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Stonehouse Community Survey

Project Report

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May 2016



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Executive summary

- A survey was undertaken with residents of Stonehouse, asking their opinion on a number of plans for the village during March and April 2016. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a total of 17 statements, including plans for infrastructure, retail, green space, education and housing. A total of 462 completed forms were obtained. Following checking, 448 were used in data analysis.
- There was positive support amongst respondents across the propositions covered in the questionnaire. The strongest agreement was with plans to provide grants to sustain village organisations, to improve the infrastructure of the village centre and to provide sports facilities.
- Respondents aged 25-34 were more likely to strongly agree with plans for new sports facilities, the creation of a new country park, building of a new high school, low cost social housing and additional housing paying for infrastructure.
- Older respondents (65+) were more likely to strongly agree with completion of A71 by-pass, plans for provision of new houses for social rent, additional social housing and additional housing paying for infrastructure. Respondents aged 65 or over were also more likely to disagree with plans to create a new country park and restore the village band stand.
- Respondents were asked an open question about the most important future change in the village for them. The most frequent themes in responses to this question were improved shopping options, restoration of and improvement of the appearance of the village, and gym/sports facilities.



a) Introduction

During spring 2016, Public Knowledge supported Stonehouse Community Council in the delivery of a community survey. The survey was designed to capture opinions of village residents on various aspects of their community including: infrastructure, the environment, business support, housing provision and community resources. The results of the survey will be used by Stonehouse Community Council in drawing up plans and recommendations for future developments in the village.

b) Methodology

i) Survey design

The survey was designed by Stonehouse Community Council. Respondents were asked to give their age and gender, before being asked a series of 17 closed response questions. Respondents were asked to select whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with a series of statements about plans for the village – including transport infrastructure, retail provision, green space, education and housing. Finally, respondents were asked to tell us what they thought for them, personally, the most important future change to the village would be.

ii) Data collection

Data collection was by a combination of face to face and self-completion surveys. Members of the local community distributed 2,000 surveys across the village. Respondents completing the survey themselves returned their completed forms to a number of collection boxes situated in locations across the village. Data collection took place between the 7th March and 15th April 2016. A total of 462 completed surveys were obtained.

iii) Data analysis

Upon receipt of the completed forms, quantitative data was entered into an excel file. During data processing 14 forms were removed due to bad data. The most frequent reason for removing forms was because respondents had checked more than one response option on a single question, or had created their own 'neither agree nor disagree' category in addition to the four response options provided.

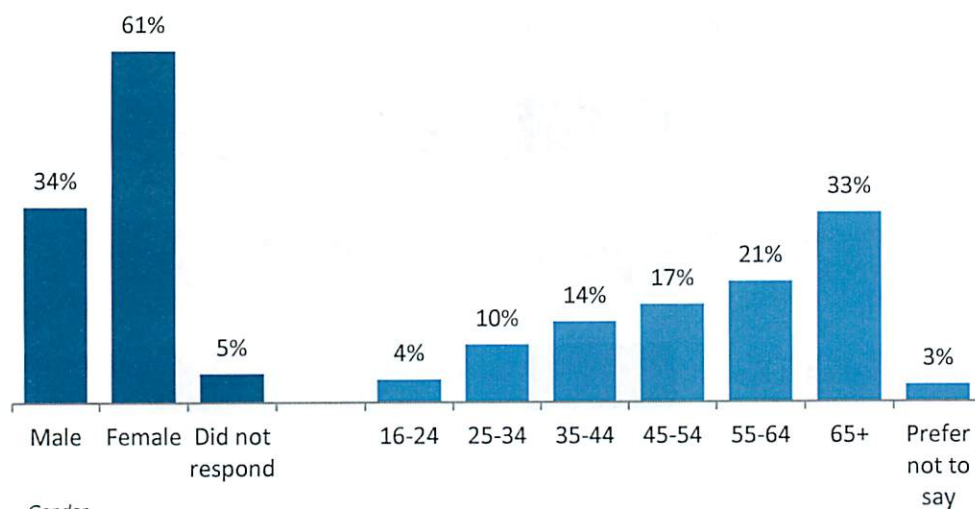
Following data entry, data was analysed using the specialist software, Askia. Cross tabulations were prepared with breaks by age and gender. Differences between groups were tested for statistical significance using the Pearson's chi-square test. Only significance >95% is recorded in the report.

c) Results

i) Sample composition

Of the 448 respondents included in the final sample, the majority were female. Age distribution was skewed towards older age groups. Around one third of respondents were in the 65+ age group.

