

Eversdens Ahead

A Parish Plan for The Eversdens

*A Summary Analysis
of Answers to
Questionnaires*

Eversdens Ahead

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Eversdens Ahead was set up as a community-led exercise to find out how residents view their experience of living in The Eversdens and to identify any actions that would improve the experience - in other words, to formulate a Parish Plan. Parish Plans can be supported by

Parish, District, and County councils as well as other agencies and have a good record of successful outcomes.

Ways of gathering opinions include the use of forums, meetings with interest groups, topic meetings (e.g. the local environment), as well as questionnaires. The Eversdens Ahead Steering Group chose to use a questionnaire adapted from questionnaires used in similar villages and associated with some recommended software.

All those of you with both the time and the interest (50% of households) duly completed and returned the questionnaire. "What do the other 50% think?" remains a valid question. The responses to the questionnaire, though significant, do not tell the whole story and some issues will benefit from more targeted fact-finding. Nevertheless, the questionnaire has delivered plenty of useful information.



What has emerged clearly is that you greatly value the villages for what they already are. The appearance and setting of the villages are much appreciated and are considered worth protecting. However, a degree of growth and development is inevitable. These notes indicate some directions.

The essence of a Parish Plan is that it is you, the residents, who make decisions and take action. It is at this point that the Steering Committee seeks to identify those of you who are willing to join the Steering Committee and form teams who will get things done.

The questionnaire has by now faded somewhat from people's memories. The Steering Committee's main reason for failing to keep *Eversdens Ahead* more obviously visible is that analysing the questionnaires turned into something of a marathon task. Now, however, it is the time to share all that the questionnaire has told us and to recruit the people who will take the project forward to turn this, as other villages have, into a real community venture.

If you are among those who expressed (or have) a willingness to get involved in any of the areas mentioned, you are urged to come and identify yourself as soon as possible so that this (so far) paper exercise can be translated into action.

In the period between the questionnaires being returned and now, several initiatives have already been taken quite independently of a Parish Plan. The Recreation Ground Committee have secured the services of the Connections Youth Bus for the summer and are actively researching other facilities for young people in the light of your suggestions. Alan Huddleston is making progress on a cycleway to Comberton. The allotments are in full swing.

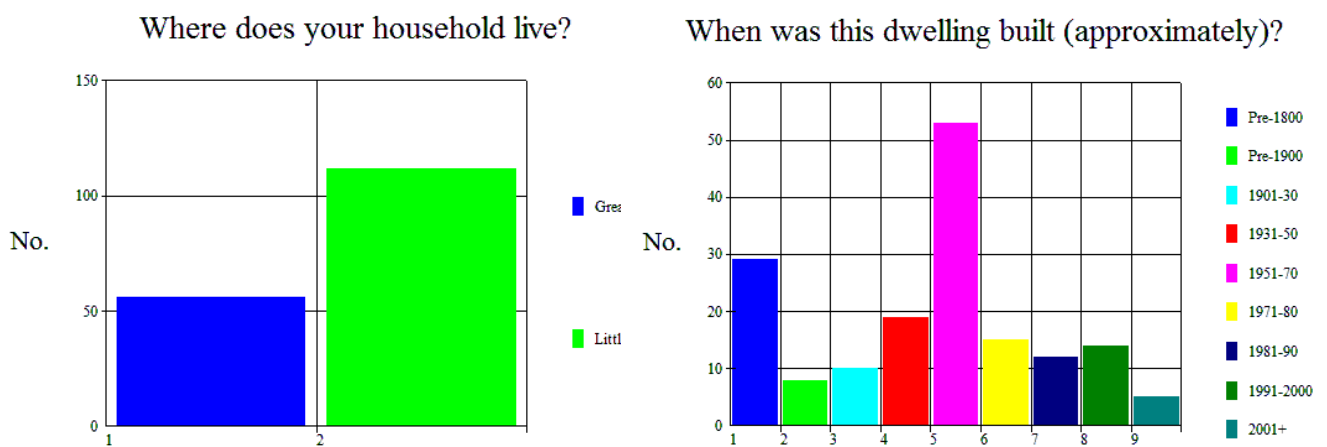
This report, and other information relating to Eversdens Ahead is on the village website www.the-eversdens.co.uk It would be good to think that you would make the website a regular port of call for news and updates.

