the land affected. The Shelford and District Bridleways Group has been effective in brokering access improvements for walkers and cyclists as well as riders: this is a model to build on.



We propose that a **Countryside Access Group** should be formed, to pursue the following recommendations:

- **support the Bridleways Group and any other relevant groups in establishing more countryside access for all users, taking account of the routes suggested in the survey responses, such as a riverside walk**
- **collect and disseminate information on permissive paths and other countryside access across the parish area.**

The Countryside Access Group will need to take account of a wide range of interests, and work with the Parish Council to influence relevant public authorities and landowners.

In a similar vein, we advocate the creation of an **Environment Action Group**, which as one of its tasks should:

- **review local anti dog-fouling measures, working with owners of accessible land.**

We also suggest the formation of a **Village Activities Group**, which should:

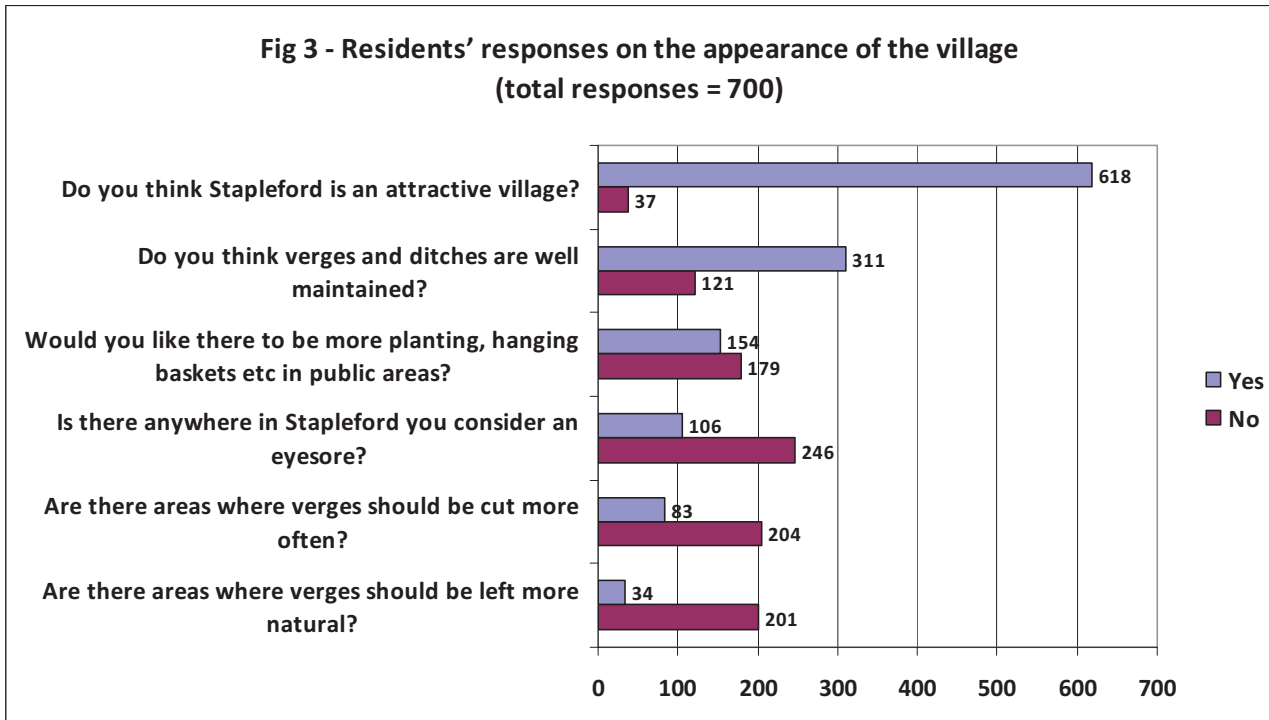
- **review the play equipment and other facilities at the recreation ground and other areas managed by the Parish Council, to take account of the suggestions in the survey responses.**

The Village Activities Group will need to take account of young people's views on play equipment (see Section 4.1.14).

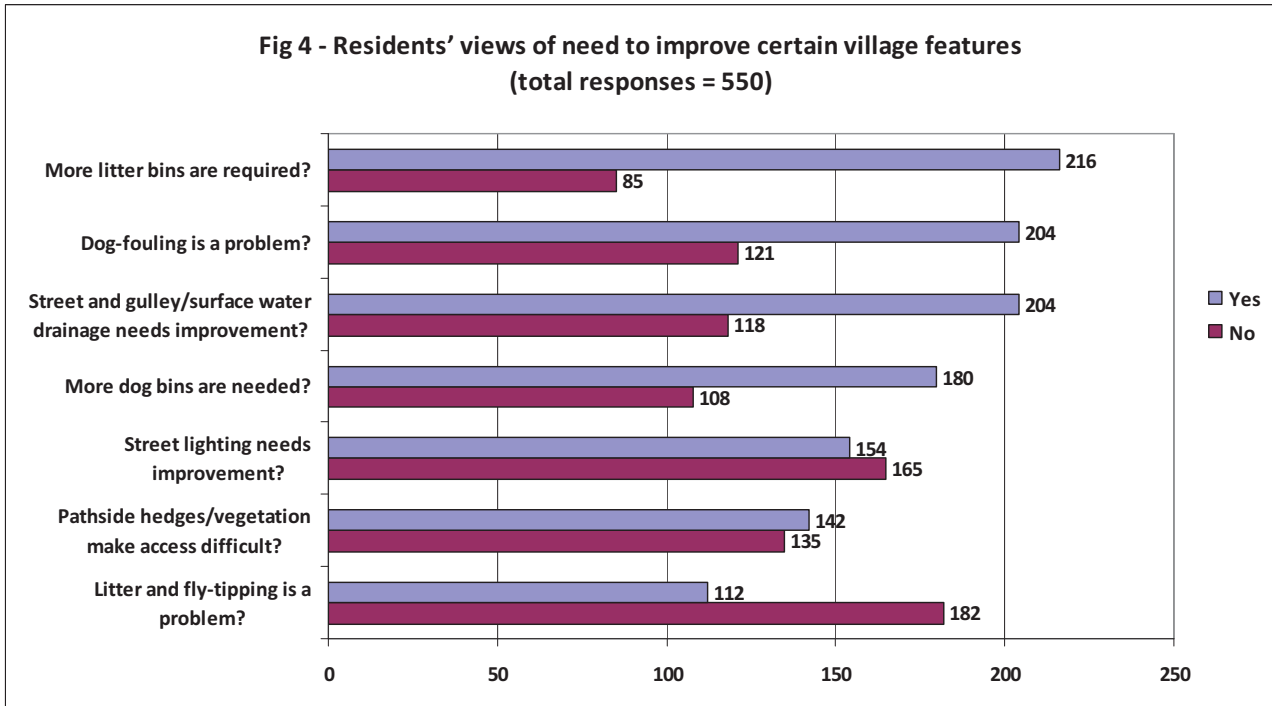
4.1.3 The street scene

Comments indicate satisfaction that the village is generally tidy and well kept, though with some concerns about litter. The village is not blighted to any significant extent by vandalism, graffiti, boarded-up buildings, derelict yards or overgrown gardens. Overall, 94% of respondents regard Stapleford as an attractive village (618 out of 655 responses).

There were concerns about the appearance of specific sites and properties. 106 out of 352 respondents thought there are some eyesores in Stapleford (while 246 thought there are none). The state of verges and ditches was generally approved (311 out of 432 responses), with no strong support for either more intensive maintenance or less. Opinion was quite evenly divided on the possibility of more planting, hanging baskets etc in public places.



The survey identified a number of maintenance improvements that residents would like to see. Dog-fouling in the village was a concern, mentioned by 204 respondents (though 121 said it was not a problem). Drainage of roads and pavements was a concern for 204 respondents. Street lighting was a concern for 154 respondents (while 165 saw no need for improvement). The most clearly identified need was for more litter-bins, supported by 216 respondents.



Many of these responses were backed by comments on specific problem-areas and suggestions for improvements. Some relate to public places, such as the cycle track towards Sawston alongside Stapleford bridge. Others relate to private properties.

In Section 4.1.2, we proposed the formation of an **Environment Action Group** to address concerns about dog-fouling in the surrounding countryside. In addition, this group should pursue the following **recommendations**:

- **review maintenance and tidiness on public land and develop actions for improvement, working with relevant authorities such as the Parish Council and the County Council's highways department**
- **consider actions to promote pride in the upkeep of private properties**
- **look at current anti dog-fouling measures within the village, in conjunction with the surrounding countryside (as recommended in Section 4.1.2).**

## 4.1.4 Allotments

The allotments are owned by the Diocese of Ely and managed for them by land agents. 46 respondents said they had an allotment, and a further 52 would like one. The survey was not designed to establish the numbers currently on a waiting list for an allotment in Stapleford, and the agents do not disclose this number. Further research would be needed to assess whether the present provision is adequate to meet local need.

The allotments are also considered important for their contribution to the green feel of the village, as shown in Figure 1. Their appearance is a concern for many respondents. Although it is said that all are tenanted, several are in near-derelict condition and some do not appear to be cultivated at all. There is a strong feeling that unworked plots should be allocated to new tenants: 308 out of 314 respondents would support this, and only 4 people opposed the suggestion. Most respondents would like the allotments to be tidier (239 out of 260 responses), though this is balanced by concern that excessive tidiness would reduce their value as a wildlife haven (85 people out of 139 think the allotments should be managed as a wildlife reserve). There was also support for improving the track across the allotments, particularly for pedestrian and bicycle access to the school (210 out of 273 responses).

The Parish Council has no control over the administration or maintenance of the allotments. It has however made efforts to engage the agents in dealing with the long-standing problems over tenancies and management, with some degree of success. It has encouraged the formation of an allotment association amongst the tenants. **We recommend:**

- **maintain pressure on the owners and their agents to improve management of the allotments, and support an allotments association, should this be established**
- **explore with the owners the possibility of improving the track across the allotments from Bar Lane to Haverhill Road**
- **research the scale of unmet demand.**

These activities would fall within the remit of the **Environment Action Group** proposed in Section 4.1.2, working with those interested in the allotments and the Diocese and its agents.

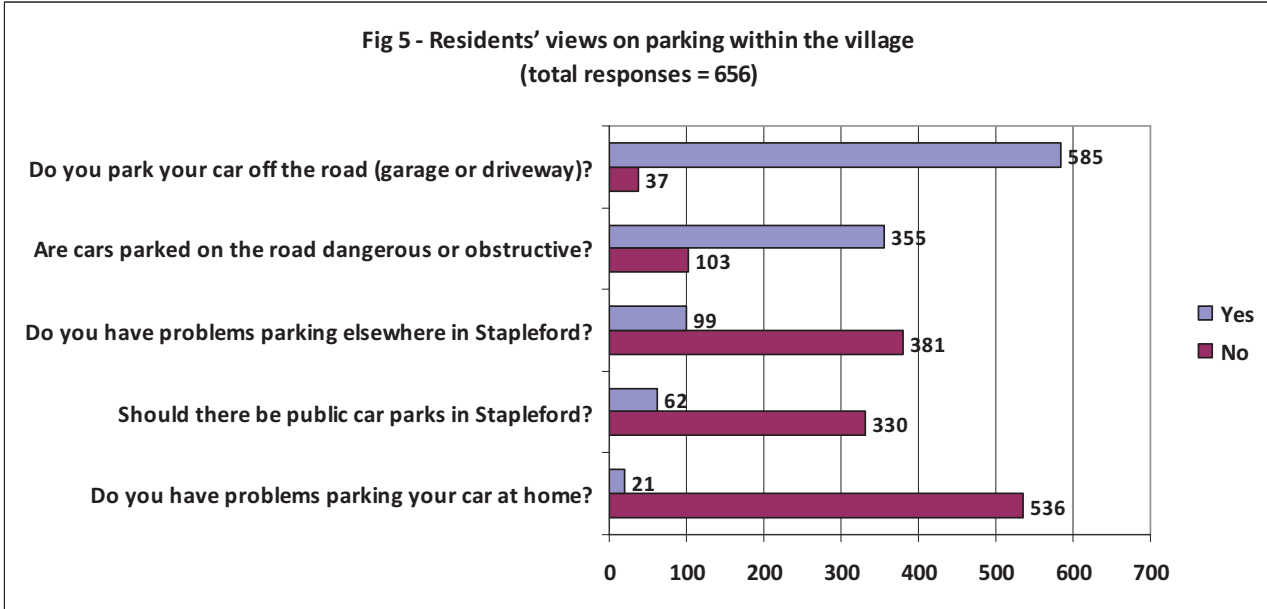
## 4.1.5 Green living

The survey sought views on energy-saving at home. A high proportion of respondents (185 out of 270) said they would be interested in receiving information and support from a local advisory group. Such a group has been formed for Great Shelford following an initiative from the Parish Council there, under the name Sustainable Shelford. **We recommend that a similar source of advice and support is developed for Stapleford.** The Environment Action Group proposed above (Section 4.1.2) might undertake this rôle, perhaps in conjunction with the Great Shelford group.

The survey also sought views on possible improvements to recycling. Many valuable ideas were put forward, most of which have now been dealt with by the introduction of blue bins. We suggest that the Environment Action Group recommended above should review the performance of the blue bin scheme in due course and consider what further improvements might be put forward. This group would also provide a mechanism for responding to other suggestions put forward in the survey, such as development of a local "freecycle" scheme.

4.1.6 Parking

The survey showed that the great majority of respondents are able to park their cars off the road at home with no problems. There was little support for providing a public car park: 62 respondents supported this, while 330 opposed. However, 355 respondents were concerned about dangerous or obstructive parking. As part of a question concerning support for new speed or parking controls in the village, 124 out of 615 respondents supported increased restrictions on parking in the road.



Comments highlighted the strength of feeling about parking problems. Parking on pavements attracted particular criticism. Parking by users of the church and the Johnson Hall was frequently cited as a problem, and another problem-area was identified at the Church Street/London Road intersection by the village shop. Various suggestions were made to improve parking: for example, using the land next to the Vicarage to provide parking for the church and Johnson Hall, and converting the verge opposite the school entrance to a lay-by so as to resolve congestion at the start and end of the school day. Comments included:

- “Many cars throughout the village seem to be parked unnecessarily on roads instead of in drives/garages”*
- “Cars parked across pavements are a nuisance when pedestrians, prams, mobility scooters are forced to go round them on the road”*
- “A restriction of parking on only one side of a road would help the flow of traffic”*
- “Some cars are parked obstructively – mainly due to inconsiderate parking rather than lack of facility”*
- “Too many cars outside the School compromising safety of all concerned”*
- “Parked cars are a problem if people ignore the Highway Code e.g. parking on corners”*
- “Lorries often block the road in Church Street”*

**We recommend:**

- **a review with the County Council highways department of whether changes are needed to parking restrictions, parking bays etc**
- **liaison with local police to secure more effective action against obstructive parking on pavements.**

We see these as a further aspect of the remit of the **Environment Action Group**.

4.1.7 Crime and policing

Stapleford provides a safe environment in which to live and recorded incidents of serious crime are low; crime for the Sawston Sector (which includes Stapleford) is below the average for Cambridgeshire.

