

Heddon Parish Community Survey Final Report

June 2021

**Heddon on the Wall
Parish Council**



Introduction

In November 2020, Heddon Parish Council commissioned Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to undertake a Community Survey for the Parish.

This survey, aimed at all residents of Heddon on the Wall, sought views on the present environment, services and amenities in the Parish and what residents would like to see improved. After the events of 2020, the Parish Council wanted to look to the future and encourage people to give all their ideas on improvements that could be made to the village for people of all age groups, young and old.

The Survey

The Community Survey involved the distribution of a questionnaire to all households within Heddon Parish at the end of February 2021. The questionnaire was also available to complete online via the Parish Council website and Facebook site.

The questionnaire was distributed by hand to all households by the Parish Council, utilising a number of local volunteers. A freepost envelope was provided to each household for return of completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire included a total of 35 questions under the following seven themes:

- You and your household
- The environment
- Services
- Amenities
- Travel and transport
- Communications
- Suggestions for improvement and development of our village

**HEDDON PARISH
COMMUNITY SURVEY**

This survey, aimed at all residents of Heddon on the Wall, seeks your views on the present environment, services and amenities in the Parish and what you would like to see improved. After such a terrible year we want to look to the future and encourage people to give us all your ideas on improvements that could be made to the village for people of all age groups, young and old.

YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Q1. How old are you?
Under 16 ☐ 16 – 29 ☐ 30 – 64 ☐ 65 or over ☐
Years old

Q2. What is your current employment status?
In full-time education ☐ Unemployed ☐
Homemaker ☐ In work ☐
Retired ☐ Other ☐

Q3. How many people live in your household?
Just yourself ☐ More than two adults with no children ☐
Two adults with no children ☐ A family with children under 16 ☐
Other (please specify): _____

Q4. How long have you lived in Heddon?
Less than a year ☐ 1 – 5 years ☐ 6 – 10 years ☐ More than 10 years ☐

Q5. What is your ethnic group?
Asian or Asian British ☐ White ☐
Black, African, Black British or Caribbean ☐ Another ethnic group ☐
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

Q6. What is the main thing that keeps you in Heddon (please tick one box only)?
The environment ☐ School ☐
Work ☐ Other family nearby ☐
Other (please specify): _____

The survey was completely anonymous and the closing date for completion was set as 30 April 2021.

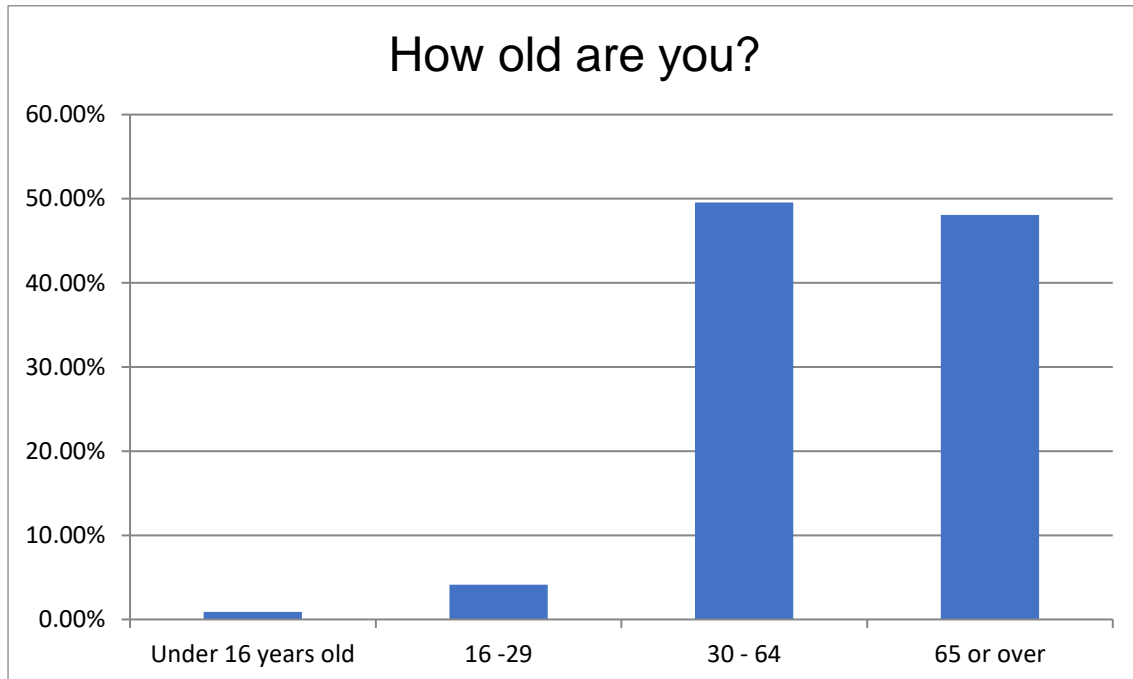
740 hard copies of the questionnaire were delivered to households throughout the Parish.

227 questionnaires were completed and mailed back to CAN representing a response rate of 31%. In addition, 115 questionnaires were completed online. The total of 342 completed questionnaires represents an overall response rate of 46%. This is an excellent response rate for questionnaires of this nature.

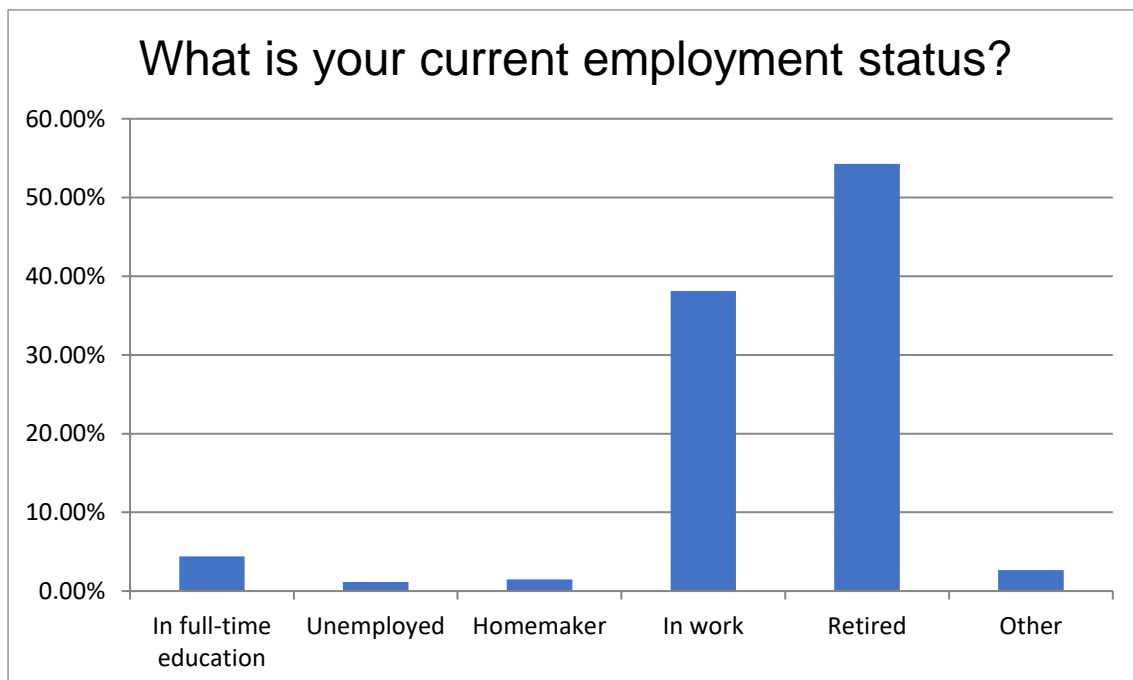
Research Findings

You and your household

Almost half of respondents were aged between 30 and 64 (49.6%) and a similar proportion were aged 65 or over (48.1%). 5% of respondents were aged 29 or younger, of which less than five were under 16 years old.