Figure 1: Gender and age of respondents



Gender

Which of the following age categories do you fit into?

Base: All respondents - 448

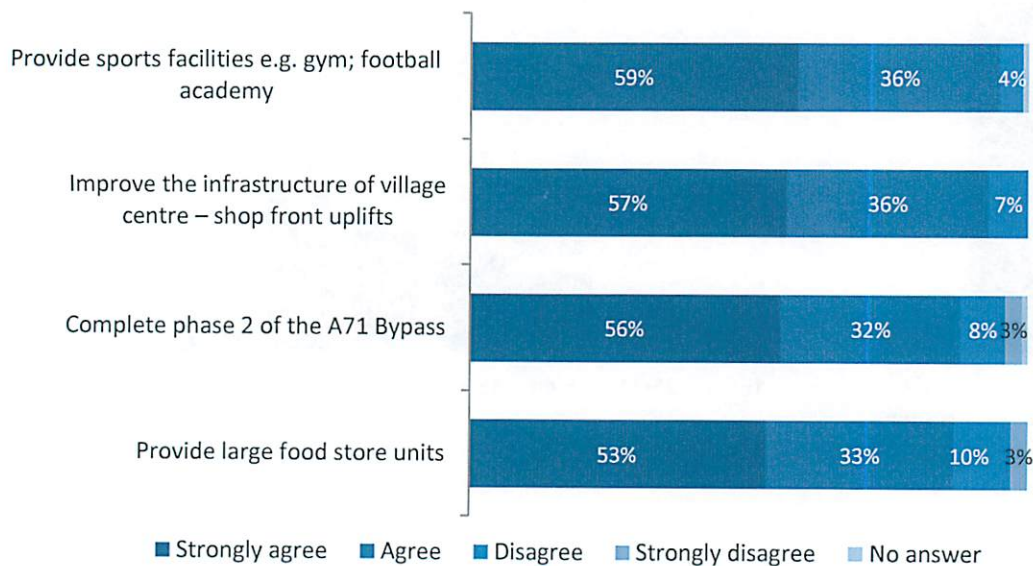


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ii) Opinions about infrastructure

There was strong agreement amongst respondents with the infrastructure development options listed. More than half of respondents strongly agreed with each of the four statements. The provision of sports facilities registered the highest level of agreement amongst respondents, and this was significantly greater amongst 25-34 year olds (72% of this age group strongly agree). Older respondents (65+) were significantly more likely to strongly agree with the completion of phase 2 of the A71 Bypass (64% of this age group strongly agree).

Figure 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following plans for Stonehouse - Infrastructure