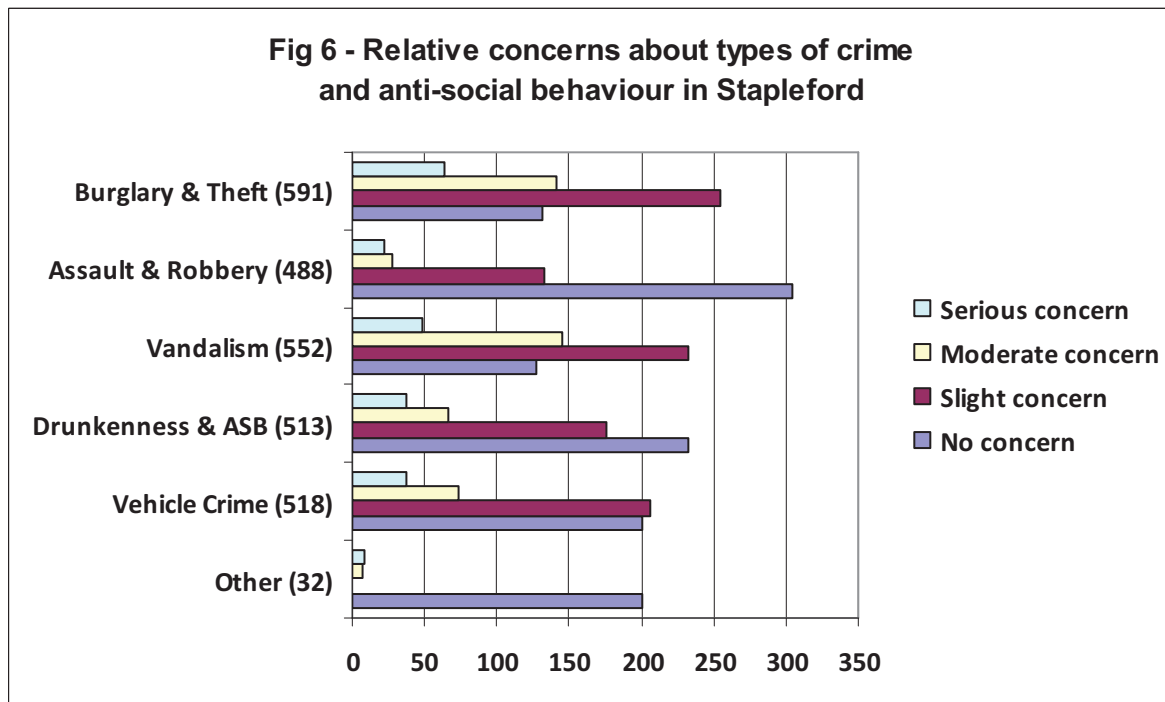
Representatives of the Sawston Sector of Cambridgeshire Constabulary hold monthly surgeries at Great Shelford Memorial Hall, providing a way for individuals to meet officers, discuss local issues and influence local policing priorities. There are also quarterly Neighbourhood Panel public meetings, at which the Parish Council is regularly represented; these provide an opportunity to inform local police of any concerns or issues and to help shape the priorities for the area.

There is a Neighbourhood Watch scheme; four volunteer street co-ordinators are registered with the police, but coverage across the village is patchy.

From the survey it is clear that:

- Stapleford is recognised as a safe place in which to live
- most residents had had no contact with the police over the previous two years
- for those who have concerns, vandalism, burglary and theft, speeding and dangerous or obstructive parking are the principal issues
- the majority are not aware of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village; sources of information about police activities or services are not well known, though residents are aware of security schemes.

The results of the survey suggest that the majority who responded to the questions find that neither serious crime nor anti-social behaviour is a major cause of concern in the village.



The issues which lead to people feeling threatened or uncomfortable include speeding (7), loud music from neighbours at night (2), noise and disturbance outside a pub and on the recreation ground (2), obstructive parking (1), rogue trading (1) and street or garden rubbish (1).

We recommend that the Parish Council, pursuing its police liaison activity, should:

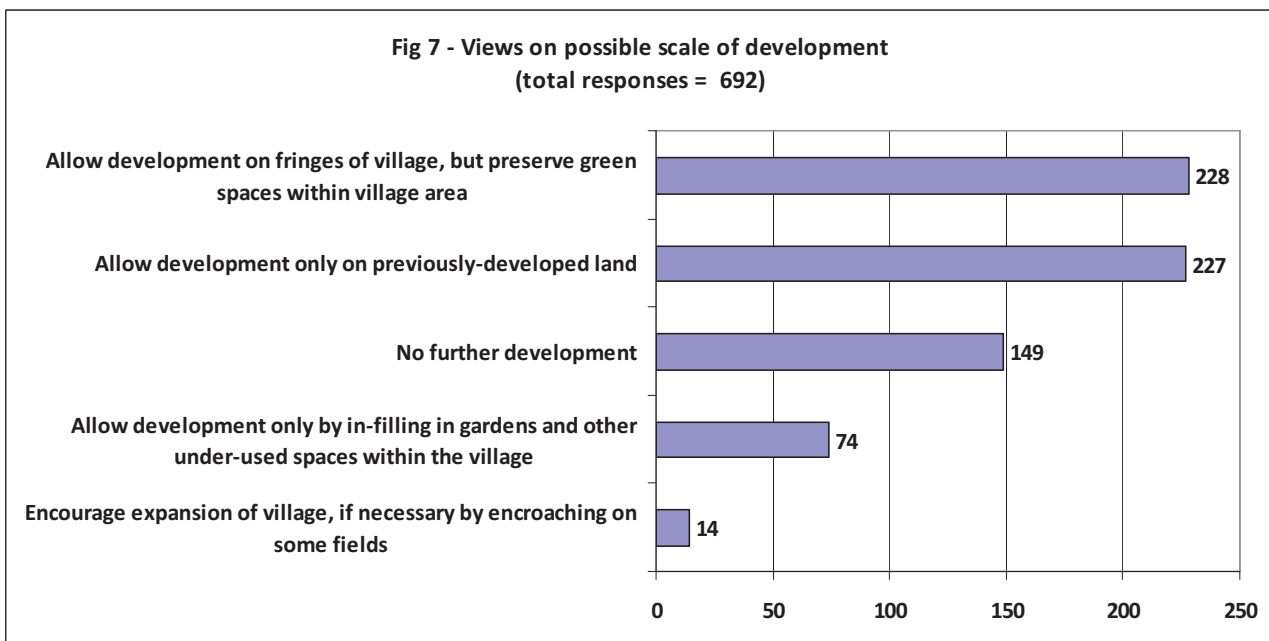
- explore further ways to inform residents how to find out about police activities, e.g. publish dates of Police surgeries in the *Stapleford Messenger*, on the village web-site, on village noticeboards
- develop ways to broaden the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

We propose that a **Community Volunteer Group** should be formed as a focus for various forms of community action (further details in Sections 4.1.12 and 4.3), and we think this group could helpfully reinforce the Parish Council's police liaison work.

4.1.8 Planning and development

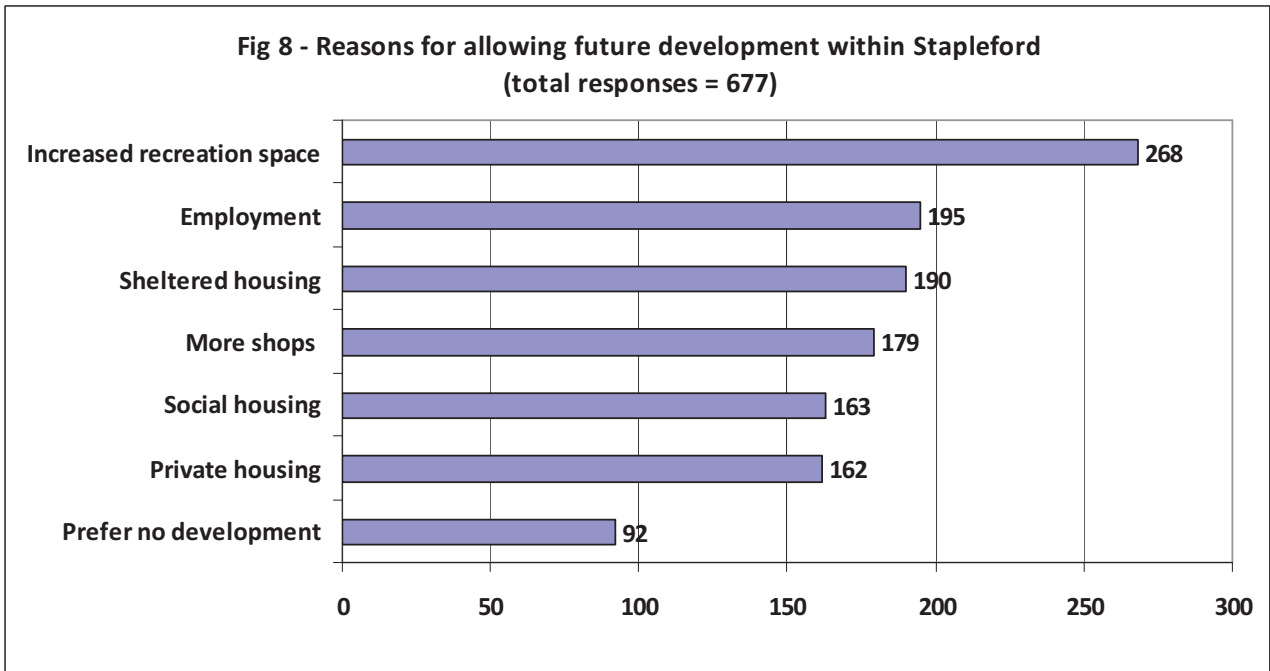
The survey responses confirm the tension between conserving the features that make Stapleford attractive, and achieving residents’ aspirations for a thriving village. As noted in Section 4.1.1, the Green Belt and areas of open space and greenery are considered vital in creating a pleasant environment in which to live. On the other hand are the needs to make it easier for young families to establish in Stapleford and for elderly residents to remain here, and to support local employment, all of which could be facilitated by appropriate development.

To gauge attitudes to this dilemma, the survey asked respondents to choose between possible development scenarios. There were 692 responses to this question. 149 opted for no further development. The remainder – 543 in total – accepted that development on some scale should be permitted. Of these, 227 would permit development only on previously-developed land, and 74 by in-filling within the village. 228 would permit development on the fringes of the village (it is not clear whether they realised this might mean eating into the edges of the Green Belt), and 14 would permit wider expansion into the fields.



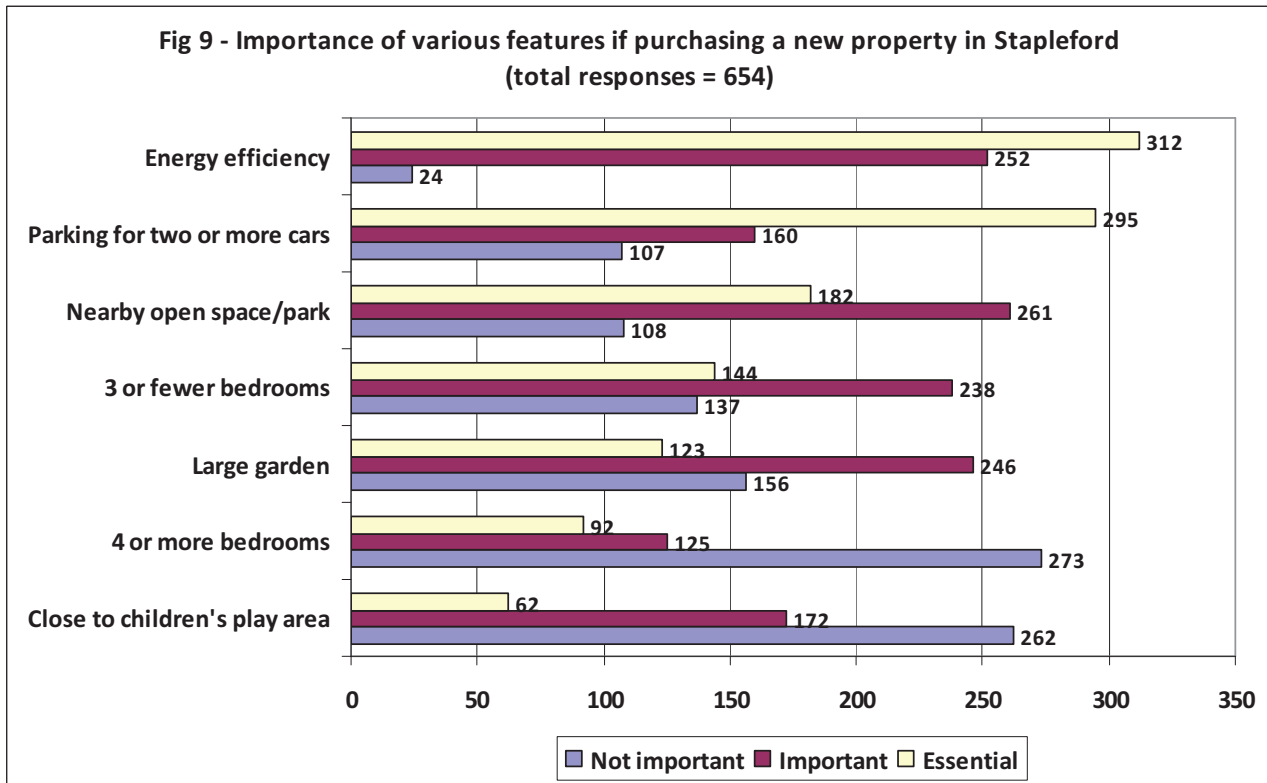
The survey also asked for what purposes development should be permitted, if any. 677 people responded to this question, with in total 1157 endorsements for development for one purpose or another (in other words, many respondents endorsed development for two or more of the possible purposes listed). The most popular reason for allowing development was to increase recreation space (268). Other purposes – to support local employment, to provide additional sheltered housing, social housing, private housing, and local shops – each received roughly equal support, as shown below. 92 responses said development should not be allowed for any of these purposes.





Looking at the demand for housing, the need most strongly identified was for bungalows (181 out of 544 responses; of these, over 40% (74 of the 181) were residents aged 70 or over). There was also support for sheltered housing (135), housing association homes (130) and shared ownership (126). Terraced or semi-detached housing was slightly preferred to detached (164 against 144 respectively). Demand for flats was slighter (51), and minimal for mobile homes (9). Small estates received some support (96); only six responses favoured large estates. The two main needs identified can be summarised as family housing and accommodation suitable for the elderly. It is notable that there is no care home in the village: residents who need residential care have to leave Stapleford.

707 responses were received to a question about moving home within Stapleford. Of these, 592 did not wish to move. Those who do want to move within the next 5 – 10 years perceive the price and the lack of suitable housing to be the major obstacles. As for the features desired in a new home, the priorities highlighted by residents are shown in Figure 9. The demand is primarily for modest family homes (3 bedrooms or smaller) with good energy efficiency, rather than executive housing.



Residents were asked to comment on availability of the internet. It appears that dwellings are adequately supplied with internet connections: the great majority of respondents (593 out of 664) said they had internet access from home. Only 35 people indicated that they use Great Shelford Library for internet access, and there was little demand for a public internet access point in the village (31 out of 452 replies). However, there is strong anecdotal evidence that connection speeds are too slow. In time, this may become less of a problem, as in August 2011 the County Council announced a scheme that aims to deliver a high-speed broadband connection to every household in Cambridgeshire within four years.

Views were also sought on the service provided by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in handling planning matters affecting Stapleford. The majority of respondents (405 out of 691) were either totally satisfied (45) or quite satisfied (356); however, the level of dissatisfaction (122) was not insignificant. Almost a quarter of responses (164) expressed no opinion. Several comments were made about the need for SCDC to advise residents of proposed developments in the vicinity of their homes (not just those immediately adjacent), for better information about proposals to be provided, and for residents not merely to be expected to check the SCDC web-site.