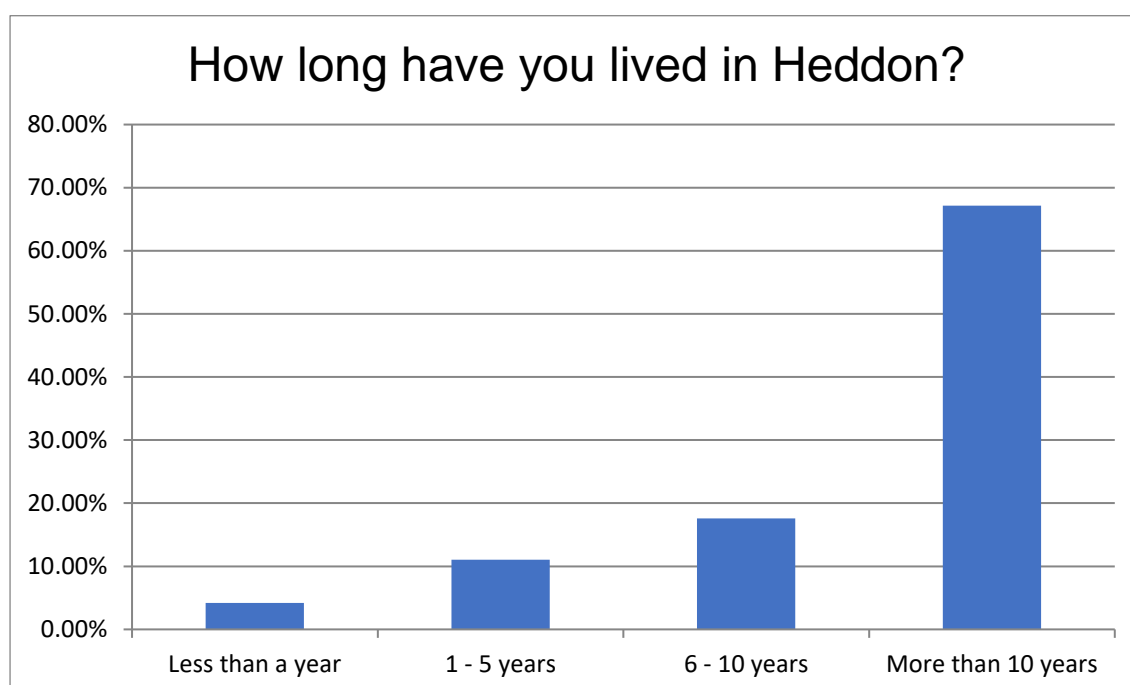
The majority of respondents were retired (54.3%) whilst 38.1% were in work. 4.4% of respondents were in full-time education and 1.5% described themselves as a homemaker. Less than 5 respondents were unemployed.



Exactly half of all responses came from households containing 2 adults and no children. The proportion of responses from other household types are shown in the table below.

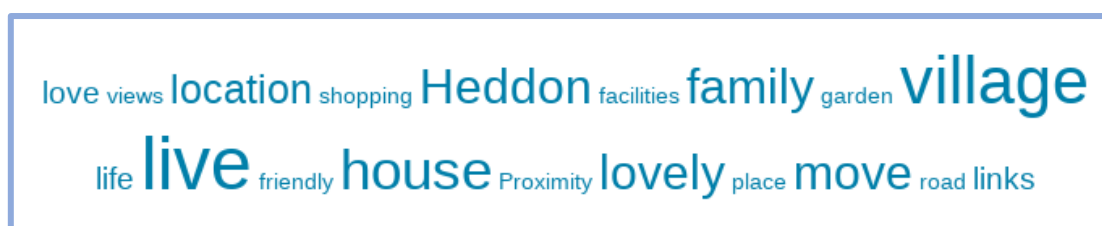
How many people live in your household?	%
Just yourself	22.5
More than 2 adults with no children	10.3
2 adults with no children	50.0
A family with children under 16	17.2

Two thirds of respondents had lived in Heddon for over 10 years (67.2%) and 4.2% for less than a year.

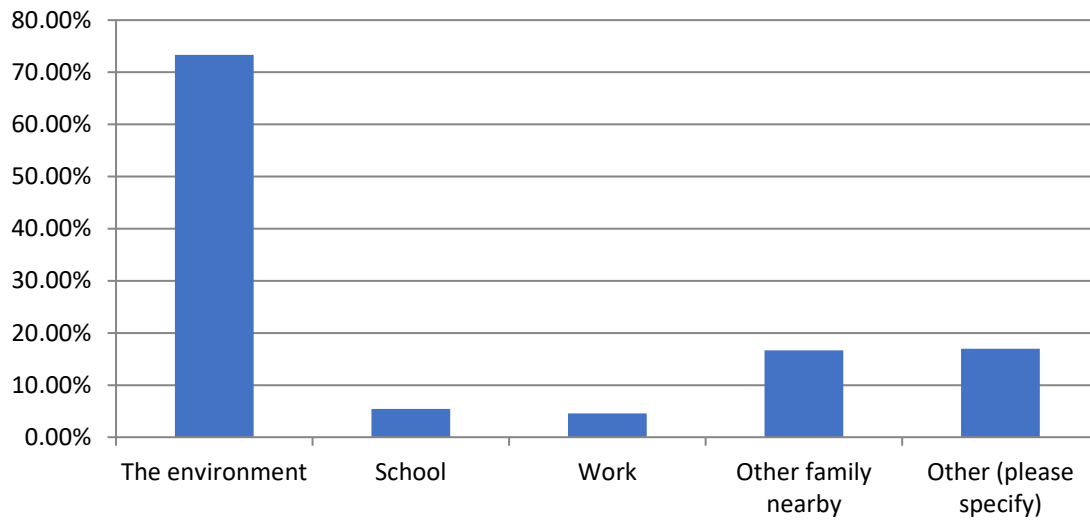


97.3% of respondents described their ethnic origin as white. Less than 5 respondents used other descriptions and 2.1% preferred not to say.