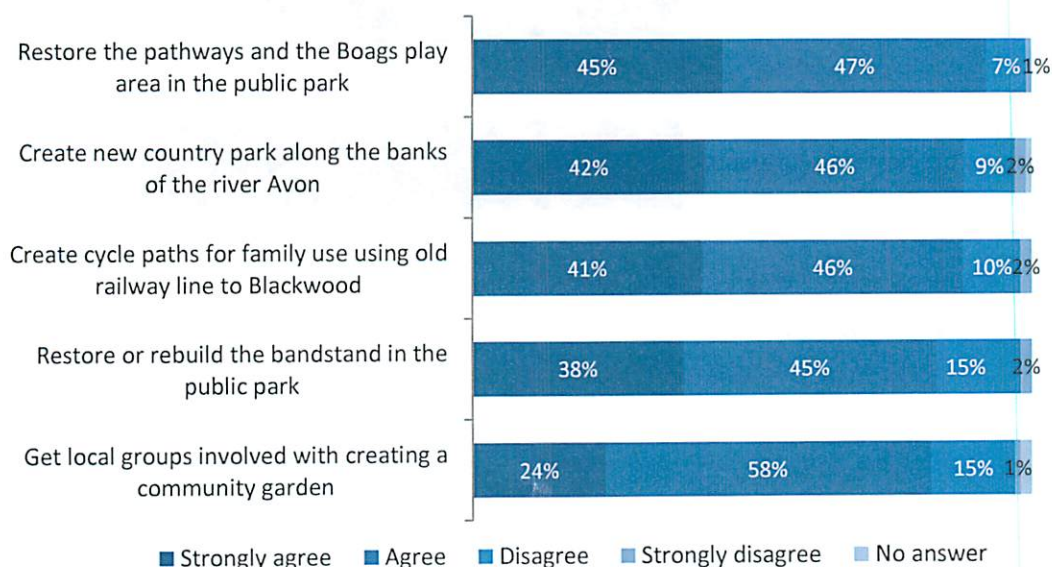
Base: All respondents - 448

iii) Opinions about environment and green space

We see positive agreement with statements relating to creation and restoration of green infrastructure, and community involvement. The strongest sentiment was towards the restoration of the pathways and the Boags play area in the public park. Although agreement (strongly agree + agree) was similar across male and female respondents (91% and 92%, respectively), women were significantly more likely to strongly agree with this statement than men (52% compared to 36%).

Amongst age groups, 25-34 year olds were the most keen to see a new country park (60% strongly agreed) and 55-64 year olds wanted to see the creation of cycle paths on the old railway line to Blackwood (51% strongly agreed). The 65+ age group were significantly more likely to disagree with the creation of a new county park (17% disagree) and the restoration of the band stand (21% disagree).

Figure 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following plans for Stonehouse - Environment and green space

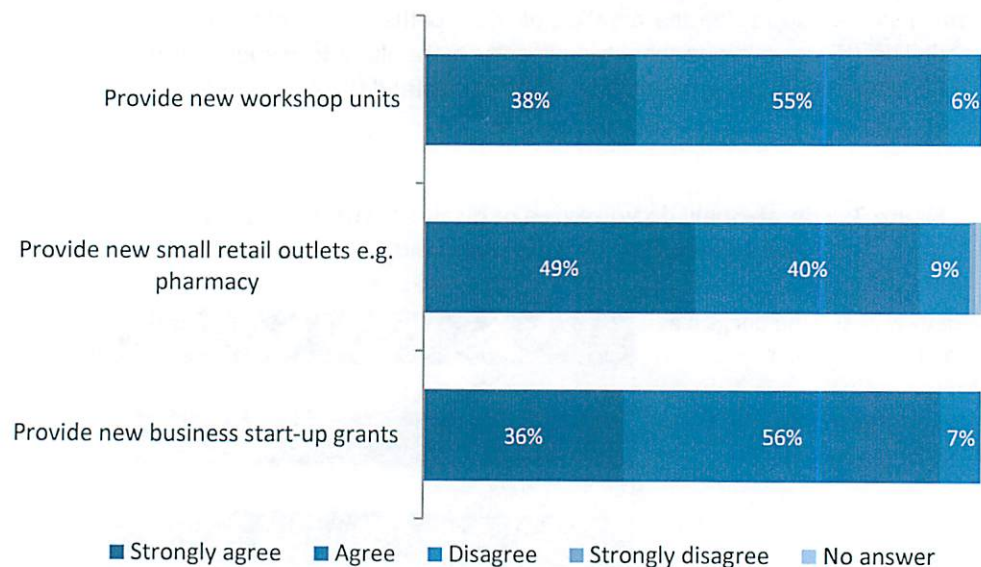


Base: All respondents - 448

iv) Opinions about business support

When asked about business support in the village, almost half of respondents strongly agreed with the provision of small retail outlets such as a pharmacy.