In summary, we are clear that **any infringement of the Green Belt would be unacceptable to the great majority of residents**, as recorded in Section 4.1.1. Residents are also insistent that the open green areas in the village should be preserved. But it is also clear that there is widespread acceptance of limited and sensitive development if this will help to retain and encourage local employment and shops, and housing relevant to the community's needs. A comment summarised the balance clearly:

*"Accepting that a certain amount of growth is essential, to allow new generations to stay in the village if they wish, and to attract a proportion of new settlers, housing cannot be provided in isolation, without the opportunity to create businesses & jobs too. A mix of housing is desirable, to attract a balance of newcomers"*

But any development must be appropriate. The numerous comments on development stressed that Stapleford's village identity should not be lost, that the attractiveness of the environment should be preserved, that in-filling by building in back gardens or by replacing bungalows with bigger houses is unwelcome, and that the implications for transport infrastructure must be taken into account.

While the principle of development to maintain Stapleford's vitality is supported, in practice the Green Belt, which runs tightly round the existing built-up area, will mean that any development (except perhaps for recreation space) will have to be fitted within the existing village envelope. Where sites become available, the result will be shaped by the commercial pressures on developers. For example, demographics put some priority on accommodation for the elderly, but care homes or sheltered housing are not generally seen by developers as the most profitable use of land. It is important that housing is not seen as the only priority for available sites: residents consider retaining employment and commerce to be important too, and there should be no presumption in favour of converting existing employment land to housing.

**We recommend that:**

- **the Parish Council should make clear to South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the local Planning Authority, and to any potential developers the very strong feeling in Stapleford that the Green Belt must be protected and the green and open areas within the village preserved**
- **the Parish Council should similarly make it clear that limited, sensitive development within the village envelope may be welcomed if it promotes the purposes identified above: the provision of recreation space, retention and encouragement of employment and commerce, and accommodation particularly for young families and the elderly**
- **the Parish Council should also seek to ensure that existing sites which provide employment are retained for that purpose rather than allowing change of use to housing**
- **any housing developments should include a mix of housing sizes and types, with a preference for smaller and family accommodation rather than executive housing**
- **South Cambridgeshire District Council should alert all nearby occupiers to proposed developments, not only those immediately adjacent.**

Preparation of a Village Design Statement, presented for endorsement to South Cambridgeshire District Council (as recommended in Section 4.1.1), would be a helpful way to gain backing for many of these criteria for development. Other groups, such as the Environment Action Group, might also add their voices to the effort to influence the planning system in line with residents' priorities as summarised here.

4.1.9 Social and community life

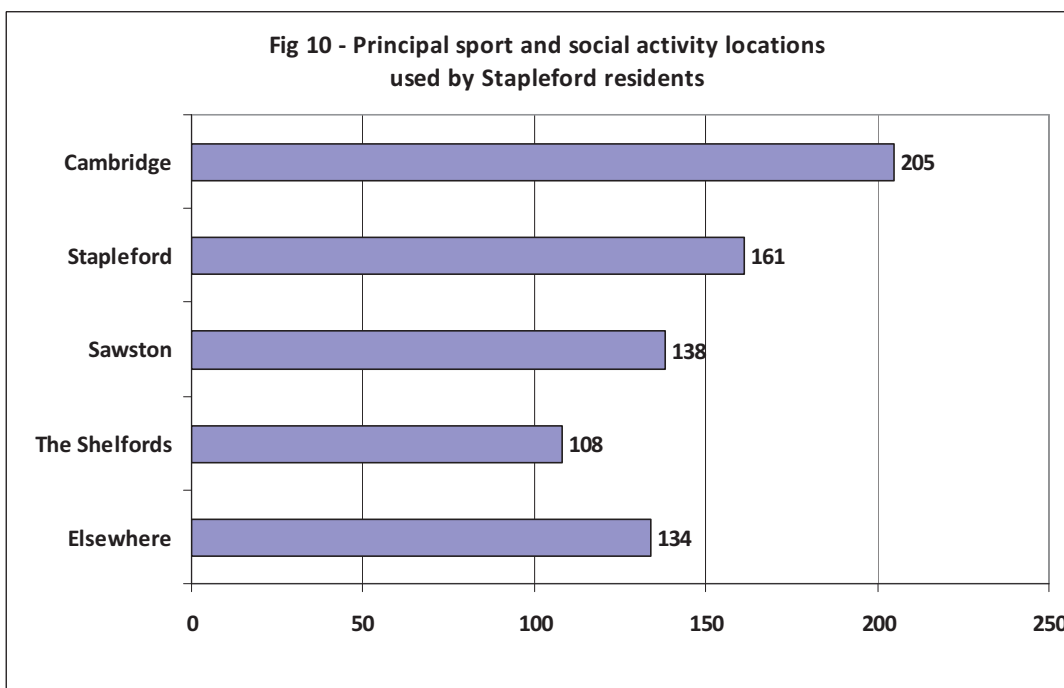
Respondents were largely positive about community life in Stapleford, with 710 out of 722 stating that they know their neighbours, and 617 agreeing that Stapleford is a friendly village. Positive responses on these questions came mostly from older and longer-established residents, but this bias reflected the weight of these groups among total respondents; younger and more recently-established residents also responded positively in proportion to their numbers in the survey.

Only 250 of the 722 respondents consider enough is done to make new residents welcome. The comments from 45 people suggested that a welcome pack should be provided, with lists of clubs, associations, services and facilities, together with a free copy of the parish magazine, the *Stapleford Messenger* (as was provided for new residents in Chalk Hill). Some people proposed Newcomers' events, though it has to be recognised that in the past these have not been well patronised. One comment suggested community social events such as walks, picnics, cycle rides and film nights. Another requested events for young professional people.

144 people recorded that they took part in voluntary activity in Stapleford; the majority of these were in the 55-84 age-group (91) and 29 in the 40-54 age group. Only 10 people between and 18 and 40 were involved in such activities.

Suggestions for activities in the village were sought, with 80 responses varying from environmental groups to arts and crafts, gardening to a wine circle, cycling club to chess club. Since some of the suggestions cover activities already in existence, eg Stapleford Strollers and U3A (Sawston Branch), lack of information across the community is highlighted once more. Helping at a village Sports Day or Pantomime attracted 97 and 76 positive responses respectively, while 182 respondents stated that they would help at a village fund-raising event. Among the 25-29 age-group, there was a greater willingness to help at a Sports Day (28) or fund-raising event (25) than at a Pantomime (13). Various comments identified the need for a central meeting-place.

The survey showed that Stapleford residents use sports and social facilities at a number of locations, with Cambridge more popular than Stapleford. For the sports clubs in the village, the majority of users were in the 40-69 age- band, with the least involvement among the 18-24 age-group (except for the 6 responses in the 85+ group). These responses suggest that only a minority of the demand for sports and social facilities is met within Stapleford. There may therefore be scope to develop new facilities, but further research would be needed to establish whether there would be sufficient usage to make any new initiative viable.



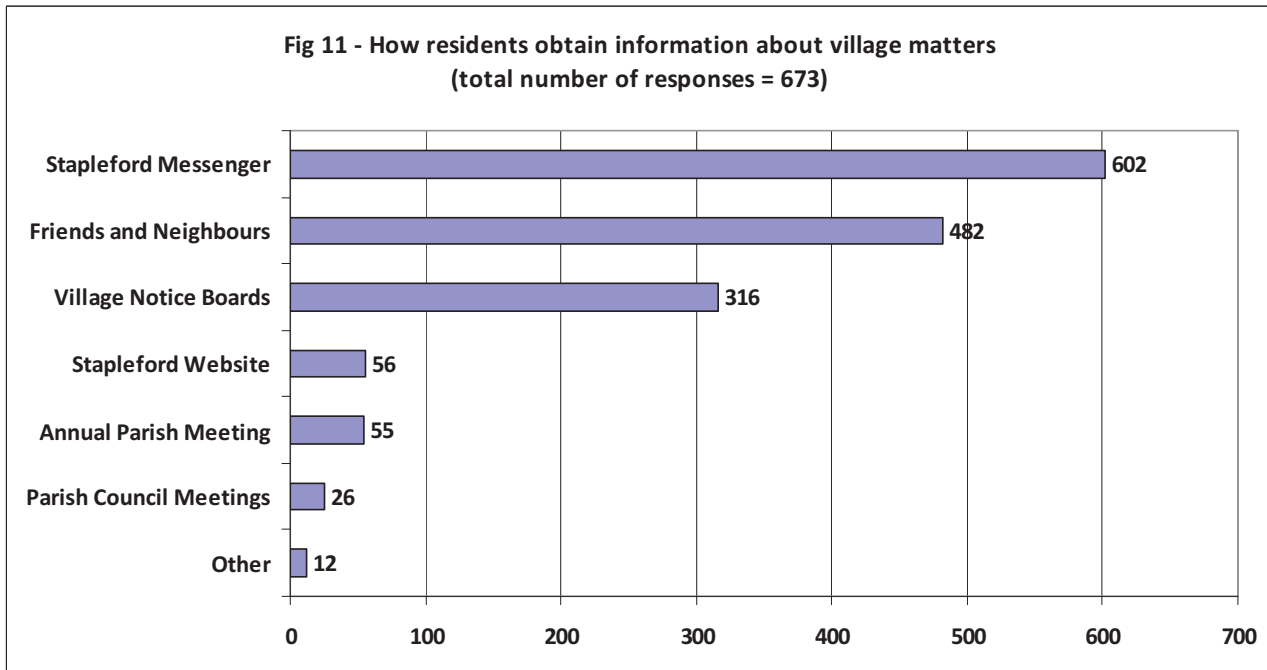
We recommend that the **Village Activities Group** (proposed in Section 4.1.2) should pursue these issues, with the following initial **recommended actions**:

- **revise, update and distribute the Stapleford *Parish Guide* (last issued in 1995) and keep this information up to date through the village web-site and reissues**
- **ensure these sources of information are brought to the attention of new residents**
- **provide a free copy of the *Stapleford Messenger* to each new household moving to Stapleford**
- **consider mounting community events, such as an annual festival of sports-related activities or beating the bounds**
- **approach village clubs and associations to open their activities for an annual community event, e.g. picnic on Magog Down, local walk with Stapleford Strollers**
- **liaise with commercial outlets over the scope for meeting some of the demands identified here for social activities and venues, such as young professionals' networking events, mother and toddler coffee mornings, a café.**

## 4.1.10 Information about village matters, events and facilities

Stapleford has a web-site ([www.staplefordcambs.org.uk](http://www.staplefordcambs.org.uk)); a parish magazine, the *Stapleford Messenger*, produced through the Parochial Church Council with a monthly distribution of around 750 copies; and village notice-boards sited outside the school, by the village shop and at the Slaughterhouse.

The survey showed that the majority of respondents obtained information about village matters from the *Stapleford Messenger* and by talking to friends and neighbours. Attending Parish Council meetings or the Annual Parish Meeting were not favoured: it appears that meetings are not seen as an effective channel for keeping in touch. The village web-site should, however, be regarded as a prime source for village affairs and its lack of use should be investigated further.



The survey also sought views on alternative ways that could be used to provide information on Stapleford. Twenty-one comments were put forward, with use of the internet and e-mails the most popular suggestions. Improved navigation and more up-to-date postings on the web-site were requested, which perhaps reflects the poor use of the site at present. Some comments:

*"Have computer alerts on planning matters"*

*"Better publicity for forthcoming business in advance so residents can organise to contribute"*

*"Planning and tree applications seem to be provided on a whim"*

*"Surgery for residents 30-60 minutes every 2 weeks"*

In the *Stapleford Messenger*, coverage of forthcoming events, planning applications and helpful advice and information were identified as the most popular items. A number of interesting additions were suggested in the 32 comments about what people would like to see covered. Two responses revealed that new residents were not aware of the magazine. Some respondents would like to see a more village-orientated magazine rather than the apparent emphasis on Church matters. The advertisements were mentioned as a useful service. A number of respondents do not subscribe to the *Messenger*. Some comments:

*"Recent village directory was a brilliant idea"*

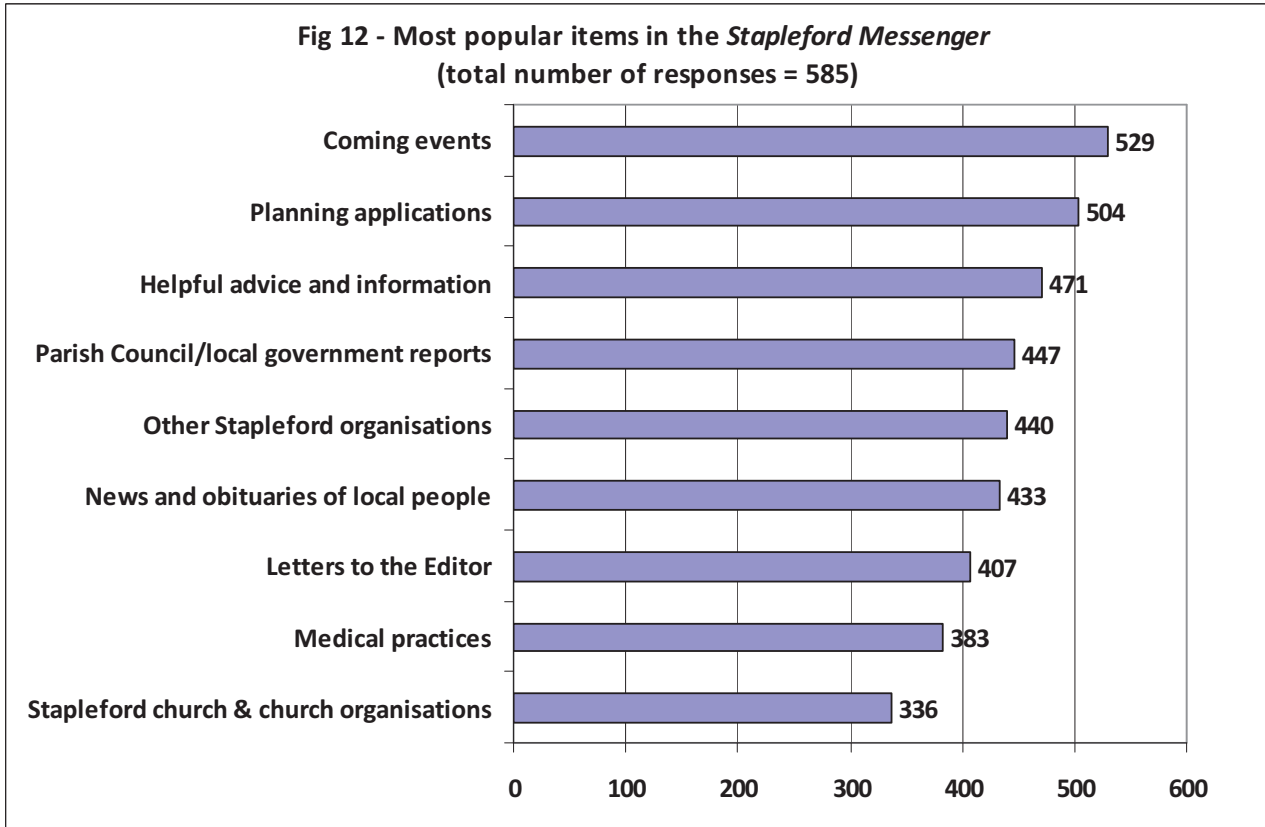
*"Stapleford Messenger should be free and delivered to all households (like Duxford)"*

*"Email newsletter"*

*"First page of Messenger is always 'Who's Who at St Andrews' rather than 'What's On in Stapleford'"*

*"Map of village road layout would be very helpful"*

“Articles on memories from old folk who have always lived in the village”



Residents’ view is that the *Stapleford Messenger* is the preferred source for information about the village, though there is also a keen desire for improved information dissemination through the internet and by e-mail.