The main thing that keeps people in Heddon is the environment (73.2% of respondents). The presence of other family nearby was the most important factor for 16.7% of respondents, school for 5.5% and work for 4.6%. 17% of respondents mentioned other factors as the main thing that keeps them in Heddon. The word cloud below includes the most commonly used words by the 56 respondents in this category.



What is the main thing that keeps you in Heddon?



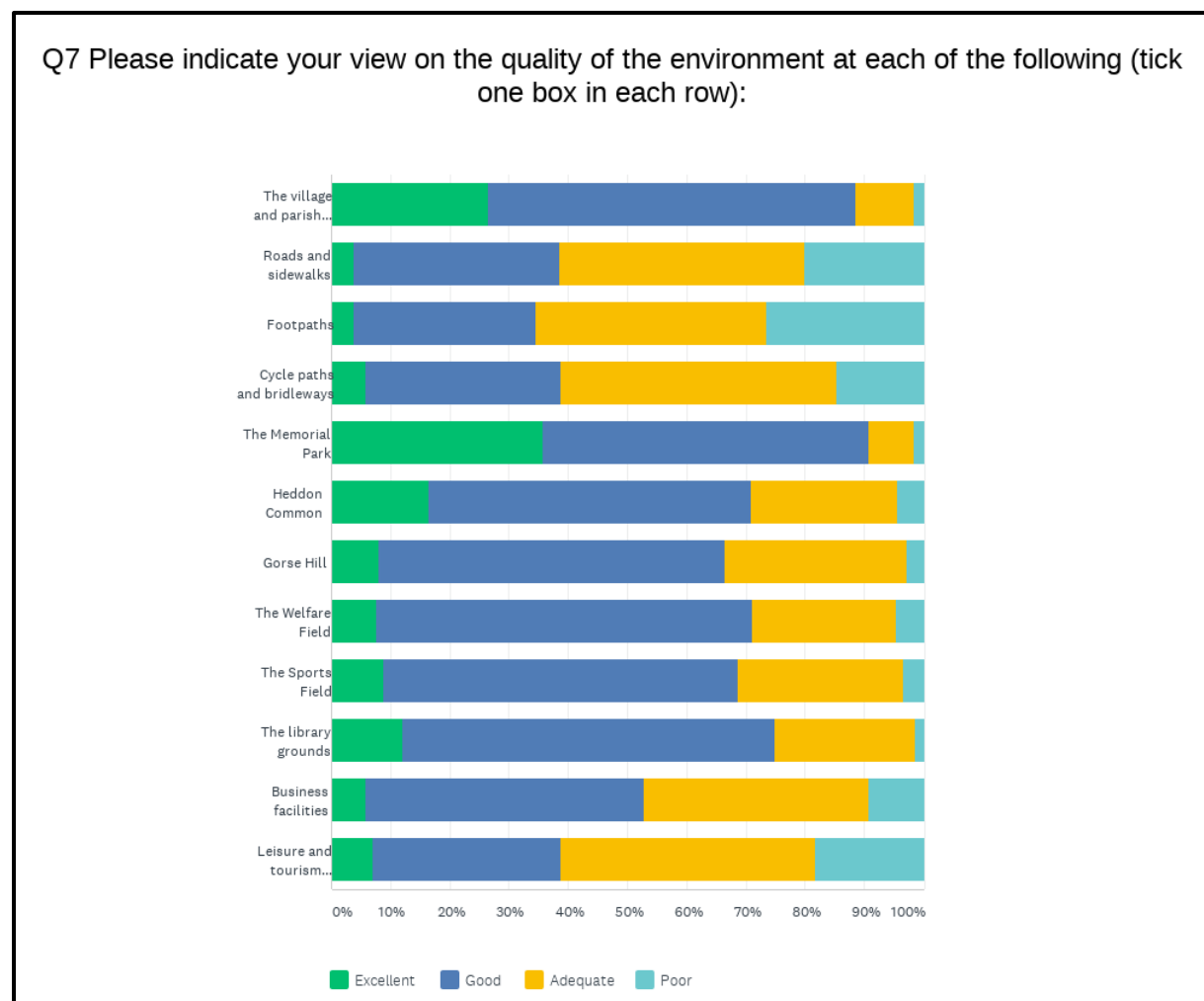
The Environment

Respondents were asked their views on the quality of the environment at a range of locations and facilities. Overall, 88.6% of respondents thought the quality of the environment for the village and parish generally was excellent or good.

The highest ranked location was the Memorial Park where 90.8% of respondents ranked the environment as excellent or good, followed by the library grounds with 74.8%.

By contrast, only 34.6% of respondents thought the quality of footpaths was excellent or good and 39% ranked cycle paths, bridleways, roads, sidewalks and leisure and tourism facilities at the same level.

26.5% of respondents ranked the quality of footpaths as poor with 20.1% applying the same ranking to roads and sidewalks.



96 respondents indicated that they would consider volunteering to help maintain these facilities/areas.

Respondents were asked to comment on the environment of the village and the facilities they used the most. 249 responses were recorded and these are reflected in the word cloud below.

many cut look right Dog walking Hall improved walkers moved nice love
common Gorse Hill children Cycle paths bridleways often Walks around village make
Garage P.O Three Tuns Butterfly Garden Footpaths Bridleways open vets keep
work Pleased Wall due sports field now pavements new shops problem
needs Common Bridleways Memorial Park Petrol station pubs
Fly tipping library will Heddon Common lot park live
walks bins village better use access footpaths
people road environment common litter Heddon
roads sidewalks Welfare Field use common garage
Park Welfare Field Paths surface Knott Hall Butterfly area lockdown
Hexham Road volunteer Dell facilities Local trees Muga pubs dell etc play park
Military Road Spar shop post office Common dog walking dogs St Andrew church
Church use Common walk school uneven poor Chapel overgrown meetings
Garage shop P.O use facilities visitors help residents

The larger words above reflect those mentioned the most. Heddon Common, the Welfare Field, Memorial Park, Knott Hall and garage were the most frequently mentioned facilities. Many respondents referred to the increased local walking undertaken during the pandemic and many made reference to specific improvements they would like to see, particularly in relation to footpaths.

Services

Respondents were asked their views on the quality of a range of services in the parish. The postal service and refuse collection were ranked the highest with 82.5% and 81.9%, respectively, ranking these services as excellent or good.