Figure 4: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following plans for Stonehouse - Business support



Base: All respondents - 448

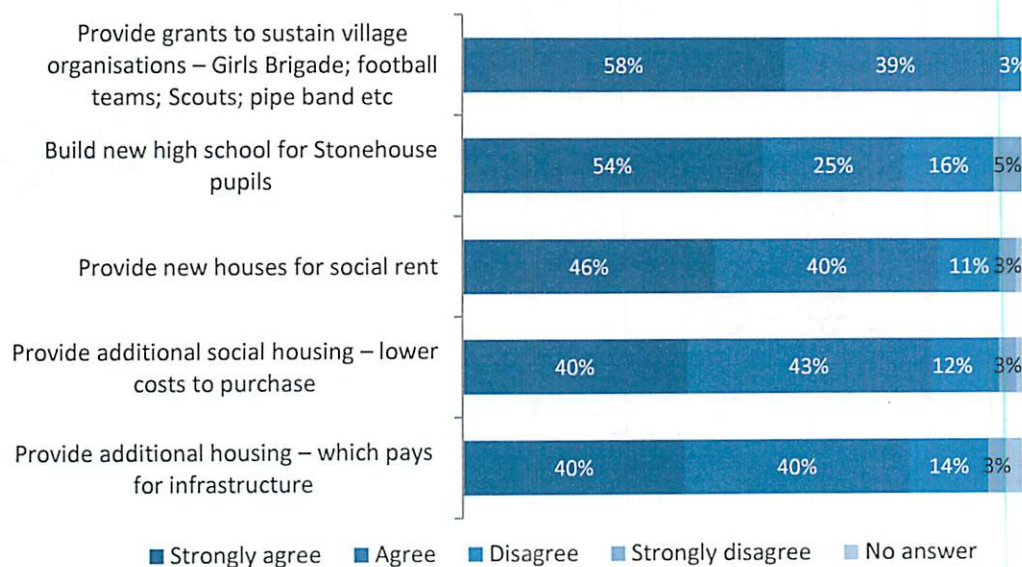
v) Housing and community resources

When asked about housing and community resources in Stonehouse, 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the provision of grants to sustain organisations within the village.

Respondents aged 25-34 were significantly more likely to strongly agree with the building of a new high school (67% of this age group strongly agree), low cost social housing (60% strongly agree) and additional housing paying for infrastructure (56% strongly agree). This may reflect the life stage of these respondents.

Respondents in the 65+ age group were more likely to agree with the provision of houses for social rent (47% agree) and provision of additional social housing (52% agree) and additional housing paying for infrastructure (49% agree) – again perhaps reflecting life stage and housing need.

Figure 5: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following plans for Stonehouse - Housing and community resources



Base: All respondents - 448

vi) Mean scores

Table 1 below summarises and ranks the mean scores of agreement with each statement (where 4 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree). The range of mean scores across the 17 statements is narrow, ranging from 3.1 to 3.6 and indicating a tendency for respondents to agree, to a greater or lesser degree, with these plans across the board.