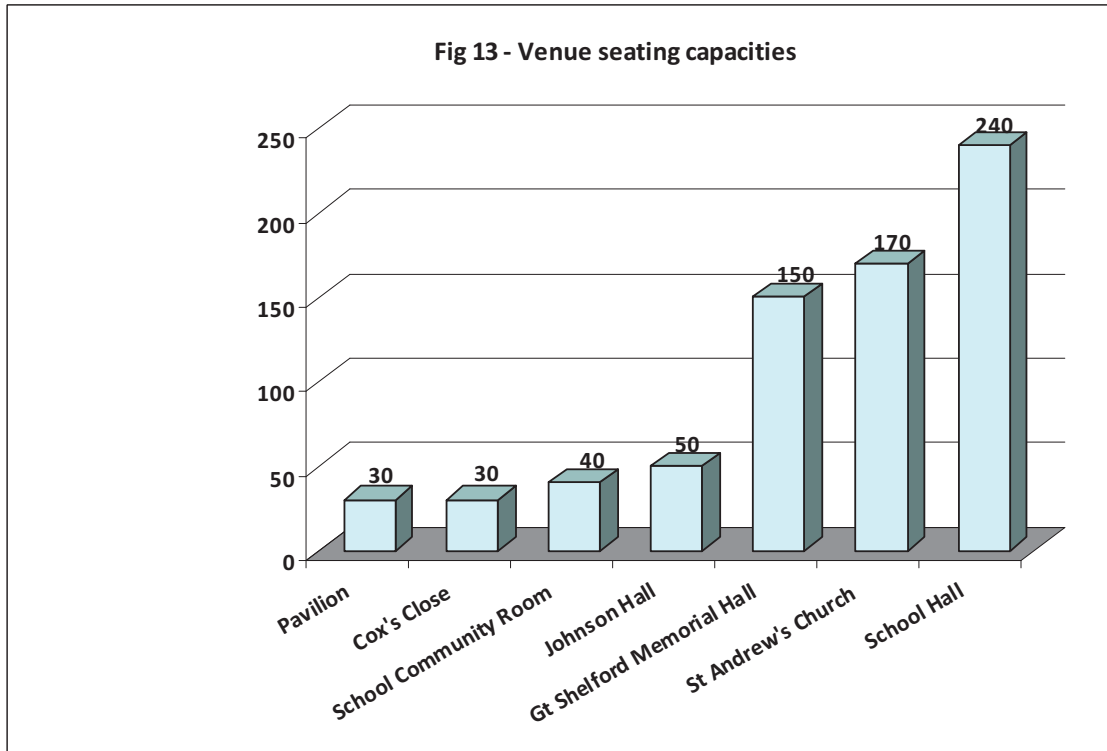
**We recommend that:**

- the Editor of *Stapleford Messenger*, the Webmaster of the village web-site and local organisations form a working group to explore other ways to extend and improve communication about village activities throughout the village.

Improved communications are relevant also to the recommendations below for a virtual Stapleford hub (Section 4.5).

4.1.11 Community venues

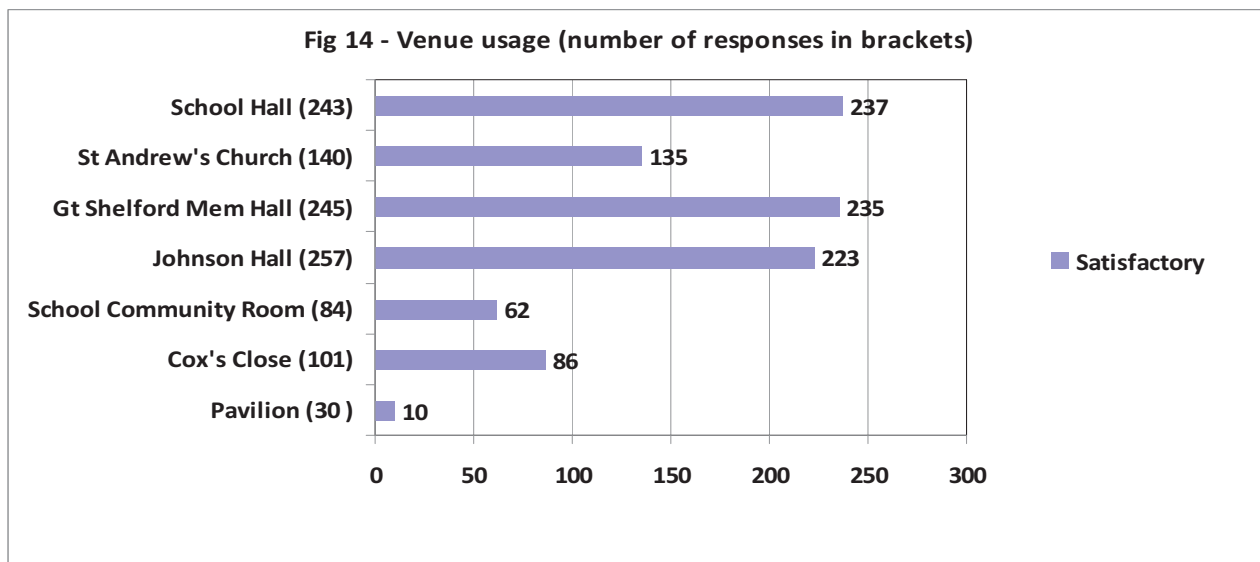
Stapleford has a number of venues, of varying seating capacities (shown in Fig 13 below), giving a choice of sizes and facilities for a wide range of activities, from regular clubs to parties, concerts and theatre. The venues are managed by a number of bodies: Stapleford Community School, Parish Council, SCDC and St. Andrews Parochial Church Council. Great Shelford Memorial Hall has been included in this section, as many in the village attend events there, as well as St. Andrew’s Church, frequently used for social events outwith church services. On occasion, these premises may be used for private functions.



Since the survey was circulated in 2010, plans to renovate the existing Pavilion have been approved and work started on 1 August 2011. The enhanced Pavilion will provide new changing areas and showers, referee’s facilities, a disabled toilet, a kitchen and a small hall suitable for committee meetings for example. Some storage space will be available. The extension will provide a larger multi-purpose hall with variable seating capacity suitable for hire for larger meetings and activities such as yoga classes, Brownies, Twinning suppers etc and private functions such as birthday or wedding celebrations.

To gauge opinion on the possible uses of a new venue, residents were asked to assess the suitability of each of the existing venues for event(s) which they attended. From the responses, all venues were judged satisfactory. Those who thought the venues were unsuitable for the event, or the wrong size for the activity, were in a very small minority. The exception was the Pavilion, which 17 people thought unsuitable; these doubts should be resolved with the extension and refurbishment.





Despite the indication from the responses that venues were satisfactory for their use, opinion was divided almost equally over whether a new or improved venue in Stapleford is needed (176 for, 147 against, from a total of 329 responses). Comments centred largely around the need for a venue larger than the Johnson Hall (capacity 50), but smaller than the School Hall (capacity 240) which was also reported to be expensive to hire. The new large hall at the Pavilion should be a bit bigger than the Johnson Hall.

A number of suggestions and comments were put forward about the type of venue some residents would like, and about new or enhanced activities for which it could be used. Of the 61 comments on the latter, 17 related to enhanced pavilion facilities, 8 to a concert hall/events facility (such as may result from proposed development at Bury Farm) and 4 to a venue larger than the Johnson Hall for parties.

*"We have enough venues to satisfy every club - these need to be used. No need for anymore expense"*

*"Better changing facilities for sports. Small meeting room/exercise classes"*

*"Decent Community Hall with Kitchen facilities larger than Johnson Hall and smaller than the School Hall and available during the day and evening"*

*"Pleasant meeting space designed to be flexible; social clubs & classes. Private hire"*

*"A venue suitable for musical events e.g. concerts. Probably covered by Bury Farm development"*

*"Stapleford needs a venue dedicated to local events as the 'centre' of the village"*

*"Could be hired out for conferences / training etc"*

*"Concert hall to keep the local choir in the village for concerts"*

*"Kids parties and groups"*

*"Meeting room for clubs and associations; lectures; drop-in for eg. internet access"*

*"Sporting, educational, social events"*

*"We need a Nursery"*

*"The village needs a central focus for village social events. The rec has most space but a decent hall, kitchen and toilet facilities are needed"*

From the survey, it would appear that there is adequate provision within the village for the activities which currently take place, particularly when the enhanced Pavilion accommodation becomes available. However, from Section 4.1.14 on Young People, the desire for an informal meeting venue is evident.

In addition to the adequacy of venues in terms of size and amenities, there is the question whether there is anywhere that provides a centre for the community. That need is not seen to be met at present, as in the last comment quoted above. This issue is pursued further below, in Section 4.5 about a village hub.

While completion of the Pavilion improvements is awaited, it is difficult to assess whether additional venues will be needed. **We recommend that:**

- **the adequacy of venues should be reviewed after the new Pavilion has been in use for some time, with a view to soliciting a commercial response (eg from the pubs) as well as considering purpose-built accommodation for unmet needs**
- **if a need for additional community facilities is established, this should be considered as a use for any Section 106 funds generated from any future local development**
- **meanwhile, the needs of young people for an informal meeting place, such as a youth shelter on the recreation ground, should be considered as a priority.**

These are tasks for the **Village Activities Group**, working with the bodies that manage the existing venues, and with the **Young People's Action Group** proposed below (Section 4.1.14) in relation to an informal meeting place.

## 4.1.12 Shops and services

Stapleford has a limited range of services: a village shop including newsagent, a church (Church of England), a garage, a builders' merchants, three pubs (which also serve food), a farm shop (with café and butcher, but located some distance from the built-up area), three hairdressers, two beauticians, an accountant, a photographer, and a cleaning services shop.

Great Shelford, about a mile away, offers more facilities including a station, public library, post office, medical centre, dentist, pharmacy, two banks, a building society, dry cleaners, two pubs also serving meals, electrical goods sales and repairs, a baker's with café, bicycle sales and repairs, a delicatessen with café, two mini-supermarkets, Anglican and nonconformist churches. The shopping centres of Cambridge are about 5 miles north, with Sawston, which has similar facilities to Great Shelford, about 2 miles to the south.

The availability and accessibility of services are of concern for residents with limited mobility. With a relatively elderly population, many residents are concerned that if the village shop closed, meeting everyday needs would become considerably more difficult.

### *Shops, pubs and commercial facilities*

719 people responded on usage of the shops, pubs and local commercial facilities. Comments indicated that residents feel relatively well served by facilities in Stapleford and the surrounding area:

*"I think we are so fortunate to have a great selection of shops in Shelford and to have newspapers in Stapleford"*

With a very high positive response rate, clearly the village shop plays a very important rôle in Stapleford life. 48 people have their weekly shopping delivered but only 53 use Stapleford for their weekly grocery shopping. With 669 respondents using the village shop in total, it appears the majority use is for convenience shopping. For residents who are less mobile for one reason or another, access to food and household goods at the village shop is clearly a lifeline.

The local pubs and the ability to purchase petrol at Murkett's garage are also well supported, although most use is 'occasional' rather than on a 'regular' basis. 94 people indicated that they use Murkett's car servicing facility occasionally. 204 people use a local hairdresser, mainly on a monthly or occasional basis. The Magog Farm shop is well supported by 414 Stapleford residents (all of whom had access to a vehicle). Travis Perkins (builders' merchant) is used by 355 people, mostly on an 'occasional' basis.

Responses indicated some demand for a variety of services that are not currently available, with the strongest support (62 respondents) for post office services within the village. A coffee shop and a family restaurant/bar also received the support of 27 people, indicating a desire for somewhere for residents of all ages to meet socially. This response reflected the views expressed in the Love It / Hate It Survey.

*"Coffee shop!"*

*"Café would be a great addition and local meeting point"*

*"It's never going to happen but Stapleford needs a post office and it needs a newsagent"*

A butchery and a deli in the village are other services which some residents say they would support. ATM facilities were also called for, though a 'cash-back' facility is available at the village shop. The range of clothing and household goods previously available from Eaden Lilley's in Great Shelford was also missed, though some respondents doubted that such a shop could flourish in a village. The opportunity to buy gifts locally was missed by 6 respondents. Some of the facilities which used to be offered by Eaden Lilley's have recently become available at Scotsdales garden centre, about two miles away.

Some respondents have difficulty getting to essential services including food shopping because of transport problems, poor health, disability or combinations of these factors. The majority of these are in the 70+ age group. 12 had transport problems, 14 had health problems and 12 had problems because of disability.

Shelford Support Group offers Stapleford residents a voluntary door-to-door transport scheme (subsidised by South Cambridgeshire District Council) based on 30p per mile for the benefit of those with no transport. Dial-a-ride services are available on Mondays currently offering transport to Sainsbury's in Coldhams Lane, and transport to Cambridge city centre could be provided. This service is based on an annual membership fee of £10 with fares dependent on distance. There is currently no take-up of this service by Stapleford residents.

These responses indicate some lack of awareness of what services are available locally. It may be that local businesses are similarly not fully aware of potential local demand. Updating the village directory, as recommended in Section 4.1.9, could provide an opportunity to bring information together and make it more accessible.