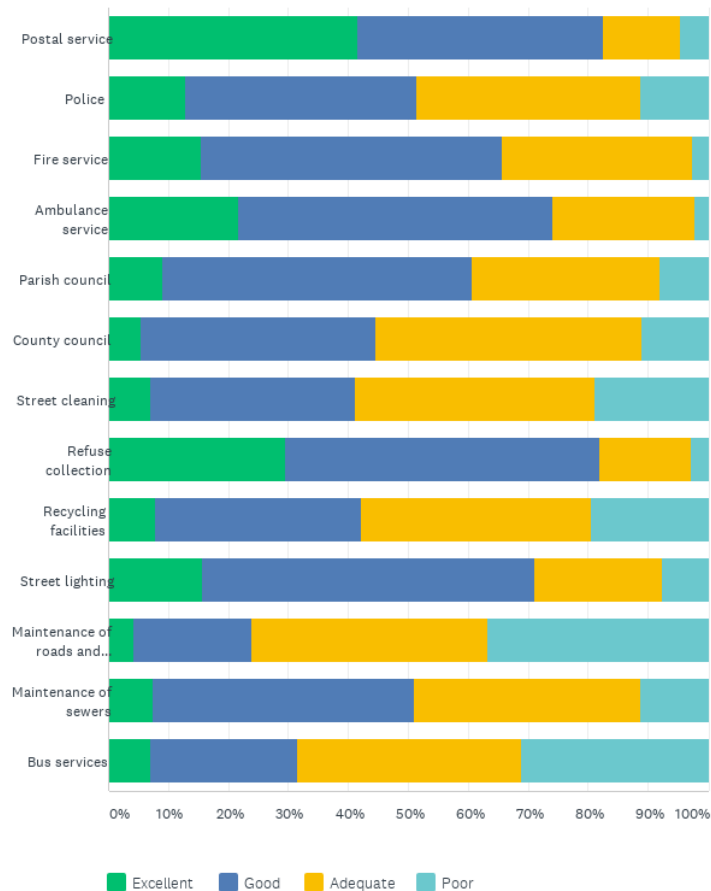
The ambulance service, street lighting and the fire service were ranked next highest with 74.1%, 71.1%, and 65.7% of respondents ranking these as excellent or good.

60.6% of respondents ranked the quality of service provided by the Parish Council as excellent or good.

The services receiving the highest proportion of residents ranking them as poor were:

- Maintenance of roads and footpaths 36.8%
- Bus services 31.2%
- Recycling facilities 19.5%
- Street cleaning 19.0%

Q10 Please indicate your view on the quality of the following services (tick one box in each row)



Respondents were asked to offer any other comments on the services in the parish. 172 responses were recorded, and these are reflected in the word cloud below.

regular two bus drive recycle glass leaves full maintenance take especially hour back sign issue
 around options t Newcastle dangerous surface house Hexham Road car time near
 make cracked often collection bin sewers go comment Parish Council water
 recycling bus stop use bad bus service estates poor area
 good garage need trip road never Heddon etc
 footpaths Lots village street cleaning Buses recycling facility
 service run glass paths see night council Northumberland Pot holes city
 weeds well early many two resurfacing blocked stop uneven will people park pavements
 first think us glass recycling problems walk county council state public transport currently great

Comments ranged widely with many negative observations regarding specific issues. Potholes and the quality of roads and footpaths were frequently mentioned along with the need for improved recycling services.

Amenities

Respondents were asked to indicate their views on the range of opportunities available in Heddon for specific groups. Responses are shown in the table below.

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
	%	%	%	%
Children	6.9	49.1	35.3	8.7
Young people	1.8	11.1	41.7	45.4
People with disabilities	1.2	12.2	49.8	36.8
The elderly	5.7	40.9	42.7	10.7
All ages	2.2	34.6	53.5	9.7

56% of respondents felt that opportunities for children were excellent or good. This contrasts with opportunities for young people and people with disabilities where 45% and 37%, respectively, of respondents felt opportunities were poor.

Respondents were also asked whether they use the library with responses presented in the table below.

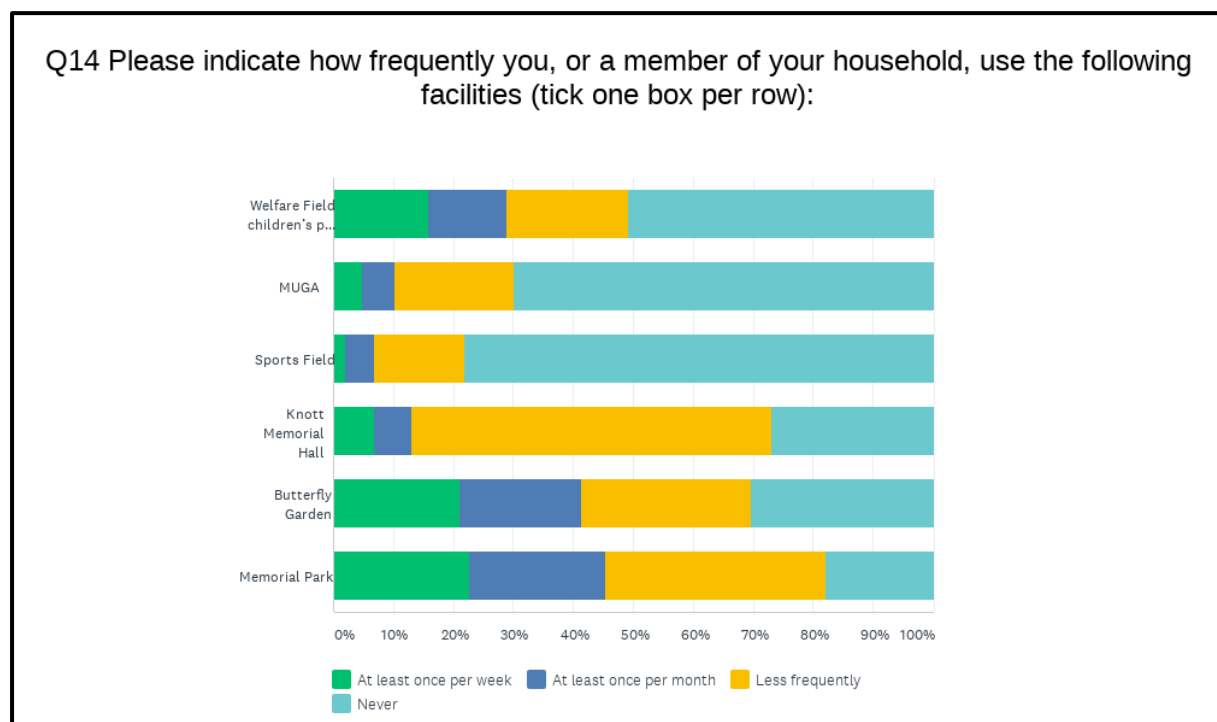
Use of the library	%
At least once per month	7.7
Less than once per month	13.8
Never	78.5

Those who use the library were asked to comment on what they value about the library. 67 comments were made with many mentioning the excellent service provided and the friendly volunteer staff. IT equipment was also frequently mentioned with many comments stating that respondents would use the library again when re-opened. One person commented: "If it wasn't there then I would miss it."

Respondents were also asked how frequently they use a number of other facilities. The table below shows the proportion of respondents using each facility at least once per month.