These notes give just a brief and generalised summary of responses to the questionnaire. Obvious pointers to action are in red. (Detailed graphs and figures are available on request.)

Household Section

Questionnaires were received from about half the houses in the villages (168) housing 427 people of all ages.

Most people (85%) live in owner-occupied detached, or semi-detached, houses or bungalows. The villages grew most between 1951 and 1970.



13 of the 427 respondents **need accommodation** (9 nearby, 3 further afield) for a variety of personal reasons.

Of the 89 children in the households, 36 attend Primary school and 31 Secondary.

Personal Section

371 (179 male and 192 female) of the 427 people (from whose homes questionnaires were received) submitted answers on the questionnaire.

About 80% of respondents have lived in the villages more than 5 years and 51% for more than 15 years.

Incomers (all but the 28 born in the villages) came for a spread of reasons, the attractiveness of the area being prominent.

Environment, location, and community (in that order) count high in what is important to people about the Eversdens. Those three factors received two thirds of the (900) ticks in the relevant question. Next came schools and family connections (about 7.5% each) and then transport links, housing costs and availability.

Village Development

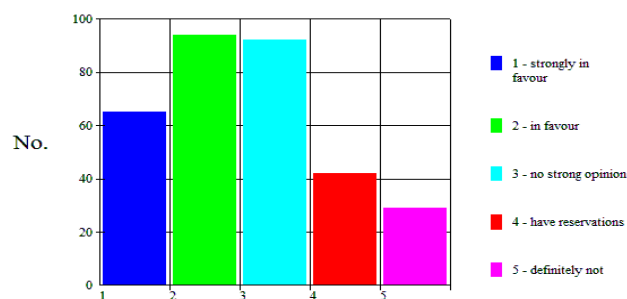
343 people expressed their attitudes to various development proposals for the Eversdens.

Most of the proposals attracted no strong feelings. There was widespread support for **more village events and societies as well as for recreational areas, footpaths, local employment, and use of allotments**. However:

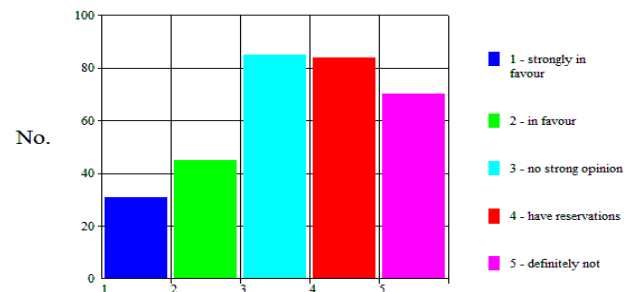
about 46% were **for small business development** (“19% strongly in favour” and 27.4% “in favour”) 12.2% “have reservations” and 20.4% ticked “definitely not”; (26.8% had no strong opinion).

about 22% were **for small scale industrial workshops** (9% “strongly in favour” and 13.1% “in favour”); 24.5% “have reservations” and 20.4% ticked “definitely not”; (24.8% had no strong opinion).

More small businesses



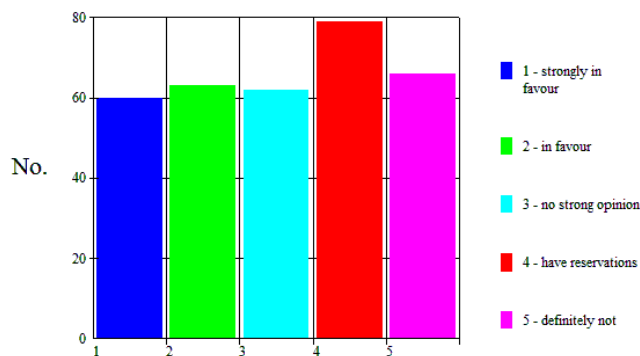
More workshops?