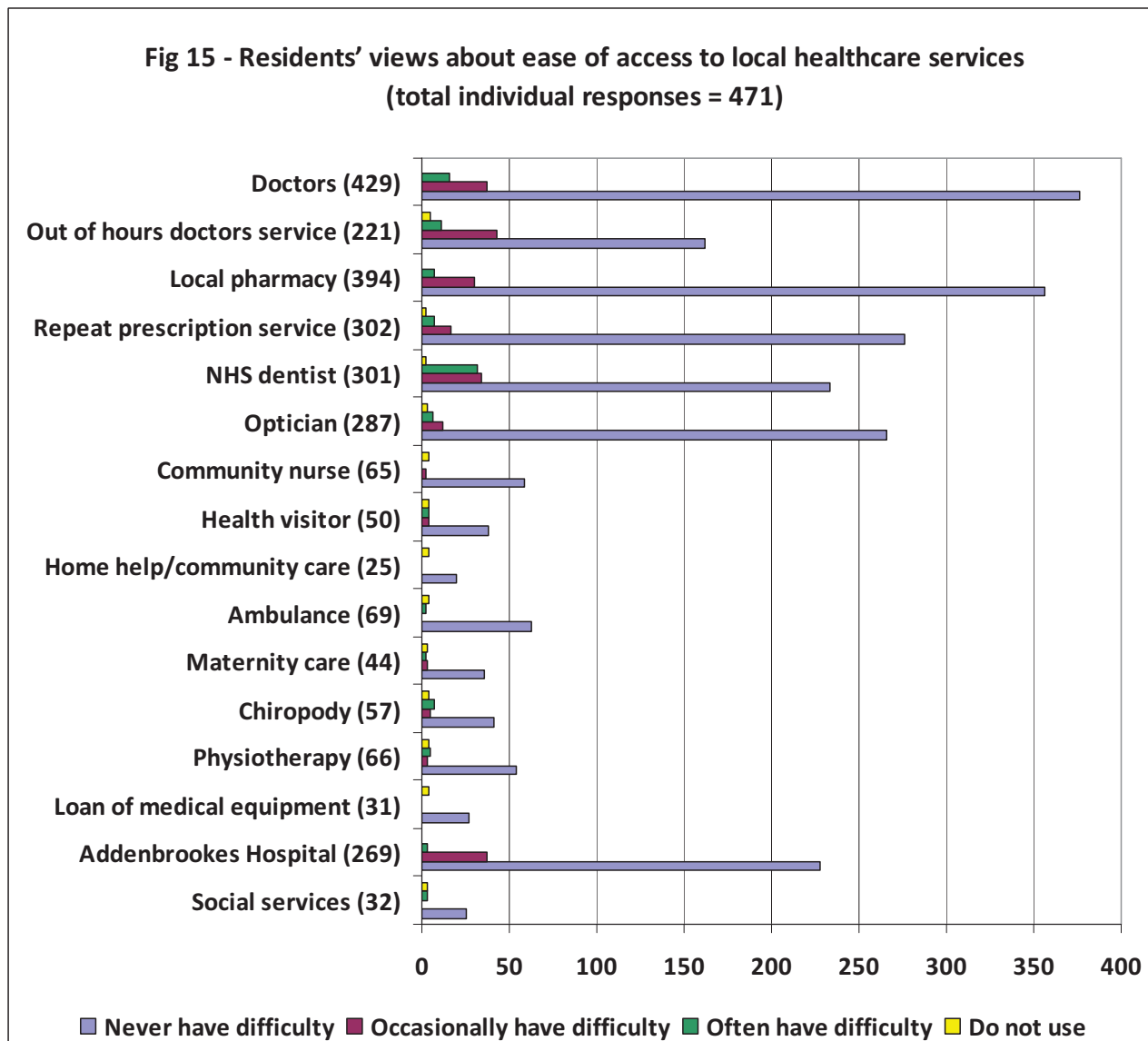
The **Community Volunteer Group** proposed above (Section 4.1.7) would be a good vehicle for addressing these issues, with an initial list of **recommended actions** as follows:

- **encourage the whole community to support local businesses as commercial ventures – ‘use it or lose it’**
- **ensure that residents with mobility/access difficulties are aware of the availability of deliveries from local shops (e.g. village shop, Boots and the Hinton Way convenience shop), milk deliveries, and a weekly mobile fish service**
- **encourage other mobile shops to serve Stapleford**
- **explore the possibility of regular group transport to popular destinations for those with mobility difficulties**
- **consult with local shops to see whether any of the currently missing services could be added to their business**
- **keep the availability of Post Office services under review; the previous attempt to maintain Post Office services in a pub, backed by the Parish Council, proved not to be viable, but circumstances may change.**

### *Healthcare services*

The village is served by three medical practices with Shelford Medical Practice being the main provider with cover also from Sawston Medical Practice (20%) and Queen Edith's Way (5%).

All these surgeries offer a similar range of services as part of the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust which oversees the provision of all primary care services in partnership with GPs, nurses and therapists. The survey did not provide data on the individual practices.



Residents clearly consider that they have satisfactory access to key healthcare provision, such as doctors, pharmacy, repeat prescription service and hospital.

Although the numbers are small, there were concerns that the appointments systems at doctors' surgeries are not as effective as they might be. In some instances, delays in repeat prescriptions being available at the pharmacy were highlighted (up to 3 days in some cases). Several comments were made about the lack of staff at some times in the Great Shelford pharmacy, limited stock choice and the possibility of a drop-off point in Stapleford where prescriptions could be collected. However, since the survey was conducted there have been service enhancements at the pharmacy, which include a prescription delivery service for the housebound and the availability of a pharmacist over most lunch-time periods.

There were far fewer responses about community services such as community nurses, health visitors and maternity care. In all cases, respondents indicated good levels of access to such services.

Comments indicate that residents would like to see improvements in the following areas:

- the provision of more NHS dentist practices in the area
- evening and Saturday morning appointments at health centres
- a local out-of-hours GP service rather than Urgent Care Cambridge (Cam Doc)
- provision of more physiotherapy appointments
- extended car-parking facilities at the local medical practices

- greater availability of parking on the Addenbrooke's hospital site
- improved public transport for reaching Sawston Medical Practice
- health clinic to be held once a month at Cox's Close or similar venue in Stapleford
- return of resident warden at Cox's Close.

These issues too fall within the proposed remit of the **Community Volunteer Group**, with the following initial **recommended actions**:

- **explore improving public transport services for residents wishing to reach Sawston Medical Practice**
- **explore providing monthly medical clinics at Cox's Close**
- **review the need to reinstate a resident warden at Cox's Close**
- **consult with local medical practices about the possibility of providing evening and Saturday morning appointments and locally-provided out of hours services.**

4.1.13 Schools and links with the community

Stapleford has a thriving community primary school, with just under 200 children on the roll in 2010/2011. There is well-regarded state secondary provision at Sawston Village College, about two miles away, with further options in Cambridge.

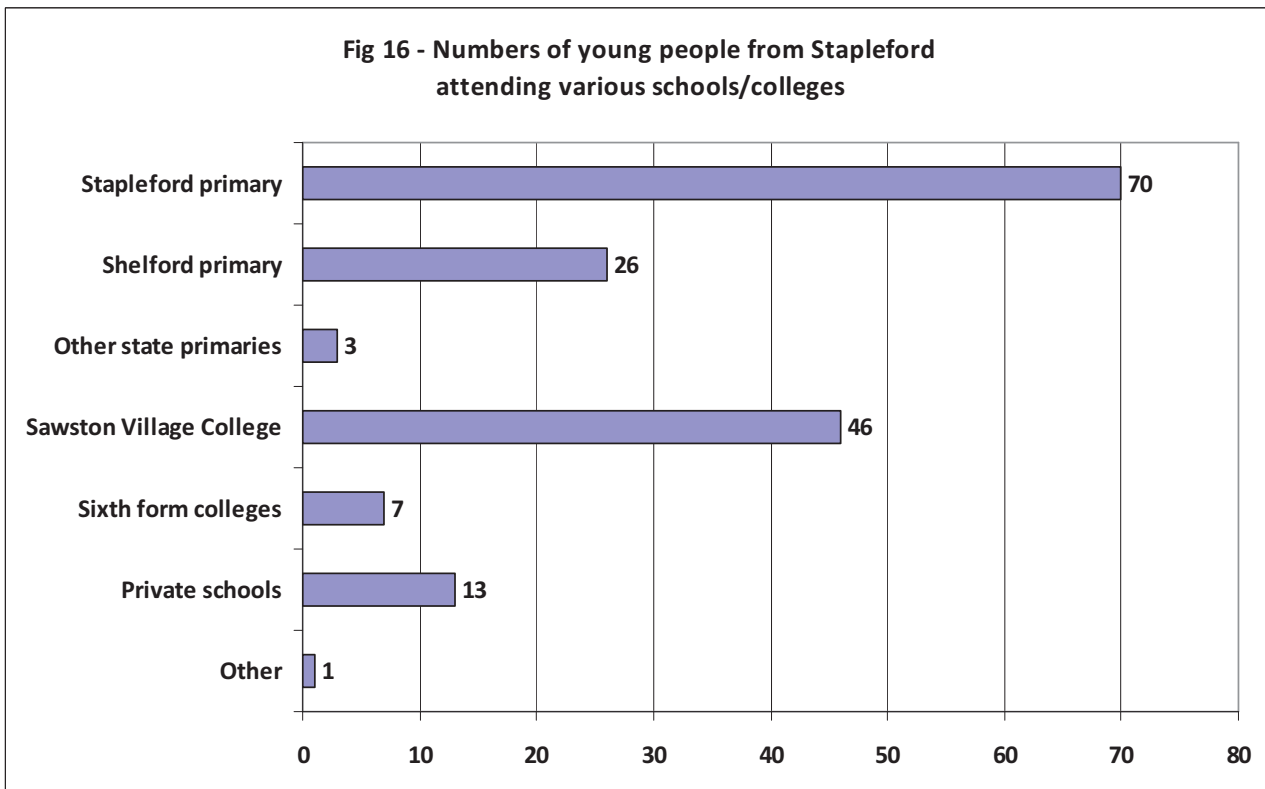
The primary school hosts various community facilities. Sunnyside Playgroup (a preschool) uses a classroom on the school site, and there is a Community Room as well as the ability to hire the school hall. The school has traditionally been a focus for community life, and some of the comments confirmed how it is valued:

*“I have lived in Stapleford since 1955 ...Attended our wonderful local school”*  
*“Being able to walk the children to school”.*

Comments also showed residents’ concern to maintain the school’s strengths:

*“More investment/support for the school”*  
*“Keeping good standards at the school”*  
*“Good school with smaller class sizes”.*

The survey suggested that most Stapleford children of the relevant age attend Stapleford primary school, with Shelford also quite popular.

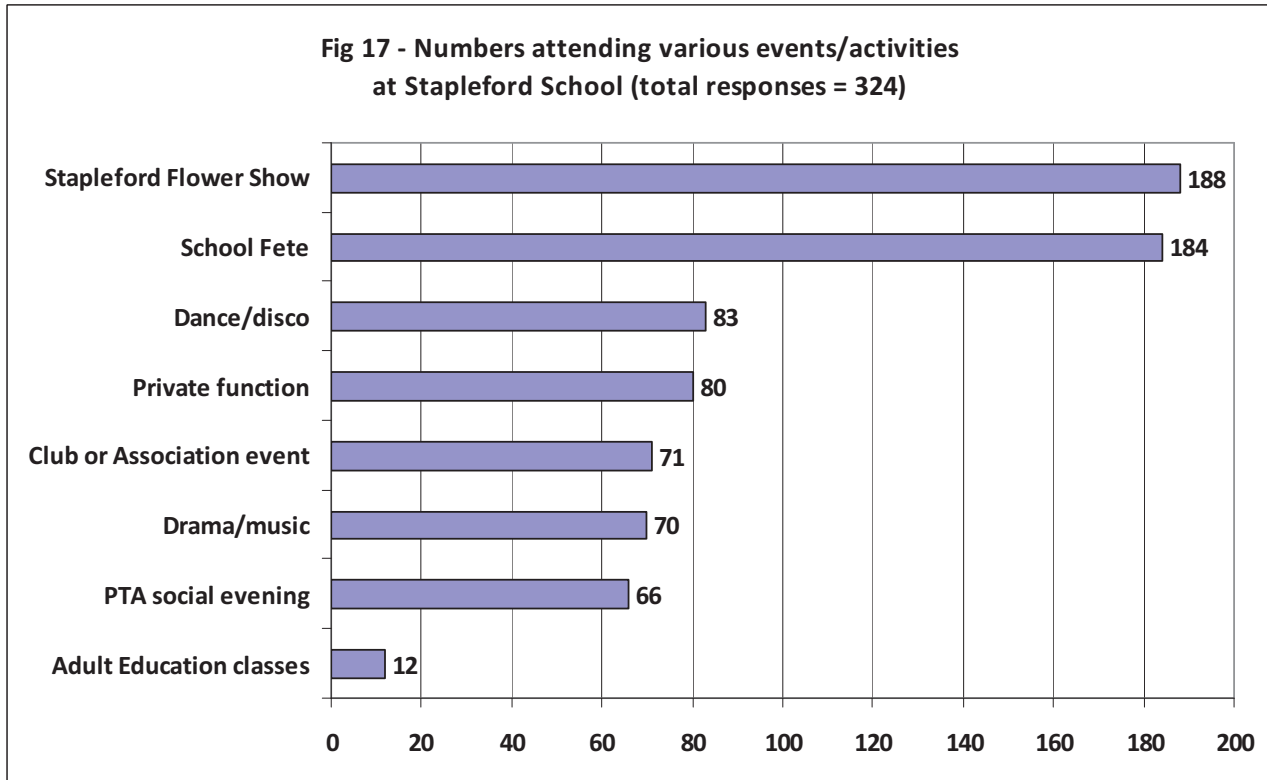


Twenty people commented that they expected their preschool children to remain at Stapleford when they reach primary school age. Conversely, ten respondents stated that the lack of breakfast club facilities influenced their decision not to send their children to Stapleford School. This issue has now been resolved and a breakfast club started in September 2011.

The survey indicated that the majority of children walk to school (42 from 58 responses), although this is to an extent inconsistent with numerous concerns raised by residents about traffic in Bar Lane (Section 4.1.6). The school is pursuing various initiatives to encourage walking and cycling and to reduce the number of cars that park for any length of time at the start and end of the school day. The school would welcome the enhancement or development of tracks to increase walking and cycling access.

To improve safety, the school would also welcome the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit around its entrance, at least at each end of the school day. Parents are concerned about visibility at the three-way junction by the Johnson Hall, where pupils and parents cross to use Vicarage Lane for access to the school. The head suggested flashing signs (operative only at relevant times) to warn drivers about children crossing.

Looking at the school’s interactions with the village community, it is apparent that residents regularly attend events held at the school.



When asked if the school still plays a major role in the village as a social centre, 227 people replied yes with 69 saying no. The numbers while not large give a positive endorsement that the availability of the school premises is seen as important by the community. Specific comments included:

*“Umbrella Club 25 years ago was an excellent catalyst to bring people together”*  
*“Only premises in village with a large hall”.*

The school welcomes community use of the facilities. However, the school’s principal responsibility is providing primary education, and non-school use of the facilities needs to be led by the community itself.

Access to the swimming pool on the school site has been a thorny question for some years. The pool is now run and maintained totally by the school, and is only available to families of children attending the school. Almost 200 respondents indicated that they would use the pool if it was available, while 139 indicated that they would not. In the section of the survey for 11-17 year olds, access to the school swimming pool was the highest-rated additional facility favoured by young people, with 43 (out of 61) indicating that they would definitely use the school pool if available. One young person wrote

*“Let all members of the village use primary school pool”.*

If a local user group wished to follow this up, the school would be willing to discuss the possibilities; there would of course be the need to find the money for operating costs and for any refurbishment thought necessary to make the facilities more suitable for family use.



Some of these are issues that the proposed **Village Activities Group** would be well-placed to pursue, and **we recommend** the following initial actions:

- **promote closer co-operation between the school and the community**
- **explore the possibility of forming a village swimming group to develop access to the school pool for members of the community who do not have children at the school .**

We also propose the formation of a **Young People's Action Group**, which could take the lead on action to:

- **promote the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit on Bar Lane in the vicinity of the school**
- **review safety related to school pupils and parents/carers crossing over to Vicarage Lane by the Johnson Hall and promote any necessary improvements with relevant public authorities.**

Further activities for the Young People's Action Group are proposed in Section 4.1.14.