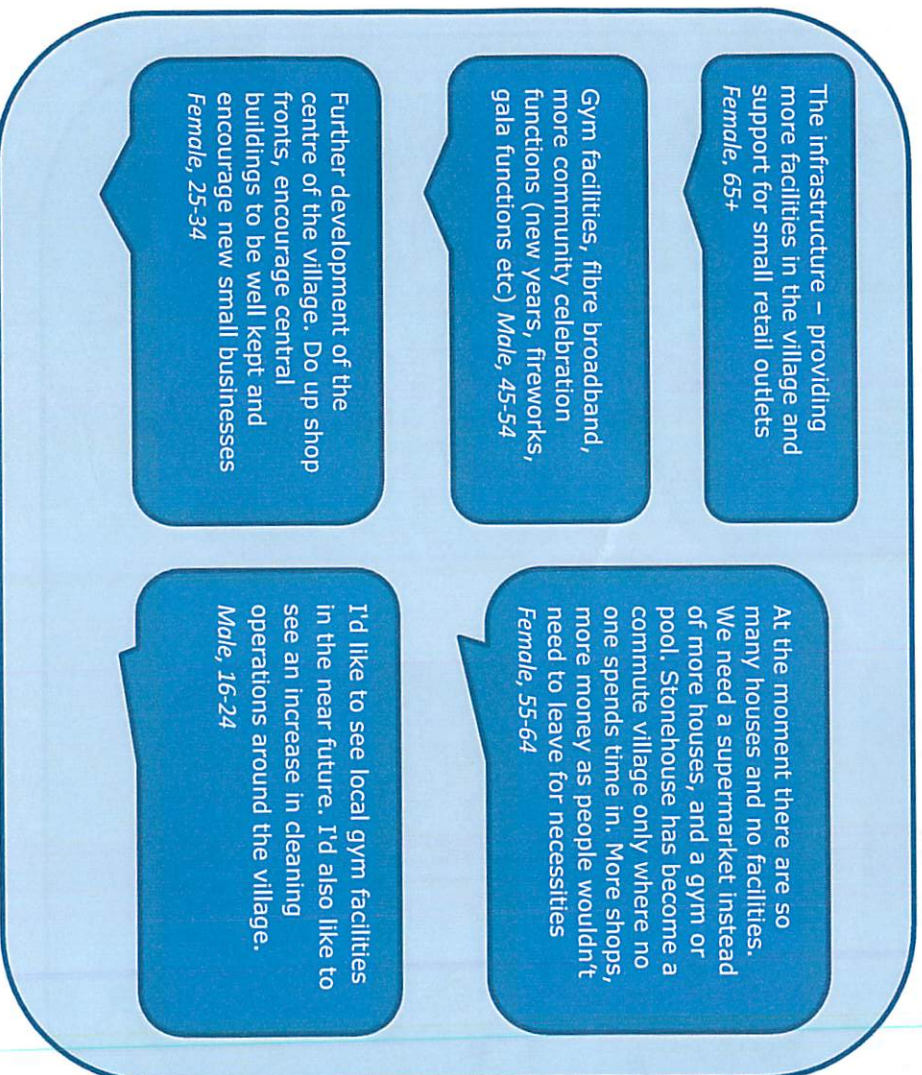
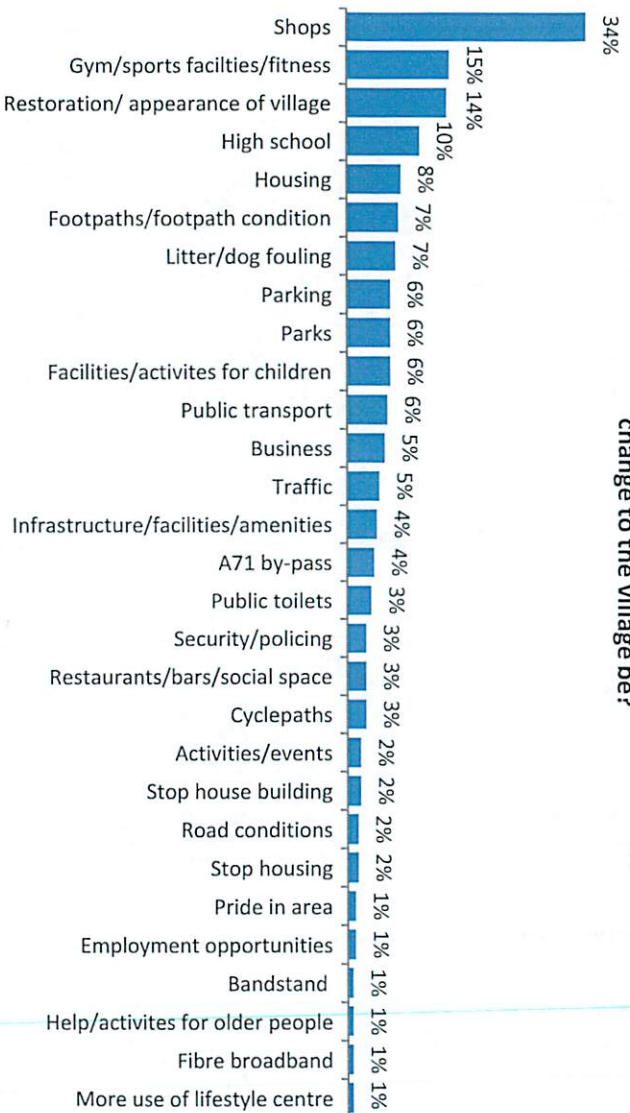
Taking the sample as a whole, the strongest agreement was with plans for grants to support village organisations, improvements to village centre infrastructure and the provision of sports facilities.