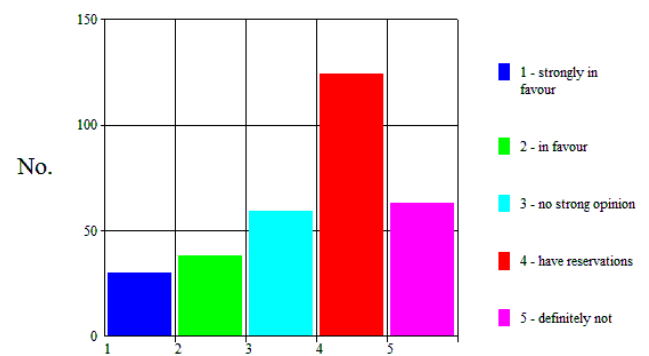
about 37% were **for more affordable housing** (17.5% “strongly in favour” and 18.4% “in favour”), 23% “have reservations” and 19.2% ticked “definitely not”; (18.1% had no strong opinion).

about 20% were **for more housing** (8.7% “strongly in favour” and 11.1% “in favour”); 36.2% “have reservations” and 18.4% ticked “definitely not”; (17.2% had no strong opinion).

Affordable housing?



More housing?



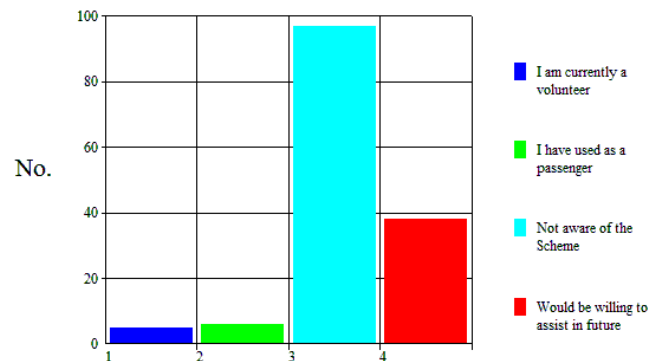
Getting about

90% of respondents say the car is their major form of transport. Giving lifts is not popular. About 5% **would**; about 30% would **occasionally**; about 45% **NEVER**.

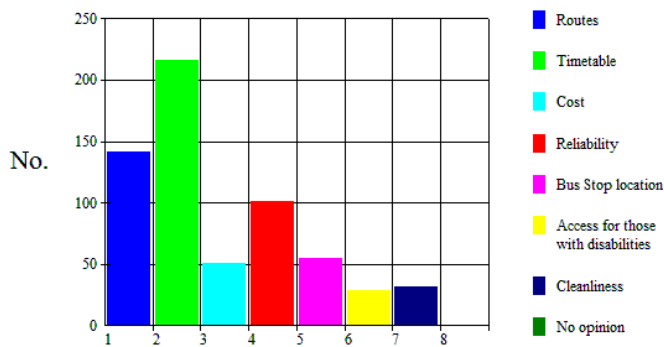
97 people (70%) were not aware of the **Car Scheme**. 36 people expressed a willingness to assist.

Around 75% **never** use the buses. A few use them to go to school and to go shopping. Many people would welcome most of the listed **improvements to public transport**, particularly to timetables, routes, and reliability. (See below)

Are you involved with the car scheme?



Would you like to see any improvements in the bus service with regard to?



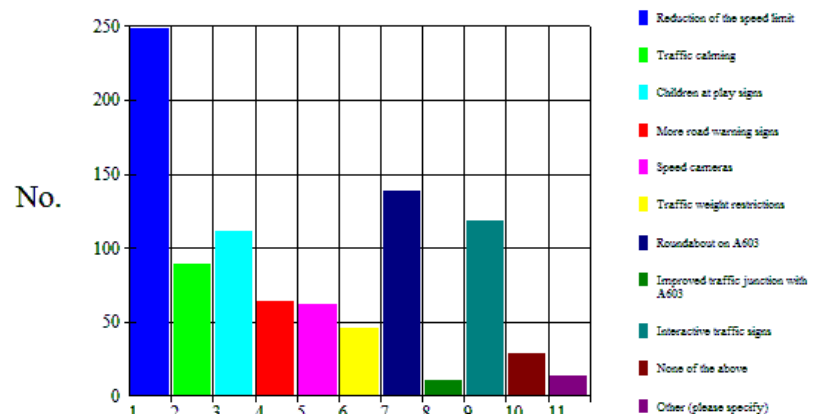
Around 80% of respondents never have any difficulty getting to the services (medical etc) they need.