Facility	% Using at least once per month
Welfare Field children's play area	29.0
MUGA	10.3
Sports Field	6.9
Knott Memorial Hall	13.0
Butterfly Garden	41.4
Memorial Park	45.3

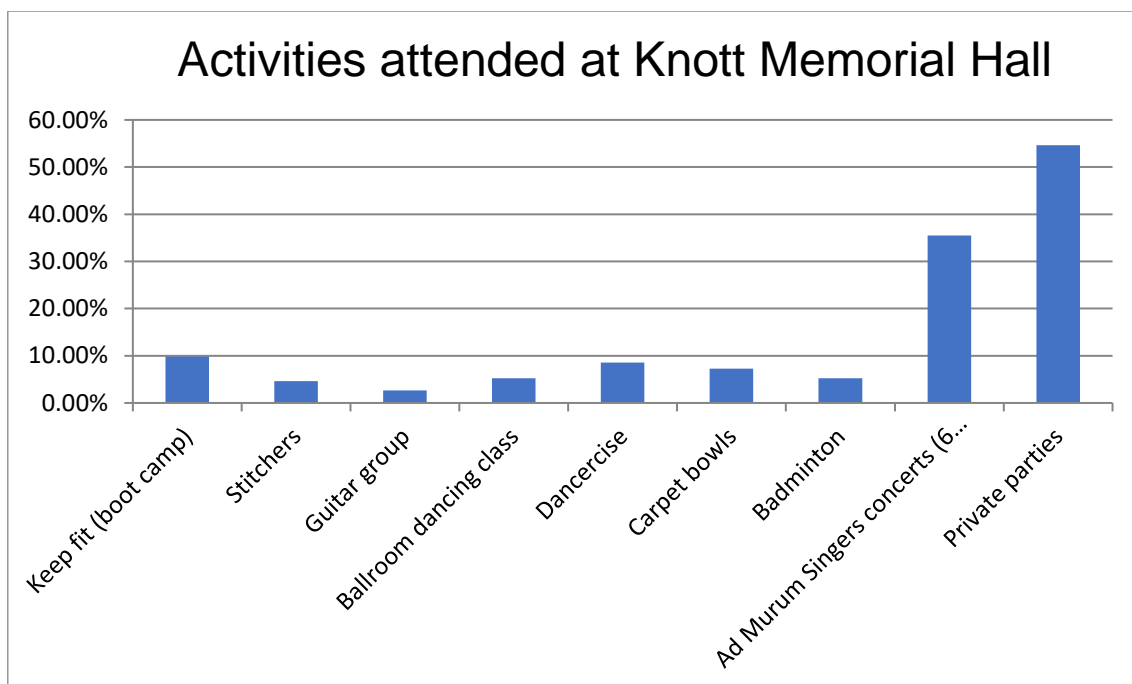
The most used facilities overall are the Memorial Park with 82.1% of respondents using the facility at least occasionally, the Knott Memorial Hall (73.1%) and the Butterfly Garden (69.7%). Full results to this question are shown in the chart below.



Overall, 28 respondents indicated that they would consider volunteering to help maintain these amenities with gardening and litter picking frequently mentioned.

Respondents were asked whether they attend a range of activities at the Knott Memorial Hall. 54.6% of respondents attended private parties at the Hall and 35.5% attended Ad Murum Singers concerts. 143 respondents indicated that they would like to see something else provided at the Hall for other age groups.

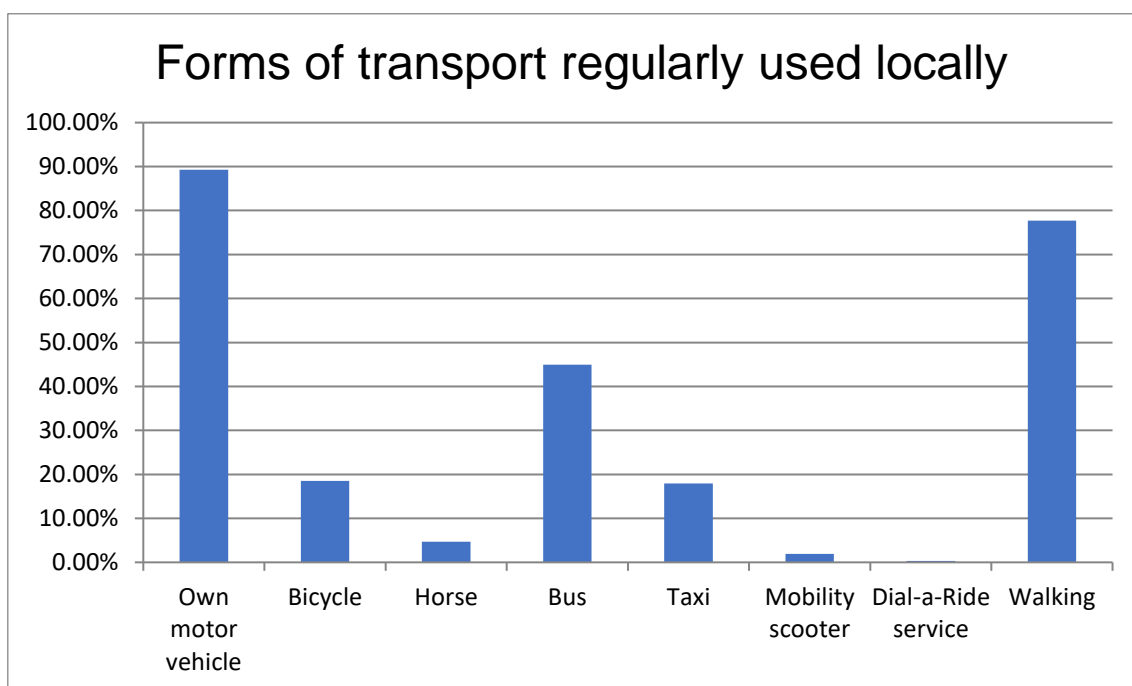
Attendance at all activities is shown in the chart below.



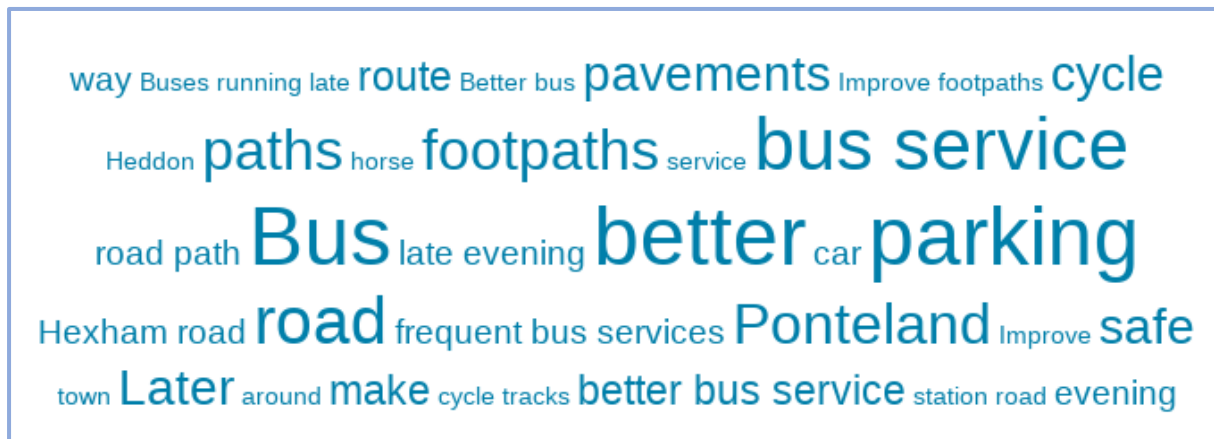
Only 9 respondents were currently involved with the Residents' Association. However, 67 indicated that they would like to know more about the ways they are involved in village life.