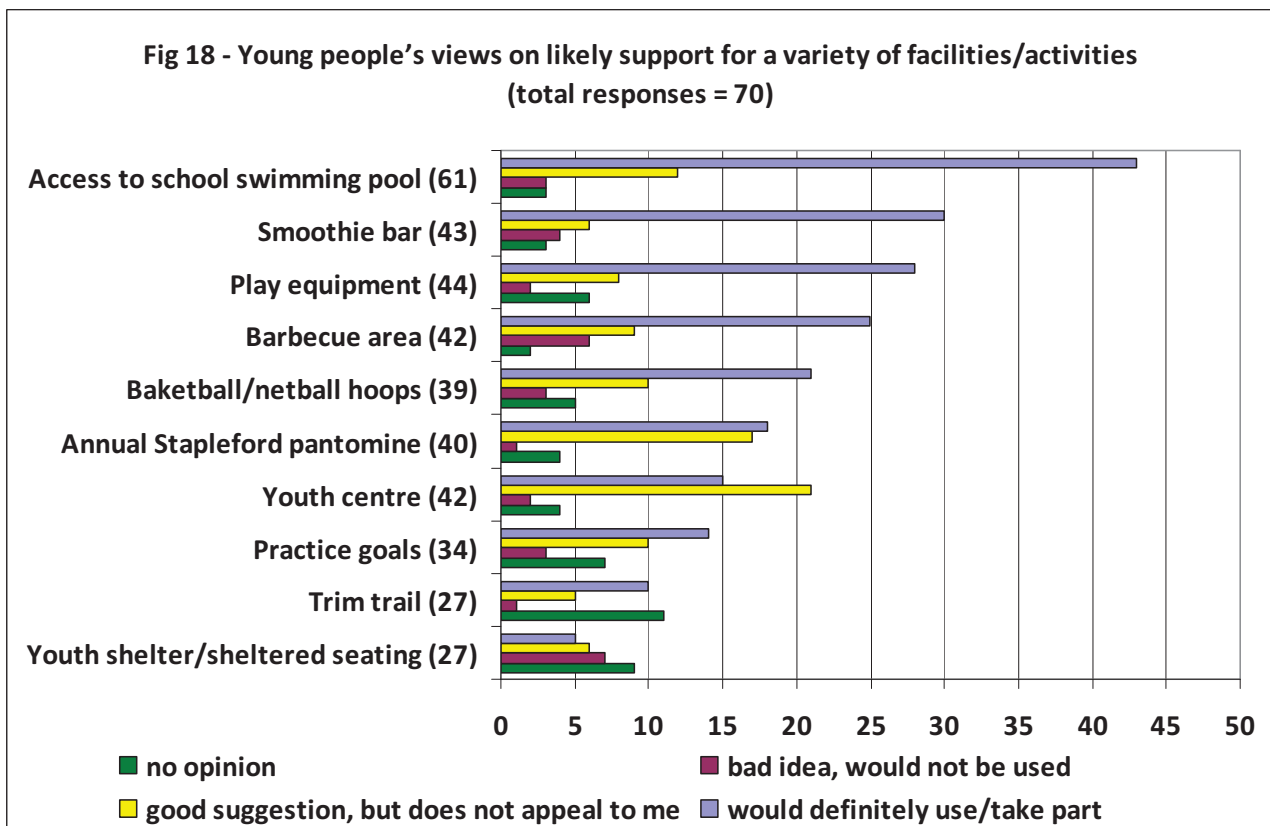
4.1.14 Activities for young people

One section of the survey asked residents from 11 to 17 years old to comment on the activities that they participate in and to give their views on improvements they would like to see. 35 respondents to the survey indicated that they were aged between 11 and 17 years old. However, the response rates for some of the questions in this section indicate that up to 77 individuals may have answered some of the questions. The 2001 census counted 179 Stapleford residents at that time aged between 10 and 17.

The survey asked young people whether there are enough facilities/activities available to them in Stapleford or nearby. Of the 41 responses, a substantial majority (31) stated that the existing provision for young people was inadequate.

Respondents were asked if they attended any youth groups in Great Shelford or Sawston (there is none in Stapleford at present). Only ten responses were received; these indicated fairly equal support of the Shelford/Stapleford Youth Initiative, Youth in the Loft (both in Great Shelford) and Sawston Youth clubs. The signed-up membership and actual numbers attending these youth groups are much higher, although precise figures for Stapleford participants are not available.

Turning to potential facilities and activities that might be provided in Stapleford, those receiving the greatest level of support were access to the school swimming pool, a ‘smoothie’ bar (originally conceived as an informal meeting place serving non-alcoholic drinks, which was to be established at the Longbow prior to its closure and change of ownership), more play equipment on the recreation ground, a barbecue area, provision of basketball/netball hoops.



As noted above, while only ten people stated they currently attend existing youth groups in Shelford and Sawston, there is definite support for some form of youth centre in Stapleford. Further consultation with 11-17 year olds in the village to determine their real interest should be undertaken.

Views were sought on additional facilities/activities that might be provided and which could make Stapleford more fun. The principal proposals were:

- opportunities to socialise: discos, youth club, smoothie bar, café, library, cinema
- provide open access to the tennis courts, add two more courts so that tournaments can be held and add floodlights so that all-year evening use (as in Great Shelford) is possible
- provide practice goals and gym equipment at the recreation ground
- a 25m indoor swimming pool
- a skate park/half pipe
- more sports opportunities for older girls, eg a girls' football team.

Some years ago, the Parish Council did provide a half pipe on the recreation ground, which had to be scrapped because maintenance was too costly. Until the renovation of the Pavilion started, there was a basketball hoop on the end of the building.

The recreation grounds in Stapleford and the Shelfords were the two most-cited areas for meeting friends etc., followed by Magog Down and the Collier recreation ground. Other meeting points mentioned included local pubs, the Nine Wells nature reserve and the 'black barn' on the track to Babraham.

The survey asked young people how they got to and from their social activities. A total of 77 replies were received with cycling (44) and walking (41) most common, followed closely by lifts from parents (39) and friends (30). Smaller numbers used the bus (25) or drove themselves (17). Comments indicated that there would be more use of public transport (rather than relying on lifts) if the frequency of bus services was improved, particularly in the evenings, and fares were lower. One person suggested the introduction of a subsidised 'Oyster-type' card for use on public transport.

While the overall response rate from young people was perhaps lower than might have been hoped, it is clear there is a definite desire among them for some type of community area/youth centre where they can meet informally.

We propose that a **Young People's Action Group**, including young people themselves, should be formed to take the lead on these issues, including initial **recommended actions**:

- **develop an informal youth meeting place, as recommended in Section 4.1.11**
- **explore the possibility of developing other youth facilities, such as reinstating the smoothie bar proposal, including use of the revamped Pavilion.**

The Young People's Action Group should also support the Village Activities Group to help:

- **promote access to the school swimming pool, as recommended in Section 4.1.13**

## 4.1.15 Adult education

The survey identified some interest in improving the local availability of adult education classes. Provision at the school in the Community Room has faded away in recent years, though commercial fitness classes at the Johnson Hall are popular.

133 respondents said they had attended adult education classes over the previous two years. Some had participated in more than one, so there were 179 responses on the location of the class. Only 16 identified Stapleford as the venue. For most classes (70) the location was Cambridge. Residents also travelled to Sawston (38), Great or Little Shelford (20) or elsewhere (35) for classes.

156 residents said they would attend more adult education classes if they were available locally. A typical comment explained:

*"I'd like to attend adult language classes but I don't drive - so would love to have something local I can walk/cycle to"*

Main topics of interest were classes relating to fitness, computers and IT, and languages.

The County adult and community learning service has planned to expand its range of courses at Shelford school in 2011/12, in addition to provision in Sawston.

The proposed **Village Activities Group** would be well-placed to develop these possibilities, working with the school. As first steps we recommend:

- **with the Sawston office of the County adult and community learning service, ensure that the courses available locally are well publicised to Stapleford residents**
- **explore with the Sawston office of the County adult and community learning service whether it would be possible to offer more adult education courses in Stapleford.**

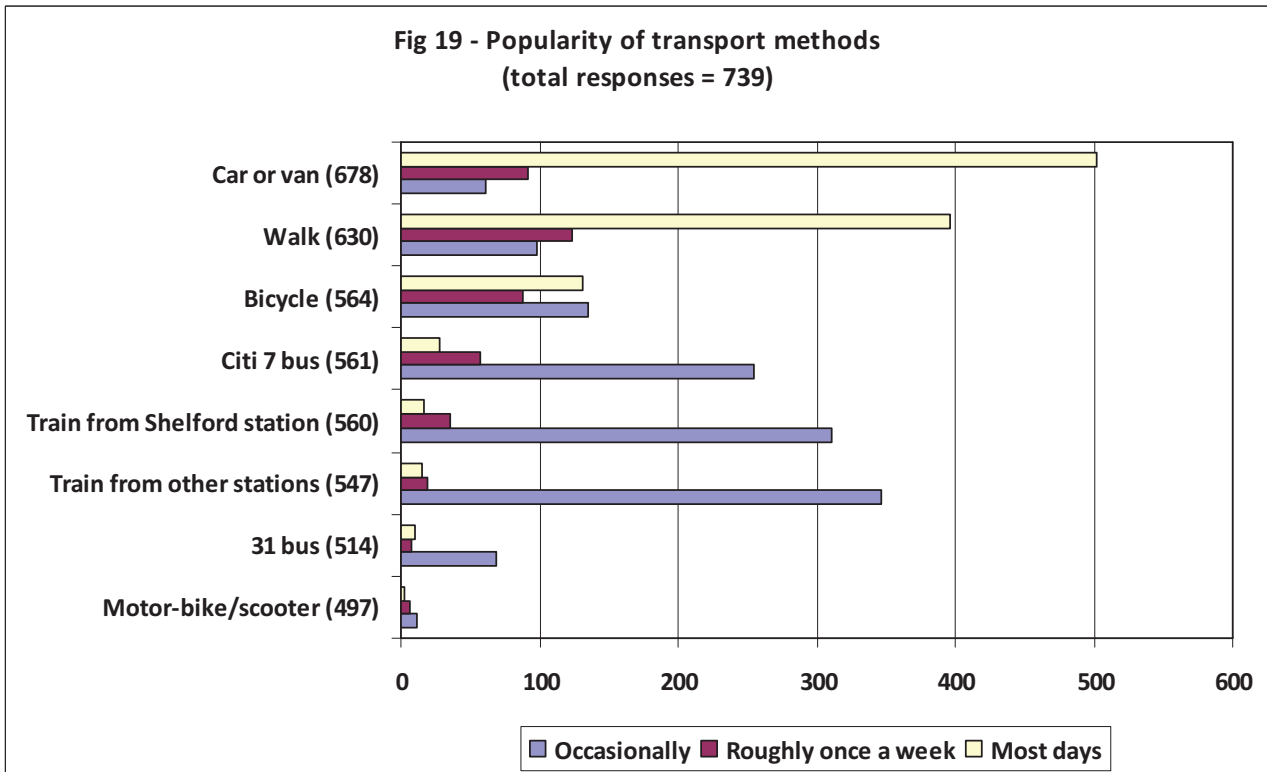
4.2 Transport

Stapleford is well-placed for transport connections. It is linked to Cambridge by two main roads, the A1301 which runs southward to Sawston and Saffron Walden, and the A1307 which runs through the northern part of the parish south-east to Linton and Haverhill. In addition Shelford station on the line from Cambridge to London Liverpool Street lies little more than half a mile north of the village.

Each of the two main roads carries a regular bus service. However, the Citi7 service on the A1301 has a poor reputation for reliability, as its indirect route into Cambridge frequently traps the buses in traffic jams. Route 31 provides a more direct link with Cambridge, but it runs only three or four times a day, and not on Sundays. The service along the A1307 is of little relevance to the majority of residents.

There are frequent trains from Shelford station to Cambridge and to London. Since the services to London stop at most stations en route, many people prefer to travel (often by other means) first to Cambridge or Whittlesford stations to pick up faster trains. A useful service is available at the booking office at Shelford station, which can provide information and tickets for travel between stations anywhere in the UK.

From the survey, it is apparent that most residents use a car or van as their main mode of transport, with walking and cycling next most common. In contrast, regular use of trains and buses by residents is fairly limited.

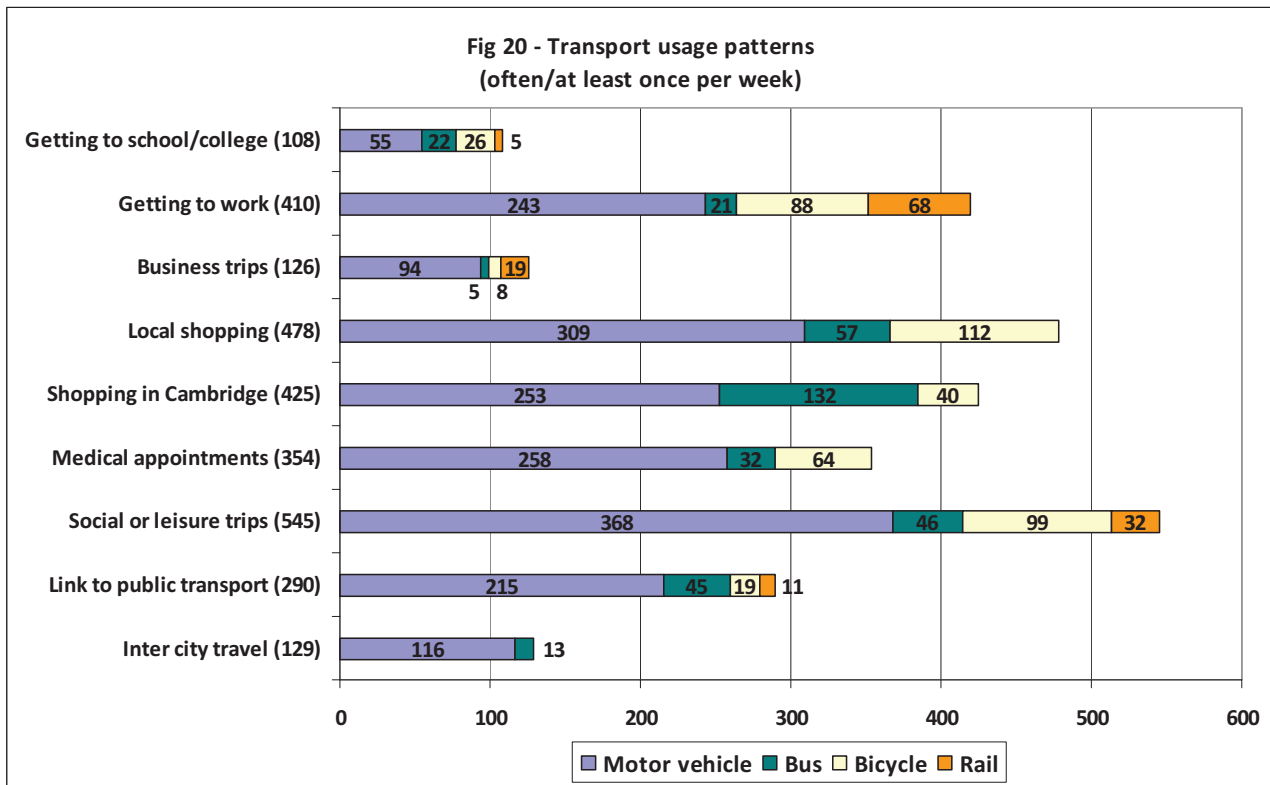


In line with the importance of car travel, 739 residents (out of a total of 788 responses) indicated that they have access to a motor vehicle. An ability to park two or more cars was ranked second by people when asked about the importance of various factors if purchasing a new property in Stapleford (see Fig 9 in Section 4.1.8).

Those without access to a motor vehicle use a variety of means to get around when the distance is too great to walk (75 responses). Buses are the most common alternative (51 responses); lifts from family (40), friends and neighbours (22) and taxis (26) are also important. 10 respondents rely on support services. Those aged 70+ depend particularly on friends and neighbours, taxis and support services.