About 10% do find some difficulty getting to activities in Eversden or Comberton for a variety of reasons.

Road safety

Main danger spots are seen to be at the top of Little Eversden High Street, the A603, and the bends around Great Eversden church. Significant numbers fear speeding traffic in various parts of the village but particularly on the **A603**. Many would support a **reduced speed limit** through the villages (70%). All the other safety measures received support though 8% of respondents supported none.

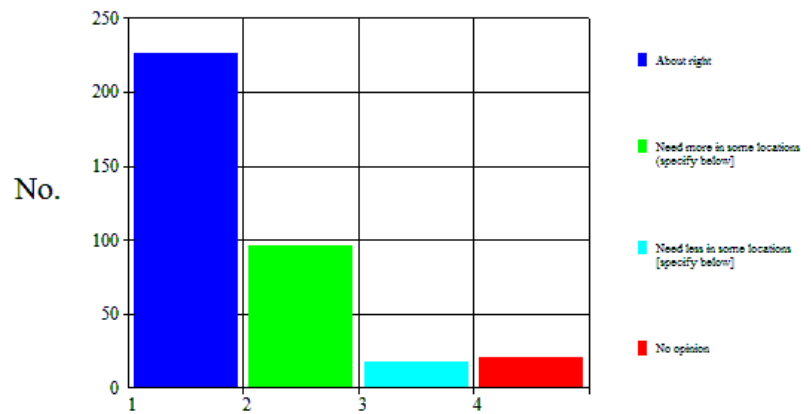
Would you support the following speed control measures in the Eversdens ?



Street Lighting

63% percent thought the street lighting about right and 27% would welcome more in specific locations.

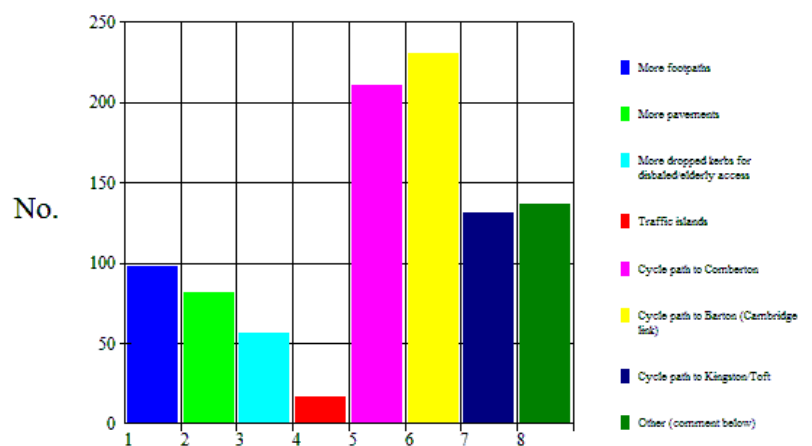
What is your opinion of the level of street lighting in the Eversdens?



Cycle Paths

Many (over 70% of respondents) would like to see more **cycle paths** (to Comberton, Barton, Haslingfield, and Kingston/Toft) and there was support for improved pavements and footpaths. About half said they would use bikes on suitable cycle ways. 99 bikes are used at least once a week.