Travel and Transport

Respondents were asked to indicate what forms of transport they regularly use to get around locally. 89.3% of respondents said they use their own motor vehicle whilst 77.7% said they regularly walked locally. 45% regularly use the bus, 18.6% bicycle and 17.9% taxi. Full responses are shown in the chart below.



133 respondents suggested transport improvements that could be made as reflected in the word cloud below.



By far the most common comments related to improving the bus service with 51 comments. These concerned improving the timetable, extending services into the evening and providing links to other destinations.

82.6% of respondents said that they would use a volunteer driver scheme to help those who cannot get out and about if one existed. 47 respondents said that they would volunteer for such a scheme.

9.5% of respondents (28) said that they would consider joining a car club in the Parish to share lifts.

49 respondents made additional comments in relation to transport in the village. 43% of these comments again related to bus service improvements.

Communications

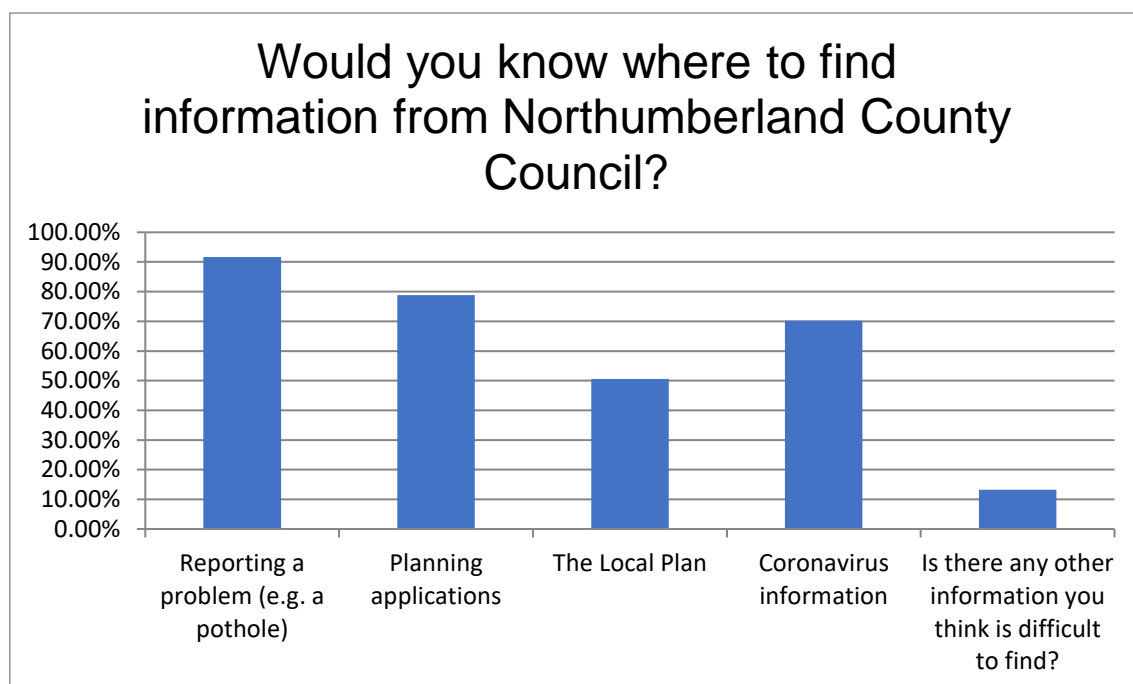
Heddon Gossip was the most prevalent current method for getting information about what is happening in the Parish with 83.5% of respondents. 71.8% of respondents also got their information by word of mouth, 68% from noticeboards and 42.1% from Facebook.

Heddon Gossip was also the most preferred mechanism for communicating with the Parish Council with 60.5% of respondents followed by noticeboards (44%), word of mouth (41.2%), Facebook (39.5%) and the Parish website (36.1%).

	Current information source %	Preferred Parish Council communication %
Heddon Gossip	83.5	60.3
Word of mouth	71.7	41.0
Noticeboards	68.2	44.1
Facebook	41.9	39.3
Parish website	14.9	36.2
Library	19.8	13.1

51 respondents suggested other methods of communication they would like the Parish Council to use. The most common suggestion was the use of email (43.1% of respondents).

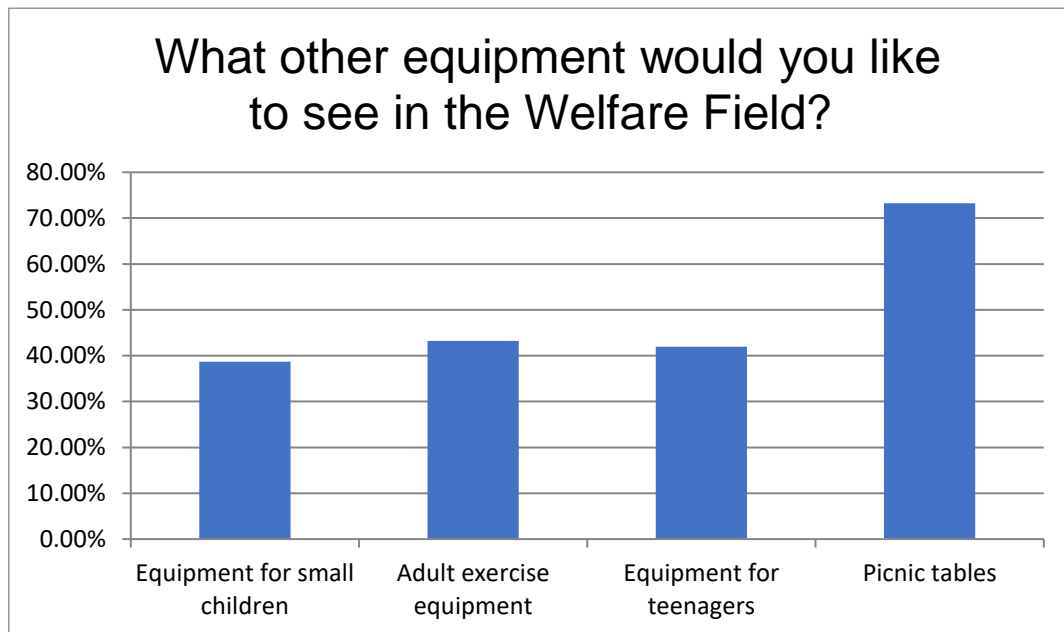
Knowledge of where to find information on key issues from Northumberland County Council was high with 91.7% of respondents knowing where to report a problem, 78.9% knowing where to find information on planning applications, 70.2% coronavirus information and 50.6% information on the Local Plan.