The survey also looked at the purposes for which different means of travel were used. Motor vehicles are the principal mode of transport for most purposes. Buses are not well used with the exception of shopping in Cambridge, which is probably a reflection of congestion and high parking charges in the city, and of the

popularity of the park-and-ride services. Rail comes into its own for commuting, either into Cambridge or London. When occasional use is also taken into account, there is significant use of the train for both commuting and social/leisure trips.



There was a series of questions about what would persuade people to make more use of a bus, train or bicycle. Among 459 responses about buses, substantial improvements were demanded for the Citi7 service – 280 wanted re-routing to avoid jams in Trumpington and Long Road, 222 wanted a better evening service, and 162 requested an improved service. 213 people wanted a more frequent service on route 31. There was also support for lower bus fares (191), better timetable information (192) and more bus shelters (44).

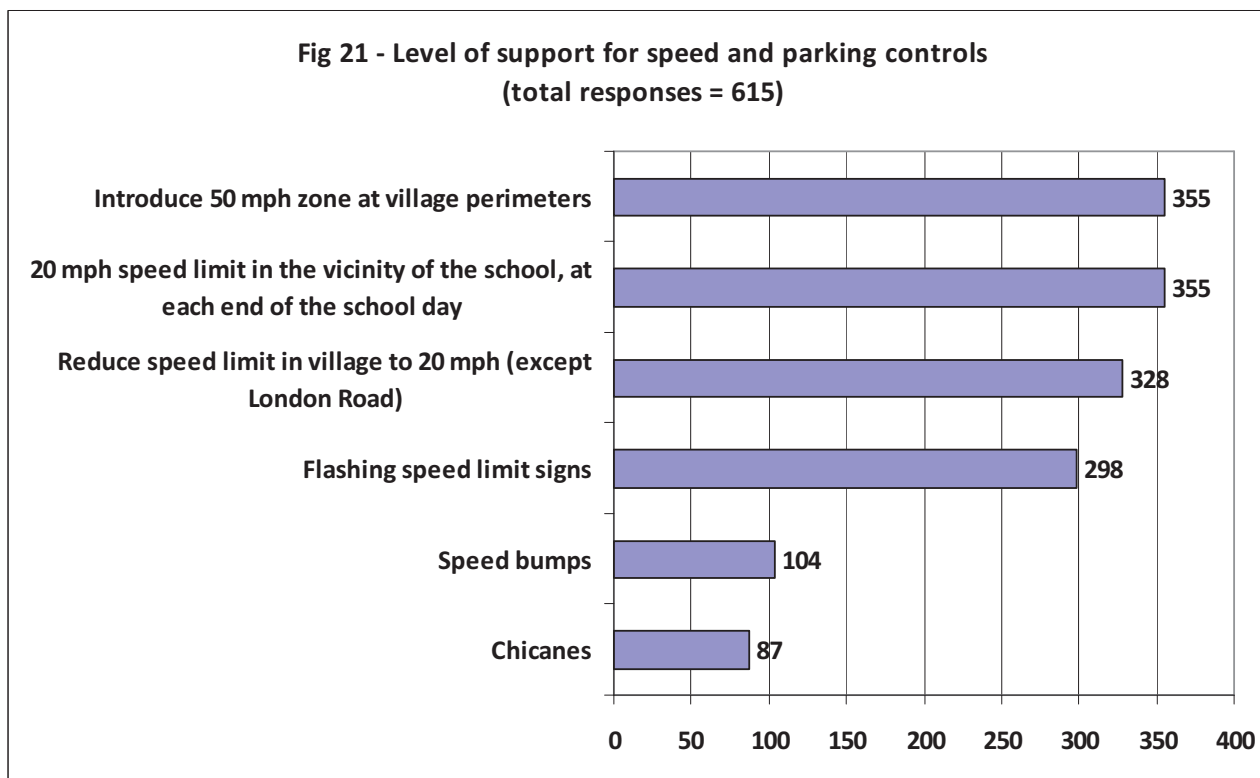
Of the 436 responses about making train travel more attractive, 82 people wanted services to be more punctual, 143 wanted better links to the fast trains which run from Cambridge and Whittlesford, 251 wanted a direct service from Shelford station to Stansted airport and 290 wanted lower fares.

Views were sought on new/improved routes and actions that would encourage greater bicycle usage (and/or persuade parents/carers to let children cycle more). 151 people (from 319 responses) would welcome a new cycle track from Hinton Way to Gog Magog Way via the cemetery. A further 86 people (from 273) would use a cycle track across the allotments if the current path is upgraded. Between 60% and 66% of respondents would cycle more if action was taken to: improve the crossing of the A1301 Sawston bypass (172 from 280); to introduce lower traffic speeds or traffic calming in the village (179 from 270); and to provide racks for locking bicycles at various locations, particularly the village shop and other local shops (101 out of 168).

Running buses later in the evening (279 people supported this idea) would encourage greater use of park and ride services, with lower fares also seen as important (162 responses). Sixty people considered that improving the terminal facilities would lead to increased use of park and ride services. Many respondents commented that the Babraham Road park and ride site needed to be enlarged as it is often full; since the survey was undertaken an enlargement project has been announced.

It is vitally important that any significant residential or employment development within or near Stapleford in the future must include improvements to the existing transport system with the aim of reducing the heavy dependence on motor vehicle usage. There was no indication of a desire to see increased home working, which would reduce the need for travel to and from work.

The survey also explored various aspects of road safety. Only 1 in 5 respondents (116 out of 603) thought that more pedestrian crossings were needed in Stapleford. The main sites proposed were London Road (at Dolphin Way), Church Street (at Priam's Way), at the Church Street end of Vicarage Lane, and across the Sawston bypass.



When asked about means of reducing traffic speeds in Stapleford, there was widespread support for the introduction of a 50 mph speed limit on roads leading into the village (i.e. Haverhill Road from the A1307, and the A1301 from the cycle crossing<sup>5</sup>), and a 20 mph limit throughout most of the village and especially around the school at the start and end of the day. Interactive speed signs received significant support, with the principal proposed sites being London Road, Mingle Lane, Haverhill Road and Hinton Way. In practice such signs are used only on roads, such as the A1301, that carry heavy traffic. There was far less support for the introduction of chicanes or speed bumps to help limit speed; in fact, many people expressed strong opposition to either.

**We recommend** the following actions in response to these issues:

- **provide more racks for locking cycles – at the village shop, the Johnson Hall and the Church**
- **provide a traffic priority feature at the entrance to the village on Haverhill Road**
- **provide interactive signs in London Road to discourage drivers from exceeding speed limit**
- **install pedestrian-controlled traffic lights on Sawston Bypass at the cycle crossing**
- **ensure that any residential or commercial developments within Stapleford include the provision of an improved transport system**
- **secure a more direct and reliable bus route into Cambridge.**

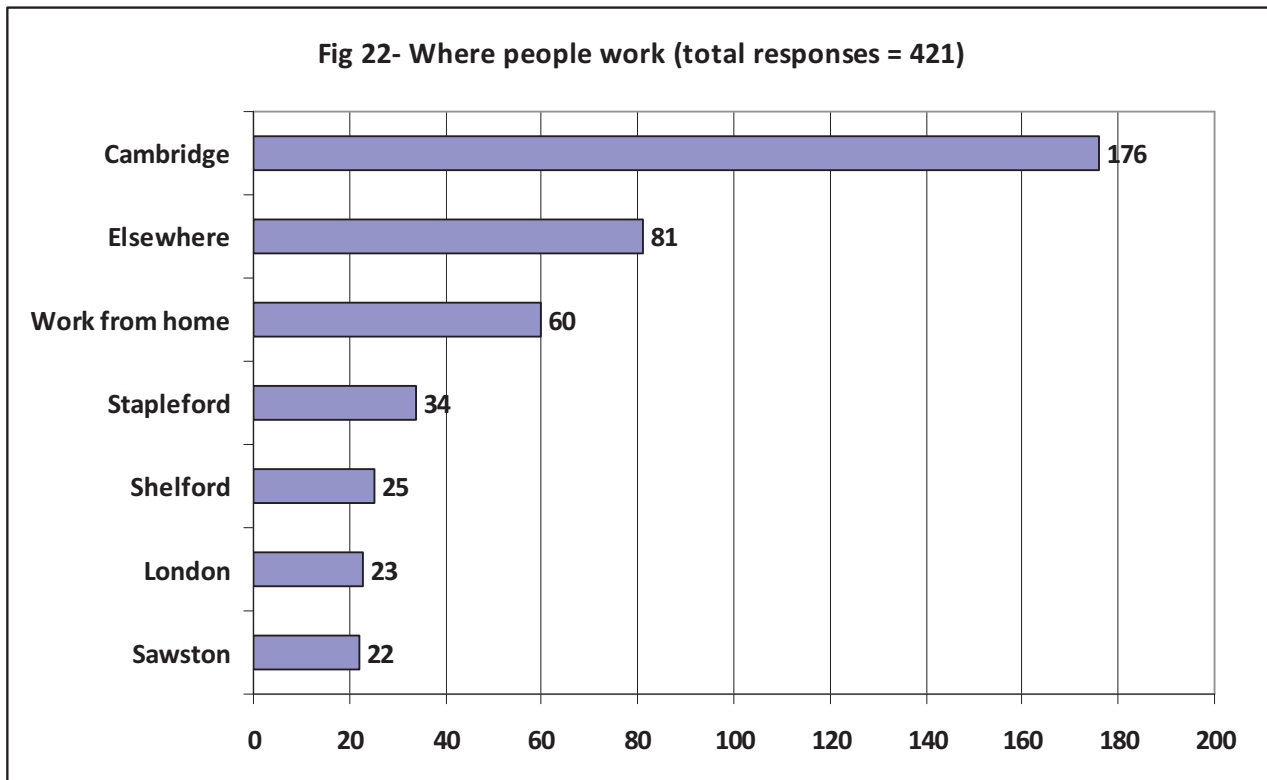
The **Environment Action Group** would be best-placed to pursue these actions, working with relevant public authorities.

<sup>5</sup> Since the survey was undertaken, the County Council has developed proposals for a 50 mph limit on the A1301.

### 4.3 Business and employment

The questionnaire sought information about residents' places of work and the nature of jobs in Stapleford. The survey also invited views about the importance of maintaining a range of businesses within Stapleford.

Cambridge is the primary work location for Stapleford residents (176 out of a total of 421 replies). 34 people indicated that they worked in Stapleford with a further 60 residents stating that they work from home. Slightly fewer people work in Shelford (25) and Sawston (22). Of the 81 people who work "elsewhere", the majority work in the surrounding villages up to 25 miles away, and a few in more distant locations, such as Brighton and Oxford.



Businesses in Stapleford are small. 45 people indicated that they ran their own business in Stapleford, of whom 34 worked on their own. The remainder (11) employed between 1 and 2 people. 22 people employed in Stapleford replied to a question about how many people they worked with: of these, only 5 worked with more than 10 colleagues. However, our attempt to survey the needs of existing businesses received few responses; the main comments related to parking.

The vast majority of respondents (417 from 445) consider it important that Stapleford continues to maintain a range of businesses. Some of the associated comments were:

*"If the village lost all its businesses it would diminish the community spirit"*

*"Particularly those who service all the residents eg builders, gardeners etc"*

*"A source of employment for local people"*

*"Need more employment opportunities for young people"*

*"Otherwise it will just be a dormitory village"*

When residents were asked whether development should be allowed in Stapleford to enable more local jobs to be created (e.g. through small business centres, start up companies, light engineering works) 195 people agreed (see Fig 8).



There were some suggestions for business support facilities – starter units, for example – that might increase activity. The small businesses operating from homes may be quite isolated; a comment suggesting a young professionals’ network tends to confirm that. With very high levels of qualifications across the population, the potential of Stapleford to maintain and develop businesses may be greater than is currently realised. It is encouraging that one of the pubs is exploring the possibility of hosting local business networking events.

As noted in Section 4.1.12, we see the proposed **Community Volunteer Group** as a mechanism for improving connections between local businesses and local demand. As part of this remit, **we recommend** the group to:

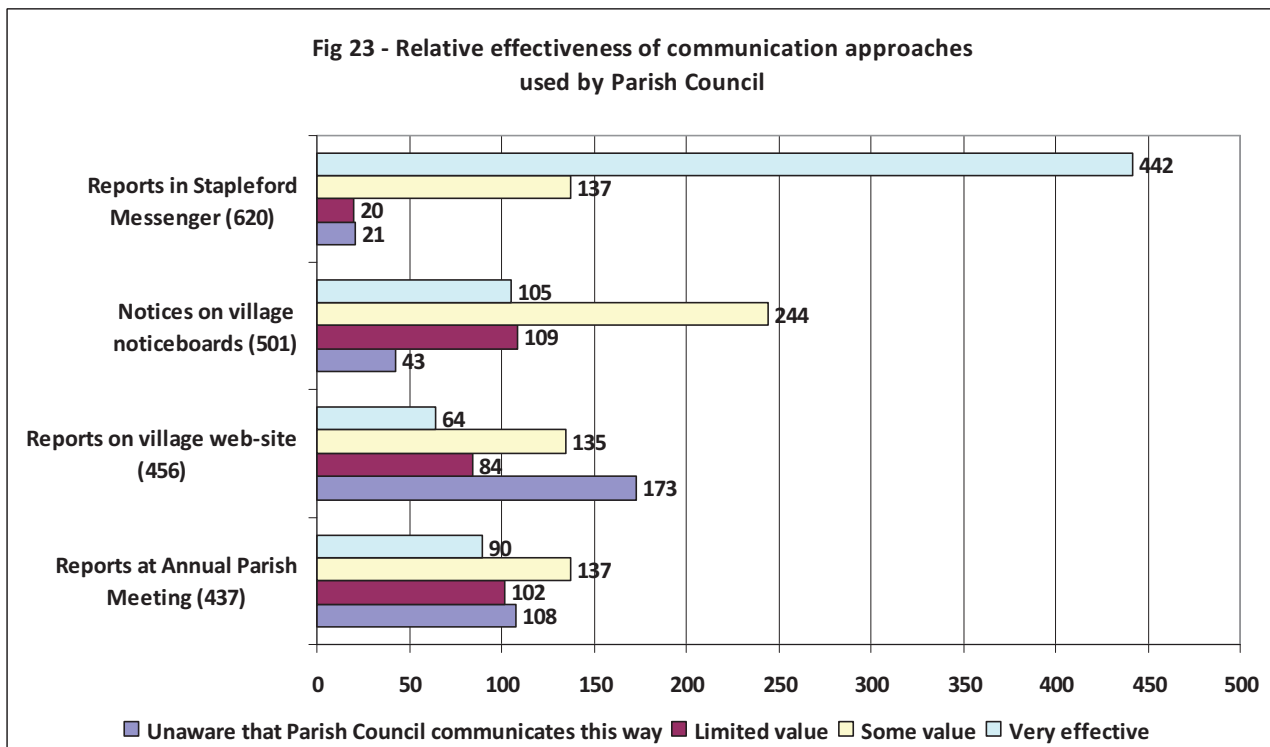
- **review the support needs of existing businesses so that they remain within the village, liaising as appropriate with bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce**
- **consider further business support facilities, such as a Stapleford business network or a Stapleford business development strategy, to help new businesses start and develop.**

We have already recommended (Section 4.1.8) that **existing employment sites should not be converted to housing use.**

4.4 Rôle of the Parish Council

The Parish Council has a limited range of functions (for example, maintenance of the recreation ground), and it acts as the representative for the community in local consultation over matters such as planning applications. It has a budget of a little under £50,000, mostly raised through the council tax mechanism. The whole Parish Council is elected afresh every four years. Stapleford Parish Council meets on the second Wednesday of the month with additional meetings if required.