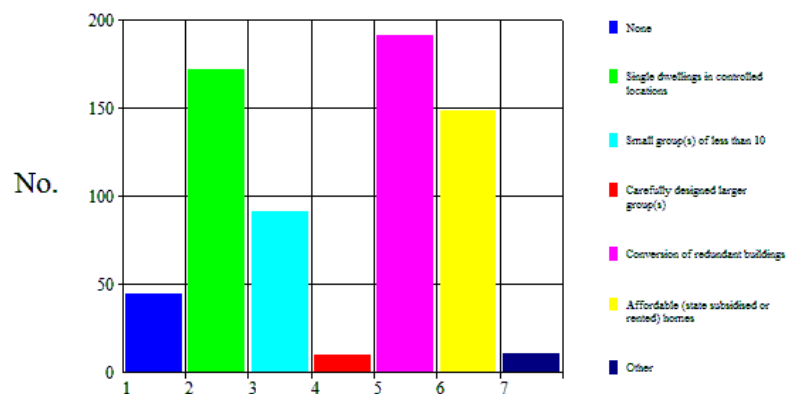
Cycling measures?



Housing

About half of the respondents would find the following acceptable: **single dwellings in controlled locations (49.9%)**, **conversion of redundant buildings (55.4%)**, and **more affordable housing (43.3%)**. A quarter would find small groups of fewer than 10 houses acceptable. 13% want no more housing in the villages.

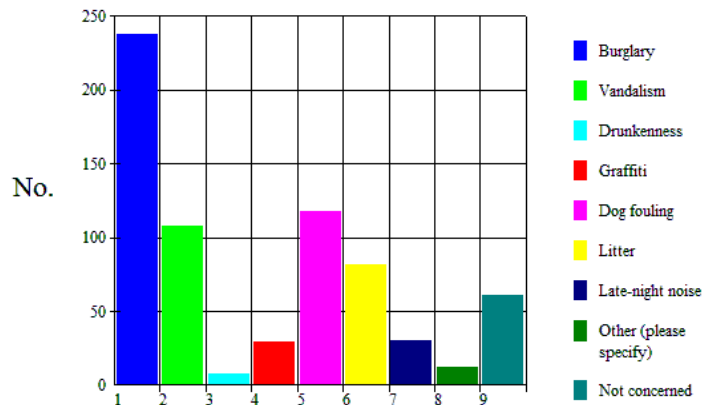
What type(s) of housing development would be acceptable in the Eversdens ?



Police and Crime

About 10% of respondents regard the police coverage of the Eversdens to be **good**. The rest are divided fairly evenly among **reasonable**, **poor**, and **no opinion**. 17% are not concerned about crime, but **burglary** concerns about 68%. Dog fouling, vandalism, and litter are next in line (about 25%). There are other concerns. Roughly one third of respondents would like to join the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, a third wouldn't, and a further third has no opinion.

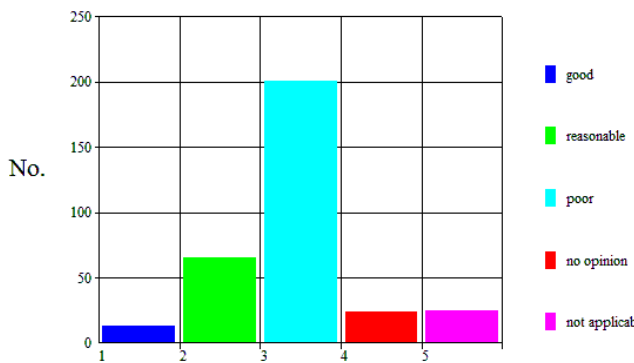
Crimes and ASBO?



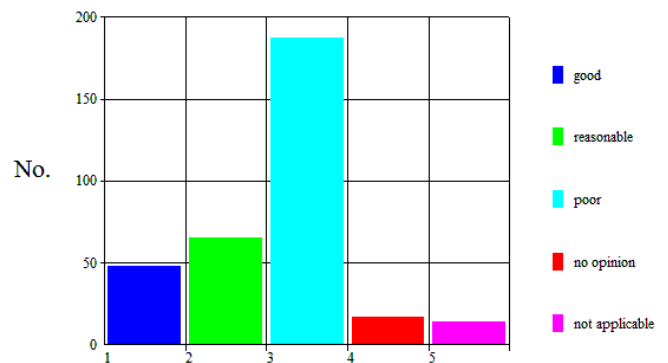
Environmental services

There is a spread of views on the standard of services. **Reasonable** or **good** fit most but 4 services come out **poorly**: **broadband speed (55%)**, **mobile phone reception (52%)**, **road repairs (46%)**, and **Winter snow services (40%)**. Gas would be welcomed by 59% and ignored by 40%.