Table 1: mean scores of agreement with plans for Stonehouse

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following places for Stonehouse...	Mean score
Provide grants to sustain village organisations	3.6
Improve the infrastructure of village centre – shop front uplifts	3.5
Provide sports facilities e.g. gym; football academy	3.5
Complete phase 2 of the A71 Bypass	3.4
Provide large food store units	3.4
Restore the pathways and the Boags play area in the public park	3.4
Provide new small retail outlets e.g. pharmacy	3.4
Create new country park along the banks of the river Avon	3.3
Create cycle paths for family use using old railway line to Blackwood	3.3
Provide new workshop units	3.3
Provide new business start-up grants	3.3
Build new high school for Stonehouse pupils	3.3
Provide new houses for social rent	3.3
Restore or rebuild the bandstand in the public park	3.2
Provide additional social housing – lower costs to purchase	3.2
Provide additional housing - which pays for infrastructure	3.2
Get local groups involved with creating a community garden	3.1

d) Respondent priorities for future changes in Stonehouse

Respondents were asked in an open question what they felt would be the most important future change in the village for them. 258 respondents provided a response to this question. Approximately one third (34%) of those providing a response mentioned shopping facilities. Sporting facilities were mentioned by 15% and general restoration/improvements to the appearance of the village, by 14%. A complete set of responses are provided alongside the data tables and a selection of responses shown on the following pages.



Encourage independent shopping by providing new small retail outlets to put the heart into the community. *Male, 65+*

Development of what the village has. Male voice choir, pipe band, public park etc. Facilities for all. Evening tea dances, youth sport facilities, a central drop in café/centre. Much better information on what's going on, what's available to encourage participation and create an inclusive village spirit *Male, 65+*

Bring the village closer together by offering more social gatherings. *Female, 25-34*

Quality retail units, with the exception of the very good butcher in the village, the other retail units are totally inadequate for a growing village, if we want people to come and stay, then we must provide the necessary outlets for them. A reliable and frequent bus service would be very much appreciated, as not everyone has a car or are able to drive. This applies particularly to the elderly and infirm, and we do have an aging population in this village *Female, 65+*

To improve the centre of the village with more shops and restaurants so the spending money stays in the village. Everyone sees it as a commuting village and they go to Strathaven (for example) to spend their money in the bars and restaurants. We need more for the kids to do, so why not have a workshop unit to teach them about cars or housebuilding etc. *Male, 55-64*

...I think it's a shame the local toilets are closed. It makes spending any time down the street a juggling act for infants, children, everyone really – and no toilet in the public park – why spend money upgrading when time is limited in park because have to leave to go home to obtain use of toilet. And play area at top of village! Would be so beneficial to families. *Female, 45-54*

I think extending the bypass will help flow away from the village as will be busier with new developments. Also be better for children playing with new parks etc. Will need to build high school as Strathaven is bulging and would benefit the school children in Stonehouse in their education. *Female, 25 - 34*



e) Conclusions

The community survey conducted in Stonehouse found, on the whole, positive support amongst respondents across the propositions covered in the questionnaire. Average scores (where 4 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree) ranged from 3.1 to 3.6 across the 17 propositions included. The strongest agreement was with plans to provide grants to sustain village organisations (3.6), to improve the infrastructure of the village centre (3.5) and to provide sports facilities (3.5).

We found some differences between demographic groups in terms of strong agreement with the different plans covered in the survey, potentially reflecting life stage of respondents:

- 25-34 year olds were more likely to strongly agree with plans for new sports facilities, the creation of a new country park, building of a new high school, low cost social housing and additional housing paying for infrastructure
- 55-64 year olds were more likely to agree with the creation of new cycle paths on the old railway line to Blackwood
- Over 65s were more likely to strongly agree with completion of A71 by-pass – this age group were also more likely to disagree with plans to create a new country park and restore the band stand, Respondents in the 65+ age group had a greater tendency towards strong agreement with plans for provision of new houses for social rent, additional social housing and additional housing paying for infrastructure

Respondents were asked what the most important future change in the village would be for them personally. The most frequent themes in responses to this question were improved shopping options, restoration of and improvement of the appearance of the village, and gym/sports facilities.