The survey asked whether the methods used by Stapleford Parish Council to communicate with residents were effective. Respondents thought that the most effective way was through reports in the *Stapleford Messenger*, whereas notices and reports on the village web-site, village notice boards and reporting at the Annual Parish Meeting were much less effective. However, for those who do not subscribe to the *Messenger*, these other methods retain a significant purpose.

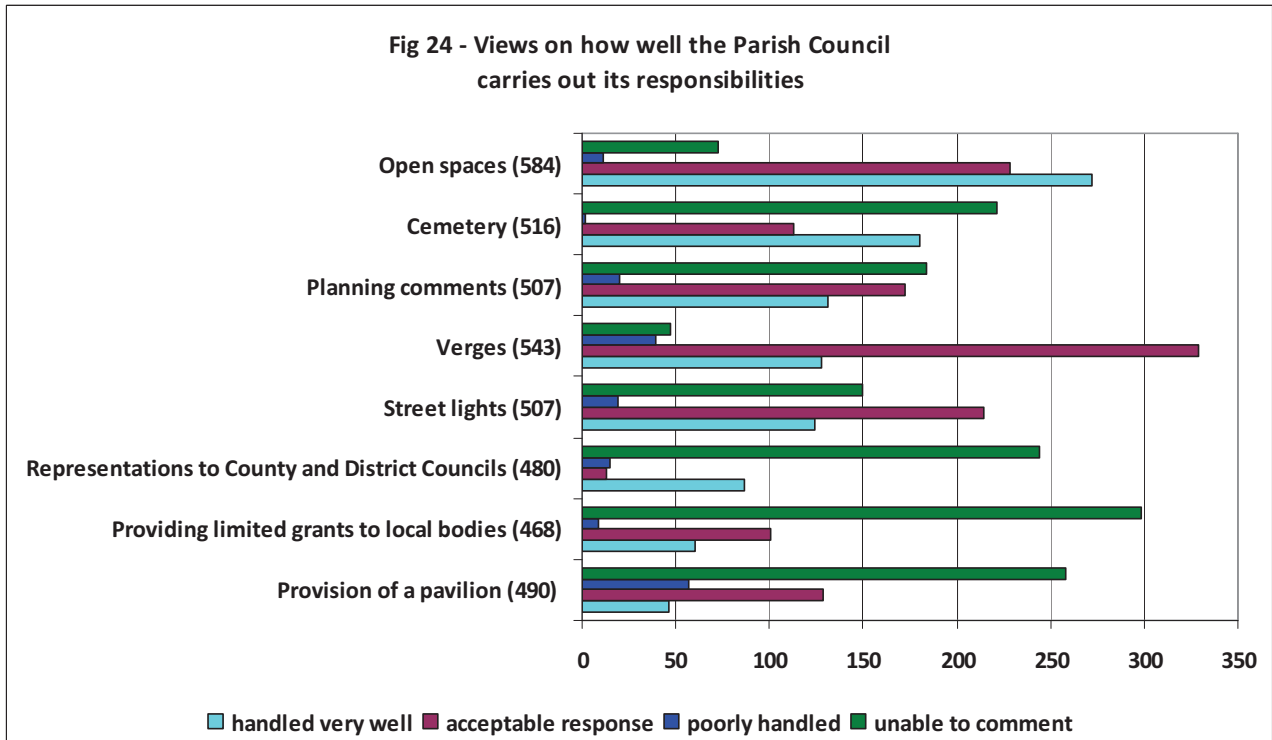


Suggestions for better ways by which the Parish Council could communicate with residents included one remark on delays on updates to the web-site, and a suggestion that a fortnightly surgery by councillors could be held (even though public time is allowed in every meeting). A request was made that the date of Parish Council meetings should be given in the Village Diary in the *Stapleford Messenger*.

A majority of respondents to these questions agreed that the Parish Council carried out its responsibilities *very well* or *acceptably* with respect to:

- maintenance of open spaces and mowing verges
- the cemetery and administration of burials
- maintenance of street lights (where appropriate)<sup>6</sup>
- comments to SCDC on planning applications and tree works.

<sup>6</sup> Currently, the Parish Council pays the County Council to maintain some street lights on its behalf.



The opinion of respondents was that the Parish Council was *less effective* over issues concerning:

- the provision of a pavilion on the recreation ground (the survey was undertaken before the project to refurbish and extend the pavilion got under way)
- representation to County and District Councils on matters relating to their responsibilities
- limited grants to local bodies for the general good.

A significant number of respondents felt unable to comment on all but the duties concerning open spaces and maintenance of verges. It may be that they were either unaware of the full range of responsibilities or had no experience of them.

Of the 29 individual comments provided under this heading, six were related to communication (including the examples given above); five concerned the upkeep of verges, overhanging hedges on paths and rubbish, with one of the comments praising the upkeep of the cemetery; four were concerned with planning/tree applications where it was felt there was inconsistency in approach; four with poor street lighting including outside the school by the allotments, in Gog Magog Way and by the church; three on the activity of meetings. Two comments were made on businesses within the village. The remaining were single comments related to a variety of issues.

Residents' view is that the Parish Council is effective though there is scope for providing improved ways to communicate its activities. Two areas of concern are given within the recommendations.

**We recommend that the Parish Council should:**

- **work towards further ways of making residents more aware of its activities and responsibilities and the outcome of its meetings**
- **reinforce representation at County and District levels through our respective Councillors**
- **make generally known the criteria for the handling of the limited grants to local bodies for the general good**
- **publicise the enhanced and extended facilities at the Pavilion once completed and set up management arrangements to maximise community use.**

## 4.5 A Stapleford hub

A theme that emerges from many responses is whether Stapleford has an identifiable centre for community life. Geography has not endowed us with a village square or high street, nor is there a Community Association which could provide a focus for community activities and events.

Residents do of course come together in many ways, at many venues. The survey responses indicate that the strength and extent of community life are far greater than many residents realise. We have considered whether to recommend a Community Centre, such as many other villages have; but we think the revamped Pavilion has the potential to meet this need. This will depend on the Pavilion being managed in such a way that it provides an accessible and attractive venue for informal activities, such as mother and toddler coffee mornings, as well as club bookings, and we have recommended accordingly in Section 4.4. We suggest that the Village Activities Group keeps this under review.

The survey responses show that it is not easy for residents to know what events and activities are available, and for new residents it is difficult to make connections. It is also difficult to get new initiatives rolling. For example, there might be enough enthusiasts in the village to start a tiddlywinks club, but nothing will happen if they do not know of each other's existence. It would be helpful if, alongside the recommendations we have made for better communications via the *Messenger* and the web-site (Section 4.1.10), a clearing-house could be established for people to register their interest in particular activities, or indeed their availability as a volunteer, or their needs that local businesses might respond to. This might require some dedicated volunteer time, perhaps a presence and a notice-board at the Pavilion, a facility on the web-site. We suggest that the Village Activities Group should consider the practicalities.

In support of new clubs and associations, the Stapleford Umbrella Association has indicated that it is able to provide advice and practical tips. It is not however a fully-fledged Community Association, and does not see the scope for developing its remit in that way.

The approach outlined here could amount to a virtual Community Association. In time a formally-constituted organisation might emerge, with a physical presence in a Community Centre. That would be a big step from the present position, and our recommendations do not envisage that we trying to achieve that immediately. Such developments will depend on the needs that the community articulates, and the availability of volunteers ready and willing to take community life forward.

#### 4.6 The Parish Council budget

The questionnaire sought opinions on whether residents would be willing to pay higher local taxes to meet some of the needs of Stapleford identified from this survey. In 2011-12 the Parish Council precept amounts to £54.75 of the Council Tax for a Band D property, generating a budget of £48,500. The 421 replies to this question were fairly evenly divided, 45% supporting the concept and 55% considering that there should not be an increase. Specific comments included:

*“Yes, in an ideal world I am supportive of investing in communities through taxes. However, does all the money taxed reach the intended community and how will priorities be made? Also, with the current economic climate, how favourable will members of the community be overall?”*

*“Not at present when real income is declining. In the last 10 years the parish precept has increased significantly more than the rate of inflation and we need to be conscious of the very tight budgets of some young families”*

*“High enough already!”*

*“If higher local taxes are to be considered, they should be for a specific major need in the village. Clearly it would depend what the needs were and whether I considered them a priority. Possibly better to fund raise for specific projects, then residents can fund what they consider their priorities”*

There is no clear mandate for increasing the parish precept, although people might be willing to pay more for well-defined projects.

Acting on residents’ behalf, the Parish Council has previously explored many of the proposals identified in this report, but has judged that the costs would require an unacceptable increase in the level of its precept through the Council Tax. On matters relating to highways, for example, the County Council has indicated a willingness to make various improvements if the Parish Council provided a financial contribution, but the Parish Council has felt unable to pursue them because of the cost and the impact on the local Council Tax. The evidence of respondents’ opinions assembled in this report will give the Parish Council a clearer view of Stapleford residents’ priorities as it considers how to shape its budget in future years.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Many of the points that come out of the survey relate in one way or another to the fundamental issues of maintaining the vitality of Stapleford while not compromising its country village character.

Residents are concerned that local jobs, services and facilities have steadily disappeared from Stapleford. Longer-term residents recall the presence in the village of a GP, a post office, and a much wider range of shops and services.

Of course, this is a trend that has affected many villages, but Stapleford residents do not want it to go further. They want Stapleford to be a thriving village, and do not want the general hollowing-out of local jobs and services to leave Stapleford just a dormitory suburb.

Counter-acting that trend will not be easy, and it will require effort from residents, not just from the Parish Council and other public bodies. Stopping and reversing the increase in our reliance on Cambridge for jobs, activities and services is an important goal for Stapleford, for two reasons. Travel to Cambridge or further afield is becoming increasingly expensive and inconvenient. And our population is likely to become less mobile: our age-profile is already more elderly than average, and as our population continues to age in line with national trends, a life-style based on easy travel will become increasingly difficult to sustain.

The survey shows widespread – though not universal – recognition that keeping Stapleford thriving will require some change and development. Important objectives are to make it easier for young families to establish in Stapleford; to maintain and increase the availability of local employment; and increase the availability of accommodation suitable for families and for the elderly.

The survey also shows a demand to maintain and strengthen social connections within the community. Community spirit was rated particularly highly in survey responses. There are indications, though, that participation is stronger among older and longer-established residents. An important objective therefore is to ensure that the strength of community life is also accessible to less-established residents with perhaps different expectations. Building a physical community hub may be an unrealistic aspiration in the short term, but we see considerable scope for improving opportunities for participation by enhancing the availability of information about the wealth of existing social and leisure activities in Stapleford.

The Steering Committee has considered whether to propose that a radically bigger and busier Stapleford would provide a more secure base for local jobs and services. However, we are clear that residents would not welcome development on such a scale. Too many of the features that make Stapleford attractive – quietness, country surroundings, community spirit – would be compromised. We do think, however, that there is scope for modest development without infringing the Green Belt, though that may require some flexibility over infilling and the use of brownfield sites within the village envelope.

So the vision arising out of the survey is of a Stapleford in future on much its present scale, with the green areas preserved, with better access to the countryside, but with niches found for some more housing and for appropriate businesses. There is of course no magic wand to make all that happen. The key will be to welcome appropriate developments as and when proposals come forward. There are local examples of how this can be achieved: the conversion of industrial premises to office units at Shelford station, the conversion from offices to housing at Abberley House in Great Shelford, and currently in Stapleford the conversion of disused barns at Bury Farm into offices, workshops and a space for musical performances. In the future, maybe a small research park could capitalise on the very high level of qualifications among the Stapleford population. In line with the survey responses, we have recommended (Section 4.1.8) that the Parish Council should make it clear in discussions with interested parties that Stapleford would welcome small-scale development that will enable the village to continue to thrive.

Stapleford is fortunate that many of the important services lacking in the village – medical centre, post office, library, bank – are available in Great Shelford and Sawston, distant only a mile or two respectively. It is essential that there is co-ordination across parish boundaries, so that decisions for and about Great Shelford and Sawston do not overlook Stapleford residents' needs. We therefore **recommend that the**

**Parish Council liaise regularly with Great Shelford and Sawston Parish Councils over the future evolution of the villages, as a first step drawing this Parish Plan to their attention.** This liaison should also include Little Shelford. For Stapleford and the two Shelfords to work together as a cluster seems to offer the best chance of keeping the villages thriving without compromising their attractiveness.

The recommendations here are distilled into 7 objectives in the accompanying Action Plan:

- to preserve and enhance the country village feel of Stapleford
- to improve access to the countryside around Stapleford
- to reduce traffic nuisance, improve traffic flow within and around the village, and enhance transport links
- to strengthen community life and communication throughout the village
- to improve community, sports and recreation facilities in Stapleford
- to enhance community services and employment opportunities within Stapleford
- to maintain confidence in Stapleford as a low crime area.

We have proposed a number of volunteer action groups to take the recommendations forward on behalf of the community. We would not want to bind them to the detail of the recommendations: we accept that the volunteers, as they get to grips with their remits, may develop better ideas. One important value of this report is the evidence-base that it provides. For the Steering Committee, the fundamental outcome is that the objectives set out in the Action Plan should be achieved, by the actions recommended in this report or by better methods if they can be devised. To maintain progress, regular monitoring and a comprehensive review after five years by the Parish Council will be essential.

The Parish Council has a responsibility to co-ordinate implementation, but parish councillors have neither the time nor the expertise to follow up all the proposed actions unaided. There are high levels of relevant knowledge and skill in the community, if residents are willing to volunteer them. Participating in volunteer groups will in itself contribute to sustaining the vitality of the community. Securing the future sketched out here will require a community effort, and making that effort will strengthen the community.

**6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Steering Committee wishes to express their thanks to the following for their support in the development of this plan.

Stapleford Parish Council for the impetus to get the process started, for continuing advice and for helping to fund the costs of the project. Cambridgeshire ACRE, in particular Sarah Johnston and Stuart Morris, for their advice and encouragement. Suffolk ACRE, especially Annette Gray, for taking on the data input task from all the questionnaire responses and for advice and guidance on the use of their software analysis package. Sean Gentle at South Cambridgeshire District Council for his assistance in creating the artwork for the report and action plan covers. Keith Craney of Printmongers and Mark Bishop of Cambridge Copy Studio for their help and advice with printing.

Numerous residents and organisations have supported this activity in various ways including leaflet and questionnaire distribution and collections, providing space for displays at village events, or simply offering advice.

The Steering Committee members who have been responsible for the preparation of Stapleford's Parish Plan are:

Chris Cooper, Michael Farrar, Kathleen Foreman, Geoff Hale (Chairman), Anne Hammerton, Stephen Poyser, John Street and Lynda Warth.

At the outset of the project, the following were also members of the Steering Committee: the late Karen Andrews, the late Michael Nurse and Peter Schofield.

**Funding**

In addition to Stapleford Parish Council (£1600), the Steering Committee acknowledges the provision of financial support from Cambridgeshire ACRE (£500), South Cambridgeshire District Council (£750) and the Village Hall Estate Fund in Stapleford (£750). Hence, total grants received have been £3600.

In terms of expenditure, the funds received have been spent as outlined below.

|                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Questionnaire software and data entry | £2272        |
| Printing costs                        | £1170        |
| Stationery and travel costs           | £158         |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>£3600</b> |





This page is left blank intentionally.