Broadband speed?



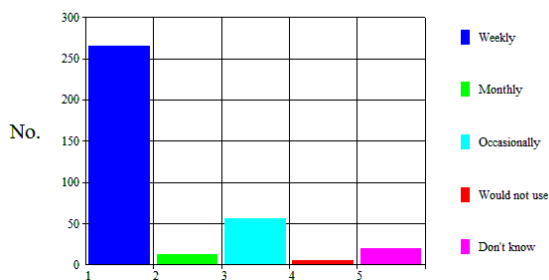
Mobile phone reception?



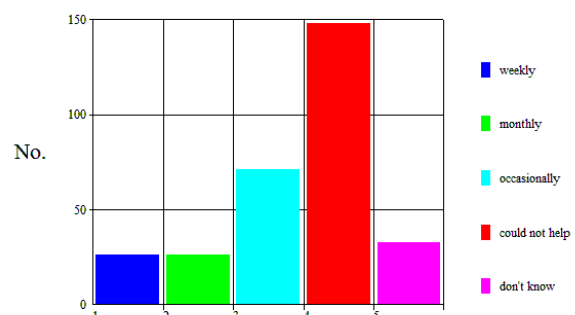
Community Shop

About 74% of the 358 respondents said they would use a community shop every week. About half said they would be willing to give varying levels and types of help (some weekly, some monthly, some occasionally – counter, accounts, filling, fetching). Around 50% couldn't.

If a community shop were opened in the Eversdens how often would you use it?



Shop help?



Information

Large numbers (around 70%) consider they are fully aware of what is going on at the village hall, the rec, and in Community Education at Comberton. The remainder either are not aware or don't want be.

Things to do

About 80 people said they would attend new **sports clubs** – 37 of them mentioned tennis. 25 were interested in types of **Keep Fit** activities. Several other games were mentioned. More than 10 people would attend Art or Drama, Badminton, and, slightly fewer, bowls, snooker/darts, organised Youth activities, and netball/basketball.

More for children and young people

Persons 1 and 2 did most of the answering and **better transport** was mentioned 37 times. However, 37 people felt that a facility in the village is needed. Ideally this would be a sports centre cum **clubhouse and shelter**, with a shop and meeting area. Another 14 mentioned a **hard surface** (tennis wall, skateboard park, basketball court, all-weather 5-a-side area). **Cycle paths, more grown-up rec equipment, and the interest of an adult** (family, supervision, inspiration, leadership) each received about 10 mentions.

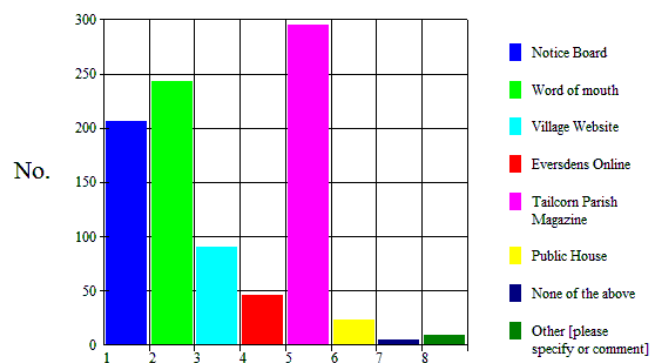
Respondents were asked to suggest ways of spending a large sum of money on the Recreation Ground for the benefit of 13 to 18 year-olds. There was an extensive range of suggestions largely included above. The complete list has been forwarded to the Recreation Ground Committee.