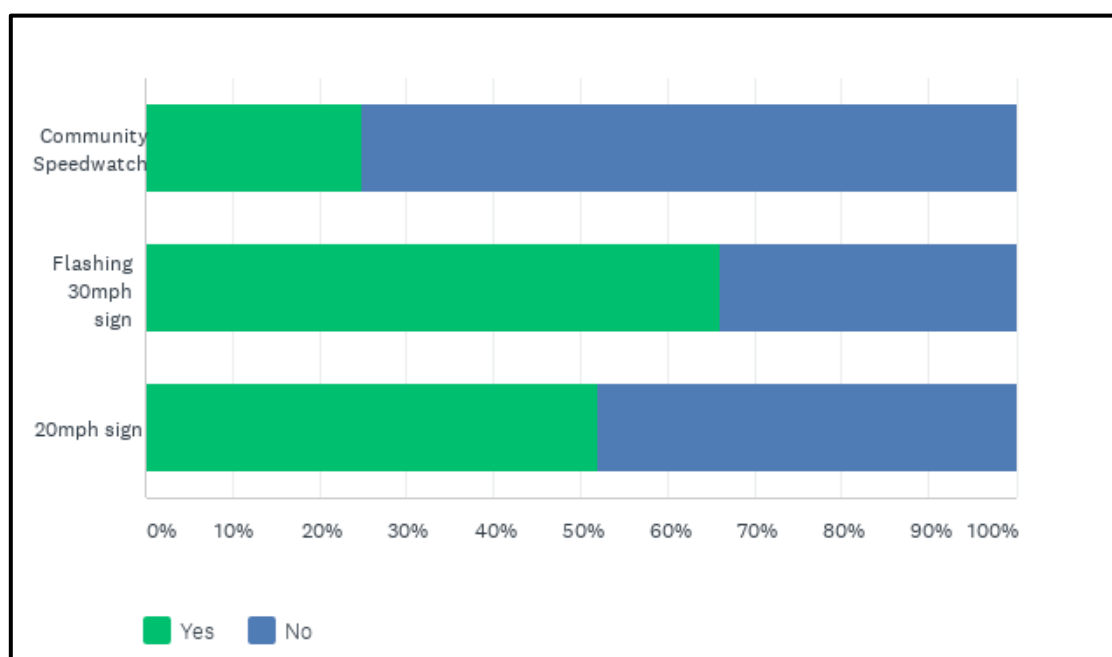
Suggestions for Improvement and Development of the Village

73.3% of respondents would like to see picnic tables in the Welfare Field. 43.2% would like to see adult exercise equipment in the Welfare Field, 42% equipment for teenagers and 38.7% equipment for small children.

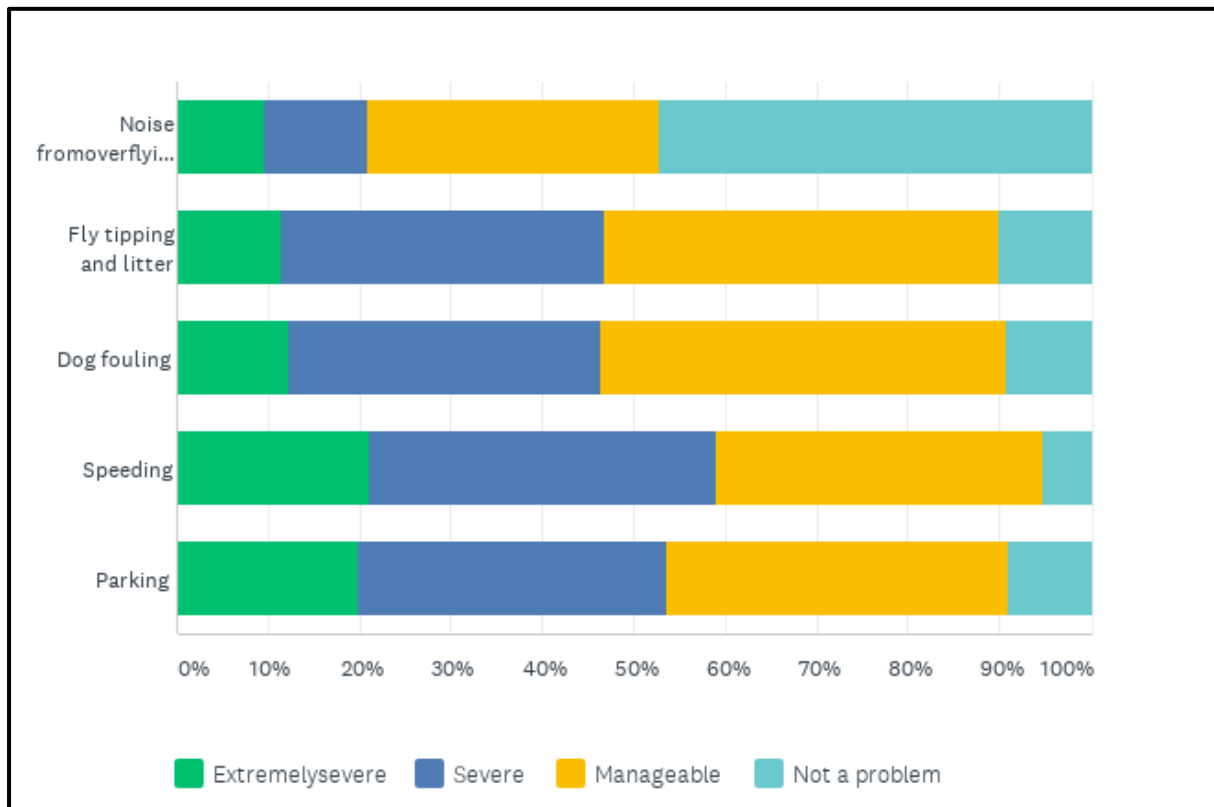
49 respondents suggested other improvements. Many comments related to improving the MUGA and also drainage.