Communication

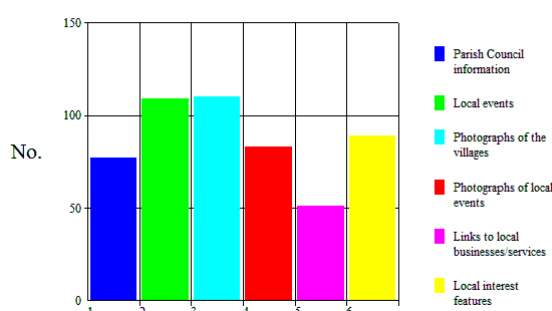
People say they get to know about what's on from Tail Corn (84%). (There are three issues of Tail Corn per year.) **Conversations inform 69%. Over half use the noticeboards, a quarter the website, and an eighth make use of Eversdens OnLine.**

Of the 280 respondents to the Tail Corn question 254 gave good support for more articles on local events, local history, local issues, nature, clubs, churches, and special features by local people – but not for more fiction. 26 (9%) do not read it.

Information sources?



Do you use the Eversden website for?



The website question revealed that 34% of the 342 respondents visit it occasionally and 25% never. 5% are regulars. Those who do visit the website look for photographs of events and of the villages, local interest features, Parish Council information, and links to local businesses.

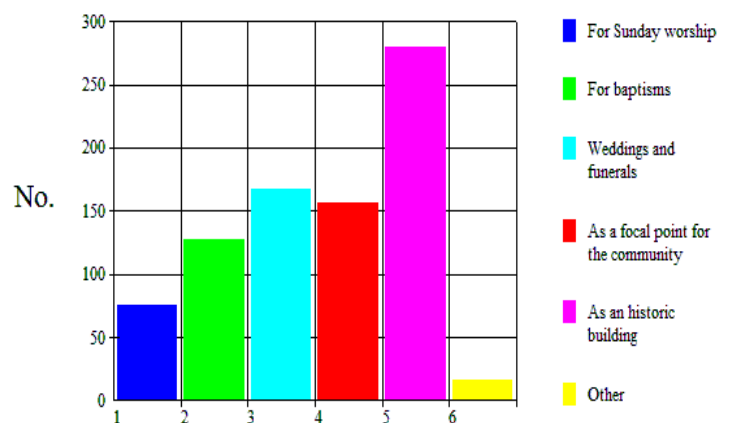
Parish Business

At least two thirds of respondents have never attended a PC meeting or annual parish meeting. Most (62%) think the PC publicises its decisions and activities well enough. Nearly half (44%) don't know how councils use money. Over a quarter are quite satisfied. Councillors' awareness of local concerns is seen to decrease from high at parish level down to lower at District level and lower still at County level. 136 respondents were "totally" or "quite" satisfied with the local planning system and 101 were "quite" or "very" dissatisfied. 107 had no opinion.

Churches

About a third of respondents do not attend any church in the Eversdens. A few attend weekly and about a quarter seem to attend at some time in a year. 15% report that they attend a place of worship elsewhere mainly because they prefer the service elsewhere or because their religion/denomination is not catered for. Most respondents value the church as an historic building (88%), for weddings and funerals (53%), as a focal point (49%), for baptisms (40%), and for Sunday worship (24%). Many would be happy to see the churches used for other activities (especially concerts and meetings) but about 10% would not. About a third had no opinion.

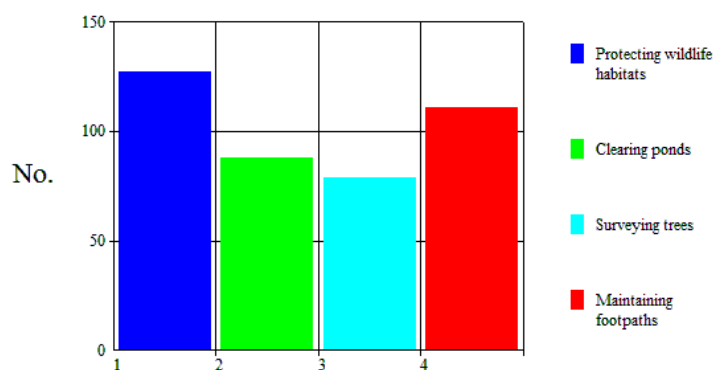
Is the Church (St Helen's/St Mary's) important to you?



Countryside

The quality of the countryside around the Eversdens is considered to be very important by 93 % of the respondents. Well over half thought all the measures listed to protect wildlife were very important. The measures included the creation of nature reserves and ponds, campaigns against litter, care of water courses and woods, and the reduction of pollution. Well over half (of 171) said they would be prepared to help with protecting habitats, clearing ponds, surveying trees, and maintaining footpaths.

Would you be prepared to help with any of the following?

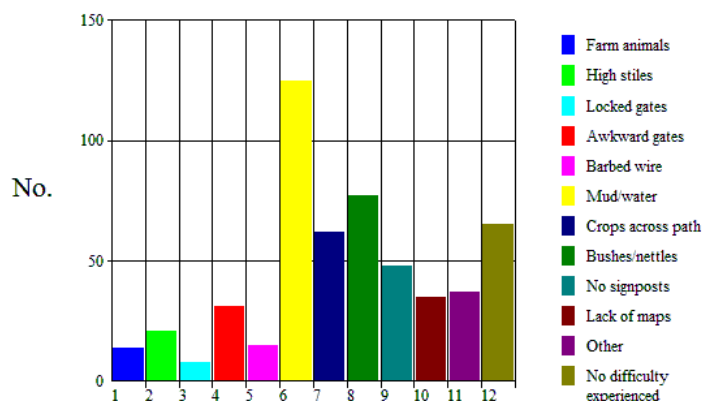


Environment Suggestions

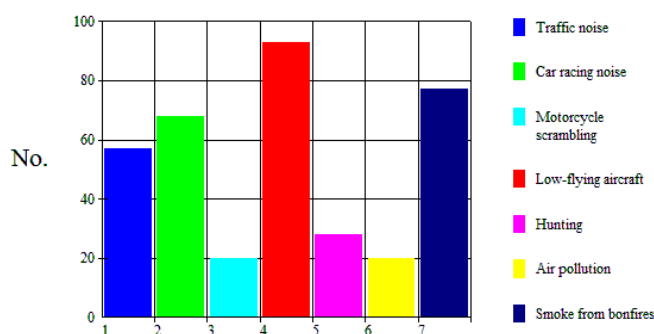
About 125 people suggested actions to protect and enhance the local environment. From the range and variety of suggestions it is clear that many **treasure the rural nature of the villages** and their setting in the countryside.

Between 62% and 85% were happy with the local footpaths and 33% would be **willing to help maintain** them. About 15% had some problems with the paths and 38% were unwilling to maintain them. Among the difficulties in using footpaths, the biggest (48%) was **mud**. **Nettles and brambles** came next. Low-flying aircraft annoy 45% of respondents. Bonfires, car-racing, and traffic noise come next. All the examples annoy some.

Any difficulties using footpaths?



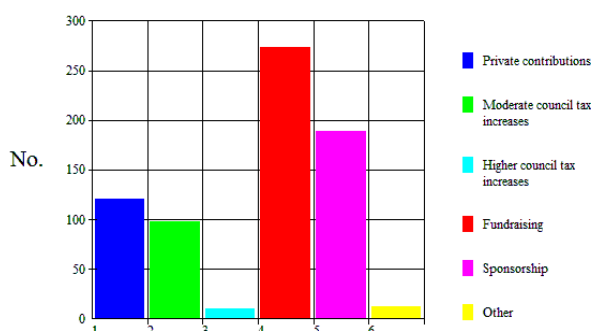
Does Eversden suffer from any of the following types of disturbance?



So how should money be raised to implement any recommendations?

1. Fundraising 86% (of 319)
2. Sponsorship 59%
3. Private contributions 38%
4. Moderate council tax increases 31%
5. Other 4%
6. Higher council tax increase 3%

Money source for implementation?



In a nutshell

Suggested imperatives are:

- to enhance and maintain the environment - countryside, footpaths, spaces, and wildlife
- to create more sporting, cultural, and recreational opportunities for all ages
- to improve the bus service
- to increase awareness of and involvement in the Car Scheme
- to eliminate speeding
- to create cycle paths
- To achieve better Broadband and mobile phone services
- To value the churches as foci and facilities.
- to establish Eversdens OnLine and the village website as viable channels of communication.

The Eversdens Ahead Steering Committee

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