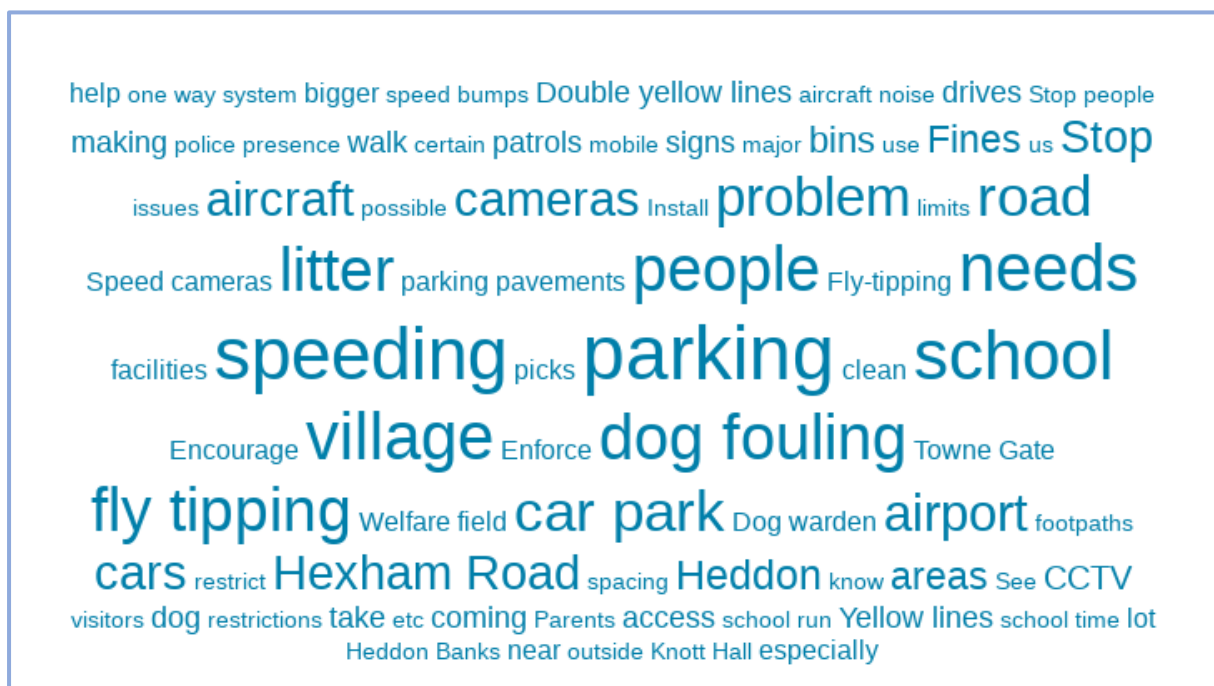
Respondents were asked whether specific measures had helped with the issue of speeding drivers throughout the village. 66% of respondents indicated that they thought the flashing 30mph sign had helped and 52% felt the same about the 20mph signs. 75% did not feel that Community Speedwatch had helped.



Speeding was considered to be either a severe or extremely severe problem by 59.1% of respondents. 53.7% of respondents felt similarly about parking, 46.8% about fly tipping and 46.3% about dog fouling. 20.8% of respondents felt that noise from overflying aircraft was either a severe or extremely severe problem.



178 respondents made a wide range of suggestions about what could be done to help with these problems. These are reflected in the word cloud below.



The final questions in the survey asked respondents to comment on their favourite thing about Heddon and their least favourite. 275 respondents recorded their favourite thing whilst 240 recorded their least favourite thing. Responses are summarised in the word clouds below.

Favourite things about Heddon

A word cloud summarizing the most liked aspects of Heddon. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with larger words indicating higher frequency. The colors are various shades of blue and teal. The words include: 'S lovely place live', 'Pleasant', 'Good', 'access', 'rural', 'social life', 'area', 'neighbourhood', 'beautiful', 'Everything', 'Peace', 'quiet', 'Closeness', 'country', 'city', 'live', 'Wall', 'neighbours', 'friendliness', 'nice', 'nature', 'lovely', 'access', 'countryside', 'environment', 'helpful', 'quiet', 'convenient', 'location', 'Newcastle', 'community', 'place live', 'friendly', 'feeling safe', 'people', 'surrounding', 'countryside', 'village', 'atmosphere', 'views', 'Easy', 'walks', 'Rural location', 'countryside', 'Proximity', 'community spirit', 'life', 'Good', 'Close', 'pubs', 'lot', 'peaceful', 'general', 'feel', 'mix', 'Three Tuns', 'Shops', 'residents', 'semi-rural', 'town', 'open countryside', 'village', 'life', 'Easy access', 'Newcastle', 'Heddon', 'generally'.

Least favourite things about Heddon

A word cloud summarizing the most disliked aspects of Heddon. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with larger words indicating higher frequency. The colors are various shades of blue and teal. The words include: 'Parish Council', 'horse', 'Speeding cars', 'much', 'good', 'cause', 'many', 'respect', 'evening', 'state', 'dogs', 'picking', 'residents', 'footpath', 'shops', 'drivers', 'Dog fouling', 'smell', 'Nothing', 'buses', 'road', 'council', 'speeding', 'Dog poo', 'village', 'Hexham Road', 'people', 'service', 'parking', 'noise', 'Lack', 'times', 'Heddon', 'problems', 'school', 'look', 'use', 'Inconsiderate', 'Aircraft noise', 'Paths', 'Traffic', 'weeds', 'litter', 'family', 'car', 'within', 'lived', 'around', 'pavements', 'car parking', 'Speeding traffic', 'Bus service'.

Summary

This was a survey of existing residents and, therefore, is an expression of the needs, desires and views of these residents. Key messages from the survey include the following:

- Residents clearly care about their community in Heddon Parish, as reflected in the high response rate to this survey – 46% overall. Response rates from younger people were low, however, reflecting a need to find other mechanisms to ascertain the views of the Parish's younger residents.
- The environment of the Parish is ranked highly by residents in terms of what keeps them in Heddon and in terms of the current quality of the environment – almost 90% of residents described the quality of the environment as excellent or good.
- Views on service provision were more mixed with some services rated highly (e.g. the postal service and refuse collection) and others identified as poor by around a third of respondents (e.g. road/footpath maintenance and bus services).
- Most respondents thought that opportunities for children and the elderly in the Parish were adequate or better whilst significant numbers felt that opportunities for young people and people with disabilities were poor (45% and 37% respectively).
- People who use the library clearly value the excellent service provided, the friendly volunteer staff and the IT equipment available.
- All village facilities included in the survey appear well utilised, especially the Memorial Park, the Butterfly Garden and the Knott Memorial Hall.
- Many suggestions were made with respect to potential transport improvements particularly the bus service – e.g. improving the timetable, extending services into the evening and providing links to other destinations.
- All existing communication mechanisms appeared utilised with a number of respondents suggesting direct email communication may also be useful.
- Various improvements were suggested for the Parish, especially in connection with the welfare Field (e.g. additional picnic tables) and the MUGA.
- Speeding, parking, fly tipping and dog fouling were all considered problems by significant numbers of respondents (ranging from 59% to 46%).

Credits

Sincere thanks go to Heddon on the Wall Parish Council and the residents of the Parish for their participation in this survey.